



**PROVINCE OF NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR
HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY**

First Session
Forty-Eighth General Assembly

**Proceedings of the Standing Committee on
Social Services**

April 27, 2016 - Issue 4

Department of Justice and Public Safety

SOCIAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

Department of Justice and Public Safety

Chair: Lisa Dempster, MHA

Vice-Chair: Tracey Perry, MHA

Members: Paul Davis, MHA
Carol Anne Haley, MHA
Paul Lane, MHA
Betty Parsley, MHA
Scott Reid, MHA
Gerry Rogers, MHA

Clerk of the Committee: Lorna Proudfoot

Appearing:

Department of Justice and Public Safety

Hon. Andrew Parsons, MHA, Minister
Virginia English, Departmental Controller
Andrew Green, Manager, Budgeting
Heather Jacobs, Assistant Deputy Minister, Strategic and Corporate Services (A)
Luke Joyce, Director, Communications
Jackie Lake-Kavanagh, Assistant Deputy Minister, Public Safety and Enforcement
Fiona Langor, Assistant Deputy Minister, Strategic and Corporate Services (A)
Wilma MacInnis, Director, Court Services
Donovan Molloy, Assistant Deputy Minister, Criminal Operations
Pamela Ryder-Lahey, Chief Executive Officer, Supreme Court of Newfoundland and Labrador
John Samms, Executive Assistant
Todd Stanley, Assistant Deputy Minister, Courts and Legal Services

Also Present

Sandy Collins, Researcher, Official Opposition Office
Ivan Morgan, Researcher, Third Party Office

The Committee met at 5:35 p.m. in the Assembly Chamber.

CHAIR (Dempster): We'll get started, if everybody is ready, seeing the time of the evening.

Welcome, everybody. I'll ask the minister to introduce himself and his staff can introduce themselves. Then we can move to this side. When you're speaking, I would ask you to just say your name for the purpose of the Broadcast Centre downstairs. I think that's it.

MR. A. PARSONS: Andrew Parsons, MHA, Burgeo – La Poile, Minister of Justice and Public Safety and Attorney General.

I guess we'll go to my immediate right and then flip over to my left; I guess that's how it works.

MS. LAKE-KAVANAGH: Jackie Lake-Kavanagh, Assistant Deputy Minister, Public Safety and Enforcement.

MS. JACOBS: Heather Jacobs, Deputy Minister of Justice and Public Safety, Acting.

MS. ENGLISH: Virginia English, Departmental Controller.

MR. GREEN: Andrew Green, Manager of Budgeting.

MS. LANGOR: Fiona Langor, Assistant Deputy Minister, Strategic and Corporate Services, Acting.

MR. STANLEY: Todd Stanley, Assistant Deputy Minister, Courts and Legal Services.

MS. RYDER-LAHEY: Pamela Ryder-Lahey, Chief Executive Officer, Supreme Court of Newfoundland and Labrador.

MR. MOLLOY: Donovan Molloy, ADM, Criminal Operations.

MS. MACINNIS: Wilma MacInnis, Director of Court Services with the Provincial Court of Newfoundland and Labrador.

MR. JOYCE: Luke Joyce, Director of Communications.

MR. SAMMS: John Samms, Executive Assistant to the minister.

MR. P. DAVIS: Paul Davis, MHA for Topsail – Paradise, Leader of the Opposition.

MR. COLLINS: Sandy Collins, Office of the Opposition and retired politician.

CHAIR: Welcome back to the Chamber.

MR. REID: Scott Reid, MHA for St. George's – Humber.

MS. ROGERS: Gerry Rogers and I work for the good people of St. John's Centre.

MR. MORGAN: Ivan Morgan, Researcher, NDP caucus.

MR. LANE: Paul Lane, MHA for the District of Mount Pearl – Southlands.

MS. PARSLEY: Betty Parsley, MHA, Harbour Main.

MS. HALEY: Carol Anne Haley, MHA, Burin – Grand Bank.

CHAIR: Thank you.

Would the minister like to have a few words before I ask the Clerk to call the first subhead?

MR. A. PARSONS: Sure. I'll be very quick.

We've all been through this stuff before. I'll try my best to answer any questions. Thankfully, I have good staff here that will follow up if there's anything I can't answer. If there's anything we can't answer, then I will make sure that if you ask, I'll provide the information. Going back to what we've done in the past, anything I provide to one side, we'll provide to the other side as well.

I'm hoping, if you don't mind, that we can start with Donovan Molloy in the back. He's got a function involving the Crown prosecutors, ADMs from all across Canada. I'm hoping we can ask him and he can go back to that important matter. Then we'll go right back to the front and let her go.

CHAIR: What subhead, Minister, are you referring to?

MR. A. PARSONS: That would be subhead 2.2.01, Criminal Law.

CHAIR: Just for procedural purposes here, we'll have the Clerk call that subhead.

CLERK (Ms. Proudfoot): Subhead 2.2.01.

CHAIR: Shall 2.2.01 carry?

Go ahead, Mr. Davis.

MR. P. DAVIS: Thank you, Madam Chair.

The first line, 01, would be under Salaries – we're not going to take a lot of time in this particular area, but I do have some questions on it. The salary budget last year was at \$6.2 million and the actual revised estimate was \$6.1 million. Can you tell me where those savings or reductions occurred?

MR. A. PARSONS: It would have been savings due to vacancies, delayed recruitment and some new lawyers were hired at a lower starting salary as opposed to higher up in steps. That would be the savings on that one, I believe.

MR. P. DAVIS: Sorry, vacancies and delayed recruitment?

MR. A. PARSONS: Yeah, vacancies and there was some delayed recruitment, I believe.

MR. P. DAVIS: So are there vacant positions there now?

MR. A. PARSONS: I going to turn to Donovan on that one.

MR. MOLLOY: Mr. Davis, there is currently one vacant position. We were, as you may recall, flying prosecutors in and out of Labrador on occasion – well, more than occasion, I guess, last year. We had put certain people in the Goose Bay positions, but they were working from the St. John's office. I'm very happy to say that we're quite stable in the last year in the Goose Bay and Wabush area. We have one vacancy. The lady who was in the Labrador position went off on maternity leave. We had

someone backfilling but then that person got a permanent position.

We have an articling clerk in Labrador who we want to keep, so rather than trying to find somebody in that six-month window, which is very hard to recruit anybody anyway because that's all that's left in a term, we decided to wait. The clerk is getting called in June. We're going to submit an RSA to keep him on. He's worked out fine and has expressed an interest in staying in Labrador. We purposely waited to fill that position.

MR. P. DAVIS: We know there are changes coming to courts in different parts of the province. What's the impact on salaries or on positions when it comes to prosecutions and the Crown attorney's office? What's the impact on the closures of some of those courts?

Harbour Grace, for example, is there a reduction in prosecution because of the closing of the Harbour Grace court that's going to be absorbed somewhere else?

MR. MOLLOY: No, Harbour Grace, maybe in the early '90s, was staffed locally. We had an office there with a full-time assistant. At some point in the '90s, to the best of my recollection, they decided to close that office and have matters in Harbour Grace prosecuted out of our main office in St. John's. That's been the practice for as long as I can remember.

The only change for us is, of course, that person won't be driving back and forth to Harbour Grace as often.

MR. P. DAVIS: Just to be clear then, there was a prosecutor who was assigned specifically to Harbour Grace court or were there a number of prosecutors who would travel out there?

MR. MOLLOY: We tend to try and have it confined to one person, simply because it's better to have continuity in any area, it leads to more efficient processing of cases, but there were circumstances when that person might have a matter in St. John's or there might be some conflict that we would send a different prosecutor out there. The intention was to have it, at all times, mainly concentrated with one person in the St. John's office.

MR. P. DAVIS: What happens to that one person? There are no job losses in that particular field or in that particular branch.

MR. MOLLOY: No, I suspect, assuming the matters are going to be dealt with in St. John's, that those matters will be distributed in the same way now that other cases in St. John's are distributed. Meaning they'll be assigned to prosecutors by their managers in accordance with the current system. So that person's employment will not be affected. I suspect more people will be handling the files. That's the only difference I anticipate.

MR. P. DAVIS: The Salaries under this section, do they include as well, support staff or support staff for prosecutors, or is this just simply – I see a bunch of heads going up and down.

MR. MOLLOY: Yes, my understanding is it's for all prosecution staff, whatever their function.

MR. P. DAVIS: You said in Harbour Grace there's one person who provided support in an office in Harbour Grace.

MR. MOLLOY: No, that was back in 1992. They had a permanent office with a resident Crown attorney. I'm not familiar with the reasoning at that time, but they decided to close that office and have the prosecutions conducted out of St. John's.

MR. P. DAVIS: What about in Labrador West and Wabush? Is it a similar circumstance there?

MR. MOLLOY: I think it's been since 2007, when Wabush was established as its own centre as opposed to simply being a circuit point, that we had a permanent Crown attorney there. The Crown attorney in that office does a number of circuits and also is routinely back and forth to Happy Valley-Goose Bay in any event, because the Wabush judge was sitting in Goose Bay prior to the recent announcement for a significant portion of each month. So we're exploring options, but that person may be able to continue to work out of the Wabush office.

MR. P. DAVIS: As I'm looking further down, I see in Transportation and Communications there was \$294,000 budgeted last year, \$445,000 actually is the revised estimate of expenditure,

but \$326,000 is budgeted for this year. Is that related to this discussion we're having now?

MR. MOLLOY: No. My understanding, and I defer to Ms. English on this, is in going through the budget historically this was an amount that – at least this is my simplified understanding of it – wasn't used, or the average of what wasn't used, and so that amount was deducted.

Ms. English could better speak to it.

MR. P. DAVIS: No, that's fine. It's not a big difference.

I don't know if the minister, if this is a place to answer this question, but I'm trying to grasp an understanding of how prosecutions and court will operate for Wabush. The Wabush court is closing, we understand. Then the prosecution cases, what would happen with those?

MR. A. PARSONS: What we're going to do there – obviously, we have to work with the judiciary on it. It has to be done in consultation. We do have some prior practice we can go back to.

Up to 2007, it had been a circuit court for 15-20 years. So I guess in this case, now that there is a prosecutor living there full-time – so depending on how we go about this, working with the caseload that's there, it will likely be the same prosecutor, as I think Mr. Molloy said, that has been commuting back and forth between handling matters in Happy Valley-Good Bay and in Wabush. So we're trying to figure it out there.

I guess the big change – not even a big change in some ways because the court hasn't been permanent in many ways, given that the judge and the Crown prosecutor have been leaving to handle matters in Goose Bay which has a much higher caseload.

These are things we'll still be working through, obviously working with the judge and the administrators up there. We have Ms. MacInnis here also. So these are things we'll figure out as we move forward.

MR. P. DAVIS: I don't know if it's of this area. Do the prosecutor and judge actually live in Labrador West?

MR. A. PARSONS: Yes, that's my understanding.

MR. P. DAVIS: Even though I know the Wabush court is planning to close, you still haven't sorted out exactly how that is going to (inaudible).

MR. A. PARSONS: Well, this is the thing. We've given the notice there. They do live there but they have been commuting, I understand, for some time. They do a fair amount of work in Happy Valley-Goose Bay. So it's a matter of looking at what we've got there.

Again, I can't talk about their personal circumstances, what their plan is, but I think if we work with the judiciary and work with the people there, I think you can still handle the caseload that's there. Instead of having a full-time court, it may go back to a circuit court. I don't want to say anything definitively, given that I have a duty to consult with the judiciary on that. It's our belief that, given the caseload which has declined pretty significantly since 2007, we can make sure the cases are heard, probably using the same exact resources that are already there.

MR. P. DAVIS: Okay.

Purchased Services, what is that?

MR. A. PARSONS: Purchased Services; rent.

MR. P. DAVIS: The reduction from \$856,000 to \$557,000 is expected to be what?

MR. A. PARSONS: I might defer to Virginia on this one.

MS. ENGLISH: The bulk of the money that was in the Purchased Services budget, a lot of it relates to rent. Some of it also relates to witness fees which are paid out of that budget.

After some discussions back and forth with the Office of the Comptroller General, it was determined that some of those expenditures should properly be charged to Transportation

and Communications. So there was some change between the two budgets to reflect the proper appropriation for it.

During a line-by-line review by the Department of Finance, it was also determined there were some historical dropped funds there and those were removed as part of this budget.

MR. P. DAVIS: You mentioned rent is a good part of it. What rent is that? What rent is changing that would have an impact on that? I probably know.

MS. ENGLISH: Atlantic Place is a big component of it.

MS. JACOBS: Yes, Atlantic Place is a big component of it. We also pay rent in Happy Valley-Goose Bay for the Crown attorney's office and in St. George's, Stephenville, Gander and Marystown.

MR. P. DAVIS: Is there something changing on the contract with Atlantic Place, because it's \$300,000 difference, which is a fair bit. Is there something – maybe the most major one, I would think, the most major rental would be Atlantic Place. Was there something changed in the contract there?

MS. JACOBS: The contract, I believe, expires this fall coming and where Transportation and Works is currently in negotiation with Atlantic Place.

CHAIR: Can I just remind Heather, before you speak, say your name for the purpose of the Broadcast Centre downstairs.

Thank you.

MR. P. DAVIS: The only other one was on Property, Furnishings and Equipment. Is that the normal property, furnishings and equipment? Is there anything else there?

I'm sorry; on Purchased Services, that doesn't include – I noticed there's a line for Professional Services. It's not a big amount, \$59,000. That's staying much the same, but are there any other services other than that in Purchased Services? There's nothing in Professional Services or outside counsel or any of those types of –?

MR. A. PARSONS: No. Outside counsel I think is mostly under a different heading, if I'm correct. That's under civil. Am I right?

MR. P. DAVIS: If outside counsel was brought in, for example, in a conflict matter or something like that, where would that be?

MR. A. PARSONS: That's a good question.

MS. JACOBS: As you can see, this amount in Professional Services for Criminal Law is fairly low. So if outside counsel is brought in for prosecution we would use the money there, but quite often the money comes out of Civil Division, Professional Services, just because the amount here is not as much. In Civil, I believe it's usually \$1.5 million, but I believe we have more money this year.

MR. P. DAVIS: You'll probably have to remind me of that when we get to Civil.

MS. JACOBS: Sure.

MR. P. DAVIS: I think that's all.

That's 2.2.01, and I think that's all the questions I have at this point in time.

CHAIR: Okay.

So we can move to Ms. Rogers if it's okay with Mr. Davis – he has two minutes left on the clock – and we'll cover 2.2.01 here. Then I understand that's it for this gentleman.

MR. P. DAVIS: Madam Chair, I'm sorry.

There was another area I wanted to ask questions on. I can do it after, if you want. It's up to you.

CHAIR: Is it the same? Is it pertaining –?

MR. P. DAVIS: On the same area, yes.

CHAIR: You may as well, yes.

MR. P. DAVIS: On protection orders; there's a concern in Labrador West that was a concern about processing on Emergency Protection Orders, Child Protection Orders and so on. How would that change? What would the implications

of not having a court in Wabush be? Would that be part of Prosecutions or would that be another area? We can leave it until later if you want.

MR. A. PARSONS: Feel free – if Donovan or anybody else wants to speak to it. I will say it will probably be back similar to what it was in 2007, before that. It's the same thing.

I don't have the exact times here. Wilma or Donovan might be better able to talk about when the court sat, when there was nobody there or there or whatever else. Maybe Donovan can speak from the criminal side of it.

MR. MOLLOY: Mr. Davis, Prosecutions doesn't have any involvement in the procuring of Emergency Protection Orders. It's either done mostly by the applicants themselves or a police officer on their behalf. We only become involved if a person is charged by the police with the breach of an Emergency Protection Order. I don't know if that answers the question.

MR. P. DAVIS: It does. It's not your area is what you're saying. So I'm not sure if this is the appropriate time to inquire on how that would happen.

The concern that's been raised with us is in the case of Wabush, so remote. Back in 2007 there were no EPOs.

MR. A. PARSONS: What we can do is go back to – when we do courts we can make sure we bring that up because Donovan doesn't have any handling in that.

MR. P. DAVIS: Sure, okay.

MR. A. PARSONS: We'll make sure we do discuss that when we go back to the Provincial Court heading.

MR. P. DAVIS: Sure.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIR: Okay.

Ms. Rogers.

MS. ROGERS: Thank you very much for being here this evening. I can imagine how tough some

of the decisions have been in many of the departments with the current fiscal situation that we're in. So I want to thank you for your dedication and your hard work, and probably some real creativity to try and continue to fulfil your mandate, even though there is such a strain on the fiscal situation within our province.

I actually have no further questions. All the questions I did have on this topic area have been answered. So I'm fine, thank you.

CHAIR: Is it the wishes of the Committee that we continue on in the two, or do you want to go back now and start from the beginning?

MR. A. PARSONS: Donovan owes you.

OFFICIAL: (Inaudible.)

MR. MOLLOY: Thank you very much for allowing me to go first.

CHAIR: Okay, I'll ask the Clerk to call the first subhead.

CLERK: Subhead 1.1.01.

CHAIR: Oh, I have an error here. We should have called for –

CLERK: No, we can do that when we do the totals.

CHAIR: We can do that after? Okay.

Go ahead.

CLERK: Subhead 1.1.01.

CHAIR: Shall 1.1.01 carry?

Can we start with Ms. Rogers this time?

MS. ROGERS: Thank you very much.

Under Transportation and Communications there's a change there, an increase of \$30,000.

MR. A. PARSONS: I think that has to do with the minister living over on the beautiful Southwest Coast. But, no, I think that has to do with the transportation that may not have been there with previous ministers, I think, having

been closer to St. John's. So I think that's pretty much all of that actually, an estimated increase which, again, hopefully after a full year we can figure out and have a better gauge of where we are on that.

MS. ROGERS: Okay.

And what a trek you have as well.

MR. A. PARSONS: It's 890 kilometres.

MS. ROGERS: One way?

MR. A. PARSONS: One way.

MS. ROGERS: Yes, that's a lot.

That was the only question I had there.

Under General Administration, 1.2.01, under Salaries, we see a reduction there of –

CHAIR: Excuse me, Ms. Rogers; we're still on the – we didn't call the second one.

MS. ROGERS: Oh, I see. You're going to do each one separately?

CHAIR: Yes.

MS. ROGERS: Okay. Fine.

CHAIR: Well, we could do all of the one if you want. That's fine; we've done it different ways in Estimates.

MS. ROGERS: I'd be fine with that.

MR. A. PARSONS: If I might say, it doesn't matter to me. Whatever is easier for you guys or the Chair, it doesn't matter to me.

CHAIR: Okay.

We'll get a vote for all of them inclusive, but I'll ask the Clerk to call the second subhead.

CLERK: Subhead 1.1.01 to subhead 1.3.01.

CHAIR: Okay.

Shall 1.2.01 to 1.3.01 inclusive carry?

Okay, Ms. Rogers.

MS. ROGERS: Okay. Thank you very much.

Under Salaries you see a reduction of \$151,000 there.

MR. A. PARSONS: If I am correct – and I hope they'll correct me if I'm wrong – there was a vacant communications position that we decided not to fill and to get rid of, I think. Also, there was a vacancy in the ADM position for a little while but that's now been filled. That might explain the discrepancy there.

MS. ROGERS: Okay.

And the vacant comms position, would that be part of the 650 jobs that were announced as being cut?

MR. A. PARSONS: I think so. That's my understanding.

OFFICIAL: An attrition position.

MR. A. PARSONS: Attrition. Sorry.

MS. ROGERS: So it's an attrition?

Okay. Thank you.

And then 1.2.02, Administrative and Policy Support, the Salaries there; we see a significant drop in '15-'16. Can you explain that \$1.3 million?

MR. A. PARSONS: I think – and again, Virginia will save me if I'm wrong – it has to do with the Domestic Violence Court. There was some delay there in getting that started. So that's why there's been – it went down because the positions weren't filled and there have been a number of positions. I think we can probably get a list of those positions as well.

MS. ROGERS: That are now filled?

MR. A. PARSONS: Yes, that we're creating and we're in the process of filling. Most of them, I think, are filled now. So we can get that list. So that explains why the number is back up. I think that was October 2015 is when they started getting filled.

There was also a vacant clerk typist position and something to do with student budget I also believe. It might have gone to other divisions.

MS. ROGERS: Okay.

Can you give us an update on the rollout of the court now? So St. John's is fully in operation?

MR. A. PARSONS: Yes.

MS. ROGERS: Because we see also – well, let's get at that and then we can go back to this.

Where are we on the West Coast and Labrador? Can you give us an update on that?

MR. A. PARSONS: Yes. St. John's is up and running. Actually, the stats I have here in front of me say they've heard 32 cases total; 22 active, three have been sentenced and seven have opted out. Stephenville; there's been 12 cases total, seven active and five opted out.

Stephenville; in the short period of time I've been here I've seen Stephenville starting to get up and running now. I know a lot of staff have actually been travelling to do the training that comes with it. Part of my mandate, obviously, was to – and part of what we said we'd like to do is increase it to Labrador and to Central.

I believe, actually, last year – I might get it wrong on dates – during the summer I think staff internally did some work, and met with the different interest groups and stakeholders to work on what the model is going to be and how we're going to do it. So that's something, again, I can't put a timeline on it, but the plan is obviously to do that.

Central is the same thing. Right now we're trying to figure out how we're going to do it, where would you put it in one of the courthouses that are out there. You've got different options there. So that's what we're trying to figure out.

So it's something I'd like to see. And I think with these courts I don't think anybody disputes the value of it. But it's like anything, too, I think you've got to get the members of the bar on board as well and get some education there. It's not something that everybody is obviously used to.

St. John's is already started. I think Stephenville – as people get used to it on the West Coast, it will see an uptake there and hopefully we'll see more go through there.

MS. ROGERS: And so can we go back to Labrador?

MR. A. PARSONS: Yes.

MS. ROGERS: Where is that at now? What's the process?

MR. A. PARSONS: We're still, internally, trying to figure out what we want to do there, how we want to roll it out. Obviously, there are some different challenges up there. We have a pretty busy courthouse. It's not ready to roll out by any means yet, I don't think. It's like anything. I hate putting timelines on anything if I can't guarantee what it will be.

Given that we have two models, or two up and running now and we have the two left – and again, we all recognize that Labrador has some different challenges also when it comes to the hiring side of the individuals that you need as well.

It is going to happen; there's no doubt. Prior to me ever being here, I know staff have met with a lot of the groups whether it was the Innu, Nunatsiavut – Jackie did a lot of the work, so she is probably better off speaking to it.

MS. LAKE-KAVANAGH: We had some meetings in Labrador there the fall and we met with representatives from Nunatsiavut. We met with the deputy minister and probably about six or seven of her staff. It was a really, really productive discussion. One of the comments that they made is that they were more interested in broad, overall issues of violence in the community and not just violence against women or intimate partner relationships. We thought that was interesting.

We also met with the Chief Qupee from the Innu Nation and a couple of representatives from the Sheshatshiu Innu First Nation as well. That was a really productive, constructive discussion, very positive. One of the things that they did say is that they were quite interested, but there was obviously a lot of ground to cover and a lot of

discussions that would need to take place. But the initial discussions were very positive.

MS. ROGERS: So is there any money in the budget this year for the rollout of the Labrador court?

MR. A. PARSONS: Yes, there has been budget monies allotted to continue studying it and figure out what we want to do.

MS. ROGERS: So how much is that?

MR. A. PARSONS: I think the rough figure is \$300,000.

MS. ROGERS: Okay.

That's to continue to study (inaudible) –

MR. A. PARSONS: That would be both; that would be Labrador and Central.

MS. ROGERS: And Central, okay.

Again, it's the assessment but not for any kind of implementation.

MR. A. PARSONS: I don't want to say that for sure. I don't want to go out and say implementation because I'm not convinced that that's entirely possible this year, but again it's one of those things – I haven't had an opportunity. I've been planning to get up to Labrador myself in February then between weather and everything else. I want to get up there myself. I've been up there before, but I want to get up and have the same conversations myself. Hopefully I can get up when the House closes; it's kind of difficult.

I'd like to get up there – depending on when the House closes, it might even be a summer visit. I don't want to move forward myself without even going up and maybe talking to the people on the ground.

MS. ROGERS: Okay, great.

If we go back to Salaries, from the original budget of '15-'16 to the estimate for '16-'17, we see a drop of almost \$720,000.

MS. JACOBS: Part of that is all the money for the Family Violence Intervention Court was put into Administrative and Policy Support. When the court was started up in St. John's and Stephenville, we transferred the salaries out to the proper areas; for example, Victim Services, Probation, Provincial Court, Legal Aid, Prosecutions and CYFS. So the money is now transferred out to those particular heads.

MS. ROGERS: Okay, great. That makes sense. Thank you for working so quickly on that, once it was rolling again.

I see my time is up.

Thank you.

CHAIR: Mr. Davis.

MR. P. DAVIS: You're probably going to hear this question a fair bit tonight. I'm not sure if I should ask it at the end or at the beginning or throughout. So you can judge yourself accordingly, as long as I get the information before the end of it.

While we're on 1.2.02, Salaries, you said the \$720,000 difference is salaries that are transferred to other budget heads. I understand that. The salary changes here, the \$720,000, are any of those positions being eliminated or lost through attrition or vacant positions or otherwise?

MS. JACOBS: Not at this juncture, no.

MR. P. DAVIS: What does that mean, not at this time?

MS. JACOBS: No, Mr. Davis.

MR. P. DAVIS: It was at this time that –

MS. JACOBS: No.

MR. P. DAVIS: Is there a plan? Well, is there anything budgeted here for reductions in the department in the months to come?

MR. A. PARSONS: I can speak to that.

Obviously, everybody knows, and you remind us in the House every day, we have this one

budget and then we have the next budget coming up. I can say, obviously, we're not looking at cuts, per se. That's not where I'm going.

Where I am right now, I guess being five months in, I'm still trying to get a handle of the department to see where – I do think there are things we can do differently. That's not code for efficiencies or anything else. I just think getting in and trying to ask a few questions – is there something we need to change the model on? I don't know. Is there something we need to add people to, change people?

Right now, I'm still at the process where, quite frankly, when you first get in trying to get your head wrapped around it and keep up with it. Then lately we've been, obviously, bogged down between the House of Assembly and the budget. So once that moves forward, I want to get back to looking at sort of the fundamentals of the department on the different aspects, some that aren't concentrated on enough and maybe other things.

Going back to what Ms. Jacobs said, I would say the answer is no.

MR. P. DAVIS: Okay. I understand.

If I can paraphrase, the change in the Salaries is not a reflection of any job reductions or employment reductions. Having said that, you as the minister, which I would expect you to do, will go back to the department and look at how operations are conducted and if there are more effective or more efficient ways to do that, that could result in a job loss, you wouldn't say that can't happen or won't happen and I appreciate that.

MR. A. PARSONS: Well, I guess I've been around long enough to know that I've got to be careful with what I say.

MR. P. DAVIS: Absolutely do.

MR. A. PARSONS: Because those words can be taken the wrong way.

MR. P. DAVIS: I've learned that.

MR. A. PARSONS: I'm not looking actively to find jobs to get rid of, but I think anybody that

looks at their department, or anybody who looks at anything, you are looking at is there a way we can do things – are we doing things the best way they could go? So it's not something I'm actively looking at. I don't want to –

MR. P. DAVIS: I wasn't trying to suggest you're trying to find a way to eliminate jobs.

MR. A. PARSONS: No.

MR. P. DAVIS: It's just how you do business and if that change in business results in a loss of a job or a position then –

MR. A. PARSONS: I guess if I were to look at something and I think it can be done differently, differently by hopefully better, then I'm going to examine it.

MR. P. DAVIS: Okay.

Under this area there's Revenue, federal and provincial revenue, can you explain that to me?

MR. A. PARSONS: Yes.

Under the provincial revenue, I believe the understanding of that is that it's budgeted revenues from Commissioner of Oaths, Notary Public applications as well as autopsy reports, which is kind of morbid the fact that the number actually increased. So that makes up that information there.

Under the federal revenue which is \$30,000, I'm very happy to report that we reached out to our federal Minister of Justice back when I got in, probably within the first three or four weeks. So we've gotten \$30,000 in funding to do a drug treatment court feasibility study. That's something I've been meeting with members of the bar and administrators on. We've secured the funding so that's something that we'll be, hopefully, getting done. The feds do cover the cost of the feasibility. So that's the first step in, hopefully, moving forward to explore that model.

MR. P. DAVIS: What happened in the Revenue from a budget of \$63,000 to a revised of \$240,000 and now budgeted \$210,000?

MR. A. PARSONS: I would say that the \$210,000 is probably a best estimate based on what we had last year. The significant increase, if I'm right, is from increased autopsies, Notary Public applications and Commissioner of Oaths.

MR. P. DAVIS: Really from \$63,000 to \$240,000?

MR. A. PARSONS: I know I felt the same way when I looked at it.

The \$210,000 would be a guess but I mean, obviously, like any kind of revenue – when it comes to autopsies, I obviously don't want to see that revenue increase.

MR. P. DAVIS: No, absolutely.

Madam Chair, maybe if we go back to 1.1.01 and 1.2.01, we could just clear those up. Actually, I think you've covered everything I have on 1.1.01.

Only that, in the Minister's Office, no change in staffing levels? There is a small increase in salary but there is no staffing change?

MR. A. PARSONS: No staffing change but the salary increase would have been with one of the previous ministers didn't have a constituency assistant. So now we're factoring in – it's the same makeup. It's myself, the EA, you have your executive secretary, Ms. Rhonda Stewart and that's it. It's the same staffing level.

MR. P. DAVIS: In Executive Support under 1.2.01 – and that's all my questions on 1.1.01, Madam Chair, but on 1.2.01, the \$150,000 you said was a position that was vacant, an attrition position, no other position changes under that area of Executive Support?

MR. A. PARSONS: No, it's a new ADM at a lower salary scale. There was the one vacant communications position that was removed.

MR. P. DAVIS: Thank you.

Maybe in the short time I have left we can move ahead now to 1.2.03 which I think is the next area. The first three would be completed, unless Ms. Rogers has to go back there or wants to go back there, maybe she will.

CHAIR: You can finish up your time if you want, Mr. Davis, because we'll continue on before I call it up to 1.3.01.

MR. P. DAVIS: Thank you.

Under Salaries, we see an increase in salaries there. Can you explain that one, Minister?

MR. A. PARSONS: 1.2.03, Legal Information Management?

MR. P. DAVIS: Yes.

MS. JACOBS: We had wrongly – we had an Aboriginal research position that we had the salary put in the civil division. So now it's properly put over into Legal Information Management, where it should be.

MR. P. DAVIS: Oh, so it's just a move to another subhead.

MS. JACOBS: Yes.

MR. P. DAVIS: You guys do that a lot.

MS. JACOBS: We're tangly.

MR. P. DAVIS: Supplies, what would be supplies under Legal Information because it seems to be as very high number for supplies, relative to other areas? Why would that be so high?

MR. A. PARSONS: I think that's the subscriptions to the different materials that make up the law libraries. As we know, we've seen an increase in that. Even when you go from hardcopy to electronic now, the publishers are still going to find a way. I guess we've seen that, whether it's Memorial University or anywhere. So that's my understanding.

Is it all subscriptions? Mostly?

Obviously, there are still the usual supplies like paper, pen, whatever, but I think the increase is mainly due to the subscriptions.

MR. P. DAVIS: So subscriptions wouldn't be under Purchased Services, it's under Supplies?

MR. A. PARSONS: Purchased Services is actually storage and record retrieval.

MR. P. DAVIS: Your cost more than doubled. It's a relatively small amount compared to some other areas, but it's more than double last year and the estimate for this year is double what it was last year.

Do we have that many more records or is it a contract?

MR. A. PARSONS: As time goes by we are storing more.

I think looking back, the historical trends show that the new number is probably a little more accurate than what was actually budgeted, previously.

I can see this is something we've seen when you do a line by line through government. What we're paying for record retrieval is crazy. It's a huge expense across government. The storage is one thing, but the record retrieval is a big cost.

So the \$25,000 is probably the more – well, that's obviously what we spent, but the \$20,000 is hopefully something more accurate.

MR. P. DAVIS: Would they be long-term contracts? Is that how they work?

MR. STANLEY: The contracts are tendered. I don't know if they're long, long-term. They may be three, four or five years but that's about it. It's not a 10 or 15 or 20 year contracts.

Most of the expenses are in relation to the retrieval and putting it back, as opposed to a monthly cost for storing boxes.

MR. P. DAVIS: Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIR: Okay.

Ms. Rogers.

MS. ROGERS: Yes, just to bring us back to 1.2.02, Administrative and Policy Support. Under Purchased Service we see a sharp reduction in revised for '15-'16 and then also a reduction for '16-'17 compared to the original budget for '15-'16.

Can you just tell me what some of those Purchased Services might be and why the fluctuation?

MR. A. PARSONS: (Inaudible) I think the big one might have been funding for copiers which again is another huge expense. So it's the funding for copiers, previously budgeted and was paid through this division. Now it's reallocated throughout the department. That's the big thing there.

The other part of Purchased Services – obviously, we've got some money set aside there for funding allocated for possible expansion of the Domestic Violence Court. There will be some necessary for that and the possibility of counselling services that would go with that.

MS. ROGERS: So the community groups that provide the – the empowerment groups, that kind of thing, does that come under Purchased Services for the Domestic Violence Court?

MR. A. PARSONS: Yes.

MS. ROGERS: Okay, great.

And all that copying – we were supposed to become a paperless society, hey. We were supposed to have more leisure. We have neither. It was all supposed to be that way.

MR. A. PARSONS: I can remember, it wasn't that long ago, hearing we were going to move towards paperless and no.

MS. ROGERS: And computers were going to give us a four-day week. They've given us a seven-day week.

Okay. Thank you very much.

1.2.04 under Administrative Support; we see quite a reduction there under Property, Furnishings and Equipment.

MR. A. PARSONS: There was a delay in the purchase of vehicles for the Fish and Wildlife Enforcement Division and the RNC. I think the actual expenditure – and Virginia might be better talking about this than I am because there's a bit of a convoluted explanation to this.

MS. ROGERS: I remember a little bit of it from last year, I think.

MS. ENGLISH: There was \$771,000 budgeted last year for vehicles, mostly with the RNC and Fish and Wildlife. We projected \$619,000 because we were waiting on approvals for the vehicles. We've actually spent \$689,000.

The budget for '16-'17 is reduced. That was a *Budget 2015* decision.

MS. ROGERS: Okay.

I wonder, Madam Chair, are you wanting to call at the bottom?

CHAIR: Yes. You're done in section 1?

Okay.

MS. ROGERS: Oh, I'm sorry. Yes.

MR. A. PARSONS: I guess before you call it, I don't know if Mr. Davis has any more –

MR. P. DAVIS: On 1.2.04?

MR. A. PARSONS: 1.2.04, before you call it, you might want to have a –

MR. P. DAVIS: No, she asked the question and it's a fairly – there's a difference that Vanessa explained. I'm fine with that one.

MR. A. PARSONS: Okay.

MR. P. DAVIS: On 1.3.01, do we want to do that one first?

MS. ROGERS: Sure, yes.

MR. P. DAVIS: Because that will end that section, right.

MR. A. PARSONS: Okay.

MR. P. DAVIS: Did you want to go ahead, Gerry?

MS. ROGERS: Sure, thank you.

The provincial revenue, we see an expectation that there may be more.

MR. A. PARSONS: Yes, there's been a change in the fees there. I think it used to take in \$7 from the City of St. John's, MUN and the hospital parking lot tickets or fines. That's been increased to \$9.

MS. ROGERS: Of the tickets that they issue, the province would get \$7 of that. Now they're going to get \$9 of it.

MR. A. PARSONS: We do the processing, I believe, and the collections. And in the City of St. John's we were doing the prosecuting, but we're moving away from that September 1.

MS. ROGERS: Okay, great.

I'm good. Thank you.

CHAIR: Okay, I'll ask the Clerk to call the –

MR. P. DAVIS: I'm sorry –

MR. LANE: I have questions as well.

CHAIR: Okay, my apologies.

Mr. Davis and then Mr. Lane.

MR. P. DAVIS: Thank you.

On 1.3.01 on Salaries, same questions as before; any position adjustments or changes under that heading?

MR. A. PARSONS: No, I don't think so. Is there? No.

MR. P. DAVIS: No. Okay.

MR. A. PARSONS: The salary variance might have been due – there were some vacancies there, I think, for a little while.

MR. P. DAVIS: Thank you.

CHAIR: You're good?

MR. A. PARSONS: And I will say that Ms. English has been doing two jobs so there was a savings there.

MR. P. DAVIS: Don't remind her.

CHAIR: Mr. Lane.

MR. LANE: Yes, just out of curiosity, I was listening to the conversation. I'm just wondering how autopsies wind up being a revenue to the province? I'm just wondering how that works, just out of curiosity and education.

MR. A. PARSONS: If reports are requested there's a fee that comes with it, I guess, through the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner who does the autopsies.

MR. LANE: But who would be asking for an autopsy that we would be charging a fee to?

MR. A. PARSONS: I would assume the health authority, probably. I don't know if there are private requests for autopsies as well. I think there are private requests sometimes for autopsies. So there's a fee that comes with that.

MR. LANE: Okay.

And if it comes from health, it's showing as a revenue on your budget. But obviously it's an expense on the health care budget, right, a wash?

MR. A. PARSONS: Again, I wouldn't call it a cost per se; it's a time thing. It has to be done by Dr. Avis's office, so it is a revenue. It sounds weird saying it when you're talking about autopsies as a revenue generator, but there is a significant amount of work. From what Virginia tells me there are actually quite a few requests.

MS. ROGERS: So if my mom dies and I want an autopsy, then do I pay for that?

MR. A. PARSONS: Autopsy report.

MS. ROGERS: Report, okay.

MR. A. PARSONS: I think there's a difference between the autopsy and the report. Am I right?

MS. LAKE-KAVANAGH: If an autopsy is required under the legislative provisions of the Chief Medical Examiner's office, there's no charge for that. But if somebody wants the report, then afterwards, if they're looking for it, there may be a charge for a report. They don't charge for autopsies.

CHAIR: Are we good now with section 1 up to 1.3.01? Yes.

Okay, I'll ask the Clerk to call them again.

CLERK: Subheads 1.1.01 to 1.3.01 inclusive.

CHAIR: Shall 1.1.01 to 1.3.01 inclusive carry?

All those in favour?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against?

Carried.

On motion, subheads 1.1.01 through 1.3.01 carried.

CHAIR: The next subheading we've done, but we won't call that. We'll continue on and do it at the end.

I'll ask the Clerk to call the next one.

CLERK: Subhead 2.1.02.

MR. A. PARSONS: We didn't do 2.1.01, did we?

CHAIR: Yes, we did that with the gentleman that left.

MR. A. PARSONS: That was Civil Law, wasn't it?

OFFICIAL: That was Criminal Law.

MR. A. PARSONS: That was Criminal Law –

OFFICIAL: Sorry, you're right.

MR. A. PARSONS: – this is Civil.

OFFICIAL: Yeah, Civil Law.

CHAIR: I'm glad somebody is awake.

MR. A. PARSONS: How dare you skip over my Estimates here?

CLERK: Subhead 2.1.01.

CHAIR: Shall 2.1.01 carry?

Mr. Davis.

MR. P. DAVIS: Thank you, Madam Chair.

The same questions as other headings. Under Salaries, any position changes under Civil Law.

MR. A. PARSONS: Okay, that's where we talked earlier about there was an Aboriginal research position. That was the change there. But I can probably go out and – do you know what? To save us some trouble going forward, how many positions did this budget – in our department? It's 31? Thirty-one positions, I think, total.

MR. P. DAVIS: Okay so –

OFFICIAL: (Inaudible.)

MR. A. PARSONS: Yeah. Am I right to say that?

MR. P. DAVIS: Do you have a breakdown of those available?

MR. A. PARSONS: Yes, I can definitely get you a copy of that. Some were vacant, some were filled. I think there were 17 associated with the courts, am I right? Close?

MR. P. DAVIS: Minister, do you have that as FTs or, actually, people?

MR. A. PARSONS: I'm pretty sure that's people, isn't it – or positions. Now, again there were a number of them vacant too, I think, wasn't it.

Let's see. There are nine vacant, four layoff notices issued, 17 notice of notice issued and one called continued arrangement. It's a total of 31, but what I can do is I certainly don't mind providing a sheet with this information as well.

MR. P. DAVIS: What was the last one you said, one what? Notice of –

MR. A. PARSONS: Yes, there was a layoff notice issued, notice of notice issued and then continued arrangement.

MR. P. DAVIS: What's a notice of notice issued?

MR. A. PARSONS: Oh, that's the prosecutor in Wabush. There is not a position gone there. She's not losing her job, but there's a change, I think, in the status of it. Where she's in Wabush, where is she going to go. That's one of the ones we are still working on.

MR. P. DAVIS: So you said 37 in total?

MR. A. PARSONS: Thirty-one.

MR. P. DAVIS: Oh, sorry, 31 in total.

MR. A. PARSONS: Yeah.

MR. P. DAVIS: Nine vacant, four layoffs, actually got notices; 17 –

MR. A. PARSONS: Notice of notice.

MR. P. DAVIS: Notice of notice.

MR. A. PARSONS: That's the courts, I believe, and sheriff's officers involved with the courts.

MR. P. DAVIS: Which is the next heading, which we'll get to.

MR. A. PARSONS: Yes.

MR. P. DAVIS: I want to discuss that a little bit further.

MR. A. PARSONS: Yes.

MR. P. DAVIS: Under Civil, there are no impacts?

MR. A. PARSONS: No.

MR. P. DAVIS: Also, in Professional Services we see a big change from what was budgeted to revised to the estimate for this year. Can you explain that one?

MR. A. PARSONS: What is it we're anticipating this year?

OFFICIAL: (Inaudible.)

MR. A. PARSONS: I'll let Mr. Stanley answer that; he'll do a better job than me.

MR. STANLEY: This year, based on our past experience with some of the expenditures we're having in various files relating to mostly energy related matters but also files for where it's Attorney General appointments of counsel in court, we went forward and asked for additional funding, just in anticipation of some of the files that we see coming. Based on our historical numbers, as you can see, last year we exceeded the budget as well.

Just for reference, this budget supports both government's outside counsel retentions but it's also the budget that is used to pay for counsel when the court appoints counsel in criminal matters. That's something we're seeing a lot of growth in and we have no control over it. We're basically just required to pay the bill when they come.

MR. P. DAVIS: I'm sorry, maybe you can explain to me in a little bit more detail when that would happen. I know it happens from time to time but, generally, when does it happen?

MR. STANLEY: There are a couple of mechanisms under which an individual who is charged with a criminal offense can apply to the court and ask for the court to appoint them, or appoint for them a counsel at the expense of the Attorney General. There's a provision under our *Legal Aid Act*, if someone is charged with a homicide they can opt – sorry.

Traditionally, there's a provision under the *Legal Aid Act*. It's still there for people to apply for to get their own counsel. What we're finding is that we're having a number of instances where people are claiming they can't find counsel at the rates that we used to pay for outside counsel under legal aid, which was about \$60 an hour. So people were claiming they couldn't avail of counsel under the *Legal Aid Act*; therefore, they wanted the court to appoint counsel paid for by the AG at market rates.

In the last couple of years we've had a swing where we've had a number of these people appointed where we're paying – we're paying significant amounts of money per hour for these criminal appointments, and these trials, once

someone gets appointed, can take a couple of years to wind through. So we've had some significant bills come in, and we're anticipating some significant bills on that next year.

To minimize or reduce this activity, that's one of the reasons why we increased the legal aid's outside counsel rate last year to \$115 an hour, to try to keep it within the legal aid system as opposed to coming straight to the Attorney General for funding. We're starting to see some benefit of that, in that we're getting more people willing to take up certificates at a legal aid rate.

MR. P. DAVIS: Legal aid rates now are \$115. Where do market rates run?

MR. STANLEY: For criminal, locally we can see up to \$200 an hour. Maybe even a bit more, depending on who the practitioner is. Actually, we've seen, I think, up to \$300 an hour for one or two people but the usual rate is something (inaudible).

MR. P. DAVIS: Does legal aid have a conflicts office?

MR. STANLEY: Yes, they do, here in St. John's.

MR. P. DAVIS: And that hasn't been an avenue when a person can –

MR. STANLEY: Well, when legal aid – if an individual gets assigned legal aid counsel and then has a problem with that legal aid counsel and wants another lawyer, legal aid will assess. They will use the conflict office if they think that the reason the person wants to get rid of their first legal aid lawyer creates a potential conflict.

Legal aid is always very sensitive to conflict issues, but a lot of the times we have these individuals who've gone through three, four, five lawyers at legal aid and then claim they can't form a solicitor-client relationship with anybody at legal aid. They can't form a solicitor-client relationship with anybody in the private sector at legal aid rates; therefore, they want the Crown to pay for the lawyer of their choice.

We have those applications. It's sort of a yin and yang thing. We're back and forth with the courts

fighting them. Sometimes they're successful, sometimes not. Not every one of those applications is successful.

MR. P. DAVIS: Is there a time or a case where an accused would say I need two lawyers? Does that happen?

MR. STANLEY: When we've done these AG retentions, we have agreed to pay for a second counsel on a file where it's a significant matter, such as a homicide. We usually require some kind of a discount for the second counsel.

We've also been agreeing, actually in the last year or so, to pay for a paralegal just in an attempt to keep the cost down of the overall processing. Because of the amount of paperwork and everything that can be involved, records and disclosure for a significant criminal trial, like a murder, can be substantial.

MR. P. DAVIS: Okay.

MR. A. PARSONS: If I might add, I do have a list here of all the legal expenses paid out. So I'll make sure I provide that as well, money paid out, mostly for civil, but obviously it covers off just about everything. It's mostly counsel but I think there are some consultants, expert witnesses and stuff. So I'll make sure that I do provide that.

I know when I was there I used to ask for it all the time.

MR. P. DAVIS: Thank you.

I have a couple of minutes left in my time here. I'd like to move to 2.1.02, if I may, Madam Chair, under Sheriff's Office.

You mentioned there are a number of sheriff's positions being eliminated. Can you outline that for me?

MR. A. PARSONS: Yes, let me see now.

I think the total is eight positions from the Office of the High Sheriff. I think most of these people are engaged in bumping. So I don't know if there's actually anybody – there are vacancies that are there. I understand that these people,

when they go through the process, will not actually end up out of a position or job.

MR. P. DAVIS: So there are eight vacancies?

MR. A. PARSONS: Eight positions.

MR. P. DAVIS: There are eight vacancies they will move into.

MR. A. PARSONS: Yes.

MR. P. DAVIS: Would I be right in thinking there will be a reduction of eight positions when this is all done?

MR. A. PARSONS: Yes, and I think that's associated with the courts.

MR. P. DAVIS: There are eight positions but there are eight vacancies. Essentially, what's happening is you have eight vacancies that are being eliminated. No one is losing a job.

MR. A. PARSONS: Yes. Well, what it is, there are the four courts: Wabush, Harbour Grace, Grand Falls-Windsor and Grand Bank. So I think those eight positions are tied up mostly with that, and there's one –

MR. P. DAVIS: Sorry, which ones again?

MR. A. PARSONS: What I'll do, I'll let Ms. Jacobs talk because she's got it off the top of her head better than I do.

MS. JACOBS: There were six positions associated with the closure of the courts. As Minister Parsons indicated, there are vacancies that if they, for example, want to move to another position, there are vacancies in other areas to be able to fill. There were two other positions, I believe, in headquarters. There was a vacant IM position. As well, there was a realignment of duties and there was one layoff in that position, in a management position.

MR. P. DAVIS: So it's the Information Management, six sheriff's positions, and what was the other one?

MS. JACOBS: Manager of Judgement Enforcement.

MR. P. DAVIS: In the case of a sheriff's officer, say in Grand Bank, what are their options? Are you saying they can bump to Gander or Corner Brook or St. John's?

MS. JACOBS: Sorry; in Grand Bank, I believe they'd all be absorbed, maybe over in the Provincial Court there because the Provincial Court won't be closing in Grand Bank. It's the Supreme Court there.

MR. P. DAVIS: The Supreme Court, yes. Okay.

In Grand Falls-Windsor?

MS. JACOBS: The Provincial Court is remaining open there. So I'm assuming, Mr. Davis, now I'm not 100 per cent positive, that there are vacancies there.

I think maybe what you're getting at, if in Wabush, would the person be willing to move to Happy Valley-Goose Bay?

MR. P. DAVIS: Yes.

MS. JACOBS: I don't know the answer to that question at this time.

MR. P. DAVIS: If they did, if they bumped to a vacant position – I know it's hypothetical and difficult to answer and if you'd rather not, I understand. But if there was a vacancy in Happy Valley-Goose Bay, then does the employer relocate the employee at the expense of the employer?

MS. JACOBS: I think I'll leave that to my HRS friends because I'm not sure of the answer.

MR. A. PARSONS: We can ask Dan on that one, though. There might be some HRS tie-up in that. I definitely don't want to speak for that crowd.

MR. P. DAVIS: Of course the same thing for Harbour Grace if someone had to relocate because of a –

MS. LAKE-KAVANAGH: There are three positions in Harbour Grace that would be identified that would have opportunities elsewhere.

MR. P. DAVIS: Okay.

CHAIR: Mr. Davis, in the interest of time, can we now move to Ms. Rogers?

MR. P. DAVIS: Yes, certainly.

MS. ROGERS: Thank you.

CHAIR: I'm hoping that we can stay within up until 2.1.04 and we'll call that before we move on.

MS. ROGERS: Sure.

If we go back to 2.1.01, Civil Law, you had mentioned that some of them were energy cases. Can you tell us what energy cases they might entail?

MR. A. PARSONS: I'm going to refer to a resident expert Mr. Stanley.

MR. STANLEY: The biggest expense that we have is in respect of arbitrations with the oil companies in respect of basically the ongoing maintenance of the royalty regimes we have offshore. So it isn't litigation that is actually in the courts; it's actually through the arbitration processes that are in the arrangements or the agreements with the oil companies.

I think the biggest ones last year, we had one to do with Hibernia and I think there was one on White Rose. We're finding that it's a constant turn, that there's always issues and we try to negotiate them and if we can't get them, then we are in arbitration.

MS. ROGERS: So you go with outside counsel for that?

MR. STANLEY: Oh, sorry; we handle those files with a combination of outside counsel and internal. We're trying to move it to internal more and even going to look at doing a business case to see if we can possibly even staff up to avoid the costs, because they're becoming bigger files than we were expecting them to be and we're consuming a fair amount of resources on outside counsel.

MS. ROGERS: Okay, thank you.

Is this where the tobacco file would be?

MR. STANLEY: It is. We actually didn't have any expenditure last year on tobacco-related matters at all.

MS. ROGERS: Is there an expectation that there will be this year?

MR. STANLEY: The matter has kind of been in abeyance because we've been waiting for a decision or two from the Supreme Court on preliminary jurisdictional matters. I think the decision has been received or it is anticipated shortly, so we could have expenditures this year but we're not expecting it to be significant.

MS. ROGERS: Okay.

Will it be with the same law firms who were initially handling this file?

MR. STANLEY: Yes, we haven't changed those retentions at all.

MS. ROGERS: So that would be Roebothan McKay Marshall, and then Humphrey, Farrington & McClain?

MR. STANLEY: Yes, in the US.

OFFICIAL: (Inaudible.)

MR. STANLEY: Yes.

Yes, sorry, it is the same firms; we haven't changed those retentions.

MS. ROGERS: Okay, so we expect some activity after the federal court decision?

MR. STANLEY: We've been waiting for – the entire matter has been held up with preliminary matters. I'll have to double check, because actually I haven't looked at it recently. We were awaiting decisions from our Supreme Court. I think we got a decision, but then it may be under appeal. But it's all preliminary stuff on jurisdiction and who can give affidavits and requests – the churn.

MS. ROGERS: So this can still be a really long time?

MR. STANLEY: Oh yes, this is a marathon, not a sprint for this kind of litigation.

MR. A. PARSONS: If I might jump in there, I think the tobacco companies are very consistent in that they like to expend as much resource as possible to extend their cases long, which means their product continues to sell.

MS. ROGERS: Who can stand the longest, huh? Okay.

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible).

MR. A. PARSONS: What?

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible.)

MS. ROGERS: Yes.

MR. A. PARSONS: Pretty much.

MS. ROGERS: Okay, thank you.

So if we can move on to 2.1.03?

MR. A. PARSONS: 2.1.03?

MS. ROGERS: Yes.

MR. A. PARSONS: Okay.

MS. ROGERS: The only issue that I'm drawn to here is Purchased Services. I can see that there was a spike there in the revised in 2015-16?

MR. A. PARSONS: Yes, that would be banking fees.

MS. ROGERS: Banking fees? They are high.

MR. A. PARSONS: Again, we know that this division there is a government rate that comes with the banking fees. But across government, again, this is another one of those areas where I think a lot of departments are dealing with it. I think it's something that needs to be looked at.

I will say, while we're on this topic, obviously Mr. Scott and his department aren't here but the good news is we're very lucky that we've got probably, if not the best, one of the best Support Enforcement Divisions in Canada. The rate of

return is tremendous. They always get high marks, so we're pretty lucky to have them. And the people that use the service get good return on that. So they've been doing good work for a number of years.

MS. ROGERS: And what would you attribute that to?

MR. A. PARSONS: I think it starts with the leadership within the department. I think Mr. Scott – again, I used to deal with him back before I was ever in this. I just think he's a good manager. He knows what he's doing and it leads to perhaps higher productivity. It's just a case of a good leader. We've got good systems in there. It's just a good department. Maybe we have people in this province that want to pay their child support, I don't know.

MS. ROGERS: I was just wondering if that was part of it.

MR. A. PARSONS: Whatever they are doing, it seems to be working because they do extremely well there. Again, it's one of those things where obviously we don't see any revenue but that revenue is going to the parents, which is excellent.

MS. ROGERS: It's going to be interesting to see what happens now in the downturn in the economy, particularly those people who have been commuting back and forth to Alberta and whether or not there'll be any who've lost their jobs, whether there'll be any impact on that.

MR. A. PARSONS: There's no doubt and that's why I think it's also important. We've seen movement in the past but you have to continue at it when it comes to interjurisdictional support orders. We have to have that co-operation. We've been dealing with Alberta, which is obviously one of the big ones, but I think you're going to see more co-operation amongst provinces to make that easier to get through. We don't need parents having to go through a lot of rigmarole to get the money that their children are entitled to.

But again, I agree, when you see that downturn that's going to – you may see a lot of applications to vary, changes there. Will they go through the normal route of every year

submitting their notice of assessment, or not submitting it and getting the 10 per cent? If they're losing their money, they're going to have to start making their applications to have their own varied because you can't just say that you're going to pay less because you're getting less. It still has to go through that route, which is difficult for everyone involved.

MS. ROGERS: Yes.

2.1.04, under Salaries we see a reduction in the revised amount and then a reduction again in Estimates in '16-'17.

MR. A. PARSONS: I think that was three positions that actually ended up in Support Enforcement. The one that we just did, there was an increase there.

MS. ROGERS: Okay.

MR. A. PARSONS: I think that is what that was. The budget and three staff transferred to Support Enforcement for recalculation, but I think Mr. Stanley will also speak to it as well to provide some context.

MR. STANLEY: Yes, we had, under the Family Justice Services Division, a very small office in Corner Brook that actually – it's a recalculation service so people who have support orders can submit new tax information and get the order recalculated every year.

The office, we realize, in Corner Brook would be better from an administrative management point of view if we brought it under the Support Enforcement office, which is also located in Corner Brook and does very similar work.

MS. ROGERS: Okay.

MR. STANLEY: So we just moved the three people from basically one division head to another and they physically co-located with the Support Enforcement people, and it's working out fairly well.

MS. ROGERS: And there were no job losses in the transfer?

MR. STANLEY: There were no job losses or anything out there.

MS. ROGERS: Great.

And, under 01, the federal revenue, we see a significant change there.

MR. A. PARSONS: Yeah, that would have been, I guess, catch up. That was revenue for two years. You'll see that in a couple of headings under here as we move forward. I think Legal Aid is the other one where you'll see like a big –

MS. ROGERS: I remember that, yes.

MR. A. PARSONS: So this is the same thing. It's caught up so the number for this year should be one year.

MS. ROGERS: Okay.

Thank you.

Are we finding that people – how is the use of counselling remediation going? Is there a big uptake? How is it working?

MR. A. PARSONS: I guess I can speak anecdotally; it's something I dealt with prior to getting into this. I think it's a great service to have these people, whether it's to counselling and mediation. I still think there's room to – I wouldn't say grow, but to change. I've seen cases in the past where I had clients that would be mailed DVDs. Sometimes I wonder whether that's actually getting used or not. Sometimes these people have to travel, which, again, is a cost on them.

I think you can also – and this may require coordination amongst departments. I'll just use Port aux Basques, for example. We don't have Family Justice Services out there all the time; they come out, I think, during circuit courts. But there's no reason somebody, if they had to do a teleconference, couldn't go to the hospital or to the college and do a teleconference with somebody in Stephenville. So it takes away that travel cost which really isn't necessary, it's not a medical appointment.

So I think there are things we can do there. I think it's a necessary service. I think anybody that uses it will find it – and I think in many cases if you can resolve a dispute through a

method like this rather than going the full gamut, I think it's better on everybody involved, especially when you have children, obviously, involved in the matter.

Again, I think we have a new gentleman that has stepped into that role there. Is it Derrick Oldford?

MR. STANLEY: Yes. Wilma MacInnis, who's sitting behind me, moved from Family Justice Services to Provincial Court. So in Wilma's stead we actually have appointed sort of an acting director, one of the lawyers who was working in that area before from the Civil Division. He's now serving as the acting director while we have some HR issues in positions we have to determine and that kind of thing, and then we'll be filling the position full time.

Just to the issue of success, the service is very successful mostly – outside of St. John's it has a very high success rate and the courts are very pleased with it. The courts are always driving us to make this service as useful as possible because it facilitates easier access and movement of matters through Family Court.

In St. John's we have a slightly lower success rate. It is still fairly successful, but we find that you have more complex cases that are more difficult for people to sit down and just mediate. We have more cultural issues and that sort of thing.

We are working to try to improve and we've had a couple of HR issues in our office here with people off. So we're working to improve the FJS service here to get it up to the level. The Supreme Court judges here in town are constantly ensuring that we try to maintain high levels of service.

MS. ROGERS: Okay.

So where are the services located in the province?

MR. STANLEY: I'm going to defer to Wilma who used to be in charge.

MS. MACINNIS: I've been dying to talk about Family Justice here.

MS. ROGERS: Great.

MS. MACINNIS: Offices across the province were located in St. John's, Clarenville, Gander, Grand Falls, Corner Brook, Goose Bay and Stephenville. I don't know if I've missed any, Todd.

Just last year, actually, we went through a process just in terms of efficiencies. Because at one point we were jointly delivered by two government departments and there were certainly some challenges in terms of that process. So last year we had a transition process where, as Mr. Stanley referenced, in terms of the movement of the Recalculation Office to Support Enforcement. But, also, right now all Family Justice Services are provided solely by Justice, plus Justice staff.

As Mr. Stanley referenced as well, we certainly do have good relationships all across the province with the courts and it is a free service. Just in terms of the promotion of that, the courts certainly do a good job in promoting that. Any applications that are filed with any of the Family Courts, they automatically send those to Family Justice Services before they get a date in court so that at least we have an opportunity to contact them and say: Are you even aware that this free service exists?

There is certainly a lot of uptake in that. Sometimes people aren't aware so certainly, yes, as Minister Parsons mentioned in terms of the promotion of that as well is very important.

MS. ROGERS: That's great. It's just wonderful.

What other department was involved before it was all consolidated?

MS. MACINNIS: It was Advanced Education and Skills.

MS. ROGERS: Okay. Interesting.

Thank you.

CHAIR: Is everybody good up to 2.1.02 so we can call that and move on?

Okay. Go ahead.

CLERK: Subhead 2.1.01 – do you want 2.1.04?

CHAIR: Yes.

MR. P. DAVIS: No two, you said.

CLERK: You said two.

CHAIR: Oh, we didn't go beyond –

CLERK: We did go, we went –

CHAIR: We did go to –

MR. P. DAVIS: Did you want to finish the other two first?

CHAIR: Pardon me?

MR. P. DAVIS: Did you want me to finish? I just had a couple of quick questions.

CHAIR: You have a couple of questions on 2.1.04. Well, go head.

MR. P. DAVIS: 2.1.03 and 2.1.04, actually. I have just a couple of questions on it.

I thank you, and I have to tell you, I was going to comment, and I will comment on this before we finish up tonight, but I think these are two areas that are very challenging work for officials and people who work on front lines under your department, Minister.

I can tell you that I personally have a great deal of admiration for them who do that. It's very difficult work to do. I know that some of them – Wilma MacInnis is a good example of it – that work very, very well. Turn around there for a second, Wilma. She's got a great background and experience in dealing in very trying and difficult circumstances. I'm not surprised to hear her say she has good relations with the courts because she's got a history and record of that.

This is the type of person that we need working in these areas, does a fabulous job and, as I said, sometimes under very stressful and trying circumstances. So for you, minister and deputy and to your staff, I have a great deal of admiration for all of them, but particularly these two areas. I know they're very tough.

On positions, my understanding is the only change was three positions moved from under Family Justice to Support Enforcement. That's all that's taken place, as far as any changes there.

I noticed in Transportation, changes in both of them. Under Support Enforcement it's fairly significant, from \$41,000 budget down to \$14,000, and under Family Justice. Is there a change in how business is operating? What would be the reason for each of those?

MR. A. PARSONS: I think actually these trends started back in 2013. I think they actually started looking at different ways to reduce this cost if they could. I think that relates to both sections there, Support Enforcement and Family Justice Services. They're going on historical trends.

I thank you and I agree 100 per cent with your opening comments there about the staff in both of these divisions. I mean, that's tough work. When you're dealing with Support Enforcement, we all know some of those phone calls they get are not pleasant. You're dealing with upset people and people going through serious times.

I think, especially on the Family Justice side, there's a way we can still make sure the service is accessed. I think technology can play a big role in that. I've seen that done. I think it can still provide the same service.

I don't know how much of it has to do with telephone costs or whatever else, but in terms of the actual travel –

MR. P. DAVIS: I was going to ask that. I know in the last few years there have been fairly healthy investments in technology: video conferencing, those types of things. So that's what some of that is.

I think I see your deputy nodding her heading in agreement. Instead of having to travel for meetings, you can do it through those types of ways.

MS. JACOBS: Yes, and historically, as Minister Parsons was saying, when we did the line by line, historically, the travel money wasn't

used. So rather than have dropped balances, the money was removed from the budget.

MR. P. DAVIS: Yeah, I think staff in the past have argued that they needed it, but good for you.

If you want to call those, I'm fine with those, Madam Chair.

CHAIR: Yes, please.

CLERK: Subhead 2.1.01 to 2.1.04 inclusive.

CHAIR: Shall 2.1.01 to 2.1.04 inclusive carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, subheads 2.1.01 through 2.1.04 carried.

CHAIR: Now, I'm going to suggest – we're about halfway through – that we take a five minute break; strictly five minutes.

MR. A. PARSONS: Sounds good to me.

Recess

CHAIR: We'll get started again. We've called 2.2.01, so we'll move on to the next one. I'll ask the Clerk to call the subheads.

CLERK: Subheads 2.3.01 to 2.4.01 inclusive.

CHAIR: Shall 2.3.01 carry?

It is Mr. Davis now?

MR. P. DAVIS: I think so, yes.

CHAIR: Yes, go ahead.

MR. P. DAVIS: Thank you.

I understand how budgeting works with Legal Aid, but, Minister, can you give me an overview of the current structure in Legal Aid? How many

staff do you have there? Have there been any changes in this year or in recent times, or any anticipated changes in how they operate, or staffing levels?

MR. A. PARSONS: I will defer to Todd on this. He will probably provide a more conscience answer than I'm able to. I don't think there's any change in the staffing –

MR. P. DAVIS: Sorry, I'm more interested in the structure. Just explain to me the structure of Legal Aid, how it operates, where they are located and so on.

MR. STANLEY: Legal Aid has approximately 125, 130 staff. That's split about 50/50 with solicitors and administrative staff. Legal Aid has a higher than you might expect, at first instance, administrative staff for two reasons. They handle all of their own corporate administration. They do their own HR, their own accounting. They avail of none of government's back-office stuff, as a stand-alone entity.

Also, they have a fair amount of staff who are dedicated to processing and assessing eligibility for legal aid claims, which takes a fair amount of time, having to get the necessary information from people and do the assessments.

They have 11 offices, I believe, around the province. I'm not sure I can identify where they are. There are two in St. John's. They have one right now in Carbonear, Clarenville – I'm going to say Grand Bank, but I'm not sure that it's actually in Grand Bank or if it's in Marystown – Grand Falls-Windsor, Gander, Stephenville, Corner Brook, Happy Valley-Goose Bay and Wabush.

I'm not sure, is that the basics or –

MR. P. DAVIS: It is. I was hoping to understand the change in the budget from \$16,900,000 last year to \$17 million this year. It probably just reflects changes in the cost of operations.

MR. STANLEY: Yes, there are actually three separate things going on in that. There was the final addition for implementation of part of three solicitor salaries to do with the Royal report. We had a three-year, phase-in plan for the Royal

report and this year, the last year of the phase-in, required us to fund three solicitor salaries.

We also put money into Legal Aid in relation to the Family Violence Intervention Court. There also was an offsetting reduction for some of that increase with Legal Aid. Through this budget process, they eliminated two vacant positions. They laid off an individual and there was a solicitor salary removed from their funding relating to the closure of Harbour Grace. Whether or not Legal Aid actually lays off a solicitor, or however else they might manage that, is really up to them because we just adjust the funding that they get. So, one person, I think, was laid off as part of the budget process and two vacant positions were eliminated.

MR. P. DAVIS: So when you go through your process, your budget with them, do they come in and make a presentation to the department on what they're seeking and you discuss their budget or what they've requested?

MR. STANLEY: Yes.

CHAIR: You can go ahead, Minister.

MR. A. PARSONS: I will let Todd (inaudible).

MR. STANLEY: Legal Aid, both in terms of what they're looking for and in response to a request from us to see what savings they could bring in, the executive of them go through their board, get approval and they bring it in to us to say here's what we could do and here's what we need. In the end, with us, it boils down to the gross grant amount that we give them.

MR. P. DAVIS: So there could become a time they come in with a presentation, you ask them to go back and find more, change more, look really in certain areas or that type of thing.

MR. STANLEY: Entirely, yes.

MR. P. DAVIS: Sorry, Minister.

MR. A. PARSONS: I will jump in here again. I can say too that during, I guess, the short time I've been here, I actually did take the time to go down to Legal Aid, down to the commission, and I was told I was actually the first person to actually go and visit in ages. So I went down,

met with the board, met with all of the solicitors and had a chat. They actually did come up to our office and meet with us as well, plus they met with Treasury Board, if I do recall correctly.

They've done a lot of work catching up, too, on the financial side. You'll see there in the federal revenue, the discrepancies there – I'll sort of jump ahead, and this is what Gerry was talking about earlier – where they're catching up on the amount that is owed by the feds.

This year it's only \$2.1 million. That's because they're finally caught up, I guess, basically filing their paperwork with the feds and getting reimbursed. It was behind for a number of years and they are finally caught up there.

Hopefully, this will also change at some point because I think part of the federal budget is there's actually going to be increased Legal Aid funding. The 10-year arrangement just concluded. Again, one of the holdups there is that they negotiate with all of the provinces and they're not doing one-offs with everybody; it's everybody at the one time.

So this has been a contentious issue for years – you go in; we want more money. So now, this year, we do understand that there is going to be an increase. Figuring out how much it is going to be, we'll figure that out. It's not for sure. I think we have an idea, probably even in the range of a couple hundred thousand, but again, we don't want to say for sure because I don't know for sure.

Legal Aid has come in, they'll tell us – I have to say they've been great to deal with, the whole board and solicitors there. I've dealt with them in the past, knowing the workloads that they have, and I think half of their problem in the past has been perception.

I mean, people have this perception; we talked about it earlier when you get an appointed counsel. Oh, I don't want a legal aid lawyer. That's garbage, as far as I'm concerned. Legal Aid has great lawyers. They have huge caseloads. They have fantastic solicitors to do a lot of work and travel and stuff. I've said that before, I'll say it again, they have a great staff. They've done a lot of work to make sure they function as good as they can.

One of the issues we all hear, I guess as MHAs, is we get clients come in who are trying to access the – trying to fill out the applications and get through that. Sometimes that can be a challenge too. It's like anything. I think they're improving on that. They have good staff doing the work there.

MR. P. DAVIS: Yeah, I mean I agree. It was common one time to hear complaints about legal aid. Slow response, I can't get to speak to a lawyer. I have to make a decision or a legal decision, those types of things. You don't seem to hear those as much as we used to or I don't anyway. The phone will start now tomorrow because I said that.

MR. A. PARSONS: Yeah.

MR. P. DAVIS: But hopefully that's a reflection of improvements on it.

Madam Chair, I'd like to move to 2.3.02 under Commissions of Inquiry. Can you explain that heading to us, Minister?

MR. A. PARSONS: Yes.

What you'll see there, and I think for the last number of years, it's always a budget of \$1,000 which I guess was just a cursory amount that was put in because there was no Commissions of Inquiry anticipated or planned.

Obviously, this year part of my mandate letter, and something I've spoken about on a number of occasions, is that I've been mandated to conduct three inquiries. So we've allocated \$1 million to hold – the plan is to hold an inquiry this year.

So we've based that on, I think you'll see salary there was to anticipate administrative support officer, anticipate 12 weeks, eight hours per day, X dollars per hour. Then you have the T and C, Supplies, Professional Services. The Professional Services would actually be the anticipated cost of counsel for anybody that's involved in it. We came up with the figure of \$1 million which is anticipated.

I'd like to think that like anything you'll do what you can to, not reduce cost, but if you're going to need space there's lots of government-owned space out there that you can use. I think we've

had people come to us that have said look, we have the space here you can do it. So that's obviously something that we would consider. That makes more sense than going and renting space.

Depending on who your commissioner – who's going to head up the inquiry, is it judiciary? Is it somebody else? These are all things that we're factoring in as we come up with terms of reference and stuff like that.

So that's what's factored in there, but I know there are probably more questions so lay them on me.

MR. P. DAVIS: I know the three inquiries. Do you know which one you're going to call this year?

MR. A. PARSONS: We're anticipating that we will go with the Humber Valley inquiry this year. I've said our logic behind it – obviously there's the federal one. I call it the Winters's inquiry, young Burton Winters. That one involves a bit of co-operation with the federal government, given that there's joint services there. So I don't think that one is quite ready to go because it requires a bit more co-operation.

The second one, obviously, is the Donnie Dunphy inquiry. We've all heard and seen, that one requires the police report, I guess, to figure out where that goes. We don't know when that matter is going to be heard but I don't think it's sensible for any inquiry to go ahead until you have the conclusion of that matter, which I can say here and I'll say anywhere, I have no idea when that will happen. We know that matter was investigated here. It's been referred to Alberta. That will come back at some point. That one, we don't know when that will be.

So, Humber Valley, in terms of readiness to proceed, was the first one we think was ready to go. You have a static set of facts and timelines. So that's the one we've anticipated going first. I don't think it has anything to do with importance per se. It has to do with which ones are ready.

MR. P. DAVIS: What's the intention of an inquiry?

MR. A. PARSONS: Well, the intention of any inquiry, I think, is two-fold. Number one, any inquiry I've ever read about or seen, the first thing you want to do is identify a particular set of facts, what happened no matter what it is. This province has a history of inquiries, whether it was Cameron. I think there was the Gushue inquiry back in the day of nursing homes. So that's the first thing that comes out.

Obviously, the set of facts has to be such that there's public interest in it and different cases. Some of them involve loss of life, some involve public confidence, some involve a set of facts that we feel is important enough to investigate.

The second part of any inquiry is to come up with a set of recommendations to prevent said fact pattern or fact scenario from happening again.

That would be the purpose, I guess, of any inquiry. I don't know if that's a Webster's Dictionary version of that, but that's just sort of how I would take it off the cuff, I guess, or that's sort of how I see it.

MR. P. DAVIS: I'm inclined to think when I see \$1 million – to be honest with you – my first thought was that wouldn't be enough to hold an inquiry.

Do you have any idea from previous inquiries – Cameron was a very extensive inquiry. In recent years, there were the Norman Reid and Darryl Power inquiries. Do you have any idea what they cost?

MR. A. PARSONS: I think the Cameron inquiry was up in the \$5.7 million. That one was established July 2007 and received in March 2009. Lamer was a three-year inquiry. It took \$7.6 million.

Now, I tend to think that the fact patterns and the time patterns are substantively different, but I've said this before, and I think it's documented that I've said it on – I don't know if it was radio or an interview or something I did – it's not a case of cutting a blank cheque. It's not a case of skimping. I don't know if I'm using the right words. It's not skimping, but at the same time you don't cut a blank cheque. You have to have cost controls put in place. That's why you do

things where you have the office space and work to do what you can to keep that.

It's like anything that any government or any business or any person does, you want to do what you can to ensure your costs that you anticipate stay at the level that you anticipate. We're confident that the number we've proposed here will cover off the cost of that inquiry and what goes into it.

MR. P. DAVIS: Madam Chair, I know my time is up. I'm just wondering if it's okay with Ms. Rogers, if I could just continue for another few minutes, and I'll be sure to –

MS. ROGERS: On the inquiries?

MR. P. DAVIS: On inquires, yes.

MS. ROGERS: Okay.

MR. P. DAVIS: Thank you, if that's okay with the Chair.

So in the case of Norman Reid and Darryl Power, which I think was around 2003.

MR. A. PARSONS: 2001?

MR. P. DAVIS: I think it was 2003, maybe.

Do you know what the cost was on that one?

MR. A. PARSONS: It was \$1.2 million.

MR. P. DAVIS: It was \$1.2 million.

MR. A. PARSONS: The fall of 2002 was the inquiry. So Power and Reid, that's right because those incidents both happened pretty close together. The report was submitted December 2003.

MR. P. DAVIS: Sorry, when was it put together?

MR. A. PARSONS: It started fall 2002, report submitted December 2003.

MR. P. DAVIS: So fall 2003 is when the inquiry actually began to call evidence. Is that what you mean?

MR. A. PARSONS: No, the information I have is the fall of 2002. The report was submitted – Judge Luther’s final report came out December 2003.

MR. P. DAVIS: Okay. So was that when the inquiry was called and actually began? Is that what you mean or was it when the inquiry began, in the fall?

MR. A. PARSONS: I think my information is that it was the fall of 2002 the actual inquiry started. Again, I don’t know how long that took.

MR. P. DAVIS: The reason I ask, Minister, is that my recollection was it took some time to find counsel and Judge Luther had to clear his schedule. It took several months for all that to happen before the inquiry actually got underway.

MR. A. PARSONS: I guess so. I’d have to talk to whoever the Minister of Justice was at that point. I can’t remember who that feller was, but –

MR. P. DAVIS: Have you had any discussions with any potential commissioners?

MR. A. PARSONS: No, I can say that I’ve discussed internally where do you go, what kind of pool do you want to go from?

I can tell you, I think there’s a protocol that comes from, I think the Supreme Court, that you should follow in the cases of inquiry. So, obviously, if you were to go the judicial route, getting a justice or a judge, then obviously you have to talk to the chief judge or justice of those courts because they’ve got a schedule that they’ve got to maintain as well.

We do know there’s a protocol that has to be followed. I don’t know, I’m assuming it was followed in the past, but it’s been made clear to me that you should follow it.

MR. P. DAVIS: So are you having any discussion with people or contacted anyone to say this is – as potential commissioner for the inquiry. You haven’t reached out to anybody. You’ve only had discussions internally is what you’re saying.

MR. A. PARSONS: I have had the chief judge send me the protocol.

MR. P. DAVIS: Okay.

As well, what about commission counsel? Have you had any discussions there on who would be commission counsel?

MR. A. PARSONS: Not that far yet, although I’ve had people – obviously they’ll say to you in passing I’m interested in that. Everybody that’s involved will need counsel, right. So we’re not that far yet in terms of figuring out who that is. And I might be wrong; I think there’s obviously some choice of the people involved.

I think the commissioners themselves would get counsel, so they’re probably going to have a say in who that is. And then the people involved would probably have a say in the counsel that they get because I don’t know if you want to force counsel on somebody.

MR. P. DAVIS: Okay.

My understanding is that there are precedents. I don’t know if you know this or not – or maybe some of your staff can discuss it – but there are precedents, such as the case with Mr. Dunphy, where investigative steps are still underway when an inquiry is called. And the fact there’s an investigation doesn’t pre-empt an inquiry from being called.

You said until it’s done you shouldn’t call the inquiry. My understanding is that there are precedents for calling an inquiry in the circumstance that exists similar to where we are with Mr. Dunphy.

MR. A. PARSONS: I can say I’m not aware of that. If you have that, by all means, I would look at it. I don’t know if somebody else has any information.

I guess from my perspective it seemed to us when you looked at it, if you have a matter that’s still going through the investigative phase where we’ve had an investigation done and this investigation has been referred to Alberta – but we don’t know what’s going to come out of that. Again, this is a case of where are charges laid, are charges not laid?

It would seem that it prompts the very strong possibility of causing issues if you were to go ahead and start that when the matter is still not completed. But if there's precedent to that, I don't know. In the cases I've always seen, the matter has been done and passed and there are no facts left to happen. But I'm certainly willing to –

MR. P. DAVIS: But the police investigation is actually over, right?

MR. A. PARSONS: I think the RCMP investigation is over, yes. The RCMP has referred that to the Alberta SIR Team, ASIRT, I think. So that's going on there.

Now, what the return on that is, I don't know. I don't know what will come out of that. I don't know if that will recommend no charges, charges, more investigation to be done, we should have done some else different. I have no clue what goes on there.

That was sort of what prompted us to make that decision, was the possibility of stuff happening that you can't control, you don't know where it going to go.

MS. JACOBS: Mr. Davis, my understanding as well is the RCMP investigation is not considered completed because ASIRT may be coming back to them saying, well, you should do this, look at that. So until ASIRT kind of puts a bow on it, we wouldn't consider that investigation completely finished.

MR. P. DAVIS: Okay.

I'm interested in the perspective of if you consider an inquiry to be a process to identify and understand clearly the facts of a set of circumstances of an event or events surrounding a matter, and if you look at that the intention is to find recommendations to prevent those circumstances from happening again, in some of these cases, particularly in the search and rescue Burton Winter's matter and also in the matter of Donald Dunphy, wouldn't there be some urgency to hold an inquiry to prevent a set of circumstances like that from happening again?

Because if I hear what you're saying, Minister, there may be an inquiry called this year. It may

take some time for it to be established and set up. It probably will run into next year and it would be some time before you called the second one and the third one. So we're talking potentially four years from now before the inquiries are completed. These are around matters that are important to life. The idea and the intent of an inquiry are to prevent loss of life under similar circumstances in the future. Wouldn't there be an urgency to get to them?

MR. A. PARSONS: Obviously there's a difference in those that involve loss of life. That's even in *The Public Inquiries Act*, I think, because depending on what the fact pattern is, that can dictate what kind of inquiry you do.

When it comes to the Dunphy one, basically on that, as I've said, we did have a loss of life but the matter is not closed, which is what's preventing the moving forward on that side.

When it comes to the search and rescue one, we do have the passage of three years, I believe – no, it might be four years. Was it 2012? 2012 I think it was, so we do have the passage of four years there.

Again, it's a different scenario in that when it comes to that one – what I say now might be different than the terms of reference. I'm just sort of speaking as I see it. You have to come up with a terms of reference here, but that may require some co-operation with the federal government. Given that we've only been in a position really since December 14, and you're going to have to co-operate with the federal government there as well, that presents some logistical challenges. We made it quite clear from a long time ago that we obviously think it's important. We want to get it done and it will get done.

Then, when you go back to the other one that we're going to do – which I still think is a serious matter. It doesn't involve a loss of life, obviously, which I think we're all glad to see, but it involves something we can handle in our jurisdiction quickly. We have a fact scenario, or supposed fact scenario, that's constrained within, we think, a certain period of dates. Again, I think it does have issues when it comes to public confidence.

So doing one before another doesn't diminish anything in terms of importance. I think the important thing is that we've said we're going to do three; I'd like to see all three done and done right. I don't want to do something that may – again you're not going to do it. There's a term I'd use here now, I don't want to use it half – we want to do them right. So that's our perspective.

MR. P. DAVIS: And to be clear I wasn't suggesting –

MR. A. PARSONS: No, no.

MR. P. DAVIS: – that you try to rush them or hurry them, it's just that it wasn't very timely.

MR. A. PARSONS: No, it's a fair question you're asking.

MR. P. DAVIS: Thank you, Madam Chair.

I may come back when Ms. Rogers is finished as well.

CHAIR: Okay, I was going to suggest that actually.

Ms. Rogers.

MS. ROGERS: Thank you.

Minister, I just want to double-check. You said that you were confident that the \$1 million will cover the Humber Valley Paving inquiry in its entirety?

MR. A. PARSONS: Yes.

MS. ROGERS: Oh. Okay.

Why would you not have the Auditor General look at this issue?

MR. A. PARSONS: I think the Auditor General did look at it.

MS. ROGERS: So why would we move on to an inquiry?

MR. A. PARSONS: Because there were five components of it that the Auditor General – when he looked at it he boiled it all down, at the beginning of the report, to five things, five

questions. He answered three and two he didn't answer. There are still unanswered questions there, so we felt it was –

MS. ROGERS: What are those two outstanding questions?

MR. A. PARSONS: That's funny; I don't have that right here. But I think there was some question as to why everything was concluded on the date that it was concluded and why we had multiple Cabinet ministers contacting the deputy minister of a department at the time, the day before the closing.

The Auditor General came back – the first three he came back, and it's more of a contractual point of view – and said, I found some discrepancies, some stuff that you shouldn't do it like this. He answered those questions, but the last two he came back and said, no, I don't know.

MS. ROGERS: Right.

MR. A. PARSONS: The other thing I will say is that the Auditor General – and inquiries, too, there are things. An inquiry has more of an opportunity for questioning, cross-examination, that vehicle of truth seeking.

MS. ROGERS: Okay.

I'd like to take us back to Legal Aid. The legal aid offices in Carbonear and Wabush, what will happen with those offices now that the courts have moved on?

MR. STANLEY: Legal aid is still trying to determine how they're going to handle that, whether they're going to move the positions, what they're going to do in respect of the office that's in Carbonear. As I understand it, they haven't confirmed to themselves what they're going to do. There was some thought that they might leave it open as a service centre, because there is a certain – almost like a storefront retail operation with legal aid dealing with clients, but I'm not sure if they've concluded that's feasible with the people who are going to be travelling, the lawyers who'll be travelling to St. John's to appear. So they're working that out.

I don't think right now they have a strong feeling there's going to be a requirement for layoffs. I don't think they're seeing that. I think they may be moving staff.

MS. ROGERS: Yes, because the same amount of work still exists.

MR. STANLEY: Yes, the work isn't going away. It's just the physical location.

MS. ROGERS: So if the solicitors are moved to, for instance, St. John's, then folks from that area, from Conception Bay North, would be required to go to St. John's to see a lawyer to get assessments?

MR. STANLEY: Yes. If the legal aid office moved the lawyers into St. John's, yes. In order to meet with your lawyer, the default would be anyone in that area would have to come into St. John's to the legal aid office to meet, but there are times these days already where things like that can occur.

If the local Carbonear office is in conflict on a particular matter, then there are people now who might have to travel into St. John's to meet with their legal aid lawyer because the Carbonear office couldn't handle the matter. So it can be kind of complicated getting legal aid staff and people physically matched up because they can be required to assign staff from offices all over the Island already.

MS. ROGERS: Do you know how many staff are in both of those offices, Wabush and Carbonear?

MR. STANLEY: I can get you that information. I think I know but I don't want to misstate. We can get that information for you.

MS. ROGERS: Okay.

So that would be staff who were permanent positions in those two offices.

MR. STANLEY: Yes.

MS. ROGERS: Okay. Thank you.

There was some talk about some of the work going to Clarenville was there, from the Harbour

Grace closure, or is everything going to St. John's?

MR. A. PARSONS: There is some going to Clarenville, depending on the location of the matter. That's the plan we had. Clarenville just opened up again. When did the judge –

OFFICIAL: September.

MR. A. PARSONS: September, yes. That's when that court reopened. So I think there is the possibility of some of the matters going to that court as well.

MS. ROGERS: When we see the work kind of splitting, going to maybe Clarenville and St. John's, will judges move as well? How will that –?

MR. A. PARSONS: Well, there's a judge in Clarenville. There's one judge in Harbour Grace. That judge would have to be relocated. Likely to St. John's, I would assume. That's the move there, I think.

MS. ROGERS: Okay. Thank you.

I'm good with that.

Commissions of Inquiry; I'm fine.

The Office of the Chief Medical Examiner; under Professional Services we see a significant variance there.

MR. A. PARSONS: Correct me if I'm wrong, but I think that's the funding we put in to do a review of the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner. That's underway as we speak, in terms of acquiring the services of the person that will do it. That's something we're hoping to move quickly.

MS. ROGERS: Okay.

The variance in Purchased Services; we see an increase in the revised amount for 2015-16.

MR. A. PARSONS: I believe that's the transportation of human remains.

MS. ROGERS: Wow, that's a lot. There's quite a jump there in revision.

I'd also like to bring up the issue of the death of two women from Newfoundland and Labrador at Nova. In the case of Ms. Strickland, the investigation was completed. Is there a role for our Chief Medical Examiner to look at the situation of the fact that we had two women from Newfoundland and Labrador who both died within a few months of each other while incarcerated?

MR. A. PARSONS: I guess what I'm saying here is just my assumption. I don't have what I think is the definitive answer, but I think given the jurisdiction was in Nova Scotia, I think that it would fall under there. I don't know if they've reached out to our Chief Medical Examiner or not.

Would there be a role? It's hard to tell. I know the two matters are serious. They're sad when you think about it. I'm definitely aware of the case of Ms. Strickland.

MS. ROGERS: I guess I'm looking at the role, not only of the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner but also the role of our Department of Justice knowing that we had two citizens, two women who were incarcerated in a facility in another province – and I understand it was federal. One of them chose to go federally so that she could get appropriate psychiatric care, and she died in that facility. There was another woman who died in that facility. I believe there is a provincial role to look at what is happening. Those were two deaths within a close period of time for each.

MR. A. PARSONS: Yes, what I would say on that – and we've all heard it, whether it's those cases or anybody who watches the news. We're hearing more frequently now, people saying they sought a higher sentence so they would have to go federal, and they want to go federal because they get services. It's unfortunate when you're hearing that. That's something I've recognized, and I think it's been recognized by a lot of people. We saw that on the all-party committee. We had the opportunity to go down and talk to the people down there.

So that's something that is on our radar. That's something we've talked about. I've been down on a number of occasions, even since then, and talked to the people providing the services. I

can't remember the name of the body; they had the mental health day. I agree with you there. I think when you have a citizen that leaves and has that happen – they're leaving to get access to services – I think that concerns us. It might not just be a justice issue, that's a health issue.

I tend to agree with you in theory. That's something I'm working with, and we'll talk about it once we get the corrections I'm sure. I've got concerns about not just the inmates but the staff, because a lot of these divisions and areas we talk about, it's high stress stuff, and down there it's especially high stress. So that's one of the things I've considered as well. Whether it's your inmate population or the people who are down there providing the correctional services, it's tough. So we need to make sure we're doing what we can there.

MS. ROGERS: Okay.

2.3.04 –

CHAIR: Can we just call the –

MS. ROGERS: Yeah, sure.

CHAIR: – quickly, because we have to call the subheadings on those.

Thanks.

CLERK: Clauses 2.2.01 to 2.3.03 inclusive.

CHAIR: Shall 2.2.01 to 2.3.03 inclusive carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, subheads 2.2.01 through 2.3.03 carried.

CHAIR: Did Ms. Rogers have time on the clock?

CLERK: She did.

CHAIR: Yes, okay.

You can call the –

CLERK: I already called those.

CHAIR: Oh, you called those?

CLERK: Yes.

CHAIR: Okay, Ms. Rogers, I'm not sure what you had left on the clock.

MS. ROGERS: I don't think I had anything left on my clock.

CHAIR: Okay, so is it okay –

MS. ROGERS: Absolutely.

CHAIR: Thank you for your honesty, since I've clearly had a long day and I'm ready to go home.

Mr. Davis, would you like to start, 2.3.04.

MR. P. DAVIS: Did you want to call those, or you've already called them? Oh, you already called them. You just said that, didn't you?

Madam Chair, I'm cognizant of the time, and I'm sure all the officials in the room and MHAs, my colleagues, are all aware as well. Under Human Rights I just very shortly wanted to have a discussion regarding concerns expressed about access to services from them, and if there is anything there to deal with. I want to make it clear to the minister that I have a number of questions regarding policing.

MR. A. PARSONS: Yes.

MR. P. DAVIS: And some on public complaints, and also on Adult Corrections and Youth Secure Custody.

MR. A. PARSONS: Do you want me to do this and if you want, we can jump ahead to make sure you get those and then work your way back to the other ones, whatever – I don't care what order you want.

MR. P. DAVIS: I'd be fine doing that unless –

MR. A. PARSONS: It doesn't matter to me.

MR. P. DAVIS: If you want while we're on Human Rights, we could come back to it.

MR. A. PARSONS: Yes, Human Rights I'll just put out there, obviously I don't think there was a significant reduction there. I think the reduction has been in non-personnel. It's been in T&C, Supplies – and that's been the normal line-by-line process everywhere. I've had the pleasure of going over there now and sitting down with the board and sitting down with Remzi – actually I'm going to hopefully sit down with him again soon.

I think what we're seeing is an increase in numbers. There are more people coming forward, which you can look at it and say it's positive that more people feel they can go to this group and have their concerns heard. The bad side is that obviously we don't want to see more complaints. So I don't know if it's a case of increased complaints or increased reporting.

But again, that's something that we do take seriously. I could sit here and go on about it, but I don't want to use up the time. What I can say is I've sat with them, sat down with Carrie, and they've been pretty easy to deal with; a really good bunch, doing good work.

There was a story a little while back on that. I don't know if it was in the paper. Was there a story on that?

MR. P. DAVIS: There have been lots of stories on it.

MR. A. PARSONS: I haven't had any actual complaints brought to me, that I'm aware of it. I haven't seen it but if there's something brought forward, obviously, we have to look at it, consider it and deal with it.

MR. P. DAVIS: Yes, I appreciate that. I bring it to your attention because I've heard the concerns in the past from people who are long periods of time waiting for investigations to be finished and findings, and quite often will signify that it's a result of resources don't match the number of investigations and requests for services from them.

More so than ever before, I think it's an important branch that provides an important service to the people of the province.

MR. A. PARSONS: This is a group, if I recall correctly, that went through a significant downsize in 2013. I think we're trying to stabilize that, but at the same time you have to look at the demand.

I'd like to think that going forward they will come to us, if these concerns are raised. I think we have a pretty good relationship going in that if they have concerns, they're willing to come to us and talk about it. Are there ways we can do things more efficiently? Are there ways we can do things differently? I'm willing to sit down – so far they've been really communicative. They've been open to me coming over and certainly both ways.

Again, if we see more, I hope it's people reporting it as opposed to the actual number going up.

MR. P. DAVIS: Okay.

Madam Chair, I have some questions under courts as well. We mentioned EPOs and CPOs earlier, but being cognizant of time, I wanted to have a discussion around policing resources, as I mentioned, and also Adult Corrections and youth corrections. So I don't know if we can –

CHAIR: What subheading are you referring to?

MR. P. DAVIS: 4.1.01.

CHAIR: 4.1.01.

Are you both done with 2.3.04 to 2.4.01 or will we need to come back because if not, we can –

MS. ROGERS: I have one question on (inaudible).

CHAIR: Can we ask one question and just clear up those two pages, skip over to four and come to three.

MR. P. DAVIS: Yes, absolutely.

MR. A. PARSONS: Yes.

CHAIR: Thank you.

MS. ROGERS: The Human Rights Commission, part of their mandate is not simply to receive complaints but also be proactive and to do outreach and education. Do you know if they are able to do that under the current budgetary restrictions and staff that they have?

MR. A. PARSONS: Again, when I met with them, it's not something that I can recall being brought up. I think they're like everybody. You can look at Justice – I can remember reading the letter to Chief Justice Green dated 2004 where we talked about Justice resources. That's been an issue, I think, for years. It's always an issue; we always need more in Justice. But, Human Rights itself, when I met with them that's not something they mentioned specifically to me. If it was an issue, then I would have that chat because, again, I agree with you that there's an awareness component and education component.

MS. ROGERS: Which I think is so vital.

MR. A. PARSONS: Definitely.

What I would suggest is if there was something there, I'm willing to listen and to figure out ways that if we can do more there, by all means – and I did actually suggest if there were ways that, through existing Department of Justice resources, whether its communications or whatever, then if there's a way that we could help spread the word, do what we have to do, that's the co-operation part that we're trying to get to.

MS. ROGERS: Okay, thank you. I am good there.

Electoral Districts Boundaries Commission, I'm fine.

CHAIR: Sorry, I didn't hear you.

MS. ROGERS: Yes, I'm fine there.

I imagine the variance in the Electoral Districts Boundaries Commission was because of our change in our boundaries.

MR. A. PARSONS: I think some of that funding was before the year-end. I think some of

it might have been actually paid for by Finance as they figured out where it went. So I think there was monies expended before March 31, 2015, and then this year money would have been expended after.

MS. ROGERS: Okay.

Under Legislative Counsel, I do have one question. Minister, it's about the request for a buffer zone around the Athena clinic. Can you tell me where that is at?

MR. A. PARSONS: Actually, I've asked my staff to continue working on that. Again, I've had the pleasure of having people come to me and feel comfortable enough to come to us and say, look, this is an issue, because it wasn't something I had dealt with before. Again, we've had this chat.

I know there's legislation being drafted elsewhere. I know I have staff that are actually working on it and I'm thinking that I can maintain the commitment that I made – I'm hoping, which is I didn't anticipate us being able to get it on the legislative agenda for this session, but I'm aiming for a fall agenda just given there's a lot of work being done now. That's not, obviously, to diminish the importance.

The other thing, though, is that having seen jurisdictions that have gone there, I think the good news is we can use their experiences to guide us both in the drafting, and are there things they would have done differently or changed. I am supportive. I think it's necessary, and the stories I've heard on it are enough to make me think that I'd like to get it done.

MS. ROGERS: Yes, and there are people who go to that clinic for various reasons – it doesn't just provide abortion services – who are also being harassed.

MR. A. PARSONS: That's right.

MS. ROGERS: I understand the last contact they had with the Department of Justice, it was recommended that the owner of the clinic go the injunction route, which would be very costly, and was told that perhaps a buffer zone wouldn't withstand a Charter challenge. Although we

know BC has instituted buffer zones, and they have survived a Charter challenge on their buffer zones. So I'm wondering if someone could clarify that for the clinic.

MR. A. PARSONS: I'm not aware of that, that's for sure.

MS. ROGERS: Okay.

So maybe I'll see that they contact the department.

MR. A. PARSONS: Yes, but I can say, given that I had the opportunity to meet and have that face-to-face contact, I'm probably the person to deal with.

MS. ROGERS: Okay.

MR. A. PARSONS: Maybe it's a case, too, of – I would imagine any solicitor would suggest all options available right now, given that the legislation's not available. I think any solicitor – again, this is what they do. They suggest the possible issues, challenges. I would toss out that, yeah, maybe there's a Charter challenge. So I also agree with you. I think it can withstand that, and given other places have gone through it, we've got that opportunity to see how they did it and what they went through.

So in my case, what I've said to the individuals I met still stands.

MS. ROGERS: Okay, great.

That's good news. I know they would like it sooner, but the fall is not so far away. It's an important issue and a matter of safety and dignity and respect.

Thank you. I'm good.

CHAIR: Okay.

CLERK: Clause 2.3.04 to 2.4.01 inclusive.

CHAIR: Shall 2.3.04 to 2.4.01 inclusive carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, ‘nay.’

Carried.

On motion, subheads 2.3.04 through 2.4.01 carried.

CHAIR: Now, is it my understanding we’re going to skip 3 and we’re going to start at 4.1.01, that’s your wishes and we’ll come back?

Okay.

Mr. Davis.

MR. P. DAVIS: Thank you.

So minister –

CHAIR: Oh, sorry.

We just need to call it.

MR. P. DAVIS: Oh, sorry.

CLERK: Clause 4.1.01 to 4.2.03.

CHAIR: 4.1.01.

Go ahead.

MR. P. DAVIS: Thank you.

Minister, maybe we can start at Salaries, and maybe you can give us an overview on budgeted last year, revised and estimates for this year.

MR. A. PARSONS: I think the difference there, we went from \$47 million budgeted, \$45 million spent and back up to \$46 million estimated. That comes down to there were savings due to retirement vacancies, other vacancies, trying to fill positions, and then there have been junior officers hired that are coming in at a lower pay scale. That’s my understanding.

MR. P. DAVIS: Okay.

Then the salary change for this year?

MR. A. PARSONS: I think that’s based on – again, you would know, obviously you’ve dealt with this. We certainly know your background.

In this case, depending on what comes in, the Chief knows who’s going to get hired and not. The workforce, I believe, has stayed the same except there are the 14 –

OFFICIAL: Salary increases.

MR. A. PARSONS: Yes, some of them are step increases or salary increases. Again, I can’t say that I know how exactly all that works. There were 14 positions, I think four were vacant constables that were not filled, and 10 were for the cadet recruits, was it?

OFFICIAL: Yes, it was (inaudible).

MR. A. PARSONS: Yes, they’re in last year’s budget, had not been filled and will not be filled. So that’s the 14 there. It’s 14 positions, but there were no individuals. Actually, it wasn’t a reduction in the actual officers that were working.

I’ll let Jackie –

MS. LAKE-KAVANAGH: The 10 new cadets that were identified in the recent budget process, that was a part of an approval a couple of years ago to add 10 additional cadets last year and this current year to grow the force by 20 new cadets, 20 new positions essentially. So this past year they graduated 31 cadets, which was the biggest class ever. They normally have between 12, 16, 18. The current cadet group going through right now has 17 in it. That was as many as they could recruit this year. So they didn’t even recruit enough to be able to have those additional 10 cadets even in their cadet roster this year.

The 10 cadets that were taken off the books and deferred, they are not cadets that are currently in the program. They were originally envisioned to be an additional 10 cadets, 10 new positions that the force would have grown by. So this doesn’t affect any of the current cadets, this deferral of those 10 cadet positions.

MR. P. DAVIS: This year’s class, you say there are 17. So all of them will be hired in September, is what you’re saying.

MS. LAKE-KAVANAGH: Yes.

MR. P. DAVIS: In '15-'16, you said there are 31, and then 17 – if I can only get my numbers right. So this year's class there are 17, who all will be –

MS. LAKE-KAVANAGH: Currently, right now, that are going through the training that will finish up the end of the summer, exactly.

MR. P. DAVIS: What's the target then for '16-'17 for the cadet class?

MS. LAKE-KAVANAGH: It depends on what they will recruit. Their normal recruitment class is somewhere in the mid-teens.

MR. P. DAVIS: So is there a plan then for hires for next year? I would assume if you're going to a cadet class, I would assume the practice has been for every class that everyone gets hired.

MS. LAKE-KAVANAGH: Yes, they have a recruitment process underway right now.

MR. P. DAVIS: Yes, but you don't know the number of –?

MS. LAKE-KAVANAGH: I don't know what the numbers will be, no. Because a few years ago they had 12 cadets go through, last year they had 31 go through, with the additional 10 positions that were added in. Their cadet classes typically fill their attrition needs.

MR. P. DAVIS: So if they were able to recruit, say, for example, 40 this year, are you saying they'd hire them all?

MS. LAKE-KAVANAGH: Not if they didn't have positions for them.

MR. P. DAVIS: Right. So the positions would depend on retirements. Is that what you're –?

MS. LAKE-KAVANAGH: In large part, yeah.

MR. P. DAVIS: Do you know how many – I think I do, but I want to check the number – officers are eligible for retirement at this time?

MS. LAKE-KAVANAGH: About 120.

MR. P. DAVIS: That's bigger than I had.

MS. LAKE-KAVANAGH: 110, 120, around there.

MR. P. DAVIS: Oh, yeah, you're going to change it now because I said that.

That's about a quarter of the entire service, right?

MS. LAKE-KAVANAGH: Correct.

MR. P. DAVIS: That's about 25 per cent. Wow.

Minister, maybe you can elaborate on how you feel about this. Because I know for several years, back in the '90s the RNC dropped about 100 members, dropped about 25 per cent overall. There was a lot of work over time to try and rebuild that. That was the plan a couple of years ago, to increase 10 last year and 10 this current fiscal year, that we're in now, to grow the force by 20. We know that's not going to happen. That it's only going to grow by the 10 that were hired in the classroom last year.

I know the plan was because of retirements that are going to happen. What's your plan for that? Potentially, you could have 100 people retire in the next several months. Potentially you could, depending – by reducing the number in '16-'17, is that – what are you anticipating as far as retirements? Ten could be a lot, not hiring those 10 this year and not having a plan to hire them. What's your feeling on that? What's your projection or your plan on that?

MR. A. PARSONS: Well, what I can say is that since I have gotten in I've had a number of conversations and meetings with Chief Janes. Certainly, he has brought up – we've brought up a number of issues, but this is not something that I can recall having discussed with him the fact of the possibility of a significant number retiring all at once. So everybody, not just in this department, every department – I realize there's been significant growth over the last number of years, I think the number is actually a 27 per cent increase in the spending when it comes to the RNC. This is one of those things where we're all feeling these challenges with the pressures that we have, but what I'd like to think is that we'll continue working with the chief.

I'm not going to pretend for two seconds that I know exactly how to run the police department, either one, whether it's RNC or RCMP. That's why we have good people running both. But my job is to be prepared to discuss, ask questions and figure out if there are issues, what are those issues and what can we do. I think that the people within the forces are better able to explain what we need to do to ensure contingency, to make sure that the plans are in place so that the forces are up and running and can maintain and sustain any retirements and things like that. Plus, I think you can get hired from elsewhere as well.

Ms. Lake-Kavanagh was just saying, again, the RNC has done a pretty tremendous job. You only have to look at Twitter to see what they're doing in terms of recruitment just via social media. So it's not something I've had a conversation with the chief about. What we've looked at is the fact that like every department, every division, when I got in the first thing I wanted to do was try to figure out how each works, what are we spending, looking at the challenges and the constraints that we have and figuring out what do we have to do to make sure. Most of the stuff that falls under here is pretty basic services that we need, whether it's policing, corrections, court and stuff like that.

So far so good in terms of the conversations, but, again, I'm looking forward – if the chief ever has that concern, I'm sure we'll sit down and figure out what we have to do to make sure that we can alleviate that concern and plan for it.

MR. P. DAVIS: You know, we live in a day and age where – a couple of comments I'd make to you – we hear almost daily, occurrences of armed robberies, violent crime that occurs in jurisdictions policed by the RNC. So we know that's not getting better. We know the technicalities of policing are certainly increasing, not only for the level of training that's important, but also the numbers.

As you said, my own background, I'm quite aware of how this became a problem over the years. I go back and think about the Lamer Inquiry, I think about the past and the Paul Bernardo circumstances and inquiries where lack of resources, lack of interjurisdictional cooperative work efforts led to disastrous results.

Back in the '90s when the RNC lost – reduced by about 25 per cent of its workforce, there was a lot of work and a lot of effort to get that back to where it was, to a level of policing that I think everyone felt was acceptable, a level of training that was acceptable and so on. And my fear, and the fear that I hear from police officers, including the ones that are eligible to retire, is what's going to happen, what's the future going to be and how are they going to be able to continue to do their work effectively.

So when I hear that we we've got four vacant positions that are not going to be filled and 10 new hires that are not going to happen, then that sets a feeling, even within the service itself – the results of that and what would happen are unknown. But it concerns me if the service itself starts to go in that downward direction as far as resources.

That's why I'm asking: What's your plan as the minister. Have you had a discussion with the chief? What happens next year and the year after? The other comment – just if I may, Minister, very briefly – is that it's also well known that it takes several years for a police officer to learn their job, so you've got to get ahead of it, way ahead of it, way ahead of the curve before that actually strikes.

MR. A. PARSONS: Well, I guess the first thing is that I think we all share the concern. When you think about it, we all love the fact that we know we have police services, the RNC, the RCMP, the fact that we can call them.

We've got a couple of things here. The first I'd say, you talked about armed robberies. Sometimes I think that maybe it's not the back end, but we need to look at the front end. We've had a lot of conversations on why this is increasing, why this is happening, so I get to the mental health and addiction side where I think we have to do more there.

Again, I know we've had lots of meetings, lots of conversations over just the last couple of years, certainly everybody in this House has, and across the province. But I think we need to do more there because we've heard lots of cases where we know that we can count on the police to be there, but in some cases it's not the police that we need in these situations, in certain

responses. Again, we have to look at why is it increasing. I don't want to get off into a long tangent on that, but that's just sort of where I am on that. I think there's more we can do there, root causes and stuff like that.

The second side is that we're very lucky to have good forces, but absolutely everything in this province, whether it's policing, education, health care – we have to deal with the financial circumstances that we find. So when we look at an increase of 27 per cent, we have to question the sustainability. I don't want to get into long, old goings-on here about the financial side, but we have to look at what are we spending, what can we afford, what can we sustain. That's where I think there's no one better than the chief and his staff around him to sit down with us and have those conversations, factoring all that in to say, you know what, what's the plan for now, but what is the plan going forward. What is the strategic plan?

So that's a conversation I can say that we haven't had, but I think the chief would do a better job than I will of explaining to me of what we need to do. And the chief and everybody, I mean there's no one that's not aware of the financial circumstances. I mean, everything you do you have to factor in where we are. But that's a conversation I'm willing to have and I'm sure I am going to have, because you know what, you're right. When you have 120 approaching retirement, then we have to make sure that we can cover that off, if something were to happen.

MR. P. DAVIS: You're right, and that's why the planning is important now when it comes to this particular area. Also, in policing – and to be honest with you I have to tell you, Minister, I expected the chief to be here tonight as part of Estimates. My recollection was that the chief had participated before but maybe I was wrong.

MR. A. PARSONS: Not in recent years.

MR. P. DAVIS: Not in recent years.

MR. A. PARSONS: But you know what, I agree, actually. After sitting down here tonight I think next year I'm going to have the chief here and have the RCMP here. I think the head of Corrections should be here and I think the head of the Sherriff's Office should be.

In fact, I've increased the number of people here because I know for sure that I can't answer all the questions. These people have been doing it a lot longer than me and they're a lot more knowledgeable than me. So you know what, I tend to agree that we need to have these people here. Bill Janes is going to do a heck of a job, a better job explaining this, the same way that chief Brophy or Superintendent Brophy down to HMP is going to do a better job talking about that because I can't.

You know what, I agree with you. I think that's something I should do next year.

MR. P. DAVIS: I'm out of time. I had some more questions but I don't mind deferring to Ms. Rogers, if she wants to go ahead, and then I can come back to that.

CHAIR: Okay, we'll move to Ms. Rogers and come back to Mr. Davis.

MR. P. DAVIS: Thank you.

MS. ROGERS: Okay, my question would be around 4.1.03, the RNC Public Complaints Commission. Just a quick question there for you, Minister.

Is there any movement towards – I'm sorry, I'm so tired right now; three really, really, really long – a public oversight, a civilian oversight of the police?

MR. A. PARSONS: Yeah. I've talked about this publicly. This is something that we are going to do. We're still in the beginning phase of talking to jurisdictions to see what they have, what's the best model. We're considering it; there's nothing that's committed at this point. Do we need a provincial one or do we partner with an Atlantic one? What kind of staff complement do we need? What's the jurisdiction or terms of reference going to be?

We're lucky that there are a lot of places. Right now we're dealing with Alberta, we're dealing with Halifax, so we have places to look. You see police oversight all over the place, not just in this country. So it is going to happen.

Given the multitude of issues that I've dealt with in a short period of time – and I've had this

conversation where you come in and you have long-range ideas. But any of us here, you sometimes get sidetracked by the day to day. That's sort of where we are on this, but that's something that's very important to me.

The most important part too – and I just have to put this out there. I was flying through an airport here in the province. I got off and I was waiting for the luggage. I had someone come up and introduce themselves. They said they were a police officer. The conversation was happening and they said: I can't wait until you do it because, you know what, I know I do good work and I'd rather have it.

MS. ROGERS: Great.

MR. A. PARSONS: And that's one of the things we've had in the past couple of months, things going on. We don't want to see anything that's going to disparage or tarnish the good officers that we have here. They encourage this. That's what encourages me that we have to continue on because our officers themselves want this. They're coming to me. I get emails.

It's going to get there, but the timing and the model, we're still trying to work it out.

MS. ROGERS: I'm very impressed with the modernization of the RNC and the movement forward, incorporating more women in the police service. I would love for us to be able to call it a police service rather than a police force.

Also, their increasing awareness and education around addictions and mental health; I believe the presentation that the chief gave to us at the all-party committee was quite thorough. I was impressed with the movement forward and the type of work they're going to do.

I have one more question. I believe there's some money that comes from Women's Policy for a partner violence project with the police, is there? Is there money that comes in to the RNC from Women's Policy?

MR. A. PARSONS: Do you want to answer that?

MS. ENGLISH: There is money that is still budgeted within the Women's Policy Office that

is transferred out, as required, to the RNC and the RCMP for intimate partner violence. So that money is still sitting with the Women's Policy Office.

MS. ROGERS: It has not yet been transferred out?

MS. ENGLISH: It has not yet been transferred.

MS. ROGERS: And is there a plan for that to be transferred out?

MS. ENGLISH: I don't know.

They do fund the positions and it's just transferred over.

CHAIR: Can you just speak your name?

MS. ENGLISH: Virginia English.

They do transfer the monies over. There hasn't been any discussion recently or during this past budget with respect to actually moving that funding to the RNC and the RCMP, but they do transfer the monies as required.

MS. ROGERS: Okay. Thank you very much.

And in terms of policing, let's see if I have anything else here. I think I'm okay on that.

Thank you.

MR. A. PARSONS: Do you want to go somewhere else or do you want to come back?

MR. P. DAVIS: I can go ahead? Thank you.

Minister – and I'm just looking line by line, I don't mean to take you right through.

MR. A. PARSONS: Is this on the RNC?

MR. P. DAVIS: Yes, it is, sorry.

MR. A. PARSONS: Okay.

MR. P. DAVIS: 4.1.01.

On Transportation and Communications it was just shy of \$2 million last year and it's about \$1.5 million this year, just under \$1.3 million

actually expended in the '15 – '16 revised. Can you explain that change for me?

MR. A. PARSONS: Yes. I think under Transportation and Communications there's a savings resulting from the RNC no longer being billed for the City of St. John's 911 service. And the funds budgeted here for relocation costs are now properly reflected under Purchased Services.

MR. P. DAVIS: Oh, so relocation is taken out of Transportation and Communications and put into Purchased Services?

MR. A. PARSONS: Yes.

MR. P. DAVIS: So that's why the increase in Purchased Services.

MR. A. PARSONS: Yes. And under Purchased Services, the relocation budget that was mentioned, there were also some higher costs for building maintenance and there were some vehicle rentals for special ops.

MR. P. DAVIS: Oh yes. Thank you.

I meant to ask you as well about civilian staff, if there are any changes in the civilian staff at the RNC.

MR. A. PARSONS: Not that I'm aware of. I don't believe so.

MR. P. DAVIS: It's easier for me to see all your staff doing this around you as for you.

MR. A. PARSONS: I just want to make sure to get it on the record in case anybody is listening.

MR. P. DAVIS: Do you have a breakdown on salaries and overtime for the last year?

MR. A. PARSONS: We can get it for you, that's not a problem.

MR. P. DAVIS: Could you do that?

MR. A. PARSONS: Yes, definitely.

MR. P. DAVIS: I'm interested in patrol, special services investigations and so on and how that varies.

Minister, a matter that's becoming more and more a topic of discussion these days in policing, in both the RCMP and RNC and in other first response services, is PTSD. The RCMP deals with their members very differently from the RNC being a federal agency. They have federal programs and services.

The RCMP doesn't have sick leave, for example. If you're sick or injured or injured in the workplace, you just continue to receive your salary. Or if you become injured on duty you just receive your salary. The RNC is treated very differently, obviously, as a provincial agency.

I know EAP quite often doesn't deal with the necessities of officers dealing with PTSD. Also, most officers don't qualify for workers' comp. Has this been anything that you've looked at or are talking about? Reflective as well that we're becoming more and more understanding of PTSD, especially in recent months and recent years, than we did just a matter of two or three years ago. It's much better understood today.

MR. A. PARSONS: I would say it's not a conversation I've had since I've been there that it's been brought to my attention in terms of PTSD.

Occupational health and safety, though; across the department there's been an increased awareness on that. So I think that might somewhat fall under there, if you think about it.

I did have a conversation in the past with Warren Sullivan about this because I think this was an issue they've been dealing with for a few years. So I remember having a conversation with him – it might have been a few years ago – because that was something they were wanting and dealing with. But other than that, it's not something that's been – Jackie might even know because she has some continuity there.

MS. LAKE-KAVANAGH: I know the RNC has been doing some work on this. Inspector O'Reilly has been involved in it, actually, in terms of developing a range of supports and services for officers and really encouraging a bit of a cultural change there around being able to go forward and ask for assistance, and do that without being judged.

We had some meetings there a while back because we're looking at developing some initiatives for Corrections. We had the RNC and the RCMP in to talk about some of the work they had been doing around mental health initiatives, healthy and supportive workplaces. There was a fair bit of work. Certainly the RCMP had done a lot of work, but they have been able to draw on a lot of national work that had been going on through such a big force and with a national scope.

The RNC actually had been doing some work as well, some really good work. I know that Corrections and the superintendent were really, really keen on some of that work and had made some linkages there. So we're having some discussions, too, about how Corrections may be able to borrow from some of those practices and initiatives that the police forces have started to develop and implement.

MR. P. DAVIS: Minister, I won't drag it out here too much, but just to say that I'd be more than happy to have a more in-depth conversation, if you were interested in doing that.

MR. A. PARSONS: Definitely.

MR. P. DAVIS: Because PTSD is really a matter that is very sensitive and very personal.

As you just related to, Inspector O'Reilly, I know, has been working for many years in trying to open the discussion and broaden the discussion, especially for those who suffer with PTSD and have never spoken about it, afraid to speak about it, won't speak about for whatever combination of reasons they find themselves in.

I'd be more than happy to have a more in-depth discussion and share some more information, my own knowledge and so on and what I've heard.

MR. A. PARSONS: Definitely willing to listen.

MR. P. DAVIS: Thank you.

How's my time?

I just had a couple of more questions on the RNC and actually RCMP. Maybe I'll go to

RCMP and I'll see if I can find those questions on the RNC while I do that.

Any changes in service delivery, complement of members – any of that planned for this year?

MR. A. PARSONS: We did civilianize four positions. Those were back office operations. My understanding, and my rudimentary knowledge, is that these would have been officers doing back office computer data, whatever, not actual on the ground. So there's been a civilianization there. That hasn't actually affected the – I always use the phrase, boots on the ground.

In terms of change in model, really pleased – a lot of communities over the last number of years have expressed their concern about coverage, 24-7 and stuff like that. So the RCMP have done a great job where they came out and just expanded the 24-7 in Grand Falls-Windsor; a pilot project.

I know there are requests from other communities. I think Clarendville. I think Gander. So I think they're managing to do that with the existing resources there, which is always great to hear, but they're the ones who are – it's them doing it.

They have a lot more communications with these communities than I do. I've met with a number of communities to talk about it but they're there. They get the complaints or the issues coming up. They'll sit down with them and then they're making this work.

So I got to give it Andrew Boland. He's been – everybody I've dealt with, whether it's Chief Janes or Boland and them, or Peter Clark, I believe is the new commanding officer coming in, they've been really good to deal with and really helpful, especially trying to teach somebody new like me.

That's the change there. I'd like to see more, if it's possible to expand to have more coverage using the same existing resources. I think that's making the councils happy out there, which makes the citizens happier.

MR. P. DAVIS: On the expansion into 24-7. Were there additional resources deployed to Grand Falls-Windsor?

MR. A. PARSONS: No.

MR. P. DAVIS: They just changed their schedules so they worked –

MR. A. PARSONS: The word we're hearing, actually, is they're spending less.

MR. P. DAVIS: What do you mean?

MR. A. PARSONS: Well, I guess with the change of schedule requires less overtime. Without telling them we're giving you less, it's a case of they've been asked to increase their coverage and once they figure out the logistics of doing that, they're providing coverage and they're actually able to do. They're telling us there're saving, so that's savings where there wasn't even a request to find savings, which is the best kind.

MR. P. DAVIS: Interesting.

All right, I'm cognizant of the time.

On the RNC Public Complaints Commission – I suppose I could look at their annual report to do this – how has the number of investigations been and files that they're using? Is it steady? Is it less?

MS. LAKE-KAVANAGH: I can speak to this.

Since that commission was formed, I know the number of complaints annually has constantly been low. The total number of complaints has always ranged somewhere in the 40 zone. That's a combination of formal complaints, it might be a phone call that comes in, but I think their numbers have been consistently hovering around those numbers since 1994-95, whenever it was established.

MR. A. PARSONS: Very few (inaudible).

MS. LAKE-KAVANAGH: (Inaudible) have gone through the hearings, very few hearings. I don't even know if they had one last year. It was a very low level of activity, which is encouraging.

MR. P. DAVIS: There have been lots of hearings over the years but maybe not in the last couple of years.

MS. LAKE-KAVANAGH: Yeah.

MR. P. DAVIS: Okay.

On the Capital, I don't have any questions on that. I know that's the new campus. I would think that's now completed.

I want to have a discussion about Adult Corrections and also Youth Secure. I can go there, Madam Chair?

CHAIR: Yes.

MR. P. DAVIS: I'm almost out of time but I can quickly ask a question. My colleague then can carry on, if you want.

You had a new program developed to deal with the women's population in custody. Can you give us an update on how that is?

MR. A. PARSONS: I have an update on numbers here somewhere.

What they did basically, the numbers were going up in Clarendville, so they did some infrastructure work down at Her Majesty's. I think they had to put in a new door and might have even been a new bathroom. I've been down there and seen it and walked in. I've been in on the range.

Currently, as of today, there are 22 females in Clarendville, one in Labrador, eight at HMP and one at our St. John's lock-up for a total of 32.

MR. P. DAVIS: How many at the lock-up?

MR. A. PARSONS: Lock-up is one.

MR. P. DAVIS: One.

One in Happy Valley-Goose Bay you said?

MR. A. PARSONS: Yes.

MR. P. DAVIS: Eight at HMP and one at lock-up. Sorry. Thank you.

MR. A. PARSONS: So that was something that came on our radar. We went out and as soon as we were aware of it we started talking to, whether it's the super there, we talked to a number of different groups. We had to make a decision.

I don't want to waste too much time because I think I've spoken about that. The interesting thing, actually, is I've gone down there. I went in one day to visit the inmates. The interesting thing now is they're saying: Don't send me back to Clarendville. I don't want to go back. Which you don't know what to expect, right?

So my main thing when I talk to them I said: I hope you get out and don't come back anywhere. That's what I'd like to see and I know that's what they want, but, actually, they're very adamant that they – nobody enjoys being incarcerated, that I'm aware of, but these individuals liked St. John's HMP better than the accommodations in Clarendville.

MR. P. DAVIS: What about programming? Is there a consistency in programming or –

MR. A. PARSONS: We've had absolutely zero complaints on that. They're getting access to all the same programs. Hasn't been an issue at all that I'm – we've had people coming in.

I guess, off the side of that in terms of, not programing, but many of these people are getting more visits from family. I guess some of them may be from the Avalon or St. John's or whatever. So they're actually getting more visits from family then they got previously.

Like I say, it's one of those things where it popped up. Obviously, it was challenging when you're going about it, then once it's done, the people that it's affecting are saying that it was a positive move.

MR. P. DAVIS: I'm cognizant of the time, I can come back.

CHAIR: Ms. Rogers, did you –

MS. ROGERS: Yes, absolutely. Thank you.

I have been hearing stories about the length of time of lock-up for women in Clarendville. I'm

sure now that has been somewhat alleviated by the movement. We all know the size of the cells and that there were three women at a time and stories of when there were staff shortages or if someone had to be taken to the hospital, then two corrections officers would have to accompany that person. So people were locked up three to a cell for three days on end.

I would like a copy, if possible, of the logs for Clarendville indicating rec times that people had, the number of lockdowns and population numbers, how many people were in a cell, if that would be possible.

MR. A. PARSONS: I don't think it's an issue. I'll certainly endeavour to get what I can, considering any constraints on their end, but I've got no problem –

MS. ROGERS: Okay, great. Good.

So I think it's very interesting, the whole issue of the women, a number of the women are much happier at HMP, and that is probably because for a lot of them it's being able to see family and children.

I'm just wondering – there's a situation as well, a jail outside Winnipeg called Headingley, and there used to be a bus that would bring family members from downtown Winnipeg to Headingley and so people were able to see their families. The majority of inmates there are Aboriginal people. A lot of people that we know who are incarcerated have really strong socioeconomic challenges and their families don't have cars or their families don't have methods of transportation.

I'm wondering if there is any commitment to assist women who are in Clarendville to assist their families in seeing them, because we know many of them are mothers and they are worried about their children. Is there any appetite to look at that, or to do it through video conferencing for those who want to see their children?

MR. A. PARSONS: What I would say is that I certainly don't want to – it's not something I was aware of until you brought it up, like the bus service, so I don't want to go out right now –

MS. ROGERS: That has since been cut as well, which poses a huge problem because the majority of people incarcerated don't get to see family or friends and connections.

MR. A. PARSONS: And I guess what I'm saying, I don't want to make any commitment right now because that would be foolhardy for me to do something like that, but I recognize at the same time when it comes to somebody's mental well-being, I can see how that would be a challenge. But I also don't think it's just females in Clarendville. I think it's individuals that might be in Stephenville or Bishop's.

MS. ROGERS: Sure, absolutely.

MR. A. PARSONS: I'm always willing to listen to everything and it has to be factored in – obviously, cost guides everything because that's just how it is. But at the same time, there might be an innovative way, a different way. And, like you say, videoconferencing, if we got pre-existing resources and we can accommodate something, then I got no problem with looking at it and figuring out can we do this.

MS. ROGERS: Okay, great.

MR. A. PARSONS: Because I think that's going to help us in the long run, like I say, if we can improve that situation. I would also say that going on the same vein one of the things – and I know you'd be interested in this as well – is that I've been really looking at bail supervision.

MS. ROGERS: That was my next question.

MR. A. PARSONS: And I've already had a number of meetings and contacts with both groups and academics and discussing what we can do here. Because we do have a situation when you have more inmates than beds, that's an issue and I don't know if it's sustainable. Again, I don't know if this question is going to come, but there won't be a new HMP this year. We all know the situation there. It's been there for a number of years.

Bail supervision to me, though, I strongly think that it can work. But again it's like anything, I want to look into it and see what's done elsewhere. We have a lot of people – we're lucky to have people in this province that have a

lot of experience in it. So I'm looking to get their wisdom and look at the same factors. Again, can you do it? Is it feasible? What are the cost benefits? I know you've mentioned it.

MS. ROGERS: I've also done a jurisdictional scan, so I'd be happy to share anything that we looked at.

MR. A. PARSONS: So I can say to you that's something that I've had conversations on very recently and it's something I'm going to continue to look at.

MS. ROGERS: Basically, we're dealing with the criminalization of addictions and mental health for the most part. We're just not doing really well in that area at all. I think when we look at the services that are being provided by SHOP and by Stella Burry, it's great, but it certainly isn't enough. When we look at the psychologist who's going to Clarendville, it's twice a week for four hours when we had over 30 inmates, that's probably a heavy load.

So I'm really glad about that. Now the women who have been moved to HMP, that was announced as a temporary measure. What's it looking like now?

MR. A. PARSONS: Well again, this is where I think it would have been great – in hindsight, I wish I had Superintendent Brophy here because he could certainly talk about it. It's almost like you assess it on a day-by-day and week-to-week basis. The good news is that when this happened – I had a lot of reservations and a lot of fears because it hadn't been done in 30 years. I guess the positive here is that the people affected, I've talked to them, like I said.

We're still considering, what are our options. There are some when you talk about infrastructure, but again we talk about bail supervision, we talk about getting back to, as I mentioned earlier here, why do we have people here. We have to look at that. What constitutes why people are incarcerated?

There are a lot of different moving parts to it, but in terms of the actual what is the plan, right now we're continuing status quo. The thing that makes that feasible to me is the fact that the people involved; it's been a good relationship

down there. The guards that I speak to and supervisors report everything is good so far and the females I've talked to have said the same, which gives me hope. It wasn't a move we anticipated, but it turned out to work.

MS. ROGERS: Okay.

The women who've been incarcerated in Clarendville, at the time when it was so crowded, also talked about how wonderful the corrections' officers were, in spite of the really challenging, difficult situation that they were all under.

What about staffing at HMP right now? We know that it was really challenged, that there was a lot of overtime, that staff are really having a hard time with being called back in and doing extra shifts. So has there been extra staff assigned because of the movement of the women?

MR. A. PARSONS: I think they're actually on a corrections recruitment right now. Obviously, this has been something on my radar because when you're looking at the line by line here and when you're looking at the amount that's overtime, sick leave and stuff like that, that's a big issue.

MS. ROGERS: Yes.

MR. A. PARSONS: I've had a lot of conversations with Mr. Brophy and his staff on what we can we do because obviously there's a huge cost component to this that factors into everything. But it also comes down to a safety issue too for our inmates and our guards. So there is a recruitment drive on there but I'm also working with them (inaudible) – nobody likes to hear of extreme use of sick leave because that means people are sick, so what can we do to address that.

I've also had a couple of conversations with Mr. Earle at NAPE to discuss this too because that's a big part of his group, and obviously he's very concerned about the well-being as well. So the good news is we've had some good conversations there. I think this has been an issue for some time. I don't anticipate that it's something I'm going to walk in and fix, but at least if you have some good lines of communication between the three bodies, then

I'd like to think that hopefully we can take some positive steps, if we can at least lay out what each of our concerns are and what some possible solutions are.

MS. ROGERS: Can we also have a list of overtime and sick time?

MR. A. PARSONS: It's not an issue on my end. I think we can get that.

MS. ROGERS: Okay.

Thank you.

MR. A. PARSONS: Vacancies? We can get that too, can't we?

I don't want to say yes without knowing for sure. It is the story of my life.

MS. ROGERS: My last question there would be in regard to Dr. Philip Klassen's independent review. How is that now in terms of the recommendations that he has made and where are we with the implementation of the recommendations?

MS. LAKE-KAVANAGH: We're in good shape on that, actually. There has been some work done to engage additional psychiatrists in the Corrections system. The recovery model is well underway. We've collaborated with Eastern Health on that. Our staff have been involved in training, and that's now the framework they use.

I know the planning for psychiatric services now includes transitions to community service providers as well, so that when inmates are released their community physician will get a report on where things are. They've done a lot of work with staff and with inmates as well around raising awareness around mental health issues, mental health conditions, services. You destigmatize that by normalizing the information, the discussions about that, just creating it as another topic for discussion.

The other issue, I think one of the recommendations was that we should engage an academic provider. So what we are doing now, and there seems to be some interest from the university on this, is we're looking at possibly developing a residency program for forensic

psychiatry at HMP so that you'd have young physicians who are specializing in psychiatry actually have exposure to a correctional setting versus, primarily, say the Waterford or a mental health area in a hospital.

So that's a whole area of expertise. It's a whole area of practice that a lot of psychiatry residents never have access to. There's some interest and some discussion currently underway on that. So I'm really hopeful we can really move that so that we open up this whole area of practice.

MS. ROGERS: Great.

Thank you very much.

CHAIR: Given the time of the evening, and we normally sit three hours, I have to ask the Committee, is it the wish to continue?

MR. P. DAVIS: (Inaudible.)

MR. A. PARSONS: I have no problem answering more questions, but my staff; I don't want to keep them too long, they've put in a long day as well, but maybe –

MR. P. DAVIS: (Inaudible.)

MR. A. PARSONS: I'm very, very – I tell you, not at all. But, no, listen, maybe we –

MR. P. DAVIS: (Inaudible) they're doing this behind you again, so.

MR. A. PARSONS: Maybe what we could do, I think that – I want to make sure we tried our best to answer them. If there's anything we don't get, then I'm always willing to have a conversation after as well. I want to make sure you get the information, but maybe we can just sort of have another go at it and if there's anything you want to clue up with, follow up with.

MR. P. DAVIS: I won't be much longer, I don't anticipate.

MR. A. PARSONS: Yes, and I appreciate the patience of everybody.

MR. P. DAVIS: I don't know about Ms. Rogers, but –

CHAIR: Are we finished in the 4s, because if so I want to call that.

MR. P. DAVIS: No.

CHAIR: Okay.

MR. P. DAVIS: I want to talk about youth custody. What's the capacity at Whitbourne? What was the original capacity or what's the capacity now?

MR. A. PARSONS: Sixty when they had the three cottages, and now it's 20.

MR. P. DAVIS: Are the cottages still there?

MR. A. PARSONS: I think two of them are still there but they're not in operation. I don't know what year that happened.

OFFICIAL: Yes, and major renovations.

MR. A. PARSONS: Yes, they required significant renovations. So you have the one cottage, I guess, operating.

How many people are there, eight?

OFFICIAL: Seven today.

MR. A. PARSONS: Seven today.

MR. P. DAVIS: With a capacity of 20?

MR. A. PARSONS: Yes.

MR. P. DAVIS: I want to ask you this question, and I don't know all the details of it, but a thought came to mind and has actually been suggested to me by a couple of people, that Whitbourne may have been an option for a women's prison. Was any consideration given to that?

MR. A. PARSONS: I think we considered absolutely everything when we'd been going through all these challenges. I think the concern there was with the numbers, you'd have to open up – because you have to have a separation, obviously. You can't have adults and youth in the same spot, and I think it would require the opening of another cottage.

I think a report that was done some time ago talked about the cost, depending on if you put adult males, adult females, youth. I think the cost was into the millions, according to the report I have. I got no problem getting a number and getting the accurate number. One cottage required a certain amount of work to be done. Another one required – and depending on the population you're going to put in there. The renovations, I think, were pretty substantial.

Then there's the security. Depending on who you have there, the enhanced security requirements for the different population, but it has been considered in the past. I asked the same question when all of this was going on: well, what about here? What about there?

MR. P. DAVIS: Again, I don't know if Clarenville would be a good resource then for youth because there's more than that in Clarenville, more women in Clarenville. How many women in Clarenville today?

MR. A. PARSONS: Twenty-three, 24.

MR. P. DAVIS: So if you have seven youth in Whitbourne, which is probably around the number that normally, I would think – my recollection was that's about the number that's been there for the last number of years.

MR. A. PARSONS: It comes down to the same cost concerns. Just say you switched them. If you put females down in Whitbourne you got to open up one of the cottages, and it comes with this millions and millions-dollar price tag, which is according to the consultant's report, which was in the department when I got there. So it's the same thing, you have these cost pressures there.

Is Clarenville the best spot for the youth? I don't know. I'm hearing they don't have the same facilities. Actually, I haven't been to Clarenville myself yet. That's one of the –

OFFICIAL: Oh, you haven't?

MR. A. PARSONS: Not yet. I've been to most others. I haven't been to that one, but that's one of the places on my road trip. I have to get there.

MR. P. DAVIS: Okay.

On the youth centre, 4.2.02, Youth Secure Custody, services in Whitbourne; could you get us the same staffing and salary information as you are for HMP?

MR. A. PARSONS: Yes.

MR. P. DAVIS: Overtime, vacancies, any change from last year at that time.

MR. A. PARSONS: Not a problem.

Obviously, we've dealt with some challenges out there in the very, very recent past; obviously, with the passing of some employees out there. So that's been –

MR. P. DAVIS: Yes, I understand.

I know I had a couple of more questions, and I can't find them either.

MR. A. PARSONS: If you want –

MR. P. DAVIS: It's the hour of the day, right.

MR. A. PARSONS: We can switch over to Gerry and come back, if you want to find them.

MR. P. DAVIS: Yes, we could do that if you want.

MS. ROGERS: I also would like to state our condolences of the tragic loss of the two staff from Whitbourne. I know that Randy Ralph was so committed and often was very courageous in even pointing out some of his grave concerns for some of the Aboriginal children, youth, who were in custody. I've had dealings with him when he had grave concerns. He was willing to go way the extra mile and it's a great loss.

I do not have anything else around corrections and the facilities. I can see there's no money here to even consider thinking about an HMP. So there's no point in asking that question.

MR. A. PARSONS: Not this year.

MS. ROGERS: Yes.

I would ask simply something on Fish and Wildlife, that's number five.

CHAIR: Yes, we'll get through this section first and call it out.

Do you have any more in four?

MR. P. DAVIS: Only a comment to add; we're talking about staffing again. This is another area where staff, both at HMP and in Whitbourne, sometimes works in very difficult and challenging environments and circumstances. Obviously, I know staff who work in both environments and at different levels, from management down through to some of the newer staff. It's tough times and it's difficult work; quite often seen as dangerous and challenging and difficult on individual employees.

To be honest with you, I would never be able to do it. I thought about it many times over the years in my role in my previous career, that if I had to work in those types of environments I wouldn't be able to do it. So hats off to them.

Every time I think about Whitbourne, I think about this particular youth that I know personally. I know some staff there, and I know one of the staff who has actually discussed this with before, but I know this one particular youth there who is no longer a youth, an adult now, but did so well at Whitbourne because of the care and consideration of the people who worked there and the family there.

I know lots of cases who've done well, but this one particular case who his experience at Whitbourne really made a significant difference in his life and where he is today and where he's going. I do know other cases of youth who've done very well and speak well of staff and so on out there.

Anyway, I just make that comment for the sake of the staff who works there. Obviously, they've got their own tragedies as yourself and Ms. Rogers referred to just this past week. It's always very difficult. When someone is so respected, people are so respected as they are, it makes it even much harder. And family in so many ways; couldn't be any closer than their own family in so many ways.

If you want to call those and then we'll go to Fish and Wildlife for about an hour-and-a-half discussion on that one.

CHAIR: Okay.

CLERK: Subhead 4.1.01 to subhead 4.2.03 inclusive.

CHAIR: Shall 4.1.01 to 4.2.03 inclusive carry?

All those in favour?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against?

Carried.

On motion, subheads 4.1.01 through 4.2.03 carried.

CLERK: Subhead 3.1.01 to 3.2.01.

CHAIR: 3.1.01.

We're just flipping back and then we'll go back to section 5. We've got a little tangle here.

MR. P. DAVIS: Minister, on the courts, you were going to educate us on EPOs.

MR. A. PARSONS: I don't know if I actually said I would educate you on EPOs.

MR. P. DAVIS: Oh yes. We'll test you now.

MR. A. PARSONS: I think, actually, I have two or three people back here that would do a much better job of educating you on that because they're certainly more experienced.

MR. P. DAVIS: Maybe I can just shorten the conversation. I'm interested to know the implications on the practice that happens in courts that are closing versus what will happen in the future.

MS. MACINNIS: I guess right now we're still very much in the preliminary phase of this whole transition process, in terms of processes in terms of moving the court responsibilities. The EPOs and some other issues have certainly been something that we have flagged.

In terms of process, as we often see now, EPOs are granted after hours, judges can be contacted after hours. So we certainly believe that we can

build on some of those pieces as well, that judges don't necessarily have to be at the court site. We know that policing authorities often help with people who are seeking EPOs as well, even during the day and after hours as well.

Yes, we are very much in the preliminary phases, but we certainly have identified that it's one of the pieces that we need to iron out as well.

MR. P. DAVIS: Thank you.

So you haven't figured it out.

MS. MACINNIS: No.

MR. P. DAVIS: But you're working on it. Obviously, you're cognizant and, Wilma, I know that it's important to you, yourself, as well.

Minister, under Salaries for both areas of the Supreme Court and Provincial Court, are there any staff changes in those?

MR. A. PARSONS: There would be a staff change according to what we listed. I will get you the list. I think the court in Wabush, we have two; Harbour Grace is four; Grand Falls-Windsor is three; Grand Bank is four; and there was a change at the Supreme Court in St. John's of two.

What were those positions again?

OFFICIAL: They were vacant.

MR. A. PARSONS: Vacant positions in the Supreme Court in St. John's.

MS. RYDER-LAHEY: Minister, if I could just clarify.

The positions in the Grand Falls-Windsor Supreme Court, actually, we're only losing two positions. One position is actually being transferred to Gander. In Grand Bank Provincial Court, out of the three positions in the Supreme Court in Grand Bank, one of those positions is being transferred to St. John's. So it's actually only two positions in both of those courts that are actually being eliminated.

MR. P. DAVIS: So in cases like that when a position is moved, an employee moves. I know I asked this question earlier, but then is that a move that government would provide for the employee? If the employee says, yes, I'm going to go to Gander; I'm going to relocate my family, would government pick up those expenses?

MS. RYDER-LAHEY: It's my understanding that NAPE and Treasury Board signed an agreement, an MOU, approximately two hours after the budget on budget day. It covers the movement of employees that are being transferred to other areas so that all of their moving expenses are covered.

It also provides that a transferring employee has the option to not take the transfer but can, in effect, take a layoff notice thereby triggering the bumping action.

MR. P. DAVIS: How is that budgeted, moving expenses?

MS. RYDER-LAHEY: I'm sorry; would you want to clarify that?

MR. P. DAVIS: So if you have a number of staff that you have to move, I know it can be fairly costly to look after moving expenses. How is that covered? Does that come under the department or does it come through the Human Resource Secretariat?

MS. RYDER-LAHEY: There is a relocation policy with the Human Resource Secretariat, and that would speak to the costs that would be covered for employees that are being relocated. Incidentally, both of our employees have chosen not to take the relocation and will trigger bumping rights instead, in Grand Bank and Grand Falls-Windsor.

MR. P. DAVIS: Okay. Where would the costs be budgeted? Would it from the department or would it be from Human Resource Secretariat?

MS. RYDER-LAHEY: The moving expenses would come out of the court's budget, as far as I understand. We've not had any employees take transfers or relocate in quite a long time; it has been probably over a decade or more. But it was

previously coming from the court's Transportation and Communications budget.

MR. P. DAVIS: Okay.

Purchased Services; there's a bit of a change under Provincial Court. I see it was \$1,280,000 budgeted in '15-'16 and \$1.5 million this year. What is Purchased Services for the court?

MR. A. PARSONS: I think that Purchased Services under Provincial Court, is funding provided for the rental costs for the Harbour Grace court to August 1. And also, we tabled in the House a little while back – it was the latest judge's tribunal that was done by the Wicks tribunal. So there's funding that's allocated that would go there.

MR. P. DAVIS: So there's almost \$240,000 in the difference in last year and this year. What would the bulk of that be then?

MR. A. PARSONS: One hundred and fifty thousand dollars for the tribunal.

MR. P. DAVIS: Okay.

And there was one more, Purchased Services under the Supreme Court; \$146,900 last year, revised to \$212,000 and Estimates is \$406,000 for this year.

MR. A. PARSONS: Okay, that's the Family Court renovations. I think it's fixing up the basement there. Am I right, Todd? Or Pam would know better.

MS. RYDER-LAHEY: Two hundred and twenty-five thousand dollars has been provided to look at renovating the Family Court basement. There's a basement in Family Court that's really underutilized, and we're bursting at the seams, so we do need to increase space that can be utilized. And \$75,000 of that amount is provided in Purchased Services, as you can see. Our Professional Services increased; \$75,000 is for a consultant to look at how we can better utilize the space and the parking lot at the Family Court, and the remainder would be for work to be done over this year. And I understand there is funding as well for additional work in year two. So I think over the course of two

years, there's \$1 million to be provided for the renovations of that building.

MR. P. DAVIS: That wouldn't be a Capital cost? It's under Current; I thought it would have been a Capital cost.

MS. ENGLISH: That money was just allocated in Current account. It did go through the infrastructure committee for consideration, but funding was budgeted there under renovations. It's not the new build; it's just renovations to an existing space.

MR. P. DAVIS: Okay.

I'm good I think, Madam Chair.

CHAIR: Did Ms. Rogers have any questions on 3.1 and 3.2?

MS. ROGERS: No, I'm fine.

Thank you.

CHAIR: Okay.

MR. LANE: Madam Chair, I have one question, if that's okay? I know the time, but I'm going to ask the question anyway.

CHAIR: Can you just state your name, please?

MR. LANE: Paul Lane, MHA for Mount Pearl – Southlands.

I apologize; I was going to ask it before the last vote and you voted before I got a chance to speak up. I'm just wondering about the Whitbourne Youth Centre, Minister. Has there been any analysis done on the Whitbourne Youth Centre that you're aware of or your staff would be aware of over the last number of years? I just ask that as a general –

MR. A. PARSONS: What kind of analysis?

MR. LANE: I ask it as a general question from the perspective that at one point in time back in the '80s, maybe it was the '90s, the Youth Centre used to be located in Pleasantville. There was one in Torbay, I think, as well. At some point in time, a decision was made to move it to Whitbourne.

I guess anecdotally – and this is what I hear from people – you have situations where it's located in Whitbourne, besides the fact that most of the staff are commuting back and forth to Whitbourne and there are issues around that, safety, moose and all that stuff; but beyond that, issues around cost, an additional cost because a lot of the residents, I understand, would probably be coming from the metro area, not necessarily all of them but many of them would.

So you get a scenario whereby, for argument's sake, the RNC picks up a couple of young fellows at 4 or 5 in the morning doing a break and entry, now they have to drive them to Whitbourne. By the time they get to Whitbourne, they're off the road. They have to drive out there and by the time they check them in, they're going back to St. John's and they're passing the sheriff's van somewhere in Holyrood that are on their way to pick up the same young fellows that they just dropped off to bring them to court, then there are doctors' appointments and court times and all this kind of stuff. This is just information you hear from people.

I'm just wondering: Has any of that ever been looked at from the perspective of is Whitbourne a cost-effective option compared to having it here in the metro area, close to the courts and the hospitals?

MR. A. PARSONS: I'll start off my saying, no, we're not building a new building right now – no, I am just kidding.

I'm probably not the best one to answer it because I don't know when it went to Whitbourne. I don't know the logic or rationale. Given the pressures we've got on HMP and everything else, they have looked at what we do have. What else can we do there? There have been reports and we talk about the pressures of having adults with youth. Should we have the youth here? I don't think it would be cost feasible, but again I don't know if there was actually a look at putting it back out here.

Two points I want to make. If there were young fellows or young ladies picked at 4 in the morning, they wouldn't go out right then. They would be held at a remand centre. There are medical professionals on staff out there. I think

there's a nurse on staff and stuff like that out there on site.

MR. LANE: I was of the understanding that was a nine-to-five thing, but again I stand to be corrected.

MR. A. PARSONS: There's been no real analysis done by me on what would it be to have it in there. I think, unless you had somewhere to go, I'd say the capital costs would be pretty high.

MR. LANE: Yes.

MR. A. PARSONS: There are a lot of needs in the justice system. We've seen that across the province. We all know HMP. We've talked about that. We've all talked about the courthouse in St. John's. I mean, that's not new. I know the courthouse in Stephenville would love to see a new one. There hasn't been a serious look at it by me.

MR. LANE: No, I wasn't suggesting there was, Minister. It was more towards your staff and wondering, if it's been there for the last 30 years, has anyone ever looked at those things.

MR. A. PARSONS: They're all so young that they would never have dealt with –

MR. LANE: Pardon?

MR. A. PARSONS: They're all so young that this is before their time.

MR. LANE: Fair enough.

MS. RYDER-LAHEY: I can actually say that I've been with the justice system for 36 years come next month, so I'm not that young. I do remember when the Whitbourne correctional facility was put in Whitbourne. There was a fair amount of controversy about it at the time, about the location, because it primarily served the metropolitan area. I don't think I'll mention the government of the day, but it was certainly put out in Whitbourne for whatever reasons were determined at a level far above my pay grade.

MR. LANE: Thank you.

MR. P. DAVIS: Pleasantville was actually a remand centre. When the original Whitbourne centre was condemned, it was only torn down, I think, last year, when it was condemned. The temporary facility was set up behind Torbay airport, the old airport, and there was an old building down there that doesn't exist anymore right next to the main runway that used then for a youth centre.

It was used there until the new one was built. The new one was built in Whitbourne and one of the big pressures was that it was an economic driver for the region. A lot of the staff that worked at Whitbourne lived in Whitbourne, and for those and a number of other decisions, it was rebuilt there. But then a new remand centre was built next to the RNC, which I meant to ask you how much utilization that gets as well.

But there is a history on both youth centres and remand centres over the last number of years. I don't know if you can take it probably where I summed it up. There is a youth remand centre in St. John's, in what used to be one of the parking lots for the RNC, right next to the RNC behind the fire hall. How much usage does that get?

MS. LAKE-KAVANAGH: I understand that is used like on a weekly basis. It's not full all of the time. I think it's five cells that are there, but they use that. There are youth there on a weekly basis. Also, when they bring the youth in from Whitbourne they will hold them there and wait for word from the Sheriff's Office before they come pick them up to bring them into court, so that they're not down in the facilities down at Atlantic Place. So they're held there before they actually get the call to come into court and be ready for them.

MR. P. DAVIS: There are no overnights there, is it?

MS. LAKE-KAVANAGH: Pardon?

MR. P. DAVIS: There's no overnights held at that centre, is it?

MS. LAKE-KAVANAGH: Yes, if somebody is picked up now they'd be held –

MR. P. DAVIS: Oh, if someone is taken overnight.

MS. LAKE-KAVANAGH: – but, it's not a long-term facility. It would literally be an overnight and then they'd be brought to Whitbourne in the morning.

MR. P. DAVIS: Minister, our colleague for Mount Pearl – Southlands brought back my memory to a question I meant to ask, and I'm glad he did.

On the closure of the courts, particularly Wabush and Harbour Grace, have you done an analysis on the impacts of policing in those two regions? I'll just explain what I mean. A police officer in Harbour Grace today has to go to court. They have a relatively short drive from either one of the detachments, the one in Bay Roberts or the one that just reopened in Bay Roberts or the one in Harbour Grace, relatively a short drive within their jurisdictional patrol or assigned areas, what would be the plans – so if a person is arrested tonight in that area, they'd probably be held in their own cells, which is the practice now, but then an officer would have to take them to court the next day. What is your analysis on officers who have to attend court?

When I was a police officer there were times I was in court maybe a dozen times in a week. If that's the case, I know it's a very busy area from a policing perspective, then what's does your analysis indicate on the impacts of policing and having policing coverage in these areas where police officers now have to leave to go to court?

MR. A. PARSONS: Well, what I can say is that, again, when it comes to Wabush, given the fact that up to 2007 it would be a similar system, given we've had a 48 per cent decline in cases there, I don't have an RNC analysis for there. It's very much based on the caseload that we saw before. I'm willing to bet that we won't see a significant impact there. It's something that was done for decades there and handled and the caseload hasn't increased exponentially. The statistics show that it's decreased significantly.

Not to be factious, say if it happens tonight, the good news is it won't happen tonight. We know it's going to take some time. I recognize the fact that I have to work with the RCMP, the local policing, the judiciary because it does have challenges. I recognize that fully. Again, we've

seen that in the past with other courts. I have seen it in my own jurisdiction.

There is some work that has to be done there. We're confident that the cost analysis will show there is a significant cost savings. But it's like anything in the justice system, you have to have cooperation and work amongst the people involved to make it successful.

In many cases, just because you haven't done a certain thing doesn't mean that it can't be done. I've been a part of that myself, being a lawyer. Lawyers are generally – no offence to any of the other ones sitting around me – prone –we don't like change. I think that's something the justice system sometimes falls prey to.

What I would say is I'm going to be working with the RCMP, the policing and everybody involved, to ensure there is a minimal impact, a minimal cost. There's no doubt it was a difficult decision that's for sure.

MR. P. DAVIS: Harbour Grace, the third busiest court, I think it's third busiest court in the province.

MR. A. PARSONS: I think that's accurate, yes.

MR. P. DAVIS: I can see circumstances where it happened so often over the years where police officers are subpoenaed to attend court. You might have two or three or four officers show up in court for a trial at 10 a.m. and the accused and his lawyer walks in and tells the prosecutor: I'm going to plead him guilty now. You could have those circumstances or you might have a lawyer who walks in and says: Look, I'm working through this and we have a guilty plea. Can we reconvene at 2 o'clock? The courts and Crown would quite often try to accommodate that.

Now, what we have in Harbour Grace case, assuming the cases are all going to come to St. John's, we could easily have two officers working, both of them were involved in a case together. They now have to leave Harbour Grace and go to St. John's. They could end up there all day long and leave little or no resources left in Harbour Grace. That's the analysis I'm talking about.

MR. A. PARSONS: Yeah.

MR. P. DAVIS: When you made the decision to move the court did you look at the cost because they're going to have to bring someone in to cover off for them, there are travel costs and so on.

MR. A. PARSONS: What I would say there is two things. No doubt, I've seen it myself in many courts where we don't have the best allocation of resources. You show up. You're maybe going for a trial. You're supposed to be there all day and you end up pleading out or you get it set over. Something comes up. There's a bail hearing pops up and you've got to take care of it. I think that's something we can work on there, whether it's the judiciary, whether it's the lawyers involved, whether it's the police. Sometimes it's just a communication issue.

The second part of that is I haven't had any concerns expressed to me by the policing forces on this. Given how co-operative and able to adapt that they've been – I mentioned a story earlier about how they managed to come up with 24-7 in Grand Falls-Windsor with the same resources, actually doing it cheaper. I'm pretty confident we can make this work.

The benefit we have here is that we do have some time. I've said this publicly. Some cases we've had courts where the caseload is just not there. Wabush is definitely an example of that. Harbour Grace, the caseload is there but the problem is it's the significant cost. When you look at the historical building, the courthouse that it was in there, you're talking about a fix – I've had figures given to me anywhere from \$5 million to \$10 million, just to make it safe to go in again. We've got the cost here of \$300,000, roughly, for annual rent to lease just the building.

I'm not saying, and I don't think I've said it at any point, that there aren't challenges we're going to work through. I'm lucky that we've got, whether it's the court administration, whether it's the police forces, whether it's the judiciary, we have to work together to make the best of it. That doesn't mean there's not an impact. I know there's an impact. I know there's going to be an impact on people, but what I can say is I've been there. I've dealt with that myself, personally. I know you have to deal with it. I'm not saying it makes it better, but there it is.

MS. RYDER-LAHEY: Minister, if I might add to that?

MR. A. PARSONS: Yes.

MS. RYDER-LAHEY: As I've said previously, I've been in the court system for just about 36 years and I don't know if this is notoriety or not, but I've overseen the closure of nine court centres in my career. Only by working with the police forces, with law firms, the local bar and everybody in particular centres, were we able to make it work.

I think back to Placentia being one that we closed. I believe it was in 2009. We worked very closely with the RCMP in that jurisdiction to figure out a way that when those cases were coming to St. John's, we were not going to take all of the police resources out of the community there.

So, again, it was by working very closely with those detachments in the affected area. And we've done that many times, right across the province and Labrador.

I guess I was also around when Wabush closed previously and was subsequently reopened. This is the ninth courthouse for myself. If you count Brigus, Wabush and Harbour Grace – just recently these two, Wabush and Harbour Grace – that brings to a total of 12 centres since 1991 of courts that have closed in the province. It's been for a variety of reasons.

We know some of this is fiscal with the financial situation in the province. We also know that in some of the centres it was due to declining caseloads. We also know that technology plays a role.

We now have video conferencing equipment in every one of our courthouses, Provincial and Supreme Court; video conferencing actually more than one unit in each court. Of course, those closing courts, those units will be moved to other centres, thereby increasing the video conferencing capability in the remaining courthouses.

So I think through a combination of good communication, working with our stakeholders, our partners in the justice system and using

technology, that we will overcome the challenges. They will be challenges but we will be able to overcome those.

MS. MACINNIS: (Inaudible.)

CHAIR: Can you state your name, please.

Thank you.

MR. P. DAVIS: Wilma MacInnis.

MS. MACINNIS: (Inaudible) just in terms of the Provincial Court, it was mentioned in terms of caseloads and it being the third busiest. Actually, in terms of caseloads, it's St. John's, Happy Valley-Goose Bay and then Corner Brook would fall in terms of the caseloads.

In terms of Harbour Grace, out of the 10 centres that we had, it was around seven of the 10, actually. It would fall around the seventh. I just wanted to clarify that in terms of the caseloads.

MR. P. DAVIS: Sorry, can you –

MS. MACINNIS: It falls around the seventh.

MR. P. DAVIS: It's around the seventh.

MS. MACINNIS: Yes, out of the 10 courts. So just in terms of combined caseloads, in terms of that.

I'd certainly add to what Pam has said as well in terms of the technology. We're utilizing that, us and all of our core partners, on a frequent basis. We use it, not only on a daily basis in terms of the courts, but also on the weekends as well with our weekend courts. We tap in to people all over the province with that technology.

Yes, I'd certainly agree with that. The connection with our partners and utilizing the technology that we have will certainly be an asset.

MR. P. DAVIS: Thank you.

CHAIR: You're good?

MR. P. DAVIS: I'm good on that one, yes.

CHAIR: All right, so I'll ask the Clerk to call.

CLERK: Subheads 3.1.01 –

CHAIR: Did you have something else on section 3, Ms. Rogers?

MS. ROGERS: Just one question. I'll just ask a question but maybe we can talk about it another time, outside of Estimates. There was work being done to ensure that the Supreme Court is properly resourced and to revise and modernize its rules in court. That was being done in '15-'16.

MR. A. PARSONS: Yes.

MS. ROGERS: It hasn't been done since 1986. I'd like some update on that, but I'm happy to get that update outside of this.

MS. RYDER-LAHEY: The rules of the project are coming along very nicely.

MS. ROGERS: Great.

MS. RYDER-LAHEY: We actually anticipate that modern, revised rules – the first time in 30 years – should be ready for gazetting, we hope, by the end of December of this calendar year.

MS. ROGERS: Great news. Thank you very much.

MS. RYDER-LAHEY: You're welcome.

CHAIR: Okay.

CLERK: Subheads 3.1.01 and 3.2.01.

CHAIR: Shall 3.1.01 and 3.2.01 carry?

All those in favour?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against?

Carried.

On motion, subheads 3.1.01 and 3.2.01 carried.

CHAIR: Now we will move to the final section.

CLERK: Subhead 5.1.01.

CHAIR: Shall 5.1.01 carry?

Mr. Davis.

MR. P. DAVIS: Thank you.

The same questions on staffing levels under Fish and Wildlife. No changes as part of any budget reductions. Are there any vacancies there that have not been filled or not planning to be filled?

MR. A. PARSONS: There are 10 to 12 vacancies in Fish and Wildlife. How many of them are up in Happy Valley-Goose Bay?

MS. LAKE-KAVANAGH: There's one permanent position that they're currently recruiting for right now.

MR. P. DAVIS: In Happy Valley-Goose Bay?

MS. LAKE-KAVANAGH: In Happy Valley-Goose Bay. And there's another position that we have somebody temporarily in. Then there are a couple of people that are off.

MR. P. DAVIS: I'm sorry?

MS. LAKE-KAVANAGH: There is a couple of staff that are off.

MR. P. DAVIS: Okay. So how many vacancies are there altogether? You said 10 to 12 altogether but how many in Happy Valley-Goose Bay?

MR. A. PARSONS: Altogether 10 to 12.

MR. P. DAVIS: And Happy Valley-Goose Bay?

MR. A. PARSONS: In the whole division. No, Happy Valley-Goose Bay, I guess, two you said?

MS. LAKE-KAVANAGH: Well, there are actual real vacancies. There's one actual vacant position right now. There's somebody else in a temporary, filling in on a temporary position and then there are two staff that are off, but they hold those positions.

MR. P. DAVIS: Right.

Purchased Services, there's a change there. A reduction in budgeted from last year to this year, a fair amount.

MR. A. PARSONS: I think there was some realignment there – is the term I'm getting – and some reduction.

MS. LAKE-KAVANAGH: Some of the associated costs with those Purchased Services would also be associated with the number of vacancies that we had as well. There would be dollars there that would be attached to supporting some of those positions. So if the positions were vacant, the other support dollars attached to those wouldn't be spent.

MR. P. DAVIS: I'm good.

CHAIR: Ms. Rogers.

MS. ROGERS: Is there an intent to fill the 10 to 12 vacancies?

MR. A. PARSONS: Yes.

MS. ROGERS: Thank you.

Just a note; I just want to highlight the incredible work that our Fish and Wildlife Enforcement Officers do.

I'm also wondering, there was such a drastic cut, did we see any increase in the number of violations in poaching and when there was –

MR. A. PARSONS: I think we did, actually. I tell you what; I can find it for you because I put out a press release just after Christmas where they gave us the latest update for last year. There were actually historical levels of increase of violations, convictions, which is good and bad.

MS. ROGERS: Great.

MR. A. PARSONS: Obviously, you don't want to see that. But I can say I've had an opportunity now to sit down with them on a number of occasions. Actually, I'm sitting down with one of them again tomorrow morning. They're doing good work and pretty challenging circumstances when you hear them talk about what they do. So that's pretty impressive.

MS. ROGERS: I just want to say thank you, folks, for a great session and your expertise and your commitment. Just thank you so very, very much.

CHAIR: Okay.

CLERK: Subhead 5.1.01.

CHAIR: Shall 5.1.01 carry?

All those in favour?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against?

Carried.

On motion, subhead 5.1.01 carried.

CHAIR: I'll ask the Clerk to call the –

CLERK: Subheads 1.1.01 to 5.1.01 inclusive.

CHAIR: Shall the total carry?

All those in favour?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against?

Carried.

On motion, Department of Justice and Public Safety, total heads, carried.

CHAIR: Shall I report the Estimates of Justice and Public Safety back to the House carried without amendment?

All those in favour?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against?

Carried.

On motion, Estimates of the Department of Justice and Public Safety carried without amendment.

CHAIR: Now just a couple more housekeeping things. The minutes were circulated earlier from the last Estimates meeting.

I will need a mover to adopt the minutes.

MS. PARSLEY: So moved.

CHAIR: The MHA for Harbour Main.

On motion, minutes adopted as circulated.

CHAIR: The next scheduled Estimates here in the Chamber is 9 a.m. on May 2, Monday, Health and Community Services.

I believe, before I ask for somebody to adjourn the meeting, Mr. Davis has a comment and the minister has. Go ahead.

MR. P. DAVIS: Thank you, Madam Chair.

I just want to take a moment to thank the minister and officials from the department for your patience, but also for your co-operation in this process tonight. I also want to thank my colleagues as well for the discussion and questions, especially the member for Mount Pearl South. I'm sure the minister will talk to you later.

I referenced it earlier; justice is tough business. So many times in justice it's not about winners and losers, because if you're involved in the justice system, then there's a price to be paid quite often by people. The people who work there do it, it's very difficult, and sometimes under very difficult circumstances. When you know at the end of it all, there's nobody who wins out of circumstances that are being dealt with.

I just want to again pass along my thanks and appreciation to the people around you, and also the people who work for them, for your department and under them, not only in your office where you have a team who support the operations that, essentially, quite often happen on the front lines, but also all those people who work on the front lines as well.

Our province, in many ways, is where it is because of some of the great work that's done by people in your department. So I extend my

thanks. Congratulations to yourself, your staff that are here and those that are not here with you as well.

Thank you.

MR. A. PARSONS: If I might just add in closing. Number one, I want to thank our Page and the Table staff. This is a long process. I want to thank my colleagues across, the Committee, Mr. Davis, Ms. Rogers and your staff.

This is a necessary process. Sometimes I've seen these go both ways. I thought this was a good Estimates session. It was done the way it's meant to be done. Good questions. We try our best to provide the answers. We have more coming to you, and it's an important process.

I know a lot of work goes into getting ready for you guys to do this. Obviously, very big thanks. I want to thank the people that are sitting beside me and behind me, because there's been a heck of a lot of work that's gone into this for the last number of months. These people were, even tonight, going above time to make sure that we do what we need to do, which is get the information out. They've put a lot of time into this. I'm really lucky I get to work in the department.

There are some people that aren't here, people out on the ground right now that are doing great work, but these people here, the team that is around us, I'm just lucky to be a part of it. They've done tremendous work, long hours, coming up with the information. I'm just lucky to fit in here and be a part of it. So I'm very, very happy and appreciative of everything they've done and continue to do, and mainly for putting up with me. Thank you so much.

Thank you, Chair, this was a –

CHAIR: I might attest, that can be a tough (inaudible).

I'll now ask for somebody to move that the meeting adjourn, the Estimates.

MR. LANE: Moved.

CHAIR: Have a good evening everyone.

On motion, the Committee adjourned.