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Jeudi 28 février 2002

**Standing committee on
public accounts**

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Provincial Auditor:
Ministry of Community
and Social Services

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Ministère des Services sociaux
et communautaires

Chair: John Gerretsen
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ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

COMITÉ PERMANENT DES COMPTES PUBLICS

Thursday 28 February 2002

Jeudi 28 février 2002

The committee met at 1032 in room 151.

2001 ANNUAL REPORT,
PROVINCIAL AUDITOR
MINISTRY OF COMMUNITY
AND SOCIAL SERVICES

Consideration of section 3.05, violence against women program.

The Chair (Mr John Gerretsen): I'd like to call to order the standing committee on public accounts meeting today, dealing with section 3.05 of the 2001 Annual Report of the Provincial Auditor, violence against women program.

Good morning. We look forward to your presentation and, following that, there may be some questions from the various caucuses. So go ahead, sir. If you could identify yourself as you're speaking, it will make it easier for Hansard to keep track as to who is saying what.

Mr John Fleming: My name is John Fleming. I'm the Deputy Minister of Community and Social Services and the deputy minister responsible for children.

I'd like to start off first this morning with a statement of belief, and that is simply that my minister, the staff at my ministry and I all believe strongly in the ministry's violence against women program and the work our funded agencies do to support women who have been or may be in danger of being abused. That statement of belief is important to us. This program is important to us. So I'm pleased this morning to have this opportunity to discuss the Provincial Auditor's report about the violence against women program.

At the table with me this morning is Andrea Maurice, immediately to my left. Andrea is the assistant deputy minister of the community and developmental services division of the ministry. Next to her is Marilyn Renwick, the regional director for our ministry for the Toronto region.

We can never forget that our collective first responsibility in our violence against women, or VAW, program is to protect women from abuse. The tragic death of Gillian Hadley should never have happened. Ministries are carefully reviewing the jury's recommendations following that tragic death, with the shared goal of doing everything we can to prevent such tragedies in the future.

The solutions are complex and involve all of us, not just in our roles as public servants or politicians but in

our roles as members of our community, as parents, friends and neighbours.

This year, the Ontario government is spending more than \$145 million on programs and services delivered in a coordinated way through nine different ministries to prevent and address violence against women and their children. These services include domestic violence courts, extra legal aid funding, rape crisis centres, hospital-based sexual assault treatment centres, cultural interpreters and public education.

Of the \$145 million being spent by Ontario this year, our ministry is responsible for approximately \$86 million. Funding for our VAW programs includes, first, \$55 million for 101 violence against women shelters; second, \$21 million for over 100 counselling programs; third, \$5 million for a new transitional support program for abused women which provides practical help to women such as helping them find housing; and finally, \$5 million for a new intervention program for child witnesses of domestic violence, which helps those children understand that the violence is not their fault.

The majority of our violence against women funds, a total of \$55 million this year, goes toward funding approximately 1,700 beds in the 101 shelters throughout Ontario I mentioned a moment ago. These shelters serve about 15,000 women and 13,000 children each year and are run by non-profit corporations, with volunteer boards, paid staff and volunteer staff. The ministry does not manage the individual agencies but it is accountable for the effective use of public funds by these agencies to provide quality services. No doubt we'll discuss that further today.

The ministry has improved the way in which shelters are funded. In January 1998, we replaced per diem funding, the more traditional approach, which was previously cost-shared with municipal governments, with block funding provided entirely by the province of Ontario. Block funding also provides more stability since it is not dependent on individual shelter occupancy rates and helps agencies to plan services and manage their resources better. It is very important to remember that these shelters are community-based and, as such, may also receive funding and services in kind from other sources, including the private sector, foundations and fundraising activities, as well as, on occasion, other levels of government.

Just last week, I had an opportunity, along with my minister, to be part of a public event announcing a new

women's shelter in Milton. The ministry provided \$1.5 million in capital funding to Halton Women's Place for the replacement and expansion of its existing aging shelter. The board of directors secured additional funding and donations, including a very community-minded home builder, together with several of that home builder's major suppliers, who offered to build the home within the agency's budget.

Members of the committee, if you were there, you would have witnessed how proud all of those sponsors were. This was their community and they were making a significant contribution to help keep women and their children safe. The president of that very major home building firm said in his remarks to the event, "We don't really believe that in our business we're here to build houses; we believe we're playing a role in building communities." That particular corporation feels that shelters for violence against women are an important part of the community, therefore their willingness to come forward and put their dollars and their time to work supporting this program.

The province really encourages partnerships between the public and private sectors because we all have a responsibility to address this serious issue. But I am pleased to tell you that ministry funding for violence-against-women services has been steadily increasing since 1997, growing from almost \$63 million to \$86 million this year. New resources announced in the 2001 budget are being used to increase the number of beds available to women and children to ensure that women in crisis can receive emergency shelter when and where they need it. Increased funding is also being used to increase counselling and support services to abused women and their children.

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Some of these new resources have been used to strengthen the VAW system in Ontario by committing, first, \$26 million over four years to add 300 new shelter beds and to refurbish a further 136 beds in existing shelters; second, up to \$9 million annually for counselling and other supports for those new beds; and third, \$4.5 million over four years for enhanced crisis telephone and referral services for assaulted women.

As committee members are no doubt aware, the Provincial Auditor reviewed the violence against women program in his 1994 report. We have worked hard since then to improve accountability and to ensure agencies are meeting the service outcomes they are expected to meet.

To ensure quality services are provided with public funds, the ministry implemented the governance and accountability framework. This framework provides clearer accountability for the use of public funds and improved business practices for both the ministry and our service provider partners.

The ministry is working with agencies to ensure that the framework has been incorporated into their regular business cycle. The business cycle includes the following steps.

Each fiscal year, ministry staff negotiate service contracts with agencies outlining our service expectations

and the funding to be provided. The service contract describes the ministry-funded services that are expected to be delivered over the coming year. The service contract also reflects the basic requirements of agency accountability regarding setting of expectations, monitoring and reporting, and corrective action wherever that's necessary.

By signing the service contract, the board of directors of the agency commits to achieving the service delivery targets.

Throughout the year, ministry program supervisors maintain close contact with agencies, assisting them in resolving problems, attending meetings as needed and informing them of policy and guideline changes.

Each quarter, agencies have to demonstrate that the transfer payments they received were used to achieve the desired results. At the end of the year, the ministry compares reported results to established expectations. Working with the agency the ministry seeks to explain and justify any and all variances or determines actions that are needed to address discrepancies.

At year-end, agencies then submit reports and an annual performance expenditure reconciliation—known as an APER—report to the ministry. Ministry staff reconcile provincial funding with actual financial and service data and identify any recoverable subsidy or overpayment.

I am very proud of a number of innovative actions my ministry has taken to improve accountability and service to abused women and their children. Let me give you some examples.

First, a performance management system has been set up to collect information about the benefits to clients achieved by VAW agencies. That goes to the whole issue of outcomes and expectations.

Second, service coordination between VAW agencies and children's aid societies is improving through a joint training initiative. We are developing a protocol for the most effective ways that children's aid societies and VAW agencies can work together in cases of violence against women when there are children involved.

Third, we are developing new tools to support agencies in meeting the requirements of the governance and accountability framework that I mentioned earlier. That accountability is very much important to us, but we recognize that some of these agencies, particularly the smaller ones, may need some assistance and support as we work through the process.

The proactive and innovative actions the ministry has taken do not mean the job is finished. We agree with the auditor that more needs to be done to monitor and assess services, and we will continue to work to improve our policies and our procedures. But we are pleased with the progress we've made.

Over the next year, the ministry plans to review and refine the service data that agencies report quarterly and annually to the ministry, with a view to promoting consistent reporting by agencies. We also plan to ensure that agencies submit explanations and action plans when

financial variances occur. We intend to continue to implement enhancements to the governance and accountability framework that I mentioned a moment ago, including a new requirement related to ensuring the capacity of an agency's board of directors. Again, sometimes smaller agencies, and perhaps even some of the larger ones, need some assistance with developing the capacity of individual board members and the board as a whole. Finally, we intend to work with partner ministries to refine the performance management system as a monitoring tool that provides meaningful outcome data.

An important issue raised by the auditor was the number of women being turned away from VAW shelters. The fact is that women and children who need emergency services receive them. It's a concern to us that not every woman can be accommodated in a VAW shelter in her home community on every occasion. It's important to note that during periods of higher demand, those women in need of emergency shelter services would be sent to a shelter in another part of the community, or perhaps outside the community, or may be given other emergency accommodation such as in a motel or hostel.

We agree that more needs to be done to ensure that all abused women get the support and services they need. That's precisely why the ministry recently announced that the government will spend that extra \$26 million to create 300 new beds and to refurbish 136 further beds in women's shelters across Ontario. When these beds are fully implemented, the government will be spending up to \$9 million annually for counselling and other supports for the women and children using these new beds.

The auditor also expressed concern about waiting times for counselling services. Counselling is one of the many important services we fund as part of our VAW program. In fact, more abused women seek counselling than they do shelter service. The ministry funds over 100 different counselling agencies that provide service to approximately 60,000 women and 12,000 children each year.

I want to be clear by saying again that women in crisis receive immediate service. The waiting times referred to in the auditor's report are for women seeking ongoing, longer-term counselling, not for women in immediate critical need.

In addition to the over 100 counselling agencies, the ministry is also funding a province-wide helpline that will start operating in April of this year. This toll-free crisis line will be available 24 hours a day, every day of the year, to help women get information and support and to be able to connect to available services such as counselling. The Ministry of Community and Social Services is also working with the francophone community to improve and expand crisis phone services for francophone women.

The auditor also reported a variance in provincial costs of residential care, which he found range from \$47 to \$658 per person per day of residential care. As I'm sure you'll appreciate, in a system with variable funding

partners and variable funding arrangements, the way you express costs and revenues can have a dramatic effect on the ranges. The auditor chose to look at it from one perspective, but there are others. The ministry has looked closely at this issue and is in the process of identifying information that will help interpret operating efficiencies and best practices that can be shared with agencies.

What's perhaps most pertinent, though, is the fact that the average daily provincial cost for residential care is about \$100 per person. To look at it another way, the median range, if you will, tells us that most shelters, over half of them, have rates in the \$75- to \$125-per-person-per-day range. There are several reasons for variances from one shelter to another. For example, some shelters raise substantial amounts of money on their own or have other funding sources such as the United Way or a municipality, while other shelters rely more heavily on MCSS funds.

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Another example is that occupancy rates affect the cost of a day of care. Only nine of the province's 98 shelters had costs that exceeded \$200 per person per day, and they are all in small, rural communities in the north. We know, particularly in the north, that shelters may have low occupancy rates and, therefore, higher costs per day for residential care, but that it remains essential, nonetheless, to provide these services. We don't believe that women in small, remote, rural northern communities should be denied service any more than a woman who is at risk in a major urban centre.

In the interests of time, I will stop here so we have time to respond to your questions. Once again, I'd like to acknowledge the important role the Provincial Auditor plays in ensuring that government is accountable and that public funds are used as effectively as possible. As I have outlined today, we have already taken a number of steps in response to the recommendations made by Mr Peters, and we will continue to work to improve and strengthen our violence against women program to ensure that it provides the best possible support to assaulted women and their children in this province.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the auditor's report and to appear before you today. We will be pleased to take questions from committee members.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Mr Fleming. We have approximately 22 minutes per caucus in the first round. Today, we start with the New Democratic caucus.

Ms Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt): Thank you, to the ministry staff for being here. Deputy, I want to focus on the way shelters are funded, because for me that was the most important point the auditor made. I listened to you say that we have improved the way in which shelters are funded and that you firmly believe that the block funding provides more stability to the agencies involved. Yet when I read the auditor's report, and I'm going to read it into the record, he says the following:

"The 1998 Coroner's Report on the Inquest into the Deaths of Arlene May and Randy Iles recommended that the ministry review its funding for shelters for abused

women and their children. In 1999, in response to the coroner's recommendation, the ministry indicated that assuming the municipal share of per diems and block funding shelters after January 1, 1998, was sufficient to address the recommendation. However, based on our work, it is clear that the ministry's current method of funding does not ensure appropriate and equitable funding for shelters that is linked to an assessed level of demand and to services provide in the respective communities."

So I think the auditor has a much different perspective than you do. I wonder if you'd like to comment on that.

Mr Fleming: I'd like to make a couple of comments and then I will ask Andrea to comment further. I think there are really two issues that are woven together. One of them is the approach to funding. We believe that the advantage of block funding is that there is an element of stability, an element of predictability, if you will, to the level of resource through the service contract process that each shelter has available to it. So if they have significant fluctuations in occupancy rate, they don't have unpredictable fluctuations in their income.

But I think the other piece that's woven into the answer to your question has to do with the overall level of resource made available. If there aren't sufficient beds, then there is a capacity problem in the system with being able to make shelters available to women when they need them. Obviously, that's of concern to the individual agencies.

I'll just ask if Andrea has anything she'd like to add to my comments.

Ms Andrea Maurice: I'd just reiterate the deputy's comment that, certainly, having the block funding does provide more stability. It has, we think, helped shelters to do better planning. But clearly, on this issue of need, it is a capacity issue and it is why the government this year announced the addition of 300 new shelter beds and refurbishment of the additional 136 beds. In making the allocations of new shelter beds, we certainly do monitor very closely occupancy rates across the province to see where the pressure points are, where the demands are. We look at the distribution of shelter beds and we certainly, in making the allocation of these new beds, made an attempt to respond to where the demand is greatest.

Ms Martel: If I might, it's not just a question of needing more beds, and the May-Iles recommendations made that clear. There was a definite need to review the funding structure for shelter beds, not only the numbers but the support for each of those beds in terms of counselling, adequate staffing etc. I go back to what the auditor said. While the ministry felt that its response to May-Iles was the block funding, the auditor doesn't believe that your block funding is responding either appropriately or equitably to the needs of the shelters.

Let me follow up. You haven't responded, at least in terms of the auditor's view, to a very important recommendation of May-Iles. I note that in the most recent recommendations from the coroner's jury into Gillian

Hadley, the government is called upon again to revise the funding formula in two recommendations. Number one says, "We recommend that an implementation committee be established," and names who should be part of that, to look into the deaths of Gillian Hadley and Ralph Hadley, the recommendations from the inquest into the deaths of Arlene May and Randy Iles etc. But more specifically, on page 38, "We recommend that the government of Ontario, through its various ministries but in particular the Ministry of Community and Social Services, ensure that all community-based women's anti-violence services, including shelters, are appropriately funded."

That's not just a capacity issue; that's an issue of operational support. So what is the government going to do now to respond to the most recent recommendations that have come from the Gillian Hadley inquest, specifically with respect to shelter funding and reviewing shelter funding?

Ms Maurice: We are, of course, looking very carefully at the recommendations and formulating a response to the recommendations.

In terms of funding to our counselling and shelter services, each year through our service contracting process we do sit down with our agencies and do negotiate with them their need and the services that they will provide to meet the need and allocate funds for those services. We set service targets with them.

We are certainly responsive to the auditor's recommendation, and in our response have said that we are undertaking a cost analysis of the funding of our services so that we can have a better understanding of the funding. I think it provides us with an opportunity then to be able to identify where there are operational efficiencies and where there are best practices. Our job is to make sure we make the best use of the funds that we have available to us and direct them to where the need is, and we do that very much in partnership with our agencies.

Mr Fleming: I wonder if it might be helpful to ask Marilyn just to talk about some of her experience in negotiating those individual service contracts. It might help you understand how we go at looking at the level of funding for each one.

1100

Ms Martel: No, because the issue for me is that there were some specific recommendations made from two coroners' juries: a review of the shelter funding in conjunction with a number of agencies, community-based hopefully, specifically with OAITH. I don't think a cost analysis, which you've just talked about, is exactly what the juries had in mind.

I'll give you one other reason why the ministry should be doing a full review of shelter funding with community-based agencies, and that's something the ministry admitted itself to the auditor in this review. If you go to page 112, at the bottom, it talks about core services. It says, "Prior to 1995, the ministry defined the core services to be provided by VAW shelters as: shelter and safety; crisis intervention, counselling and support to women and their children; administration; children's

support worker; emergency transportation; and crisis telephone services.” Those were the core services that shelters were to deliver.

Although the ministry is still committed to the provision of these core services, the ministry acknowledges that, due to funding constraints, some shelters may not be able to provide all of them any more. It goes on to say the ministry had no method in place to determine to what extent these services were or weren’t being provided. By your own admission, a number of shelters are not able to provide the core services that your ministry defines they should be providing.

That goes back to the need that’s already been clearly identified by two coroners’ inquests and, I think, now by the auditor: that the block funding is not an adequate response to the May-Iles recommendations, and that what is clearly needed is a full and thorough review, involving community partners, of shelter funding. That’s what I’m trying to get at. Is the ministry going to undertake such a review, and when?

Mr Fleming: The point I’m trying to make is that our approach to reviewing that has been through the service contracting process that we have with individual agencies rather than the system as an entirety, and why I thought it might be responsive to Ms Martel’s question if we were to present to you a little bit of the process that we go through with each one of the shelters; to talk about how we get to the service contract, and what funding flows from that, agency by agency, rather than looking at the system as an entirety.

Marilyn, could you do that please?

Ms Marilyn Renwick: Certainly. We’re a decentralized structure with nine regional offices. Within those regional offices are staff, program managers and program supervisors who interact with all the transfer payment service providers. In the violence against women prevention program, there is a lead program supervisor in each office, as well as other program supervisors who have responsibility for this program area on the operational side.

Certainly the move to block funding has made sure that shelters get funding from only one level of government and has reduced the administrative burden on those shelters. What a program supervisor does is establish the expectations from the agency and sets the service to be delivered, based on previous years’ service and also on predicted need. We all know that different parts of the province have different costs, in terms of operating shelters or any other program, as a matter of fact. In the north, transportation is a huge additional cost. In the south, the costs of housing, and sometimes staff costs, are higher. So that’s why we negotiate by regional office and by program.

When we’re negotiating around counselling services, the costs can look very different. One of those reasons is the difference in cost between group counselling and individual counselling. It might well also be the professional nature of the counselling versus peer counselling. Many programs use a peer counselling approach because

they believe strongly that other women who have experienced violence in the home are better able to counsel and work with the current clients.

After that process is done, the regional office sends a budget package to an agency. It comes back. It might come back with different figures than have been negotiated because the agency has realized that they need more money in one area than another. A service contract is developed and signed by a board of directors. It talks about funding levels and service expectations. During the year there is monitoring of the contract through quarterly reports and other mechanisms. It’s an ongoing iterative relationship throughout the year between the program supervisor, often the program manager, the program staff and board of directors. At the end of the year, this service contract and the quarterly reports are reviewed. The APER is sent in by the agency. It talks about what the financial expenditures are related to the level of service. If there is surplus money at the end of the fiscal year, those dollars are recovered.

When we monitor throughout the year, we do take corrective action. If reports aren’t being sent in, we will deal with that issue with the board of directors. If the issue is lower or higher use of service than we expected, we’ll talk to the agency about what that is. Often we know what that is: there’s been a leak in the roof and they’ve had to close a few beds, something like that. So we do take corrective action when these things aren’t followed.

I would say that we do need to improve our monitoring. We’re getting better and better at it every year. Our staff are more trained than they were last year and the year before, and our APER reconciliation is more up to date than it was, but we can always improve and we’re doing that, often as a response to the auditor’s reports.

Ms Martel: Thank you for the explanation, but let me go back to what the auditor said, because despite everything you’ve just told us, it was the auditor—not us, the auditor—who said the following: “Based on our work, it is clear that the ministry’s current method of funding does not ensure appropriate and equitable funding for shelters that is linked to an assessed level of demand and to services provided in the respective communities.” So you can give me the whole explanation, but I’m telling you that he has said this does not respond to needs, nor does it respond to two coroner’s juries’ recommendations. I don’t think the ministry could stand here today and tell me that the move to block funding has ensured that all shelters can deliver core services, because you told the auditor yourself that you can’t ensure that any more because of funding cuts.

Instead of going back to the service contracts—which we know about and which the auditor has already told us are not working to ensure that there is adequate funding for shelters so that services can be met—what are you going to do to realistically and fully respond, not only to the auditor’s concerns but to the two coroner’s juries’ recommendations about a full review of funding for

shelters? What are you going to do to respond to that directly?

Mr Fleming: I don't know what I can say further to what I have already. We believe quite strongly that the process we have in place as we've described at some length to you is increasingly responsive to need.

The Chair: The auditor has a question, if you don't mind, Ms Martel.

Mr Erik Peters: When we raised this particular point, Chair, the ministry informed in their own response—I'm reading from page 118, and you may want to take a look at that.

Interjection: I did look at that.

Mr Peters: You indicated that "a sectoral framework that outlines basic requirements for transfer-payment agencies will be finalized and distributed to ministry regional offices and transfer-payment agencies in the spring of 2002." I'm wondering if, to help the committee out in answering the question, you could relate where that stands.

Ms Martel: If I might, no, Erik, because I'm referring specifically to shelter funding. Your audit was concerned about a number of accountability measures around reconciliation etc. That's not what I'm getting at.

Mr Peters: OK, fair enough.

The Chair: We can deal with that later on, then.

Ms Martel: I'm specifically asking about shelter funding.

Mr Peters: That's fair enough.

Ms Martel: Can I deal with the graph, then, on page 110? Deputy, you told this committee that beginning in 1997, the funding increased in this particular program from \$63 million to a current level of \$86 million. I would like to know, in terms of the shift in funding, particularly from 1997-98 and 1998-99, how much of that is the government assuming 100% of shelter costs because of local services realignment? Has any of that changed?

Mr Fleming: I'm sorry. I'm not following your question precisely.

1110

Ms Martel: You show quite a significant increase between 1997-98 and 1998-99. You've also told us there's been an increase from \$63 million to \$86 million from 1997 to now. What I'm wondering is, how much of that difference, if any, is the difference of the ministry assuming 100%?

Mr Fleming: So you're asking, is it 80% or 100%?

Ms Martel: And what's the overall value of that?

Ms Maurice: When the ministry assumed responsibility for shelter funding, the ministry took on an extra \$3 million, which accounted for the municipalities' share. So that figure is in the increase. Certainly the increase is in fact far more substantial from 1996-97 to where we are today, which is \$86 million. But it is \$3 million.

Mr Fleming: So of the total increase from 1997 on, Andrea, \$3 million is the amount we absorbed from the municipal governments and everything beyond that was increased funding from the province.

Ms Maurice: Correct.

Ms Martel: OK. What I'd like to know is, was any of the balance of the \$30 million also allocated to shelters, or is the bulk of it to counselling and services that don't provide shelters? Can you break that down for us?

Ms Maurice: The balance of the \$30 million? Five million dollars was added in 2000-01 for the transitional counselling program; \$5 million was added for the early intervention for child witness program. So that's \$10 million into counselling. Of course, the—

Ms Martel: Can I stop you there for a moment? Are those run in shelters as well or in the agencies?

Ms Maurice: Both.

Ms Martel: OK.

Ms Maurice: Of course, the new shelter funding that was announced in the recent budget in terms of the operating dollars, which will grow to \$9 million, includes counselling funding that would be provided to the women in those shelters.

Ms Martel: None of that would appear, I assume, in the budget that's before us, in the graph that's before us. Those allocations were made in the fiscal year after the auditor's 2000-01 report?

Ms Maurice: I think that's correct.

Ms Martel: OK. Can you give us a breakdown? The auditor did this in his report. He broke down the two: the shelter costs on their own and then the costs to the 100 or so community-based agencies that don't offer shelters but offer counselling etc. Through the period that appears in the graph, could you give us a breakdown between what of that increase went to shelters and what went to the other agencies? You've told us that \$3 million would have for sure, because that would have been the municipal share that you assumed. Was there anything above the \$3 million?

Ms Maurice: I don't have those figures before me. I'm sure the ministry could get those figures for you.

Ms Martel: If you could give us a breakdown—what I would like to know is if through that whole period, with the increase in the budget, there was any increase in shelter beds or staff at shelters. You talked about increased funding. I'm wondering what was provided with that, specifically with respect to shelters.

Ms Maurice: We'd be happy to find the information for you.

Ms Martel: OK. I wanted to ask about your surveys, because the auditor drew from your surveys to highlight the waiting lists at shelters and the waiting lists for counselling services. I noted that the surveys were done in the fall of 2000, so I have some questions about that. Was this survey an initiative through all the nine regions of Community and Social Services?

Ms Maurice: Yes, it was.

Ms Martel: Can I ask what prompted it?

Ms Maurice: I don't know the answer to that question. I'm sorry.

Ms Martel: I have a couple of questions about this. Was it a survey sent to shelters and to agencies delivering counselling services that don't have shelters?

Ms Maurice: Yes, to counselling and to shelters.

Ms Martel: Was it sent to all the transfer payment agencies in this regard?

Ms Maurice: I'd like to invite Barbara Kane, who is a policy adviser at the ministry.

Ms Barbara Kane: My understanding is that the survey was done with our regional offices in preparation for the expansion of beds.

Ms Martel: What did the survey ask? Can we get a copy of it?

Ms Kane: I don't have a copy here, but I think we can get you a copy.

Ms Martel: Can you give us some general questions? I'm assuming that waiting lists and counselling were, because the auditor identified those. Was the nature of it to ask the agencies themselves what their shortfalls in services were?

Ms Kane: It was looking at gaps in service and preparing for the allocation of new beds.

Ms Martel: So you think you'll be able to provide us with a blank, generic copy of that?

Ms Kane: I think we can do that.

Ms Martel: I would be interested in a number of other questions. Could you also provide us with the results? The auditor pulled two numbers for the purpose of the audit, which was to focus on one shelter that said they had 1,000 women who were turned away, and another statistic that counselling services, in some cases, were at waits of three to six months.

I would be interested in knowing what other questions were asked and what other responses were received. Particularly region by region, did you tally waiting lists for beds and then waiting lists for counselling? Were the results structured in that way?

The Chair: Could you answer, and then we'll go on to the next caucus.

Ms Kane: I don't think there was any final summary prepared for it. It was really a background document for the ministry to determine where the highest needs were in communities, more particularly for the beds. But we can certainly provide you with that information.

The Chair: We'll move to the government caucus.

Mr Bart Maves (Niagara Falls): I want to pick up on Ms Martel's first 10 minutes about funding for shelter services. But I want to approach it a little differently than Ms Martel did, because my reading of the auditor's report is a little bit different than Ms Martel's. Let me read a couple of things and do this on a bit of a timeline basis.

Prior to 1998, we had 80-20 shared funding with municipalities on shelters, and it was on a per diem basis. In a lot of areas it was determined that this was a poor way of funding. The auditor himself says, "The per diem method used prior to 1998 did not reflect a shelter's actual cost or funding needs; and total per diem funding provided in prior years did not always reflect actual shelter use." There were problems with the shared costs with municipalities, because municipalities all funded on a different basis. You didn't always know what that basis

was, so your data was difficult to obtain. It was pretty much a hodgepodge prior to 1998.

Your response to that and to inquests was to try to move to block funding. In my area, shelters have appreciated the move to block funding because of what you said: it provided some stability. And I think that in the sector itself, those managing facilities appreciate knowing what their budgets are going to be, if not from year to year, at least at the beginning of the year, although it may change over time.

So 1999-2000 was the first year that you had full block funding, correct?

Ms Maurice: Yes.

Mr Maves: Which I think is the right way to go. The auditor, however, looked at your first year of block funding and points out on page 119: "Two of the three regional offices we visited ... provided annual funding in block amounts to each of their shelters based on the highest amount of annual funding that each shelter received under the per diem method of funding from 1992 to 1996. The third regional office was of the view that this method of funding was not appropriate and instead funded its agencies for 1998 and later years based primarily on the amount of funding each shelter received in the 1996-97 fiscal year." He then says, "Neither of these funding methods is appropriate." So you've gone to block funding, which I'm OK with and which I think the sector likes better. The auditor doesn't actually come out and say which way he likes better. He does say there was a problem with per diem funding, and he also says there are problems with the way block funding is being handled.

According to the auditor, one of the problems is that your own regional offices are not doing block funding the same. So I would suggest now—and you can just hold on to this one—that you need to make sure that when your regional offices are doing block funding, they are approaching it from the same methodology. I think the auditor would appreciate it if that was the case.

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The auditor then provides several graphs, which show some of the difficulties in the first full year of block funding, on pages 120 and 121. He shows that the average cost per person served was between \$363 and \$5,981. He shows that the average annual cost per available bed was between \$15,000 and \$60,000. The average cost per person per day of residential care was \$47 to \$658. On the following page, for crisis support the average cost per person served ranged from \$19 to \$2,000. Crisis telephone counselling ranged from \$1 to \$135 per person served. General counselling ranged from \$69 to \$1,668. Sexual assault counselling ranged from \$38 to \$1,337 per person served.

Obviously you've moved into this area of block funding, which again I support. I think it's the right way to go, and I think the sector supports it. I see two problems. Number one, your regional offices should be on the same platform. They should be deciding how to disburse this money in a similar fashion. Number two,

you're in your first, second or maybe now your third full year of block funding. Especially in your first full year, you're going to have discrepancies; I understand that. But if I look at these graphs in 2000-01 and 2001-02, please tell me that these discrepancies will be narrowed. I know they won't close, because, as you said, in some places in the province there's a minimum level of funding that a shelter will have to have in order to stay open. So I know they won't close completely; there's got to be a range. But if I'm to look at these graphs in 2000-01, 2001-02 and so on, should I not see this narrowing?

Now my question, after my large introduction: do we see this narrowing in these cases?

Mr Fleming: Your first question was about the regions and differences in the regions. Let me say to you that in a ministry where virtually all our programs are delivered through regional offices, we always have two issues that we try very hard to keep in balance. One of them is some kind of consistency in the ministry's overall accountability for how funds are used—that's on the one side. On the other side are the different needs and the different problems, region by region, across a province that's obviously very diverse. The challenge always is to manage the balance between those two so that our regional offices are best responding to the needs of local communities. There needs to be some flexibility to that, all within an overall level of consistency. In the early days of the introduction of a new approach to funding, there may have been greater variation among regions as we implemented this. I'll ask in a moment if Marilyn has any comments about where we find ourselves on that front in 2002.

The second part of your question was about the range of costs. I tried to address that in my opening remarks. Let me just comment on that a little more fully. When you look at the low-end costs, first of all you need to remember that what the auditor is looking at here is provincial funding going into program for units of service. I would remind you about what I spoke of earlier, which is the potential for other funding to have come into the program. So if the United Way had funded or the municipality had made a grant or there had been a fundraising endeavour, then that would be additional revenue which might potentially drive down the cost. Similarly, in some areas where the catchment area is much larger and the population smaller and therefore the occupancy levels are lower, the economies of scale have a significant impact.

The question is, will that range narrow? I think it's possible to some extent that it might, but there are some drivers that cause it to be that broad, which frankly I don't see changing, as I've just mentioned.

Mr Maves: Deputy, I would say they should narrow. I understand that there are other dollars being allocated, but in my view the auditor looked at provincial dollars and this is the allocation of provincial dollars per person for each of these services. So as you're moving toward greater accuracy of your block funding, these provincial numbers should narrow. I agree that they won't close,

because of the situation that it's a vast province and there are rural areas, northern areas and urban areas. I agree that it won't close and I agree that you're not going to have 100% occupancy in every shelter across the province. However, these should narrow as your model becomes more efficient.

I move to the auditor's recommendation here on this. The auditor's recommendation is not to blow up your block funding model, the auditor's recommendation is not to return to the per diem funding model; the auditor's recommendation is to "ensure that agency funding requests provide information that is sufficiently detailed and relevant to allow the ministry to make informed funding decisions; and critically assess all requests for funding and ensure that amounts approved are commensurate with the demand for services and the actual services provided."

What I'm reading into this is that the auditor is saying that indeed if those two steps are taken—and I would imagine you're doing this out of just plain due diligence, to make sure your funding is going to the right places—then indeed these should narrow. So I don't think he is saying, "Blow it up," I don't think he's saying, "Go back to per diem": I think he is saying you've got to continue to collect data and make sure that your block funding works appropriately. And to work appropriately, should these numbers not narrow? I'm getting a nod.

Mr Fleming: The other issue here, of course, is that as we gather better data, then we have a more accurate representation of units of service and the cost for each unit. As we've tried to describe to you this morning with our performance management system, we're trying to build better sources and better quality of data.

Mr Maves: Agreed, and that's a good thing. I think when you have that, you'll have a better ability to make sure that some of these discrepancies don't continue to exist. That was the funding piece that I actually wasn't going to start with, but I found the way my colleague across the way approached it was a little different from the way I was approaching it and I wanted to get that on the record.

More on a macro level, you also said the auditor started off in a discussion with us saying there was \$135 million spent for violence against women programs across ministries. Some data that was provided to him said that Comsoc was—we had the numbers here a minute ago.

Mr Fleming: Our portion of that is \$86 million.

Mr Maves: Right, \$86 million, and \$17 million from the AG and some from Sol Gen and some from health. You had said, I believe, in your comments that the funding is now, provincially, \$145 million. I believe I also heard you say that this year the government increased funding by \$5 million for the early intervention for child witness of abuse program and \$5 million for a transitional support program for abused women. That's \$5 million annually and it was flowed this year?

The Chair: Could you answer, please, so that Hansard can take it down.

Mr Maves: They're nodding yes. I'll interpret that for Hansard.

The Chair: Well, a nod is kind of difficult to record for Hansard.

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Mr Maves: I know. Go ahead.

Ms Maurice: That's correct, we did add in this fiscal year, this fall, \$5 million, annualized, for transitional support and an additional \$5 million for the early intervention for child witness program.

Mr Maves: Has all that money flowed? Is all that money in utilization right now?

Ms Maurice: Yes.

Mr Maves: Good, because quite often we get folks here who say this money has been put out and it hasn't been utilized. So that's good.

Ms Maurice: I think we have in the child witness program over 103, or approximately that number, of counselling groups that are in operation.

Mr Maves: I'll move to an area that I'll approach a little differently. The auditor said in the 1997 report that he wasn't satisfied there were enough standards and guidelines and expectations of service in place for each shelter, and I have queried to him, wouldn't a lot of that be within service contracts? When we enter into service contracts with each of these organizations, within those contracts they have a certain level of service and certain standards they've got to adhere to. The answer I got back was no, those service contracts aren't actually very detailed and don't provide that. So could you tell me again how we ensure quality within each facility?

Ms Maurice: I'll start off, and perhaps Marilyn would like to add to it. First of all, we certainly agree with the auditor's recommendation and comment that it's very important that the ministry communicate very clearly to our transfer payment agencies what our service expectations are. We do that through our budgeting and service planning contract process. We detail the service expectations, we detail service targets and the dollars that will be spent on those.

Another comment the auditor made was around eligibility for services and, again, we make it very clear to our agencies who is eligible for our VAW services.

I would like to go back to a comment the deputy made earlier in his remarks, and that is the importance and the accountability of the boards of directors of the violence against women agencies. They are indeed accountable for providing quality services and it's our job to work with them and monitor to ensure that they do that. They are accountable for determining what the staffing needs are in a shelter, our counselling agency, and what the staff qualifications ought to be in that agency. They are certainly accountable for ensuring the physical safety and security of the shelter and they are very responsible for ensuring that shelters communicate what services they provide. That is certainly a recommendation that came out for shelters in the Heikamp inquest, I believe. They are responsible for doing that kind of communication and making sure they coordinate their services with other agencies.

Our role certainly is to provide support to our agencies in doing that. We do that through our various accountability mechanisms. The deputy did mention that this year we have a new resource guide for boards of directors to help them in discharging their roles and responsibilities. We also are assisting communication between VAW agencies and children's aid societies to ensure that they understand their various roles and responsibilities through a training curriculum that we've implemented and a protocol process as well.

We set out very clear expectations in the service contract. We do expect the boards of directors of our agencies to set and be accountable for their own quality service standards.

Mr Maves: The auditor has pointed out several times—and I've introduced a bill, the Minister of Finance has said he's going to introduce a bill and this committee has endorsed that he be able to do value-for-money audits of transfer payment recipients. He still can't do that right now. As legislators, for the money that we flow and we give out to different boards and different transfer payment agencies, we want to make sure that money is being spent appropriately. We don't really have a great vehicle like we do with the auditor in other parts of government funding to be able to do that.

When he made the recommendation about standards, service directives, guidelines and so on back in 1994, the ministry had agreed with this recommendation and indicated it would establish clear service expectations, as you've said, and monitor their achievement. However in my questioning of them, they're not very satisfied that the service contracts are very detailed in this area on standards. He also said he's reviewed 10 of the service contracts and that they're somewhat generic, and he didn't feel the need to review any more.

Can this committee get a copy of one of your service contracts with names, dates and places blacked out so that we can have a look at those service contracts and get a feel of how comfortable we are that those service contracts are addressing some of these issues?

Ms Maurice: Yes.

Mr Maves: By the way, I want to say that I support the ministry's goal of not having ministry-wide standards and rules and regulations that have to apply to every single shelter because, as we keep hearing over and over again, Ontario is a big place and what's good in Toronto might not be good somewhere else. So I support these things being in service contracts; I'm just a little bit concerned when the auditor tells me he's unhappy with what's in the service contracts. That's why I'd like to take a look at it so that our committee might be able to recommend something that could be included in the future in those contracts.

Mr Fleming: If I could just make a general comment, I think it's worthwhile to point out to the committee that, overall, the Ministry of Community and Social Services has agreements with about 1,400 transfer payment agencies. The whole purpose behind our governance and accountability framework and process that we've tried to

put in place is not to spec every last detail about what we want those transfer payment agencies to provide, but rather to have a kind of partnership with them where it's clear what it is we want done and we have those expectations clearly set out in the agreement. But at the same time, as part of that governance and accountability process, we're taking advantage of the expertise and the local responsiveness they've got to develop useful and valid measures of how well those expectations are being met.

As all of you know, I'm sure, in some kinds of programming it's more straightforward to be able to determine success against measures. In a lot of cases in social programs, human service programs, it's not quite so black and white, not quite so clear-cut, not quite so easy to do. It's an evolving process for us to work within the ministry with our transfer payment partners across a whole range of programs, not just VAW programs, to develop those kinds of measures. We think we're making progress.

The Chair: We'll have to leave it at that, Mr Maves, and we'll now turn it over to the official opposition.

Mrs Marie Bountrogianni (Hamilton Mountain): I'd like to first, before I ask my questions, reiterate Ms Martel's concern about a real shelter funding review being done. The cost analysis, agency by agency or region by region, and the block funding may be part of that, but it certainly does not define a review in the way the inquest recommended.

My first question is about the counselling, maybe some clarification. Emergency counselling is offered immediately, from what the deputy said. What about the three-to-six-month wait for counselling? What are the issues that require counselling that can wait that long? I'm more concerned, at least at this point, about the children where it may not be obvious that emergency counselling is needed right away. Trauma is not obvious all the time and so my concern is a three-to-six-month waiting period for children. Are there ways, first of all, to track if that waiting list improves with the additional funds? Do you have a tracking mechanism? Do you have criteria that outline which children and women get funding, and when and how, different levels of professional counselling versus peer counselling? Can someone answer those questions?

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Ms Maurice: Perhaps I can start, and Marilyn might wish to add. In terms of the waits for counselling, when a woman comes, either alone or with her children, and is in a crisis situation, the first concern of the agency of course is to ensure the safety and security of the woman and her children. The waiting times which the auditor refers to, and which of course we're not happy with, are in reference to longer-term, ongoing counselling, the kind of counselling that would help a woman deal with the issues of establishing a new life, getting settled, getting her children settled. It may be therapy, and in fact those figures do include information from agencies that are providing a longer-term therapy. Unfortunately, there are waiting lists for those kinds of services.

The issue of children experiencing and witnessing violence was a concern and was a driving force for the ministry to introduce its new early intervention program, the \$5-million. We don't have data on waiting times at this point comparable to the time when that survey was done.

One of the things I would like to tell you about is our performance management system that we and a number of other ministries have introduced. It's a consumer's perspective on the service they're getting. It is a survey that's done in shelters, our counselling services and some of the counselling services of other ministries, like the sexual assault centres, where the women actually fill out a form and provide information on the service, evaluating the service. One of the things specifically we're asking them is how long they waited for service and what their perception was, how they viewed that: was it an acceptable or an unacceptable waiting time?

That information is just starting. I believe the survey is referred to in the auditor's report. We've just had our first year of collecting information. We're still working with our agencies to bring more of them on board. We do not have complete data yet, but we're hoping next year we'll have much better information that really will help us get at some of the things that you're referring to.

Mrs Bountrogianni: I realize this is evolving, but I would strongly recommend that you impress upon all the agencies the importance of gathering that data because, as the deputy mentioned, it's not only helping kids realize that it's not their fault, but the reasoning behind that of course is that they don't become abusers themselves of victims of abuse. You'll go a long way to preventing future abuse if we do this part right, so I encourage you to keep encouraging the agencies to give that data and then to give it to us, or to the public.

When will all of the newly announced 300 beds be put into place?

Ms Maurice: It's a four-year rollout. We have just over a hundred new beds targeted for this year.

Mrs Bountrogianni: I'm sorry, I can't hear you.

Ms Maurice: For this fiscal year, approximately a hundred of those beds and the remainder to roll out over the subsequent three years.

Mrs Bountrogianni: At that rate? At a hundred beds per year?

Ms Maurice: Where can I find that information, folks?

Mrs Bountrogianni: And this is engraved in stone? This won't change, regardless of what Minister Flaherty might say next week or the budget? This is going to happen no matter what, 300 beds? Deputy?

Mr Fleming: These are the decisions we have as of today.

Mrs Bountrogianni: Good answer.

Mr Fleming: I can't speak to future direction we might receive from the government.

Ms Maurice: It's 107 this fiscal year and the remainder by 2003 or 2004.

Mrs Bountrogianni: OK, thank you. Now, who is being consulted regarding the development of service quality standards? Are you consulting with the agencies themselves? Are you consulting with the women themselves?

Ms Maurice: In terms of getting back to the question about service quality standards, what we do with our agencies is work with them to set service expectations and service targets which are part of our service contracting process.

Mrs Bountrogianni: So this is done as part of the contract process?

Ms Maurice: Part of the contracting process. Now, one of the specific issues that we have been looking at is the issue of communication and coordination among different parts of the service sector and it's been a particular issue that was certainly raised in the Heikamp inquest, a particular issue between the child welfare sector and the violence against women sector. We have engaged in quite a fulsome consultative process that involves our VAW system as well as children's aid societies to initially develop a joint training curriculum. There was quite a significant amount of work and consultation that went into that. We're quite pleased that over 3,000 staff in the province have already been trained on that joint curriculum.

The other piece of work we're doing that we think will move us closer to better coordination of services in terms of a standard, if you like, is the work on the joint violence against women and children's aid society protocol, and this is really about how those agencies deal with one another. The way we've approached it, again, it's very consultative to develop generic protocol. We did a consultation in the fall. We're currently revising that protocol. We will be issuing the protocol this spring. The next stage is at the local level for individual children's aid societies and violence against women organizations to take that and turn them into local protocols. That's one example of how we're working together.

Mrs Bountrogianni: Thank you. One of the things that I observed in my touring of the facilities across the province is the disparity, particularly among the physical security. That was also mentioned in the report. I'll never forget one in Ottawa where I thought, "Here we have the capital of the country and this place is not secure," terrible conditions, as opposed to the one in my riding which is new and modern and very secure. I could see women feeling secure there and I could see only totally desperate women going to one of the ones in Ottawa. Is anything going to be done to address that disparity?

Ms Renwick: I think physical security is really important and vital in this area. We're refurbishing 136 beds around the province, so that gives us some opportunity as we support those beds to increase security. Certainly when we're building we're paying attention to that.

The board of directors, of course, is responsible and needs to do that assessment and then needs to come forward to the regional office and speak to us about that.

There are minor capital dollars often available that can be used to fix physical security needs. They could be doors, they could be alarm systems, those kinds of things. So there is often minor capital money available to do that and we take physical security requests and needs very seriously.

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Ms Maurice: Perhaps I could just add, since you raised the issue of Ottawa, that there are 40 new shelter beds going into Ottawa and part of the capital plans for those shelters is a good security system. That will also be the case, in fact, for the new shelter in Hamilton, the native women's shelter. I visited that shelter myself not too long ago and—

Mrs Bountrogianni: You see my point.

Ms Maurice: I see your point, yes. We're very pleased that there's going to be a new shelter there.

Mrs Bountrogianni: Excellent. With regard to the one in Ottawa, a good fence would have been a good start; that's how basic the needs were up there. You mentioned, and I'm glad to hear, that security is going to be addressed because that is first and foremost.

You mentioned a training curriculum for agencies. Does that include for the boards of directors as well? If we expect the boards of directors to be accountable, we need to provide the resources to train these members of the boards. Does that training include board members? I'm not sure that all of them are as trained as perhaps they could be. They mean well, they're wonderful, they're committed, but I don't know if the training is consistent or that the background knowledge, which would require more training, is consistent.

Ms Maurice: I agree with you that board training is key. The specific training initiative that we referred to is for staff so that they understand. Marilyn may want to address what we do in the way of board training.

Ms Renwick: We have added to the service contract a schedule that speaks to board capacity and we're asking boards to sign that back to us, so that causes them to have a review. We're also doing a manual for boards of directors to help them understand their role and responsibility. In my own region, board members did come to the CAS-VAW joint training because they were interested in terms of their own growth and learning, so in some places they were able to do that.

But we really are focusing on boards of directors. Our children's aid societies have a board manual that has been very successful. What we're doing is taking the core of that manual and using it amongst all programs in the province to increase board accountability and learning.

Mrs Bountrogianni: I think that's a good start, but if we are to hold these people accountable, I would hate to have a repeat of the CCACs and just take over because mistakes have been made when in fact they haven't had the training to prevent the mistakes. I'm thinking particularly of some rural areas and some northern areas. Thank you very much.

The Chair: You have no further questions at this stage?

Mrs Bountrogianni: No.

The Chair: OK, Ms Martel.

Ms Martel: I wanted to go back to the survey, if I might.

Interjections.

Ms Martel: Just so I'm clear, Mr Chair, are you going to just continue? Am I the only one left with questions?

The Chair: No, I don't believe so.

Ms Martel: OK, so how long do I have?

The Chair: We'll just start the next round and you'll take seven minutes and then we'll continue with you right after lunch.

Ms Martel: OK, thanks. I'd like to know if you can give us the exact number of surveys that went out, when you get a chance to look at it again.

Ms Kane: I'm sorry, Ms Martel. We'll have to get back to you on the details of the survey.

Ms Martel: OK. I'd like to know how many were sent out by the ministry and how many were returned. I gather the results were not made public.

Ms Kane: It was an internal exercise that the ministry did with our regional offices to just prepare us for the new monies that we were hoping to get for the new bed allocation.

Ms Martel: Is it possible that this committee could have a summary of the responses?

Ms Kane: I think we can do that.

Ms Martel: OK. One other question: you said this was done primarily to determine bed allocations with respect to the August announcement. What I'd like to know is, did the August announcement fully respond to the needs that were identified? That's why I'm interested in getting the responses.

Ms Kane: I think that we were able to address the priority areas and that we used the bed numbers to maximize our response, but we were not able to fully respond to all of the identified priorities of every shelter or every community.

Ms Martel: Did the ministry put a monetary value on the needs as they came in? I appreciate it would be difficult on the counselling side, but the shelter bed side might be one that the ministry could calculate, both in terms of new beds required or refurbished beds. Did it work that way?

Mr Fleming: I don't think we know the answer to that question, either. We'll have to go back and see what data we have.

Ms Martel: Clearly, my interest is in seeing what the needs are that may still be out there that remain unmet even with the announcement. That's where I'm heading with this one.

Mr Fleming: I understand where you're going.

Ms Martel: I wanted to ask some questions as well about the announcement in September with respect to the beds. I have a couple of questions. You announced \$26 million for 300 new beds and to refurbish 136. Is that \$26 million strictly capital funding?

Ms Maurice: Yes, it is.

Ms Martel: So in that regard, the \$3 million to \$9 million that will be allocated over four years should be considered operating funding to support those beds.

Ms Maurice: To support the new beds. Of course, the refurbished beds are existing beds and there are operating dollars currently already attached to them. So it's for the 300 beds that will be created.

Ms Martel: In that regard, you gave us a figure earlier, Deputy, that the average daily provincial cost for a bed would be \$100 per person per day. Correct?

Mr Fleming: Correct.

Ms Martel: So over 365 days, on average you'd be spending \$36,500 per bed to support that bed as strictly an operating cost. Would that be correct?

Mr Fleming: I think the service contract—Marilyn can answer that—would take into account the average occupancy levels, which would obviously have a bearing on the overall dollar operating allocation to each shelter.

Ms Martel: I'm not sure I clearly understand that, but let me give you what I'm looking at. If I look at 300 new beds and I use the figure that you gave me, which is \$100 per day, I would have an operating cost to support those beds of \$10.95 million. But your allocation to support those beds is \$9 million at the end of year 4. So I look at that and say there's a shortfall of almost \$2 million of operating funding needed to support those 300 new beds. Is that a realistic assumption for me to make?

Ms Maurice: Maybe I can add something, Deputy. That, of course, is the average, Ms Martel. Some of the 300 new beds—and Barbara probably has the number—are being added to existing shelters, so their operational costs, because there's an infrastructure in place, are going to be less than the costs of a new shelter.

Ms Martel: OK, but I'm working with the \$100 that you gave us, which I would assume would be an average per bed, regardless of if you were moving a new bed into an existing shelter. I'm assuming that \$100 represents a per-bed cost, new or existing bed. Am I right to use that figure or wrong?

Ms Kane: The figure that we used to calculate the operating costs was \$3,000 per bed per year, and that figure is the current provincial cost per bed in the last fiscal year.

Mr Fleming: She said \$3,000, but she meant \$30,000.

Ms Kane: I'm sorry—\$30,000. No, we'd be pretty cheap.

Ms Martel: Let me work with that figure. That's how you arrived at the \$9 million, then. That gives me two different sets of numbers. I appreciate that you say you worked with \$30,000. The deputy talked about \$100,000 generally. That's a gap of about \$6,500 per year per bed.

Ms Kane: Can I explain that?

Ms Martel: Sure.

Ms Kane: Because it is based on occupancy and the average provincial occupancy is about 82%, which, when you take days of care times 82%, comes out to about \$30,000. So if you only are occupied 82% of the time, then your average cost per day at \$100 works out to about \$30,000 a year.

Ms Martel: Is it realistic to use that in areas where you have overcapacity? I don't know the shelters that were listed where they were continually turning people away. If you work it that way, aren't you going to run into a problem of having shelters in areas where there is an ongoing and increasing need still not receiving enough operating dollars from your ministry to fund the new beds?

Ms Kane: We worked with that \$30,000 annually per bed as a starting point for the discussions with the shelters. Our regional offices were involved in this, and it was based on what they thought they needed to operate within the limitations of the \$9 million. So we did come up with figures. Some of them were slightly cheaper, as Andrea says, because they were in existing shelters where maybe the average operating cost is about \$25,000 per bed, and so that's what we negotiated with them.

The Chair: Can we leave it at that? It's 12 o'clock now. We'll continue with this at 1 o'clock. We stand recessed until 1 o'clock.

The committee recessed from 1201 to 1301.

The Chair: I'd like to call the committee back to order. We'll continue with Ms Martel.

Ms Martel: Thank you, Mr Chair. Before I continue with questions, I thought I would read into the record something I consider to be important. Mr Maves made two references to the support of the shelter sector for the current shelter funding. I thought it was important that I read into the record the submission that was made by OAITH, which is the Ontario Association for Interval and Transition Houses, an advocacy group that represents the majority of women's shelters in the province. This is a submission they made to the Gillian Hadley inquiry, and it was just done in February 2002.

Their recommendation 16 reads: "That the Ministry of Community and Social Services of the province of Ontario immediately conduct a review of actual costs of providing emergency shelter services for women and children in Ontario and develop mechanisms and initiatives to increase the funding of women's shelters in Ontario to meet the real program needs of women and children who use women's shelter services."

I think that most accurately reflects the perspective of this sector, and it's a most recent perspective as well, which is why I continue to advocate for a real review of the funding mechanism.

I want to go back to the issue of the announcement of the money for beds. I want to follow up with a couple of questions. We left off with my trying to determine if the \$9 million was going to provide adequate operational support for the 300 new beds. I think I'm beginning to understand the rationale that was used for that. Correct me if I'm wrong: the last part of the discussion was that there had been some discussions with the shelters to determine their operational needs, which led to that allocation. Can I be clear that that's what was said, or did I misunderstand that comment?

Mr Fleming: If you're referring to the survey—

Ms Martel: No. Perhaps I misunderstood, but I thought what had been said was that there had been some discussion with the agencies regarding their real operational costs, which supported the \$9-million decision. I want to be clear if I understood that correctly.

Ms Kane: No. My reference was to their negotiation after the announcement.

Ms Martel: OK.

Ms Kane: And that was in determining what their operating cost per bed would be, that the ministry would pay out of the \$9 million. The \$9 million had been established by that point.

Ms Martel: Did you negotiate with all of those that have been listed as receiving new beds?

Ms Kane: Yes.

Ms Martel: Is it clear, then, that those who are to receive new beds agree that overall the \$9 million will meet the operational needs, or is there a shortfall?

Ms Kane: I would say that we have been able to give more money to some of the new beds. All of the new beds, I understand, will receive about \$34,000 instead of the \$30,000. It's in the refurbishing of the beds that we were able to have some cost savings to offset that additional \$4,000 a bed.

Ms Martel: I apologize, but I thought the \$9 million was only for the new beds.

Ms Kane: And the 136 refurbished beds.

Ms Martel: Your press release from August 7 just refers to new beds.

Ms Kane: Oh, I'm sorry. I'm confused. You are right: the \$9 million does refer to the 300 new beds. I apologize.

Ms Martel: So what I'm confused about now, and I apologize, is that you made reference to savings from refurbished beds. I'm not sure what the link is, one to the other.

Ms Kane: I'm going to call up my colleague Susan Crocker, our VAW capital analyst, who will be able to give you some additional information on the allocations.

Ms Susan Crocker: When we went back and looked at the actual budgets the agencies were providing, we found that where we were putting new beds, where a building or agency existed and had existing infrastructure, it was actually costing us less per bed than it was for the new beds where there was no existing administrative infrastructure. So we were able to re-allocate to brand new shelters with no infrastructure some of the money we were saving from where we were just adding beds.

Ms Martel: So the savings actually came not from refurbishment but from new beds in existing shelters. Your cost per bed in entirely new shelters is higher, but it is being covered from the cost saving?

Ms Crocker: Yes. The \$9 million was the figure we were working with, and we were working to balance to that figure. But we were able to achieve some cost savings because of the different types of new beds.

Ms Martel: So you feel confident that the \$9 million will address those operating needs at those 300 new beds,

that every bed will be in a position to be in place and you won't have some shelters not being able to proceed because the operating funding does not support those beds?

Ms Crocker: That is my understanding.

Ms Martel: OK. Another question I had was—the capital money is flowing from SuperBuild—is there a local share for capital costs for each shelter?

Ms Maurice: Sorry, I don't understand the question.

Ms Martel: SuperBuild usually requires a local share over and above the government financing. Is this capital financing 100% for these shelters, so no local fundraising will have to go on to build these new beds?

Ms Crocker: There may be in some cases.

Mr Fleming: A good example of that is the situation I described in my opening remarks, where the shelter in Milton found a partner and was able to accomplish all of its goals with some private fundraising money as well.

Ms Maurice: If I could add as well, what we knew from our agencies was that in some instances they came forward and said they had some funding from CMHC, and some of them had funding from the federal supporting communities partnership initiative program that they could use. So they identified to the ministry what kind of capital enhancement they would need in order to either add a certain number of beds or create a new shelter. Certainly, as part of the SuperBuild funding, we did encourage our shelters to look for other sources of funding as well, to look for those partnerships.

Ms Martel: But I want to be clear that it is not a requirement for every shelter to provide 10%, 5%, 3% etc?

Ms Maurice: No.

Ms Martel: Where they had that, they provided that to you and there was an adjustment in their capital funding?

Ms Maurice: Or we were aware of it in the planning process itself.

Ms Martel: The \$3 million that was allocated for operating in this fiscal year, were those dollars spent?

Ms Maurice: We anticipate that we will spend approximately half of those dollars. The reason we're not likely to spend the full \$3 million this year is that there were some delays in start-ups, opening up the new beds. Because a good portion of the operating dollars goes toward salaries, it's a shorter fiscal year than we had anticipated.

Ms Martel: So about \$1.5 million will go out the door this year?

Ms Maurice: I believe it's \$1.4 million.

Ms Martel: I think those are the questions I have on that allocation. Thank you very much.

I want to return to a point in the auditor's report that involved minimum staffing levels. The auditor noted that in the 1995-96 fiscal year the ministry eliminated the standard of a minimum staff-to-bed ratio. Can I ask what the rationale was for that, and what were the implications of that? I'm particularly thinking of any funding or financial implications. Was that involved?

Ms Maurice: Perhaps I can address that one. In fact, the staff level ratio was developed, in a sense, as a kind of guide or best practice. Rather than eliminate it, it wasn't implemented. It represented, perhaps, an ideal place where we'd want to be if there was sufficient funding in the system. So it wasn't a matter of taking it away and, therefore, affecting agencies. It wasn't implemented.

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Ms Martel: So there were no negative funding implications when that occurred. That's what I want to be clear on.

The last thing I wanted to touch on had to do with a media report that appeared today in the Toronto Star: "Domestic Violence Review Sought." I'm not sure if you had an opportunity to see it. It was handed out to us; I don't mean to blindside you. I'll read the comments into the record so you'll know I'm not ad libbing. It states: "Ontario's coroner's office wants to be able to track how well inquest recommendations into domestic violence deaths like those of Gillian and Ralph Hadley are being implemented."

Two points: the coroner's office made the point that they had requested such funds after the May-Iles inquest, but they were denied. I'm going to assume, because it was the coroner's office, it would have been a denial by the Solicitor General's ministry and not Community and Social Services. Would that be correct?

Mr Fleming: Just glancing quickly at the article, it looks as though the Office of the Chief Coroner is asking for money to track coroners' inquests. It's been a routine for a while now—I can't say how long—for ministries or teams of ministries to comment on inquest recommendations and for there to be progress reports at the annual point on those. I take it, from a quick glance at a few of the words here, that the coroner is looking for some resources to augment his capacity to analyze those and track them.

Ms Martel: The recommendations that are flowing from the various inquiries?

Mr Fleming: And the comments coming back from ministries on their progress with implementing them. I think that's what this says.

Ms Martel: Given it is the coroner's office, I believe that's funded by the Solicitor General.

Mr Fleming: That's correct.

Ms Martel: So the original denial for that, after the first inquest, was not by your ministry?

Mr Fleming: If it's a request by the coroner for additional funds from the Ministry of the Solicitor General, that has nothing to do with us.

Ms Martel: It didn't say that. I'm assuming the coroner's office is not supported by Comsoc but by Sol Gen. Am I correct?

Mr Fleming: That's correct.

Ms Martel: In this respect, would you have had any input, or would you have seen such a request previously from the coroner's office? Do they make their requests known to you because your ministry essentially funds the majority of services for domestic violence?

Mr Fleming: If this is indeed the coroner tracking recommendations from all coroners' inquests, recommendations go to all ministries. So again, it's an internal matter of the Ministry of the Solicitor General—I'm sorry; I haven't read the whole article.

Ms Martel: Maybe I'm not making myself clear. What they seem to be asking for specifically is to be able to track the recommendations that come from the coroners' inquests—the recommendations from May-Iles and from the Hadley inquest—to see if they're being implemented.

Mr Fleming: Just those two?

Ms Martel: They talked about future ones too, and I hope that's not the case. I gather that at the time they made their submission to the Solicitor General's office, you would not have been aware of that request or asked to support it one way or the other, even though your ministry provides the bulk of funding for domestic violence initiatives. That's what I'm getting at.

Mr Fleming: That's correct. I'm not aware of the request. We're not aware of the request.

Ms Martel: So this would be the first time you have seen this second request as well?

Mr Fleming: Yes. That's correct.

Ms Martel: The one thing I would ask you to consider is to be supportive of this particular request. I understand it's not your ministry, and I understand you don't want to go telling other ministries what they should be funding. However, there have been two quite extensive, very public coroners' inquests, with a number of recommendations that are very significant with respect to trying to deal with domestic violence. Perhaps your ministry and the minister could consider some mechanism to support this request to the Solicitor General to see if this can be done. I think it would prove to be a very effective way to measure how we are doing in dealing with these important recommendations. I'll leave that with you to think about.

Mr Fleming: Just a quick comment, if I might. Certainly from a philosophical point of view, I don't have an issue with supporting the coroner and doing what the coroner does. Having served at one point as Deputy Solicitor General, one thing I can speak to is the very definite arm's-length relationship there is between the Office of the Chief Coroner and the rest of the world, for that matter, because of the nature of the work they do. I can see that there would be an issue in the chief coroner seeking to be funded by some of the same bodies, whether it's ministries or other bodies, where there are inquest findings to be done that might have a bearing on the arm's-length relationship. In other words, it seems to me that whatever the legitimate costs of the chief coroner are, they should come from the allocations given to the Ministry of the Solicitor General and not be supported by other ministries.

Ms Martel: I wasn't suggesting a request of funding support.

Mr Fleming: I thought that's what you were asking.

Ms Martel: No, my apologies. It was to see if yourself and the minister would support this funding request that is clearly being made, I gather, to the Solicitor General. It would be an important measure for a number of ministries, but particularly yours, to determine how we're dealing with these recommendations since you provide essentially the bulk of the funding for these initiatives.

Mr Fleming: We can certainly give that some thought.

Ms Martel: It would be a good measure against what recommendations were made and how the government is actually doing.

The Chair: The government side.

Mr Bob Wood (London West): I wonder if I might refer you to how we now fund children's aid societies, which I would define as: we define what services they are to provide, we pay them on a fee-for-service basis and then we audit them to see whether or not they are performing the services that they're supposed to be performing. I would like you to comment on what you see as the pros and cons of such a model for the shelters.

Mr Fleming: The one striking difference between the children's aid society and the violence against women world is the nature of child protection being a statutory matter, where there is a statutory obligation on the part of those societies to carry out certain work. While there is a high degree of importance to the work that violence against women programs do, there is no statutory requirement for that. I haven't really given the notion of that kind of framework a great deal of thought, but that's the thing that strikes me first.

Mr Wood: Those are my questions.

Mr Raminder Gill (Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale): First of all, thank you for being here. Let me re-emphasize that violence against women is a very important area and, from the government's point of view, we want to do everything possible.

A couple of questions come up. I'm not sure what the terminology is, but in terms of long-term-care beds or the nursing homes—and you may not be able to answer this—the per diem, I believe, is less than \$50 and here the per diem is around \$100 on average, ranging anywhere from the low \$60s to \$600. How do you compare that? Why is it more? I'm not saying it's enough or not enough. I'm just asking, why is there a discrepancy in the two areas?

Mr Fleming: One comparator that we could speak to would be the emergency hostels that are operated by municipalities. There the current funding is \$38 a day, but that's a situation where people who use those hostel programs are coming in in the evening, are there overnight and leave immediately in the morning again. It's basically an emergency accommodation, a roof over their head for the night and, I believe, breakfast in the morning, as compared to violence against women shelters where women are staying there for a more extended period of time. Obviously there is a range of counselling and support programs of various kinds that are offered by

the VAW shelters that wouldn't be the same as in emergency hostels, so there's a significant difference in the staffing cost that would account for the balance of the difference.

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Mr Gill: Does the average \$100 include the counselling cost, is that what you're saying, or is it just the shelter cost?

Mr Fleming: Whatever program is offered by the shelter as shelter program would be built into that cost, yes.

Mr Gill: I read somewhere that there is a delay in counselling of between three and six months. Is that a fact?

Mr Fleming: Those are for longer-term cases, as Andrea pointed out earlier. There is not a delay for people who are there on an emergent basis as to their most immediate circumstances. But as we discussed this morning, for women who need some help on a longer-term basis deciding their future, there's waiting in some cases.

Mr Gill: How do we compare—I'm always curious— with the other provinces in Canada in terms of funding, in terms of usage, in terms of demand?

Ms Maurice: I have seen some information. I think I could say that unfortunately in this sector the information that we have nationwide is not really ideal, either in terms of tracking the need for services or the services provided. There have been a couple of surveys undertaken nationally to try and get a handle on statistics of women who experience violence. I think there was one done in the early 1990s and then later in the 1990s. Of course, we have police statistics that help us track that.

We do have information nationally, and provinces together have tried to collect information on the services that are in place. Unfortunately, that's just the data I've seen. There may be other data available, but sometimes we're dealing with apples and oranges in terms of trying to compare services. So there are some data on shelters. Certainly from what I've seen, the services we have, the beds we have, are proportionate to our population in the country.

I don't know the answer to your question in terms of cost comparisons. I haven't seen any data.

Mr Gill: This morning, Deputy, in your opening remarks, you mentioned something about the periods of high demand. Is it seasonal? Is that what you're referring to, certain times of the year?

Mr Fleming: I believe that it is. Something I've seen commented on regularly in the media is that the time of the Super Bowl is one time during the year when violence against women peaks. I believe there are some other times of the year when the usage is higher. I can't speak directly to when that is, but I know there are some swings. Andrea might have a little more information.

Ms Maurice: We also know that the end of the school year is often the time when a woman may choose to leave an abusive situation. She's attempting not to disrupt her children, so it is a time when she may seek assistance toward a move out of the house.

Mr Gill: Generally speaking, I think you had said this morning that the demand is being met except for perhaps during the period of high demand. Is that the case?

Ms Maurice: I think when the deputy made that comment this morning it was in terms of a finding in the auditor's report that women are sometimes turned away from shelters. There was a statistic quoted that one shelter reported that, over the past year, 1,000 women had been turned away. The comment there was that in a time when women are coming and looking for shelter services, there may not be a bed available. I think that's what the deputy's comment was in terms of the high demand. There may not be a bed available and, in those instances, what the shelter does is certainly ensure a woman's safety. They would not send a woman back to an abusive situation, but they look for alternative safety options for that woman. Those may include putting a woman in a motel for a short period of time, moving them out of their community to another women's hostel that does have space or perhaps into an emergency hostel. I think the demand referred to was demand on the shelter for their beds at any point in time.

Mr Gill: Is there an average length of time that these emergency shelters are needed? And is there repeated use, somebody who might have been there and they're back again? Do you have any statistics on that?

Ms Maurice: The length of time that a woman might be in a shelter—

Mr Gill: Emergency shelter.

Ms Maurice:—in an emergency shelter might range from a few days to a few months. Sometimes women do leave the shelter and return, and in some instances a woman does make a decision—and we have to be clear: the decision is always with the woman of what she wishes to do in her life. She may choose to return to the home and then, at another, later point, escape the home again and return to the shelter. There certainly are instances where there would be repeat use of the services.

Mr John Hastings (Etobicoke North): Thank you for coming in today, folks. I have a few questions for you regarding the auditor's observations in terms of establishing measurable performance targets and indicators, to which you have agreed in your response on page 70: "effectively monitor the results achieved against the targets established; and monitor the relationship between the results achieved and the costs incurred." The ministry furthermore "agrees that establishing service outcomes and developing the means to measure and monitor those outcomes is a complex undertaking. Because of this, the ministry will be moving in stages."

My question to that quotation is, how long is it going to take Comsoc to develop these standards? Do you have a timetable? What will the standards be, in addition to the ones the auditor has mentioned in his observations on the report to this committee? For example, will the standards include energy conservation standards? Because when you have women going to a shelter, you've usually got children going there, and a lot of them are not adequately heated. How will you vary your standards of heating

from Toronto, say, to Thunder Bay? Because you're going to have to be consistent with the local heating bylaw. Not that I necessarily think—21 degrees is perhaps a little warm.

The Chair: You want it warmer than that?

Mr Hastings: No, the bylaw already is 21 degrees centigrade—

The Chair: I see, OK.

Mr Hastings:—and I'm wondering whether that is the best use of energy in such a place. What kind of standards will you have for learning for kids in a lot of these facilities? How does an agency that gets money from Comsoc deal with the disposition of sensitive information once a woman and her children have left a shelter or have come back? How is that handled? Can we expect some development on this in the next 60 days? It seems to me—correct me if I'm wrong, auditor—the transfer accountability standards have been missing since 1991.

Mr Peters: You mean transfer payment accountability standards?

Mr Hastings: Yes; value for money, efficiency, the ratio of staff to clients, the number of beds, all those things. You abandoned the bed ratio a number of years ago. The overall accountability standards: are they in place yet?

Mr Peters: The accountability framework?

Mr Hastings: Yes. If you take a look at your 1998 submission—

Mr Peters: In 1997, yes—

Mr Walter Bordne: I think there are two different issues here. One is—

Mr Hastings: There are two: you've got the VAW shelters and you've got the accountability standards that were to be reported on by Comsoc in 1997.

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Mr Bordne: The quality service standards for VAW, which is one of the two, were discontinued in 1995. The accountability framework has always been there under the MBS directives, although the ministry adopted its own framework which is tailored on the MBS framework.

Mr Hastings: Are you folks satisfied with the adoption of the standards they have?

Mr Bordne: In terms of the accountability framework, we said they'd developed one but it hadn't been implemented for this program at the time we looked at it. So it was in place but not implemented.

Ms Renwick: I'll just say around the governance and accountability framework that it's a complex framework and needs to be done right. So we've developed an MCSS framework built on the MBS one, we've shared it with all the agencies, we've talked to them about it, we've added the service schedule piece about board capacity, and we've done a business cycle checklist for ourselves. So we're really moving ahead in terms of monitoring and establishing service expectations. This year's budgets and service contracts will move us a considerable way.

In terms of some of the other questions, the local heating, that's one of the reasons we negotiate the budgets and the service contracts individually, because we might have extra costs in one place or another. What matters isn't the end number so much as using the same approach and the same criteria in establishing each service contract. So you consider heating, for example, and if the cost is higher in one place than other, you've considered that consistently across the province. That's where we're trying to be.

In terms of the sensitive information, all the shelters are very aware of the sensitivity of their location. For example, they're not listed in the phone book and those kinds of things because they want to provide a really safe environment, and they regard record-keeping and the sensitivity of information extremely highly. I'm not aware of any particular incident where there's been a breach in terms of that kind of information. It's taken very seriously by each and every member of staff in every shelter.

Mr Hastings: The ministry's response to me is completely unacceptable. You've got, "We'll be moving in stages." You've been working on this stuff for at least two years, it seems to me. What is so difficult about creating standards for care, standards for energy conservation, the protection of private information, capital management, replacement of roofs that probably in some instances need replacing, the whole fundraising issue? Why can't we get out of you folks, for once, some specific timelines and dates, that this thing will be finished by the end of July this year, and then you report back the two specific things are exceedingly difficult? Why do you have to invent the wheel, when there are probably similar services provided in other states, provinces, the United Kingdom, Australia? Utilize those and make adjustments where they would make the most relevant sense.

Ms Renwick: We do have a capital management plan and it is in place, and it is fair and transparent in terms of how capital funds are allocated. So that's in place. In terms of replacement, we do have what we call minor capital dollars, and those dollars are used every year for replacement of—health and safety kinds of needs. That would include a roof or a fence for a secure program. The governance and accountability framework is in place, but it's an iterative process. We do refine every year because we do want to get better. So it's in place, but we're trying to get better at all our activities.

Mr Hastings: Well, that's encouraging. Let's go back to an experience I had as a councillor in Etobicoke in 1993. One of the shelters in an area not far from there lost its charitable registration from Rev Can; we helped get it back for them. You folks are talking about creating standards for your boards of directors on what kinds of things are expected of them in terms of all these things. To use that one example—you probably weren't aware of it—you were still flowing monies to that particular women's shelter but the treasurer hadn't even reported to Rev Can on the financial affairs of the organization so

Rev Can yanked their charitable status. You probably weren't there, but it seems to me those sorts of things are illustrative as to why you're still developing boards of directors guidelines for responsible behaviour, how to conduct a meeting etc.

Ms Renwick: We expect boards of directors to be able to manage and we fund the boards to do that. But increasingly we've found that with board turnover and an increasingly complex environment, they do need our help. And the manuals are more than how to run a meeting. They go to the roles and responsibilities and accountabilities of board members so that they each understand what their responsibilities are on a board. That's where we're trying to be with that.

Mr Hastings: What kind of timeline commitment can we get from you folks as to when most of this stuff is going to be in place?

Mr Fleming: I think the answer is that it's in place now. As we're describing to you, we're working always with those agencies to improve on it.

Mr Hastings: But in your ministry response, you're saying "moving in stages," on page 70. If you use that as an indicator, why are we so vague? Why can't we have materials and documents submitted to this committee that indicate how far along you are and what you have to achieve yet on the specific items that the auditor has raised and other members of this committee have raised regarding accountability guidelines for transfer partners and for the VAW program as well?

Mr Fleming: I remind the member that this report you're looking at is for a period some time ago. We've moved a considerable distance forward since then. That's why I'm making the assertion that we have those mechanisms in place now, recognizing also, though, that we're still working with our transfer payment partners on perfecting and improving.

Mr Hastings: Deputy, would you be amenable to submitting documents as to how far along you are on your plan regarding some of these deficiencies the auditor found, particularly regarding the VAW program?

Mr Fleming: I'm not really clear what documents the member is referring to. I think we've undertaken to provide some documents earlier this morning. I don't know specifically what it is you're looking for.

Mr Hastings: You have in your ministry files, it would seem to me, documents that indicate how far along you are on the matters that are referred to on page 70. You must have working materials. You must be able to submit to this committee how far along you are in terms of developing however you define service expectations for—

Mr Fleming: There are individual contracts for every agency. I don't think that's what you're asking for. Every agency has a service contract that sets out what our expectations of that agency are.

Mr Hastings: But the auditor says that the level and the scope and the nature of the service expectations are not clearly defined.

Mr Fleming: Two years ago.

Mr Hastings: They may be in the service document for each agency, but the ones they looked at in Comsoc's files don't seem to indicate the same. Is that not true?

The Chair: You're referring to page 7, Mr Hastings. What document—

Mr Hastings: Page 70.

Mr Fleming: You must have different numbering than we do.

Mr Hastings: The transfer payment agency accountability and governance documents. When we look at that particular response, I surmise that there must be some working materials in the ministry regarding the phrase that the ministry will be "moving in stages" in the middle paragraph of the response to the auditor's recommendation dealing with value for money, service expectation outcomes and so on, section 3.04. If you're moving in stages, there must be things that you haven't completed, obviously. There must be things that you are still working on. Would it not be possible and feasible to submit to this committee what exactly those items are that you've already completed and the ones you're still working on that clearly define and give us as members a better understanding of where we are in this situation on the accountability and governance issue?

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Mr Fleming: Mr Chair, I think we could provide a summary to the committee that would get at what Mr Hastings is looking for.

Mr Hastings: Would it also include benchmarks and timelines for the things you are still working on that will be completed by a certain date in the near future? Is that not a reasonable request? Or a set of timelines for those items which are, as you put in your response, "complex"?

Ms Maurice: I think what we could provide to the member is our progress on the implementation of our governance and accountability framework. The summary could provide you with the initiatives that we have already undertaken and the initiatives that we plan to undertake with the timelines on those initiatives.

Mr Hastings: Thank you very much. Do I have more time left, or is that it?

The Chair: Well, we are in the last round. Do you have any final questions?

Mr Hastings: I'd like to have Comsoc submit to the committee some of the numbers on women who go through either program and where they end up. Do we have consistent repetitive cycles of return? Do you track stats on a regional basis? Do you find people who are living in urban areas more prone to returning to a shelter because of an exceedingly difficult relationship? Or is it more the other way, in rural Ontario or northern Ontario? Do you track—when they leave the shelter, do they end up getting into any job training, do they go back home for a while, or neither of those? What exactly happens to these folks who end up having to go through either program? Do we have any numbers like that?

Ms Maurice: We do have numbers on women and children who use our services. Of course, at the ministry we have aggregate numbers. We don't have information

on specific individuals. We have introduced a performance measure system whereby we are collecting information now on the evaluation of the services, but in terms of specific individuals, where they are six months after they have left the service—we don't collect that information. It may be that some individual service providers try to do some tracking and follow-up, but the ministry does not.

The Chair: I would ask, with your permission, for Mr Wood to take the Chair now. I've got a few questions. Unfortunately, Ms Bountrogianni wasn't feeling well.

The Acting Chair (Mr Bob Wood): Mr Gerretsen.

Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands): Would it be possible for you to file a standard generic contract that you have with these various shelters? I'm not sure whether that was one of the documents you agreed to provide us with.

Mr Fleming: I think we did undertake this morning to do that, yes.

Mr Gerretsen: OK, thank you. The other issue—and this is to you, Mr Fleming—is that in an answer to Mr Wood a few minutes ago you said that there was a statutory requirement with respect to children's aid societies but not with respect to violence against women. Would you not agree with me that that changed when Bill 117 was passed and given royal assent, that we now do have a Domestic Violence Protection Act that in effect obligates the government of the day to some extent to be more actively involved in this whole area to the same extent that they are as far as protecting children under the children's aid society acts concerned?

Mr Fleming: Just give us a moment if you would.

Ms Kane: The Domestic Violence Protection Act has not been proclaimed yet, as you know, and was enacted in December 2000. It provides a level of civil protection to anyone over the age of 16 who is a victim of domestic violence. But it's not equivalent to the Child and Family Services Act.

Mr Gerretsen: I didn't want to mislead you there. I understand it has been given royal assent on December 21, 2000, but it has not been proclaimed as yet. Is that what you're saying?

Ms Kane: It has not been proclaimed yet.

Mr Gerretsen: I know that's a political question more than a departmental question, but do you have any reason, from a departmental viewpoint, a ministerial viewpoint, a ministry office viewpoint as to why the act has not been proclaimed as yet?

Ms Kane: I happen to know that the Ministry of the Attorney General is working on a plan to support its implementation and that that has been a demanding process in setting up the systems that will support women and other victims of domestic violence to be able to get the kind of intervention orders that the act stipulates they are entitled to. But it is not equivalent to the Child and Family Services Act.

Mr Gerretsen: I would just urge the government to get on with it because it has been a year and two months now.

I just want to get a drift as to how many—I take it all of these shelters are non-profit shelters. There's no such thing as a for-profit shelter in this respect, is there?

Mr Fleming: A for-profit shelter?

Mr Gerretsen: Yes.

Mr Fleming: Not to my knowledge.

Mr Gerretsen: How many other shelters is the ministry aware of that are out there in the province of Ontario that look after the protection of women and children that your ministry doesn't fund at all? Are there any of those that you're aware of?

Mr Fleming: I don't think we're aware of any. That's not to say there aren't any.

Mr Gerretsen: There may be some, I suppose, run by some church groups—

Mr Fleming: Possibly.

Mr Gerretsen: —or possibly even municipal groups. Yes, I understand that.

The next question that I have then is, do you keep any statistics on the amount of the total budgets of all of these 101 shelters that you're actually funding, between the amount that they request to be funded and the amount that you actually fund? In other words, do you know what the shortfall is that you're not funding, but that the various shelters have asked for? Do you keep any records on that?

Ms Renwick: The regional office would keep the individual amounts, the budget submission and then the service contract, but I don't think we keep it in a rolled-up manner and don't submit it to the policy branch or to corporate.

Mr Gerretsen: Could you undertake to get us those regional figures and maybe total them up for us?

I'll tell you where I'm coming from. I think we, as a society and as a province, have gone a long way in this whole area. I can still remember being involved with a shelter like this 25 years ago when there was absolutely no funding involved. Then municipalities got involved to some extent, and the government of the day, and I think governments over the last 25 years have provided funding. It's never enough. I realize that and I've heard over the years some very good cases from some very good shelters that have come up with some good reasons as to why they're not getting enough money, as far as they're concerned, for what they want.

I just want to get some sense from the people who are actually out in the field as to how much money they feel ought to be spent in this area so that they can provide the necessary services, and how much the government is actually giving to the shelters in total. I have no sense of that at all. Every now and then we hear from a particular interest group that it's not enough for this, that or the other reason, but is there a shortfall of \$20 million, \$25 million, \$5 million? Do you have any sense of that at all?

Mr Fleming: We don't have a sense of the amount, but we can certainly have a look at what information we have.

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Mr Gerretsen: I greatly appreciate that.

I take it that basically the regional offices currently decide within the parameters of the funding that they are given in this area as to how much the shelters in their area are going to be funded on an individual basis. Would that be fair to say?

Mr Fleming: Within the parameters, as you've said, of the ministry's overall policy, yes. Our attempt is very much for our regional offices, not just in this program but in all of our programs, to try to identify community needs and respond to them in the most effective way we know how. It varies from place to place depending on community structures and needs.

Mr Gerretsen: And would it be fair to say that's the reason why the various guidelines that we've talked about, or that the auditor has talked about and the requirements that he feels ought to be there, really aren't looked at as strictly as perhaps they are in other areas, because of different needs that different communities and perhaps different shelters have?

Mr Fleming: We've tried to focus on service expectations rather than on a rule book. So instead of saying you have to have X staff people for Y number of women in the shelter, we talk about the kind of expectations we want around service—as well, of course, as some basic things like safety and so on.

Mr Gerretsen: There was one figure this morning that kind of surprised me when you went from the 80-20 funding to the full provincial funding. You said that basically the province only ended up paying, for that 20% aspect, \$3 million. That tells me that the province was only spending about another \$12 million, being the other 80%. What am I missing there? I mean, at that point in time there was \$64 million spent by your ministry, I believe, so I would have assumed that the municipalities were spending 20% of that, which would be \$12 million, and yet you gave us the figure of \$3 million. Could you clarify that for me?

Ms Maurice: I can offer some information on that. There was a per diem established. I believe at that time the per diem was \$34.50 a day, and that was the cost-shared portion of the shelter costs. It was essentially, I believe, a room-and-board per diem cost. So we paid 80%; the municipalities paid 20%. We subsequently picked up the 20%.

In addition to that, though, the ministry also provided funding for services which were beyond the room-and-board type funding, so the per diem just referred to that room-and-board component of it. That was the cost-shared component.

Mr Gerretsen: OK, that clarifies that.

I just want to have this perfectly clear in my own mind. The comment has been made a number of times today that whatever local funding is picked up, which presumably is shown in a budget of an individual shelter, there's no relationship between the local funding that an organization may be able to raise and the amount of money you will allocate to that shelter. Is that correct, or is there another aspect to it that maybe needs some clarification?

Ms Renwick: I think the base funding, the block funding, provided by the ministry is generally based on the same standard across. The auditor said that that varies, and we say that's by community and those other things that we've referred to. For example, the deputy was talking about Halton Women's Place, where the fundraised money goes into capital, and other fundraised money may go into program enhancement. So the United Way might put in money which might be used for program enhancement.

Mr Gerretsen: But in a situation where money is being raised locally, either from the United Way or by the organization itself, you are not penalizing that organization in effect by affecting that block funding that they get from the ministry, are you?

Ms Renwick: We might be on some occasions, but not as a general rule. I don't know of any specific ones where we are penalizing.

Mr Fleming: Generally speaking, organizations like the United Way would have as one of their criteria that they're not going to replace government funding.

Mr Gerretsen: No, I realize that, and I also realize that it's much easier for an organization to be involved in a capital fundraising program than to raise money for operating funds, which is always a tough thing to do. So would it be fair to say that most of the money that's being raised locally, other than through other government or quasi-government organizations or United Way or what have you, would be going toward capital more than the operating side of things?

Mr Fleming: Capital, or augmenting program for something the agency wanted to do that was above and beyond, as far as I understand it.

Mr Gerretsen: OK. I don't want to put words in your mouth, but in those cases you are not penalizing the organization if they raised more money in order to enhance their programs?

Mr Fleming: Not to my knowledge.

Mr Gerretsen: That's all the questions I have. Thank you.

The Acting Chair: Ms Martel, do you have further questions?

Ms Martel: No, thank you.

The Acting Chair: Does the government side have further questions? Mr Hastings.

Mr Hastings: The serious reporting provisions that the auditor noted in his auditing of Comsoc—

Mr Fleming: Serious occurrence reporting?

Mr Hastings: Yes, page 116, where there seems to be some discrepancy or some need to have a consistent, common type of reporting form, whether it's paper-based or electronic: to what extent has Comsoc managed to come up with a solution to that problem so that all agency providers are now on the same footing if one of these stalkers manages to invade a shelter, to use an example which I would consider a serious incident?

Ms Renwick: A common form is in place, and common expectations from service providers. Recently the

regional offices were reminded to make sure they were in compliance with this policy.

Mr Hastings: How long has this been in place now? Since, say, last September?

Ms Renwick: Longer. About four years, I would think. It might be longer than that.

Mr Hastings: Is this form available for the committee to see?

Ms Renwick: Certainly.

Mr Hastings: OK. We'd appreciate getting it. As the auditor notes, there seems to have been an inconsistency in the one example he gave. I assume, then, that kind of example is an exception rather than a general type of response, given that you now have a better way of handling the reporting of serious occurrences?

Ms Renwick: I think that over the next year we'll see consistency in reporting in place.

Mr Hastings: Regarding what Mr Gerretsen mentioned about fundraising, what is the ministry's general philosophy if a women's shelter or a VAW organization decides to undertake capital fundraising on its own? Do you have a philosophy or a practice that in effect says that if the agency raises \$15,000 for a specific capital replacement, that money then would be subtracted from the agency that would be getting that \$15,000 from its fundraising effort?

Ms Renwick: I think we said earlier that sometimes an agency might come forward and say, "We need \$150,000. We have \$150,000, matched. Somebody wants to see that government's money is in and matched before they commit." In other cases, for other fundraised money, agencies do tell us what fundraised money they have, but we don't penalize them for that.

Mr Hastings: On the capital side?

Ms Renwick: On the capital or operating side.

Mr Hastings: On the operating side as well?

Ms Renwick: As far as I know.

Mr Hastings: Very intriguing. Has that always been the practice of Comsoc regarding its agency providers in this specific sphere, that if they raise monies for either operating or capital, even if the ministry had committed certain dollars for a capital replacement or an enhancement of an operating of an existing program, it would not penalize the agency for the fundraising anticipated or completed, in the past?

Ms Renwick: I can't speak to the past. I don't know.

Mr Fleming: I don't think it's terribly likely, if the government has committed funding to a particular program, that a fundraising drive is going to be particularly successful. It's my experience in communities that it's more likely that where there are needs that government funding hasn't addressed, like a capital shortfall or something like that, fundraising is more successful. That certainly goes beyond VAW into a lot of different programs.

Mr Hastings: Could you provide to this committee if there were any incidents in the past where the ministry did penalize a women's shelter or any similar organ-

ization related to these services and had the monies deducted from whatever they raised?

Mr Fleming: I think it's unlikely.

Mr Hastings: It's my common understanding that that was a practice of Comsoc in other areas dealing with seniors in the past, so I'm just wondering—and when I say "past," five, eight years ago—has it now been abandoned? What actually happened? I'd be most curious to know in terms of how that was handled. If this practice has only been going on for three or five years but in the past it was a different arrangement—we're not talking about United Way dollars, we're talking about monies that would be raised individually by a women's shelter for a specific need, either program enhancement or capital replacement.

Mr Fleming: It's unlikely that we would have an easily retrievable record if there were such a situation, but if we determine that there were any, we can tell you about them.

Mr Hastings: OK, perhaps correspondence can handle that reasonably well.

My final question deals with what you folks generally call service expectations or outcomes and how you are going to commit yourselves to trying to get a better handle on your financial controls for these service providers and yet not go to—and I understand why it would not be advisable—a completely rigid standard on a whole set of operating items because of all the differences across the province. How do you as an organization reconcile, though, this fine balance it seems to me you're walking between trying to adhere to what the auditor has reported out to this committee and your commitment to creating some form of standards in some of these areas yet keeping it somewhat flexible for the provision of services, whether it's a cost per meal per person, per child, which we know would be different in Timmins and Thunder Bay to what it would be in Toronto or southwestern Ontario?

Ms Renwick: We use the service contracting process that I've talked about before to set service expectations. We negotiate them with agencies. That talks about the type of service to be offered, the number of people to be served.

You're right about the balance. We've put a business cycle checklist in place across the province so that we're sure that every program supervisor is considering the same things as they negotiate that budget.

We do manage to the bottom line as well. Generally an agency is free to move money from line to line within the agency, so we're not tying them up in terms of they need this much money here and there. They need the freedom to manage, so that's the way we operate.

Mr Hastings: Is the purpose of this checklist to provide monitoring for you folks as well as the regional offices on the cost of different things that are required to operate, such a shelter heating costs being different, food costs being different?

Ms Renwick: That's done through the budget submission and the contract negotiation. The checklist is

more about making sure that we have documentation in place, that we've followed all the steps.

The Acting Chair: Are there any further questions? There appearing to be none, I know I speak on behalf of all members of the committee in thanking the presenters

for coming forward today to give us their views and knowledge.

The committee stands adjourned until Monday, March 4, 2002, at 10 am in committee room 1.

The committee adjourned at 1405.

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