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**COMMITTEE**

**ON**

**PUBLIC ACCOUNTS**

**Wednesday, March 23, 2011**

**COMMITTEE ROOM 1**

**Public Service Commission**

**Retention, Attrition and Demographics in the Public Service**

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## **Public Accounts Committee**

Ms. Diana Whalen, Chairman  
Mr. Howard Epstein, Vice-Chairman  
Mr. Clarrie MacKinnon  
Ms. Michele Raymond  
Mr. Mat Whynott  
Mr. Brian Skabar  
Hon. Keith Colwell  
Mr. Chuck Porter  
Mr. Allan MacMaster

[Ms. Vicki Conrad replaced Mr. Mat Whynott]  
[Mr. Leo Glavine replaced Hon. Keith Colwell]

In Attendance:

Mrs. Darlene Henry  
Legislative Committee Clerk

## **WITNESSES**

### Public Service Commission

Ms. Kelliann Dean, Commissioner  
Mr. Gordon Adams, Executive Director, Policy and System Performance



House of Assembly  
*Nova Scotia*

**HALIFAX, WEDNESDAY, MARCH 23, 2011**

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ACCOUNTS**

9:00 A.M.

CHAIRMAN

Ms. Diana Whalen

VICE-CHAIRMAN

Mr. Howard Epstein

MADAM CHAIRMAN: I'm going to call this meeting to order as it's 9:00 a.m. now. We have, of course, our meeting of the Public Accounts Committee. Our witnesses today are from the Public Service Commission. We have Ms. Kelliann Dean, Commissioner and Mr. Gordon Adams, Executive Director of Policy and System Performance. As is our custom we will begin by introducing the members who are here today on the committee then we'll follow with your opening statement.

[The committee members introduced themselves.]

MADAM CHAIRMAN: We'll turn it over to you, Ms. Dean, and you can give us some opening comments before we begin with questions.

MS. KELLIANN DEAN: Thank you for the opportunity to be here today to discuss attrition, retention and demographics within the Nova Scotia Public Service. All three are critical components of human resource planning, particularly now as we work closely with departments to support government's priority to live within its means.

The three areas you've chosen for discussion provide an excellent opportunity to highlight the work we do at the Public Service Commission, how we support government departments with their annual HR planning and how we work to ensure employees continue to be valued and treated fairly.

As you are aware, government made a commitment to reduce the size of the civil service by 10 per cent by 2013, relying on attrition through retirements and voluntary departures. The intent of this goal is that the reductions will happen over time, not all at once which gives departments the opportunity to be strategic and purposeful.

Since joining the Public Service Commission in 2010, I have been impressed with the calibre of staff and their commitment to public service and have come to appreciate the complexity of the work that we do. To that end I would like to address some of the terms we'll use today so we all have a common starting point.

As you saw in the information provided to you, one of the ways we are tracking reductions in the size of the civil service is by monitoring changes in FTEs, or full-time equivalents. The FTE estimate factors in all approved and funded FTEs, including vacancies, fixed to a department's budget and reported on annually.

The 2010-11 estimate for the provincial Public Service is 10,813 which is down from the previous year's estimate by 122 FTEs. The estimate for 2011-12 will be released with this year's budget and this will be another indicator of movement towards the 10 per cent reduction target.

Attrition is a key factor in managing the reduction of the size of the civil service. The chart indicates the attrition rate for government or the rate at which people move out of government, which is currently running at 6.9 per cent. This isn't a number that we use to assess the overall size of the Public Service, it's more useful as a measure of turnover or HR activity. However, the vacancies created by attrition are of particular importance for departmental HR planning.

When a position becomes vacant it provides a department with an opportunity to assess whether the position is critical and needs to be refilled or whether there are other alternatives to consider and the position can be eliminated. Perhaps functions can be performed in a different way or more efficiently through greater use of technology.

Retirements are another critical component of attrition. As you've seen in your chart, this fiscal year there are 1,620 employees who are eligible to retire and by 2013-14, 2,722 employees will be eligible, however, our research shows that people generally stay two and a half years to three and a half years past their eligibility date. Given that we expect 1,446 employees to retire between now and fiscal 2013-14, again, being able to predict the number of people likely to retire in a given year helps departments develop workforce plans and HR requirements for the future.

As departments look at their own operations to make HR decisions, PSC serves them in a supporting role. We provide workforce data, retirement forecasts and the strategic support services they need for HR planning. Examples include organizational design, workforce planning, change management, recruitment and retention services,

training and development, job evaluation and classification, and HR advice on collective agreements and staffing policies.

Like many departments, at PSC we are also reviewing our own operations and analyzing our HR requirements for the future. Over the past year PSC has been aligning itself to better support government priorities and improve service delivery. We're currently developing a new HR plan to build on the work of the 2010 corporate plan so we can better serve departments and employees. Our vision is to be strategic human resources business partners and leaders committed to client service excellence.

I would be remiss if I didn't spend a few moments to speak to you about retention and the strength of our existing Public Service. Working from one end of the province to the other, more than 10,000 public servants deliver services and programs to Nova Scotia's families, businesses and communities every day.

One of the ways we track employee engagement and satisfaction is through our biannual employee survey. In fact this month employees have been asked to participate in the 2011 survey. The results are used to give Public Service leaders a representative picture of the work environment we all share. It provides staff with an opportunity to express their priority areas for improvements.

We are making progress in a number of important areas. The 2009 employee survey showed 78 per cent of employees said they were satisfied with their job; 71 per cent said they would prefer to stay with the Government of Nova Scotia even if offered a job somewhere else; 74 per cent of our employees said they agreed that the training they received met their work-related needs. Also, when we look and compare ourselves inter-jurisdictionally, in 2009 Nova Scotia ranked above average and had the top score for: making a difference through a skilled, committed and accountable Public Service; being a top employer; being a learning organization; and employee engagement.

We are certainly pleased with these results and it speaks to the commitment of not only PSC, but departments across government that are working to ensure employees are respected and valued for the work they do. Having said that, I appreciate that we need to continue to pay attention to what we are hearing from employees and make any changes where possible.

Government has noted several times that it values the strength of the Public Service. I would like to use my time with you today to talk about PSC's role, our commitment to the Public Service, set the context for HR planning as we work to support government's commitment for 2013 and to answer any of your questions, to the best of my ability. Thank you.

MADAM CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much, Ms. Dean, that's great. It's a good introduction.

We'll begin, as I mentioned to you, with 20-minute rounds and we begin with the Liberal caucus. I'd like to ask Mr. Glavine to take the floor.

MR. LEO GLAVINE: Thank you very much, Madam Chairman, and thank you for being here today. I'm going to try to, I guess, determine some very specific kinds of information so bear with me as we go through. What contracts have been settled since July 2009, which would fall under the Public Service Commission?

MS. DEAN: Since 2009 - I probably will miss some of them. Certainly we have settled the contract with the NSGEU, which is for the civil service. I know that a number of them are currently in the works for the broader Public Service.

MR. GLAVINE: I ask that question because it seems that we get just a snippet of what is in the contract these days. Would you be able to provide this committee with the exact terms of the contracts since 2009?

MS. DEAN: I'm certain we can endeavour to do that, absolutely. The collective agreement that was recently negotiated would be provided.

MR. GLAVINE: Specifically related to the 1 per cent/1 per cent wage increase for the Civil Service Master Agreement, what will this cost the province?

MS. DEAN: The 1 per cent for the civil service – would you just give me a moment to verify that number. Perhaps what I can do is get back to you on that point, I wouldn't want to give you the wrong number.

MR. GLAVINE: Okay, then. So there were a number of other concessions reached in the master agreement, including vacation improvements, job relocation in the same classification, the same department and other language improvements. Can you list some of these concessions and briefly outline what each of them means?

MS. DEAN: I'll do my best to share some of the things that I can recall. Certainly there were improvements in vacation entitlement and carryover. That was approved; four weeks vacation after five years of service, five weeks after 15 years. This was extended to bargaining unit employees and also excluded employees. There were improvements made to prepaid leave and family illness leave.

There were also improvements to weekend premiums, to severance pay. There were amendments that were made to kilometrage rates. That's a high-level summary of some of the changes that were made.

There was also a memorandum of understanding that was agreed to, to provide a process for when people are relocated in the civil service, there's a process that we would follow to ensure that we're being fair and consistent. Those might be some of the things

that you're specifically looking for. Again, we would be happy to provide that to you in greater detail.

MR. GLAVINE: Thank you. What are the total monitoring costs of these non-wage concessions?

MS. DEAN: I'll have to get back to you on the specifics of that and I can provide that to you.

MR. GLAVINE: That's great, thank you. One of the concessions given was that all permanent employees, or term employees with at least three years of service, as you outlined - but not seasonal - whose jobs are eliminated, are guaranteed another civil servant position somewhere in the province, which pays at least 90 per cent of their previous rate. What effect does this provision have on the NDP's stated goal of reducing the civil service by 1,000 positions?

MS. DEAN: If I could speak maybe a little bit more broadly about that goal of reducing the size of the civil service. We know that there's a certain amount of attrition that we are going to be seeing over the next three years, which gives us some flexibility in terms of reducing that number. Now, when we're looking at moving people in the system, we're doing it consistently and we want to be fair, so if there's an opportunity to look at different alternatives for employees - if an employee was displaced, as an example, and there was another opportunity, they would be provided with another opportunity for employment.

So I think when you look at the broader picture and the flexibility that we currently have in our system in terms of upcoming retirements as an example, so vacancies that would be created, I think that we should be able to achieve the target goals.

MR. GLAVINE: So in your opening remarks you did state that so far 125 positions from the civil service have been eliminated.

MS. DEAN: Well, I said that the FTE estimate from the previous year has changed and it's reduced from about 122 from where it was previously, and I would expect to see that the estimate coming out in the budget would reflect further movement towards that goal.

MR. GLAVINE: So there is a good chance then that some have been placed in other positions. So what is the cost to the province of guaranteeing employees who have lost a job with the province?

MS. DEAN: I think you have to look at that in terms of - there are a number of factors. If there's an opportunity to put somebody in a different job rather than recruit somebody in, there's a savings because there's an incredible cost to training a new

employee. If we're able to find employment for people in other areas of government, then they are able to use those skills productively.

In terms of the specific cost, it's difficult to quantify. I think that our goal is to make sure that the folks we do have are employed and that they're productively employed and that we make the best use of their skills, and if they need further training, that we will provide that further training.

MR. GLAVINE: So is this a case where somebody can actually receive a severance from one civil servant position and then actually be re-employed into a different position in another part of the province?

MS. DEAN: No.

MR. GLAVINE: That doesn't take place, okay. So there's an additional concession that the province may be required to retain employees whose positions may be eliminated and transfer them into a new or vacant position. What is the estimated cost of this retraining package for this year and for the years following?

MS. DEAN: Again, that is difficult to quantify because these situations will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis. We currently don't have a large number of vacancies where we are looking to place people. These provisions are in place so that as these situations occur we systematically work through them and we apply the process consistently. So it's difficult to say exactly what that potential cost could be, because keep in mind this will happen over time as departments look at their operations and make decisions about what they're going to continue to do, what they may not do, and how they may use their existing vacancies as well to accommodate other people. It is very much done on a department-by-department basis.

MR. GLAVINE: So there isn't a broad program of training - it would be specific to you?

MS. DEAN: Exactly, it's very specific. You would look at an individual, you would look at their skill set and determine whether or not they needed training in order to take a different position, and they may not.

MR. GLAVINE: Right. What transfer packages would be available to employees who are moved geographically to other positions?

MS. DEAN: That would be a case-by-case basis depending on where they are and where they are going, and I can get back to you on the specifics on that. Generally we would support them.



MR. GLAVINE: I'm aware of some of those, so I'd like to drill down on what it actually is costing the province to do that.

MS. DEAN: Yes and as I said, it's going to be on a case-by-case basis.

MR. GLAVINE: Government says it will achieve their cuts through attrition, yet it seems that vacant positions will be filled by current civil servants - how will the NDP reach their goal to cut 1,000 positions while these positions are being filled through employee transfers?

MS. DEAN: Let me try to drill it down with a specific example for a department. When a department has vacancies it doesn't necessarily mean that it will be filled by an existing employee. Departments have choices to make when their vacancies come up. They can determine whether or not they need to fill that position, whether they want to do the work differently, or they may not fill it at all. There are choices that need to be made on a department-by-department basis depending on the criticality of the position that becomes vacant - that's another element of a decision on how to move forward. So, really, it depends on the objectives of the department, the work that needs to be done, and the resources that it needs to apply to do that work.

So, again, when there is a vacancy, when people leave for voluntary reasons, when they go because of retirements it does create an opportunity for a department to take a closer look at that work and how it needs to be done. So whether that is a position is filled and there's a competition to refill it or whether it's a bargaining unit position that potentially there is somebody else who has the seniority to take that position, those are all on a case-by-case basis and it really is department specific.

MR. GLAVINE: For those employees who have positions eliminated, the contract states that they will be offered a voluntary severance package - what does the package look like, and how much are these offers expected to cost in total?

MS. DEAN: Again, giving you a total cost is difficult because we're talking about a case-by-case basis.

Situations where a bargaining unit employee's job is eliminated, if that occurs, what we need to do is follow a process which is outlined in a memorandum of understanding - which I can certainly ensure you have - and there is a specific process that we would go through to ensure that a voluntary severance is absolutely the last step in the process, because the goal is to ensure that if there are opportunities to employ that person elsewhere in the system, that we find those first.

So there needs to be two offers of employment made, as well as potential retraining if that's applicable. Only after that process has been gone through would voluntary

severance be an option and then it would be equivalent to one month per year of service up to a maximum of 52 weeks.

MR. GLAVINE: Are you aware of the NSGEU's internal campaign called Civil Service Cut Stoppers?

MS. DEAN: Yes I am.

MR. GLAVINE: So this initiative encourages the NSGEU members to go on-line and click to the button called "Civil Service Cut Stoppers" and anonymously report any vacancies in their departments. This information will help NSGEU to identify areas that are being cut and it gives the NSGEU the data they need to defend and protect members and the services they provide to the public - this was stated by Joan Jessome, the Fall of 2010 issue of The Union Stand. What effect will this initiative have on the NDP's plan to achieve the 1,000 cuts to the civil service through attrition alone?

MS. DEAN: It's interesting because actually the union has approached us and would like to meet with us to talk to us about what their findings are from the Cut Stoppers campaign, and we would be happy to meet with them to discuss the impacts that they are hearing. Certainly as there are vacancies in departments, again as I've said, there's an opportunity to look at whether they would be filled, whether the work would be done a little differently.

Certainly it's not the intent to overload employees by maintaining vacancies, but we do need to really think differently about how some of that work gets done and whether all of it needs to be done. So I appreciate that the NSGEU may have concerns and we're happy to discuss those with them.

MR. GLAVINE: So how does that initiative, combined with the added security required that employees must be offered work at a rate which is at least 90 per cent of their current salary, affect projections for attrition within the civil service?

MS. DEAN: I think that the projections that we have, again, they are fairly significant when you look at the retirement numbers and you look at that combined with normal attrition, so really I see that as part of the process that we follow as we go through the exercise of looking very strategically at the work and looking at where we can make cuts so that they have the least impact on service delivery.

I see this as just part of our process that we go through over the next three years as we look to reduce the size of the civil service - and, again, attrition really does provide us with that opportunity because it creates vacancies, and when you have a vacant position you can minimize the impact on an existing employee because there is nobody in that position.

MR. GLAVINE: The retirement forecast model predicts there will be 345 retirements in fiscal 2010-2011- how many actual retirements have taken place to date?

MS. DEAN: I think that number is about 280 for this – oh, you mean to date in this month or this year?

MR. GLAVINE: This fiscal year.

MS. DEAN: This fiscal year, I believe it is approaching 300. Our forecast is that it will be around 300. I'll get you the exact number, but I think we're close to 300 and we haven't hit the end of March yet, the end of this year. Our forecasts tend to track very closely to the actual number of people who retire.

MR. GLAVINE: I guess this is probably kind of, a bit of a look into the future here, but what effect will increased costs of living, an HST hike, et cetera, reduced pension benefits, 1.25 per cent locked in for five years, and increased incentives to stay in the workforce while accruing pension benefits have on the projections of the next three years, 345, 357, 366?

MS. DEAN: I'm sorry, would you mind clarifying what you wanted?

MR. GLAVINE: In other words, as we take a look at the fact that we see a cost of living probably going to be 2 to 3 per cent for this fiscal year, reduced pension benefits, that's 1.25 per cent locked in for five years, and increased incentives to stay in the workforce while accruing pension benefits, what is the effect on the projections - and the projections are there - 345, 357, 366 for the next three years?

MS. DEAN: Perhaps I can answer that by speaking about our survey. What we do is we survey, on an annual basis, people who are eligible to retire so that we can build that into our forecast, so that we have a greater idea of how long it is they will stay past their eligibility date. So, on average, we know that they'll stay 2.5 to 3.5 years longer than their eligibility dates. We do factor that into our planning, so we know when we start to look at the numbers of people who are eligible, that really the numbers who will actually retire in a given year are going to be lower than that.

I don't know if I have addressed your question exactly.

MR. GORDON ADAMS: The model is reasonably sophisticated, the econometric model, and we have an economist on staff who adjusts the model with the input and information from the survey as well as the economic factors. We do take those considerations into account in our model and in our projections.

MR. GLAVINE: Has the NDP issued a hiring freeze for the civil service?

MS. DEAN: No.

MR. GLAVINE: Not that you're aware of at this point?

MS. DEAN: No, absolutely not, we are continuing to hire.

MR. GLAVINE: Okay. So what is the current replacement rate for retirements?

MS. DEAN: I may be able to get that for you. What we are actually doing now is working on a model so that we can look at leaves - that's attrition, the number of people who leave - and the hires. Just because someone leaves the Public Service doesn't mean you're going to leave it vacant. There are positions that are critical, that need to be staffed. What we're trying to do is build an accurate picture of the number that go and the number that are hired, so we're working on that kind of forecasting right now because that's critical for us to be able to track if we're trending in the right direction.

MR. GLAVINE: What is the projected replacement rate for retirements in the civil service for the next three fiscal years?

MS. DEAN: Again, that would be something that we would be able to see from this model that we're in the process of building now.

MR. GLAVINE: What is the total net loss of civil servants projected for the next three fiscal years?

MS. DEAN: It's approximately 10 per cent, so if we use the FTE as a basis, we've said approximately 1,000 FTEs.

MR. GLAVINE: So that means that at this rate, 875?

MS. DEAN: Sorry?

MR. GLAVINE: How many then, so far, since June 2009, have been removed from the civil service? You talked about 125 for this fiscal year.

MS. DEAN: Yes. Well, we're going from estimate to estimate, so if we look at where we were with 2009 and then I think the FTE estimate for 2010- 2011 is 10,810. So we will be able to see when the estimate comes for the budget what we're projecting for the next fiscal. So we've gone from 10,935 to 10,813 from the last fiscal to this fiscal and then we'll see when the estimates come out what that looks like.

MADAM CHAIRMAN: Thank you, that's the end of the 20 minutes. I'm going to call upon Mr. MacMaster for your turn for the Progressive Conservative caucus.

MR. ALLAN MACMASTER: Thank you, Madam Chairman, and I would like to thank the Public Service Commission for coming in today. My first question is actually a request for information, so I wouldn't need an answer for this today.

I would like to get a breakdown of the number of FTEs in government and have it broken down by department, by division, by position, and then for each position the classification, if there is one - I guess even management positions have classifications, so I guess all of them would have classifications - a wage range for each position, an average benefits cost or some figure that would quantify the cost of benefits for that position, the office space required, and whether or not that FTE position is currently vacant.

It's a lot of information, but it would serve as an excellent benchmark and management tool - and if we could have it for the year 2010-11 that would be most current, that would be helpful. If it could be prepared for the years 2008-09, that would be helpful as well. An electronic copy would be preferred, it's more environmentally friendly, and perhaps in a spreadsheet format. As far as time frame, if we could get something like that within a couple of weeks that would be great - would that be possible?

MS. DEAN: Some of it. That's a tall order. We'll certainly look at it and see what it is that we can compile for you.

MR. MACMASTER: I'd like to put a time frame on it today in the meeting, because I know sometimes these things can carry on and there is certainly value from a time frame perspective - and you know, really, this kind of information should be something we're using all the time in government, because if we don't know about this, then we're not controlling the situation, and if we look over the last five years we've seen a tremendous increase in the FTE count.

I know in 2004 and 2005 we had about 9,000 people working in the civil service and today we have close to - I know at the end of 2010 I think we had closer to 11,000, so a significant increase in the number of people employed by government. I guess we have to ask ourselves the question, are we helping Nova Scotians any more - our population is not growing and we've increased the number of people working in government by a massive amount, are we doing good management of government resources, are we optimizing our resources? So if we could have that information, do you think maybe within four weeks or something like that, that we could have . . .

MS. DEAN: Some of it we may have sooner than that and we'll endeavour to get you what we can within a four-week time frame and, if there's something we can't do, we'll certainly get back to you.

MR. MACMASTER: Thank you for that. My next question is on the Canada Games. I believe there was a program put in place to support the volunteer effort, whereby employees of the provincial government could take a leave - I think it was up to 10 days - to

go and volunteer in the Canada Games. I know that's not too long ago, but would we have any data on how much that would have cost government?

MS. DEAN: We did compile that and we can provide that to the committee. We've basically just got it within the last couple of days, but we will certainly provide that.

MR. MACMASTER: Thank you. There were some questions by my colleague about attrition and those retiring from government, and this question will be focused on government's ability to reduce, over the coming remainder of three years, their goal of up to 1,000 people in the Public Service. From the attrition rates, which include retirements, we're looking at about 600 people per year leaving through attrition?

MS. DEAN: Approximately.

MR. MACMASTER: Okay. So seeing the reduction of 1,000 people, it wouldn't necessarily impact those people if they are retiring or if they are leaving for other reasons, it wouldn't affect them so much personally, would it?

I guess to clarify, when we think about people leaving government and we think about cuts to FTEs we think about people losing their jobs, but if we're having about 700 people leaving annually anyway and they're not losing their jobs, they are retiring or maybe they are taking a job in the private sector, then would it be safe to say that 1,000 people over four years would be very reasonable, from that perspective?

MS. DEAN: We think so, yes. The interesting thing about the attrition number is that the retirements are the piece that we can forecast. Historically the other voluntary departures are difficult to predict because they happen for various reasons but, generally, based on history we can tell that that will be our attrition rate.

And you're right, it does give you the flexibility, with that number of people exiting voluntarily, to look at other alternatives for doing the work.

MR. MACMASTER: Okay, thank you. I guess those numbers, the numbers that we're looking at today, about 10,000, 11,000 employees, that doesn't include people working in the health care /education systems.

MS. DEAN: No, it does not. It is specific to the Public Service.

MR. MACMASTER: Okay, thank you. Next question, I was reviewing the mandate of the Public Service Commission and one of its roles is to act as government's agent for collective bargaining. Is it true – and I've read this, I believe it was in all novascotia, and I've seen it in a couple of other places - I believe it was 90 per cent of an employee's wages are guaranteed, no matter if their position is eliminated for whatever reason?

MS. DEAN: I would find that difficult to believe. I think the reference may be related to the memorandum of understanding which speaks to the placement in a different job and the salary there.

MR. MACMASTER: Can you first explain what that 90 per cent figure relates to and, secondly, what impact does that have on your office's ability and the department's ability throughout government to manage their human resource needs?

MS. DEAN: Really, again, the process that is established under the MOA is there to ensure fair, consistent treatment across the civil service when we need to move people around because of potential job eliminations or vacancies, or we're looking for other opportunities for people. So really that 90 per cent ensures that the employee isn't adversely affected if they are moved into a different position. Again, it's part of our process that we'll go through as we examine our attrition and we need to move people to get the work done that we need to do.

MR. MACMASTER: Does it restrict government's ability to say that change makes choices and rearranges priorities in a particular department - and say there's a need for five less people, does that mean those five people have to have employment guaranteed elsewhere in government?

MS. DEAN: Again, there's a process that we need to go through to ensure that we provide other alternatives for employees and we need to exhaust all avenues possible. Then, at the end of the day, if the employee does not want to take those opportunities, they can elect to take a voluntary severance.

MR. MACMASTER: Do you have to provide an opportunity?

MS. DEAN: Yes.

MR. MACMASTER: According to the MOA?

MS. DEAN: Yes.

MR. MACMASTER: So the 90 per cent figure is irrelevant, is it?

MS. DEAN: I would suggest that the key here is that there's a process we need to follow that ensures that employees have an opportunity to look at alternate employment if their position is eliminated.

MR. MACMASTER: So it's somewhat restrictive for a government that is trying to manage its expenses to be able to operate with such a restrictive MOA in place.

MS. DEAN: I would say that it is basically the process that we're going to follow as we look to adjust the size of the civil service - if we even need to go down that route in some instances, which we may not.

MR. MACMASTER: I notice that Joan Jessome was quoted in a news report that the NSGEU has negotiated strong language in their latest contracts with the province that would deter the employer from reducing their ranks, because it would have to find them a job in another department and retrain them. Further, she went on to say, she didn't think it is their intention to lay people off - this being the government - if it came down to that. So I guess this is probably the clause, the MOA that she would be referring to.

The next question I have - and I guess the reason I'm asking that is to highlight that there are always choices to be made in government, and if choices are made without the common good in mind we see things like increased taxes, we see higher taxes, it is harder on the economy, the province starts to drag behind economically and it is harder and harder for us to provide a good, healthy private sector and good, healthy economy for young people to stay in our province. So those are the things I'm thinking about when I'm asking those questions, because I think the primary role of government should be to optimize the resources we're taking in from the people back out to the people.

Another question I had - I was just looking at the incidence of sick days - do you have any statistics on sick days in provincial government?

MS. DEAN: I do have statistics, yes.

MR. MACMASTER: Could you give some indication of the average number of sick days taken per employee?

MS. DEAN: I don't think I have it with me, but I can certainly get that for you.

MR. MACMASTER: Could you provide a comparison - I don't know if the data exists - but compare it to other provinces and perhaps compare it to maybe a couple of other industry groups in the private sector?

MS. DEAN: Yes.

MR. MACMASTER: Okay, and perhaps the incidence of disability as well.

MS. DEAN: Yes.

MR. MACMASTER: Okay, thank you.



MADAM CHAIRMAN: I should mention as well, our clerk is keeping a list of all of these requests because I know that you're feverishly taking them. She will remind you afterward so that you have that.

MS. DEAN: Perfect.

MR. MACMASTER: Also, what about union grievances - have there been a lot of union grievances in the past year?

MS. DEAN: I would have to look at that, again to see whether it's consistent with previous years.

MR. MACMASTER: I don't mean to be making a lot of work for you . . .

MS. DEAN: But you are.

MR. MACMASTER: Well, you know what? People say it is job creation, but really we should know this information; otherwise we're going to be creating jobs we don't need. I think this is key information, and if I was in charge of the government this is the kind of information I'd be looking to manage the resources for the people.

The other one I was going to ask about is terminations - have there been any terminations in the past year in government?

MS. DEAN: Yes.

MR. MACMASTER: There have been. Would that be consistent with previous years?

MS. DEAN: Yes.

MR. MACMASTER: Would you know a rough percentage of what that would be?

MS. DEAN: Not at hand, but again that would be part of the attrition number, so that would be included. There's voluntary, involuntary, and we definitely track that.

MR. MACMASTER: Okay. Sometimes in our constituency offices we get complaints about areas in government where people don't find they're getting helped, and sometimes you try to make a change there and you often hear, well you can't ever change things, somebody is there and they're there for life. That concern has been raised to me before in the past.

The next question I have would be for the employees themselves. Looking at the surveys, I was really surprised to see some of the figures. Only 49 per cent of employees

feel they receive recognition for work well done. Do you have any comments or insight on why there would be such a low level of satisfaction by employees that they feel that they're being recognized when they do a good job?

MS. DEAN: That's interesting - I'm just wondering what year you might be referring to for that?

MR. MACMASTER: In fairness, I think that figure was for 2006-07.

MS. DEAN: I think it is because 2009, those results had improved significantly. In fact, let me see if I can find that for you - sorry, could you repeat which index . . .

MR. MACMASTER: It was 2006-07 and it said that only 49 per cent of employees feel they receive recognition for work well done.

MS. DEAN: I know that has gone up and I can definitely get you - I don't have the exact number for that. I have a summary of the employee survey results, but I know that has improved; in fact, engagement overall has improved. It was lower in the 2006 survey and it's up to 74 per cent, which is actually higher than other jurisdictions in government. Nova Scotia does very well.

Another area of improvement is related to work-life balance and people feeling that their department creates a safe work environment. So there are improvements that have been made - and that's why the employee survey results are so important to us because we do track and monitor the results carefully. Obviously, in 2006 we were not happy with that result and many departments focused some attention on that area and we did see an improvement.

MR. MACMASTER: That's good. My intention is not to be critical there, it's just that if you see something that stands out, and it sounds like you've taken steps to try to improve that.

MS. DEAN: Yes, absolutely.

MR. MACMASTER: Were there any management practices that you tried to implement to try to improve recognizing staff for good work done?

MS. DEAN: Yes, I think one of the things the PSC introduced was an employee recognition program, and then departments would adapt that to their own departmental needs as well. Our research shows, too, that it isn't just a formal program, it is informal recognition that people are looking for - they want to hear from their supervisors. So part of that is also around leadership development and training for managers to ensure that they're aware of the need to provide feedback and recognition to staff. So it is very much also about that one-on-one relationship that they have with their supervisors.

MR. MACMASTER: That's great. There was another one - it said only 36 per cent feel government hires and promotes people on merit. Have you any insight or comment? That was again, I believe, from 2006-07.

MS. DEAN: Yes, and that has improved significantly since then as well. The merit, the issue with that is we have a fair hiring policy and since then the department has done a lot of work to ensure that people understand the fair hiring policy and that they are adhering to it because part of it was employees didn't understand what fair was, what the merit policy was designed to do, so we've had to do a lot of work around that with managers as well, to help them understand that. There needs to be an open competitive process and that's what the fair hiring policy is about.

Again, as a result of that, there was a lot of drilling down into the specific issue to determine what we needed to do with managers and how best we needed to inform them to correct that perception.

MR. MACMASTER: Thank you. There was one other one - it said only 42 per cent feel they are fairly compensated. Has that changed at all?

MS. DEAN: Yes, it has. I wish I had that one, too, but I'll get back to you with the improvements, because they have improved.

Again, the fact that people say that they are satisfied with their job, that 79 per cent of them are inspired to give their best, that 83 per cent are satisfied with their work, and 75 per cent are proud to work with the Government of Nova Scotia, we see that engagement as really important. The compensation piece has gone up in terms of being fairly compensated for their work. Again, that is something that we do watch very carefully.

MR. MACMASTER: That's good, I'm glad to hear that because of course as MLAs we work with many people throughout government in every department, and there are a lot of people who are a pleasure to work with. It's important to me to know that those people are in an environment where they feel it is dynamic and where they are valued for the good work they do, so I'm glad to hear that those stats are improving because, at the end of the day, I think no matter where we are in government, if we're all helping to pull the cart then the people of Nova Scotia are well served. I'm glad to hear that there has been some progress in those statistics.

MS. DEAN: There is.

MADAM CHAIRMAN: Mr. MacMaster, your 20 minutes have elapsed, so we will come back for a second round, as I'm sure you have more questions to follow up on.

I'd like to turn to the NDP caucus and I understand Ms. Raymond will begin.

MS. MICHELE RAYMOND: Thank you very much, Madam Chairman, and thank you very much for very informative answers to date.

One of the things that I am wondering about, though, is that much of this is actually premised on retirement and I was wondering if you could talk in a little bit more detail about what retirement can involve. I am assuming that this doesn't mean just people who have reached the age of eligibility but it must include those who leave for the private sector, those who need to withdraw from the workforce entirely, illness, a whole variety of things that actually retirement encompasses because one of the things that you are dealing with, of course, is the difference between eligibility for retirement and actual retirements.

Do you have any sense of - I guess the first question would be, the majority of your retirements are people who have, in fact, reached a particular length of service and therefore it is time for them to go, or they are able to go - could you talk about some of the other reasons why people do end up leaving the Public Service?

MS. DEAN: Certainly. Speaking about the retirements - on average the people who leave have 26 years with the provincial civil service, so they are long-standing employees for the most part. The reasons they may delay their retirement are financial reasons or the fact that they really enjoy what they are doing and they are not ready to go. And many who do leave - there are people who retire from the public service and continue to do other things obviously, they may seek further employment. Some people are relatively young when they leave because they have been with the civil service for a while.

The other reasons why people leave can be that they are looking for different opportunities or they move from the Public Service to the private sector, and some people leave because they want to pursue educational opportunities. So there really is a variety of reasons other than pure retirement.

MS. RAYMOND: So, in fact, it's not just the fact that people have put in 26 years, but there is a whole variety of other things that actually lead to this attrition rate. And I guess I'm asking that, too, because you talked a little bit about the fact that it's impossible to know exactly where a retirement is going to emerge at any given moment - it's just that some will, but there will be even additional ones as well. I have seen some charts that seem to indicate that you actually expect an increasing proportion of those who are eligible to retire to actually do so, so this suggests that you may, in fact, be coming up with an even higher attrition rate as time goes by - is that correct?

MS. DEAN: Yes, and I would like to mention as well that we actually can predict and we do know where the retirements will occur in the system, because we track that very carefully. We do know the age of our employees and their service level, so we do know, in individual, down to the department level, where these retirements are potentially going to occur. We give departments data to help them so that they will see, for example, wow, in three years I'm going to lose potentially ten of my senior management, or I will lose ten

people here and potentially five here. And that forms the basis for them to be able to plan, to be able to say okay, if I know this is going to happen, I know this is a critical position, I'm going to need to hire someone here, or I see a couple of positions here potentially. I don't need to do this anymore, I may switch how I do that, I may combine positions. So I just wanted to make the point that we do monitor that activity very carefully so that we can help departments plan.

MS. RAYMOND: And you do have all of these predictable ones.

MS. DEAN: We do. Having said that, as you have indicated we can't predict everything, so as much as we can have a better idea of our retirements we can't tell when somebody may decide to leave for other reasons. You can't plan that variable.

MS. RAYMOND: And that's one of the things, I guess, that I was leading into, because I would assume therefore that it's important to look at the positions themselves, the functions that are being performed and the essentiality of each of those functions. So I was wondering exactly how it is - you do work with departments, the Public Service, and what kind of a process it is that you take, that you look at when deciding whether a specific position will be replaced or whether its functions will be kept.

MS. DEAN: Well, we have staff who pay a lot of attention to the analytics and the information and the data, so we call that workforce planning. What happens is we use the data for departments, along with the expertise of some of the staff we have who are well versed in HR planning and we would work with the departments. So we would do much of what you said, we would look at who they have in their organization and they would go through a process of identifying where the potential risk is, where they may lose people through potential retirements.

We would look at their workforce needs in order to help them achieve how they're going to meet the objectives of the department - what staffing resources do you currently have, what is it that you're going to need - we would help them work through a process of establishing critical positions, and that critical position is a position that is absolutely fundamental to a business that it needs to have to fulfill its mandate. That's not to say that some of the other positions are absolutely not critical, it's just that potentially your mandate could be jeopardized if you can't fill that position, so you evaluate that.

You would also look at your potential to hire at certain levels. So if you know you're going to have vacancies and you know you're going to have difficulty recruiting certain positions in your organization, that's part of the workplace planning as well. Where are you going to get the people if you're going to lose X per cent in your department? So it is a very detailed process and it's a planning process that the department needs to engage in so that they can plan how they're going to deal with that attrition in the future.

MS. RAYMOND: It must be a very different process depending upon which departments there are. We all recognize the word “public service” is essentially about the provision of services to the public. I think there are some, obviously, fundamental needs the province has which continue to be served, so it’s really good to know that you’re engaging with each of these department around their particular needs and so on in order to maintain that.

One of the things, too, that I was looking at was you’re looking at job satisfaction, as well, and of course the question about fairness of compensation and so on, of course the increase in job satisfaction, at least taking everybody’s experience, leads to an increased perception of the fairness of compensation and so on, so I’m really pleased to see that this is one of the important measures that as a jurisdiction we are actually doing, as well as many others. This is one of the things that I think will enable us to actually have, at the end of the day, not just a productive civil service, but happier and presumably better engaged with the rest of our society, so I’d like to congratulate that. I guess I’ll end with that and turn it over to my colleague.

MADAM CHAIRMAN: Mr. MacKinnon.

MR. CLARRIE MACKINNON: Thank you very much, Madam Chairman, it’s great to have you here this morning. In the serious and sincere efforts to get our financial house in order, we have a situation where something like 19 per cent of our civil servants are 34 years or under. What can we do to attract youth in these rather difficult times for you and the entire civil service?

MS. DEAN: That’s a really good question. Interestingly, that number is growing a little bit. We are having some success attracting youth into government and there’s definitely a recognition that we need to do more. On the bright side, there is an organization within the Public Service called GoverNEXT and I’m fortunate enough to be their champion. They are a volunteer network of young people under the age of 34 who work across government, who have come together to help us do exactly that, to look at what it is that attracts young people to government, what keeps them here, how we can ensure that they stay, what we need to do better to keep them. They have done some research to provide some advice to the Public Service Commission around policies and retention. That work is really important as we look to attract more young people.

Again, even though the government is looking to reduce the size of the civil service, we do recognize that we need to hire. We’re going to need to replace, because as we lose people who are retiring, we need to build opportunities for youth to come in and build careers. One of the things that the GoverNEXT group reminds us is that they are attracted to government, they see government as providing competitive compensation and incredible opportunities for varied work. So we do have an advantage there, and our challenge is to get them in at the right level so that they can continue to grow and develop their careers in government.

MR. MACKINNON: In the vein of some of the questioning of the member for Inverness, the situation with those who are proud to work with government, at one time - I think it was probably 2004 - only 60 per cent of employees were proud to work for government and today that is over 75 per cent. What do you attribute that to?

MS. DEAN: Well, you know, I think part of that can be attributed to the fact that when you do an employee survey and you get the results and you're committed to taking those results and trying to improve the work environment, I think that managers and leaders in the Public Service have taken that really seriously. So when the 2004 results came out there was a concerted effort to look at strategies and ways to improve the workplace. A lot of that starts with leadership and starts with management, so there has been some focus around these results and individual departments take them seriously and look at their own results and see what strategies they can put in place to improve them. So I think that that has a lot to do with it.

MR. MACKINNON: One of the areas that we haven't talked about at all this morning, and it's a concern for me and I think it's a rural concern perhaps more than an urban concern, and that is impacts in relationship to seasonal employment, in relationship to Natural Resources, Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal and so on. When we're talking about the FTEs and so on, where does the seasonal follow in all of this?

MS. DEAN: They are included in the FTE count. Again, there are seasonal needs that are required and those are factored into the FTE count. In terms of what that means in the sense of a reduction, again, you still have to look at attrition as the main mechanism for us to use to achieve the reduction.

MR. MACKINNON: How engaged are employees in Nova Scotia in comparison to other jurisdictions? I understand we're doing quite well. What is happening to encourage that kind of engagement?

MS. DEAN: It's interesting. I think Nova Scotia does fairly well comparing ourselves inter-jurisdictionally, and it's difficult to say - we're very proud that our results are as good as they are when we compare ourselves to the federal system and to other provincial systems. I think that it's a credit to the people in the public service.

MR. MACKINNON: Thank you. I'm going to turn the remaining time over to the member for Cumberland North.

MADAM CHAIRMAN: Mr. Skabar, you have about six minutes.

MR. SKABAR: Thank you. Is there an average length of time it takes to complete a staffing action, like from beginning to end?

MS. DEAN: There is and I would say it depends on the specific staffing action and it would depend of the complexity of it.

MR. SKABAR: Is it awfully cumbersome and it takes far longer than it should?

MS. DEAN: It can be and that's one of the reasons why in PSC we're looking at our own processes, because we want to increase the efficiency of our operations serving the departments. We are currently looking at automating some of that staffing process in order to make it happen a little more quickly and more efficiently and make it easier for people. We recognize that we need to really do a better job of meeting the needs of our own clients as they look to fill positions and recruit and conduct staffing transactions.

MR. SKABAR: Your "own clients" being the department, the line departments?

MS. DEAN: We serve the departments. We have staff who work throughout government in human resources who support their client departments and provide HR service.

MR. SKABAR: In the chart I notice there's a variance between 200 and 900 of the FTE estimate and the actual FTEs in place - is that because positions aren't being filled?

MS. DEAN: The estimate and actual, sorry. Yes, that is exactly why. I think the other thing to keep in mind - the estimate is the annualized number, that is the budget for the department for its FTEs, and the actual tracks activity at a given time. When the actual is reported on at the end of the year some hirings may be in progress, there may be some vacancies, and so it's an indicator of what the department actually spent during that fiscal period of what it was allocated.

MR. SKABAR: Is any consideration being given, or to what extent is the responsibility and authority for staffing actions being devolved to the lowest level of department level?

MS. DEAN: Are you referring to hiring?

MR. SKABAR: Yes.

MS. DEAN: Right now the authority for hiring remains with the deputy minister, and the actions can be initiated at various levels in the organization but it does require deputy minister sign-off. Currently that is where it stays. I mean, we are looking at opportunities to increase that delegation of authority or move it within the organization, but that's something that is still under consideration. So currently the authority is with the deputy minister for hiring and for termination.



MR. SKABAR: So that would be one of the reasons why it takes so long to complete a staffing action?

MS. DEAN: Well not necessarily. I think what has happened over the past is our process is pretty cumbersome, so that's why we are actually improving that by automating a lot of it. It is a very paper-driven process.

Recently we have, through SAP, begun to make improvements to shorten the time that it takes to do some of those transactions.

MR. SKABAR: So the whole process would remain the same, but just be automated as opposed to the paper-driven - is that it?

MS. DEAN: Well, currently yes, but, as I explained, we are looking at all of our processes within the Public Service Commission to see if there's a way to be even more efficient. But staffing is just one process - we have other processes that we need to look at as well so that we can try to make them more efficient.

MR. SKABAR: And this being delegation of authority to staffing down to lower levels, is that . . .

MS. DEAN: Well that wouldn't happen immediately. We need to understand the full process first and where hand-offs are before we could look at changing approval authorities. Right now the deputy ministers have the authority for the staffing transactions.

MR. SKABAR: So anyway, I can't recall - you started off by saying is there an average length of time it takes to complete one - what is that time?

MS. DEAN: Again, it depends on what it is. If you're asking me how long does it take to hire somebody . . .

MR. SKABAR: Well, on average.

MS. DEAN: I could get back to you on that. I wouldn't want to say, to give you a number that was incorrect but, again, it does vary - and I can get back to you on that - but our goal is definitely to improve on that because we know that sometimes it does take too long.

MR. SKABAR: Has there ever been any consideration given to moving from FTEs to running costs for staffing actions or for staff?

MS. DEAN: No, not at this point. The FTE is our budget number. We do track by head count because for some of the things that we are monitoring it is easier to monitor by

head count, but the actual measure for government of the size or the civil service is FTE, so anything we do would then be converted to FTE.

MR. SKABAR: Okay. Are all departments going to be sharing the burden equally of the 10 per cent reduction?

MS. DEAN: No, this isn't across the board, this is about looking specifically - again, vacancies arise at different rates in different departments and, again, attrition, as I said, you can look at retirements as one opportunity to achieve reduction. So I think it will depend on the needs of individual departments and what their attrition is going to be - so it's not an automatic 10 per cent.

MR. SKABAR: So it's not that every department is expected to reduce its FTE count by . . .

MS. DEAN: Every department is expected to reduce its FTE count, but I think the actual number will vary from department to department.

MR. SKABAR: As a percentage even, for that matter.

MS. DEAN: Yes.

MR. SKABAR: Okay. Given the ebb and flow of Government of Nova Scotia employees, and there likely will be some movement between departments and between offices, is any consideration being given to the likelihood of - I was looking at diversity and the mix here - to relaxing any guidelines for diversity and hiring of visible minorities and gender mix?

MS. DEAN: I think the departments take their diversity goals really seriously. I think we have a long way to go in terms of improving diversity in the Public Service. I don't see that as sort of any kind of barrier. I think there's an opportunity to do more there to increase the diversity of the face of the Public Service.

MR. SKABAR: Where I was going with that one . . .

MADAM CHAIRMAN: I'm sorry, your time has elapsed. If I could, I'd like to ask Mr. Glavine to begin. We have 14 minutes for the last round of questioning.

MR. GLAVINE: Thank you, Madam Chairman. Just to pick up on one of the themes that my colleagues have been talking about, retirements and attrition and so forth, I brought in a bill the same day as the minister of the day did - Mark Parent - to remove the 65-year-old barrier to continuing employment in government. I'm wondering what kind of pickup there has been with civil servants to work beyond age 65 and is that going to be, again, perhaps another factor that will make it tougher around reductions?

MS. DEAN: Actually, this has been in place for awhile. The average age of people who retire is actually 59, so certainly I don't see that as a huge barrier or impediment.

MR. GLAVINE: Yes, so that will be one little factor.

MS. DEAN: Potentially, yes.

MR. GLAVINE: One of the areas that I had asked about earlier, and my colleague here had referenced as well, was in regard to one of the concessions made and it was in the master agreement. In your second response - I had asked about it earlier on - you kind of saw it more as a memorandum type of understanding, but is this actually in the agreement which I asked for early on? One concession given was that all permanent employees, or term employees with at least three years of service but not seasonal, whose jobs are eliminated, are guaranteed another civil service position somewhere in the province which pays at least 90 per cent of their previous rate. So that's part of it now and was worked into an agreement.

It is my understanding that in essence, the NSGEU gave up wage increases above one per cent in exchange for language that makes it almost impossible to remove somebody if they are in the union. Is that your understanding of that concession?

MS. DEAN: No, it isn't, but I would have to get back to you on that just to verify exactly where that is, whether it is in the MOU or whether it is in the master agreement.

MR. GLAVINE: Okay. We don't need to be specific around names or positions here, but in effect now we will have people who will leave a job - for example, a \$75,000 job, could go to one of \$55,000 but they're actually going to be guaranteed 90 per cent of their previous wage even though they will have less responsibility, perhaps less demanding duties in this new job. Is that the reality of this concession?

MS. DEAN: Again, I'll have to get back to you on the specifics around that. I'd like to verify my facts on that and how it's actually applied.

MR. GLAVINE: Okay, thank you. You said that we've had 122 full-time equivalent reductions so far in this fiscal year. Where have most of these reductions actually taken place? You did talk about it wouldn't be straight across the board, it would be different from department to department.

MS. DEAN: Again, I can't tell you exactly where all of those would take place because, again, it would happen department by department. The estimates will show where the reductions would appear in each department, you could see where the reductions would occur in each department.

MR. GLAVINE: So you will provide that information to the committee? I think that's very important when you consider the nature even of some of the seasonal jobs, for example, with DNR when we're looking at our parks, fire protection, et cetera. I think if there are such reductions the public of Nova Scotia really needs to have that kind of knowledge.

How many civil servants are projected to be reduced in the coming three fiscal years?

MS. DEAN: Again, the target, the government's goal was to reduce the size of the civil service by 10 per cent by 2013, which is an estimate of approximately 1,000 jobs. I would expect to see what that is going to look like when the estimates are tabled for the budget this year.

MR. GLAVINE: So based on the current tracking where we have such a small number and looking at the number of potential retirees, and we don't quite meet that target, are there potential layoffs to come in the civil service?

MS. DEAN: It's not expected that the target would be achieved through that. Again, we have a considerable amount of potential attrition to deal with which means that we have existing vacancies that are coming up and it's expected we can achieve that through voluntary departure and attrition.

MR. GLAVINE: How many contract employees, to be specific, have not been renewed in this fiscal year within the public service?

MS. DEAN: I don't know that for sure - I'd have to get that for you.

MR. GLAVINE: You'll have to get that, okay.

I was just kind of taking a look at the whole picture of the civil service and the growth over the last decade. What has been the growth rate in the civil service over the past 10 years?

MS. DEAN: Well perhaps what I could speak to would be some of the highlights that would indicate where you might see some increases in the size of the civil service because you had mentioned that before and I did want to point out that.

That growth is related to some very specific events and it's also related to increases in budgets the departments may have received and they need increased staffing to deliver on new programming. For example, in April 2007, Community Services transferred about 300 child care coordinators from the Child Welfare Agency, so that would have been a large chunk that would have added to an increase in FTEs. As well, Labour and Workforce Development in 2009 transferred about 100 federal employees into the civil service, so that

would account for an increase, and as well we had approximately 1,000 casuals and seasonals who were brought into the civil service as a result of the casual conversion that occurred. So you see that - some of those very significant chunks - as having an impact on the increase in FTEs over the years.

Now the goal is to look at where we are and to try to manage that and to see some reductions.

MR. GLAVINE: You would deduct then it's very much probably a product of government programs and new initiatives or changes from federal to provincial as we saw?

MS. DEAN: That plus, again, the 1,000 people who came in under the casual and seasonal conversion, so that was a significant increase in FTEs as well. These are people who had been working for government, but were brought into government through that conversion process.

MR. GLAVINE: Having an overview of the current number of civil servants, the kind of programs they deliver, and a number of us MLAs have talked about the close work that we have to do with civil servants in our job - do you see that by reducing at this stage by 1,000 that, in fact, it could negatively impact on program delivery?

MS. DEAN: I think that departments will be looking to minimize any negative impacts on program delivery. But I think it also presents us with a unique opportunity to really look at the work we're doing and look at whether there are certain things we need to continue doing the same way or whether there are some things that we can deliver and achieve differently. I think that it is important to have a strategic look at the work the departments do, and of the programs. Obviously, we do not want to impact negatively on service delivery and want to minimize that.

MR. GLAVINE: So at this stage, as the plan goes forward, is there a plan in each department to reduce by a certain percentage and a certain number to achieve that goal or is it based more around the attrition factor? What's part of that plan to get the 1,000 reduced?

MS. DEAN: That goes to what I was explaining about our work with departments around HR planning. As part of the business planning cycle in the budgeting cycle, departments look at what they're expected to do and what resources they have to deliver on their objectives. So they are part of achieving government's goal. Every department understands that it needs to look very carefully at what it's doing and needs to determine if there are opportunities to potentially reduce FTEs, and that is part of the planning process. So departments are doing that.

I don't want to suggest that it is a completely siloed exercise, but it starts with individual departments and then we need to look at the overall impact across government to determine whether that is going to be achieved over the time period. Again, it is

dependent department on department and, again, dependent on their business objectives and what it is they're going to try to deliver.

MR. GLAVINE: Just to switch to an area that we've also been addressing this morning and that is employee satisfaction and contentment with their work and so on. I'm just wondering if in your overview, and you talked about the 2009 employee survey and what it showed - is that just an internal type of review or is it a third-party that takes a look at job satisfaction within the public service? There are also, of course, results from the Nova Scotia Corporate Resource Plan, 2005-2010 which, again, surveyed 8,100 public servants and do have perhaps a little different picture, where this report seems to be in 2009. Are they somewhat . . .

MS. DEAN: Yes, those results that are reported in the Corporate HR Plan are drawn from the employee survey results. Our employee survey is administered by our evaluation group internally. It is a very sound survey methodology and we also co-operate inter-jurisdictionally so that we are using common questions so we can compare ourselves to other jurisdictions. There is a working group across Canada that looks to ensure that there are common questions. That is available, I believe the employee survey results are posted on our Web site from previous years. As I said, we are currently in a survey cycle now and expect that we would see results in the summer from this survey. That is one of the baseline documents that we have that we measure our performance on with respect to employees.

MR. GLAVINE: One of the elements we do need to account for is that it only had a 53 per cent response . . .

MS. DEAN: It did, yes, but I think that went up.

MR. GLAVINE: I just wanted to make one reference here - it says survey results told us that many respondents did not believe that the hiring process as was mentioned earlier, a merit base and objective, that they did not believe that they could express concerns about wrongdoing in the workplace without fear of reprisal, they expressed doubts about department leadership, and about the likelihood of a meaningful response to their concerns and perceptions. That was on Page 18 of the report.

So we only got a 53 per cent response rate and we get comments of that nature - does this tell us something about the culture of the civil service and government?

MS. DEAN: I would just like to clarify - were you looking at 2004 or 2009?

MR. GLAVINE: No, this was 2005 to 2010.

MS. DEAN: Although the response rate has improved, what I will say to respond to your question is we take that extremely seriously and the province has created a respectful

workplace policy in order to provide employees with an opportunity to raise their concerns confidentially, anonymously, and have them looked into, so we are responding to that. There is mandatory training for managers around respectful workplace, so we want to make sure that people are aware that they should feel free to do that if they have to raise concerns and that they have an avenue to do that. They can go directly to the Respectful Workplace Coordinator and raise their concerns in a confidential manner.

MADAM CHAIRMAN: Mr. Glavine, your time has elapsed now so I'm going to ask Mr. MacMaster to begin, 14 minutes.

MR. MACMASTER: Thank you, Madam Chairman. This, I think, is my last request for information. (Laughter) Would it be possible to get a copy of the MOA that we discussed earlier? Thank you.

In the last number of years would you have some idea and some comment on the departments and agencies that have had the biggest staffing increases and why they would have a need for that?

MS. DEAN: I could certainly get that for you. Again, it might respond to some of the things I said earlier where, as an example, Community Services might look like it has increased significantly because it brought in the child welfare agencies. Any of the departments, as an example, that would have had a lot of seasonal workers - DNR, Tourism to a smaller degree - would have seen increases, as well, because we've brought those casuals into the civil service bargaining unit, so that is available.

MR. MACMASTER: Thank you. Here's a figure that I've always tried to quantify and have never been able to: do we know what proportion of government expenditure would be devoted to salaries and benefits? Even a rough percentage figure, like within 5 per cent even.

MS. DEAN: We can get that.

MR. MACMASTER: Okay. This is an interesting one, and we know there has to be capital and it makes sense to have government offices sometimes closer together because people have to work together, but what is the geographic distribution of our Public Service? Do we have some breakdown by, say, county or region of the province?

MS. DEAN: I actually do have that one, which I can provide to you. About half of our employees, 45 per cent, are in the HRM area. The rest are distributed around the province in the various percentages, which I can share with you.

MR. MACMASTER: Do you have a rough idea of the percentages by the rest of the province?

MS. DEAN: Would you like me to go through them?

MR. MACMASTER: Yes. Did you say that there's about the same amount in every other region?

MS. DEAN: It varies. For example: Annapolis County, 2.8 per cent; Antigonish, 1.5 per cent; Cape Breton County, 5.8 per cent; Colchester, 9.5 per cent; Cumberland, 2.9 per cent; Digby, 1 per cent; Guysborough, .6 per cent; Hants County, 1.7 per cent; HRM is 45.9 per cent; Inverness is 1.8 per cent; Kings is 4.2 per cent; Lunenburg is 3.8 per cent; Pictou County is 3 per cent; Queens is .16 per cent; Richmond, .04 per cent; Shelburne, .34 per cent; Victoria, .87 per cent; and Yarmouth, 3.1 per cent. About 10 per cent do not have a location and they're un-coded in the system. That would be your gap.

MR. MACMASTER: That's great, thank you, that's good to know.

The next one I have here, there are a couple of offices that our office has looked at and noted there has been some increase in - an office called the Chief Information Office. I guess the first question would be, can you quantify what department that falls under and what the objectives of that office are?

MS. DEAN: I believe actually they were in Public Accounts recently, so the Chief Information Office has all the IT support in it. I believe that is now part of the Treasury Board. And again, they reflect all of the people who provide IT service, similar to the Public Service Commission, if you will, where they have folks who support all of the departments.

MR. MACMASTER: So these are people who maybe used to be inside a line department, who have now been collected and moved into this central agency?

MS. DEAN: Yes.

MR. MACMASTER: Okay, so it's not really new people in government.

MS. DEAN: No, it's an alignment of the people who provide that IT support into one unit. In fact, similarly, the Public Service Commission went through that several years ago, so the people who are in our corporate service units have now been brought under the Public Service Commission. It may have looked at one time like the Public Service Commission had an increase in staff, when really it was movement from reporting to departments that they served to reporting to the Public Service Commission.

[10:30 a.m. Mr. Howard Epstein took the Chair.]

MR. MACMASTER: And those roles that are now inside of the Public Service Commission, what were those people doing? That wasn't IT but maybe it was - was it HR?



MS. DEAN: It's the same thing, the HR service.

MR. MACMASTER: Oh, the HR service, okay.

MS. DEAN: I was making the analogy that similar to IT, the same thing happened with the Public Service Commission.

MR. MACMASTER: I got you, okay, that makes sense. You mentioned with the IT support that that was connected to the Treasury Board as well.

MS. DEAN: There is a CIO but I believe that the deputy is Greg Keefe, who is also deputy for Treasury Board and deputy to the Premier.

MR. MACMASTER: Okay, so there was an increase - actually, that was one of the other offices noted where there was an increase. Do you know what that was caused by? Was that something similar? I can appreciate if you don't have the answer.

MS. DEAN: Again, I do know that the office of the CIO brought in the staff who were providing service in the field. So it's the same service but they are now the office of the CIO.

MR. MACMASTER: So the CIO is under the Treasury Board.

MS. DEAN: They have a common deputy.

MR. MACMASTER: A common deputy, okay, that's good. In Intergovernmental Affairs there's a noted increase of, I think, 17 per cent over two years. I don't know if you would . . .

MS. DEAN: I'd have to look at that. Off the top of my head . . .

MR. MACMASTER: Yes, in fairness - sorry?

MR. ADAMS: It's fairly small, I'm not sure what the absolute number of 17 represents, but it's small.

MR. MACMASTER: Yes, okay, because it's a small dollar value. A 17 per cent increase might only mean that they made a small tweak, if they're a small office. Okay, that's good to clarify that.

Training costs. It was noted that there was a large per cent increase in that, about a \$120 million increase in training in the last couple of years. Does that sound right?

MS. DEAN: For what, specifically? Do you mean overall?

MR. MACMASTER: Yes, this would be like to - yes, throughout government, to train employees. Maybe it's retraining for a position elsewhere?

MS. DEAN: Well, I would have to look at that because there are different ways that employees can access training, so we have the Corporate Learning Centre and we provide training for PSC, we provide a variety of training programs but, in particular, our leadership development training programs for three levels of management and executives. So departments, if this is a departmental training cost, they do pay for that service, so when they send people to the training courses they may also elect, for professional development reasons, to send people or bring training into their departments for department-specific purposes, so that might be part of that training cost. But we could look into that if we knew more specifically what line item you were looking at.

MR. MACMASTER: Okay, perhaps that's something we could put in writing to you and try to clarify a little better to make it easier for you.

Just keeping with training, I know there's a nice benefit in government where people can get their master's, say an MBA or an MPA. Do we know how much the government spends on education costs each year? Do you have a rough idea?

MS. DEAN: It would be rolled into an overall training number. We can see if that is actually specified but that is something that would be done department by department.

MR. MACMASTER: Right, so you wouldn't have that information.

MS. DEAN: I would have a number for training but I may not know specifically, but we can look into that one, too, for you.

MR. MACMASTER: Okay, that would be good. Also, travel costs, because I know every employee in government can travel, they might go to a conference or something like that. I'd be curious to know what the amount is in travel.

MS. DEAN: Related to training?

MR. MACMASTER: Actually, that's a good point because you might not have access to that information, but I'm trying to determine how much money is spent each year on travel by employees in government.

MS. DEAN: We could see what we could do to find that out.

MR. MACMASTER: Yes, maybe there's somebody who works in the finance side who could figure out that number. Do you have measures of quality for the service being delivered in government?

[10:35 a.m. Ms. Diana Whalen resumed the Chair.]

MS. DEAN: In terms of overall services, some departments do. I would suggest that Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations would have some measures related to quality. Certainly as we go forward the employee survey results will not be the only thing that we will be looking at to measure our service, because as a service provider to departments we are going to be getting into client satisfaction measures and quality measures for the services that the Public Service provides to its clients, so that is an area that we will be looking to develop.

MR. MACMASTER: Thank you. Oftentimes in our constituency offices we get calls because somebody did not like the answer they got, and that might not necessarily be linked to the quality of service, but I'm glad to hear that you're looking at customer satisfaction because there are sometimes when people get frustrated trying to get something in government, to get a service, and some are easier than others. In Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations they might have a wait-times list or something like that if somebody is going in to get a driver's licence and that may be very different than, say, somebody trying to get a housing grant or something like that. Are there any measures that you have in place for cost of service delivery? Do you keep track of how much it costs to deliver a program to see if there's . . .

MS. DEAN: The business areas would have the cost to deliver programming, and as we look at our own organization as a business delivering service, that's something that we will be conscious of as well. We're certainly looking at our ratio of the number of PSC employees to employees and looking at how that measures compared to other organizations that deliver HR service, and cost to deliver HR service is part of our analysis going forward. I would expect that other departments may be looking at that, as well, themselves.

MR. MACMASTER: Sure. One area I've looked at in the past is user fees. You put a user fee on a service from government and we very often don't know how much it costs to deliver the service, so I guess that's kind of what I was trying to get at there, too, if we have ways to determine the HR cost within delivering a particular service in government. But we don't really have areas to track that level of detail, I guess.

MS. DEAN: Not yet, but that's not to say it isn't something that we would be looking at in the future.

MR. MACMASTER: Have there been examples in government where you've been able to deliver services more cost efficiently?

MS. DEAN: I'm sure there are lots of examples throughout government on that one.

MR. MACMASTER: It's not something that you're seeing every day probably . . .

MS. DEAN: I can't speak for the service delivery in the different departments, but I can tell you it's something that we at PSC are looking at because we recognize that there's an opportunity to be more efficient in the delivery of our own service. Actually, it reminds me, we did look at how the cost of our service compared to other jurisdictions as we were analyzing our own operations and service delivery model. We've seen that we are pretty efficient right now so we're working to continue to do that and hopefully improve.

MADAM CHAIRMAN: Mr. MacMaster, I'm afraid your time is over as well. We will turn the questioning over to Mr. Epstein for the NDP.

MR. HOWARD EPSTEIN: Thank you. You were asked earlier about seasonal employees. Did I understand you to say that the FTE numbers that we have seen include seasonal employees?

MS. DEAN: Yes.

MR. EPSTEIN: Would it include casuals as well?

MS. DEAN: Yes.

MR. EPSTEIN: Okay, so it includes everybody.

MS. DEAN: Everybody.

MR. EPSTEIN: Okay, that's fine. Can I just ask how the seasonal employees figure in, in terms of computation?

MS. DEAN: You mean how many of them would be . . .

MR. EPSTEIN: I'll get to that in a minute, but I think what I meant was this, and I'll try to illustrate it. If there are nine people who work for four months over the summer, that's a third of a year, nine people working for four months would be three FTEs, is that how it's computed?

MS. DEAN: Yes, it's annualized. So an FTE may be more than one person; it's not one-for-one necessarily - but having said that, the majority of FTEs is one person in a full-time job.

MR. EPSTEIN: Of course, yes. Well that's my next point, where we're going. So let's start with the seasonal employees - can you tell us numbers or percentages of the FTEs that would be made up of seasonal employees?

MS. DEAN: I can absolutely get that for you.

MR. EPSTEIN: Have you any kind of approximate estimate in your head at the moment - is it in the range of 10 per cent, is it in the range of 20 per cent?

MS. DEAN: I'm thinking it is 10 per cent, but I don't want you to hold me to that because I wouldn't want to mislead you. I can get that for you from staff.

MR. EPSTEIN: Okay, and again what I'm wondering is about longitudinal measures and I'm wondering whether, over the last decade, those numbers fluctuate or whether it is your understanding that they are more or less stable?

MS. DEAN: We did, and I guess to your point, we've had seasonal in place for a number of years and bringing them into the civil service hasn't necessarily changed the number of them, but we track them now as part of the civil service.

MR. EPSTEIN: Was there a time when they weren't tracked as part of the civil service?

MS. DEAN: They were tracked but, again, they are counted now in our FTE number - prior to that they wouldn't necessarily have been in our FTE number.

MR. EPSTEIN: Do you remember when that happened?

MS. DEAN: When the casual conversion occurred, which was in 2007.

MR. EPSTEIN: Okay, can you explain what the casual conversion is?

MS. DEAN: I'm sorry, that was when we had seasonal casual employees who were employed by government but they were brought into the civil service. So they were brought into the bargaining unit and they became part of the civil service, which speaks to the corresponding increase in FTEs over that period, as we brought them in and they were counted as civil servants.

MR. EPSTEIN: Can you explain the difference between a seasonal and a casual and a permanent employee, say, if that's the correct third term to use?

MR. ADAMS: Obviously perms are people who have full-time employment on an ongoing basis; seasonal is someone who, season over season, has the same employment engagement, but for a finite period of time; and a casual is someone who comes in for a finite period of time but isn't guaranteed that position year over year. So our seasonal would be like our forest techs, or fire crews, or visitor information centre people who have a job that they come to for a period each year and it's there for them to come back to - casuals don't have that same situation.

MR. EPSTEIN: Are there rules around entitlement to positions or to conversion from one category to the other?

MR. ADAMS: Yes.

MR. EPSTEIN: Can you explain what those are?

MR. ADAMS: Not off the top of my head - we can endeavour to provide it to you. It is in the collective agreement. There are certain thresholds - so many weeks you can change from temp to term to perm, but again that's not my side of the ship. Sorry, it's not my area of the department. That would be staff relations who would know that off the top of their heads, I just don't.

MS. DEAN: But certainly there are provisions in place that we adhere to as part of the bargaining unit around the terms of those employees.

MR. ADAMS: Yes there are, absolutely.

MR. EPSTEIN: Generally how long does one have to be an employee before a position becomes a permanent position?

MR. ADAMS: Permanency is determined in a different fashion - you are a permanent employee based upon a definition of the position; you can come into a permanent position on day one if it's a permanent position.

MR. EPSTEIN: Yes. I think what I was asking was for positions that didn't start out as permanent positions - is there a time trigger that comes into play or not?

MR. ADAMS: Jocelyn, do you have that threshold? Is it - how many weeks?

MADAM CHAIRMAN: That won't be recorded unless you repeat it or she comes to the table.

MS. DEAN: Sorry. That is articulated in the collective agreement, so there are terms and numbers of seasons before they turn into term positions and, again, I can get that to you.

MR. EPSTEIN: Okay, and just to summarize what I was asking about, I was asking if you could provide some longitudinal information about the percentage of FTEs who are seasonal and the same data perhaps for those who are casual, out of the total of the FTEs that we're looking at. That would be very helpful, thank you very much.

I'm now going to turn it over to my colleague, the member for Cumberland North.

MADAM CHAIRMAN: Mr. Skabar.

MR. SKABAR: Thanks very much. I have just a couple of little questions to follow up on something that came up earlier. Are we expecting any revisions in mandate in order to achieve the reductions - revisions in mandate by any line departments - or are some services that are currently being delivered just not going to be there?

MS. DEAN: Again, I can't speak to that specifically, I think it depends on individual departments, but in general terms I don't think you would see huge changes in departmental mandates. Obviously, recently, some departments have been brought together to achieve better alignment in their functions and I think those departments would be looking at how that integration is going to happen. In terms of across-the-board changes to mandates, I'm not aware of anything significant.

MR. SKABAR: Just working better, doing more with less, is the plan then?

MS. DEAN: I think it's working better, being very strategic, being more efficient and looking for opportunities to even improve service delivery.

MR. SKABAR: When you were giving out the distribution of public servants per region or per area, I'm slightly concerned that this might involve some more centralization and taking public servants out of rural areas and moving them into HRM, or trying to get a greater economy of scale with people there. I guess I answered my own question - that would be part of the department's decision to do so, or do you have any . . .

MS. DEAN: It is, but I'm not aware of any move to do that. I think that government is committed to making sure that employment remains in the rural areas. There may be opportunities for co-location or a better way to collaborate to deliver service, but I don't see a move to centralize in HRM.

MR. SKABAR: I was thinking less of centralization than if in a department like Community Services, or whatever, when they're sharing services, that an employee might need to be moved from Amherst to Truro or something like that because it still covers the same area, that's moving them into the centre and then the periphery of the smaller communities would have fewer public servants in them compared to the larger centres.

MS. DEAN: Again, I'm not aware of anything at this point. But as you did indicate, departments would obviously be looking at various options if they needed to, but I'm not aware of that right now.

MR. SKABAR: Okay, thank you.

MADAM CHAIRMAN: Mr. MacKinnon, your turn.

MR. MACKINNON: Thank you very much. One last question, it's my understanding that there is an important review taking place by the Public Service Commission now in relation to processes and also the delivery of services. I know that the whole thrust is to streamline and create efficiencies. Having said that, could you just elaborate a little on that review and perhaps in the process tell us the last time such an in-depth review has taken place in this province?

MS. DEAN: Having been with the Public Service Commission for just over a year and with government, I think it's going on 10 years, I'm not aware of any prior, significant review of the Public Service Commission. I know that in the past we have looked at the need for renewal of the Public Service, the Public Service Commission, and that a significant amount of work has been done. What we need to do now is to build on that and move forward and really transform our organization.

That means looking at, as I said earlier, every process to see if there are ways that we can streamline, do it more efficiently and perhaps use technology, as well, to make it easier for people to access information about policies and access our services. Also, keeping in mind that we brought all the corporate service units - and there are seven of them throughout government - in under one roof with the Public Service Commission, it means that we need to work to look at those organizations and see how we can better function as one Public Service Commission rather than seven different corporate service units.

If you think about an example where recruitment, for lack of a better example, is done in every single corporate service unit, you can see that there are processes in every single one of those and maybe there's an opportunity to take a look at that and do it a little differently, to be more efficient or more effective.

The same thing, as an example, with training - training programs are done in every single corporate service unit and at the centre at the Public Service Commission, so there's an opportunity to look at how we might do that better, to deliver better service to our clients. So that is our focus for the next two to three years.

MR. MACKINNON: Thank you very much. We're trying to share here so I'm going to bounce back to the member for Halifax Chebucto.

MADAM CHAIRMAN: Mr. Epstein.

MR. EPSTEIN: Well, thank you, I'm happy to get the chance to ask more questions. I wanted to pick up on a point that my colleague from Cumberland started to ask about earlier, which had to do with diversity inside the broad civil service. It seemed to me there are a number of indicators out there in some of the statistics that we have - gender balance, I guess, being one of them. In addition to that, of course, is representation from



those who self-identify as coming from an Aboriginal background or an African Nova Scotian background or having a disability.

I see that the numbers for gender are pretty much in balance. In fact, there's a slightly larger number, of course, of female members in the civil service, it's established at 52-48 in terms of gender balance. I wonder though - those are overall numbers - whether there's a breakdown in terms of managerial and non-managerial positions, do you have numbers for that?

MS. DEAN: I can get those, I don't have them with me but we can break that down. One of the things that I have noted, and I did see that recently, was that women moving into the more senior ranks is improving, which is positive movement.

MR. EPSTEIN: I'd certainly be interested to see that. I note that when it comes to self-identified Aboriginal persons, we're showing numbers less than one per cent, sort of at about 0.8 per cent - well, in fact, less than that - 0.08 per cent, so this looks to be very tiny and not really even seriously in accord with the numbers of Aboriginal persons in the provincial population, which I think is perhaps around 2 per cent or 2.5 per cent now. I'm wondering about the steps that are taken in order to try to advance those numbers, can you tell us about that.

MS. DEAN: We do have diversity plans and every department prepares a plan, an employment equity plan and diversity plan, to assist in the overall goal of improving diversity within the Public Service.

The other piece about this, because the numbers are self-identified, it could be higher, the representation could be higher. I'm not suggesting that it is a lot higher but it is difficult because you're asking for people to self-identify in all of these categories: disability, African Nova Scotians, racially-visible and Aboriginal persons.

What we do know is that some of the efforts that we've made - we have a diversity round table which helps us identify strategies, as well, to try to increase representation within the Public Service. We work with the Office of Aboriginal Affairs, as well as African Nova Scotian Affairs, Acadian Affairs, to see if there are some specific strategies that we can take to either recruit more people in or remove any barriers that may be perceived for people who are applying to government, who are in government, so that we can do a better job of increasing our diversity.

MR. EPSTEIN: Do I have a minute?

MADAM CHAIRMAN: A minute.

MR. EPSTEIN: Okay, thank you. One of the other numbers I noticed was that years of service that people have in by the time they retire seems to be fairly substantial, that is

they seem to have at least 25, 27 years often before they take retirement. I'm wondering if these numbers indicate that for most of those who are civil servants they regard life in the civil service as a lifetime career or whether there's a lot of turnover. Do you monitor - you must track that, do you?

MS. DEAN: We track turnover, definitely, because that obviously is an indicator of a lot of things. It's interesting that the people who joined government earlier, who are retiring with the longer years of service, yes, very much have had a career in the civil service, but what we're finding now is that we're hiring people in at mid-career. So we would expect that when they go they may not have that level of service when they retire. We are bringing people in now at different points in their careers, so I don't think it's the same where you come into government and you're staying for your full career.

People do move around a lot more than they did in the past; they are looking for different employment opportunities. We're going to see changes in that in the future as we bring people in at different points.

MADAM CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Mr. Epstein, the time has elapsed. I would like to give you a couple of minutes if you'd like, Ms. Dean, to do a summation or just a final comment.

MS. DEAN: Again, I would like to thank you all very much for having me here. It has been a great opportunity, I think, for us to talk about what the Public Service Commission's role is in supporting departments, particularly as we look to support government in living within its means and achieving the goal of reducing the size of the civil service by 2013. We're certainly happy to follow up on many of the questions that you've had and provide you with the information you're looking for in a timely manner. Again, thank you to my staff, as well, for being here and for the support that they've provided in preparation for this.

MADAM CHAIRMAN: Thank you and we appreciate you all being here today, as well, and I think we've all learned a lot. We certainly have a long list of items that have been asked for. Usually I mention them and I'm not going to do that today because it's such a long list, but be assured that our clerk has it and we'll send that along to you. I know your staff have taken some notes, as well, and I think it is good to have a time frame of perhaps the four weeks that was asked for by Mr. MacMaster, just because there is so much. We do thank you again.

On the committee business, we don't have any new business before us, but you will find a list of the upcoming items that were agreed upon by our Agenda and Procedures Subcommittee and then voted on by the members in the last couple of weeks. I want to thank our clerk for getting those set up. We only have two weeks that are going to be open that she couldn't book and I think with the House sitting, we'll all be glad to have those

weeks as a bit of a break during the next two months. Thank you very much - a motion to adjourn.

MR. MACKINNON: So moved.

MADAM CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much, Mr. MacKinnon.

We are adjourned.

[The committee adjourned at 10:57 a.m.]