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**SUPPLY
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House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

HALIFAX, THURSDAY, MAY 1, 1997

SUBCOMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE HOUSE ON SUPPLY

2:08 P.M.

CHAIRMAN
Mr. Dennis Richards

MR. RICHARD HUBBARD (Chairman): I guess it is about 2:08 p.m. so with that we will open the meeting and welcome back the Minister of Community Services and his staff and open the floor to questions.

The honourable member for Cape Breton West.

MR. ALFRED MACLEOD: Mr. Chairman, it is a pleasure to be back here with all these wonderful questions that we have to ask the Minister of Community Services and to be with such a pleasant bunch of colleagues.

If we go to the main estimates of the Province of Nova Scotia on Page 5.3, we see an increase there in the Commissions and Agencies budget from \$720,000 to \$1.168 million, an increase of about \$450,000. I wonder if the minister would care to explain these increases?

MR. CHAIRMAN: The honourable Minister of Community Services.

HON. JOHN MACEACHERN: The increases, I think, are in the Direct Grants. You can see them almost inclusively there. It is tied to the fact that BUF last year has basically been suspended and their grant for the year before was about \$350,000 and we have it back in the budget as we wait for the task force to return to speak to us about what comes next. So we put it back in the budget to allow for whatever comes next. We are using some of the budget to provide for the operations of the task force. That is basically what it is about.

The others are just increases a little bit here and there. If you look, for example at the Senior Citizens Secretariat, a small increase. The Senior Citizens' Commission, which we have not really figured out how to fit together with the Senior Citizens Secretariat, but we put the money back in to see if we can get some kind of an agreement and that is why the difference. So the total gives you that.

The other differences - Family Violence Prevention - we are way up. We have added a lot of money to that program. It was experimental when we started out and now we are very pleased with it. It is showing us many good things. One of them from Cape Breton in which Justice and Community Services with the transition house have come up with a program using volunteers so that if you have spousal abuse, the police will take away the abuser but a trained person stays with the person who is abused as long as it takes so that they do not get lonely or afraid and hesitate, I guess would be a good way of putting it, in laying charges. That is coming very much from this Family Violence Prevention.

MR. MACLEOD: Just to follow that up a little. You say they stay with them as long as it takes? There is no time-frame involved?

MR. MACEACHERN: No. These are trained people. In our first phase we have trained 26 and they are trained when to recognize that they are comfortable again because they will go through a phase. First of all, they feel guilt. Secondly, they are fearful because of what they have done but loneliness is the thing that kills them, that drives them back to the police station to say I do not want to lay charges, I was better off before. These people are trained to take them through that. Once they recognize that there is a stability that happens, and we do not lose track of them, they are able to return home then. It is not unlike, if you want to consider one of the programs, at least it reflects to me, one of the programs the alcohol addiction people use - that if somebody looks as if they are going to be in trouble, they come and stay with them until they are comfortable and then they go away, but if they need them again, they call back again. It sets up a relationship.

MR. MACLEOD: These 26 people that have been trained, what would their status be? Are they full-time employees?

MR. MACEACHERN: Volunteers. All volunteers. Many of them, by the way, I met.

MR. MACLEOD: Are they coordinated through the transition house?

MR. MACEACHERN: The transition house, the police in Cape Breton and the Department of Community Services. The training is paid for, but almost all of them are connected in other ways. Some of them are transition house workers. Some of them are people who are taking the BACS program at the University College of Cape Breton who want to become social workers. So this becomes part of their resume as they are working their way toward becoming social workers.

At the beginning, when it was first proposed, they told me that they were hesitant about people volunteering to do this, but they not only had no difficulty getting the 26 volunteers, they had another 26 waiting to be trained because they know there will be a burn-out factor and they will need replacements.

MR. MACLEOD: And the training is paid for by the three?

MR. MACEACHERN: Yes, by us and Justice.

MR. MACLEOD: Still on Page 5.3 of the main estimates, Salaries and Benefits. I see an increase there of some \$102,000.

MR. MACEACHERN: Is that up in Senior Management?

MR. MACLEOD: Down below in Commissions and Agencies.

MR. MACEACHERN: Down below. Corporate Services Unit?

MR. MACLEOD: Commissions and Agencies. Then you go down to Salaries and Benefits. The first line of the main estimate document.

MR. MACEACHERN: Salaries and Benefits, we have adapted, and I can find the numbers here exactly, especially in Cape Breton and here in metro and Queens, we have taken all of the municipal workers and taken them into our fold. That now comes on our books and not on the municipal council books and that is the biggest part of the number of employees that have grown relative to us. Therefore, that is under our estimate now that all of the former municipal employees of Halifax, Dartmouth and the county are now resting in the Department of Community Services.

The family violence people have transferred to us. Previously we had 344 people staff-wise. Now we have 446 and they have transferred over from other areas into that budget.

MR. MACLEOD: It is Commissions and Agencies, so that the first part where you said about the municipal workers . . .

MR. MACEACHERN: No. That is right. That is why I was guessing, because we did not have it in front of us.

MR. MACLEOD: I just wanted to be sure that I am sure.

MR. MACEACHERN: That is what it is. That is family violence people and everything that has come across to us. The difference is previously there were 344 employees and now there are 446; \$244,000, now it is \$446,000 and that is people who have come across to us.

MR. MACLEOD: And the Operating Costs on the next line? There has been a \$90,000 increase there.

MR. MACEACHERN: Likewise, we have taken a new thing into that item. It is the family violence crowd that has come across with us. That budget item was shared before with Justice, I think. That \$109,000 that comes across is from Justice for services we provide to the Family Violence Initiative.

MR. MACLEOD: Then under Grants and Contributions, we see a 141 per cent increase there of some \$255,000.

MR. MACEACHERN: That is BUF again. You can see from the previous year the estimate was \$438,000, we are back to that but, because BUF was not operating last year, that money was not used and we put it back in the budget anticipating the task force report and which direction we go with it after the task force finally reports to us.

MR. MACLEOD: When is that report supposed to be done?

MR. MACEACHERN: They have a draft report. We have taken the draft report, we have asked Justice to give us an update on where they are in their response to the Marshall Inquiry recommendations. Education has responded to the BLAC initiative so that we see what the overlap is. We have sent those out to the task force so that they could reflect on those two things with the recommendations. Then they are going to come back to us. We are going to have another meeting with them to see where we go from here. That will be in the short term, a month or so. It is not long away.

MR. MACLEOD: That would only be an interim report to the department, internal to the department?

MR. MACEACHERN: No. In fact, we sent the task force report - the draft report - out. It is in all the libraries. If you would like to have one, just contact our office. Cathy MacPhee will provide you a copy of it. You will notice that it has much overlap with the BLAC report and much overlap with the material that was recommended in the Marshall Report. I met with them just to see what the overlap is, set that aside, and see how we should proceed.

MR. MACLEOD: Could you give me an idea of how many additional people were appointed to Commissions and Agencies over the last year?

MR. MACEACHERN: It seems to me like thousands. That is what it seems like because it is one of those occupations that goes on and on. The most significant agency that we appoint is the appeal boards across the province. They are regular and according to regulation or legislation they are filled every year. So many each year. That is the main one. I can get you a list of them all. Big Brothers/Big Sisters, we do not do that one; that is out there and we give them money.

MR. MACLEOD: I am just talking about the ones your department does.

MR. MACEACHERN: Senior Citizens Secretariat, we appoint that one. Senior Citizens' Commission, we have not got anyone there; Family Violence Prevention Initiative; the Provincial Advisory Council, of course that is there; Disabled Persons Commission, again, they are our main ones that are directly under me. We will get that for you, how many we have appointed in the last year and who they are, if that would be helpful to you. If the chairman of the committee would like to have that, we can put it for the record. That is the copy of the list of boards and commissions that have been appointed in the past year, the people. We would be pleased to provide it to the committee and to the members of the committee.

MR. MACLEOD: We see under Senior Management, Salaries and Benefits increased about 33 per cent.

MR. MACEACHERN: Yes, I can give you that. There have been three positions transferred in. There are no new positions. One was transferred from the deputy minister's office to my office, that is a Policy Advisor by the name of Judy Fowler who is a lawyer and a social worker whose job is to liaise with my office and any calls that come in directly relative to programming. That frees up my deputy and my deputy's staff to deal with the department, so that any inquiries flow through Ms. Fowler's office.

Likewise, there were two positions to Communications. They came previously. They were over in Strategic Planning and they are coming from Strategic Planning to our shop. When I arrived there, we had these people sitting in Communications but when I looked at the Communications line, there were \$78,000 and I wanted to know how we were so efficient. They explained to me where they were being paid from, so I said that should be transparent so everybody could see it. So you will notice the Communications budget has gone from \$78,000 to \$231,000 and that is because we have put it in the line and taken it out of Strategic Planning. If you look over at the Strategic Planning budget, you will see the consequent decrease over there.

I asked the same question, by the way, when I saw this.

MR. MACLEOD: It is a good question.

MR. MACEACHERN: It is a good question.

MR. MACLEOD: During last year's estimates, the previous minister stated that there would be 18 additional child care workers.

MR. MACEACHERN: They are there. I will find them for you. Just give me one second. That is on Page 5.5.

MR. MACLEOD: Of the main estimates or the supplement?

MR. MACEACHERN: The supplement, and they are located in two places and I will find them for you. Children's Services - Field is the first one. That has half of them and the other one is Children's Aid Society Grants. That is the other half. Actually, they were put in earlier, but this is a full year's increase to cover them so you will notice that they are in Children's Services - Field, that is tied, for example, to the Dartmouth office that runs directly from our office. There is no Children's Aid Society over there, as an example, and the Children's Aid Societies Grants would look after the others because we have a mixed system, some done by agencies, some done by ourselves.

MR. MACLEOD: I think when they were originally announced, these positions were to provide families with additional resources at the front end to prevent situations from getting worse. Since there weren't any outcome measurements for 1996 and 1997 until this fall, could you give us the status of how effective these new positions have been?

MR. MACEACHERN: To be honest, we don't have the status. You will notice, we have a booklet out which basically has our strategic plan, our business plan. The business plan has indicators, but we are just starting with that so it is relatively new. We are starting to have meetings with the Children's Aid Societies looking at exactly the effectiveness and the accountability. That relationship between the department and the Children's Aid Societies didn't exist before. We are starting to build that and we are putting the accountability measures in. I cannot tell you how effective they are. They tell me that it is better because their case/workloads are down because of it. That is what they tell me.

We don't know how effective they are because part of our difficulty since 1991 has been that the new Act that came in in 1990 changed the way the Children's Aid Societies did business and they drifted away from the early intervention side. That is stepping into the families and they felt that the only way they could act because of the new Act was when they took them into care. As a result, from 1991 on, the number of children coming into care, and you can see that with the apprehension costs, soared because they felt the expression in the Act is you have to choose the least intrusive so you cannot step in early. But we are now changing that and that is part of what our 18 people are about, how, in fact, when you see a problem in a family, whether it comes as a referral from a school, a referral from a child care facility, a referral from the police, even, how in fact we can step in early to give assistance.

We are starting to do that. It is brand new. So we don't have accountability measures now but we are building them. They are included in our business plan. We are having another meeting with the presidents and the executive directors of the Children's Aid Society, I think on May 9th. Staff is having another one on May 15th to start talking about how, in fact, we can step in to those very accountability measures but it is relatively new, this relationship between the Children's Aid Societies and the department.

MR. MACLEOD: But it would be fair to say that the caseload measurement is not an accurate way of measuring how effective the program is going to be?

MR. MACEACHERN: They tell me and I have to confess that all I can give you is what they report. In my discussions with them, the discussions always started with caseload but by the time we finished, we ended up talking about workload. I will quote one of the workers at one of the meetings and I have been to five or six of the agencies sitting at tables exactly like this and they are telling me about their lives, they said, if you have five difficult cases, although that is not a high caseload, that may be an impossible workload but if you have 25 or 35 relatively - let's say minor for the sake of discussion - cases that may be a high caseload but a low workload. So we started at the end of the day focusing our attention on what the workloads for each of our workers are. So caseload is a good indication because averages like student/teacher ratio but I think there is something more significant here because there is a substantive difference. They gave me some of the stories of the kind of difficulties these young people have that they deal with and I want to tell you, it scared me. If I was spending my days with, let's suppose, 15 cases like that, I want to tell you, I would burn out pretty easy. So that is where our focus is now. Our indicator at the front side is probably caseload, will give you that there are more workers, but I don't know if it would tell you how effective they are.

MR. MACLEOD: I guess that is the point I wanted to make because I don't believe that caseload is a true measurement of what is actually taking place. Workload is more significant then, I guess, and it is something that we have to be very aware of because I think the burn-out rate of the employees and the social workers is very high.

MR. MACEACHERN: One of the things that came up in our discussions about workload, by the way, which may be helpful to the committee and members concerned with that, they were asking questions, how you give respite to adoptive parents, to parents with troubled kids, to foster parents. Almost in an idle moment, I said, do you guys need respite? Their eyes just lit up because they work all year and then they get their vacation, but sometimes they have just got to get away, so our staff is talking to them about how we can involve changes, moving from this particular workload to another workload to get rest in their job. So burn-out is a major problem in this job. The only thing I can compare it to is some time I spent in a burn unit with a family member and watching staff. It is that kind of emotional tear all the time.

MR. MACLEOD: So we have identified that the workload is substantial. We have identified that the 18 new people have had an impact but we are not sure how big an impact.

MR. MACEACHERN: Yes, exactly.

MR. MACLEOD: So the question would be then, are there plans in the future to add more to the 18? If I remember when the previous minister made the announcement, I am almost positive it was the first of more.

MR. MACEACHERN: I cannot speak to that at the front side. This is the second wave of the group that we have done, the second wave of 18, but what I want to do is I want to sit with them.

MR. MACLEOD: I am sorry, I hate to interrupt you.

MR. MACEACHERN: That is okay.

MR. MACLEOD: So you are saying this 18 that we are talking about here is now actually 36 new people since the initial announcement by the previous minister?

MR. MACEACHERN: Yes. So we want to sit with them.

MR. MACLEOD: Do you have a third wave in mind?

MR. MACEACHERN: Well, I would say, Alfie, and I am going to speak as clearly as I can, until the Children's Aid Society and ourselves get better at what we are doing, we may need a lot more. We may not need any more to do the job right if we get more emphasis on early intervention and we don't have to take so many into care. We have many situations in which the appropriate kind of care doesn't exist, therapeutic foster parents, secure treatment, doesn't exist. So what they do, oftentimes, is you have a child go from an inappropriate foster home to a more inappropriate foster home, to a more inappropriate home and then they are broken for you. So we have to get better at that. So we may need more and if we need more, they will be provided. But we may not need more as we get better at what we are doing now and then our resources can go in other directions, whether it be for family supports or whatever.

[2:30 p.m.]

MR. MACLEOD: I guess I understand what you are saying but the problem with that is until we find out if we need more or if we don't need more, there are a number of people who are falling through the cracks and what do we do about those? The ultimate goal here, and I am sure that is the ultimate goal in your department and with your staff, and I wouldn't question that, is to make sure that the people who need the help, get the help. But while we

are fine tuning and doing all the adjusting, there are a number of people - and everybody around this table has run across some of those people - who have fallen through the cracks. Is there any plan or any idea how we can address that problem in the short term because if, indeed, the resources match up with the needs after a while, that is great, but what about right now?

MR. MACEACHERN: Well, let me quote, again, one of the people around the table. They say to me, there is no child that came to their attention that they did not take into care and provide care for. There has been no child who came to their attention that they did not protect or attempt to protect. The best test of that, and I didn't bring it with me here, is they are doing a report in Ontario about children in care - and this is not me I am speaking to, these are the people in the field who are doing this job - where we have many incidents of children in care, whether they be under the protection of the Children's Aid Societies who were hurt badly, some of them killed in Ontario. It is the most tragic case. God protect us, we haven't had that. So the people are doing the job, under great duress, but the job is getting done. Our job is to do the job better. If we come to a point that we have children who need protection who are not getting it, I can tell you, there will be the appropriate and the right amount of people there, I can tell you that. But I am not getting that message back. What I am getting back from staff is that in order to do this, this is exhausting. That is what they are telling us.

MR. MACLEOD: Well, the exhausting part on the staff's part is not even up for debate as far as I can tell because everybody who I have ever talked to who belongs and works in this field gives it 123 per cent all the time and they are very concerned about where they are going and what is happening.

MR. MACEACHERN: Agreed.

MR. MACLEOD: If we could move on a little bit. I guess still staying with the main estimates, Page 5.5, under Family and Children's Services, we look at Salaries and Benefits and we see a cut in that budget of \$2.5 million.

MR. MACEACHERN: There is a reason for that, too. Let me find this out now. We will check that for you. You proceed and we will get that for you.

MR. MACLEOD: Well, it begs a whole lot of questions. I have all kinds of questions but it depends on what your answer is.

MR. MACEACHERN: That is the institutions. We have it. That is the CTC, the res centre, not the res centre yet, but it is that group of people who are no longer in our employ. They are all there. That is the big thing. You can actually see that in the account as you look at the monies that go to the CTCs. It is down at the bottom of the detail. You can actually find it, where is that big number, there they are, the CTCs, Nova Scotia Youth Training

Centre, \$800,000; the Children's Training Centres, we went from \$2 million to \$1 million. You see it decline rapidly across the mix. That is what is happening.

MR. MACLEOD: But it was my understanding that most of the employees who were involved in these institutions . . .

MR. MACEACHERN: Had an early retirement, right.

MR. MACLEOD: . . . were replaced.

MR. MACEACHERN: Yes, but early retirement moved them out.

MR. MACLEOD: Early retirement was part of it but a lot of them were brought in, as I understand it, as case or intake workers?

MR. MACEACHERN: That is correct. But there were cleaners, for example, and some of them may be re-employed, for example, the Dartmouth facility, there are cleaners, there are cooks, there are a lot of other people and there are some people who didn't get work, but mainly it was the retirement that was significant and these people replaced them. For example, in the Halifax region when we had the amalgamation, most of the counsellors who were previously working at the Dartmouth CTC found jobs. So that has been part of it and some of them from Income Assistance transferred over. But there were decreases in this area because of that reason.

MR. MACLEOD: But the number of actual child care protection workers is the same or greater?

MR. MACEACHERN: Well, it is obviously 18 more. That is located under a separate item and the child protection workers are stored on those two lines that I gave you in terms of Children's Services - Field and Children's Aid Society Grants, and both of those you see have either stabilized or gone up. So the numbers of workers there are no less.

MR. MACLEOD: So there was no loss of jobs or positions?

MR. MACEACHERN: For people in child protection?

MR. MACLEOD: For people in child protection and Family and Children's Services caseworkers?

MR. MACEACHERN: That is right, in that area.

MR. MACLEOD: No loss of positions?

MR. MACEACHERN: An increase of 18 jobs, actually. There are 18 new positions.

MR. MACLEOD: Because of the second wave of the 'previous minister's announcement?

MR. MACEACHERN: That is exactly right.

MR. MACLEOD: What does your department contribute to the poor morale among the department employees that was noted in the last report of the Nova Scotia Association of Social Workers?

MR. MACEACHERN: Let me talk about morale, first of all, and I will talk about the Nova Scotia Association of Social Workers report second. First of all, I have travelled and sat down with many of the offices personally and I have asked them the question. They do have difficulties and part of it is they have two archaic systems. When I say that, one is the municipal system, one of them is the old family services system or the provincial system and sometimes they have missed the mark. So they are frustrated.

I can give you all kinds of examples of that, one from home, in which we had somebody who was on family benefits. She was a single mother whose husband had left her and she had lost her job. It was a very sad case but she was trained to become a home care worker and so she was getting a day a week, sometimes two days a week and sometimes she would work a week. One time she worked for a whole month and she was deemed then to be in the workforce, so of course she was taken off benefits, but when she didn't get any work the next month she took a long time to get back on. So there are all kinds of frustrations in the system to the workers, to the employees. There is a morale problem there because of that and we are working very hard, both with the employees out there and with both training, but we are also updating the system as we move toward a single tier to reinvent and come up with something that is more reasonable and sensible, I guess, would be right.

In terms of the Association of Social Workers, they did a story in which, I think, 40 people wrote in. What was reported and what I saw, there was a certain difference between them because - and we could talk about how scholarly it was. When somebody asked me about it, I say, yes, they are telling me the obvious. Some people are frustrated and they have written in to express their frustration. I accept that but it wasn't a sample or a demonstration of what is happening in the field. I have spoken to, I think, 500 employees. They had responses from 10. I would suggest that my sense of the frustration, although different in tone, both recognize that there is a frustration problem and I take some issue of the validity of how they have reported it and I have made that clear to them that I do have a problem with how they promote it. But we both recognize that there is a problem.

MR. MACLEOD: I take a little objection to your answer because I haven't talked to 500 social workers but I have probably talked to a couple of hundred and most of them have expressed to me that there is a real problem with morale.

MR. MACEACHERN: Yes, I agree.

MR. MACLEOD: Some of it is associated with the two different systems and the other thing that it is associated with is the fact that they are not encouraged to show initiative in their jobs.

MR. MACEACHERN: That is because the old system won't allow them.

MR. MACLEOD: In some parts of the old system they were allowed because when they worked for a municipal unit, they were encouraged to be innovative and come up with new and better ideas to make their dollars stretch. I guess I would have to ask what the department's plans are? We have a very capable workforce, as I understand it, and people want to do the best they can. We have a government that wants to get the most bang for their dollars and we have people who want to give you the most bang for the buck but they are not allowed to do it. Is there a plan somewhere around that is going to allow these people to actually do . . .

MR. MACEACHERN: Part of my discussion with the staff is precisely to do that. Part of the difficulty we had - and Eileen and I spoke about this last day - especially in metro and Cape Breton, is we are taking a whole lot of systems and bringing them together. Not only are we bringing previous staff together, in reference to your previous question on the CTC, some of those employees who had a completely different job are moving into the system. So what we are trying to do and it sometimes presents us some difficulties, we have to develop a system while at the same time - for example, in Cape Breton we are inventing a system, it is a pilot project in which staff themselves are inventing it. What they are doing, and I sat in on some of the discussions, when they consider what to do next with the people who come to see them, they sit down each day and they talk through the cases and present them to the other workers, the other employees who work with them, to get a reflection on it. So what they are doing is they are inventing the system as they proceed. So there is some caution to that, it takes some time to do some things in that system, but it is coming.

We are encouraging it. In fact, one of the main drives of our consideration of what comes next has to do with discussions with them and taking their observations back so that we have both a framework that protects the workers so they don't wander all over the place and get themselves in trouble, but also at the same time it has the flexibility to allow for differences. We are trying to invent that. For example, the old municipal system in Glace Bay was completely different from the municipal system in Sydney, absolutely different. So when you take the workers, then, and cross them over and put them side by side each other, we have to come to some common ground so that if you walk in and you are treated by this

worker and Robert walks in and is treated by another one, there has to be some kind of fair treatment.

So we are trying to find the common ground for that. So it has difficulties with it and I am not diminishing that, causing some problems, some uncertainty. It would be better if they had a blueprint. The blueprint is not there because they are inventing it but at the same time I think it is the best way to go, using their experience. We sit with them, we talk through it. I, myself, have met with the people in the Sydney office, the Glace Bay office, the North Sydney office, for example from your region, I have sat with them and we are moving towards that, we hope, by April of next year to have a system that is more responsive. But presently the legislation we are working under has two set up, one is the municipal system and the other is the provincial system. We are trying to find a common ground to work through that has the best elements of this and the best elements of this.

MR. MACLEOD: Okay, if that is the case, then the pilot project that was developed in Cape Breton was developed for two reasons: one, to implement the one-tier system in a municipal unit and, secondly, to help iron out the bugs in the system?

MR. MACEACHERN: That is why we did it.

MR. MACLEOD: That is why it was done, okay. Why then, before you had the bugs out of a system, would you push on to do it province-wide when you haven't got it working right in one spot? The history of this government with amalgamations, be it school boards or municipal units or whatever, has shown that there are some flaws in amalgamation and you had an opportunity in this case to make sure that there was a good working plan in place prior to rushing in. I guess the question is, why?

MR. MACEACHERN: Well, I am not rushing. I will give you an example. Let's take the opposite end of the province and take you to Digby. Down in Digby we have a very tragic arrangement and probably the poorest social assistance arrangement certainly in the province. Well, they are as bad as New Brunswick. New Brunswick has one very bad system. They are equally as bad. We cannot sit here until we get this perfect before we go and try to work this one out. We have learned much in Cape Breton, we have learned much in Halifax and we have learned much in Queens because it is giving us a rural picture which is very helpful to us. We believe we are ready and the municipalities, by the way, each of the municipalities, each of the mayors, want to be part of this planning. We think we are ready to move forward. We have this thing in place. Our legislation we hope to have in place in the fall. If not in the fall, we will have it in the spring so that we can move forward. We believe we are ready to do that but yes, there have been growing pains in Cape Breton. There have been growing pains here but now, when we step into Digby, we have people who can help us implement in Digby and we don't have to make those mistakes again.

It has been a learning experience because not only do you want to talk about an amalgamation, it had staff reconfiguration, let's call it, besides. We had all kinds of systems. For example, in our area some people would move from the county to Glace Bay to get better benefits. If, in fact, they didn't qualify then, they would end up moving to Sydney. So we had this arrangement that was tied to the best benefit for the best circumstance. We have evened that out, to a degree, so that if you live in Sydney or the county or Glace Bay, you would be treated equally well and that is coming along very well. That equity question is being addressed. We are not perfect yet but we are working toward being less imperfect.

MR. MACLEOD: Well, I would agree that we are not perfect yet.

MR. MACEACHERN: Well, I accept your apology for that.

MR. MACLEOD: In the supplement, Page 5.3, the department has increased the funding for family violence from \$27,700 to \$162,000.

MR. MACEACHERN: Yes, people have moved from Strategic Planning into the Family Violence Prevention. Again, it was tidying up the way people were assigned. The Family Violence Prevention program came out of the Strategic Planning side of our shop. As I said before, we have now funded it more, it is more free-standing now and so we have it under its own item and tidied up from before. Again you can check over to Strategic Planning where you will see that that item has gone down significantly, and this is part of the reason for it.

MR. MACLEOD: So this extra money that we see in this year's budget is completely related to staff and benefits?

MR. MACEACHERN: Yes, it has moved across. And a little operating money, too, because it would have come with them, travel and the other benefit side as well, tied to having more staff.

MR. MACLEOD: But everything that would be included to having an individual employed? There is a person who works in that area but there is no extra money?

MR. MACEACHERN: The program is a service program. For example, the value added is in the person that you have doing it. So they existed before, we have just reassigned them to this line in our budget. That is all. So the program is still there although we have expanded it and we are making money off it. You will see in the larger picture that money is coming across from other departments because they are providing service to Justice, principally, but I think they are also giving assistance to education and other areas as well as part of what we are doing.

MR. MACLEOD: How many people would be involved in this?

MR. MACEACHERN: There are two people.

MR. MACLEOD: Those two people are responsible for the entire province?

MR. MACEACHERN: The planning of it, yes. But they join in and they produce materials. They send materials out. That is what they do. They are the support staff.

MR. MACLEOD: They are the support staff, they are the initiators.

MR. MACEACHERN: By the way, even members of the House have spoken, I remember Eileen has spoken several times in the House about the effectiveness of this. This group is getting a great reputation across the province for the work that they are doing.

MR. MACLEOD: Page 5.4 of the supplement, under Field Offices, and I could be wrong but I understand that to be mostly an administrative component?

MR. MACEACHERN: Principally, yes, I accept that. Part of the problem is we are evolving from the region. For example, most of the staff here is because HRM has taken on the municipal staff. That is really why the increased cost.

MR. MACLEOD: That is the extra \$2 million?

MR. MACEACHERN: That is right, a big part of it, but also, for example, and you will see in our next year's estimate, we are actually going to transfer some Finance people to each of the regions so that not only will we build the budget here in the department with the regions, but afterwards they will have some flexibility to move money. For example, let's suppose the Children's Aid Society in Cape Breton, for whatever reason, had to take more children under care, the RA in the region, the regional administrator, could, in fact, take money from other pockets to provide for that emergency so they will need some financial people there as well. So we are giving more autonomy to the region so you can have more decision making in the regions. There is a small element of that but the biggest part of it is because of the HRM staff, as I have said before, has transferred over to us.

MR. MACLEOD: Page 5.6 in the main estimates, yes. There has been a cut overall in the expenditures, \$2.4 million?

MR. MACEACHERN: Yes, approximately. We have agreements working with both HRDC, the federal people from last year and for next year with ERA, EDT I think they call themselves now, so that we are developing something called the Bridging To Success Program. Based on what we learned last year, this allows us, with an investment from the economic development people, we are able to get approximately 1,500 we anticipate from social assistance back to work. That is the difference. We are anticipating that we will be as effective this year as last year. Have I got that right? Just checking.

MR. MACLEOD: Check with the boss.

MR. MACEACHERN: That is right. They know all these numbers and what they mean and they try to teach me and I am kind of a dumb learner so they have to watch me. That is what it is tied to and you can see the difference, by the way, actually, if you look at the supplement, you can see that we are moving away from the family benefits all by itself, we are moving to a combined family benefits income assistance mix so that we can be much more flexible. That has to do with the pilot we spoke to before. We have all of the RA's and their staff looking at opportunities in each of the regions now so that if somebody comes into the system who is job ready or close to job ready, we move them over to the income assistance side where they can have the job readiness supports, whether it be child care, for example, or whether it be training. So we move over to that side. So you will see that we are blending it but that is allowing us now to change all of our shops from maintenance shops, if you want to consider it, to support shops to help people towards work. The effectiveness is based on last year's program which was about 1,500 people that came off the system and moved into the workforce with supports. We estimate it will be about the same this year.

MR. MACLEOD: While you are talking about Bridging To Success, and I might have missed it in your explanation and I apologize for that up front, but what line item would show where the funding comes from?

MR. MACEACHERN: It is the same line item. It is tied to the income assistance payments. It is inside there.

MR. MACLEOD: It is inside there, as were the Compass Program payments?

MR. MACEACHERN: Yes. It is all part of our income assistance plan. Now the Income Assistance, last year, you will see it is a lower item. It is down lower from last year but we have taken that line out. We have taken the family benefits line out and we have merged it in with Income Assistance so that we could have a little bit more flexibility. So you see the family benefits line is gone. Last year it was \$238 million, now it is nothing but it hasn't disappeared, it has been folded in with the Income Assistance so, again, that we can have more flexibility. So it was in Income Assistance last year. It is still in the Income Assistance line but so is family benefits. You can see the difference in the number because if you take the \$238 million and you add the \$54 million, you don't end up with \$277 million, you end up with something more than that and that is where the difference in the budget is. That is estimating we will be as effective this year coming as we were last year.

MR. MACLEOD: Why is the Maintenance of Children, a line item under Family and Children's Services budget, being cut by \$1.6 million? That is on Page 5.5 of the supplementary.

MR. MACEACHERN: If you would, I would like you to look at three items there because I will talk about them all at the same time. There are three items that have to be looked at: Maintenance of Children, Apprehension Costs and Voluntary Care. They are all monies that are support monies that go to Children's Aid Societies so I will speak to that. First of all, the Children's Aid Society Grants, you will notice, have gone up to allow for the 18 new people, or half of the 18 new people, approximately. We travelled around the province and we talked to the Children's Aid Societies and asked them how we can improve what we are doing. They said, first of all, and you can actually see the number, the estimate from the previous year for Apprehension Costs was \$6.6 million but they spent \$9 million. So the forecast is \$2.5 million more.

We have a cost over on the apprehension side of \$8.5 million where we have kind of cut through the middle. Likewise, they told us that if we had more early intervention, if we had more supports for foster homes, more supports for adoption and more front-end services, then we could save apprehension costs. The apprehension cost is tied almost entirely about the number I told you before about taking more children into care. So they said if they would be allowed to step in earlier, so we said, we will partner with you on that, then they believe that the apprehension costs and the maintenance costs will go down. So what we have said is that we will work with them to add more discretion at the front end and more supports at the front end. We believe, because the apprehension cost is because we are getting more children and that is legal fees and court fees mainly and assessment costs, we will help them with finding out how to better provide assessment services or second opinions. That cost them, they told me, something in the order of \$2,000. For example, if you came into care, we do an assessment but then when you go to court, they ask for a second assessment. If we can find a better way to do that, we don't have to pay private assessors, we can get somebody in our system to do it and the money, then, can be used for child protection.

So we have set these targets off to the side and that is exactly what they are because if we are right and we can do this, then we can meet those numbers. But as I said to the group, in fact I was speaking to somebody today, there will be no child, and there never has been a child who needs to be taken into care who won't be taken into care because there is no money. But those are the targets that we set. We think we can meet them, my staff thinks we can meet them but we are going to work all year, side by side with the Children's Aid Societies, that if, in fact, we are mistaken, then there is nobody at a loss for it. So it is an educated guess from the early intervention side. If you have fewer coming into care, the cost is less and if there are fewer coming into care, the apprehension costs obviously will be less.

In other areas, of course, in terms of how we deal on the front end with adoption, with foster parenting and we have, for example, an arrangement that we are working out right now with the Foster Parents' Association, how we put pre-service and in-service support for foster parents, respite care, so that they can get a rest as well because so many have very difficult cases. So we are working our way through that side of it and we are guessing that that is what it is going to be. Our best estimate is that is the numbers. They are usually better numbers

than were estimated from the year before but as you see, if we need more apprehension, it will be provided.

MR. MACLEOD: The statement you made that there will be no child who needs services . . .

MR. MACEACHERN: That we know that are there, then we will take care of them.

MR. MACLEOD: That is the way it should be.

MR. MACEACHERN: That is a guarantee.

MR. MACLEOD: Has that opinion been expressed downward in the system so that the people at the front end who are working under the guidelines and the constraints, are they aware that that is the feeling?

MR. MACEACHERN: Let me say to you yes and no because I think that is the best answer I can give you. Historically, and I go back to what I said before, the day-to-day relationship between the Children's Aid Societies and the department hasn't been there. We are starting to develop it. I met, as I said, five Children's Aid Societies personally, sitting in a room like this, and I expressed it to them. I don't know if they believed it, but I tell you I expressed it to them and that was our discussion. I met with the presidents and the executive directors in one room and I told them that. After our staff talked about these numbers with them on Monday, they came back to me and said there is still some uncertainty, so I have had my deputy set up a meeting for May 9th to talk to them again about it and I am going to state, as I have stated to you right now, that I can assure you that at any time if, in fact, the resources have not been defined to do it, go ahead and do it anyway because we will back you because we will be there to do that.

MR. MACLEOD: Now, will you back them with actual dollars?

MR. MACEACHERN: Yes, we will make sure that the bills are paid.

MR. MACLEOD: You will make sure the bills are paid and that is admirable. That is the way it should be, but will they be penalized in some other area of their budget?

MR. MACEACHERN: No, you can see it from last year. In fact, we have actually done that. The three areas they work, the Maintenance of Children, Apprehension Costs, Voluntary Care are all up and they were all paid for because, again, you have no choice. If you have a child in care, you have to maintain the child. If you have a child, because the parent and child can't live together, who volunteers to move into a group home, we support them because you can't not support them. It is that simple. It is our hope that working with them, side by side, that these targets can be met.

MR. MACLEOD: So the short answer is yes, you will look after the children; no, they won't be penalized in another part of their budget?

MR. MACEACHERN: Exactly. But we are going to be working with them carefully. Let me tell the cost of what we have done and we have looked at all of the budgets and I, personally, have done some of it. We have looked at all of the budgets of the Children's Aid Societies. Some are very efficient. Some of them are not so efficient. So our staff have started already sitting down with their budget people talking how they can do better budgeting, how they can do better assignment of their resources, because some of them are not as efficient as others. We are not scolding them or anything, we sit with them because every one of them knows that if they rescue \$1.00 from over here, it is useful to them. They have been very positive. It is developing very well and our staff are getting a much better look, like our financial people, inside with them. So when we are doing this, we get a better understanding of what is happening at the micro level; besides, we do this stuff from this end.

MR. MACLEOD: I truly believe that the people who are involved in the system are not the problem, they are the answer and they are the solution and they are the ones who are going to help make the difference in the long run.

MR. MACEACHERN: We agree again.

MR. MACLEOD: The Children's Training Centre in Sydney, it is scheduled for closure later on this year.

MR. MACEACHERN: Yes, that is right.

MR. MACLEOD: The exact date is June?

[3:00 p.m.]

MR. MACEACHERN: That was our targeted date but right now, as you know, the unit has a medical unit. I think there are six or eight young people in there, seven, it is of that order. These have extreme needs. These are extreme. I visited there and it would just break your heart but we have to build, because you have that great big building containing this unit, we have to replicate that unit and the plan is to replicate it in a small residential unit near the hospital. That unit is housed by hospital staff from the regional hospital so we want it near the hospital because these have high medical intervention needs. So when we get that built, that is when we will close it down.

MR. MACLEOD: This unit that you are talking about will be built by Community Services or built by you?

MR. MACEACHERN: Yes, it is ours.

MR. MACLEOD: It will be owned by you?

MR. MACEACHERN: Well, that hasn't been finally decided. There may be an agency involved doing it but it is under our care.

MR. MACLEOD: It will not be private.

MR. MACEACHERN: I can't imagine it would be. I would be surprised because this is heavy care. It is hospital staff doing it. When I say that, we use, presently, in the Children's Training Centre, hospital staff, we second them basically from the hospital and that will continue. We are happy about that, by the way, because the staff there, this is very personal. By the way, it might be helpful for you to know that Frank Capstick and his staff are looking for an alternative use for that facility. It still rests with us. It hasn't been declared surplus and they are looking for how that can be used for some of the youth services that are being provided in Cape Breton. Who is looking at it is that eastern project which involves Health, Education, Community Services and Justice and they are trying to find an alternative use. I would be very happy with that because again it provides employment for some of the cleaners and some of the other people who presently work there.

MR. MACLEOD: Mr. Chairman, I think I am close to my time. I have another line of questioning I want to get at so I don't want to start and then stop so maybe I could . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: The member has about five minutes.

MR. MACLEOD: It is not enough.

MR. CHAIRMAN: As long as you know you are entitled to that.

MR. MACLEOD: I will stop now and pass on to my colleague.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The honourable member for Halifax Fairview.

MS. EILEEN O'CONNELL: Mr. Chairman, once again, if I ask something that has been asked, and I know I heard a few things repeated today and you seem to be quite willing to do that and I am glad.

MR. MACEACHERN: I have already tested that answer so I am okay.

MS. O'CONNELL: I wanted to go back to something that I asked you the other day and check to see if I remember what you said correctly because if I do, I have another question. Remember we were talking about the secure facility? Is that the one under Nova Scotia Residential Centre?

MR. MACEACHERN: That is the building.

MS. O'CONNELL: Okay, so it was in operation all last year?

MR. MACEACHERN: Yes.

MS. O'CONNELL: Is that \$3.332 million its operating costs last year?

MR. MACEACHERN: Yes.

MS. O'CONNELL: Okay, and they are less this year and I think you said, correct me if I am wrong . . .

MR. MACEACHERN: That is because we are moving out of usage. Here is what is going to happen. By June, we will have moved the 10 or 11 young people to other facilities. Between June and December, actually probably a little longer, we are going to renovate the building as a secure treatment unit. That involves locks on the doors, for example, that requires very particular clinical changes. Starting in September, we are going to start hiring the program people, start building up toward April 1st. On April 1, 1998, we hope to have that fully engaged and by that time, its budget will be about \$3 million again. That will require, and this is very important, this will require us adding over \$2 million to the Community Services budget. I have taken this to Cabinet and that has been approved for next year, not this year's budget, for next year. So what happens, if you consider that \$3.3 million, that is still in our budget for next year but the majority of that, over \$2 million of it, will flow back to the four regions and we need to add \$2 million because we have 10 young people out of province right now and that costs us \$1 million per year. We will bring those home so that \$1 million becomes part of the operational budget of the res centre.

MS. O'CONNELL: So the \$2.305 million that is there now is for the renovations, is that what you said to me?

MR. MACEACHERN: Renovations, the rebuilding of the programming because we will have to start hiring program staff in September. That is the plan and we have to wind down current staff too because some of them have severances, some of them have other contract conditions that have to be met.

MS. O'CONNELL: So, in fact, what you are saying, and this is what dawned on me after I left here the other day, is that this will not be in full operation for another full year?

MR. MACEACHERN: This year it won't be. Next April 1st, in full operation, yes. It is very difficult, as I said to you last day, there are two models of this in the country, one in Alberta and one in Ontario. We have rejected both of those models. We are trying to develop, under Jane Fitzgerald and the Izaak Walton Killam Hospital, a therapeutic model of

secure treatment. The goal is the therapy, it is secure but to get to the therapy. Many of the others, security is the key and they give therapy besides. So our focus is toward a medical model and we can't find any precise model to copy from so we are going to have to invent it. We have done work already but from September to April we will be actually doing modelling. During that period of time, we probably will start taking one or two or three young people back to the province to test precisely what it is we are doing under the professional staff we have there, but I cannot give you the detail of that because that would depend very much on the advice of the professional people doing it.

MS. O'CONNELL: But nonetheless, it won't be full functioning until a year from now.

MR. MACEACHERN: From this April, yes. Approximately a year from now, full functioning. That will be somewhere between 15 to 20 young people there. That is the goal but also we believe it will have an outpatient facility as well, both for training of staff and also for providing a diagnosis, prescriptive advice for other young people who are in the regions.

MS. O'CONNELL: I had meant to ask you the other day and I don't think I did, about the Diabetic Assistance Program. My recollection is that is a grandfathered program?

MR. MACEACHERN: Yes, it is.

MS. O'CONNELL: Because it stopped a couple of years ago, right?

MR. MACEACHERN: It has been grandfathered out.

MS. O'CONNELL: I guess I would just like to say from my less than a year's experience, that this is a program that the people are in desperate need of and express my regret that there is no way that new clients can be taken into this program because, as you well know, it can be very expensive to have certain medical needs and diabetics have expensive needs. I don't know whether I am making a plea in this particular context but I guess what I could ask, is has there been any discussion about renewing that program, particularly with the restructuring that is going on, will there be any way the diabetics can get the support that they need through either a restructured program or through a revived Diabetic Assistance Program?

MR. MACEACHERN: I will speak to diabetics from my experience from home, and as I said, I am looking at the numbers in the book, it is still \$170,000. We have two young people at home, one of them who is very athletic and he was aware of his diabetic situation. He played hockey, he actually was an excellent hockey player who had a look from a professional team. He came to Dal, he is in the medical profession now. He applied for diabetic assistance and received it despite the fact that there was absolutely no disability. I don't know how they tested it in those days but because he had diabetes, he qualified.

There was another person who had diabetes and it was a problem for them. It was a severe problem, it was debilitating. The other fellow, there was no debilitation. I would suggest that if there is somebody for whom diabetes is a debilitating experience, they would qualify under the Voc Rehab which would probably be more supportive than this program would be from my numbers. That would be my guess from it. At the time, I remember the two qualifying. It was a puzzle to me. Just because you medically were diagnosed with having it, despite the fact you had no symptoms whatsoever, you would qualify for that, but I would suggest that somebody who has a debilitating problem because of it would be covered by voc rehab. I would be willing to bet money on that, a quarter or something.

MS. O'CONNELL: Let's go back a step because we are talking, aren't we, diabetic assistance for people who are on assistance?

MR. MACEACHERN: Not necessarily.

MS. O'CONNELL: We are not?

MR. MACEACHERN: No, they went to college for example, same as Pharmacare, yes.

MS. O'CONNELL: Okay, so this is for people who are not on assistance?

MR. MACEACHERN: That is right and that is why it was a very odd program, actually. Students who were very well off, like the athlete I spoke of, his parents were very well placed but he qualified. I just share that as an example.

MS. O'CONNELL: So tell me about how they would qualify under the rehab?

MR. MACEACHERN: Well, if they have diabetes and if it is debilitating, like if you, for example, applied to go to be educated and you are gauged to be under the voc rehab, then this assists you. Then, in fact, money comes through either our shop or Education, one or the other, or it comes from us through Education to support you in university. Over at St. Mary's University, for example, they have both their aids clinics for people with disabilities, but we fund many people who have disabilities to go to university.

The case that you probably remember the best was the person from Truro who was on our voc rehab program but she couldn't get a place in Halifax where she could stay but that was through our program. I can give you details on the voc rehab if that would be helpful to you.

MS. O'CONNELL: Sure, I would love that, thanks, but my question is still, then, if you are poor and we acknowledge there are . . .

MR. MACEACHERN: Then Pharmacare would cover that.

MS. O'CONNELL: Well, not if you are working poor.

MR. MACEACHERN: Oh, there is a whole problem here. Even if you were the working poor and you had diabetes, this wouldn't go to you. This is tied for a very particular reason.

MS. O'CONNELL: Who did it go to then?

MR. MACEACHERN: These two people qualified because they were studying but we will get the detail for you. I don't have it all. They are the only two cases I know so I shared them with you but I will give you the detail of the case and when we are here next time, we will talk through that. I only gave you the only two cases I know but I will give this to you.

MS. O'CONNELL: Can you give me, apart from the two cases you mentioned . . .

MR. MACEACHERN: That is all I have. I don't know anything else. The forecast is up, by the way, because the cost of drugs has increased, if that is any help at all. But I will get you the detail of that, Eileen, because I have shared with you all I know.

MS. O'CONNELL: I don't understand because I thought its original parameters were for poor people who could not afford the extra expense.

MR. MACEACHERN: Well, let me suggest to you that the young fellow I am referring to was not a poor fellow and he did qualify and it was tied to his study and they are the only two cases I know of, and they were both tied to study, but I will get you the very particulars for it.

MS. O'CONNELL: I am quite puzzled about that because it seems to me that if the problem before was that people who really didn't need the assistance were getting it, couldn't we restructure a program so that those who really need it get it and those who don't need it don't get it?

MR. MACEACHERN: That is part of our thinking, Eileen, as we are looking toward this child benefit and restructuring. We want, eventually, our goal to be that the Department of Community Services work for poor people whether they work or don't work, and to give them the supports they need to either keep them working or move them towards work or towards independence. That is what our goal is. So I share with you your concern with it but I can't speak to the particular program because I don't know what its parameters were.

MS. O'CONNELL: I am going to start picking through this pile of stuff I have here and sort of going back and forth. I am sure you saw the press release put out on the 29th .

MR. MACEACHERN: No.

MS. O'CONNELL: . . . from the Presidents of Family and Children's Service agencies. Have you not seen this?

MR. MACEACHERN: No.

MS. O'CONNELL: It is signed by Allison Scott-Butler . . .

MR. MACEACHERN: Oh, yes, I did. Let me see it.

MS. O'CONNELL: . . . who is the Chairman of the Presidents of Family and Children's Services.

MR. MACEACHERN: Oh, yes, we just spoke to this. I will speak to this again, yes. I haven't seen the press release but she sent me a letter which I will share with you.

MS. O'CONNELL: No, I think I have seen it, actually.

MR. MACEACHERN: You have seen the letter, okay.

MS. O'CONNELL: I guess what I was trying to do was to deal with these numbers that she has here.

MR. MACEACHERN: Well, if you could, I will find them in the book there on Page 5.5.

MS. O'CONNELL: Well, I was listening when . . .

MR. MACEACHERN: Okay, that is the same story.

MS. O'CONNELL: Alfie was talking about the three programs and you identified Maintenance of Children, Apprehension Costs and Voluntary Care.

MR. MACEACHERN: Those are the three.

MS. O'CONNELL: When you add those up, now I don't have my calculator here and my math is infamous, but I think it comes to - the total is 87 per cent of last year's total grant for those three.

MR. MACEACHERN: Something like that, yes.

MS. O'CONNELL: So there is a 12 per cent or 13 per cent decline?

MR. MACEACHERN: Well, that is of the actuals but if you look back at the estimate from the previous year, because my understanding is this was an unusual year, you will notice that, for example, the Maintenance of Children, the previous estimate was \$9.5 million. The new estimate this year is \$9.679 million. Apprehension Costs, the previous estimate was \$6.6 million, this year it is \$8.5 million, the estimate from the year before was \$3.3 million. Voluntary Care, it is down by \$400,000. So from the estimate, yes.

The actuals, and there are some funny things that happened and I will share this and let me repeat again, it comes not from sitting in Halifax and thinking this stuff up but sitting and talking to them. I asked the Children's Aid Societies, that is individual Children's Aid Societies, and collectively what it is they needed. They told me the following things. I even have a paper from my discussions there stored some place but I think I can remember most of it. They told me most of all, they need more flexibility between the three programs because sometimes they have all kinds of money on the maintenance side but they don't have apprehension costs. So we have provided them, and in fact the discussion said, well, let's allow for more flexibility, likewise, allow their grants to be used more flexibly, too, and our staff are talking to them about that.

The second thing they said, and we did some serious work on this, they said we believe that apprehension costs are too high for two reasons, that is assuming the same number of children come into care. First of all it is because the lawyers' costs are too high because too much of it goes directly to the lawyers and there is not enough mediation. Secondly, that the courts require second assessments and the reason they require second assessments is they don't trust the social workers who are at Children's Aid. So they have asked me, and our staff is working on this, to get the Family Courts to start recognizing or qualifying particular people in the Children's Aid Societies as acceptable. Okay, so those are two things.

The maintenance of children, they asked about how, in fact, they exercise that money and we told them that was something we could talk to them about but apprehension cost is the big difference and a big cost increase as you look at it.

The other thing they said to us is part of the difficulties, and this goes back to 1991, the Act was changed in 1990 and after 1991 there was a severe increase in apprehension. So I asked not only my staff, I asked them as to why this was so and it had to do with the way the Act is written, that it is less intrusive, and as a result it moves much discretion away from the social workers and stops them from early intervention. So I told them I would sit with them - not only me but my staff - and find better ways of doing some early intervention.

We have started those discussions and we have said to them, these are our targets because we are going to be sitting with them side by side in partnership with them. They asked one other thing, too, by the way. Because of liability, they are paying a lot of money for liability costs, and some insurance companies not only are charging a lot of money, but won't allow them to be insured. So we are looking on how to cover the liability cost which is very expensive, but we will provide them from assistance.

So we have set these targets. We think these are doable if we can get more early intervention because fewer children will come into care. If fewer children come into care, it is obvious that maintenance of children will go down, apprehension costs will go down and if we get mediation at the front end, fewer people will have to leave their families. So that is our best professional guess of what targets are doable.

I can assure you, as I did with both Alfie and the Children's Aid Societies that I met, that there will be no child ever who comes under the care of the Children's Aid Society that needs services, that those services will not be provided because of cost, but we believe those targets are doable if we do the other end better. So we are working at that. In fact, I have a meeting scheduled with the executive directors and the presidents of the Children's Aid Societies across the province, I think for May 9th, and my staff has a meeting set up with the executive directors on May 15th to start working out new approaches.

The letter from Ms. Scott that came to me yesterday said directly that they want to meet with me because, first of all, they thanked me for making sure that their grants had been maintained. That was very important for them but they said doing business the way they used to do business, these numbers are a problem so they want to sit down and invent new ways of doing business. I had contacted, even before the letter came in, I had directed my deputy, after the Monday meeting, to set up a meeting with them so we can start talking our way through this.

MS. O'CONNELL: But this came out two days ago. Did you talk to her before this came out?

MR. MACEACHERN: Our staff met Monday with them, that is Monday past. Today is Thursday.

MS. O'CONNELL: So this release would have come out after that meeting . . .

MR. MACEACHERN: That is right.

MS. O'CONNELL: . . . which suggests to me that maybe they are not yet satisfied.

MR. MACEACHERN: That is why I am having the meeting on May 9th. My staff came back from the meeting on Monday and they talked about some of the concerns that were there so I told the deputy to set up a meeting. That meeting was being set up when I received a letter from Ms. Scott, and this is the first time I have seen the press release, but the letter says we have to sit down and talk because they are concerned with liability, as I gave to you. They are still concerned with liability and they are concerned with the ability, if the apprehension and maintenance numbers are the same, then they have difficulties. So they said let's work out a way, in fact, that you can address that. I am more than pleased to do it because it is part of what we told them we would do several months ago.

MS. O'CONNELL: Okay, thank you. I just wanted to note, before I leave it, what they did say, though. I understand what you are saying but I think it might be valuable to have it on the record. While office operating budgets have been maintained, workers cannot provide needed services to the most vulnerable children with the funds currently budgeted and I do hear your response.

MR. MACEACHERN: In the way that they have it, yes.

MS. O'CONNELL: I did hear your response. Have you considered a block form of funding?

MR. MACEACHERN: We have done that. In fact, our proposal at the beginning was that we give them a block. They originally accepted that as a given but then they had a caution so they said, well, let's go through it slowly so I said, fine, we will do it slowly. So we have maintained the line so they would have a framework but we said that if you need to move in and out, just record that you have moved in and out and we are happy to work with you on that. We were willing to go toward more of a block funding but the last information I had, there was a little hesitancy so we said, well, let's keep moving in the direction we are and with a target of moving towards more global funding and trusting the professionals in the field to use the money in the best way possible. So we share that goal with them but, again, these are targets for us. We think they are doable. If they are not doable, as I said, I can repeat again that, first of all, we are not going to leave a kid who is at risk without taking him into care. Once we take him into care, we will care for him and I can assure you of that.

MS. O'CONNELL: Is there an issue in this around Community Services paying for things that should come out of other budgets, for example, a court-ordered psychological assessment?

MR. MACEACHERN: Yes, that was one of the issues that was raised and part of the court order. The problem we have is that they order the assessment but it has to come from someplace else. We don't mind providing - nor do the Children's Aid Societies, according to what they told me - or getting a second opinion, but what is costing is that the money comes

out of the Children's Aid apprehension money for this second opinion which is simply a review of the previous opinion. So we have to find a way by that. It is very expensive.

MS. O'CONNELL: Who is doing both of them? Let's take a psychological assessment because that is the only . . .

MR. MACEACHERN: Usually by a private sector person is the second one.

MS. O'CONNELL: Okay, and the first one is?

MR. MACEACHERN: It is by a Children's Aid Society.

MS. O'CONNELL: A Children's Aid psychologist?

MR. MACEACHERN: A psychologist or a social worker, depending on the level of difficulty.

MS. O'CONNELL: So that first assessment, the cost would be absorbed by the agency.

MR. MACEACHERN: That is right. They don't mind that because it is their staff.

MS. O'CONNELL: The second one would then be . . .

MR. MACEACHERN: It would come out of that apprehension money and they have to pay for it too and they have to pay for lawyers. It is a real problem.

MS. O'CONNELL: Is there no way to move those over to Health?

MR. MACEACHERN: Well, I would much rather if I could because Health won't solve it if it is an unreasonable expenses. One of my staff members, which I mentioned before, Ms. Fowler, she is a mediation person. She is a lawyer and her speciality is mediation. She did some quick analysis throughout the province. There were about 6,800 apprehension cases, approximately 48 of them were mediated. I am reaching for the number because she reported to me it is of that order. We have to get better at that. So one of the things we have done, as part of a project, Ms. Fowler is putting together a research team to look at, first of all, what is the research out there, what is the evidence from the studies that have been done? Secondly, how do you train people to get better into mediation within the agencies and number three, how do we set benchmarks and work through it? That is very important because that money is not going to the protection of children, it is going to something else and we want to rescue that so it goes toward the protection of children.

MS. O'CONNELL: Just one more question on this, I think. As I said, that letter is two days old. You got a letter.

MR. MACEACHERN: I got it yesterday.

MS. O'CONNELL: You got it yesterday, okay. So you haven't replied yet?

MR. MACEACHERN: Yes, I did. I had replied before the letter came. They are asking for a meeting with me so I had already contacted them and told them I would have a meeting with them before the letter came asking for a meeting. It came from the report from the staff.

By the way, I want to say to you in almost deference to the letter of Ms. Scott, I understand their apprehension. They are very concerned about liability in a big way. These are volunteer boards and they are doing a great job and they are worried. They are worried because of the operation historically and they have always been left away from the Department of Community Services and the Department of Community Services sometimes is not there with them when they need them and I have committed and I said at all of the meetings that I had, you can check my record from my previous history, at the end of the day I will be side by side them when and if they need me, I can tell you that.

We want to work through and do what we do better. We want to make sure there is never a report about children in Nova Scotia that indicates that they are not being protected. We are committed to that. In fact, in everything that we have written, our number one priority of the Department of Community Services is the protection of children and others who need protection for whatever reason. So that commitment is there but I can see where the numbers would scare them if we are going to abandon them. I can see that but I am leaving with them on May 9th to tell them I am not abandoning them. In fact, I am sitting in the boat with them and I am going to be rowing and pumping, just like they are.

MS. O'CONNELL: You might not want to make them wait eight days.

MR. MACEACHERN: No, it is as quick as we could have a meeting because they weren't available. By the way, they have money. They are not worried. Even in their worst case scenario they said some of them will have difficulty by December so we have lots of time to get to it. So they do have money to operate.

MS. O'CONNELL: I want to talk for a couple of minutes about the Too Good To Lose report. I know that the secure treatment facility is a kind of cornerstone of that and it has been dealt with but my first reaction when I went to that news conference was there is an awful lot in here and you can pick out one thing that you can put a fence around and say we can do that. You know you can take a project and you can do it but to me, as significant, or more significant, are the recommendations around reorganization. So just my initial question,

when I read this statement in the supplementary expenditures was how much is it going to cost and where is it going to come from - not that I am against it. So I tried to go through this report and flag places that would take money. I guess I could just ask a general question, do you have any sense? I know that a lot of this is reorganization. You move staff, you move money, you set up committees. You cuddle up to other departments and talk to them in kind of . . .

MR. MACEACHERN: We don't say it that way.

MS. O'CONNELL: . . . revised processes and exchange information and all that but it is my experience that when you do that, that takes money, even though your staff is already there and so on, you need planners, you need - I don't know if there is such a word - an implementer, but you know what I mean. You might even need a team of people who are taken from other work and we have experienced that in the schools where instead of getting a team of people together and getting them from other work, you just pile it on until you are stacked to your eyeballs. So is there a designated pot of money for the very real costs that are mentioned here several times, they are acknowledged here, and are very real if this is ever going to work? This is the kind of thing, you know, when people start chintzing on it, it gets half a quarter done and then you are no further ahead.

[3:30 p.m.]

MR. MACEACHERN: If I could, we have to plan. The most difficult piece was the secure treatment. First of all, finding a place and getting it in the plan. That is very important to us. That is the most difficult piece because even conceptually, it is very difficult. What we are missing, and if you take the spectrum from in-family support all the way to secure treatment, there is a whole spectrum there. It includes, and I may not have it all but I will try my best, we have foster parenting at the normal level; we have adoption; we have what they call therapeutic foster parents; and we also have not secure treatment but we have therapeutic treatment. The Izaak Walton Killam Hospital does a lot of it, for example, and, in fact, we have some young people up there now, I think six or eight, up at the Izaak Walton Killam Hospital but that is secure treatment. It is treatment because people know they have difficulties. So if you do the whole spectrum, we are very weak in the in-family, foster and adoption parts. We acknowledge that at the front side.

As I said before when we were talking about those numbers, the Children's Aid Societies, in my discussions with them, felt for a long time they weren't allowed in those areas and that is why I said about partnership with us and them. The solution at that level has got to be with the Department of Community Services in the local offices and the regional offices working hand in glove with the Children's Aid Societies in the regions. That is not expensive because not doing that is very expensive, as we have said. We believe, by the way, we can reallocate resources to do those kinds of things.

So, therapeutic treatment, if you want to see the number, it goes back to your previous question relative to the residential centre. We are going to bring \$1 million that we have been sending out of province back. We are going to add about \$2 million that was going to be in our budget next year new, that \$2 million is brand new dollars, and that \$3 million is going to run the residential centre. The \$3.3 million that presently runs the Nova Scotia Residential Centre is new money for the regions. Now some of it will be lost in the short term because of the transition but that money will be the money that is going to be reallocated to the regions for the kinds of things like therapeutic treatment, therapeutic foster parenting, the training and the support of that side. Already the four regions are planning on how that will be distributed, how they will work separately and how they will work distinctly.

I mentioned to Alfie, for example, a while ago that at the Children's Training Centre in Sydney, that Justice, Education, Community Services and Health are looking at how that facility can be part of that therapeutic treatment in that region, just to give you an example. So planning is taking place. So we have, clearly, something of the order of \$3 million new money that now is going to be reallocated to that function. So that money by itself is there and, as you said, as you travel through, there is little bits and pieces.

An example, family violence prevention and our most advanced model of this is in industrial Cape Breton where we have what we call the Eastern Project which is reflected province-wide by something we call CAYAC, which is Children and Youth Action Committee, which takes Education, Justice, Health and Community Services who work together to do very particular things. Oftentimes, it is not a lot of money if you work together.

The best example of that that I know of right off the top of my head because I was at the opening of it, was the program that they have down in Cape Breton that happened almost by accident. I say that because of the meeting of these four departments. Justice and Community Services were talking about spousal abuse and the police were lamenting at the fact that, well, they go in and they take the abuser away but within a day the wife calls back and drops the charges, brings him back home because she feels better when he is home than when he is away for many psychological reasons. So they put their heads together, they called in the transition house people and they sat down and they developed a training program for support people. These are volunteers. There are 26 of them and what happens, when the police come in and remove the abuser, this person stays. That gets by the loneliness, it gets by the fear and it gets by those other things to give the abused person a chance to go by that. That is the kind of thing that is happening all over the province and our Children and Youth Action Committee has synergy. The synergies that are coming from that are substantial. So it is not just a single item, it is a whole attitude of the department and the agencies looking at early intervention, looking at supports there.

We have also talked to other kinds of community groups, one of them that I speak of with much pride is the group from the Citizens Service League from Glace Bay which is a church organization that basically now works with our department to do particular things. They do child care and other kinds of things but anyway, there are many things that can be done. We have some monies and as we move forward we believe that as we become more effective, we are going to save poorly spent money and reallocate it to better spent money.

MS. O'CONNELL: I guess what I am saying, though, is that it often costs money to save money initially.

MR. MACEACHERN: Agreed. That is why we have this \$2 million.

MS. O'CONNELL: And where is it in the budget?

MR. MACEACHERN: Well, let me get back. The Nova Scotia Residential Centre, that is the best money that you can look at. It is easy to see. Let me repeat that when it goes into operation fully next year, the 10 people who are out of province will return home and we will spend \$1 million there and that will be part of the budgeting for the new secure treatment facility. We will require \$2 million new money from Cabinet and we have approval for that. That is part of the planning for next year's budget for that residential centre. So that is going to have its budget restored but none of it in our present budget.

MS. O'CONNELL: Right, I am interested in the rest of it, though . . .

MR. MACEACHERN: Let's go back now.

MS. O'CONNELL: . . . because we have established that that money is there.

MR. MACEACHERN: Let's look now at the Nova Scotia Residential Centre at the bottom. It does have a budget now, let's say the minimum of \$2.3 million that is still in the budget. That money will still be in the budget even though it is not being allocated for the new secure treatment facility, that money is to be distributed among the four regions to do the very things that we are talking about.

MS. O'CONNELL: I thought that money was for renovations.

MR. MACEACHERN: That is for this year but it stays in the budget next year and the renovations will be done.

MS. O'CONNELL: So there will be another line next year that says something like interdepartmental cooperation?

MR. MACEACHERN: Yes, it will fold up into the Children's Aid Societies. If you go up to the top, it will go into the items that you are talking about up top. It will go into prevention services, it will go into the regions because that line will disappear. We will have a brand new line next year which will read Nova Scotia Secure Treatment Facility or something of that nature, which will have a budget of about \$3 million. It will be a new item but that money, if you look at the bottom, will be added to that and you will have - let's guess here, if everything else stays the same - instead of \$88.706 million, you will have \$91,706 million or something of that order, or actually \$91 million.

MS. O'CONNELL: I hate to sound dumb and I hate even worse to be dumb, but in that line that now says residential centre, you can or cannot take some money from that for the other . . .

MR. MACEACHERN: All of that will go to that. That is what it is for.

MS. O'CONNELL: For all aspects of it, not just . . .

MR. MACEACHERN: Yes, that is right. Like you take that \$2.305 million, for example, it is sitting there. This year it will look after the staff changeover, it will look after the new programming people coming in, it will do that for this year. But the next year, that money is not needed for that because we will have the other source of money and that money stays in our budget and that money is to be used in a plan and we presented this plan to Cabinet for approval. It was approved. That money flows into the regions and presently the regions are planning on how to use that money next year.

MS. O'CONNELL: Is it possible to get a breakout on that line for this year?

MR. MACEACHERN: Well, we could attempt to break it out because we can give you the cost of renovations. It is about \$300,000 for renovations. We can give you the EDIP costs, we can give you the other costs out of that, we can do that.

MS. O'CONNELL: And this will show up?

MR. MACEACHERN: No, we can't show that up until next year because this money this year is doing what I told you it was doing.

MS. O'CONNELL: Yes, but I was talking about all the other things in Too Good To Lose.

MR. MACEACHERN: That will be in next year's budget.

MS. O'CONNELL: So the rest of it is not going to happen this year?

MR. MACEACHERN: Well, we are doing parts of it. Let me repeat what I am saying. This year we are already doing the in-family supports, we are starting that, the foster home supports, we are starting that but that is coming out of our present budget. I wanted to show you an additional new money that would allow us, most particularly, to do - just below secure treatment there is therapeutic foster homes, therapeutic treatment. That is what that money will essentially go toward and we don't have that in our system now but that is our goal there. But the other things can be done by just reallocation. I gave you some examples. If, in fact, we can do some more mediation in the families, we will have less need for voluntary care money. If we can do - poor English I know - more better interventions at the foster/adoptive level, we will need less apprehension costs.

MS. O'CONNELL: One provincial province has a Department of the Child. Is it British Columbia or Manitoba?

MR. MACEACHERN: British Columbia.

MS. O'CONNELL: And I believe Manitoba and Saskatchewan both have major initiatives that don't actually meld departments but they have cross departments.

MR. MACEACHERN: They are virtual.

MS. O'CONNELL: When I read this I thought it was going to address itself more, not that it wasn't going to address what it did, but that in addition, and there is a hint of it, I don't see that there would be a lot more cross department stuff.

MR. MACEACHERN: That is stored in the initiative that we are experimenting in Cape Breton called the Eastern Project, but formally in the department is called CAYAC.

MS. O'CONNELL: Yes, I saw that, but is that going to expand?

MR. MACEACHERN: Yes, this is expanding while we sit here. What we are doing involves Health, Education, Community Services and Justice. It started with discussions and now it is working on initiatives. Those initiatives very much tie together to develop protocols and I will give you an example of this, that the schools will be able to refer learning disabilities not through the family doctor but directly to the pediatricians, for example. That is one of things that we are talking about.

A group actively involved in Cape Breton for pediatricians came to see me and they expressed a concern from the other side which was very interesting because then I attached them to the discussions in CAYAC and there is a meeting being set up in May where we will bring the pediatricians together with this group to find out how we can do that better. What happens, and I will quote one of the pediatricians, a child was sent to the family doctor who diagnosed one thing and sent them home with medication. It didn't help. The mother sent her

back to the family doctor and after several tries, the family doctor referred her to the pediatrician. It had nothing to do with what the doctor thought it was. It was something very specific about children and families and it was sociological, it was not medical but it was exhibiting itself in medical symptoms. The pediatrician saw it right away. The child is okay now, it was treated well but we have to find better ways of getting referrals to pediatricians because some of the things require very specialized knowledge that sometimes the family practitioner doesn't have. That is just an example of how we are getting better at this kind of thing.

MS. O'CONNELL: So it is going to start small and get big then rather than start big?

MR. MACEACHERN: I would hate it to start big and be wrong. You want to talk about a mess. It is like building a bridge and it falls through. I would rather kind of build the footings first and make sure they are secure and work my way through it. It is coming along very well and it will grow quickly because the learning curve has been remarkable. That is why I gave you the example of that spousal abuse thing. It came from the discussions. It wasn't planned initially but it has come into being very quickly. The Eastern Project is less than two years old and it has all kinds of little things like that that are making a huge difference.

MS. O'CONNELL: I think I have got my head somewhat straight around that.

MR. MACEACHERN: But you are right, it is a huge initiative. It is not a little initiative, it is huge.

MS. O'CONNELL: And fraught with difficulty nonetheless.

MR. MACEACHERN: You have to do it because to not do it is to risk the worst kind of things. What happens, and this was told to me again by a children's aid worker, sometimes what we have to do out of desperation is that we take a child in our care and we put them in a foster home. We know it is not right but it is our only option and we know that that person is going to be back to us very quickly because we know the foster parents and this child, it is not going to work. If we could, for example, have placed this person in therapy for a period of time, then it probably would have worked but it doesn't exist and she said, and I can still see her describing it to me, the frustration because she did something that she knew was going to come back to her. It came back to her exactly like she said. She said, I found another foster home, the kid ran away. I found another foster home, the kid ran away and now this kid is in Truro. She said we didn't need to put that kid in Truro and that is part of the frustration they have because the devices at their disposal don't cover the spectrum and these people know what they need but it presently is not available to them.

MS. O'CONNELL: I want to ask you for a little bit about funding to community groups. You, yourself, know this has been a concern and the groups lost 3 per cent of their funding midway through the year, which had the effect on probably most of them of a 6 per cent cut because they were operating on previous assumptions. I have a letter here from the Community Services Halifax District Office, March 26th. It has been flagged by somebody because they have a couple of concerns. This letter is from the regional administrator and it says, the allocation of funding for the remainder of the fiscal year, please find an advance payment of your regional grant . . .

MR. MACEACHERN: What is the date of that letter?

MS. O'CONNELL: March 26th. Please find an advance payment of your regional grant for the first quarter of the fiscal year. It is based on your other grant prior to the 3 per cent reduction - and we all know that is accurate - the allocation of funding for the remainder of the year will be subject to a review of your budget submission and approval by the Department of Community Services when the budget is determined. Now it goes on to say - I want to go back to that but it does say - this is consistent with usual procedures for advanced payments early in the new fiscal year and should not be viewed with any anxiety.

MR. MACEACHERN: That is because we have not done this yet. They are not allowed to tell them their budget until the group of us approve it. That is just a legislative form.

MS. O'CONNELL: Well, I guess not everybody is reading it that way because they said this is the first time that we will be subject to a review of our budget after the year.

MR. MACEACHERN: Well, let me say, part of that . . .

MS. O'CONNELL: It sounds like a bit of a mixed message.

MR. MACEACHERN: I don't disagree with it. One of the things we committed to when I made the announcement last year is that we are going to sit down with each and every one of our agencies. When I say that, and I am not making an exception of that, our regional guys and our finance guys, when we sit down with everyone to see, in fact, if they are doing the best job with the money. It is good for us, by the way, and it is good for them. It may intimidate them because it has never happened and I will give you the best example of this. I had an agency come to see me that was over 100 years old. They came in and they talked about the 3 per cent roll-back and all the rest of it. Then they showed me a budget tied to our three core functions. One of the people, just before they left Finance, said we thank you for this. This is the first time we have ever done a detailed analysis of our budget, first time ever. The way it used to work, we took the money and we spent it the way we always spent the money. If we got increases, we spent that too. So we are asking them to reflect very clearly on what it is they are doing with money and we will help them if we can.

The commitment that I made, and I made very clearly and I repeated it in the House yesterday, is that the budgets of all of those groups will remain the same this year. I told them that but we will be reviewing all budgets to look at how we are going to proceed next year. I told everybody that, that was part of my announcement.

MS. O'CONNELL: Does this letter mean . . .

MR. MACEACHERN: Their budget is the same this year.

MS. O'CONNELL: So that budget review is not for this year.

MR. MACEACHERN: We are going to review their budget this year but it is for next year.

MS. O'CONNELL: I don't think that is clear from the letter at all because it says, here is your first quarter . . .

MR. MACEACHERN: That is right.

MS. O'CONNELL: . . . and then you are subject to budget review. So what they are saying is - well, they have a number of concerns, I think, the people we spoke with. One is that they do good budgeting, they get their year ready and then along comes the department and says, well, no, we want it this way so we are only going to give you this much.

MR. MACEACHERN: This year they will be okay.

MS. O'CONNELL: But what I am saying is I think there is a problem with this letter then.

MR. MACEACHERN: The way it is written, I agree.

MS. O'CONNELL: Can we do something about that?

MR. MACEACHERN: Not now, it has been sent.

MS. O'CONNELL: Can we not send them a letter clarifying it?

MR. MACEACHERN: We will be talking to them. As soon as we get through this budget and it gets approved, then we will be communicating with all of them.

MS. O'CONNELL: The second thing I think they are very concerned about is that they will be told they are duplicating services.

MR. MACEACHERN: They might be duplicating services.

MS. O'CONNELL: They might be but the one sense is that given the desperate downloading of social services, the job losses, the general decline in quality of life for people over the last, say, seven or eight years . . .

MR. MACEACHERN: I can't disagree, yes. I can't disagree with you that there are significant social problems because the whole workplace is changing. We can talk about the global economy. We can talk about free trade and it is a problem, I agree.

MS. O'CONNELL: I guess the danger is, you know, if somebody with the very sort of - I don't mean to say anybody here would be like that - but somebody with a very rigid mind said, okay . . .

MR. MACEACHERN: That would be Clem. Have you met him before?

MS. O'CONNELL: No, and I am sure he wouldn't be.

MR. MACEACHERN: He drives a bicycle. He is okay.

MS. O'CONNELL: The point is, if a community agency says we do this and we do this for so many people . . .

MR. MACEACHERN: And we have asked them to tell us that and they have.

MS. O'CONNELL: . . . whatever it is, breakfast, a hot meal, any kind of an agency that is helping people who are in the very worst and close to the worst condition. Is somebody going to come along and say, well, you are within 3.6 kilometres of somebody else who gives a hot meal and therefore you are duplicating? I think they are worried about that. If you set those rules . . .

MR. MACEACHERN: I will give you two stories that are actual cases. The one in Sydney is the best one where the transition house is now doing the administration services for that second chance facility for male abusers. The services are there. They haven't changed but they have one administration and one financial services between the two of them. That is one example.

The second example, I met with the transition houses, the women's centre - I referred to that the other day - and one of the spokespeople for the group said, we recognize that one of the things you want us to do is start looking on how we can cluster together compatible services in a region. I said, well, I have never used the word cluster but if you are comfortable with the word, I will use that. They said, well, we are looking on how we can do that and we have talked to all of the agencies. The woman speaking to me was from Lunenburg. She said,

we have spoken to all of the agencies in our area and we are getting better at this. That is the kind of thing we are trying to promote.

Let's suppose, for example - and let's take your breakfast program - I have two breakfast programs side by side each other, one in the school across the street and one across the street over here. There might be some things that can be done between the two of them so that we have more breakfasts because if they can enhance their services by joining somehow, then we would encourage that and we would talk to them about that.

Part of the problem that I see and it goes back to what I said about the Children's Aid Societies, oftentimes, before, the relationship between the Department of Community Services and these agencies has been, I will say, distant and oftentimes immature in the sense that they never discussed problems. The department sends the money and they complain it is not enough and that is the only dialogue that ever occurs between them. We are changing that and we are actually getting into dialogue and some of them are concerned with that.

I am saying that after we do this for a while we will get better at it as I reported to you the last day here, the transition houses and ourselves - and me, particularly, if I might - are getting better at talking to each other because we talk to each other more. So we will get better at that and it won't be done in a paternalistic, I am doing this to you tone because we have never brought that tone to anything we have ever done. So this is going to be done constructively and thoughtfully because we recognize the people out there providing those services are not only well intentioned but they are very experienced at giving the necessary services. I know that, but there are better ways of doing everything that we do and we want to work with them to find better ways of doing what we do and hopefully better ways of helping them do what they do.

MS. O'CONNELL: The impact, I am sure you have seen this, more crises, less resources, and I was referring to the general social situation, the decline of jobs, the downloading onto the volunteer sector which I think is a big issue in these groups. They are often asked to do more with volunteers and of course that is going on everywhere. It is going on in the schools, too, but it is very frightening, I think, in community agencies where volunteers don't have the liability, the protection, to be doing skilled work that they are not trained for, where they don't have liability to be opening and closing facilities and maybe having them burn down in the night and so on. So I think the downloading onto volunteers is really serious and you have probably seen this but there is an appendix on this and this was that press conference in . . .

MR. MACEACHERN: Yes, I remember the one.

MS. O'CONNELL: You remember the one up on Brunswick Street?

MR. MACEACHERN: And I counted the adjustments made in the province. The United Way, some were excluded from the United Way, some had decreases from the United Way, some had municipal changes, a whole list of them.

MS. O'CONNELL: Yes, there is a whole list of cutbacks, it is frightening.

MR. MACEACHERN: But some of the cutbacks had to do harder fund-raising because of that, yes.

MS. O'CONNELL: And some of them are not provincial. I am not saying they are. There are cutbacks in CAP funding, United Way, lost tax concession grants. They lost money from the federal government and on and on. Foundation grants cut and then accompanying this was a list of staff layoffs, staff wage cuts, staff Christmas bonuses and we know that people who work in this sector work for much lower wages. I used to be the president of Metro Planned Parenthood and the nursing staff that worked there made at least \$10,000 less in a year in a full-time equivalent wage than a nurse would make in say a hospital setting at that time. So we know they work for less already. We know they are desperately overworked. We know they are often asked to do things because of cutbacks and lack of resources that maybe should not be done that way and so on. I guess what I am saying is that you cannot blame them for coming to you and saying we don't have enough money.

MR. MACEACHERN: I have never blamed them.

MS. O'CONNELL: Okay, but I think it is important to listen to that too.

MR. MACEACHERN: Let me share a story with you that you reminded me of. Child care workers came to see me and they sat around and they said a Grade Primary teacher makes this much money, we make this much money. I said I acknowledge that. They said we work just as hard as the Grade Primary teacher and I said I acknowledge that but I don't know how to change the history that sits in front of us in a very quick time.

I will even go further than that, the paradigm that we are living in right now is focused very much on an industrial world. The industrial world focuses on rewarding the production of goods and not rewarding on the production of services unless it has a direct impact on the production of goods, examples, lawyers, accountants and so on. I could make a whole list of them. The new world we are moving into, the information world, you are going to see more and more recognition of the importance of the kind of work that you are describing. The most succinct, clear description of this is in Jeremy Rifkins book, *The End of Work*.

The third sector's importance is going to come upon people and they are going to have to find better ways of acknowledging its importance and rewarding it. There is going to be a new balance between the value of the production of goods and the value of the production of services, in particular, the human services. Much of this is being replaced by

computer technologies and that is part of the trauma that we are all going through because where we are going next is a problem. He argues, and I share his belief in this, that the next development is going to come precisely from the recognition of the value of this kind of work and I share that with you.

How we go from where we are to there, I feel like, remember that poem, *The Wasteland*, they talked about getting across the river, that is the problem we have now and it is the biggest problem. I remember when I first came into the department, the present Minister of Health said, I think this is going to be a very difficult task for me but the task that you and your department have before you in the next number of years is the biggest task that we face and I think that is exactly right for the reasons that you describe. It is not fair, it is not reasonable, it is not equitable, nor is it helping us move forward. How we get to that is a real task.

MS. O'CONNELL: Well, I have great respect for people who will be visionary and who will make the time and use the mind to envision a future and whether they turn out to be right or wrong, there is also a very different, a dystopia in the future too which has to do with globalization and in fact the increasing impoverishment and social isolation of women and children. So much of what this is is about that. We were all supposed to be working two hours a week by the 1990's too.

MR. MACEACHERN: That was before we got into this business.

MS. O'CONNELL: But all of us were supposed to be onto some life of leisure and studies show that we work many more hours than we did even 30 years ago when I left university. I have great respect for that but I am not going to plan on it, myself, and I am really not sure that we should and that the Department of Community Services should plan for it.

MR. MACEACHERN: There is a wonderful quote that says, man will continue to do the unreasonable until it becomes impossible and it flashed into my mind as you were describing that. This is going to occur, I can assure you of that. As to how and when, I am not really sure about that. We can help in terms of refocusing and caring. The Too Good To Lose model that you described and the relationship between government and the agencies becoming more and more mature is going to help us to get there. I wish you could do it quickly but my great fear that if someone were able to do it quickly and it were wrong, it would cause you a huge difficulty. This has to evolve.

It is happening here and part of the angst that we are suffering is the incompatibility between how we behave and our good sense but we are moving in the right direction, I think, and I know from the staff in the Department of Community Services, and I have many discussions with them after hours in our office where I sit and talk to them, they have great concern with getting there. They recognize the difficulty and that is why they do the extra

work and they don't get paid extra. They get paid for their contract work and I want to tell you the hours that they put in and likewise with the agencies you described, are the kinds of things that will make a difference.

MS. O'CONNELL: Well, you know that quote says it all to me because while man is being irrational, women and children . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Eileen, you have about three minutes.

MS. O'CONNELL: . . . are being unemployed and so on.

MR. MACEACHERN: Although I know some women who can be irrational, too. I just share that.

MS. O'CONNELL: So let's talk about day care.

MR. MACEACHERN: Yes, day care. We have added 50 spaces.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Excuse me, Eileen, I just wanted to let you know you have three minutes so you can ask any important questions you may have.

MS. O'CONNELL: Well, I can come back, can I not?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Absolutely.

MS. O'CONNELL: My recollection was that the analysis was that we needed 2,500 spaces. That was about three or four years ago.

MR. MACEACHERN: That was before my time. I can't argue that. I would say that some people may have said that.

MS. O'CONNELL: The Nova Scotia Round Table on Day Care said that the province needed 2,500 day care spaces, that that is how many it was short. Well, I will leave that and check my figure. My recollection was that and that we are getting it at the rate of about 10 per cent of what we need.

[4:00 p.m.]

MR. MACEACHERN: Well, let me argue that. I feel pretty good about that. Almost everywhere across the country, there has been withdrawal. We haven't. We have kept it going, we have kept moving forward. The year we came in, there were 100 new spaces. There have been 50 a year ever since. So there have been 300 new spaces, some promised

before we got there but they were put in, plus 50 new a year. So that is 300 new spaces in a period of time when everybody else is retreating.

Secondly, with the help of many Ministers of Community Services across the country, we have convinced HRDC to include child care as one of the active measures and the National Child Benefit, as we are working through this, we are looking on how, in fact, reinvestment may help that area. There is some debate about whether it should but that has been part of the discussion. So we have retreated from it. We have acknowledged the difficulties with it. I haven't seen the new Red Book, what that says. I know it says something, it was on the news this morning, but I don't think the commitment to do it is working its way through. So we are still working so I don't apologize for where we are. I don't know if you will ever have enough of all of the services but I think our direction is right and my discussions with the Round Table on Day Care is that they are very comfortable with the fact that we are still moving forward and they recognize the difficulties and I have had several meetings with them and much communication with them.

MS. O'CONNELL: Yes, I know that but . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: The time for the member has expired.

MS. O'CONNELL: There are just a couple of other concerns that I . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Excuse me, the time has expired.

MS. O'CONNELL: Oh, was that three minutes?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes it was. Time goes by fast when you are having fun, Eileen.

The honourable member for Kings West.

MR. GEORGE MOODY: Mr. Chairman, I won't keep you very long. You may have discussed this issue when I wasn't here. I had another case this week and I am getting more and more cases of individuals who have been on provincial assistance, single parents, and they either have one child, two children or whatever. I know in this particular case, and I have had others, the doctor sort of said they have had some mental health problems and asked them if they could get out and get a part-time job or work. When they get a part-time job - and the minister knows part-time jobs are usually at minimum wage, I guess they are paying \$5.50 - when they report what they are earning - and I know it varies a few hours, like they may have 16 hours a week or they may have 20 hours and they can't precisely say because they don't know themselves, when they do keep their worker informed but the person, in this particular case, of course naturally when she worked her benefits were cut, and she understood that, but I guess by the time she paid a babysitter, her take-home is less. The worker said to her, well, you had better stop working and go on full benefits. To her, financially, that would be better.

Probably health-wise it would be worse but yet it is costing the province more money by her going on full benefits.

What she is saying to me, and I am a little discouraged about what the worker is saying and I know the workers are, and the minister might be able to comment, but it appears that in the Valley, the workers are overworked. I understand the difficulty but they have so many cases that they are not getting to people and when people inform them of any change in their circumstances, somehow it doesn't get worked into the system and sometime later it does and then it creates another hardship. Is there any move in the department, not so these people make more money, I don't think anyone is asking for that, they are asking that they don't want to be worse off because they are trying to go out and work and support themselves and eventually, knowing if they could work part time, maybe eventually they could work themselves basically off of the system. When you have a two year old, like this one does, obviously you have to have a sitter when you go out and work. I didn't tell her this but we have changed, you know she is only paying her sitter \$3.00 but by law she should be paying minimum wage so she would be really in the hole. I didn't tell her that.

I guess it is not the first case and I know in the past of some cases where the department really has tried to help the individual, probably bent the rules but used common sense, so they helped somehow with the child care or babysitting or whatever so that the person actually wasn't worse off than they were because if you go exactly by the rules, and we all know this, they take the gross pay into consideration. Well, we all know you don't take home the gross pay to begin with. So anyway, this young lady called me today and I have wanted to bring this up because I have had others and I am wondering if the department is seriously looking at being able to deal with this issue because I am sure the minister would want what we all want and that is for these people to obviously work if they can, even if it is only part time.

MR. MACEACHERN: The short answer is yes. Now if you want the long answer, I have a real long answer or a medium answer.

MR. MOODY: Well, what I am trying to find out . . .

MR. MACEACHERN: I will give you every bit of that. I have all the notes. First of all, the problem has to do with our system as presently written, identifies people who work and people who don't work. A huge number of our people either work part time or they work casually, one or the other. They are not recognized in any legislation or any programs that the province here, or in the country, have. There is no place in the country and I have sat with every minister, I have been fortunate enough to be part of this council so for the last two and one-half years, even when I was in Education, I had been sitting both at tables like this and in the evenings drinking coffee talking about these kinds of things and everybody has the same problem. It has to do with our legislation. It goes back to a very long time, whether it be the

municipal or the provincial and it is tied so you don't have work or you do have work. That is part of our difficulty. We are attempting to do that. We have to find a way . . .

MR. MOODY: You are attempting to change the legislation?

MR. MACEACHERN: Yes, and we want to get away . . .

MR. MOODY: Well, I will commend you for that.

MR. MACEACHERN: We are trying to get legislation that supports poor people no matter what their income is. This National Child Benefit that was announced some time ago, we have been working on for two and one-half years. What we are arguing is that we have to find a way and we are only talking about families, how can we get money to families with children who are poor. So this National Child Benefit, and that is why it is so significant as a first step in that, two principles were given when we started the discussions with the federal government. First of all, at the end of the day, nobody will be worse off, first principle. Second principle, if you work, you should be better off. Those are the two principles.

MR. MOODY: Well, that is some incentive to work.

MR. MACEACHERN: Yes.

MR. MOODY: I agree with that.

MR. MACEACHERN: So what we are trying to do based on that principle, not only ourselves but every province and every territory in this country, supported in some way by the federal government because we are doing some research on this, like our agreement with HRDC has a research component and that is one of the things we are going to be researching: how, in fact, can you put programs in place so the disincentives to go to work disappear and everything in it is an incentive toward work. So that is what we are trying to invent in the Department of Community Services.

The fact that the workers are overworked, we are even analyzing the present way benefits flow. We are discovering, for example, that more and more of our staff time is spent on checking rents, checking electric bills, checking other kinds of things like that but not doing counselling. So we are trying to find a way, trying to find a process by which benefits flow one way and counselling goes another. So we are working at that too.

You are exactly right, for example, the present system. If you were part of the working poor and one of your children developed asthma, you have to quit your job. You cannot afford to pay for that medicine and making \$6.00 or \$7.00 an hour. You cannot do it. Likewise, the child care that you mentioned, they are the two that we came up with which are the two biggest disincentives; if you want a scale of 1 to 10, the Pharmacare is about 10,

the child care is about 2 and everything else is 1 or below. But the Pharmacare is the big one and most particularly we have discovered it is the asthma situation. Again, on a scale of 1 to 10, the asthma problem is 10, other diseases are 1 and 2. So we know that that is a problem and we are focusing all of our attention, as long as I have been there, and it was happening before I arrived, on inventing a system, the single tier will help, the agreement with HRDC will help but the National Child Benefit will help. That National Child Benefit is starting at \$650 million. It is to grow to \$2 billion over a period of time. When it gets to \$2 billion, we think we will have achieved the two things that we described when we started because that will flow to children whether the parents are working or not working, whether we are giving the parental income or they are working for the parental income, those benefits will continue to come towards the children and the programs will cover both groups if they are poor.

MR. MOODY: What time-frame are we talking about for this to go from . . .

MR. MACEACHERN: The single tier will be in place. We have already started moving more supports in and you can see it as we move. We had income assistance and family benefits as separate lines. We have merged them to give our staff more flexibility so that when they see an opportunity of a job-ready person, they have more flexibility to support them toward work. That is the first thing. They have no legislation to back them yet, by the way, which makes it tough. They are kind of working on the discretion of the minister right now but that is okay. We hope to have the legislation either in the fall or the spring in place. We hope to have the single tier so that we can then plan this thing in place by April 1st of next year. The National Child Benefit will be in place, at the latest, in July. That is the first level which will flow an additional \$500 per child in this province that month. When that arrives, we hope to be able to shift the system even more towards the two principles.

MR. MOODY: Does the \$500 come all at once?

MR. MACEACHERN: No, it would come by month. They haven't figured that out yet.

MR. MOODY: I would hope not come at once because these people have a very difficult time in planning their money. I have trouble myself.

MR. MACEACHERN: That is part of what we have to do in terms of programming, too. Presently the federal government, through the WIS and the Child Tax Credit supplies \$1,050 per Nova Scotian poor child. That is what it is on average; \$500 will be added to that so that across the year, a family of four, a father, mother and two children, there will be an additional \$1,000 and a total from the feds of \$3,000 flow into the family. So that becomes the base on which we are going to build our system. By the end, when it gets to \$2 billion, about \$9,000 will flow so you can see very clearly, with present dollars, that that gives you a financial base to provide for a family of four and then the income is sitting on top of that.

So we are doing much modelling, trying all kinds of variations because we not only have to see where we are going to from where we are but how you get there.

MR. MOODY: The department has been very good at trying to work out solutions. Over the years I cannot say enough about the people there sincerely trying to help individuals but sometimes you just run up against a wall.

MR. MACEACHERN: Yes, usually legislation.

MR. MOODY: Usually legislation prevents you from doing what common sense would tell you should be done. That is unfortunate. I am glad that you are addressing it. The other issue you didn't touch on was the workers, the field workers. I don't know, I can only talk about, and they have not told me this but I can certainly tell by talking to clients and having to deal with individual cases, that they really have too large a caseload to try to adequately deal. The problem, what happens, it is not their fault, but the client ends up either having their cheque delayed or having something happen to them that happens much later even though they have informed the office because the worker just doesn't have time to keep up with it. I know that people say, well, the worker didn't call me back right away, it has been a while and people who apply now are probably about a year getting that home visit, nine months to a year, because they are just backed up. They physically cannot do what they are expected to do to give the kind of service. Is anything happening in that area as well?

MR. MACEACHERN: I mentioned in passing in the other area, caseload/workload is a real question. Okay, so let's divide that in the first place. They are overworked and they thought we were a little silly when we started it. We actually started doing an analysis of their day. What do you do all day? They thought it was a silly question but now they are starting to understand. We now have an understanding of how they are spending their day and, as I said to you, much of their time, and I forget the number but it is close to half of their time is spent doing things that have nothing to do with counselling whatsoever so therefore if you want to consider, if we could do this another way, you could double the amount of staff you have, if you want to consider the way you could work it.

Part of it has to do with the way the benefits flow. They are expenditure based. They flow in a way that every expenditure has to be verified and it is not efficient. I will just say that as politely as I can.

MR. MOODY: I agree.

MR. MACEACHERN: So we are changing that. We haven't figured out what the solution is but we do know that we are not going to have worker counsellors spending their days checking on whether your rent has gone up \$4.00 or down \$3.00.

MR. MOODY: What you are saying, then, I think I hear you and I would agree, if this is what I am hearing, that your counsellors will continue to do their counselling but there will be somebody else or something else that will plug in the data. I am thinking everybody is on a computer disk, everybody is on computer. I am thinking why can't someone else, when someone calls in with the information, update the person's file and it doesn't have to be the caseworker who upgrades the file. What happens now, I know that unless you get to talk to your worker, your file doesn't change.

MR. MACEACHERN: You are exactly right.

MR. MOODY: So that creates all kinds of problems because time goes by and all kinds of things. I suspect that if we had people doing that, I know it is probably a few more dollars but I am sure it would be less money than hiring a counsellor.

MR. MACEACHERN: You would save money. We are working on it. In fact, a work plan crossed my desk last week. It crossed on my computer. They send stuff they are working on, rather than sending a hard copy, they simply send, and I read it off the screen and if I am tired I make a hard copy and read it but we just have a working model of a way of starting to do precisely that. How, in fact, you collect the data.

The other thing, we have our contract with Systemhouse where they are looking how to better automate our field workers so that rather than them being a paper-based system, they do the data while they are talking to the person and it gets stored and it is there when they get back to the office. So we are looking at that as well. Again, I don't know if we need more people but we have to have our people doing what it is they ought to be doing. So that is coming very well and I can't say enough for the workers. I have actually sat with them and they told me what you are telling me.

MR. MOODY: They are very good people.

MR. MACEACHERN: They say, we can't keep doing this. The beginning, by the way, I just thought of the first female person who said this to me, she was sitting about where you are around the table. She blew up and she wrote it and I took all of her concerns and wrote them down. The RA was sitting next to me, staff was sitting next to me. I thanked her for it and went outside. She stopped me and said, I didn't do anything wrong, did I? Because she wanted to say this and the minister was in front of her so she did. All of the frustrations blew out and that is no good when she meets somebody else.

MR. MOODY: She is getting the frustration of the clients so I can understand why it is building within her because when she talks to the clients, they vent it out with her and usually the caseworker . . .

MR. MACEACHERN: And she did it to me.

MR. MOODY: . . . and it just goes down the line.

MR. MACEACHERN: And it was fair.

MR. MOODY: As I say, if you are addressing these, and I know you recognize it, and I guess you are right, it is something that has been around for a while. I think it seems like the more difficult the time, these issues sort of come to the top. I would be pleased if you would keep me informed of what the changes are.

MR. MACEACHERN: I will make an offer to you. We are working, we spent all day Monday, the senior staff, reflecting on two discussion papers that have come forth at different times. We hope to have a discussion paper circulating, starting with staff. After staff we want to actually give it to people who are on the system. We want to give it to the business community. We want to give it to all of the people. It will have a framework document but then it will have a different questionnaire, depending on who we are sending it to. I will be pleased to provide that to you and it will have the framework of what we are attempting to do.

MR. MOODY: Okay, I would appreciate that.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The honourable member for Cape Breton West.

MR. MACEACHERN: Welcome back.

MR. ALFRED MACLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Minister. It is nice to be back. Upfront I am going to apologize if I ask you some questions that have already been asked.

MR. MACEACHERN: I just hope I give you the same answer.

MR. MACLEOD: We will check on that, too.

MR. MACEACHERN: Okay, I knew you would.

MR. MACLEOD: There has been a lot of discussion about the Children's Training Centre in Sydney. We talked about that briefly before. You mentioned that there was a hope that there would be some type of a use for it by your department or a combination of departments. I got that right did I?

MR. MACEACHERN: Exactly. It is under the Eastern Project which is Health, Education, Community Services and Justice. We have a committee of the regional administrator for us, the regional administrator for Justice, the Health regional administrator and the inspector of schools. That group of four is an operating committee that can make decisions. They actually can effect things that if they decide to do a particular thing, they

don't check with us, they do it. They don't have to check with any of the departments. It is an operational committee. Their parameters are very clear. If they decide to use that facility, we are going to support them using it. They are looking at several options on how to use it. We hope that that, in fact, happens.

MR. MACLEOD: The Nova Scotia Residential Centre, what lies in its future?

MR. MACEACHERN: The history of the centre is - how can I say it - spotted might be a nice word to say for it. Presently we have about 10 to 12 young people there. It is not a secure treatment facility and oftentimes the young people run away. Some of the most difficult situations, the most difficult children, behaviourally, that we have in the Province of Nova Scotia are located there. Presently at the res centre, there is a significantly sized staff, many of whom have come from the Children's Training Centres, for example, and have bumped in and it is not able to do what it does. Our most severe cases, we have to send out-of-province because we have no secure treatment in the Province of Nova Scotia for them. Basically you have to lock them up to treat them. We like to think of our new place that we are developing as a place we treat but to do that we have to lock them up. Actually the doors are locked, it is under court order, that is the facility that we are building. The one we have now doesn't do that.

So what has been decided, this is actually a consequence of the report which is called Too Good To Lose that we have been discussing significantly in the last couple of days which is saying that you need a spectrum of treatment from least intrusive to most intrusive in order to deal with the young people of the Province of Nova Scotia who are having difficulties. So what has been decided, and it took us some time to do this, is to take the facility, which is the residential centre, the building which is a good structure, it is going to close in June, as its present function. It is going to close as a residential centre as presently defined. We are then going to renovate it so that it becomes a secure treatment facility. The renovations will cost a little over \$0.25 million and then hopefully, around September, we hope to hire a program director to start developing a therapeutic program for those children most in need so that the 10 children who are out-of-province right now can stay home and those other children, some who are presently in the res centre who need very serious therapeutic treatment for behavioural problems, we can locate in Truro. They will be placed there under court order, which is the case, and they will be treated appropriately and I think that is the right way.

The amount of money that will be involved in that eventually is \$3 million, only \$1 million of which is in the budget right now. There will be \$2 million additional provided in next year's budget and I have already run this by Cabinet so I don't hesitate to suggest that it will be provided. We spend \$1 million now for those 10 who are out-of-province. When they return home, of course, that will bring \$1 million back. So we will have that \$1 million plus we will have \$2 million additional and that will be the budget for the new centre which will be a new line next year in our budget, probably called the Nova Scotia secure treatment facility or something like that. This line will disappear and that \$2.3 million you see there will

go back to the four regions to be used to help implement Too Good To Lose. So that is basically the whole story of the residence.

MR. MACLEOD: So the \$1 million that is missing from this budget . . .

MR. MACEACHERN: Is up inside for Maintenance of Children and Apprehension Costs, it is stored up inside there because that is where the \$1 million comes from, I think. There are 10 of them. That is stored up in Maintenance of Children. There was \$11 million spent this year and we budgeted \$9.6 million for next year.

MR. MACLEOD: When this new centre starts off, the staffing requirements will be greater or less than what is there?

MR. MACEACHERN: Number-wise, about the same but some of them much different because if you consider . . .

MR. MACLEOD: The positions will be different.

MR. MACEACHERN: That is right, different kinds of positions.

MR. MACLEOD: Is it the hope of the department to fill them from in-house?

MR. MACEACHERN: Some of them, I suggest, don't even exist in Nova Scotia because this is a very special kind of thing. They might exist in Nova Scotia but they might not. The lead psychological supports that are there, we might not have them in Nova Scotia because this is a very particular, very specialized thing that is being done here. We may have them, we will advertise but we would not at all be surprised if the people who do this presently are not located in Nova Scotia at the high end. At the lower end, or in the mid-range, there may be some of the people presently in-house that can take those jobs and we will be pleased to do that. Some of the cleaners, for example, may be able to step in there. Some of the teachers' people may be able to step in there but I cannot speak to that until the program is developed.

MR. MACLEOD: The question, then, I would have to ask is, will Nova Scotians be given first option for any of these positions, all things being equal and they are qualified?

MR. MACEACHERN: In fact we would be happy because we would know that they would stay, they would come and stay. Just by accident, by the way, I was up in, I know George knows this fellow, Ed Charles, who was at Dalhousie, I met him up in Toronto, he was having lunch at the same restaurant in the hotel where we were meeting. I went over to talk to him and it happens that his son does this but the only place he could find a job was in Georgia first and now he has a job in Toronto. When I described what we were doing, he was

ecstatic because all he wants to do is come home. So there are Nova Scotians out there who are specialized and this may be an opportunity for them to return home.

MR. MACLEOD: If we could change gears a little bit and go back to small options homes. The interim standards that were released for small options homes, there is a lot of confusion in the industry, or there seems to be a lot of confusion in the industry. We have different units that are called small options homes.

MR. MACEACHERN: Community-based options they are called. There are all kinds of different names.

MR. MACLEOD: There are all kinds of different names, yet some of the people who are operating small options homes for seniors, one to three bed operations . . .

MR. MACEACHERN: We don't do those. They are not ours. Health does those.

MR. MACLEOD: None of them are yours.

MR. MACEACHERN: We do have some too but they are people with disabilities, developmental ones. We have some seniors who are developmentally impaired but if you were to go to a small options place that had a group of seniors that they were, by definition, seniors who arrive because they are old, they usually don't fall under us. Most of our small options facilities are for people who are developmentally impaired, people with disabilities. They are ours. We are presently under discussion with Health to find some way of making sense out of the two of them because, as you described, they are all over the place.

MR. MACLEOD: Yes, they are all over the place and one of the things that happens to the operators is they are always trying to find out who is responsible for them.

MR. MACEACHERN: Yes, single tier will solve that. They are municipal by history, by the way. That is why they are all so different. We have inherited them and we are just trying to figure them out. Likewise, Health has taken over the other side and we are trying to figure them out but the effort is there. We are talking to the association people. They all belong to an association of one kind or another and we are trying to figure out how to do this.

[4:30 p.m.]

MR. MACLEOD: Is there any kind of a time-frame put on this, because one of the things I keep hearing . . .

MR. MACEACHERN: As quick as possible. It is very complicated.

MR. MACLEOD: I would be the first one to admit it is very complicated. The different operators that I have had the privilege of talking to, keep feeling that they are spinning their wheels because there is a moratorium on small options homes but when they try to find out who it is they are supposed to get their interim standards from, they have seen copies of the ones that resulted from the inquiry into the Eddie Sheppard issue.

MR. MACEACHERN: Well, actually, they didn't come from that. They were started long before. In fact, about two and one-half years before I arrived in the department, they were working on the standards, I guess, whatever you call these things, the policy that is there. As soon as we took over in Cape Breton, that is when we started exploring on how to put these things together because we really weren't involved with them except paying the per diems and the municipality was paying part, we were paying part but they were under the auspices of the municipality. So as soon as we inherited them, Barb Burley, who works in our shop, started to look on how, in fact, we can put a framework for these things because they were all over the map. So it was started long before the Sheppard incident and it is just that they arrived at approximately the same time.

I remember the day I released them, they were not totally vetted but they said we were hiding them or something. I just said, let's put them out. So I put them out and I announced that they are still in development, we want some feedback from people but they mostly cover the things we do. That would be, for example, the post-mentally ill and the post-mentally ill, it is very important to say, are people just like you and I. They are not institutionalized, they are not under security, they are not under observation, these people have been designated by their psychiatrist, who more often than not knows more than I do, who have said these people are free to live - and free I say - in their communities. We want to make sure that if people we are sponsoring - let's call it that in terms of providing them benefits - move into a place that, in fact, they are clean, they are safe, they have certain things and that is what we have put there, systems of checking and reporting if something goes wrong. Our standards approach that.

The Department of Health and ourselves are talking about how, in fact, we can work through the variation between what we do and what they do and those discussions are coming along in a positive way. It is very difficult at the beginning because even getting your head around it is difficult but we are starting to do that and our staff and the Department of Health staff are sitting constantly working on how to do this and we are now talking to the operators to bring them into the discussions too so that we can find a solution that is transparent, that makes sense to everybody and is sustaining and it is not a question of making a decision different for every unit. What we would like to do, ideally, for example, if the level of care is Level 1, then the funding flows in this particular way. If it is Level 2, it flows in this particular way, Level 3 and so on. If, in fact, there is an extraordinary situation, then it would be dealt with extraordinarily and we are trying to find out how to do that but it is very difficult, it is not simple.

MR. MACLEOD: So those people who require Level 1 care, are they part of your bailiwick?

MR. MACEACHERN: No, that is the seniors. Ours are all people with disabilities.

MR. MACLEOD: I find that amazing . . .

MR. MACEACHERN: Isn't it though?

MR. MACLEOD: It is because the people I have been talking to are dealing with your department.

MR. MACEACHERN: Part of the reason for that is how you get into - see that is part of the mix. You watch for example, the Department of Health, in many areas, contract with the Department of Community Services for the accessibility to these places. Although it is under Health, they, for example, in Cape Breton, in order for you to access these places, you go through staff of the Department of Community Services who are designated to do this under the direction of Health. That is where the difficulty comes in Cape Breton. Other areas know that they are separate and they are handled separately but that is how it is happening there and it is confusing. That is why you go to Community Services to get access to Health services. Am I fair there, George?

MR. GEORGE MOODY: That is the way I understand it.

MR. MACEACHERN: That is the way it is.

MR. MACLEOD: That is the way I understand it, I understand what I hear but I don't understand why it is that way.

MR. MACEACHERN: Well, George did it. (Laughter) There is a history to it. It is nobody's fault, it just landed in a particular way. I call them accidents of history.

MR. MOODY: It goes right back to the big argument that it should be one department.

MR. MACEACHERN: Absolutely. In some places it is even more curious because we did some charts on this that would just drive you crazy. If you look at the accessibility, it flows one way. You access some things through Health, some things through Community Services even though the accountability for these things over here are for Health, and Community Services. It is all over the place. It is the strangest thing. We are working to make sense of it. We presented our view of this, our vision of this, to the annual meeting of the associations. By the way, we brought both associations together. They are talking. We presented it to them and they acknowledged what we were proposing makes sense. In other

words, that there be a single accessibility process and secondly that whoever does the accessibility be accountable for doing it. But where that is going to go is the second question but we are framing this. I acknowledge, front end, this is very complicated. It must be terribly complicated to somebody trying to access it out there who hasn't spent a lot of time with it. We are trying to simplify it.

MR. MACLEOD: It is hard for someone who is trying to reach access to it but it is also hard for some of the operators who are trying to survive. These people are small business people who employ as high as six or seven individuals in the community, they provide a service that is cheaper than the service that can be provided by keeping people in extended care beds in the hospital.

MR. MACEACHERN: The last meeting that we had with the associations, and they mainly do residential care, which is part of it, and they are all over the place and this was not only the two groups that belong to the associations but the people who don't belong to the associations, they come to the same annual meeting. So the Minister of Health and I met with them and we put together a working group of the two executive directors of the associations and staff from Health, and Community Services to develop a work plan. So that is happening now and we want them at the table with us because they have to be part of our solution here. So we have started that. The meeting was held last Friday. This is our third meeting. The first two meetings were with the executive crowd and this is with all of them, everybody was there. They have agreed to work toward that and I think a solution will be much quicker because we are all at the table together.

But it is very complicated. It is driving them to distraction. Some of them feel they are being treated very unfairly and to be fair with you, they are because you can have two identical type homes giving the same kind of care across the street from each other treated absolutely differently financially. When I say differently, I am talking a difference of 20 per cent to 25 per cent per diems; across the street, with the same number of people, the same level of care. I started at the beginning trying to figure it out but I gave up. That is just the way it is. We have to find a way of making sense out of it and it is nobody's fault. I call it accidents of history. I blamed George and apologize for that because if he hadn't been here I wouldn't have said that but seeing as he was here, I figured we should direct it someplace else. It just happened and it happened in a way that I don't think anybody can explain.

MR. MOODY: Let me just interject. When long-term care went to Health, it was under Community Services, I think people thought that would help solve some of the problems but it obviously hasn't because even though they go to long-term care, they still go to Community Services to get in the long-term care which is run by Health. So it really didn't solve the problems that I think we hoped and others hoped that it would.

MR. MACEACHERN: The protection, and I understand why they did, let's talk the logic, the developmentally handicapped people, they need a social model of involvement. I am watching it and it amazes me how the staff in these places bring the best out. It is just remarkable. The other is a medical model. They don't need the social, they are okay socially. Their friends come in, they understand that, that is okay. So they need a different model. The question is, how do you provide the same type of thing when in fact the residences you need are very similar? That is the real difficulty that we are trying to address. The programming has to be of one type here and of another type here and crossing them over doesn't even make any sense because it is two different communities altogether and one needs a lot of nursing, a lot of medical interventions.

The other needs caring people who know how to communicate in the most interesting ways. I thought, as I am saying that, I am visiting a place, non-verbal people, difficult with mobility, the staff kind of touch them here on the neck when they say their name and they hold them and it is most fascinating, I don't know where they learn it but we do it with our children. You know when you come in and you hold your child and you hold them, it is what they do. You see the response. It is remarkable but that is not what they do in the long-term care facilities of the other kind. How you do both of those services in similar types of facilities in reasonable ways is what we are trying to work our way through. We have great staff working at it and our staff is fearful that if it all moves over to Health, they want to protect the social involvement.

The people in Health, and rightly so, are very concerned that if it all went the other way, it may forget that these people need medical interventions of a very serious kind. As Clem just kept referring, we have some units that have both. We have units which we talked about the CTC in which they are under our care because they are developmentally handicapped, but the medical interventions are as huge as you can find in any facility any place. That overlap is probably the most fascinating mix that you can come upon because the staff that you need has to be able to do that social stuff while providing the medical intervention. These people are just absolutely special.

MR. MACLEOD: There is no question these people are special. I guess I have to go back. I must be . . .

MR. MACEACHERN: I agreed with you.

MR. MACLEOD: Well, that is good. We have agreed there is a problem and we have agreed that there is a committee put together to solve the problem. Have we agreed on a time-frame?

MR. MACEACHERN: No, because we finally have gotten the private sector guys and the non-profit guys and all the rest of them at the same table with us. This has taken us a long time because they did not talk to each other either. Okay? So now we have them talking to

each other, like they are talking among themselves here and now they are talking between each other. We are at the table with them and a solution is possible now. Before, it was not because everybody was defensive. Like, one person says, yes; I get more than this person so I do not want to talk. This person was clamouring to talk, you know what I mean? It is very complicated because of the numbers and the variations. If you have 700 units, and I think that is about the number that you are talking about, I bet you there are 450 different per diems.

MR. MACLEOD: Yes, there is a number of different per diems. I know that. So for those people who are operating small options homes right now . . .

MR. MACEACHERN: We are working with them.

MR. MACLEOD: You are working with them but there is no light at the end of the tunnel yet.

MR. MACEACHERN: Well, you tell them that as quick as we can get to it we are going to get there because it is going to require them, too. We cannot dictate this at the front end because it will blow up. This requires them to be part of the solution. They are at the table with us and they want a solution as badly as we do.

MR. MACLEOD: They probably want it worse than you do because there are people out there who have small options homes that do not have the three people or the two people, whatever they need, to help operate . . .

MR. MACEACHERN: I checked on that, by the way, and I was right. If they licence for three people and one of them, for example, goes home, they can have three people.

MR. MACLEOD: I would like for you to provide . . .

MR. MACEACHERN: Yes, you give me a note of your case and I will check into it because there must be another story someplace.

MR. MACLEOD: There is something going on here because there is a number of people who have come to us and said that they cannot get people in. I do not understand it. That is why I keep on asking you.

MR. MACEACHERN: I don't understand it. I will send somebody to the particular case to find out the story because I sense there is something unusual here.

I will be pleased to do that. I checked just after I left. I spoke to Barb Burley over there and she said yes, that is the case. If it is licenced for three, it has three. If it is licenced for six, it has six. If one goes at a particular level - but you send me the case because I think there is another story someplace buried in the obvious story.

MR. MACLEOD: There are several cases but we will certainly send you a sample case.

I do not want to dwell on the small options thing too long, but it is an issue that has to be resolved sooner than later. It just keeps popping up and there are people out there who require and need the service. There is a moratorium on the service and yet there are people out there who are willing to provide a service. We have a case in Cape Breton where they are talking about taking 30 active treatment beds and making them into long-term-care beds and there are people out there who are willing to provide the service at a lesser cost. It just does not make any sense to me.

MR. MACEACHERN: That is under Health . . .

MR. MACLEOD: It might be under Health but (Interruption) Somewhere in there somebody is putting a sprag in the wheel, if you understand that term.

MR. MACEACHERN: I just do not have the answer to your story. That is all.

MR. MACLEOD: If your department is the one that is looking at the placement, especially in the Cape Breton area, then your department must be either part of the solution or part of the problem.

MR. MACEACHERN: We hope it is the solution.

MR. MACLEOD: I guess I have gone as far with that right now as I can get without getting any more confused.

I will change gears again for a little bit. Talking about the process for a person to get involved with finding out about their children when they have been adopted. There is a \$250 fee.

MR. MACEACHERN: It depends. I think there are four levels of fees. It starts - it depends on your application, I am guessing here - at \$50 at the beginning and it has three levels depending on what the search is. Then, when you register for so much, we check to see if it is possible, if the records exist. To go further, it is a second, and I think the total cost is \$250. That would be to bring them together. That would actually, for example, you and your adoptive parent actually to introduce, that is what it is. For the information fully, it is \$250. Basically, we had a choice - and I have to take significant responsibility for the \$250 - we could not afford to do this but we could afford to do this if it paid its way. So we chose that it is important to do so it was my choice and I take responsibility for it.

MR. MACLEOD: What happens in the case of an individual who does not have the means to pay this?

MR. MACEACHERN: Well, that is there, too. We provide that. In fact, there is a needs test, an income based test. If you are below that, we just do it.

MR. MACLEOD: Are people aware of this?

MR. MACEACHERN: Yes. In fact, I remember the first day this was announced. There were 50 requests made that day and with every request we send out all the information. We have two dedicated people over there. I say dedicated in two parts. They are dedicated to doing this and they are dedicated people. They think this is very important and they are working at this very hard. They are communicating very quickly. I have had only one complaint and it is a consistent complaint. Otherwise, the people accessing this service, I have not had any complaints to me from those accessing the service. The person complaining, by the way, is complaining on the principle that you would have to pay to do this. That is what it is. It is not about how the service is being provided. There is a complaint that in fact this somehow should be free. So I just put that on the record and acknowledge that that is a difference of opinion between that person and us.

MR. MACLEOD: I think I know the person you are referring to.

Transition houses. We talked a little bit about them before and one of the things in the different transition houses that I have visited that always comes up is zero tolerance and the policy that has been put in place. I guess I would like to hear what your concept or your belief or your feeling is on that.

MR. MACEACHERN: Zero tolerance relative, you mean, for a transition house or generally?

MR. MACLEOD: Well, in relation to transition houses in particular. What is their role when it comes to zero tolerance?

MR. MACEACHERN: I do not know how to put them in context. I believe in zero tolerance relative to spousal abuse. I accept that. That is a given. I just imagine in my home or when I grew up or in the home I am living in now, I want to suggest to you that zero tolerance is not only the rule, but it is the demand. I do not know how it applies in terms of what their role is. I do not know really what you mean.

MR. MACLEOD: Do you believe in zero tolerance?

MR. MACEACHERN: Absolutely.

MR. MACLEOD: No question?

MR. MACEACHERN: Absolutely.

MR. MACLEOD: Yet the funding for transition houses across this province varies, as we talked about before.

MR. MACEACHERN: That is for the same reasons I gave you before.

MR. MACLEOD: How did you put that?

MR. MACEACHERN: Accidents of history.

MR. MACLEOD: The problem is we put a policy in place. Governments are famous for this. It does not matter which one.

MR. MACEACHERN: We do not have a policy. That is part of our problem. There is no policy. These all happened accidentally. That is why I call it that. In most of them, here is what happened. A person or a group of people get together and form these things. They make application for funding to the municipality, to the province and sometimes to the federal government and they get so much.

MR. MACLEOD: Zero tolerance?

MR. MACEACHERN: What do you mean?

MR. MACLEOD: Zero tolerance is a policy of the government. That is the policy I am talking about.

MR. MACEACHERN: I see. I accept that. I am sorry. I am talking about funding.

MR. MACLEOD: We put that policy in place and we believe in zero tolerance. Right, now the accidents of history is where the funding formulas have been used to . . .

MR. MACEACHERN: There is no formula. It is just how they got their money.

MR. MACLEOD: That is fine, but we put a policy in place. We say that we believe in zero tolerance but we do not fund one of the most fundamental tools of making that happen to the appropriate levels in their fields.

MR. MACEACHERN: We don't know what the appropriate level is and let me review . . .

MR. MACLEOD: Well, John, please, \$20,000 for some centres and \$50,000 for other centres . . .

MR. MACEACHERN: That is the women's centres. The transition houses are much bigger than that. The transition houses are all per diems. They are two separate things.

MR. MACLEOD: The women's centres are also used as part of the zero tolerance, too.

MR. MACEACHERN: Yes.

MR. MACLEOD: We can be nit-picky around this, if you want. That is fine. We can stay here.

MR. MACEACHERN: No, I am not. I'm ready.

MR. MACLEOD: What I want to know is, why is it, in not only this government, but all governments, in my mind, that we put policies in place but never put funding in place? That is the fundamental question. Why do we do that? They build up expectations, people that really need our help, people that are in desperate need of our help and we build up their expectations by introducing these wonderful programs that are only a piece of paper because we don't provide the resources. Why don't we do that?

MR. MACEACHERN: Transition houses and safe houses and women's centres are not a consequence of the zero tolerance.

MR. MACLEOD: They are not, but they are there now and they are being used because they are there because that is the only resource available.

MR. MACEACHERN: In some areas, yes, that is right. (Interruption) That is right absolutely. Now, let's go back to it and I am going to talk about the meeting I had with them. In fact, I sat and talked to them at length about this very thing because they are all over the place. Transition houses from place to place are funded differently. They are funded differently, again, because of the accidents of history that I have described. How we are going to fund them in the future has to do with us developing a policy on how you fund women's centres, how you fund transition houses and it has to be a provincial policy. We don't have one on how these things are funded. We have to find a way of doing that. I agree with you.

MR. MACLEOD: I understand that. We have introduced a program, zero tolerance, but we didn't do any background work. It goes back to, why do we do that?

MR. MACEACHERN: I don't know. I didn't do it. I just got here, okay?

MR. MACLEOD: It doesn't wash. You use that all the time. You have been in government now for almost four years, so that doesn't wash anymore.

MR. MACEACHERN: I am acknowledging it at the front side. Let me say at the beginning. Let's acknowledge at the front side. There is an equitable funding in terms of how these transition houses, women's centres are funded, presently. How they came to be that way, and, by the way, we do not have a policy for transition houses for the province. We just have some that occurred in some places. How, in fact, we proceed is a question and I say we are trying to answer the question and I wish I had a magic wand to solve your concern, but I don't have the magic wand, nor, and I repeat what I said before to Eileen, what I would be afraid of, if I solved something all at once and was wrong, it may be more problem than it was. This has to be involved with the stakeholders. We are working with the stakeholders. I am sitting with the people. We are working through this. We acknowledge the difficulties and we are trying to find a solution.

MR. MACLEOD: Again, I will say it. The people in the system are not the problem. They are the solution. We all know that and that is why you are sitting down and talking to them and that is the way it should be done. I am only a country bumpkin, okay?

MR. MACEACHERN: Not me, I am from Glace Bay. I am very sophisticated.

MR. MACLEOD: We won't even go there.

MR. MACEACHERN: That is because you are not welcome. You want to play, we can play.

MR. MACLEOD: I would not go there in that conversation. I have spent a lot of time in Glace Bay. I worked there before I came here.

MR. MACEACHERN: And I spoke to you often there.

MR. MACLEOD: The problem is that we have got a program, and this is one of many programs, that we identified that needs funding, needs help. You are talking about a solution process that I think could work. But what happens in the meantime? You see, there are people that still need to use these services in the meantime.

MR. MACEACHERN: Back up for just a second. It is not just the transition houses. But let's talk even in the Legislature upstairs, the idea of zero tolerance in the Legislature and how we deal with each other. That is very important. It is a level of degree of what you understand. In schools, zero tolerance is something that is now becoming a principle throughout all of the schools. It is not about transition houses. That policy that has been adopted is not about spousal abuse, for example. It is about something else. Spousal abuse

is a part of it. So, in terms of funding the whole thing, every agency, every part of government, is focused very clearly on this zero tolerance relative to abuse.

If you want to speak very specifically, gender type abuse, that is a significant part of it, for obvious reasons, obvious cultural reasons. It is not just about transition houses. How in fact these things will move forward is the question that we are asking with them. We accept that this is where we are and I told them that from the front side. There is not going to be a magic solution in the next short period of time, but I am more than willing, as is the staff, to work with all of them to find a way through it. I have them all sitting at the same tables, side by side each other, with us, talking about how, in fact, we move forward. It is coming along very well from that area. The zero tolerance is even, in fact, how we deal with each other, you and I. Now don't get cross with me.

MR. MACLEOD: I never would do that.

MR. MACEACHERN: I knew that.

MR. MACLEOD: Because it wouldn't make any difference.

MR. MACEACHERN: It might sometimes.

MR. MACLEOD: I am getting a little frustrated, so I am going to change just a little bit.

MS. EILEEN O'CONNELL: Alfie, can I say something?

MR. MACLEOD: You certainly can.

MS. O'CONNELL: I thought that you gave a commitment in the House to bring those three lower ones up to the \$54,000 level.

MR. MACEACHERN: I did, but he is asking me about a whole lot of things. What he is asking me is not just about the difference between those two, he is asking me about the fact that this whole area is underfunded. It is not just a question of the difference between them.

MS. O'CONNELL: I just wanted to flag that, you know that, that the minister, and I am reiterating it today, just to make absolutely sure I heard him right, that commitment was made yesterday that those ones that get \$20,100 are going to get \$54,000. That is what I heard. (Interruption)

MR. MACLEOD: . . . when I asked that question.

MR. MACEACHERN: Well, you didn't ask me that question.

MR. MACLEOD: No, I did ask you that question yesterday and what I asked you was the difference and you said you were reviewing the program and how they were being funded, but there was no guarantees how they would be funded later.

MR. MACEACHERN: Eileen pushed me.

MR. MACLEOD: Gender abuse.

MR. MACEACHERN: Eileen then said to me, afterwards, how do you think this thing is going to work? My understanding, and I have asked staff to look very clearly, and the last indication I have is that we think this is possible and that we can address this. That is exactly what I said.

MR. MACLEOD: We think we can address it.

MS. O'CONNELL: You are not taking one dollar off the \$54,000 ones to give to the ones that are at \$20,000 to bring them up and he said, yes. He agreed with that. He is saying now he agreed with it. Just so you know because I am holding him to it.

MR. MACLEOD: And I will be right behind you. I make a great backstop. It will take you a day to walk around me.

Let's go back to talking about transition houses and how they do get their funding. There are different funding formulas, again, . . .

MR. MACEACHERN: Per diems.

MR. MACLEOD: Per diems, but they have to reapply every year for their funding. Is that right?

MR. MACEACHERN: No. Their funding goes year by year and, historically, the funding has been announced probably late and that is why you get the parts. We review every budget every year. What we are doing, in fact, I met with them and here is what I told them. I said, I would like a group of you to sit down with my staff and figure out if there is a better way to fund. If it doesn't cost us any more money, we don't care how it flows. By the way, now that we have this two-tiered system, they get part from us and get part from the municipalities. Some municipalities are late paying, some pay on time, some don't pay at all, some pay less, some pay more. So it is a real problem. But as we move towards single-tiered, that part will be solved. I asked them to sit with staff to try to explore other ways of providing funding and they committed to do that.

When I was down with the Lunenburg group, they actually had a proposal on how they think the funding might flow better. So we are considering that. Again, that came from their request as I sat with them, and not from something I came down and told them. I just said, is there a problem? Tell me what it is and if you have suggestions. The staff was with me. I said, could you continue this conversation to see if we can get a better solution? When they all met in my office, a group of them with my staff person, Judy Jackson, they talked through it and, again, the commission was made that they talk to each other to try to find a better way that the cash would flow.

Here is one of their complaints. They said, in order for us to get paid, if we are working with somebody, we have to bring them to stay at our transition house. But sometimes it is better to counsel them in their home and support them in their home, but there is no support for us doing that. So we are trying to work our way through that and it has some difficulties, but we are trying to work through it.

MR. MACLEOD: One of the questions that I hear from a lot of people in groups is you apply for funding and we never find out until the very last moment if we are going to get the funding. For example, there was one group that applied and it wasn't until April 2nd that they received a cheque in the mail.

[5:00 p.m.]

MR. MACEACHERN: Yes, but that is because the year starts on April 1st.

MR. MACLEOD: Yes, but up until that point, from the time they looked for their funding, they had no way of knowing if they were getting it or they were not getting it. The staff were up in the air wondering what was happening.

MR. MACEACHERN: Well, I will answer it in two ways. First of all, we announced in September that we were doing a review and that we would get back to them. It was in the paper long before that cheque came because the reason we didn't send them a letter, because I think and I am guessing at this, when we did, probably in February, it was in February. In February I was down talking about the residential centre in Truro and one of the reporters asked us, what about next year? I said we have looked at it and we are going to maintain the funding for next year. So that was in every paper and on every radio. In fact, by the time I left here for Truro and by the time I got to the airport, it was on the radio. So that is why we didn't push it. It was all over the place that it was there. I can't explain why they hadn't heard it. We sent the quarter cheques out exactly like we did with the 3 per cent reinstated but it was on every radio station and on every television station and in every newspaper in the province.

MR. MACLEOD: With all due respect, Mr. Minister, it was on every radio station and in every paper in the Province of Nova Scotia that the Auditor General wasn't pleased with the way that the budgeting was done in this province and people took that for gospel and you told us it wasn't right. So why should they just listen to a radio announcement? You have a double standard here. You expect us to listen to the radio and the announcements in the newspapers when they fit your use but when . . .

MR. MACEACHERN: This was pretty clear, though.

MR. MACLEOD: Well, it may have been pretty clear but these are the same people who you have just finished telling us that you would like to sit down and talk to. All these different agencies . . .

MR. MACEACHERN: And we are going to sit with every - we wrote . . .

MR. MACLEOD: Well, why can't you write them a letter and tell them what is going on? That is what they want.

MR. MACEACHERN: I accept that. They received their money on April 2nd because the year started April 1st. Last year - let me speak to this because this is very important, by the way. What I told them, and I met every one of them, here is what I said. From now on, when we get through this year, we hope to be putting in place rolling budgets of three years in a row. That is what we hope for, given in December, that is our target. We have done it with the school boards and we hope to do it with all of our agencies here. This is a revolution for them because they never even thought this was possible. So when December comes, we will tell them what their next year's budget is, starting April 1st.

We will also give them kind of a snapshot picture of what they might be getting the year after and kind of giving them a visioning of where we hope to go in the future. We are aiming to do that. That is brand new to them and they are very excited about that as a possibility. So that is where we are heading.

This year is special because we did a review last year. This year we are talking to all of them and I am going to be around the province, speaking to each and every one of them. Staff is going to be talking to each and every one of them. By the time the end of the year comes, we are going to be working in a much more continuous sort of way, but historically, that has not been the case and that is what we are aiming towards. Were they happy with the letter, by the way?

MR. MACLEOD: I'm sure they were happy with their funding . . .

MR. MACEACHERN: I just thought I would check.

MR. MACLEOD: But there was no letter and that is the key that you are missing here. You see . . .

MR. MACEACHERN: Letter saying what, though? You said you had a letter and he didn't get a letter. I don't understand this. (Interruption) Okay, I think it is the region that didn't send a letter because she has a letter that went with the funding, indicating that that is exactly what it was. It went March 22nd. (Interruptions)

MR. MACLEOD: Well, I think I am talking about probably a different organization than she is.

MR. MACEACHERN: Okay, we will check it.

MS. O'CONNELL: This is the letter that came with the cheque, enclosed please find the first quarter's cheque. That is not notice ahead of time.

MR. MACEACHERN: Yes, but again, I assumed, and as I said, it was all over the place . . .

MS. O'CONNELL: And he buggered it up anyway.

MR. MACLEOD: They did not receive a letter, they received a cheque. The problem is you take great pains to explain to us every time you answer a question that you communicate with people and you sit down and you talk with them.

MR. MACEACHERN: Yes, I do that.

MR. MACLEOD: The cry of some of the agencies out there is, very simply, that there isn't enough communication.

MR. MACEACHERN: Okay, we will get more.

MR. MACLEOD: At times they ask questions and questions about their funding.

MR. MACEACHERN: They didn't ask any questions.

MR. MACLEOD: There were two letters sent to you; one on February 27th, one on March 26th and signed by Terry Donahoe.

MR. MACEACHERN: And did I answer them? I always answer letters.

MR. MACLEOD: You always answer your letters . . .

MR. MACEACHERN: But what did I write back?

MR. MACLEOD: . . . but you rarely put anything in them.

MR. MACEACHERN: Oh, what do I write? Tell me what I responded to. Tell me what I said. What did I write back?

MR. MACLEOD: After the first letter you did announce over the radio but not by communications. That is the problem.

MR. MACEACHERN: Okay, we will take that. I have no problem saying that that is what should have been done but I assumed that everybody knew - I travelled the province after that. In fact, shortly after that I went from Lunenburg to Queens to Shelburne to Yarmouth to Digby to Annapolis to Kings County during a period of three days. When I got there everybody knew.

Here is what they said now. I am going to tell you what the question was; we are just checking the story, we heard it as the truth. I said, absolutely.

MR. MACLEOD: Now you are starting to catch on, you see. They didn't . . .

MR. MACEACHERN: They didn't believe it.

MR. MACLEOD: They didn't really believe it.

MR. MACEACHERN: You know what that was? That was the previous government, the way they created a bad reputation.

MR. MACLEOD: Well, you should learn from past mistakes and not build on them.

MR. MACEACHERN: Well, we are going to learn.

MR. MACLEOD: And that is communication.

MR. MACEACHERN: I accept that.

MR. MACLEOD: You got me all fired up now.

MR. MACEACHERN: I'm ready to go.

MR. MACLEOD: So you say that for funding for transition houses, for example, there is no reapplication process?

MR. MACEACHERN: There is a review each year. We review each year what the budget was because they are all tied to per diems. You see, it is also tied to that dual system which we are moving away from. So there is each municipality, we want to make sure that they are - like we have had a couple of cases, and I won't relate which one, of very poor use of money - can I say that? - and it concerns us greatly. We did one review, two reviews and they are doing very well now. In fact, when I visited them they belated their bad history and then they told me that this is under control. My staff, I checked with them yesterday, everything is going well.

You see it is very difficult because there is certain financial expertise needed besides the goodwill of caring for people.

MR. MACLEOD: And that is one of the reasons why they have to undergo a review, as I understand it, so that those things can be checked out. Again, and I am talking about a transition house here, one of the problems is being right down to the wire before they know.

MR. MACEACHERN: We are going to fix that next year.

MR. MACLEOD: They have responsibilities to staff and other people to let them know.

MR. MACEACHERN: That is why the plan next year is for December.

MR. MACLEOD: So next year, anybody who is expecting funding from your department . . .

MR. MACEACHERN: By December that is our plan.

MR. MACLEOD: . . . they shall know by December?

MR. MACEACHERN: That is our plan.

MR. MACLEOD: Whether it is a transition house or a women's centre or . . .

MR. MACEACHERN: That's our plan.

MR. MACLEOD: . . . a help line in Cape Breton.

MR. MACEACHERN: Anybody who receives funding from us shall know by December of the year previous that they are going to receive funding and what it will be, yes.

MR. MACLEOD: I thank you for that answer. Now that I did slip in there about the help line in Cape Breton, it is a very important operation. I think you are well aware of the services.

MR. MACEACHERN: I know what it does, yes.

MR. MACLEOD: I think with the proper funding it really saves us money in the long run. I know in the past, and last year in particular, they went right down to the wire about their funding and they had some major concerns. They are doing some unique and innovative things to survive and make that service available for people but I would just want to encourage the minister to do everything in his power to make sure that that is the type of service we can keep. I think what those people do, as volunteers, is remarkable.

MR. MACEACHERN: I note the observation but I can tell you that what we are doing is we are going to be reviewing across the next year, sitting down with each and every one of them, with our regional administrators because again it goes back to how is the service delivered in the whole region. So we will be looking at each and everything. As I said to Eileen a while ago, it won't be done in a distance way; we will actually be on the ground dealing with each and every one of the agencies that we fund. The regional administrators have started discussions. There is a lot in some cases but they have started discussions already with agencies.

MR. MACLEOD: If I could, I just want to go back to the adoption thing for just a second. You say there is a means test; what is the minimum amount of money, do you know?

MR. MACEACHERN: It is at maximum family benefits, I am told, whatever that is. So that is again . . .

MR. MACLEOD: It is graduated from there.

MR. MACEACHERN: Yes. It is again focusing on not whether you are on family benefits but the poverty level again.

MR. MACLEOD: Just one more request. You mentioned there is a committee sitting down looking at the small options problem. Do we have the names of the individuals that are - I know you haven't got it right there on the top of your head.

MR. MACEACHERN: Well, I can tell you who is representing - Sue from Health, what is Sue's last name? It is a hyphenated name, I only met her about two weeks ago.

MR. MACLEOD: If he could just supply those names to us and who they represent, it would be helpful.

MR. MACEACHERN: I forget, there are four people on the committee but we will get the names for him.

MR. MACLEOD: Mr. Chairman, that is it for now. I want to thank the minister and his staff for being so kind to me.

MR. MACEACHERN: We tried our best. Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The honourable member for Halifax Fairview.

MS. EILEEN O'CONNELL: Mr. Chairman, I just wanted to make a quick comment about the women's centres because Mr. MacLeod was talking about it and I may as well just add my voice.

I was listening to your phrasing carefully but our understanding is that you met with the women's centres and also with the Transition House Association of Nova Scotia, THANS, right?

MR. MACEACHERN: Mr. Chairman, absolutely. But I not only met with them I met with representatives of all of them. In fact, the last meeting I had a couple of weeks ago and I am meeting with them again, included at least one representative of every transition house and every women's centre in the province. There were so many of them that they had to sit against the wall.

MS. O'CONNELL: Mr. Chairman, this meeting that I am referring to, it is my understanding that the transition houses were not at this particular one?

MR. MACEACHERN: Mr. Chairman, I met with them too, I have had all kinds of meetings.

MS. O'CONNELL: Mr. Chairman, I am talking about this particular meeting. Is that your recollection that there was one meeting that was with the transition houses with the women's centres and THANS?

MR. MACEACHERN: Yes.

MS. O'CONNELL: I listened to your phrasing about doing things differently but their concern is that they will lose money because somebody will come in and argue that something is a duplication of service when in fact it is complementary?

MR. MACEACHERN: Mr. Chairman, they brought that specifically to me, that was the argument that was made. What I said to them as clearly as I possibly can, I said, no, that is not what we are looking at. I gave the example I gave you, for example, in Sydney with the

transition house and the Second Chance group. I said, is there a way for us to put programming together so that both services are delivered but we can enhance those by doing things together? They came back with the word, clustering, which is interesting because that is a word that is usually used in the business sector but that is the word that they used. That was their first question and I answered it as clearly as I could for them, that that was not what we were working toward, we were working toward how to help each other and not how to get in each other's way.

MS. O'CONNELL: Mr. Chairman, I guess I am just worried because I am not sure that they feel as good about the message as you feel about delivering it.

MR. MACEACHERN: Mr. Chairman, part of the difficulty has to do with history. I can share with you my past experience in meeting with the universities. The beginning discussions were exactly like that but after a period of time they became much more grown up, I will use that, in terms of how we related. It will come with time as we talk to them. They will see what we are doing as we are doing it. I haven't disappointed them yet.

MS. O'CONNELL: Mr. Chairman, I am going to leave that one alone . . .

MR. MACEACHERN: Maybe I have disappointed them.

MS. O'CONNELL: Mr. Chairman, well, all right. Our understanding is that they asked you for a commitment to work for the women of Nova Scotia.

MR. MACEACHERN: And I said yes. I went further than that, I said my commitment as Minister of Community Services was to work for every Nova Scotian and by definition that includes the women of Nova Scotia. I give you that commitment because that is what I, by constitution and sworn oath, do.

MS. O'CONNELL: Mr. Chairman, this is why they are worried because that is not going further for them. I think the issue is and the zero tolerance issue, the Family Violence Prevention Initiative clearly demonstrates that there is on the one hand the commitment of this government to work with women and children. Family violence is primarily directed against women and children, I am not saying it is exclusively but that program is there because of what you call cultural history.

I guess if I had been at this meeting I would be a little unnerved by that answer, especially if it was in the conjunction of funding because, in fact, what you have to do in that kind of a situation is to work for the women and children and the benefits will accrue to the culture.

MR. MACEACHERN: Mr. Chairman, part of the difficulty is I have a sworn oath and I am going to choose people with disabilities if I could, Mr. Chairman, with your respect. We have to and justice requires this that people that have special needs we treat special. That doesn't minimize the fact that my commitment to the people of Nova Scotia who have the needs are there and I will work devotedly, with the greatest energy that I can for people with disabilities.

I don't for a moment work with the same energy for people like ourselves as I do for people with disabilities because they have very particular needs and as a result they need a disproportionate amount of my attention and energy and they get it. They get it consistently and you can see it in the budget, you can see it in the way that we spend our days. Likewise, and I don't mean to be even a little bit unpleasant about it, we don't have any money for transition houses for men because it is a special need and that is what we are providing for. The Children's Aid Society has focused their attentions in a very particular way and we know that but that is part of my difficulty.

To say to me am I dedicating my energies towards the care of women and children, absolutely. By oath and by constitutional requirement I must dedicate myself to that and in the Department of Community Services it is obvious to those who are at risk and those, whether it be children or adults who for some reason, certain circumstances or an accident, they are at risk and can't defend themselves, that is number one of what we do. Everybody in the Department of Community Services knows that, we have written it every place you can find that it is number one. Secondly, we provide basic needs, food, clothing and shelter to those who can't provide for themselves and, third, we help people towards independence. So my answer to the question was absolutely correct and I say that in terms of the oath that I took.

Justice requires that differences be recognized and that equals be treated equally and that is again consistent with justice. To say, for example, that it is the Minister of Community Services' main function is not true. I wouldn't have lied to them nor will I lie to you.

MS. O'CONNELL: Mr. Chairman, I don't think they said main function but if they did I didn't know that. I guess what I am saying is that if the government . . .

MR. MACEACHERN: Well, you seem to be implying that.

MS. O'CONNELL: No.

MR. MACEACHERN: Well, let me do it again then and I will be safe. I am committed to . . .

MS. O'CONNELL: No, let me do it again, okay, because what I am getting at is if this government does have a commitment and it does because there are those budgets for women's centres, that demonstrates working for women. Why can't it simply be said, yes, I am working for women of Nova Scotia?

MR. MACEACHERN: Well, I said that.

MS. O'CONNELL: It doesn't exclude anybody else.

MR. MACEACHERN: Let me go back to what I said. I took almost as a, how can I say it, I didn't take it as an affront but I felt it required clarity. I said to them if this group is here or if People First is there, am I dedicated to those people? Absolutely I am. I said to them, you take any group around this table in need of a particular type of service, am I dedicated to that? Absolutely I am. I said to them in particular that that includes the group that is here. As you said quite correctly, the evidence is in front of us.

MS. O'CONNELL: That is right but I guess I am just flagging the notion that if it is there, why can't the words be uttered, yes, I am working for women in this province. The evidence is there.

MR. MACEACHERN: I just finished saying that. I said to them, that is my sworn oath and yes, obviously, then I am working for women and children because that is part of what we do. But it is not all of what we do, we do other things besides as the budget again indicates. If you want to find out what it is we do and I told staff that when I first arrived as I tried to find out what our core functions were, I took what we said and then I explored the budget.

The budget is telling everybody what we do because that is what we are spending our energies and our money on and you can see it very clearly.

MS. O'CONNELL: I will leave that one alone, thank you. I want to talk for a minute about community-based options for adults. We had an inquiry from someone who was very surprised and please correct me if my information is wrong, if we look at community-based options, the line on Page 5.6 and you look at last year's stuff, you see there was an estimate, you see that it went up and then you see it is up again this year. It is my understanding that there was a cap last year but the cap was jiggled because of need and it is up again this year. Is that correct?

MR. MACEACHERN: I think it is more than that. There is community-based options, \$28 million and we are estimating \$30 million based on it. There are cost elements involved in terms of what we are paying. We simply pay the costs and again they are all over the place in terms of the numbers of people there and that is simply reflective of what we anticipate it is going to cost us.

MS. O'CONNELL: But was there a cap last year that was then, because of need, slipped past out of just clear . . .

MR. MACEACHERN: Oh, I don't think so.

MS. O'CONNELL: There was no cap?

MR. MACEACHERN: There is a moratorium on community-based options.

MS. O'CONNELL: Can you explain what that means, the moratorium?

MR. MACEACHERN: Some of the people, when they become adults, if they have disabilities, we accept them. If they are in our care and they go, for example, from the residential centre, just as a CTC and they go into, we accept them. That is probably part of the cost there. As we close our CTCs, some of them had adults in them and those adults would move into our community-based options many times.

MS. O'CONNELL: Was there a funding cap last year?

MR. MACEACHERN: No, there was a number cap.

MS. O'CONNELL: A number cap. Okay, thank you. And was that number cap lifted?

MR. MACEACHERN: No, it was a general moratorium and the only exceptions that would ever come, we allowed, for example, as we were closing the CTCs, we provide for them. There may be some cases, I know, for example, in our area some of the people who are coming from the CTC, we have built small options to house them. So there could be cases like that of deinstitutionalization. Mary's Hill Home is the other one.

MS. O'CONNELL: There is a number cap which means you could only have so many people in them.

MR. MACEACHERN: Number of houses, number of places, yes. There were no new community-based options facilities.

MS. O'CONNELL: So the cap is the same as the moratorium?

MR. MACEACHERN: Yes.

MS. O'CONNELL: Okay, so no new places.

MR. MACEACHERN: Except when we have cases like Mary's Hill closing. One of the conditions that were made as Mary's Hill was closing is that Mabou is building a small options place for those people who have been institutionalized in Mabou for many years and that is their home. So the municipality is building a small options home and three of the residents who are really connected to Mabou, even though they are not from there, are going to stay and that is an example of an exception.

MS. O'CONNELL: Is the moratorium still in effect on new places?

MR. MACEACHERN: Yes.

MS. O'CONNELL: With that exception.

MR. MACEACHERN: Yes.

MS. O'CONNELL: So no new places can open?

MR. MACEACHERN: That is right.

MS. O'CONNELL: So the only way somebody can get in at the moment is if somebody leaves.

MR. MACEACHERN: That is right. That is as it presently exists. Unless there is an extraordinary circumstance as we just described. We are looking at ways of moving forward. We have some ideas on how to move forward but we haven't settled on them yet because we haven't got exactly the complications that might come with them and we have embedded it with some of the providers out there. So we are looking at some ways . . .

MS. O'CONNELL: Is there a backlog building up on the waiting list?

MR. MACEACHERN: Probably there is. Probably the demand is there. Let me put it this way, when a space comes, we don't have any difficulties filling it and that goes back to Alfie's earlier question about if you have a licence for three and somebody were to leave, very few cases of which that is not filled very quickly.

MS. O'CONNELL: Can we get the numbers on the waiting list? Is that possible?

MR. MACEACHERN: I don't know that there is a formal waiting list.

MS. O'CONNELL: Or even the numbers. We don't want to know who they are, it is just what kind of a backlog there is.

MR. MACEACHERN: We will try to find what kind of data we have and whatever kind of data we have, you are welcome to.

MS. O'CONNELL: I am on now to upgrading programs. March 22nd, the Halifax Chronicle-Herald reported that two long-standing and innovative adult upgrading programs in Halifax are in jeopardy due to government cutbacks. Veith House upgrading program that has been in operation for 21 years and the Spryfield Continuing Education Program that is operated out of St. Paul's United Church for 16 years rely in part on a combined \$33,000 in provincial government funding. Most of that funding comes from the Department of Community Services in the form of aid to students on social assistance while the Halifax Regional School Board helps pay the instructors' salaries. Community Services stopped referring clients to Veith House last fall and in January the department cut off funding to six students in the Spryfield program. Last month the school board stopped paying the salary subsidy for the instructors. It goes on to say, it outlines what kind of programs they are and what populations they teach. I will skip over most of it. The bottom paragraph says that the Community Services spokesman, John McKee, said Monday the department is concerned about losing the programs and is setting up a meeting to try to work out the details. I guess my question is, are these programs really going, what does he mean by work out the details? How to cancel it?

MR. MACEACHERN: What he is basically saying, and I remember the article and I checked. That is actually the regional people, in fact, the region of metro, how, in fact, they do provide the training. Some of it was tied to how they did their upgrading. It has happened here and it varies as you go from region to region. I don't know what the detail is, what they found out in terms of it but that would have been funded per diem per social assistant recipient, case by case. I don't know what happened to the ones that no longer were referred. If they are no longer being referred there, they would be referred someplace else. So I don't know if there was more appropriate training for them or more appropriate . . .

MS. O'CONNELL: Well, it is upgrading.

MR. MACEACHERN: But once you get the upgrading, though, they could take them someplace else because there are other models of upgrading. But we will check it for you and see what the outcome was after the discussions because it was discussed and this is the first time I have heard of it since then. We will check it for you to find out.

MS. O'CONNELL: Could I ask what budget line that would be on?

MR. MACEACHERN: That would be under your income assistance part of it, the same thing, because your supports are tied inside there. That would do training, it would do child transportation, anything that would help people to go to work.

MS. O'CONNELL: That seems pretty drastic if the need is there.

MR. MACEACHERN: Yes, but I think there is a story to it. I think the people who are no longer referred there are referred someplace else, for whatever reason I don't remember, but there was a logic to why the region no longer were referring people to that area because they are still doing the training and we will check it for you and see.

MS. O'CONNELL: These are part day programs. That is the difference.

MR. MACEACHERN: Yes. It could be the development of day schools. I mean that is part of it. In fact, in the House upstairs today, they just introduced two groups, both of who are going to what they call adult day schools. It could be that some of these people are now being referred to the adult day schools. I was just speaking to one of the instructors at the adult day school and he said almost all of the people in his class have come off the Community Services rolls but we will get your answer for you rather than me speculate.

MS. O'CONNELL: Alfie, do you have one or two questions that you might want to ask just for a minute? Do you have anything that has come to your mind? The only reason is, there is somebody sitting over there I have to talk to so if you had a question . . .

MR. MACEACHERN: I could tell stories. I am just kidding.

MR. ALFRED MACLEOD: Who would want to go there?

MS. O'CONNELL: Do you have anything left or anything you have thought of?

MR. MACLEOD: Just give me a few seconds here.

MS. O'CONNELL: I will ask another one and maybe you could follow it up for a minute.

Mr. Minister, the NEEDS Project report. Do you remember that wonderful report from the NEEDS Project?

MR. MACEACHERN: No, update me.

MS. O'CONNELL: That is the massive report that was done and presented to you in early December about identifying a whole range of needs for people with disabilities.

MR. MACEACHERN: Oh, yes, okay.

MS. O'CONNELL: I haven't heard anything about it since.

MR. MACEACHERN: First of all, that has come from Charlie MacDonald's operation.

MS. O'CONNELL: Yes, it came from three groups, the Disabled Persons' Commission.

MR. MACEACHERN: Also, it was referred, it was sent along to Andy Scott's crowd when they did their national report, too. So you will see some reference in Andy Scott's national report. He did that House of Commons report that was referred to HRDC. Andy Scott's is probably the most complete report of the situation across the country. There was a consultation which actually started at one end of the country and travelled all the way across the country. The committee had two MPs on it but then it had, I think, four people from the disabilities community on it. They wrote the report. Andy Scott is a New Brunswick MP and the report, basically, is the foundation, well, it includes everything that could be included, even in NEEDS, it is kind of a reflection upwards.

What we are doing, and this is part of our discussions, in fact, we just did something with Transportation on working toward some kind of a transportation policy for people with disabilities. We put, I think, \$300,000 into a fund to start discussions. I met yesterday with Leo, myself and Minister Downe, to talk about putting together a work team to approach this. Their emphasis at the present time is developing a tourism initiative led by people with disabilities for people with disabilities and, as a result, they would be able to support, in part, a transportation system. So they brought that to us but that is a consequence of it.

[5:30 p.m.]

The second part of it, and this is part of the discussion from across the country, the same committee I spoke of before, in terms of National Child Benefit, their second initiative is developing a national program for people with disabilities. They are looking at and I am reaching here at length, that Canada Pension, looking at workers' compensation, family benefits, disability, income assistance, EI disability and there is a fifth program that they are looking at in terms of this, finding out if and how, in fact, you would go about developing a national program for people with disabilities.

In the last federal budget, there are four elements that came directly out of Andy Scott's report and the federal government, along with the 10 provinces of all leanings, and the two territories are looking about how you approach it. So we are looking at a national look at it first while we are doing programming in Nova Scotia. If the national one develops, it is going to have a great influence on how we proceed because it is going to impact very much on how we proceed. What we don't want to do is proceed in a direction that contradicts where we are going to end up nationally because those two things have to overlap in a very strong way. So it is being considered. In fact, Anita Irving, who is the chairman with Charlie MacDonald, they are giving a lot of attention, they are making recommendations to myself and staff constantly. We have been talking to everybody in terms of this to start the dialogue. Well, we could go on but that is where it is.

MS. O'CONNELL: Do you have a couple of things?

MR. ALFRED MACLEOD: Yes.

MS. O'CONNELL: I will be back in one minute.

MR. MACLEOD: The Compass Program, we talked a little bit about that earlier.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Does the member wish to be acknowledged?

MR. MACLEOD: I am sorry.

MR. MACEACHERN: That is Alfie MacLeod.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The honourable member for Cape Breton West.

MR. ALFRED MACLEOD: I am sorry for my eagerness, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That is all right.

MR. MACLEOD: To the minister, the Compass Program, I believe when it was originally announced, it was a budget of somewhere around \$15 million.

MR. MACEACHERN: I forget, \$15 million, half and half provincial and federal.

MR. MACLEOD: How much of that money was used?

MR. MACEACHERN: Not only was the \$15 million used, we used more ourselves because when it ran out and the feds were through, we continued. In fact, we funded for about four months all by ourselves and it almost crippled us because we continued. So what we have done now is we have joined with Economic Development and we have formed something we call Bridging To Success and it has many of the characteristics of Compass but new things added. So we are proceeding in that direction because it was very useful. The federal government is no longer in that program but we were anticipating our agreement with the federal government and that allows EI recipients and social assistance recipients and others to get more services and the services will be integrated. So we are working on that right now.

MR. MACLEOD: And if I understand Bridging To Success right, the hope is that we will get more people off the rolls and back to work.

MR. MACEACHERN: Yes, and the goal is that a day a week is better, moving toward full-time employment.

MR. MACLEOD: Right, which is a very admirable goal and I am sure that we all want to strive to meet that. The question I ask, eventually, the department hopes to see a saving here in their budget.

MR. MACEACHERN: Yes, we will. We did last year and we will next year.

MR. MACLEOD: That saving, is it all to the department or do the municipalities, when we come on line with the one-tier system, will the municipalities share in some of that saving?

MR. MACEACHERN: Well, the agreement that we have is a very unusual agreement. It basically says if there are more costs, we get them. If there are savings, especially on the administration side, we share them. But in terms of programming, if in fact we save money in terms of a particular program, we are going to do more programming. We are not going to save money. This is going to be more programming. If I can, for example, by saving money because more people go to work, I can put more supports for other people because we consider the spectrum of people who are on social assistance, they vary from those who have been on it for a short time and can go to work quickly to some who getting them to work is going to be a major task. So we can work our way deeper and deeper into that pool of people who are on social assistance with every dollar we rescue. So we are going to be working very diligently and every dollar, if we save money on administration, we will share it. If we save money on programming, we are doing more programming.

MR. MACLEOD: Reinvest it.

MR. MACEACHERN: Absolutely.

MR. MACLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Eileen, did you wish to question the minister again?

MS. EILEEN O'CONNELL: Yes, please.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The honourable member for Halifax Fairview.

MS. EILEEN O'CONNELL: I don't know that I have a lot left but I do have a couple of things at least. You may or may not recall that I wrote to you in the fall about . . .

MR. MACEACHERN: Did I answer you?

MS. O'CONNELL: Well, that is the good part. I just have a question. I wrote to you about the federal government's proposal to transfer job training to the provinces. Do you remember that?

MR. MACEACHERN: Yes.

MS. O'CONNELL: You did send me a letter, which you said you wouldn't normally have released but here it was. That letter indicated that you were not going to participate with the federal government because, and this is what I wanted to check about, my recollection was that it had to do with transferring employees from one level of government to another. Now, in March there is a letter to our Leader saying that you rejected the proposal for that reason.

MR. MACEACHERN: Yes, I did.

MS. O'CONNELL: Is it my understanding, then, that this new deal with HRDC that you announced is the same deal but that the job problem has been worked out? Is this all the same package?

MR. MACEACHERN: It is the same package, it is the same proposal. They made a proposal that involved that we take over the complete delivery of what they call the six active measures of the EI program. Our staff and their staff have been, for close to a year, sitting down and trying to work their way through it but the problem was that the federal government committed to particular arrangements with anybody who transferred over and they were talking about 250 staff members transferring to the province which were incompatible with our agreements with our unions. I stated from the very beginning that I will not sacrifice our people just to bring these people across.

So what I did after some time, I forced the discussions away from that item and left it off to the side and we focused all of our attentions on the principles. At the end of the day, we agreed on all of the principles of partnering, working together, serving people better but we couldn't come to an agreement on the transfer, how that possibly could happen. So I still remember one of my last meetings, I simply took the contract we have with staff and I gave it to the federal representatives and I said you take that away and you give that to your lawyers and if you can figure out a way of making this compatible, then I will talk to you. They came back after that and that is when I told them I couldn't accept it because they acknowledged that the promises and our commitments were incompatible. So then what happened, we sat down and just discussed principles and said can we partner to satisfy those.

Our agreement is like no other agreement in the country. Newfoundland is closest. They have a co-management which I don't even understand because it is a static kind of thing that you have to get approvals at all kinds of levels. What ours basically says is that the province and the federal HRDC office will together put in place the six active measures. That is the principle, plus we will do anything else we agree to do together. That is what it says in principle. It is very short. It is about 13 pages or something. It basically says that if we agree to do something, this is how we will go about doing it. Some cases in point, we are looking at, for example, how we can take social assistance training offices and HRDC offices and put

them together in this way, that if somebody arrives at the office and they need assessments, for example, prior learning assessments - as an example, we are talking to Henson College about that - then we find ways of providing it for them. We don't ask them how they got here except to put it on a form so people know.

If you, for example, are an EI recipient, you come to me, who is a prior learning assessment officer. This person here was on social assistance. They come to me because they need prior learning assessment. I may be employed by the federal government, I may be employed by the provincial government, it doesn't matter in our model. So that is what we are working to put in place. As a result, the benefits and arrangements that the federal employee has are his arrangements. The service he is providing is to Nova Scotians and it is of a particular type and we want to be able to use them not only for the EI recipient but the social assistance recipient and others so that if it is the service we need, we have to give precedence to these groups but we want to be able to do the others. We are working on that even though it is not in our agreement except to say that if we decide to do this together we can. So that is the kind of agreement it is. Do you want a copy of it?

MS. O'CONNELL: So my own self, I just want to translate this into really concrete terms. I don't know whether I have . . .

MR. MACEACHERN: If you don't have it, I will get it for you.

MS. O'CONNELL: I have Canada-Nova Scotia Agreement on a Framework for a Strategic Partnership.

MR. MACEACHERN: That is it.

MS. O'CONNELL: Let me just translate it into really concrete terms. The mother of five children, aged three to eight, who was told by Community Services that she may as well forget it because she would need \$38,000 in income to pay her child care. Is this going to do anything for her?

MR. MACEACHERN: Well, we hope so but we are just inventing it now and one of the measures that is provided there, one of the six active measures, is child care. There were only five and under pressure of not only Nova Scotia but of most of the provinces and the territories, this was included. It was included at our request and Doug Young was the minister at the time and he agreed to do that. So that is part of it. How, in fact, it proceeds case by case, I would only be guessing but it certainly can address the question, how it would address it is part of the process that we are working at. What we hope to do and our goal is to, as much as possible, provide opportunities for people to move toward work and that they will not be punished for working. That is what our goal is. Now how that is going to be achieved is an adventure, I guess would be a good way of putting it.

MS. O'CONNELL: If you were she, what office would you go to tomorrow to find out about this?

MR. MACEACHERN: Tomorrow you still come to us or HRDC because both of us are part of the agreement. She would go to either one of those offices to see if we have solved it yet. I would be surprised if we have because we have just started it. But I can tell you that there is another case identical in Cape Breton, by the way, only it is four children. Again, her husband and she, for whatever reason, separated and she was left with the four children and she has a similar problem. How, in fact, we proceed is a question that we want to do because I think it was Mr. Moody who said earlier on that it may be financially better for her to stay home but it may be healthwise better for her to go to work. That is the question that we have to work our way through. I don't believe people ought to be punished for going to work.

MS. O'CONNELL: But does this program acknowledge her choice if she wants to? See that is what happened before, her choice was to find work and Community Services says don't be ridiculous, it is way too costly. You are never going to make enough money, you are going to be worse off so go home and forget it. This woman is looking at the rest of her life and saying . . .

MR. MACEACHERN: We won't be telling people that.

MS. O'CONNELL: She is looking at the rest of her life and saying, I have five children and I am only 32, or whatever, and I want a sustaining career for the rest of my days.

MR. MACEACHERN: Let me even, I will underscore that for you in the following way. The present system, and I will take single mothers, for example, because it is a whole category in our present system, we have many cases of 43 to 50 year old women whose children are now gone off who are absolutely hopeless and they are hopeless for the following reason. They are now deemed to be a single, able-bodied person. They have no training, no skills, no experience because the system basically says that you go off and look after your children and we will provide you maintenance, that is what they do, and they are lost. So if you want to consider a dreadful situation, that is as dreadful as it can be because this fine person has done a good job raising under difficult situations her family and she arrives, the children are gone off, they are doing okay, and boys oh boys, what a shock she gets. That is something we are trying to address so that if, in fact, somebody is there, we develop their skills, we develop their opportunities, we keep them connected to the workforce so that when that occurs their opportunities are better and if you want to put it in your language, the choice of it is better. So that is part of our concern as we work our way through it. Your case, the single mother with the five children is probably the extreme of that.

MS. O'CONNELL: Yes.

MR. MACEACHERN: But you can see the trauma because that is traumatic. This woman who has very positively contributed and all of a sudden she is - and it is a problem.

MS. O'CONNELL: So she should watch this program carefully for support.

MR. MACEACHERN: Absolutely. It is our hope that this has the kernel of the solution for many situations in terms of prior learning assessment, literacy training, skills toward work, other kinds of things because it provides a single entry to it.

MS. O'CONNELL: I don't even know if I want to get into the one-tier welfare systems. How would you like to get into the one-tier? (Interruption) I don't know whether at this point in the day, there is so much on it. I did want to make a comment though and now that I see this I remember your conversation with Alfie about the Nova Scotia Association of Social Workers. I just want to interject one comment about that. I heard and understood what you said about the validity of the study.

MR. MACEACHERN: Scholarship-wise.

MS. O'CONNELL: Scholarship was the word you used but I would like to add on the record that there is one among perhaps other very good reasons for that and that is that it is a self-selecting response group and that a self-selecting response group from those on social assistance or family benefits, there are many people who will not speak out. You know we live in a political culture where people think if they speak their mind they will lose what little they have. So I just wanted to add that comment because I think you are quite right but I think the reasons for it are more significant than the fact that they are self-selecting and I think, in fact, they received many fewer responses than they had anticipated because they had underestimated the power of that restraint and kind of the old political culture in this province that if I speak up, they will take away my cheque.

MR. MACEACHERN: There are two things I will say to that. Again, I am going to address this as best I can in a scholarship way. I am a math/physics person and my background is research - that is what I did in my past life - 1,100 social workers were part of their association, they were asked to send in, 10 responded and they are not intimidated, but 10 responded and it was presented in a very particular way, if I remember this, 15 per cent of those who responded said, but when you present it in that way, you are implying a validity. I understood about the details and the difficulties but when you present data as if it is saying something about the number of people in the system that object to it, that is the scholarship question.

The conclusions, and again I am speaking scholarship-wise and I am not speaking defensively, reflecting that as so many, for example, I am remembering one of them at the bottom of the page. Let's see if I can remember it exactly. It said, such a percentage of the people feel that they were poorly served but I don't think that reflected it all, in fact. That is

part of my difficulty as I work my way through that. So two things. I agree to what you say when you call out for stories from people on social assistance, there is a dread and I will use the word dread. Secondly, though, there were 1,100 social workers, 10 responded and I will even go further than that, many of the social workers who are members of this, in fact, are the very people who are delivering the service that were receiving the criticism. I know, for example, from talking to some of the people in our shop, they had some difficulty with it on a scholarship level and that is part of it.

MS. O'CONNELL: It is a small sample, I don't dispute that but I just want to be very careful. You can't say the opposite either.

MR. MACEACHERN: Well, I didn't. I tried not to.

MS. O'CONNELL: I know and I just wanted to be clear about that, that it is a small sample. Now, of course, prospect mailings consider 4 per cent a good response.

MR. MACEACHERN: But if it is sampled properly, that is right. It has to be sampled randomly.

MS. O'CONNELL: Prospect mailing is a dump. You send it out to everybody and every dog that you know.

MR. MACEACHERN: But they have done mathematical analyses and they are coming back and they are indicating what the margin of error is and even if they had done a margin of error on this sample that they had, I want to suggest to you that it would have been more than 4 per cent.

MS. O'CONNELL: One of the things that happens in the House and around this place is that when you, sometimes, and you have not done it in this committee, I am not saying that you have, in fact, you have done the very opposite but frequently, I understand the need for numbers and critical mass and all that, but sometimes things happen to real people that are so terrible and sometimes when we talk about that, the response is a non-response on the grounds that it is anecdotal and I just want to say that yes, this may amount to anecdotal but it is real important and it is about real people.

MR. MACEACHERN: I will add on top of that. When I first met with my staff I said to them, a group of you have a very difficult job and no matter how hard we work, some bad things can happen. We can work very hard and if bad things happen, that is very sad, explore it very carefully to make sure that we have done everything we know how to do and if we haven't then we have to learn from that because bad things happen, they really do, and as hard as people work, you are going to have situations that are unfortunate and are going to hurt people. (Interruption) Yes, that is true and they have to be studied and they have to be

explored and taken very seriously because they may be giving you indications of systemic problems that will be helpful.

MS. O'CONNELL: The shelter allowances, any hope of restoring those to previous levels?

MR. MACEACHERN: By the way, when they say that, the shelter allowance as it presently exists, in some regions they were the shelter allowance that existed before because what they did, and staff will help me, I asked this question early on, when they merged the county with Halifax and Dartmouth, they went up with some, down with some, they went in this area but when they were looking at single, able bodied, they picked a number that was in one of the areas and I forget which one. So to say that it went down, it went down in some areas but the food allowance went down in some areas and up in others and that is what they arrived at. That being said, because that is the history of it, as we move toward the single tier for the whole province, we are going to be moving toward shelter allowances for the province that make sense with differences being treated different.

So as we review across this year, that is a possibility and I give you that. I am not telling you it is a guarantee but those things are all being reviewed because industrial Cape Breton, Halifax and Queens are pilots in which we are exploring decisions that are made and how effective those decisions were.

MS. O'CONNELL: I raise it as an MLA for Fairview because nobody there thinks that you can live anywhere for \$225 month. It is utterly appalling. So is there any guarantee that it will be tied to the cost of housing?

MR. MACEACHERN: As I said, I won't give you a guarantee because I hate that because I may end up, something may happen that that, let's go further, I may not be here in five months' time, I don't even want to consider it, so I can't give you a guarantee.

MS. O'CONNELL: I suppose I may not either so there you go.

MR. MACEACHERN: That is why guarantees scare me in this business but I can tell you that staff is looking at it very carefully and I have sat in the office up in the West End Mall and talked to staff and one of the staff members actually brought that concern to me. She is the adolescent worker and she was walking by in kind of a fast pace. I introduced myself and she says, I have a problem. I said, what is your problem? She said, I will be right back. She went to use the phone and then she came back to me and she explained the shelter allowance and dealing with adolescents. So our guys are looking at it very carefully. They are exploring it very carefully and their conclusions will be based on what is best, as best we can do. That is part of our discussions.

MS. O'CONNELL: I wanted to register that because I do think it is utterly appalling. It is not possible.

MR. MACEACHERN: I accept that and, as I said, I share that. It has been noted before as well.

MS. O'CONNELL: I could stop there, I could probably, like you, go on and on but I don't need to.

MR. MACEACHERN: I know a lot of stuff about this stuff and I kind of like sharing it because I have spent the last 10 months learning it and some of it is pretty special, most of it is pretty special.

MS. O'CONNELL: I am still grappling myself with the whole history of the one-tier. I don't even know where to begin on that.

MR. MACEACHERN: If it would be helpful, I will give you a very quick review. We presently have the Cape Breton pilot - which is the real pilot - the metro, which is simply a replication.

MS. O'CONNELL: It is not really one-tier, though, is it?

MR. MACEACHERN: It is one-tier but it has . . .

MS. O'CONNELL: One-tier management.

MR. MACEACHERN: One-tier management.

MS. O'CONNELL: Two-tier funding.

MR. MACEACHERN: But in Cape Breton they are using a single tier. They are moving in that direction. Queens is like Halifax. We then have 32 systems run by us, delivered by us but double and they are all over the map. Digby, as I see the member for Digby here, which is probably the most difficult case. Lunenburg is different again, Antigonish is different again and there are 32 of those. Then we have 20 in which their municipal workers and our workers don't talk a lot and sometimes they are in the same building and you go here and when you are done there you go here and when you drop out of there you go back here. So that is what we are dealing with. We are moving toward a single tier. We presently have 63 per cent, approximately, among the three systems which have this joint management moving toward single tier.

The others we are going to, across the next year, bring them all under single management and by April of next year, we will have moved towards. I say that, an income assistance model which supports people toward work also with a focus on looking on people, we call it a static caseload. Some people, who, if they work, it will only be a marginal attachment to the work so we want to find a way of not pestering them a lot, I guess is a good way of putting it, with a recognition there but the supports. We want to be able to support them in a way that enriches and encourages them. So that is what we are attempting to do. We are looking at all kinds of modelling. We have a staff looking on how to do it and I am very encouraged by it.

MS. O'CONNELL: The goal for when this will all be . . .

MR. MACEACHERN: April 1st of next year by agreement with the UNSM. So that is our target. We have to have it ready by then and then we have to also get it ready so that when the National Child Benefit comes in, we can flip it to make sure that becomes part of the program.

MS. O'CONNELL: Did I read that the Town of Kentville was distressed about this?

MR. MACEACHERN: No, they are distressed that they still pay 10 per cent.

MS. O'CONNELL: They thought it was going to cost more.

MR. MACEACHERN: Here is the agreement we had. I went to UNSM and made the following agreement. You all want us to do this, I accept that. We think we can do it but we can't absorb your present contribution. Their present contribution was of the order of \$42.8 million. So I said to them, I don't care how you come up with it, you figure that out. That is not my concern, that is your concern. So they sat down and they worked through, with the help of our staff, they started with a whole lot of models. They got down to three models of how the funding would come and they agreed on whatever was the lesser of last year and this year for any municipality. Generally, that is good but there are several, Richmond County is upset with that, some of the people in Kings County are upset and it is tied to the history.

Usually the pattern has been if you had a very stingy, in Digby, system, then you are better off. But if you had a system that went from being stingy to be less stingy because of the way UNSM agreed, they have a proportional problem. They are happy but they would be happier if it somehow evened out but the agreement is that there are probably three in the province like that.

MS. O'CONNELL: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The honourable member for Cape Breton West.

MR. ALFRED MACLEOD: The direct assistance program has been offered to people

MR. MACEACHERN: Direct assistance for? Oh, yes, I have it.

MR. MACLEOD: I thought for a second there I called it the wrong name.

MR. MACEACHERN: I will get it. It has a couple of names. I will get the one that we have. You have a name for it here, I will get it here. It is called the - it is a direct assistance program, there is no question - but do we call it? Low Income Targeted Relief Program.

MR. MACLEOD: Now is this funded by your department?

MR. MACEACHERN: It is funded by government but run through us, yes, and it is going to be monitored and delivered specifically by Business and Consumer Services. So it is run through us because one of our goals and why we have asked this to happen, our goal eventually is that we serve poor people whether they work or don't work and this is one of those programs that goes to the working poor but we want it sheltered in our area so that in fact it would be the beginning of the recognition by all of our people that it is the poverty and need question that we are trying to address.

MR. MACLEOD: Can I ask what may sound like a little bit of a silly question but earlier when we were talking we identified a major problem with small options because the Department of Health and the Department of Community Services were both mixed in there and now we have a program that we are mixing two departments with again.

MR. MACEACHERN: They are just going to be sending out the cheques, that is all. We do the decision making and looking at it but they want to find a way of identifying who ought to be receiving this and those kinds of things but it is being housed by us. So they are kind of like the mail people for us, if you want to consider it. Do you know what I mean? That is what they are doing.

MR. MACLEOD: Is there a cut-off date for when a person can apply for it?

MR. MACEACHERN: No. If they apply during the year, then we provide for them.

MR. MACLEOD: Any time during the year.

MR. MACEACHERN: Yes.

MR. MACLEOD: Is there anything in a person's income that wouldn't be used against them?

MR. MACEACHERN: This program is for a family that makes less than \$16,500, I think, net. Is that correct, or is that gross? A single person who makes less than \$9,000 qualifies. So those are the two numbers.

[6:00 p.m.]

MR. MACLEOD: Okay, but when you are calculating the income, does the old age supplement count as part of the income?

MR. MACEACHERN: I don't think so, no. I don't think it does. We will check it for you but I don't think it does because that adjustment was made and I remember the day that it was made and as a result, I think 20,000 seniors qualified.

MR. MACLEOD: I believe the minister is correct but when I look quickly over the brochure, there is nothing in there that indicates that for the individuals.

MR. MACEACHERN: We will check that for you and we will do something about it.

MR. MACLEOD: It asks for a copy of your income tax assessment form.

MR. MACEACHERN: Yes, so the EIS doesn't go on there, though.

MR. MACLEOD: Yes, it asks for net income, net income of spouse or dependants, senior citizens only.

MR. MACEACHERN: So it is net.

MR. MACLEOD: It talks about the guaranteed supplement.

MR. MACEACHERN: What does it say?

MR. MACLEOD: Deduct line 146.

MR. MACEACHERN: Okay, there you go.

MR. MACLEOD: See, I answered that question for you. I can work for you.

MR. MACEACHERN: I am glad you are here.

MR. MACLEOD: There was some confusion by some people, though, especially in the brochure.

MR. MACEACHERN: Great, I accept that. I am glad it is in the application because that solves a lot of problems for us.

MR. MACLEOD: I guess the other part of that would be that some people haven't bothered to go as far as looking at the application when they read the brochure. It is a very small point but some of these things have to be . . .

MR. MACEACHERN: We will make note of that. This is new for us.

MR. MACLEOD: We have to walk before we can run.

MR. MACEACHERN: That is right.

MR. MACLEOD: I am finished and thank you, Mr. Chairman. Again, I thank the minister. We have about five minutes left.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes, there is. I want to thank the minister and his staff for coming in.

MR. MACEACHERN: I was pleased to be here. I enjoyed it. I hope I was helpful.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Shall Resolution E3 stand?

Resolution E3 stands.

We will now move on to the estimates of the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture.

The honourable Minister of Fisheries.

Resolution E10 - Resolved, that a sum not exceeding \$6,144,000 be granted to the Lieutenant Governor to defray expenses in respect of the Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture, pursuant to the Estimate and the business plan of the Nova Scotia Fisheries and Aquaculture Loan Board be approved.

HON. JAMES BARKHOUSE: Mr. Chairman, I am delighted on behalf of the Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture, which was just proclaimed on February 28, 1997, to change the name from the Department of Fisheries. With the major change in our legislation last year, the name change was just one small part of the major reorganization of legislation which allowed our department to put the name of aquaculture in the title. It also has meant it has been a major focus of our government to bring aquaculture into a major program within our department for creating jobs in rural Nova Scotia.

I believe Mr. Casey, the member for Digby, would attest to the fact that it has meant significant jobs have been created in the Digby region due to salmon aquaculture, and scallop aquaculture developments have also been taking place in the Annapolis Basin with good support of the community. The traditional scallop industry which is located there is having difficult times at the present but those same people have made a major investment in the development of aquaculture in that area.

I know the time is short today but I just want to say that the department has made, I think, significant strides in the last year in its management and we have a new Deputy Minister, Alan Steel. We also have a new Director of the Aquaculture Division, Leo Muiise, who came to us with 20-some years of experience in the federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans, and we welcome those two new staff members. We also have been part of the CSU, which is headquartered in the Department of Natural Resources, along with Agriculture and Environment. So our administration has taken a different reorganization within our department. That is a significant change and hopefully, for a very small department - I think we have 97 permanent staff - having extra services in the human services part of it, it provides what we believe will be an addition to and a service that our staff have not always had in the past.

I recognize that there is just a short time left. I would say we will be back tomorrow to bring a more detailed examination of the department and I will welcome questions from the members of the Opposition. We hope that fisheries and aquaculture will prosper in the province. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I ask for adjournment.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes, that is the allotted time. We want to thank the minister for coming in and we look forward to his question and answer period. I thank all members for helping out.

The proceedings for this evening are adjourned.

[6:08 p.m. The subcommittee rose.]