

Second Session - Fortieth Legislature

of the

Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

Standing Committee

on

Crown Corporations

*Chairperson
Mr. Clarence Pettersen
Constituency of Flin Flon*

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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Fortieth Legislature

Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
ALLAN, Nancy	St. Vital	NDP
ALLUM, James, Hon.	Fort Garry-Riverview	NDP
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ASHTON, Steve, Hon.	Thompson	NDP
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HOWARD, Jennifer, Hon.	Fort Rouge	NDP
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KOSTYSHYN, Ron, Hon.	Swan River	NDP
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MACKINTOSH, Gord, Hon.	St. Johns	NDP
MALOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	NDP
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<i>Vacant</i>	Morris	

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA
THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON CROWN CORPORATIONS

Wednesday, October 23, 2013

TIME – 6 p.m.

LOCATION – Winnipeg, Manitoba

**CHAIRPERSON – Mr. Clarence Pettersen
(Flin Flon)**

**VICE-CHAIRPERSON – Mr. Drew Caldwell
(Brandon East)**

ATTENDANCE – 11 QUORUM – 6

Members of the Committee present:

*Hon. Mses. Braun, Howard, Marcelino,
Hon. Mr. Robinson*

*Messrs. Briese, Caldwell, Dewar, Pettersen,
Mrs. Rowat, Messrs. Schuler, Wishart*

APPEARING:

Hon. Jon Gerrard, MLA for River Heights

*Mr. Michael Werier, Chairperson of the Board,
Workers Compensation Board*

*Mr. Winston Maharaj, President and Chief
Executive Officer, Workers Compensation Board*

MATTERS UNDER CONSIDERATION:

*Annual Report of the Workers Compensation
Board for the year ending December 31, 2011*

*Annual Report of the Workers Compensation
Board for the year ending December 31, 2012*

*Annual Report of the Appeal Commission and
Medical Review Panel for the year ending
December 31, 2010*

*Annual Report of the Appeal Commission and
Medical Review Panel for the year ending
December 31, 2011*

*Annual Report of the Appeal Commission and
Medical Review Panel for the year ending
December 31, 2012*

*Workers Compensation Board 2011-2015
Five Year Plan*

*Workers Compensation Board 2012-2016
Five Year Plan*

*Workers Compensation Board 2013-2017
Five Year Plan*

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Clerk Assistant (Mr. Andrea Signorelli): Good evening. Will the Standing Committee on Crown Corporations please come to order.

Before the committee can proceed with the business before it, it must elect a new Chairperson. Are there any nominations for this position?

Mr. Gregory Dewar (Selkirk): I nominate Mr. Pettersen, Flin Flon.

Clerk Assistant: Mr. Pettersen, Flin Flon, has been nominated. Are there any other nominations?

Hearing no other nominations, Mr. Pettersen, will you please take the Chair.

Mr. Chairperson: Our next item of business is the election of the Vice-Chairman–Chairperson. Are there any nominations?

Mr. Dewar: I nominate Mr. Caldwell.

Mr. Chairperson: Mr. Caldwell has been nominated. Are there any other nominations?

Hearing no other nominations, Mr. Caldwell is elected Vice-Chairperson.

This meeting has been called to consider the following reports: Annual Report of the Workers Compensation Board for the year ending December 31st, 2011; Annual Report of the Workers Compensation Board for the year ending December 31st, 2012; Annual Report of the Appeal Commission and Medical Review Panel for the year ending December 31st, 2010; Annual Report of the Appeal Commission and Medical Review Panel for the year ending December 31st, 2011; Annual Report of the Appeal Commission and Medical Review Panel for the year ending December 31st, 2012; the Workers Compensation Board 2011-2015 Five Year Plan; the Workers Compensation Board 2012-2016 Five Year Plan; the Workers Compensation Board 2013-2017 Five Year Plan.

Before we get started, are there any suggestions from the committee as to how long we should sit this evening?

An Honourable Member: Until we're done.

Mr. Chairperson: Until we're done.

Mrs. Leanne Rowat (Riding Mountain): I would say midnight, but likely sooner.

Mr. Chairperson: Okay. Good? Sounds good. Yes?

An Honourable Member: Revisit at eight to see where we're at.

Mr. Chairperson: I'd like to—or Honourable Jen Howard, I'd like to recognize you. Go ahead.

Hon. Jennifer Howard (Minister of Finance): Why don't we revisit at eight? I'm happy to stay 'til midnight, but let's see where we got to by eight.

Mr. Chairperson: Okay. Are there any suggestions as to the order in which we should consider the reports?

Does the honourable minister wish to—sorry. Now we have Mr. Schuler.

Mr. Ron Schuler (St. Paul): Yes, thank you very much, Mr. Chair. And if it would be the will of the committee, could we just have our questioning as a global questioning and at the end, then, we would look at the individual reports.

Mr. Chairperson: Yes? *[Agreed]*

Does the honourable minister wish to make an opening statement and would she please introduce the officials in attendance?

Hon. Erna Braun (Minister charged with the administration of The Workers Compensation Act): Good evening. It's my pleasure to appear before this committee in my brand new role as Minister responsible for the Workers Compensation Board.

I'm very pleased to be here this evening and with the chairperson of the WCB, Mr. Michael Werier; its president and CEO, Mr. Winston Maharaj; and members of the executive team.

I begin my involvement with the WCB at this very exciting time: 2012 saw a number of reviews of the health and safety system occur; Manitoba appointed its first Chief Prevention Officer, Don Hurst; and earlier this year my

predecessor, the Honourable Jennifer Howard, released a groundbreaking five-year plan for workplace injury and illness prevention. I know that the WCB is working very closely with Workplace Safety and Health branch to bring the goals and objectives of the five-year plan to fruition.

Even though I know there have been many advances in workplace safety over the last several years with significant reductions in workplace injury rate, there remains much work to be done. I know that the WCB is committed to further building Manitoba's workplace safety and health culture, and I look forward to seeing those plans take shape over the upcoming months and years.

Of course, prevention is a very important part of the WCB mandate, and, indeed, is enshrined in The Workers Compensation Act. The WCB also devotes considerable effort to helping injured workers recover and return to employment in a safe and appropriate way. It has an essential role in caring for those who are injured at work, helping ensure they continue to receive an income to support their families and in helping them return to health and work safely.

I know that service to injured workers and employers is central to the WCB's mandate, and I was pleased to be advised about the importance the WCB places on excellent service and continuous improvement. I'm very happy to begin working with the WCB on its important mandate and at this time I would like to thank Mr. Werier, Mr. Maharaj and the executive team for being here with me today.

I understand that Mr. Werier has some remarks he would like to make.

Mr. Chairperson: We thank the honourable minister.

Does the critic for the official opposition have an opening statement? *[interjection]* Does the critic for the official opposition have an opening statement?

Mrs. Rowat: I do.

Mr. Chairperson: Okay. Go ahead.

Mrs. Rowat: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I'll be very brief because I'm looking forward to the presentation this evening and the opportunity to ask some questions of the minister as well as WCB board.

So I want to first congratulate the minister on her new role. I've had the opportunity to work with the minister in other projects and I think you're very well

qualified and I look forward to working with you as we go forward.

I want to thank the staff for being here today. It's very important that we get to know what workers compensation has been up to over the last year or so. I'm the new critic, so I'm going to be learning a lot. I'm seated with a former critic, so I know that he'll be giving me some insight. But I appreciate you taking the time this evening to join us.

I'd like to thank my colleagues for joining the table tonight because we know that we are looking forward to the opportunity to pose some questions to the minister and to the Workers Compensation Board on behalf of constituents and Manitobans abroad.

* (18:10)

We look forward to bringing up key issues, and this committee gives us an opportunity to ensure that there is an accountability and a transparency in the legislative process, especially when you consider that many Manitobans who have had the opportunity to engage with the work of the Workers Compensation Board.

So, with these few remarks, I'm happy to turn it back to the Chair and to proceed through this evening's committee.

Mr. Chairperson: We thank the member.

Do the representatives from the Workers Compensation Board wish to make an opening statement?

Mr. Michael Werier (Chairperson of the Board, Workers Compensation Board): Yes, I'll make a brief opening statement.

Mr. Chairperson: Thank you, Mr. Werier.

Mr. Werier: Thank you. Good evening to everyone, and thank you for all be—for you being here to this evening.

First of all, I just want to say to the new minister we look forward to working with her in the work that we do and, as well, say that we certainly enjoyed working with the previous minister, Minister Howard, and we wish her well in all her future endeavours.

Just a few brief comments. The board, which I represent, oversees the decision making in key policy areas. Ultimately, our goal is to help injured workers, provide them with compensation and ensure that they are able to return to work in a meaningful

way. We, as well, ensure the sound investment of funds which are entrusted to us to ensure the overall operation of the organization and we set the strategic direction of the Workers Compensation Board.

As most of you know, we—our board is a tripartite board. We have representatives from organized labour, from the employer community, public interest representatives and an independent chairperson, and we hear divergent views in the course of doing our work. Our stakeholders often have different viewpoints on issues. But it's a testament, I think, to the professionalism and dedication of our board that they strive to collaborate, achieve common goals and reach a consensus on issues.

I'm just going to take a moment to highlight some of the issues that arose during 2011 and 2012 which are dealt with in our annual reports which are under consideration this evening.

We base our work on four themes, and they're set out in the reports, that being prevention, recovery, service and stewardship. On the prevention front, in 2011 and 2012 we saw the continuation of the SAFE Work initiative with a number of campaigns aimed at reducing injuries and building a workplace safety and health culture in the province. While our time-loss injury rate was essentially flat in 2011 and 2012, over the longer term we've seen a significant decrease in the time-loss injury rate. From 2000 we've seen approximately a 41 per cent decrease.

We look forward in implementing Manitoba's Five-Year Plan for Workplace Injury and Illness Prevention that was released by Minister Howard in April 2013. A project which we launched in 2011 aimed at designing the future state of injury prevention in Manitoba contributed to the development of that plan. Services at the core of what we do in terms of serving injured workers—and these efforts have included the opening of a new regional office in Brandon to serve Brandon and the Parkland region, the launch of an online employer registration request system and making WCB information and assistance available in a wider range of languages.

Another one of our key themes is stewardship. Despite lower investment returns in 2011 which affected workers compensation boards across the country, we finished 2012 in a very sound financial position with an operating surplus of \$91 million and a funding ratio of 126.6 per cent. This financial and fiscal management has allowed us to lower the

premium rate from \$1.60 to \$1.50 per a hundred dollars of assessable payroll, and we've been able to maintain that rate in 2012 and it kept our average assessment rate the second lowest in the country for those two time frames.

I'd like to thank the contribution of all our stakeholder groups in helping achieve our goals. We greatly value the input from our stakeholders and, in fact, we make a very conscious effort to ensure online—ongoing, rather—collaboration with our stakeholder groups.

As well, I'd like to publicly acknowledge our front-line staff, the executive and the administration who, of course, carry out the day-to-day workings of our organization, senior staff that are seated behind Winston and I. There is a long list of long-serving staff at the WCB. On an annual basis, I sign long-service certificates and it always strikes me as to how many people we've had working at the WCB basically for their entire working lives. They're a dedicated, hard-working group and I'd like to publicly acknowledge the contribution they make to the work that we do in the province, and in some small way that would've contributed to the WCB being recognized as one of Manitoba's top 25 employers the last two years.

Just in closing, I look forward to the discussion this evening and hope we can provide you with information and answers that will help you in your work.

Thank you very much.

Mr. Chairperson: Thank you.

The floor is now open for questions.

Mrs. Rowat: As a new critic for this area, I have some—just some very basic questions with regard to board governance and just wanting to know a little bit more about the Workers Compensation Board and how you would evaluate board members. I'm just wanting to know, you know, how are the evaluations done, and by whom.

Mr. Winston Maharaj (President and Chief Executive Officer, Workers Compensation Board): So we do run an evaluation process, a self-assessment for the board, and we've actually just gone through that process recently where the board has assessed themselves, and previous to that we also had Brown Governance undertake a governance assessment process of the board. And—I think it's a three-year cycle—we run a more in-depth evaluation

process which relates to the board governance. And that is not a self-assessment. That's actually having an external vendor come in and do a review and look at our—evaluate the board's performance.

Mrs. Rowat: Can you indicate to me where you are on the three-year cycle presently, and, actually, who does your evaluation or assessment? Is it a contract of some sort or—

Mr. Chairperson: Mr. Maharaj.

Mr. Maharaj: So we just actually completed an internal self-assessment, so this year would have been the end of one cycle. We will actually be undertaking an external vendor to do the review in the next, and that would likely be 2015. So it—we don't have an assigned vendor on record, so we would go out at that point in time and do an RFP and look for an appropriate vendor to do that.

Mrs. Rowat: So that would—there would be a tender process for that.

Can you indicate to me what qualifications and credentials are required for a board appointment? I'm just curious to see how you determine that.

Mr. Werier: The board is, of course, appointed by order-in-council based on consultations that are had with the various groups representing employers and labour and public interest. So the board has developed a list of competencies that the board should possess on a collective basis, and we review that list annually, and so we attempt to have a cross-section of skill sets and qualities that people bring to the board.

In addition, the legislation establishing the Workers Compensation Board provides for appointing external members to certain committees, and, with that in mind, we've—we have one external member on our audit committee and three external members on our investment and finance committee, and those are selected after publicly advertising and then going through a selection process and ultimately having a board appoint them. They're a board appointment rather than a order-in-council appointment.

Mrs. Rowat: What is the general code of conduct or standards of practice that are in place for board members? Do you have—can you outline for me in a general sense what that would be? Like, you know, I'm not looking for extreme detail but I would like to get a sense of what that would look like.

* (18:20)

Mr. Werier: We have a board bylaw and conflict of interest which sets out parameters for recognizing and avoiding potential conflict, including a declaration of potential conflicts and recusal from board business when a conflict might arise. We have an annual conflict of interest declaration that we sign. There's also annual training on a conduct code and conflict of interest which is conducted by our general counsel and corporate secretary as part of our overall training and development plan, and we have ongoing training on governance through an annual governance education and training plan. There are updates provided by our corporate secretary on an ongoing basis. Our board members also attend sessions such as a Deloitte director series, and there are governor sessions that are offered by the Association of Workers Compensation Boards of Canada where various of our board members attend and have sessions which includes training on financial literacy, risk assessment, governance and investments.

Mrs. Rowat: Thank you, Mr. Werier. So would any of those sessions be mandatory? Is there, you know, an expectation that they would be asked to attend these sessions and to what level?

Mr. Werier: There is an expectation that board members will seek out and attend training in areas where they need or feel that they could use that training, and we rotate—we don't have all our board go to, for example, a session that would be out of town. So we rotate, and given the fact that we're a small board in number, all of the members do have the opportunity and do take advantage of the opportunity to attend these sessions.

Mrs. Rowat: Under what circumstances would a board member be removed from their capacity as a director of the board? *[interjection]*

Mr. Chairperson: Mr. Weir—

Mr. Werier: Sorry. They are order-in-council appointments, so ultimately they would continue until reappointed or, I suppose, if the circumstance arose that it was determined that their appointment would be revoked. Fortunately, we haven't—I haven't had to experience that in the course of my tenure over four and a half years. So I guess if circumstances arose which were of such a magnitude that warranted that, I guess it would have to be looked on in a case-by-case basis.

Mrs. Rowat: So if a situation should arise that is serious, would the board then approach the minister

with the concerns or what would the process be to deal with a situation such as that?

Mr. Werier: I'm advised that under one of our bylaws it provides that the—if any director breaches a provision of the bylaw, the board can take such action as they might deem appropriate, including recommending to the Lieutenant Governor-in-Council that the director be disqualified from holding office. So that's a specific provision which deals with the board taking action and making a recommendation to the Lieutenant Governor-in-Council. Other than that specific situation, the best I can state for the record would be that we would have to look at an individual situation and then determine whether such a recommendation would be made on the advice of counsel or our corporate secretary and any other advice that we might seek before making such a recommendation to the minister.

Mrs. Rowat: One further question with regard to board elections and activities. You had indicated that in your four and a half years as chair that you haven't come across a situation where that process has had to take place. Are you familiar or aware of any situations that have taken place in the past and, if so, for what reason for dismissal or removal of an individual from a board?

Mr. Werier: No, I'm not.

Mr. Schuler: The Workers Compensation Board, of course, is a big part of Manitoba, as it is across North America, and it's important not just to businesses but to workers. It's an important facet of our community, and I think all of us would agree that it's important that strong boards be in place and those individuals that are on the boards be held to a higher standing, perhaps, than others. It's important that we have individuals on the board that represent various interests, that represent the workers and the businesses to the best of their ability.

Now, I'm sure the corporation is aware that one of the board members, Mr. Bob Dewar, who was appointed as a worker representative and the director of operations for the Manitoba Government and General Employees' Union, has recently been suspended by his workplace because of an internal HR matter that Mr. Dewar's workplace felt serious.

My question to the corporation is: Does the corporation feel that Mr. Dewar's suspension from his professional activities warrants a similar

suspension from his Workers Compensation Board-related activities?

Ms. Braun: That is an issue—I'm not aware of any details, but that is certainly an issue between those parties, and that doesn't impact on the current board that he sits on.

Mr. Schuler: And further to that, to the corporation and to the minister, have you or anyone from the Workers Compensation Board made contact with the MGEU to discern the nature of the internal HR matter that would cause for Mr. Dewar's suspension?

Ms. Braun: As I say, I'm not aware of anything, and, certainly, it's an issue between those two parties.

Mr. Schuler: And we have to be careful here because, you know, ignorance is bliss and we want to be careful that we don't—you know, don't know, don't tell perhaps isn't the best policy. The Workers Compensation Board is very important to this province; it's very important to this province. It's important work that's being done, and I think the board should be held as an example of what's good and best about this province. And we just want to be very clear if the minister has or is it in her opinion, as the MGEU is, that Mr. Dewar needs to be suspended from his duties, and, if not, why has the minister felt that that wasn't necessary?

Ms. Braun: As I indicated earlier, it's an issue that's being dealt with between those two parties and doesn't have an impact on this board.

Mr. Schuler: In the board of directors and committees listing of the 2011 workers—WCB annual report, Robert Dewar is listed as a worker representative. If he is no longer—have the confidence of the MGEU, how can he sit on the board as a workers' representative?

Ms. Braun: As was indicated earlier, all positions are appointed by order-in-council. Consultations were held with the different groups in terms of nominees from those groups for appointments.

Mr. Schuler: Has the minister consulted with or been approached by the MGEU in regard to Mr. Dewar, and that, seeing as they do—no longer have confidence in him as an employee, seeing as they've suspended him, that perhaps they no longer have confidence in him as a representative, a worker representative, on the WCB board of directors?

Ms. Braun: No conversations have been held. I have not been contacted by MGEU.

Mr. Schuler: Would the minister wish to comment—or commit, rather, to follow up on the professional activities of Mr. Dewar and to examine whether or not his work with the WCB has been compromised in any way, and could the minister get back to this committee in writing on that?

Ms. Braun: My position would be at this point that the parties are dealing with that issue, and at this point it has no impact on this board.

* (18:30)

Mr. Schuler: And, again, we don't necessarily want to get into a debate at committee, but it's very clear if the committee would look at the WCB 2012 annual report. I mean, it's on the first few pages, page 10 to be exact. The second individual listed as a board of director is Robert Dewar, and he's listed as a worker representative. And as we know, he actually is no longer a worker representative. He's been suspended from his place of work—who actually had nominated him as a worker representative—and that the minister nor the corporation feels that there's an issue with that is mildly concerning to say the least.

On behalf of the committee and I'm sure on behalf of most Manitobans, we would like to one more time ask the minister if she would look into this instance and perhaps consult with MGEU what their feelings are. Again, we don't want to talk about personal issues at committee, certainly not on the record, but the minister does have that opportunity to do it, and would she endeavour to speak to the MGEU to see that perhaps there could be something that would make it difficult for Mr. Dewar to continue on the board and then deal appropriately. Could she at least commit to that?

Ms. Howard: Yes, maybe I can help clarify how appointments are made for Mr. Schuler. Appointments to the board for worker representatives are actually made in consultation with the Manitoba Federation of Labour. The Manitoba Federation of Labour consults with their members and they forward names to the minister's office. And so if, in the future, there were need for new representatives for the work—for workers, those consultations would be held with the Manitoba Federation of Labour.

Mr. Schuler: And has the minister spoken to the Federation of Labour—Manitoba Federation of Labour, and asked them if they still have confidence in Mr. Dewar, seeing as he was suspended from the MGEU?

Ms. Braun: No, I have not spoken with the MFL.

Mr. Schuler: Can the minister, then, endeavour to speaking to them to see if they still have confidence in Mr. Dewar, seeing as he was suspended by the MGEU?

Ms. Braun: I would expect that the MGEU has a process that they are following, and until such a point that we hear that there's resolution or whatever, I believe that is an issue between those two parties.

Mr. Schuler: My question is to the chairperson of the Workers Compensation Board. Does he feel comfortable with an individual on the board as a workers' representative who has been suspended as a workers' representative from his place of work on the board of directors?

Mr. Werier: I reiterate what the minister and the past minister have said, that the Federation of Labour is the group that, I understand, consults with the minister on appointments with respect to individuals being able to continue. I'm not—I have no personal knowledge of what is going on other than what I've read in the paper, and I assume that once due process has taken place we'll have more information and the Federation of Labour will make known their views.

Mr. Schuler: My question is to the president and CEO, Mr. Maharaj. Does he feel comfortable with an individual on the board of directors, who is supposed to be as a worker representative, who's been suspended from his place of employment as a workers representative is still acting on the board of directors? Is he comfortable with that?

Mr. Maharaj: I would repeat again what the chair and minister has said in that the Manitoba Federation of Labour is dealing with the issues at hand. I have no knowledge either of the issues other than what is—I've read in the paper. So I would hope that due process would be followed, and at that point the Manitoba Federation of Labour certainly would contact the minister or ourselves if there's more information or action to be taken.

Mr. Schuler: And, again, one of the reasons why we hold these legislative committees is to hold the Crown corporations accountable. Crown corporations are owned by the people of Manitoba and not any political party or any one individual, and they're very important because they serve all the people and they serve the best interests of all the people, and that's very important for all of us to keep in mind. And there is one individual on the board who has a cloud over his head and, again, whether

it's the minister or the president or the CEO or the chairman, we would think that at least the corporation would be protected enough that some investigations, some inquiries would be made in regard to this individual.

I don't think any of us wants to see any kind of second-guessing or doubt about the board of directors. It's very important that we have a Crown corporation that's above reproach. And we've asked the minister, we've asked the president and the chair if they would—well, certainly the minister we've asked to look into it and we've asked other questions of the other two, to look into it and just to make sure that, you know, there isn't someone on the board that has lost the favour or lost the confidence of those that he's supposed to represent on the board. And if the minister could endeavour that she would look into that for the committee and report back to us in writing, we would appreciate that.

Ms. Braun: I think I'll use the words due process, and I think that is something that will be occurring, and at such a point in time as the MFL will be speaking with us, if there are issues, then that will be so. But, at this point, I think that there is a process in place which will be worked through, and at some point, when resolution occurs, then the MFL will be the body that will be coming forward to us.

Mrs. Rowat: I'm just following the discussion here and I guess I'd like to just put on the record and ask for comment back from the minister, the chair and the president: Have you or your deputy minister or anybody within your senior staff, including the chair and the president, received any correspondence, any emails, any type of discussion, phone discussion, with regard to Mr. Dewar's situation and how that may or may not affect his role on the WCB board?

Ms. Braun: I have received nothing. The only thing has been what has been in the Free Press. I've been out of the country, so there's been no correspondence, and, you know, as someone who's been on the job for three days, there haven't been any discussions on this. And as I said earlier, I think the due process needs to take place in terms of the issues within the—with the two parties, and as was indicated earlier by the former minister, that it's a recommendation that comes through the MFL, and they are the body that will be contacting us if anything should arise. But, at this point, no.

Mr. Schuler: Sorry, I think the question was also to the chair and the CEO. I'm sorry, I jumped the gun, if they wanted to reply to that first.

Mr. Werier: I don't have anything to add, really. I haven't spoken to anyone at Manitoba government employees union. And even if I attempted to, I could rest—you could rest assured no one's going to venture private personal personnel information to a third party if they have a matter that they're dealing with.

Mr. Maharaj: And I also have not spoken to anybody or have any additional knowledge other than what's in the paper of the circumstances.

Mr. Schuler: I'd like to move on, and I would note that several members of the board of the WCB have made monetary donations to the New Democratic Party of Manitoba, and I'd like to outline these. Interestingly enough, Mr. Bob Dewar, \$2,975; Wendy Sol, \$353.04; Robert Plohman, \$760. I would further note that several current members are past donors to the NDP, including Robert Labossiere, who donated \$575 in 2009, \$1,036 in 2010, \$793.75 in 2011.

I was wondering if the minister thinks it's appropriate that board members of the WCB are donating to the NDP given that a WCB directorship is a paid appointment or 'renumative' appointment.

Ms. Braun: I think my response would be that individuals are able to make donations to whomever or what organization that they choose to, and, you know, it's their prerogative to donate to whatever group or organization that they wish to.

* (18:40)

Mr. Schuler: It just seems odd that a group within the board seems to be fairly substantial contributors to the NDP, and I'd like to ask the minister, does the amount an individual has donated increase their likelihood of a WCB directorship?

Ms. Braun: I can't imagine that it would. In the past, I've sat on the ABCs committee and, certainly, that kind of information is never part of the discussion.

Mr. Schuler: And, again, it seems to be that there's some—this isn't quite going to a dinner, a \$2,975 donation by none other than Bob Dewar. I can understand the minister's hesitancy to remove him off the board. That's a little bit more than a break-open ticket at a NDP fundraiser or a wine and cheese event. It does look like the politicization of some members on the board. And, again, to the minister, does she not feel that that is a little bit more than just a casual donation to the NDP?

Ms. Braun: As indicated earlier, appointments are made through consultation with employer as well as

labour groups and those recommendations come forward to the minister. So, I mean, the process by which nominees are brought forward goes through the organization who wish to present nominees to sit on the board.

Mrs. Rowat: Public awareness campaigns. We've seen the government in the past, through Spirited Energy and others, see those campaigns go sideways, and so I'm just wanting to have a bit of a discussion with regard to WCB's campaign because there seems to have been a significant increase in contributions in that area. In 2007, \$41,625 was used as a budget amount for events and organizations and public awareness. In 2012, that number has tripled to \$117,354.

I just want to know if there seems to be an increased need for public awareness, you know, sponsoring events. And, I guess, what is the budget for event organization sponsorships and what is the criteria used to determine where you will allocate dollars for sponsorships on an annual basis? Is there a process?

Mr. Maharaj: So, certainly, we do provide for sponsorships, donations and promotional items, and the criteria really is to link it back to the work of WCB and the mandate. Much of that is through linking to awareness around safe work, awareness around WCB return to work, appropriate return to work, return to health and meaningful work, so we will support promotional items.

We—on the donation side, we do support primarily the United Way through the United Way campaign, and that is also something that our employees participate in. So much of the support through that is also for the culture of the organization as well, so it's a kind of a combined approach.

So there is a criteria and, certainly, we are very transparent about all of our donations, sponsorships and promotions. It is available on the Internet and we have a criteria that we assess each and every request.

Mrs. Rowat: Thank you for that response.

One question I have is with regard to Downtown BIZ. There was a significant contribution, \$30,000, to Downtown BIZ. When you're talking about promotion, et cetera, that one jumps out as a fairly large contribution. Could you explain to me what exactly that money was used for?

Mr. Maharaj: Certainly. So the Downtown BIZ is actually—it's twofold. Firstly, as a Crown corporation,

we do not pay our share towards the Downtown BIZ that all other businesses in the downtown area pay. So there's a levy attached to the Downtown BIZ that, other than Crown corporations, other businesses pay in the area, so this is really in lieu of paying it through that levy.

The other side of that, of course, is the fact that we are an anchor tenant on Broadway. Our employees certainly are—throughout the area of downtown look at things like safety and being a good corporate citizen in the downtown area, so that's actually a bit of a bonus as well. So, in fact, when you look at what we would pay as a levy if we weren't a Crown corp, it's much larger than that. So that's really the, I guess, the nemesis or the start—sorry, the genesis—excuse me—of that payment.

Mrs. Rowat: A twofold question: One, what would that levy be if you had to pay it? And secondly, why is it just this year starting to contribute towards that? Or else I don't have the prior years, but it just—if you can answer those two questions, I'd appreciate it.

Mr. Maharaj: Yes, unfortunately, I don't have—I can certainly endeavour to get back to you on the exact amount of what the levy would be, but I can tell you that we have paid less than what the levy would be had we gone through that. I can also tell you that we pay less than our other comparable Crown corporations. So I don't have the exact dollar amount of what that levy would be, but I can get back to you with that information if you like.

Mrs. Rowat: Yes, thank you, and I look forward to that.

So this \$30,000 goes towards what in relation to the Downtown BIZ?

Mr. Maharaj: So that would go towards funding things such as their safety initiatives, the downtown—safety initiatives for downtown staff such as the SafeWalk program and things of that nature.

Mrs. Rowat: Mr. Chair, it looks like SafeWalk receives funding as well under a different category. I guess my concern is do you—you have an office in Brandon, so have you thought that by making this contribution of \$30,000, you—Brandon renaissance—or Renaissance Brandon would not be considered something that would be similar, an organization that is very similar to Downtown BIZ. You know, I—what you're doing is opening a door is what I'm saying, and you're providing downtown Winnipeg or Downtown BIZ \$30,000, and other communities that you are visible in have similar organizations, and so

what you're doing is opening a door for allocating dollars that, you know, really should be going towards programs that promote safety or provide those dollars towards employees who are requiring supports from you. And I just see this as opening the Pandora box and creating some concerns.

Mr. Maharaj: So we do have a budget amount that's allocated and set aside for this particular line—promotions, sponsorships and donations—and I would expect that we don't go out and necessarily look for organizations to promote as much as they come to us. And we assess them based on a criteria and that criteria certainly has to fit within our mandate. So should Brandon approach us or should there be an organization that does that, certainly, we would assess it in the same way as we do the other sponsorships requests that come in.

And I'd also say that we're very proud to be in the Brandon downtown area and we're proud to have opened that office in Brandon. So, again, there would be a criteria, and it's less of opening a door more than a program and a criteria that we would assess it against.

Mrs. Rowat: Yes, I'm glad the office is in Brandon as well. As an MLA that for a period of time just completely surrounded Brandon, I had a lot of clients that had serious concerns about having to travel into Winnipeg for medical appointments, et cetera, so I appreciate the Brandon office. I look forward to it expanding into Parkland, but I do have some concerns about the amount of money that is going into initiatives that aren't directly related to safety or safety awareness.

* (18:50)

And I wasn't promoting, you know, looking at other jurisdictions to provide funding like Downtown BIZ. I'm just saying that I'm cautiously concerned about where the dollars are going and seeing, you know, funding increase by threefold to such events without really having any outcomes is a bit of a concern.

I guess one other one that I noticed on the list was Manitoba Hydro's golf tournament and providing \$300 for the golf tournament, I guess. Do you feel it would—it is appropriate that one arm's-length agency of government is giving funding for another? That would also be another concern that I have as well as my colleagues with regard to how those dollars are being allocated.

Mr. Maharaj: So the Manitoba Hydro golf tournament, they're essentially partners in some of our safety initiatives, and it was supported through that way in that manner and as a partnership with us.

Mrs. Rowat: Thank you. I appreciate that. Would you be able to provide with—when you do send the other information that you have indicated you'd provide, a copy of the criteria for donations, in writing? Thank you.

Mr. Maharaj: Absolutely. Yes.

Mr. Chairperson: Yes, Mr. Wiser.

Mr. Ian Wishart (Portage la Prairie): It's actually Wishart. Thank you.

Mr. Chairperson: Wishart. Okay, I'm sorry. Wiser—Wishart.

Mr. Wishart: It's—yeah, different enunciation.

I had a few questions that we've somewhat touched on already, but when you were talking about training and standards for the board, you're a Crown corporation. Are you subject to the oversight of the Crown Corporations Council?

Mr. Maharaj: No, we're not.

An Honourable Member: Why are you not?

Mr. Maharaj: So, under the current regulations for Crown corporations, we are not designated as a Crown corporation.

Mr. Wishart: Thank you for that answer.

On the issue of how you select your medical services, which you use quite a bit of, I'm curious as to how does workman's compensation select the different medical experts that they use for different situations. Is it a—do you have a regular group that you go to or is it done by contract?

Mr. Maharaj: I might need some clarification. I'm not sure if you're talking about our internal medical staff, which we have or 'contra'-on contract, or if you're talking about something other than that.

Mr. Wishart: I'm talking about the medical staff that you have available to look at individual claim situations, and how are they selected.

Mr. Maharaj: Well, we have a director for that area, for our medical health area, and certainly he's very much involved in the selection of those individuals and is well-known in the community, so he is quite aware of the different practices. We also have a—an administrator in that area that would be involved in

that process, and we have, of course, our corporate HR that would be involved in that process too. Legal would be involved in the contracts as well.

Mr. Wishart: Just to make sure that I understand this, sir, you have a contract on a ongoing basis with different medical staff for different purposes? And how long is that contract determined and how do they—is it a bid process for those contracts or are they your full-time employees?

Mr. Maharaj: So we have individual contracts with those individuals who are require—physicians and health-care providers. As required, they're generally run three years. And those are not tendered; they would be more similar to a hiring process. But these are not employees; again, these are individuals that we contract with.

Mr. Wishart: Just to be sure I totally understand how you do this then, you submit requests for proposals to the industry or are these one-on-one approaches?

Mr. Maharaj: So it's a little bit of both. We do at times post, as you would when you're looking for—so, post an ad when you're looking a special select skill and expertise. At times we might know specific individuals with that speciality and they might be approached. And, of course, our senior medical advisers who are linked into the community and are networked, they would know as well individuals for a specific skill set and we might approach those individuals.

Having said all of that, there's a selection process and a criteria. And, again, it's a rigorous process that they would go through before they actually are brought on contract.

Mr. Wishart: I thank you for the answer to that. So the contract, is it a fee for service for each usage or is a annual contract that provided with each of these?

Mr. Maharaj: It's fee for service.

Mr. Wishart: So for every claim that they handle they get a specific fee, and that's negotiated ahead of time?

Mr. Maharaj: Okay, so I'm sorry, but it actually is an hourly rate based on their work on each individual claim. So it's not a fee for service per procedure.

Mr. Wishart: Okay, and thank you very much for those answers. So in that regard it differs from private—or the medical practice, in general, as to what they get per procedure.

Going back to the selection process, you mentioned that that's an internal process, you have staff with the expertise. Is there an evaluation process on the use or the success of the contracts, whether they are performing the services you require? Do you have an evaluation process?

Mr. Maharaj: Yes, I mean, it's one of our normal processes within the organization, so we have a senior medical adviser in charge of that area. And he is full-time and he would be the individual who would undertake those evaluations of the various different deliverables and contracts.

Mr. Wishart: No, go ahead.

Mrs. Rowat: All right, thank you. I'm just going to go into a little bit about expenses and the CEO expenses. I know that there's been a significant increase since your predecessor in 2011 on what he spent on meals, and there seems to be about a \$1,500 difference. Being new, I understand, you know, there's different needs in meeting with different organizations and groups, and just wanted to know if you can give me a little bit of an explanation on how you feel, you know, that increase is actually benefitting the company. And giving you opportunity to, you know, defend those dollars, yes.

Mr. Maharaj: So, when I was first brought on, I actually—as one of my objectives and one of my deliverables was to go out and to actually create relationships, meet with stakeholders, gain an understanding of—we are a tripartite board, so gain an understanding of each of those different groups.

* (19:00)

So that involved meeting with a number of our stakeholders, which is why you would see actually that increase. That means a meeting with some of them individually, as well, meeting with some of the groups, and so that was done on a continuous basis and I have actually a list of the individuals who I've met with who are all, again, related to the work that's done at WCB.

Also, as well, you know, this was a very interesting year in that there is a lot of change at WCB. It was mentioned earlier that the minister has a new five-year plan. We also have various different reviews that are referenced in the annual reports. For each of those—those also involved a lot of gaining an understanding of the different groups that would be impacted by this. So, again, that's what was involved in those meetings or those various different meal expenses that you're referring to.

Mrs. Rowat: I appreciate you providing, you know, your comments with regard to this. We know that the government is facing a significant deficit, the PST increase, et cetera. So we really, you know, obviously, are, you know, trying to watch our dollars. Well, and—you know, we're looking at the departments, you know, making sure that they are watching their dollars. So just wanting to, you know, ask the minister, I guess, what, you know, her thoughts are with regard to the expenses and would she be, you know, continue to defend, you know, increased budgets for expenses such as luncheon meals, et cetera, increasing up to over \$2,000?

Ms. Braun: Well, all I can say is that, as a person being brand new to this position, I need to familiarize myself with the operations before I can make any comment.

Mrs. Rowat: Okay, I just wanted to raise it as something that, you know, that we're all concerned about, is the dollars that are being spent within government. So thank you for that.

Mr. Stuart Briese (Agassiz): Just, I live right near it and I come by it every day, your building, and are the renovations complete? That major overhaul you did on the building, are they complete now?

Mr. Maharaj: Yes, so renovations are complete, and as you, you know, had noted, it was a very extensive project. The renovations to the building meant taking off the granite slabs that were on there, fixing the steel structure that was underneath. There was asbestos abatement that needed to be done and, again, staff continued to work in the building during this process so there was special safety measures that had to be put in place, then a new vapour barrier put up and all of the granite work put back on. So the building is now safe.

Mr. Briese: What was the overall cost to that?

Mr. Maharaj: The overall cost was approximately \$14.3 million.

Mr. Briese: Was that, just out of curiosity, was that way over budget or was it close to the budget you originally allocated, or how'd it come in on what your expectations were to start with?

Mr. Maharaj: That was—there was a preliminary budget that involved an estimate without taking the granite off, and that budget was a much lesser amount and I believe somewhere around 7 or 8 million dollars. Once the mock-up was done of a section and the granite was taken off, the engineers

were able to look at what needed to be done, which included a new steel structure underneath, the asbestos and then, obviously, putting it all back together. That, once that was looked at, which I believe was about six months after the preliminary estimate, it was revised to \$15 million. So the current cost came in well under budget.

Mr. Briese: There's quite a bit of activity going on on the lot just to the north of that. Did that lot, the extension on the Convention Centre—and just tongue-in-cheek, but all the piles being driven, I see your granite stayed on, so it must be well attached on this go round—but does—that lot doesn't belong to Workers Comp, by any chance, or is any of that property yours?

Mr. Maharaj: The lot does not belong to us, no.

Mr. Schuler: Yes, I'd like to ask a few questions about the Winnipeg Jets tickets in the 2013 NHL season currently under way. I know that in 2012 the WC did not—WCB did not purchase any Jets tickets but rather received 17 tickets for the WCB's IT, HR and SAFE Work services departments. Can the CEO or the chair of the board confirm that that is actually the case?

Mr. Maharaj: I can confirm that we did not—I'm sorry, can you ask that again? That we received 17-tickets in—when?

Mr. Schuler: In 2012, the WCD—WCB did not purchase any tickets but rather received 17 tickets for the WCB's IT, HR and SAFE Work services departments. Is that correct?

Mr. Maharaj: That's—it doesn't seem to be correct, according to my records. In 2011, we received 11 tickets, and in 2012, we received 6 tickets.

Mr. Schuler: So the 17 tickets come from 2011-2012 season. Would that be fair?

Mr. Maharaj: Yes, that would be fair.

Mr. Schuler: Is it possible to get a list who received those tickets? And, again, if they went to staff—we would be fine at this committee if it was just listed as staff, but if it had anything to do with a board member or political staff or ministers or management, we would like to know who got that. Would it be possible to get that list?

Mr. Maharaj: I can confirm that none went to board, these were all staff. But certainly we can send you that list where it indicates staff where it is staff.

Mr. Schuler: Yes, and a little bit of concern of the committee—I'm trying to find the exact questions when this issue was raised the first time, and that had to do with we asked if the corporation had purchased any tickets and—or received any tickets, and I'm trying to find the exact quote and I'm not being very good at finding it. And the answer from the CEO was no, and, in fact, there were tickets that were given to the corporation, again, as they were received rather than purchased. And we felt that was being a little bit cute with the wording because we had asked if there had been any received by the corporation. So we want to be very clear in our questions. You know, for the life of me, I can't seem to find that question in Hansard so I will have to leave it at such.

Obviously, the public is very concerned about these tickets seeing as there is still about a 5,000-person waiting list. I know that I personally, the closest I seem to get is the grate outside the MTS Centre and get to smell the popcorn; that's about the closest I've come to a Jets ticket. So Manitobans are very concerned, and again I want to be very clear that no board member, no management and no political staff or ministers had access to any of these tickets as a gift, as a guest of any kind.

Mr. Maharaj: So I can again state that no board member had access to any of these tickets, and out of the 17 tickets we will endeavour to go back to see exactly which staff and listed as staff. I will have to take the time to go back to see whether any of those staff that attended were management.

Mr. Schuler: Yes, and I'd like to thank my colleague Leanne Rowat for finding what I was looking for. It's April 11th, 2012, and in this case it's page 80. The question was, is the Workers Compensation Board a season ticket holder of the Winnipeg Jets? And the answer from the CEO was, no, we are not. The question by myself was, so with the advertising that's done by the Workers Compensation Board with the Winnipeg Jets, they do not get any tickets for that? And the answer back was, no, we have—we—as a corporation, we get no tickets. And we found out afterwards that, in fact, the corporation did get tickets. I think it was, what, 11 and six or six and 11? But we understand that they didn't receive them as a matter of being purchased but they got them as a gift for having advertised. Is that correct?

* (19:10)

Mr. Maharaj: Just for the point of clarification, we did not receive tickets for advertising. So, actually, that answer is correct. The tickets that were received

was for client appreciation. There was, in fact, 11 tickets received through that, and they were all related to IT, not for advertising. The other tickets you were referring to, again, one was for, actually, United Way, as far as participation in that campaign. The other one was for human resources, which you referenced. None of those tickets were for advertising.

Mr. Schuler: Tickets were received, and I think that was the point of the questions.

I'd like to move on. According to information received by our office—*[interjection]* Excuse me?

An Honourable Member: He answered the questions you asked.

Mr. Schuler: Okay, the former minister, I think, would like the floor so she can put some comments on the record. But, again, if we go back to April 11th, 2012, page 80, and the question was: So with the money that's been given in advertising dollars to the Winnipeg Blue Bombers, there are no tickets, season tickets or any tickets given.

And that was just right after we had asked about the Winnipeg Jets, and the answer was no, we do not receive any season tickets or tickets in general. And we had been talking about tickets in general. Does the Workers Compensation Board or any member of the board own tickets to Winnipeg Jets and Blue Bombers, and we went on to individuals.

And I guess I wasn't—I guess the point was is that we were asking if there were any Jets tickets or Bomber tickets that had come into the corporation to use for whatever, and the answer was no, and then we saw a listing afterwards that there were tickets with the Workers Compensation Board. And we understand that they came in in other ways, other means, and we would've liked to have had a full declaration on those tickets. It was a little 'disconcerting' for myself who had, I thought, asked fairly explicit questions about the tickets, and full disclosure would've been appreciated.

Anyway, I would like to move on to other questions, but I see Mr. Maharaj—

Mr. Chairperson: Mr. Maharaj.

Mr. Maharaj: With all due respect, I do believe I did answer the question, and I am certainly—do not in any way want to mislead this committee. I'm happy to offer full disclosure at any time. However, with all due respect, I do believe I did answer the question.

Mr. Schuler: And I guess we'll just leave it at that. It's a dispute over the facts, and we'll move on.

According to information received by our office, the reason for the tickets received was client appreciation. Could the corporation elaborate on this description?

Mr. Maharaj: I can only say that these are organizations that we do business with, and I can also say that through the United Way campaign, this is an invitation, really, to bring the campaign organizers and the people who have participated in that together. Again, these are staff; these are not board members. And, as well, I should add, these are not, again, myself as the CEO.

Mr. Schuler: Has the Workers Compensation Board purchased or received any event tickets or other non-monetary gifts for employee use and, if so, could the corporation please elaborate on the nature of those gifts?

Mr. Maharaj: We have not, no.

Mr. Schuler: Thank you.

Mrs. Rowat: I'm just going to go back to real estate. And as I said earlier, I'm a new critic to this area, and I just want to get a better understanding of the operation of WCB. What properties are currently owned by Workers Compensation Board?

And if you would be able to—I'm sorry—I'm going to continue—and if it's an extensive list, if you could provide me with that list, that would be great.

Mr. Maharaj: It is—it is a fairly extensive list, so I certainly can endeavour to supply that to you.

Mrs. Rowat: Could you also provide me with information on whether these—if you—if these are owned by you, obviously—the—whether they're leased or rented and who manages these properties as well, with that list?

Mr. Maharaj: Certainly, we can provide that information.

Mrs. Rowat: And I guess I'm just going to—just to clarify, page 66 in the 2012 annual report, it indicates that the board has outlined operating leases and expenses for office premises from 2013 to 2017. Could the president or the chair please, you know, elaborate on that line within the annual report and what that will entail?

Mr. Maharaj: We do have office space in the building next door, which is 363 Broadway, and we

also pay for the space for the appeal commission, which is leased on St. Mary Avenue.

Mrs. Rowat: And when the—when you're providing the information on the background of those properties with regard to leases and expenses, would you provide, you know, the contract types of agreement that you have from the 2013 to 2017 with that?

Mr. Maharaj: I'm—I just want to clarify what you're—asked for, the actual—*[interjection]*

Mr. Chairperson: Order.

Mrs. Rowat: You're indicating that there's an operating lease and expenses for the office premises. You're going to provide that. Sorry, I'm tired.

Mr. Maharaj: I'll have to check to see if we're able to actually provide—you mean the actual lease agreement with 363—sorry, 363 and with—on St. Mary's. I should mention we also have—and it was just brought to my attention—lease agreements in Thompson for the Thompson office and lease agreements in Brandon for the Brandon office.

So, certainly, we'll endeavour to provide that information and what we can in the way of the actual contract; I'm not sure how much information of the actual lease agreement we can provide.

Mrs. Rowat: Thank you, I appreciate that response. And if you could provide the contracts, that would be great and give me a better understanding of the operation.

Okay. With regard to lease obligations, there seems to be a wide variation in minimum lease obligations. Can you elaborate on why do numbers vary so much in the five-year period outlined? There seems to be—

Mr. Chairperson: Mr. Maharaj.

Mr. Maharaj: It's just a—it's really just the term of the lease. So we have various different contracts that end at different times and the costs related to those contracts show up on those projected lines until the end. But they will ultimately be renewed and it would affect that as you go year—as you go one year forward.

Mrs. Rowat: Sure. I appreciate that, and I'm sure when you—I get the information, I'll have a better understanding, but it wasn't as clear in the annual report.

Other than 333 Broadway, what other factors are contributing to the cost fluctuations? We noticed there's improvement costs, et cetera. Can you indicate to me, you know, what other factors are contributing to the cost fluctuations?

Mr. Maharaj: Well, we would have—when a lease comes up for renewal, we would sometimes renew that lease at a different rate, and that could certainly be at a higher rate as time goes on. There also could be a need for additional space, so we have expanded at times and we have leased out new space in the same building, which is the building next door to us, so that would also contribute to the change in the number of leases in any given year and the fluctuation. Those are probably the major contributing factors.

* (19:20)

So I'm told that the primary reason for the fluctuation is because it—in this particular note—and these are accounting rules, so how it's reflected is very technical—you do not reflect the continuation of the lease, you take the current lease to the end of the lease and reflect it in the projection. So where a lease ends, obviously we still need space for those individuals, and for that office it would be replaced with something if not a continuation of that lease. It's not reflected here.

Mrs. Rowat: That's a good clarification. I just didn't understand it; it's confusing, so I appreciate the explanation.

With the amount of properties that you own, what principal banker does Workers Compensation have or use as a line of credit or use to negotiate?

Mr. Maharaj: Banker, meaning—I'm sorry, I need clarification on that.

Mrs. Rowat: The question is which provincial—or a principal banker does Workers Compensation have a line of credit with? It says on page 45 there's a \$3-million line of credit. Just wanting to know who your banker is with regard to that line of credit.

Mr. Maharaj: It is RBC, although that is—the clarification that I was seeking is that is not our line of credit used for the purposes of purchasing real estate, that is actually the organization's line of credit with RBC.

Mrs. Rowat: The WCB has also established a revolving credit facility with the Province of Manitoba in the amount of \$40 million. I wonder if

you can elaborate on the need for this and the usage for this amount.

Mr. Maharaj: Yes, we've had that line of credit in place for some time with the Province. We have not utilized that line of credit to any kind—significant or material amount. In—for the last two years, it was utilized to a small degree, and I—in very small amounts and at a 'preven'—preferred interest rate in the last year, but certainly nothing material.

Mrs. Rowat: Is there a present balance on that?

Mr. Maharaj: No, it's currently zero.

Mrs. Rowat: Page 51, security lending, the \$97.3 million in secured loans has been provided to third parties as of December 31st, 2012, with total collateral owing of \$102.2 million. What organizations are recipients of the secured loans from WCB?

Mr. Maharaj: I can endeavour to get back to you with a list.

Mrs. Rowat: Thank you for that response. If you could provide it in detail who the organizations are, how much they've secured from you and for what reason they'd be use—utilizing those dollars.

Mr. Maharaj: So we participate in a program through RBC where RBC actually has an extensive list of security backed and lending. And through—they would be the ones that actually would hold that, and it's a very extensive list. And we participate, really, through them.

So maybe what I could do at this point is provide you an overlay of the program that we're in, the criteria—and we do have a very strong criteria as far as the types of investments that they would be allowed to participate in, but the list itself would be difficult to get.

Mrs. Rowat: And I guess if I have any further questions with regard to that list then we can chat. Okay, thank you.

Mr. Wishart: Mr. Chairman, and just following up, you have a lending strategy, then, that is managed by RBC as to the nature of your investments, and are there some investments you have chosen not to participate in? Do you have a sustainable strategy of any nature?

Mr. Maharaj: No. They just—this is for a very small component of our investment portfolio that's related to security-backed lending that—it's not in relation to

our actual investments in the assets of the equity-equity assets, if that's what you're referring to.

Mr. Wishart: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, Mr. Maharaj.

So, do you as a board, have you made any decisions as to the nature of the investments that you choose to invest in? You're investing substantial dollars on behalf of the people you represent, the clientele. Do you have a strategy to determine the nature of those investments in the few—now and in the future?

Mr. Maharaj: Yes, absolutely. The board has a statement of investment policies and within that we have an asset mix. It's a well-diversified portfolio. We have currently three external professional advisors on the investment committee, which is a subcommittee of the board. These are individuals that are experts and knowledgeable in the area of investments. And we look annually, the committee, at the asset mix, the particular managers within each asset mix, the return, the benchmarks, and we also look at whether or not there might be new or different investment assets that need to be considered within those mixes and the adjustment of the overall asset mix.

Mr. Wishart: Thank you very much. And it does sound as though you've given this some thought and it's an evolving strategy, obviously. Returns are difficult to get from a number of marketplaces, and I note you had a pretty good return the previous year, particularly on property. What do you attribute that to?

Mr. Maharaj: Well, I would like to take—I would certainly like to take credit for the market, but I can't. You know, there's a cycle. We have a lot of experts working on all of the different asset classes, including real estate, and certainly those people who are involved in that give us very good advice. And also we're into very good investments, obviously, within each class. So the credit goes to the investment committee and obviously the people they've hired to give us advice as well.

Mr. Wishart: And thank you very much for that answer, and certainly I hope you continue in that vein on behalf of all the people that use your services. Certainly, it saves them money in the long run. It was not attributable to any specific windfalls, it's just general market situation? Occasionally, you do get windfalls.

Mr. Maharaj: No. I think it's fair to say it wasn't a particular windfall.

Mr. Wishart: Okay. And I'd like to move on a little bit and talk a bit about some of the numbers in terms of total injury claims, and this year was down a little bit in terms of total injury claims from the previous year, and it's been a fairly constant trend regarding that. But fatalities seem to be quite a bit up. Now, I know that's certainly beyond your control, but what steps have you taken to try and address sudden increase in that area?

Mr. Maharaj: Certainly, it is concerning. Fatalities, any number, and especially in consideration, if the numbers are increasing. However, I do want to draw your attention to the fact that out of the fatality number, there is a considerable component that relates to occupational disease. So, by way of example, for the total fatalities, these are fatalities that are not necessarily just the fatalities that are accepted and covered by WCB, but total fatalities of 40 for 2012.

* (19:30)

Those that relate to occupational disease was 29. And why that is important to note is because occupational disease obviously has a long latency period, relates to exposures that could have happened quite a while ago and are very complex and difficult to deal with. So that's something to be aware of as we target and try to determine what can be done around preventing fatalities for the future.

There were 11 acute hazards and, certainly, on those acute hazards, we are engaging in significant campaigns, as, actually, I think was mentioned earlier, around awareness and prevention, also around appropriate safety systems. And, certainly, we're partnering with a lot of the organizations—and, in fact, Hydro was used as an example—to try to reach those, really, employers and employees when it comes to being aware of safety in the work environment. So there is a strong focus on prevention.

Mr. Wishart: I do hope that your campaign leads to some success in terms of the accident-related fatalities.

The—just touching briefly on the occupational disease ones, and, certainly, they seem to have been on the increase, and I'm wondering if you have attributed much of this to the aging population that we hear so much about, the baby boomers as they

approach retirement. Can we expect this to continue to be a problem because of this?

Mr. Chairperson: Mr.—or, excuse me, Mr. Maharaj.

Mr. Maharaj: So I think that it's, of course, difficult to know in the future because these are long-latent issues that occur, and, again, if you go back 10 or 20 years, you may not have seen at that point in time some of the exposures that we're now dealing with today. So it's difficult to say whether it's going to get worse or better, but we would hope, with awareness and with the amount of research that's being undertaken—and there's quite a bit of focus, as well, in the area of occupational disease today that may not have existed in the past—that we actually will see a decrease in the area. This also relates to some new injuries that are coming to light and talk about psychological injuries and things of that nature. So it's difficult to predict and, certainly, I wouldn't be able to say whether it's going to get better or worse, but we're certainly going to do everything we can to mitigate it and to deal with it.

Mr. Wishart: Well, I certainly appreciate that, and I do hope that we all—for all our sakes, that this is successful, but I guess I do still retain some concern that with the aging population that we will see some problems in this particular area.

I did want to touch briefly on the fact that now agriculture is included in the process, and I am unfortunately aware of the statistics in that area which are not good, especially for the young and the very old. Do you see that the inclusion of that sector will have an impact on the number of fatalities that you see?

Mr. Maharaj: Absolutely. The fact that we are reaching out and we've started several initiatives—and I think you may even be aware of some initiatives we've undertaken in the agriculture sector—it's an area we would like to focus in, and there's a lot of opportunity there to actually effect some change. So, yes, I would think and hope that we would actually see those injury rates come down.

Mr. Wishart: I certainly hope that that actually does lead to a reduction. I know I worked in this area for many years, and it is an extreme challenge to get people's attention on this issue, particularly during the busy spring and fall seasons. I don't know that I have an answer, but, certainly, the more you do promotion in these sectors, I think, the more you will have an impact. We certainly found some improvements by doing that. And when I talk about

promotion, I mean actually going out to do farm visits. And that's not with the idea of enforcement, though, certainly, you have the mandate to do that, it's the idea of making them aware of what it is they have on that farm that actually constitutes an injury or a potential injury. So, certainly, I would encourage you to be more active in that area.

Did someone want to follow up with the Brandon questions? *[interjection]*

Mr. Chairperson: Excuse me. Order, please.

Mr. Wishart: Thank you, and I know there wasn't much of a question in that statement. Going back to appeals and medical review panels, can you provide me with a little bit of an overview as to how you do an appeal process? I think every MLA has certainly been touched by the fact that there's someone in their constituency that has been—has had to go through the appeal process. How best—how does it work and who represents the injured party, in particular?

Mr. Maharaj: So we do have various different levels of appeal, and there is the opportunity for review internally—review first at the actual adjudication level by the director within that area, also by our review office, again, internally at WCB, but then we also have an external appeal commission where a formal appeal takes place. And then we actually do have two of the representatives of the appeal commission here.

I'm not sure if your question is related to the formal appeal part of the process or the—it would be the internal, which would be the WCB part of the process.

Mr. Wishart: Well, firstly, because it is the first step in the process, could you explain how the process takes place internally?

Mr. Maharaj: So I—you know, I don't have the extensive detail behind it. I'm going to give you the higher level. And, certainly, if you want more detail, I think we can provide that to you.

But the reconsideration process, if a claimant wants to ask for reconsideration, it starts with their adjudicator, and the adjudicator does have the ability to reconsider at that point. And that is more of an informal discussion between the claimant and the person who is adjudicating the claim.

After that it goes to what internally would be a more formal reconsideration. So, again, the

individual can ask that their claim be reconsidered by our review office. Our review office has the ability to look at that claim and to uphold or to again make changes to that decision at that point.

Having said that, if the claimant is still not satisfied with the results at the review office they can file a formal appeal, at which case the appeal commission is an independent body from WCB and has an entire process around that.

Mr. Wishart: Certainly appreciate you explaining the various steps of process. There's often a lot of confusion on the part of claimants as to where they are in the internal process. Do you track where the claims are settled? How many are settled initially, how many are settled by the adjudicator, how many settled in your internal appeal process and how many actually go through to the commission?

Mr. Maharaj: We do track that, and we do look at those statistics and I think it's fair to say that they've been quite stable over the last number of years.

Mr. Wishart: Could you share some of those numbers with us as to the last couple of years, for example, to see that they are stable?

Mr. Maharaj: Yes, certainly I can send you that information. I actually—I think that—I believe that some of that may be actually available already, and I'm being pointed to a chart. But we can still endeavour to send you the information, if there's any additional information around that, in detail.

* (19:40)

Mr. Wishart: I certainly appreciate that answer. Going onto the appeals process, there has been an increase in the number of appeals, sort of a trend with time, and I was—particular note that there are different ways for workers to represent themselves in that appeals process. Some bring legal counsel, a lot of them come with their union representative or a worker, and I assume that worker is your worker. Or is it a worker from their workplace?

Mr. Maharaj: So that would actually not be our worker; it would be—it may be somebody from the Worker Advisor Office, or it may be somebody from their union, should they belong to a union, or somebody they've chosen to represent themselves, but that wouldn't be the WCB worker.

Mr. Wishart: Well, thank you for that answer.

I would assume, then, the advocate would be anyone from your organization or is the advocate also a third party?

Mr. Maharaj: The advocate—again, the employer might have an advocate that attends as well, so we do have the ability to bring representation of WCB at the case—at the appeal. So we review the appeal and decide, if at that point in time, WCB would like to represent—make representations at the claim appeal.

Mr. Wishart: So you have the right to bring representation, which would perhaps be legal counsel to any of these claims. The individual has his right to choose—his or her right, rather—to choose from any of the options that are available to them. Does the nature of the individual's representation seem to have an impact on their success?

Mr. Maharaj: I certainly can't answer that.

If you like, we do have again—we have the chief appeal commissioner here, Alan Scramstad, and we have the registrar of the appeal commission, Peter Wiebe, here. So any questions, and it's hard because some of these are hard to delineate, but any questions that are really directed and deal with the appeal commission because they are an independent arm, we would have to have asked that of the chief appeal commissioner or registrar.

Mr. Wishart: Well, certainly we want to be sure that the appeals process is arm's-length, and that's your point, I think, that you aren't actually very close to it, so you're not really aware of it. But we do want to be sure that we can advise constituents that come to see us as how best to have themselves represented in this process. So I would like a little more information as to how—what type of representation leads to the best results. Is there some way we can get that?

Mr. Maharaj: You know, I don't have an answer for that. I can't comment on what type of representation.

Mr. Wishart: Perhaps the minister could endeavour because you have the appeals commission under your responsibility, as well, to approach the appeals commission and look for a little enlightenment in this area. It is an issue because we frequently—and I'm sure you've had it as an MLA as well—yet the question is, if I'm going to appeal, how do I best represent myself?

Ms. Braun: I'll endeavour to see what I can do about that for you.

Mrs. Rowat: I appreciate the questions from the member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Wishart) because

I do know that a significant number of calls that we get are from people that have been denied supports from WCB and just want to know what the process is. And I know there is somebody within WCB who is our angel, who helps us on occasion to direct clients who we feel may have a case and we appreciate that support.

Have you ever considered an employer advocate or resource within WCB? Other jurisdictions have that tool or that resource for employers, and I'm just wanting to know if you would comment on that and give me your perspective on whether that would be a useful tool for employers.

Mr. Maharaj: So, certainly, we do endeavour to support both employers and injured workers as best we can. And what there is within the WCB an ombudsman role in the Fair Practices Office and, actually, that ombudsman role is for both employers and injured workers. So, certainly, that office is one avenue that employers can approach where they feel there is an issue of fairness or if they need some form of support around a particular claim.

Mrs. Rowat: How do businesses find out about this? Have you promoted it to businesses, and actually how would that process unfold, if you can explain that to me?

Mr. Maharaj: So the Fair Practices Office does have an annual report. They are promoted on our website, and they actually have endeavoured to get out into some venues to do some outreach. One of the mandates given to that office is actually to do exactly what you've said is to promote their services to say we're here and this is our role if you feel you need us, so to both employers and to injured workers.

Mrs. Rowat: Could you indicate to me the stats on how many people or how many employers are actually utilizing that resource?

Mr. Maharaj: I can get you those stats on how many employers are utilizing. I don't have it off the top of my—at the top of my hands.

Mrs. Rowat: I've just got a few questions with regard to the Brandon office.

You know, I'm really pleased to see that Brandon has an office, and it's been very useful for constituents in the Westman area and Parkland. Are you looking at expanding anything into the Parkland region, in any other capacity, if you can just give me some background on that?

Mr. Maharaj: Certainly our first phase was to establish Brandon itself, the office, and move files over from Winnipeg to Brandon, and that phase 1 has been completed. The second phase is to do exactly as you've said, to expand the catchment area. That expansion would include Parklands, Dauphin, Swan River, Russell, Neepawa, Minnedosa. So, yes, we are looking at that.

Mrs. Rowat: Can you tell me the time frame and if you've identified location for the expanding office?

Mr. Maharaj: So just for a point of clarification because I don't want there--this to be misleading, that the expansion is to actually move the catchment area that that office services. It's not to add additional regional offices out in those communities. And, in fact, much of that has been done already. The functionality around where would you go if you call in from these particular communities is now Brandon, but we're still--there may still be some of the functions left at Winnipeg that need to be finally moved over.

Mrs. Rowat: Okay, and just for clarification, if somebody from Russell calls the Brandon office and would like to meet with a worker, would a worker then make the trip to Russell or to Dauphin or does--how does that work? And if there--that is the case, then are they increasing the number of workers to address the, you know, the region expansion?

Mr. Maharaj: So, yes, the worker would actually go out to meet with the individual. We did increase the number of individuals, employees, at Brandon for the purposes of phase 2. So this was all actually in the expansion out to Brandon. It was in the project plan as a phase 2.

Mrs. Rowat: Could the president provide me with the stats on your Brandon office, the number of people that have come through the office and the numbers have--that have been, you know, sort of a breakdown as we've seen on the others, but just sort of break it down into what's happening in the Westman area?

* (19:50)

I just, you know, very curious and wanting to share that with some of the constituents out there that I've been asking about it, as well as, you know, what the cost is to operate this centre. And I know it's a very important resource for many Manitobans, but just wanting to know what the cost is per lease and other costs and how many staff you presently have working out of there.

Mr. Maharaj: I'm not sure, we--I can provide you the stats on that as far as the number of claims going through and the number of--basically the workload related to the office. And, as we currently have 19 staff, I believe we're increasing to 20, so it's somewhere around 19 to 20. And the ongoing cost is--well, I'm going to have to take a minute to--\$1.2 million as far as the actual operating cost. Oh, sorry. I correct--\$1.5 million.

Mrs. Rowat: And the lease costs for that, would you be able to provide me what it costs to lease the building that you're in?

Mr. Maharaj: Yes, I would be able to provide that. It would be a component of the 1.5 ongoing operating cost, so.

Mrs. Rowat: With regard to language services, there--obviously, we have a huge contingent of new Canadians living in the Westman-Parkland area. Could you indicate to me--or provide to me sort of a synopsis of how you're dealing with that and what types of services are being provided at the workers centre in rural areas? How are you addressing those challenges?

Mr. Maharaj: Well, we do actually have a dedicated individual in the Brandon office that services that particular language component, and I believe it's Spanish, but there is a Spanish-speaking component that we have to do a lot of interaction with in that area. So we've looked at that combined with a combination of different language services, and we've actually made a quite a push on various different--translating various different material into different languages as well. And that's on our website and that's print as well.

So, certainly, we're aware of the needs within the area, and if that changes over time, we'll also address changes in the needs, so--

Mr. Chairperson: Mr. Gerrard.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Yes, just in your 2012 annual report, page 69, there's a time loss injury rate, and for 2012 it's listed as 3.3 per hundred. But there's an asterisk there, and it says that the 2012 time loss injury rate's an estimate and will be confirmed in mid-2013. I presume since we're beyond mid-2013 that you would have the final number there. Do you have that?

Mr. Maharaj: Yes, that is the final number now, so it has been confirmed.

Mr. Gerrard: Yes, one of the concerns would be that the last three years that the number of the time loss injury rate has been—has not been decreasing. In fact, at 3.3 that may be very slightly higher than the 3.2 last year, but is certainly no better than the 3.3 of the preceding year in 2010. So, you know, it seems that the decrease in the time loss injury rate has stalled. Can you give us an explanation of why that might be or what the reason we're not seeing a further decrease?

Mr. Maharaj: So I think that over time there certainly has been a concerted effort on bringing the time loss injury rate down, and we've seen the fruits of that labour, especially in the last 10-year period, if you look at injury rates dropping 41 per cent since the year 2000. Having said that, once the injury rate has, as you said—your term you used was stalled at this current level of 3.3—we've come to the conclusion that we really need to make a greater push on the prevention—the actual change in the culture of safety and health in workplaces and in the province.

So, if the phase 1 of this push was to make awareness around, you know, the kind of foundations of prevention and people to think about safety and to think about things of that nature, phase 2, which is something that you'll see kind of threaded throughout, is to really attack the behaviours and the culture. And that's something that we're looking to do, and I think the minister's five-year plan actually focuses very much on that, combined with a changing demographic where you have youth, and you have vulnerable workers and an increase in new Canadians, which was mentioned earlier.

So, certainly, the environment is shifting a bit as well, and there needs to be targeted campaigns, targeted approaches to those individuals and to those groups.

So taking all of that into consideration, there is quite a shift on the type of focus that needs to happen over the next five years to move that rate further down to see the type of change that we saw from the year 2000.

Mr. Gerrard: Now, I'm just wondering whether you can help us to put this in perspective and how would this number of 3.3 per hundred be compared to the numbers in other provinces. What sort of range would we find in other provinces, for example?

Mr. Maharaj: Certainly this number is not a very good comparator for other provinces, and the reason

I would say that is, firstly, the industries that are covered. So the coverage rate within each province is different as well as the types of industries that are covered within each province and the risks of those industries.

Secondly, when a time-loss injury is considered to be a time-loss injury is different within each province; ours is immediate. In fact, should you go to a doctor, that's reported as a time-loss injury. That's not the case in all provinces; some have a delay.

But, having said all of that, the—certainly if you look across the province and you just took the statistic and metric on its own, we would be at the bottom. We would—we, in other words, we would have one—the highest rate.

Mr. Gerrard: Yes, I mean, it seems to me, although our—the workers who are included in workers' compensation here would be a bit different from other provinces, that they—in many other provinces they wouldn't be completely out of line. I mean, a number of other provinces have a mixture of, you know, manufacturing and, you know, health and so on. And, you know, it seems to me that this kind of difference where we seem to be near the bottom needs a little bit more in-depth explanation in terms of beyond just there's some differences in the industries covered.

Mr. Maharaj: Certainly where we've seen other provinces that are the ones that we may look at as successful in bringing that rate down, we'd look at the types of initiatives and infrastructure that you see us talking about in the next five years. So that would mean focusing on youth. That would mean focusing on new Canadians. That would mean focusing on 'changerin'-campaigns that focus on changes in behaviour and create that culture. It would mean networks of safety associations that are increased beyond what we might currently have.

So we certainly can see the differences in the infrastructure that's needed for that real next big push on prevention, and I think that that's actually been laid out quite nicely, and we're working on a plan that would see that come to fruition over the next five years.

Mr. Gerrard: What I would ask is in terms of youth, if that is a major issue. Has there been any look or consideration of trying to incorporate improved approaches or understanding of workplace, health and safety into high school curriculum or anything like that?

* (20:00)

Mr. Maharaj: Yes, so we do fund, for example, SAFE Workers of Tomorrow, and we provide a grant fund to them to go out to do exactly as you say, to go out to those high schools and to begin to get into that curriculum a component with relation to safety and roles and responsibilities and start to create that culture.

We also have a new youth council that we've developed, which we're trying to pull out the ideas to understand how we can target and how we can actually affect the youth. If you look at our campaigns over the last year, many of them have been focused on youth. In fact, one of our most successful campaigns, which may not be successful for us around this table but is very successful for the youth target group, is our zombie campaign. So the zombie campaign is targeting exactly that demographic that you're talking about. We're online. We are on the Web. We also have an online community. We have a website that we drive youth to. We have contests on there. We have T-shirts out. We are now 'partnering' on—partnering with, this year, with bring your son or daughter to work day—I forget the actual title of the day—but we're bringing a safety aspect to that, and we're 'partnering' with the folks who do that. So we are quite involved in the youth, but we know that we need to target and do more.

Mr. Chairperson: The Chair would like to state that the hour being 8 o'clock, we previously agreed to reconsider the time at this point. What is the will of the committee?

Mr. Gerrard: I think I probably have about another 15 minutes. I don't know what the critic would have.

An Honourable Member: 8:15?

An Honourable Member: 8:15, sure.

Mr. Chairperson: Is that the will of the committee? 8:15? [Agreed]

Mr. Gerrard: My follow-up is this. That, I mean, if the youth are concerned, do you actually have statistics that our youth rates are particularly high, and have you looked and analyzed the type of injuries they're getting into and the sorts of, you know, particular areas that need to be addressed?

Mr. Maharaj: Yes, we have statistics on the youth incidents, and we have an idea on, you know, where things need to be addressed. We're doing research on it, but we're also reaching out and trying to change the attitudes of the youth themselves. And it is a

difficult target group to reach, but it certainly is one that we're focused on.

Mr. Gerrard: I note on page 71 you have the percentage of claims paid within 14 days of injury, and there seem to be—have been fairly steady progress in getting toward this 70 per cent up until 2011, and then in 2012, the number has gone down. So can you give us an explanation of what's happening here and what's being done to, you know, move things back toward the 70 per cent, which I believe is your target?

Mr. Maharaj: So that—there was a slight decrease from 2011 to 2012, as you've identified, and that can be due to many things: one being workload and in—an increase in, you know, there could be staffing issues a particular time within a year, or increase workload or the complexity of the cases. But I can tell you that we have actually—[interjection] Yes, so I can tell you that year to date, we've actually surpassed that target. We've passed the 70 per cent mark. And, again, as you would guess, when we saw that, we did dedicate some resources into digging down into what the core issue might be, and where we can fix things, we were able to fix it to currently be breaking a target that we had never actually met before.

Mr. Gerrard: Yes, in the area of employer satisfaction—that's on page 72—I note that, you know, as with the last area, that the 2012 number has dipped from 2011. In fact, it's gone down to lower than it was for any of the last several years at 64 per cent. Can—is there an explanation for this and, you know, why that's as low as that?

Mr. Maharaj: So that's very concerning to us as well, as we always want to, you know, obviously see the trend moving in an upward direction towards our target, not downward. And we've actually introduced some new surveying measures in order to actually target and get to the bottom of why employers might feel that their satisfaction level has dropped. And I think we have some additional information on that, and we are actually targeting some initiatives towards bringing that up.

Mr. Gerrard: Yes, I just wondered if you could perhaps provide—you said you've got a little more information on that—whether you've got some more details that would be helpful in understanding this.

Mr. Maharaj: Yes, I think we could provide you with some of the survey results that we've

specifically been digging into why it may be that the—there's been a dip here.

Mr. Gerrard: Yes, I think it—there was some discussion earlier on about the number of fatalities and I note that, as with some of the other statistics, last year the number of fatalities, which is on page 69, was up to 36, which is higher than it's been in any of the last four years and I'm sure is a concern. I wonder if you can provide an explanation for why it was so high in 2012 and why—what happened?

Mr. Maharaj: So again—and this, I think, was mentioned earlier—that number is actually comprised of two components, one being an acute hazard component, the other being occupational disease and the larger component there in 2012. And I'll relate it to the total number of fatalities. Occupational disease was 29 and the acute hazard was 11. So, in fact, the acute hazards actually dropped between 2011 to 2012, and you can equate that to the things that we can target more immediately and where the—we might see some results as far as campaigns relate to the acute hazards. For example, Tie One On was a campaign saying that, you know, when you're a roofer, you need to use this equipment and that was quite a successful campaign.

Having said that, the occupational disease—all I can say is that there is a long—obviously, as you're aware, there's a long period of time where that can have—an individual may have been exposed and it may show up at a later date, and that would've been the case for 2012.

Mr. Gerrard: Is that increase in part related to expansion of the number of occupational diseases covered, and—

Mr. Chairperson: Mr. Maharaj.

Mr. Maharaj: Yes, in part. That would also relate to where there's an expansion for occupational diseases especially, yes.

Mr. Gerrard: Would you have a breakdown of the occupational diseases, and—

Mr. Chairperson: Mr. Maharaj.

Mr. Maharaj: Yes, we have a breakdown of occupational diseases, and we can provide you with that if that's helpful.

Mr. Gerrard: That would be very helpful, and thank you. I think it's important that when you've got this sort of an increase that it be looked at very carefully and understood well in terms of where it's coming

from and if there's some things that we can be doing to decrease occupational exposures. And, you know, that would be particularly valuable. One of the reasons, I think, for expanding some of the coverage was not only to make sure that workers were properly compensated, but also to bring to light a better understanding of where the occupational exposure situation is and what sort of occupational exposures need to be addressed in an improved way from what we're doing at the moment.

Mr. Briese: Yes, I asked earlier about that lot between Workers Comp and York. Did Workers Comp—it appears in last year's Hansard that Workers Comp did own that at one time. Is that right?

* (20:10)

Mr. Maharaj: I'm sorry. I thought your question was in relation to the Convention Centre expansion. So we have—you were talking about—if I recall—the Convention Centre expanding into the lot behind 363, which is the building next to us. We don't own that lot behind it which is where the Convention Centre is expanding. We do have our parking lot, which is directly behind our building which we own, and there is no plans for development at the current time.

Mr. Briese: I apologize for that. The—but your lot then does go right to York?

Mr. Maharaj: Yes, it does.

Mr. Chairperson: Shall the annual of the Workers Compensation Board for the year ending December 31, 2011, pass?

Some Honourable Members: Pass.

An Honourable Member: No—oh, yes, sorry.

Mr. Chairperson: Shall the Annual Report of the Workers Compensation Board for the year ending December 31, 2011 pass?

Some Honourable Members: Pass.

Mr. Chairperson: The report is accordingly passed, or the report is not—oh. Shall the—the report is accordingly passed.

Shall the Annual Report of the Workers Compensation Board for the year ending December 31, 2012, pass?

Some Honourable Members: No.

Some Honourable Members: Pass.

Mr. Chairperson: The report is not passed.

Annual Report of the Appeal Commission and Medical Review Panel for the year ending December 31, 2010—pass.

Shall the Annual Report of the Appeal Commission and the Medical Review Panel for the year ending December 31, 2011, pass?

Some Honourable Members: Pass.

Some Honourable Members: No.

Mr. Chairperson: The report is not passed.

Shall the Annual Report of the Appeal Commission and the Medical Review Panel for the year ending December 31, 2012, pass?

Some Honourable Members: Pass.

Some Honourable Members: No.

Mr. Chairperson: The report is not passed.

Shall the Workers Compensation Board 2011-2015 Five Year pan—Plan pass?

Some Honourable Members: No.

Some Honourable Members: Pass.

Mr. Chairperson: The report is not passed.

Shall the Workers Compensation Board 2012-2016 Five Year Plan pass?

Some Honourable Members: Pass.

Some Honourable Members: No.

Mr. Chairperson: The report is not passed.

Shall the Workers Compensation Board 2013-2017 Five Year Plan pass?

Some Honourable Members: No.

Some Honourable Members: Pass.

Mr. Chairperson: The report is not passed.

If some reports don't pass, please request that the members leave those copies on the table for future meetings.

The hour being 8:12, what is the will of the committee?

Some Honourable Members: Committee Rise.

Mr. Chairperson: Committee Rise. Thank you, everybody.

COMMITTEE ROSE AT: 8:12 p.m.

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