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**Thursday 10 April 2008**

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des débats  
(Hansard)**

**Jeudi 10 avril 2008**

**Standing committee on  
public accounts**

2007 Annual Report,  
Auditor General:  
Ministry of Government  
and Consumer Services

**Comité permanent des  
comptes publics**

Rapport annuel 2007,  
Vérificateur général :  
Ministère des Services  
gouvernementaux et des Services  
aux consommateurs

Chair: Norman W. Sterling  
Clerk: Katch Koch

Président : Norman W. Sterling  
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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

## STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

## COMITÉ PERMANENT DES COMPTES PUBLICS

Thursday 10 April 2008

Jeudi 10 avril 2008

*The committee met at 0937 in committee room 1, following a closed session.*

### 2007 ANNUAL REPORT, AUDITOR GENERAL

#### MINISTRY OF GOVERNMENT AND CONSUMER SERVICES

Consideration of section 3.01, Archives of Ontario and information storage and retrieval services.

**The Chair (Mr. Norman W. Sterling):** Good morning. My name is Norman Sterling. As the Chair of the public accounts committee, I welcome you to our committee. Thank you for coming. Today, we are going to discuss section 3.01 of the 2007 annual report of the Auditor General, dealing with the Archives of Ontario, and the storage and retrieval services as well.

It's normal for us to ask the deputy minister, who is with us today, Michelle DiEmanuele, to lead off with a statement. I believe you also have the Archivist of Ontario here. As a 30-year veteran of the Ontario Legislature, I want to ask the archivist to come down to my office to clean it out after she leaves here today.

Deputy, if you would lead off.

**Ms. Michelle DiEmanuele:** Thank you, sir. I am Michelle DiEmanuele, the Deputy Minister of Government and Consumer Services. I'd like to introduce, on my right-hand side, Mr. Ron McKerlie, our corporate chief information and information technology officer, and Miriam McTiernan, the chief Archivist of Ontario.

It's always a pleasure to be welcomed at public accounts as a deputy minister. I think we've been responding very effectively to the Auditor General's report in 2007. I will cover some of those things briefly today. The archivist will also be making a brief statement.

Prior to the report, we had actually been working on modernizing the archives, and had been focused on updating and improving many of the procedures for supporting the people of Ontario in this area.

In April 2007, the Archives created a recordkeeping support unit. This unit includes staff who provide recordkeeping information, advice and support to ministries and agencies. It's virtually a compliance unit.

In July 2007, a strategic plan for the preservation of archival electronic records was developed.

Since July 2007, a database containing approved records schedules for all ministries has been established.

The auditor's report confirmed that we had made many areas of progress in modernizing, but of course, made many additional value-added suggestions.

In my role as deputy minister, I am also responsible for leading, overall, the public sector renewal portion for the Ontario government, making sure that we are focusing on providing high-quality outcomes for the public, focusing on value for money, managing risk and balancing accountabilities, and supporting and engaging our workforce. The Archives has been part of this entire agenda of modernization.

You may recall, Mr. Chair, I was here last year to speak about our progress with respect to birth certificates. I'm pleased to talk about our progress today with respect to the Archives.

Let me now turn quite specifically—many of you may or may not know, but we get approximately 65 million hits a year on our website. That's 12 million more hits than Library and Archives Canada, and 10 times as many hits as British Columbia.

What makes the Archives of Ontario so popular? We believe it brings the past alive for Ontarians. It showcases Ontario's public and private archival records as a vital resource for studying and interpreting history, people and culture in this province. The Archives also develops innovative educational programs.

The Archives' collections includes the Ontario government and private records going back to the earliest days of Ontario. They contain genealogical records, vital statistics, records relating to aboriginal peoples, thousands of photos and maps, architectural records, documentary art, sound and moving images.

To give you a sense of that collection: over 310,000 boxes of paper records—that's 55 miles; 1.7 million photos; 40,000 maps; 200,000 architectural plans; 40,000 sound and moving image items; 70,000 publications in its library; 50,000 microfilm reels; and almost 2,500 historical and contemporary works of art in the government of Ontario art collection, which is displayed in government locations throughout the province.

In the past few years, the Archives has focused on making its collection much more accessible to teachers and students.

The Archives of Ontario is a major player in the Ontario History Quest, an online resource designed to meet the curriculum requirements for grades 7, 8, 10 and 12 students. It has been an unparalleled success.

The Archives has continued to partner with the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, or OISE, as we know it. Based on the efforts of a working group, the representatives were able to produce a new educational resources section of the Archives website, and both partners had been working on developing this in a more vibrant way.

The Archives of Ontario, in co-operation with Historica, a national not-for-profit organization devoted to the promotion of Canadian history, created the Archives of Ontario Award, to be given at Historica's history fairs held throughout Ontario. This award recognizes outstanding student achievement for the best use of original records related to history. Thousands of Ontario elementary and middle school students participate in the Historica history fairs programs each year.

We have been making the Archives more accessible. The Archives of Ontario's virtual exhibits program continues to be one of the most popular features on the Archives' website. The online exhibits section of the website regularly receives tens of thousands of visits each month. It showcases some of the Archives' most interesting records in an accessible and interesting way.

Last year, to recognize the 175th anniversary of the Rideau Canal and its appointment as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, the Archives of Ontario mounted Eye-witness: Thomas Burrowes on the Rideau Canal. Thomas Burrowes worked on the Rideau Canal during its construction and documented his experience in watercolour paintings. The Archives has 115 of his paintings in its collection, and many of them are presented in this exhibit.

Some upcoming exhibits include an overview of the government's promotion of good health and a history of all the Premiers of Ontario.

In addition to making its materials more accessible throughout the province, the Archives has also been actively modernizing its processes and services. The Archives and Recordkeeping Act, 2006, came into effect on September 1, 2007, bringing the Archives into the modern, electronic age. That act replaced the act from 1923; I think you can appreciate that there have been many changes since then. We are developing and implementing a strategic plan for the management of electronic records. We are improving public access to archival records by developing and implementing databases describing these records more effectively. We are implementing a new computerized inventory control system for tracking these records more effectively. We have inspected 300,000 containers of archival records and their contents to ensure that they are appropriate as archival records. We're moving our archival records to a new state-of-the-art storage facility suitable for much more long-term preservation of our records. Finally, I think many of you are aware that we are moving the main building to York University in 2009.

The Auditor General said that protecting and preserving records is of prime importance, and we agree. As I said, the Archives has recently moved over 300,000 feet

of archival records to our new state-of-the-art storage facility, and in that, we also have built cool storage capability that is better for our photos and film records. The government has also entered into a 35-year lease with York University, which I've mentioned.

The auditor noted that the activities of the government are increasingly being documented by electronic records. The long-term maintenance of archival electronic records for hundreds of years is an issue in the entire archival community worldwide. It is the subject of ongoing research and debate.

The Archives has recently completed a strategic plan for archiving electronic records so that issues around arrangement, description and access for electronic records can be identified and addressed. The plan was developed after researching activities in other jurisdictions, such as Australia, the EU and the United States. The plan identifies goals and activities to help reach these goals and will be implemented over the next four years.

The Archives is currently developing a strategic plan for the digitization of archival records and is undertaking several pilot projects so that the public interest is served.

The auditor pointed out that the Archives' obligation to manage the volume of stored government records is also important. Under the Archives and Recordkeeping Act, the Archives established requirements for ministries to prepare record schedules that specify how long government records are kept and whether they are destroyed or transferred to the Archives at the end of their operational life. The Archives only retains those records with permanent and historical significance and is continuously refining and improving its processes to accomplish this.

The Archives recently re-engineered procedures for processing the annual transfer of government records. This new process involves the inspection of each container and ensures that the archives is retaining only the right records.

The Archives has increased its holding of electronic records to 817 gigabytes in the past year, and this total is continuing to increase.

Although we have been aggressively implementing the actions that were recommended in the Auditor General's report, there is still much more to be done.

At this point, I would like to pause and just thank the staff of the Archives of Ontario, who have been working for several years now to update our facility and our records management and our storage capability. I believe they have done an outstanding job and are up to continuing to work at improving this very vital function.

I am confident that the Archives of Ontario will continue to become world-renowned as a leader in its field, especially once it moves to the new facility.

Mr. Chair, I would like to thank you again for this opportunity and thank the Auditor General again for his report. The Archivist of Ontario will make a few comments as well.

**0950**

**Ms. Miriam McTiernan:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, for inviting us here today to talk about the progress of the

Archives of Ontario. I am Miriam McTiernan, the Archivist of Ontario, and I would just like to elaborate on some of the points made by Deputy Minister DiEmanuele.

The Archives of Ontario was established in 1903. This is Canada's largest provincial archives. Our mission is to identify and preserve Ontario's documentary memory, and to promote and facilitate its use. Our mission is also to provide innovative leadership in managing information to support accountable government.

The Archives of Ontario is a leader in customer service, dedicated to identifying and responding to the evolving needs of our customers.

We're very proud of our past. We're vastly excited about our future. Next year, as the deputy said, we will be moving to a purpose-built facility on the Keele campus of York University. This is the first time in the 106-year history of the Archives that we will have suitable facilities for archival preservation.

I appreciate that the Auditor General's 2007 annual report noted that the Archives had been making progress in improving its operations. In fact, the Archives had been making a great deal of progress prior to the report. The Archives agrees with the auditor that the activities of government are increasingly being documented by electronic records. In fact, they are now more often the only record. As the auditor noted, the volume of archival material entering the Archives in electronic form so far is minimal; however, that volume will be increasing over the next decade.

We recently completed an extensive research project to identify best practices in archival electronic records, resulting in a plan called the strategic plan for archival electronic records. This plan identifies the need to develop an approach that is flexible and adaptable to accommodate varying formats of electronic records while preserving authentic and meaningful records.

We can, for example, identify original paper records, and we need to be able to assure ourselves that electronic records are authentic, that they were created by the right person, and that no subsequent changes were made. Also, as electronic records are migrated, we want to make sure that the information can still be accessed as anticipated.

The auditor recommended that the Archives should, in collaboration with ministries and agencies, develop strategies and timetables for reducing the growth in and minimizing the volume of records that require storage. The Archives is committed to retaining only those records with permanent and historical significance.

We recently re-engineered the procedures for processing the annual transfer of government records. This new process, which involves an inspection of each container, ensures that the Archives is retaining only the right records. Records assessed as not being significant are identified for destruction and not added to the inventory. In addition, we have developed selection strategies for some high-volume groups of records where only a representative sample is retained. Through these

measures, 21% of containers in the annual transfer have been selected for destruction as a result of this work.

We welcome the auditor's suggestion to invite ministry internal auditors to conduct a thorough assessment of our inventory and security controls, and we are pleased to note the auditor's acknowledgement of the substantial progress made in gaining better inventory controls over the collections in recent years.

We agree with the auditor's recommendation to improve access to archival collections, and we have begun a thorough review of records not listed or fully described in the Archives descriptive database.

The archival collections are currently available to our clients through a variety of means. We have a listing of all containers in the container tracking system, which contains a high-level contents list of each container. A subset of those containers in the container tracking system is also available in legacy paper-based inventories and lists, which provide a more detailed description of the container, and the Archives descriptive database, which provides searchable detailed information of collections and containers online.

The long-term goal of the Archives is to have all collections available through the descriptive database. Indeed, timelines are being developed; however, our major focus is preparing the collections for their physical move to our brand new facility in April 2009.

The Archives agrees that protecting and preserving records is of prime importance. We acted immediately on the auditor's observations about environmental controls and monitoring in the records centres. We installed temperature and humidity data capture devices throughout both the provincially owned and the private sector facilities, and we're developing the protocols for monitoring and acting on the results.

We have taken corrective action in the artworks storage area and increased monitoring there. Our new facility at York University will contain a vault specifically for the storage of artworks to ensure that the temperature and humidity requirements are met.

The Archives agrees with the Auditor's recommendation that the confidentiality of records and storage be protected, and that service providers are in compliance with the security and confidentiality requirements of their contracts.

New contracts are being developed for private sector storage of records. Internal protocols for the procurement process around these contracts, with particular attention to the management of procurement documents, will be revised and enhanced.

Within the contracts themselves, requirements to ensure privacy and security will be strengthened, including hiring criteria for the private sector staff. In addition, protocols for ensuring adherence to contractual requirements will be developed and monitored on a prescribed schedule.

As you can see, we've done a great deal of work to improve and modernize the Archives of Ontario. We now have the legislation and we will soon have the infra-

structure to fully realize our potential to preserve the past for all Ontarians. There is still a lot of work to be done, but as we move forward, I am confident that the Archives' star will shine brightly in our new state-of-the-art facility.

Thank you, Mr. Chair, for this opportunity to shed some light on the progress of the Archives of Ontario. I would like to invite you all to visit us in our new home this time next year.

**The Chair (Mr. Norman W. Sterling):** Thank you very much. Mr. Zimmer.

**Mr. David Zimmer:** Just to set the groundwork for this morning's discussion, I'm trying to get myself into the head of an archivist, how you go about thinking through these issues.

How does an archivist, who has the responsibility to decide what they're going to save, what they're not going to save—what's the thought process that goes on? An archivist who has been sent a bunch of records from the Attorney General's office and the archivist doesn't have any particular legal background, or perhaps it's something from the Ministry of Finance that might be arcane financial documents, and ditto that for the other ministries—mining and so forth. How does the archivist approach that problem in their mind—what to hang on to and what not to hang on to?

**Ms. Miriam McTiernan:** That's probably one of the most fundamental activities of an archivist. That's what they're trained to do. How we go about it is, to use your example of the Ministry of Finance, we would look at the Ministry of Finance as a whole: what its key core activities are; what its key decision-making items include; where the key parts of its service delivery to the public are; how it interacts with the public—where all of those were. And based on that initial high-level review, we would drill down, and as we looked at a division or a branch, the work would be to identify what the best record is. What is the best record that identifies how decisions were taken, how there are interactions with the public? On that basis, we would write a report.

How we have worked on that in the Archives to make sure that we're really doing the right thing is an individual archivist will write a report. We then peer review it, to ensure that we bring all of our good minds to bear. Then the final report comes to me for decision-making. But we do a lot of work to make sure that we're thinking through what the best record is and how to keep it.

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**Mr. David Zimmer:** Just to follow up on that question: How often would the archivist call up the folks at the Ministry of Finance and say, "I don't understand this," "Can you explain this?" or "Should we hang on to this?" What's your opinion at the ministry on this?

**Ms. Miriam McTiernan:** In terms of understanding how the records work, which is where the ministries have the best knowledge, the archivist would spend a lot of time talking to the ministry person most responsible for the records. You need to understand how the ministries

are using them, what they believe is important in them and where they believe the best record is. So we work closely with the ministries in writing the initial report.

**Mr. David Zimmer:** My third question, then: Is there something akin to a triage process? So the archivist looks at a huge whack of material from the Ministry of Finance, quickly says off the top of his or her head, "This doesn't warrant any further inquiry or concern or anything. We're just going to deep-six this and we're going to make our analysis on the remaining." Is there that sort of triage function or does everything end up in the hopper?

**Ms. Miriam McTiernan:** We conduct what are called functional analyses; they're archival appraisal documents. They're done at the high level of the ministry, so it will look at the ministry as a whole. In that, we will often identify areas where there are records that we know have no archival value. If a schedule comes in for that, it will get a quick look to make sure that there's nothing in there that we've not been aware of, but it won't get the full-on analysis and appraisal.

I think there are some very easy decisions. There are those kinds of basic types of daily transactional records that we don't keep, and then the high-level records in the deputy's office that we know we have to keep. It's the records in the middle that really need the careful thought, so that's where we devote our efforts.

**Ms. Michelle DiEmanuele:** Mr. Zimmer, if I could also add, it is a two-pronged partnership. Within the ministry itself, one of the benefits of the new piece of legislation is that we're being clear about the roles and responsibilities with respect to records management and the kind of triage you're talking about. The new legislation is in place that says that ministries now have a very clear role they must play. We have policies and procedures that help them do that first cull as well, and then take it over to the archives, where further work is done.

Miriam and her group have an important educational role that they now play across an all-of-government approach. It used to be much more fragmented several years ago and we've worked to try to bring it in as a network of records management with clearer accountability and much more direction around that kind of triage approach, to use your language. It happens all through the organization, not just within the archivist area.

**Mr. David Zimmer:** And finally, to use your expression, this idea that there's high-level document stuff—obviously, you're going to hang on to that; it's easy to decide to hang on to it—there's the clutter at the bottom and, as you said, the in-between, which is the really hard work, in terms of keeping it or not keeping it. In a typical ministry, what would the breakdown be of high-level, this middle piece where you've really got to think it through, and the junk? Is it 30-30-30?

**Ms. Michelle DiEmanuele:** That's very difficult to answer. If you look at the Ministry of the Attorney General, for instance, and you think about the nature of its business, there's a much higher level of retention of records versus other parts of government, which

wouldn't have some of the same legislative requirements etc. It's very hard to give you a sense of that. What I can tell you is that each business is looked at very uniquely so that we don't just make improper assumptions around that kind of split.

I would say that from a ministry perspective, the ministries probably err more on the side of caution and leave some of those adjudicative processes and judgment calls to those who are trained to do it.

**The Chair (Mr. Norman W. Sterling):** Are there any other questions from the Liberal caucus at this time? If not, we'll go to Mr. Hardeman.

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** Thank you very much for your presentation. I appreciate the work that the archivists do. Following up on Mr. Zimmer's question about how you decide the records that are worth saving: Over time, how do we deal with the fact that something seemed like a real, saveable record today, and as the world turns, 10 or 20 years later, if you look at the significance of those records that you have no room for because capacity is all used up—how do you decide on the importance of all the records? Does the importance stay the same? If you've decided today that that's the record that needs saving, can we be assured that 50 years from now that's still the record that society most wants?

**Ms. Miriam McTiernan:** That's a really good question about an ongoing issue that we deal with. As we move on, and as we look at records that we thought were worth keeping, as we reappraise records that are coming in, we will actually go back and say, "We only now need to keep a representative sample of that record." In my remarks I mentioned that we had destroyed 21% of the annual transfer. That had also been applied retroactively. If we make a selection decision, we apply it retroactively so we're not constantly keeping records.

Records also spend time in the records centre, where there's still a ministry custody. That also gives us some time to think about whether we want to take the full body or a selection body. That kind of constant rethinking, reappraising and looking at what's going on in the world, what research interests that we're aware of, happens every year.

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** In the auditor's report there are also some comments comparative to other jurisdictions, the number of records that we're saving as a percentage of those that come from the storage of the ministry, and you make your evaluation of which ones should be put into the archives. We have a very high percentage that makes the archives compared to other jurisdictions. Could you give me a reason for that?

**Ms. Miriam McTiernan:** I think what happens is that the records that go to the records centre are records where there needs to be a retention period. In the last six months, we have developed a schedule for transitory records, where we're saying to ministries, "Don't send these records to the records centre; destroy them on site." So when records go to the records centre, they're going to be there either because ministries will need them for business or because we want to have another look at

them at the end of their time period. But, as I say, for those big volume groups of records, we do implement selection strategies at the time of bringing them into the archives, so that what we actually take into the archives is in line with what goes on across Canada.

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** In that same vein, if you look at the comparators across Canada, is the type of record you would save based on being an archivist regardless of where they work or run the archives, or is that also based on the local environment, as to which letter and how extensively each issue needs to be archived as opposed to all the paper that exists dealing with that subject?

**Ms. Miriam McTiernan:** It's a mixture of both. I participate in a group called the Council of Provincial and Territorial Archivists, and we talk a lot about some of the big issues, like the big-volume court records that we have to deal with. We will look at what each other is doing and then take it back and see how well it will work. We have to do what's right for Ontario, which might be quite different from what's right for other organizations. Their volume might not be the same as ours, but we do talk a lot about it because it's always good to get many ideas and thoughts on each issue. We do pay attention, but we also have to think about what's right here.

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** I still haven't quite got a handle on what is archived. That's not the fault of your explanation; it's my not understanding the whole program. In very simple terms: Obviously you know what I've got on my desk here and what's circulated in this room for this meeting, what the auditor prepared to facilitate this meeting. What part of what's being used here this morning will I be able to find in the Archives of Ontario 25 years from now?

**Ms. Michelle DiEmanuele:** What we're doing today.

**Ms. Miriam McTiernan:** Yes. You will find all of it because we maintain Hansard as a permanent record.

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**Ms. Michelle DiEmanuele:** And you'll most likely find my opening statement, not only in Hansard, but when I do the archival work within my own office it will be an official address, for instance, that I would have given, so I will send that in to the official records of this ministry. There are, for instance, a series of e-mails that went back and forth in the preparations of the deputy minister. Most likely some of that would be included, again, to give one a representation of that event that occurred in the Ministry of Government and Consumer Services at a point in time, as an example.

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** So everything of significance that involved setting up this meeting and getting us here and the discussion today is archived in its individuality and then it's re-archived. And the auditor's report, obviously, will be in the archives somewhere—what he told us. So going back in history, 25 years ago, we should be able to recreate from your material this meeting.

**Ms. Miriam McTiernan:** We certainly should, yes.

**Ms. Michelle DiEmanuele:** A representative sample of events, yes. Maybe not my phone call to the Auditor

General, asking why we had been selected, but everything else will be there.

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** If that's the case, is it likely that future generations will require that much information from our archives? What will it generate 100 years from now?

**Ms. Miriam McTiernan:** It's fascinating to me what people come to the archives to look at. We just never can tell. I see all the time the requests we get for the freedom-of-information applications, so I see the types of things. We have people coming to look at records of their parents, their grandparents. We have researchers doing demographic studies. We have people doing geographic studies. We just never can tell. I mean, the uses are amazing. Political science students may come and look at how the public accounts committee functioned, how it worked with the Auditor General. Given the interest in that type of thing, I imagine people will still be looking at it.

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** Thank you very much. I'd just like to point out that I hope the record will note that this public accounts committee functioned extremely well.

**Ms. Michelle DiEmanuele:** Mr. Hardeman, I was just going to add also that I think one of the areas—again, I mentioned it in my opening statement—is the whole area of electronic record-keeping. I can envision, 50 years from now, that this is the part of history as it relates to both the archives and our information and information technology area, where people will look back and think through how we made decisions about moving from basically a paper-based democratic set of processes to what I think will look very different 50 years from now. You can see where this, from a historical standpoint, is probably a very important point in history.

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** It's interesting, Madam Minister, that you brought that up. The question that I think arises from the auditor's report is whether we have done a sufficiently adequate job of documenting and archiving that transition, whether we have enough electronic archives so that future generations will be able to see that we did a reasonable job making that transition, as opposed to all of a sudden waking up at some time and saying, "We have lost, or we have not got in our archives, 20 years of electronic records."

**Ms. Michelle DiEmanuele:** Let me address that quite specifically, because I have to say I do think a lot about that. Particularly as we move our facility, one can't help but think about the archives of the future. So there are three or four foundation pieces that you should be aware of that we've worked very hard on over the last two or three years in this ministry to actually set a foundation for moving forward.

The first thing we did: We actually brought in a new piece of legislation that for the first time recognizes electronic records, which had not been there before. It had not been envisioned in 1923.

The second thing I did as Deputy Minister was that I actually brought together all of the various parts of the—if I can use the phrase—supply chain management of

information. So we had an archive, we had a records management area, and we had our information and information technology area, which also houses our privacy and access to information components. You can see, if those were in three distinct areas, there is an opportunity for some disconnect or disjointedness in how we're providing a service. Now the Archives of Ontario is quite attached to our information and information technology area, so I think you can see there is a nice movement forward in thinking through how we actually make that supply chain work more effectively.

The third thing that we're doing is obviously the new building, which has so much more capability than our traditional archival processes and procedures, and also moving us into the new age of technology and bringing the archives to the public in a much different way.

All of these have set a foundation, and our CIO for the organization, Mr. McKerlie, may want to say a couple of things on this particular item, because we have been actually beginning to develop that strategic capability around information management in the electronic age.

Let me just finish by saying that this is a new and emerging area that all archives are certainly thinking through and dealing with. Because of our size and our activities, we are one of those who are aggressively active in and also have some influence in this area because of the archivists' reputation. So we are making some strides, but I'll let Mr. McKerlie make a few final comments on it.

**Mr. Ron McKerlie:** Thanks. It might be helpful just to give you some background in terms of what we're doing before the information gets to the archives to try to make it a little bit more manageable and make sure we are saving the right stuff and preparing the information appropriately.

Right now, we manage for the OPS some 600 terabytes of electronic mail information, electronic records like Word documents and so on. That would be the equivalent of about 600 million books' worth of information. It's growing at about 30% a year, so it's a significant volume.

In 2006, we set up the office of the corporate chief information and privacy officer, and we were fortunate enough to attract Dr. Mark Vale. Dr. Vale has a Ph.D. in information economics from Stanford University. He practised information management for 20 years in Canada. In fact, he is the pre-eminent information management guru probably in the country. He worked for many of the provinces and the federal government, and has helped us a great deal in terms of putting some structure in place and working with the deputies and the ADMs around preparing information, what information to keep, how to keep it, what retention should look like in electronic format, and really doing the precursor work to the time that they're ready to hand it over to the archives.

Our goal, and it will take some more work—clearly there's lots to be done—is to make sure that we do a better job managing information—structured and unstructured electronic information—and keeping track of

it. One of the challenges we have, if you can imagine that much electronic information, is the search capability and being able to find what you need when you need it. So some of our efforts are around improving search capabilities.

The other challenge we have, of course, in the electronic space, and I'll just try to be quick here, is that the media keep changing. It's difficult to predict what software and hardware will be required a generation from now to be able to read the information. It's not unique to Ontario; all jurisdictions are dealing with the same challenge. It's one of the reasons that we have used the microfiche, because it has about a 500-year lifespan. It's one of the few technologies, as old as it is, that will be around for a very, very, very long time, and it's why financial institutions and others have chosen not to move off it for some of their critical records. So we will continue to support that because we think it will be around for many generations to come. But we do have some challenges around that.

I hope that helps.

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** Thank you.

I have another question, and this is the challenge of not being able to keep up, shall we say, in the documents coming from the storage to the archives. This is a local question from my involvement with the people in my riding when I get calls about information they want and it's old enough that it's not in the ministry anymore, but it's not old enough to be in the archives yet. That's where our generation, our people, have need for records. It's great to work with the archives and such for authors, genealogists and so forth, but the average John Q. Public wants information that's still in their lifetime. There's an awful lot of that sitting in transition, shall we say. The archives don't know which box it's in, and the ministry says, "Well, it must be with the archives because it's no longer with us." How do we deal with that?

1020

**Ms. Michelle DiEmanuele:** Mr. Hardeman, I would certainly be interested in any specific issues that you would like to talk to me about afterwards, but I can tell you that overall, the first point I would want to make is that there is no document in transition per se, because there is always an owner. So even before the archives accept that record, the ministry still owns it, regardless of where it is, and has a responsibility under the act and under our procedures to own it.

I can tell you that, on average, we're retrieving those records within 48 hours. So if there's a particular issue that has been brought to your attention, I would be more than happy to deal with you more directly, but that's our metric around retrieval of those records.

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** Thank you.

**The Chair (Mr. Norman W. Sterling):** I'm trying to summarize what we're talking about. There are sort of three keepers of the records, or three stages to it: the ministry, number one. Am I correct to assume that almost all of the ministry's records go into the temporary storage area?

**Ms. Michelle DiEmanuele:** Not all of them.

**The Chair (Mr. Norman W. Sterling):** Do you know what percentage that would be, or can you guesstimate that?

**Ms. Miriam McTiernan:** I couldn't really, but, as I said to you, in the last six months we did issue a schedule for transitory records, saying to people, "Don't store these. Throw them out as soon as you no longer need them." But a lot of records have anywhere between a five- and seven-year retention period before they get destroyed. All of those would go to the records centre, because it's going to be much more cost-effective storage than keeping it in office space, where you're paying a lot of money per square foot. So we would be encouraging ministries to send those, and then at the end of the five- or seven-year period, we would be destroying them.

**The Chair (Mr. Norman W. Sterling):** And the ministry tags about 60% of those, according to the auditor, that are destined to arrive in the archives. Is that correct?

**Ms. Miriam McTiernan:** The average number, based on what we take in, is around 3% to 5%, what we actually retain permanently. As I said, a lot of material goes to the records centre, and then, before we acquire it into the archives, we'll select or we may make the decision that we don't wish to acquire any more. But based on what is destroyed, what we take in and what's still there, it's between 3% and 5%. It depends on how many court records we're taking in in any year.

**Ms. Michelle DiEmanuele:** Some of those records that are in that holding pattern—

**The Chair (Mr. Norman W. Sterling):** Temporary storage.

**Ms. Michelle DiEmanuele:** Temporary storage—are really there because of legislative kinds of requirements. We know we need to keep them for a period of time, but we also know they're likely not archival material, which I think is the distinction.

**The Chair (Mr. Norman W. Sterling):** Can I have the auditor—because we're getting an entirely different story or information than—

**Mr. Jim McCarter:** Maybe it's just a clarification, and maybe we need some help too.

**Ms. Michelle DiEmanuele:** It's a language issue, maybe.

**Mr. Jim McCarter:** We looked at the number of records in what we have called in the in-camera briefing "temporary storage." It looked to us like 60% of those records were being designated to be transferred to the archives, which we thought was a pretty high number, based on some anecdotal evidence we had from talking to the Toronto archivists from the feds. We had a quote basically from the US National Archives which indicated around 3%, so the feedback we had was that 3% to 5% of all the records to eventually go to the archives was about the right number.

Then, Ms. McTiernan, I noticed you mentioned that of the records, once they go from the temporary storage, if I understand it, to the actual archives, then you do a thorough review to make sure it's really archival, and of

those you're rejecting about 21% to say, "Do you know what? We don't agree; these should be destroyed." But if I understand, what you're saying is that at the end of all of this process, about 5% get into the archives.

**Ms. Michelle DiEmanuele:** Mr. McCarter, if I can, that's an important clarification, so let me see if I can give you the supply chain, Mr. Chair.

That's right: 60% are designated. "Designated" doesn't connote "accepted." It is high, as the Auditor General has indicated, and that is what the archivist was talking about with respect to working with ministries to be much clearer about what their role is in the preserving of information. We are probably receiving far too much. There's much more that ministries could be doing to cull, and we have a new piece of legislation that's clear about roles and responsibilities, new procedures that we've been working on, and the archivist has also been working on an overarching strategy that she will share with ministries so that we can be much more diligent at that front end.

As a deputy minister, I always would err more on the side of caution at that stage in the retention of records, as they go through this process, to make sure that we aren't in fact destroying something. It's a lot easier to make that decision down the supply chain correctly. If I destroy it up front, it's gone. So I think you'll always see it as a slightly higher number.

We believe we can get it down from the 60%. That's not only important in terms of the issues that we've talked about with respect to storage etc., but it does save taxpayers money in not storing unnecessary records. We have made some progress just recently, as the Archivist talked about, in terms of the destruction of some records.

**The Chair (Mr. Norman W. Sterling):** The problem is, you say 60% are designated, of the ones that are in temporary storage, to go into the archives. The Archivist said that you're rejecting 21%, I think, of the 60%. I don't know how you get down to 5%. That's the mathematics.

**Ms. Miriam McTiernan:** The 60% that the auditor reported are records that are in the records centre for anywhere from five to seven years to 100-plus years, so there is a great big number in there. It's the job of the records centre to retain records for as long as ministries feel they have a business need for them. We simply take, each year, what is destined for the archives in that given year, and in terms of the overall holdings, that averages between, as I say, 3% and 5%.

We've also implemented—this will be our third year—a process where we physically go through each box and we verify that this box is an actual box of archival records; if it's not, we destroy it. That's where we've begun to reject quite a bit more than we have in the past.

**The Chair (Mr. Norman W. Sterling):** The records centre must be ready to blow up, in terms of how many records it has, if you're only taking 5% out and there's 60% going in.

**Ms. Miriam McTiernan:** Remember, the records centre is also destroying quite a lot of records every year.

They destroy in the order of 30,000 to 50,000 feet. So they're actually doing quite a bit of destruction each year, as well.

**The Chair (Mr. Norman W. Sterling):** That's of the 40% that aren't going to be retained. The 60% must be getting larger and larger every year. Is that correct?

**Ms. Miriam McTiernan:** There's certainly a growth in the amount of records in the records centre, and that's one of the areas that we wish to begin to address.

**Ms. Michelle DiEmanuele:** If I can say this, we have begun to address it, with respect to the work that we've been doing with ministries on what records should be designated to go to the centre.

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** On that same topic, just a clarification: Maybe I'm missing the point, but it seems to me that 60% of all the records are destined for the archives; 21% is refused before it goes to the archives. Is that right?

**Ms. Michelle DiEmanuele:** On an annual basis. If I can make a clarification, that 60% is not necessarily an annual number; the 21% is. That 60% could be records that should be retained for five years, seven years or 100 years.

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** I'm not interested in how long they're supposed to be retained. You said of those that were destined for the archives, you were rejecting 21%.

**Ms. Michelle DiEmanuele:** Of those that were destined for the archives, that were then in the queue for the archives to receive, which might not be the full 60% in any given year, 21% is being destroyed.

**Ms. Miriam McTiernan:** The records centre does not send 60% to us each year.

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** When you say 5% go into the archives, what is that 5% of?

**Ms. Miriam McTiernan:** It's the 5% of the total holdings of the records centre on an annual basis.

**Ms. Michelle DiEmanuele:** If the principal point is, do we have a storage issue, the answer is yes.

As the auditor noted in the report, we've been working through a number of processes that start also with much more effective inventory of what records we have. We've been doing that. We've been working through the procedures that ministries should be following and that triage we talked about early on, that it isn't just happening at the back end of the process; it's much more effectively happening at the front end of the process. We are working within the archivists' shop on making sure that we are going back and looking at records and destroying what doesn't need to be retained.

**1030**

I think it's fair to say we started a series of processes to deal with storage issues, and we'll be continuing to do more. In my view, that was the principal point that the Auditor General was making to me as the deputy minister, and he's correct.

**The Chair (Mr. Norman W. Sterling):** I think the real difference is the numbers; your 5% is 5% of many years of collection in the records centre. We were talking about annual numbers in terms of this growth, so the 5%

doesn't really indicate to us how much of each year you're keeping.

**Ms. Michelle DiEmanuele:** Mr. Chair, maybe that's something I could provide the committee. I could give you the last three years of what we see as the net growth of the collection. Would that be helpful?

**The Chair (Mr. Norman W. Sterling):** I think that would be helpful.

**Ms. Michelle DiEmanuele:** Okay, I will do that.

**The Chair (Mr. Norman W. Sterling):** Ms. Horwath, thank you for your patience.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** That's okay. It was a good discussion. It was important to get some of that stuff clarified.

I want to go back to the issue about identifying which kinds of records are part of the supply chain, if you will. When you talked about, in describing for this committee's purposes, what would have been archived or what will be archived, you said something about what won't be in the records is your phone call to Jim saying, "Why are you picking on us?" Are sensitive records kept; for example, briefing notes, ministers' briefing notes, e-mail, politically sensitive things? Is that part of the history of how an event goes down?

**Ms. Michelle DiEmanuele:** Let me tell you the chain of events that I would have gone through. Public accounts is a very important process for the deputy minister. This is probably the single most important thing I do as a deputy, to be accountable to the Legislature of Ontario. It is a series of events that I run as deputy minister. I keep my minister informed, but my minister doesn't direct me as it relates to public accounts. I think that's an important distinction as well.

I would have received a call. Our Auditor General has, I would say, an informal policy whereby he always calls to say, "Heads up. You're getting chosen." After having had a discussion with you, he usually gives you his sense of generally what he thinks the soft spots are in the report, as a little bit of a guide to prepare, but it wouldn't be much more than that. I don't think Jim and I spoke more than about a minute and a half in that conversation. That probably isn't in the official records because he called me on my direct line. Had he called me through the main line, it would have been logged etc.

Once that happens, I initiate a meeting. That meeting invitation will be in the records for this ministry. There will be a series of briefing notes that would have been prepared for me, Q&A that I would've asked the staff to prepare for me, and the statement that I made today. I typically ask the staff to get me what I call killer facts. I think you heard Mr. McKerlie use a killer fact that still blows me away in terms of the 30% growth of our electronic capability every year. Those kinds of things would be compiled into, in fact, this binder that I have. That virtually becomes the official record for me as the deputy minister as it relates to this event.

My calendar, for instance, has been kept, so you could trace all the meetings I've had in preparation. I think there's probably been three in total, maybe four. Basic-

ally, after today, the final version of my speech would be kept, and the Q&A. All of that will be kept and stored.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** I guess what I'm getting at, outside of this context—this is the one example we're using, but there have to be all kinds of other situations where policy is being developed and where ministers are involved and where briefing notes go back and forth and where, ultimately, decisions are made that then become a part of our history as a province. Are all of those kinds of pieces maintained as well?

**Ms. Michelle DiEmanuele:** Absolutely.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** So even confidential briefing notes between ministers and their staff?

**Ms. Michelle DiEmanuele:** Absolutely. That's all governed under our freedom of information and privacy act as well, so it's not just through the archival rules but also through other pieces of legislation where there is very clear direction on what should and shouldn't be kept and what shouldn't be destroyed as it relates to the decision-making of government.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** This is where I actually want to end up, which is, how, then, does the Archives of Ontario make sure that these—where's the accountability piece? How does your organization make sure that something that might be pretty politically a hot potato, or whatever, not just accidentally get put through the shredder? How does that happen?

**Ms. Michelle DiEmanuele:** Frankly, that is a major accountability of a deputy minister under our privacy and access to information act and through other pieces of legislation, where we have a responsibility to keep the official records between the elected members of the cabinet and the civil service of Ontario.

For instance, in terms of the relationship between a minister and, say, my office, all of the decisions related to that information that is contained in my office, the assistant deputy ministers' offices or the directors' offices are made by me, the deputy, not by the minister of the crown. Equally, the minister of the crown has a responsibility as an executive council member on what he should or shouldn't retain, and that is in fact governed by the executive council office. So that's where the accountability would rest there.

The chief privacy and information officer, which actually was a new position we added into the Ministry of Government Services over the last couple of years, was actually a specific recommendation by our chief privacy commissioner, Ms. Cavoukian. We accepted that recommendation, and he spends a great deal of time educating our senior civil servants and those folks designated to do a lot of the work in this area, making sure there are no grey areas where people are then making decisions that would be inappropriate. So we spend a lot of time in this area.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** So as you're going through the process of trying to work with the ministries to make sure that they are focusing in on the things that need to be retained and not retained, is this all part of that process?

**Ms. Michelle DiEmanuele:** When I talked about bringing those three areas together, it now does create a supply chain. So you have in Mr. McKerlie's shop the chief privacy and information officer as well as all the rules designated around some of the information management, as well as the archivist act etc. All of those become the set of principles that govern us. Then you have within the ministry the responsibilities for making that initial triage that we talked about under that governance structure. But now there's one place to go to get answers when you are either confused or you don't understand or it's a grey area. You've got all of the expertise in one area. So that kind of peer review and discussion occurs. Then once ministries have made those decisions, and you've already heard that ministries tend to err on being more generous in what they send so that there isn't the destruction of a record that shouldn't occur, that happens; it's then that the archivist would be looking at that. When they are going through and deciding what to receive, they don't just use the act itself; they're looking at all of the legislation that governs the people of Ontario with respect to whether it's retention legislation, like employment standards records, for instance, or other pieces of the act that are so critical and core to a business. Of course, we would retain those records and everything in between. It is a supply chain, and today much more than it was a decade ago.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Thanks. I'm wondering as well about the issue of the temporary storage. I know we've talked about that a lot, but I need to get a handle on what kind of record needs to be kept for 100 years, temporarily, as opposed to archived? The reason I'm asking this is because it piqued my interest. Are there particular ministries that tend to have a lot more stuff in the temporary records than others? If you could expound on that, that would be helpful. Then, also, what kinds of materials need to be temporarily stored for 100 years, or 50 or—I couldn't really tell from the report and reading through the materials what that looks like.

**Ms. Michelle DiEmanuele:** Let me tackle the differences between ministries. The Archivist may have more to say on that, and then she can go into much more detail about the actual storage lifespan.

There are ministries that absolutely do retain more records than other ministries. The Ministry of the Attorney General would be, for instance, one of our best customers. Our ministry retains a fair number of records because we have many of the employment records that we have responsibilities to keep. We do a lot of the work in terms of transfers with Revenue Canada etc. So there are some legislative responsibilities for us to retain records longer, certainly, than other ministries.

Obviously, your larger ministries will have more information to retain, such as the Ministry of Finance or the Ministry of Correctional Services. They are just large in nature. Then you have smaller ministries that would obviously have less information to retain. So it is a bit of a grab bag, but I think there's a logic to it. If you think about the Ministry of the Attorney General, as one of our

partners in this, given the nature of their work, there are many issues today before that ministry where they are looking at records that are hundreds of years old, if you think of the issues of land claims.

**1040**

**Ms. Miriam McTiernan:** As the deputy said, in answer to your question, the Ministry of the Attorney General is actually our largest customer when it comes to records, and that's obviously court records. They would have a long retention period because we would never be clear when people would need to come back. In fact, in the past, there has been some destruction that has caused us issues as we go forward. Another type of record that would have a very long retention period would be correction services individual records—again, for the same reason that people might need access to them on an ongoing basis. And records that I remember that have that very long period, or records where the legal departments are concerned about litigation and long-term litigation, so they want the records kept for a long period of time—if ministries feel that they have a strong business need to keep them, and they have to pay for the storage, then we will respect their wishes. So those are the types of things where we know there will be ongoing issues that might come up.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** I wanted to go one more step with this and ask whether or not the temporary storage facility can be used as a way to hold onto records that ministries don't want to have in the permanent archives, and thereby have more public access to them. Do you know what I'm saying? My understanding is that a temporary storage facility has, really, no public access. While they're there, there's not public access, unless—and maybe you can clarify this, Deputy. You had said that somebody can access this information, that it's a 48-hour turnaround. Is that what you're saying?

**Ms. Michelle DiEmanuele:** Yes.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** So the temporary records don't prevent public access.

**Ms. Michelle DiEmanuele:** Absolutely not. We've structured it in a way to ensure that that access is as quick as possible, and the public—actually, let me start from a different vantage point. If those records are needing to be accessed, ministries will make a determination initially if that's an access point that they can just naturally do or if it would be subject to freedom of information, and then it would go through that process. But it's absolutely accessible, and certainly by legislation it is.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** That's great.

I had one other question, at this point, anyway, about the issue around our art collection. Someone had mentioned to me that there had been a significant aboriginal art collection that had been donated in the 1980s to the province of Ontario. Do we have a handle on that? Do we know where that is?

**Ms. Miriam McTiernan:** I'm not familiar with the specifics, so I'd be happy to get the information and get it back to you. But I don't know.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** You don't know?

**Ms. Miriam McTiernan:** I'm not familiar with the specifics of a donation in the 1980s.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** So you don't recall, through the process of going through the audit, whether there was an art collection donated from aboriginal—

**Ms. Miriam McTiernan:** No.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Okay. Those were my questions to this point.

**The Chair (Mr. Norman W. Sterling):** Mr. Sousa.

**Mr. Charles Sousa:** Congratulations. This is very impressive, given what I've heard today and what I've seen, and even through the auditor's report, who also acknowledged the fact that the Archives have done a good job in their improvements. Even when the auditor's report was coming out, there were a number of initiatives under way, and it's obvious to me now that you've taken great steps to move forward. It's an exciting time, especially with the move to the new building.

I have three questions. Let me start with the first one. How do we compare, versus other jurisdictions like the federal government or even some of the US states, in terms of our archival procedures and our reputation?

**Ms. Miriam McTiernan:** I think we compare very well on a number of dimensions. We have put a lot of time and effort into ensuring that our collections are described and that the descriptions are available electronically. I think we're far ahead of many other archives in terms of doing this. We also have put a lot of effort into customer service, ensuring that we can deal with people not just who come in the door but online, via e-mail or fax, so that we're responding and giving people what they need.

In the US the format is a little different. A state archives would not have the public and private the way we do, so comparisons are somewhat difficult. We look to the states for information on how to manage the government records because they've done a lot of good work on that. For example, Washington state is far ahead in terms of electronic records. We've been talking to them and understanding how they're doing it, so that we can emulate and do well with that. But in Canada, we are regarded as a leader in customer service in our descriptive activity and in how we're managing the government records.

**Mr. Charles Sousa:** Great. The other two are around the physical process. We've heard a little bit about the IT and it seems to be the way, moving forward, but we do have to deal with the physical aspect of archives. Can you elaborate? We've spoken about the improvement to the archives process. Can you elaborate a bit more on the control process? I'm thinking about bar coding or the tracking of the incoming acquisitions, as well as public access.

**Ms. Miriam McTiernan:** Since 2002, we've had a significant project under way to get control of our collection—inventory control. That has involved looking at each box, making sure the contents of the box are what the listing that we have available says they are, and then bar-coding the box so that we can control it when it's

happening everywhere. We're now through 80% to 85% of the collection and by the end of this year, December 2008, we will have all of our containers bar-coded. We have that significant drop-dead date of having to be ready to move to York and we wish to have everything under control so that when it leaves the Grenville site we know what's on a truck and when it arrives at York that the same materials arrive. Obviously, to have that kind of surety, we have to have everything inventoried and bar-coded.

**Mr. Charles Sousa:** Fantastic. I guess that was my last point—the actual identification of those bins. Some of the concern from the auditor was that we didn't know what was in them. With the move to the new building, it would seem to me that we do have a sufficient workforce to do the job. That was part of the issue, I think. The other one was public access, when they come to read of the activities and so forth. Those are the other two pieces that I was looking for.

**Ms. Miriam McTiernan:** One of the constraints that we have at the Grenville operation is that we have to run three reading rooms. So a customer has to move about the facility, depending on what they want to look at. When we move to York, it will be just one reading room. So for somebody coming in, they get to sit there and we provide them with all the material they want to see in one place. I think it will be a significant improvement. I think our customers will really enjoy it and they will have a much better level of access to all of our holdings as a result of the work that we're doing.

**Mr. Charles Sousa:** So all those bins will be identified, people will know what's in them, it will be clearly stated and we'll be ready for the move?

**Ms. Miriam McTiernan:** Yes, we will.

**Mr. Charles Sousa:** Good. Thank you.

**Mrs. Maria Van Bommel:** Thank you very much for being here today. Member Horwath brought up artwork. We've spent quite a bit of time talking about electronic records and paper records and that sort of thing. When it comes to donations from the public, such as artwork or artifacts, how do you decide what to take and what not to take, or do you just take everything that the public brings in? And again, how do you store that? We've talked about the environment for paper and that sort of thing, but certainly when you get into artifacts and artwork, environment is very important. And then how do you give the public access to it?

**Ms. Miriam McTiernan:** I'll answer that in two ways. First, speaking about archival records that are offered to us on donation, usually what we do is go through an appraisal process quite similar to what I described for government records. We look at how significant this is province-wide. We would rarely take something that was local, because we operate on the basis that local history is best kept locally. So we will always look at provincial significance, whether it be the organization, the person, the not-for-profit. If it is significant, then we will accept it.

We will talk to people about under what conditions they want to give it to us. We're very wary about any

long-term restrictions, because they're very difficult to administer. For example, if someone was to offer us something and say, "But I don't want this looked at for 200 years," the chances are we'd say, "We really don't want to take it and keep it because it wouldn't be accessible." Our goal is obviously to make materials available. We go through a process very similar to what we do with government records: The archivists appraise it, we peer-review the appraisal and we make a decision.

**1050**

For artwork, our curator will work closely with the person offering the artwork to us. What we're usually looking for is artwork that documents Ontario, and we of course want it to be available to put on walls for people to enjoy as a display collection. We have an excellent partnership with the Ontario Society of Artists, and in the past two years they've donated over 70 pieces of art that we will happily have up on the walls for everyone to enjoy. That's how the artwork comes in.

**Mrs. Maria Van Bommel:** Some of these pieces, I can well imagine, people would like to take. What kind of security would you be having in the new facility and do you currently have, and how do you handle situations where things have been taken?

**Ms. Miriam McTiernan:** Speaking first about the artwork—because we've actually been taking significant steps in the last little while—on an annual basis, we check that the pieces we're aware of are where we think they are. In terms of the ministries, deputy ministers' and ministers' offices, the CAO verifies that the pieces are available. In the past six months, we've completed a province-wide project. We've gone to the 37 towns and cities where our art is located in government buildings and we've physically verified that the material is there. We're also in the process of affixing the art to the walls with new kinds of hardware, new kinds of attachment devices that can only be removed with the consent of the curator. In that way, we'll be able to track.

The final piece is, we have a database where we have all of the pieces of art listed, and we have photographs and images so that we know what we have and where it is. Obviously, we want the art collection to be available. Public display is its function. This is how we're improving it.

The security of the new building for the archival collection is really much enhanced over what we have right now. We're going to have the storage on the second and third floors, which won't be accessible to the public, and we'll have very restricted access in terms of staff. So we will really be protecting the records in a much better way.

We had an internal audit to review our procedures. They're helping us, making sure we get it right, because obviously the security of the collection is of prime importance to us.

**Mrs. Maria Van Bommel:** So how do you handle recovery of things if they're stolen?

**Ms. Miriam McTiernan:** When we become aware of something being stolen, we've always dealt with the police, and I can give you an example. In 1999 and 2001,

some pieces were stolen from the Legislature. The police recovered all of the pieces in 2001. As soon as we become aware, we do call them, and we take it very seriously.

**Mrs. Maria Van Bommel:** You take it to the OPP and the police handle it?

**Ms. Miriam McTiernan:** Yes.

**Mrs. Maria Van Bommel:** Thank you.

**Ms. Michelle DiEmanuele:** Mr. Chair, when Ms. Horwath is back, I have the answer to her question on the aboriginal collection as well.

**The Chair (Mr. Norman W. Sterling):** Thank you very much.

Is there more volume in temporary storage than in the archives? What is the relative bulk or measure of those two facilities?

**Ms. Miriam McTiernan:** In temporary storage, we have over one million containers.

**The Chair (Mr. Norman W. Sterling):** And in the archives?

**Ms. Miriam McTiernan:** Just over 300,000.

**The Chair (Mr. Norman W. Sterling):** So the temporary storage is three times as large as the other one. In terms of volume in and volume out of temporary storage, is there more volume coming in than you are taking out, rejecting or is being destroyed each year?

**Ms. Miriam McTiernan:** We bring in a very little bit more to temporary storage than we actually destroy each year.

**The Chair (Mr. Norman W. Sterling):** Temporary storage is coming from the ministry, so that's a finite amount. On the outtake, there would be what is destroyed by the temporary storage people themselves, and 60% of it has been designated to go into the archives—so presumably, if it was there for seven years, that 40% would be an amount that would be destroyed by the temporary storage people. Then, of the 60% going to you or what you're considering, 21% of that is being destroyed, I assume, at that stage. So what they're getting rid of out of the temporary storage is still growing in total volume. In other words, instead of a million boxes next year, there are going to be a million-plus.

**Ms. Michelle DiEmanuele:** What I said is that I'd get you back a three-year history of what the growth is. I don't have the numbers with me. But I think your principal question is correct. Right now, if we don't continue to do some of the corrective actions that we've been taking over the last year or so, we could get ourselves into a storage issue, because there is an incremental growth, as you're pointing out. But we believe we've begun to address that through a number of activities. Certainly, again, working more vigilantly with ministries will also help, which I believe was one of the recommendations coming out of the report.

**The Chair (Mr. Norman W. Sterling):** I'm going to ask you this question on behalf of the committee after all the other questions have been done. If you have some ideas in terms of the committee making recommendations in our report that we will be writing to the

Legislature which will assist you in getting your message out to the ministries in terms of vigilance and what they're doing, we would love to hear those kinds of comments. In other words, our role here is not to be overly critical. On the other hand, we like to keep people's feet to the fire, in terms of having better administration of whatever the guidelines are and that kind of thing.

We still have some questions. I think you had an answer for Ms. Horwath on the aboriginal art question.

**Ms. Michelle DiEmanuele:** We think it may be. In 1985, we received a donation, through the Ontario Heritage Foundation, of three Norval Morrisseau pieces of work from John B. Carrel, so we believe that's probably the most significant we would have received in that time period related to aboriginal art.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Thank you.

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** One of the questions that one of my colleagues wanted me to deal with had to do with the maintenance and storage of the art collection that the Archives has. I think it was fairly much answered with Mrs. Van Bommel's questions—that, "We're not perfect yet, but when we get into new facilities, things will be much better." Is that the way to interpret it?

**Ms. Miriam McTiernan:** Yes. In the new facility, we'll have a vault that's specifically designed for the artwork, and all of the artwork that's not on display on government building walls will be stored there.

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** I know we're going to get some clarification on the numbers, but I want to go back to the storage and the 21%, but from a different perspective. When the material is directed to go to the Archives, it's based on a schedule that the ministry has, where some is going to be stored for this long and this long. When it gets to the time where it's going to be archived because it's the type of material that the ministry has decided should go to the Archives, if the Archives decides that it's not archiving material, does the ministry then reconsider whether they want to destroy it or whether they want to store it longer in temporary storage?

**Ms. Miriam McTiernan:** If I can just clarify, the way we do records retention schedules—which is how we determine how long records stay in a ministry, stay in temporary storage and whether or not they come to the Archives—is done in a collaborative way between the Archives and the ministries and now our new record-keeping support people. So we will have agreed at the start of the process that a record will stay in the ministry for this amount of time, stay in temporary storage, and then come to the Archives.

Should a ministry have a business need at the end of that period and may need to retain the records for another couple of years, we will then change the date based on their need, but we may not change the disposition. Usually, as we're acquiring the materials and doing the actual transfer into the Archives, that's when staff will make the determination that, "Sure, this decision was taken 20 years ago, but maybe these records should no longer come to the Archives." That's often how that pro-

cess that I described, where we did go back and destroy, comes about.

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** I want to go back to the amount of material that we're archiving. Going back to our meeting today, I find it interesting, and it may be a small, moot point: It was suggested that the Hansard would be archived for the meeting. We are also going to save the presentation the deputy minister made, separate from the Hansard, when the Hansard already has all that. Does that get weeded out or is it all in the boxes? Do we have duplications for everything that happened?

1100

**Ms. Michelle DiEmanuele:** That would get weeded out as you work through the process, but it would be incumbent upon me, as I said, to pull together what those official records might be within what I am responsible for. I think, as you work through the supply chain, that duplication absolutely would be weeded out. Frankly, it would be weeded out by the fact that at some point I'll receive the Hansard as well. That then allows us to make those kinds of decisions.

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** The Chairman mentioned the growth of the records in storage waiting to go into the archives. Obviously, because we're getting new facilities and so forth, the growth of the archives is happening too. As time goes on, if we go back into the archives, we will find from 100 years ago that the amount of information that needed to be saved from government operations was a much smaller bundle of goods than it is today. At some point, if we keep going that way, the storage facilities are not going to grow as fast as the product that needs to go into them. How do we deal with that? I mentioned earlier, before we started the public meeting, that I lived in my same house for 40 years. I was my own archivist, so I had to decide what in my life and in our family's life was worth saving. But after 40 years, I either had to build an addition on the house, which I couldn't afford, or I had to get rid of some of the things I had if I wanted to store any more of the new product coming in. How do we deal with that with the archives?

**Ms. Michelle DiEmanuele:** I'm actually going to ask our chief information officer to take a first crack at that and then we'll continue from there.

**Mr. Ron McKerlie:** As we move to electronic records, obviously we don't have a volume issue anymore and it's not necessary to have everything produced on paper. So if we can use the electronic record as the record of government in the future, that will be incredibly helpful.

The other thing it allows us to do is to come up with better online search tools so that when something is FOI-able, for example, the vision is that we would put that tool and capability in the hands of the public so they could come in and look at the information directly, either to get it under the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act or, if it's in the archives, they could actually view it online because it's already digitized. As we move more and more into the electronic phase, we get more and more comfortable with the electronic record. I

think that's part of the answer to your question, in the future, in terms of shrinking the physical space that you need to store all of this.

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** Going to the electronic, then, is it possible to change the product of today that's on paper to electronic media for storage purposes, so we wouldn't have to have the environment that we need for our paper archives?

**Mr. Ron McKerlie:** Some archives are starting to do that. It's not an inexpensive process, but everything can be scanned and digitized. There are machines capable today, for example, of going through books at many pages per second and treating the source material very gingerly and capturing the images digitally and so on. We are doing a couple of pilots within the archives—and the Archivist can talk about the pilots that are under way and planned—to start to digitize more information. Then the question becomes, do you need the source document, and in which cases do you need the source document kept? But absolutely, that's a part of the solution for the future. It's not inexpensive but it does preserve the document.

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** So as we're looking into the future—let's first go into the past for a year or two, when the decisions were being made to expand facilities and to build a new building for the archives and so forth. Are we also looking at, as we're generating information, making sure we generate as much of it as we can in a storable way so we don't have to store all the paper? Is that part of the study?

**Ms. Michelle DiEmanuele:** I think the Archivist referenced that this is an area where we've begun to do a lot of review and also partnership working with those folks. I think you mentioned Washington as being a leader in this particular area. So that is part and parcel, as we built the foundation I talked a little bit ago about—this is the area we're now heading into, which is giving much more direction around how to store. I think the chief information officer also mentioned that one of the things we have to take into consideration is, when we store it today, will it be readable tomorrow? These are some of the challenges that we're still facing, and I'm not sure I would say with confidence right now that we have all the answers. These are the areas that we're really tackling right now as we address many of the other historical issues.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** I want to go back to the artwork just briefly, and I'm sorry that I missed a couple of questions that Mrs. Van Bommel put forward. On your document that talks about your future plans, it says, "Building Ontario's Memory," and one of the things that it indicates under "The Priority of Excellence in Custodial Strategies and Practices"—this is on page 16 in my package here. The second bullet point says, "Complete a full survey of our collections to identify risks and prioritize preservation requirements." Is this a list of everything or specifically of artworks? I think the timeline you have on this is 2010. I don't know where I read that, but I thought I saw that somewhere. Could I just get

a sense of whether that "survey of our collections to identify risks" is artworks or is it everything? Then I'll have a few more questions after that.

**Ms. Miriam McTiernan:** That actually refers to everything. Over the past three years, we've been surveying each of our collections. We've been surveying our photographs, maps and architectural plans, and we've completed a survey of the artwork. As we identify documents or art that are in need of repair, we're doing it right there. It's an approach we call a preventive preservation strategy. It's one that's unique to us; it's not done elsewhere. It has meant that we've been stabilizing and preparing a lot of our collection so that we can move it safely and so that it's preserved over time.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** So is it through that process that there is a discovery that some artwork couldn't be found?

**Ms. Miriam McTiernan:** That's another process that we follow. I was mentioning to Mrs. Van Bommel that we annually do a survey, through the building managers in towns and cities outside of Toronto and here in Toronto using the CAO's office in each of the ministries, where we ask the people to verify that the artwork we have listed being on display in their facilities is still where we think it is. That's how we discover if material has been moved. In the past six months, we've undertaken a project where we've gone around the province and physically inspected all of the artwork so we know where it is and it is where we think it is. We have taken the opportunity at that time to attach it to the walls with new kinds of devices that can't be undone without the permission of the curator.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** This is particularly for wall hangings; are there other kinds of artefacts or artwork—like soapstone sculptures, those kinds of things—that are also out and about in ministers' offices or other municipalities?

**Ms. Miriam McTiernan:** There are also pieces. All of the pieces you see around Queen's Park are part of the government art collection. There are some smaller pieces. They're usually in individual offices, so that means that the security on them is pretty good just as it is. We haven't had any difficulties with those.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** So you're pretty confident at this point that you have a full list of artworks and where they are, and you have a system for making sure that they don't walk away or that they don't end up in someone's briefcase.

**Ms. Miriam McTiernan:** That's correct. We have a system for tracking, yes.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Okay, very good. It's on an annual basis that you review?

**Ms. Miriam McTiernan:** That's what we've been doing, but as I say, this survey that we just did ourselves—because the other one, we ask others to do—will now become our baseline.

**Ms. Michelle DiEmanuele:** I believe it's been 2001 since we've had any incident of any kind. That's a pretty good track record.

1110

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** I wanted to ask a couple of questions about the management of the transportation contracts. I think in the auditor's report there was an indication that there was a discrepancy between what was being billed for and what was being utilized. I think \$700,000 came up as an issue. Do you have any best guess as to how long this has been an ongoing problem, and of course, then, are you certain that you've put the controls in place to make sure these kinds of contract management issues have been addressed?

**Ms. Miriam McTiernan:** As soon as we became aware of it, our records centre manager dealt with the supplier and sorted out the issues. We did get a refund on the amount that was outstanding. As we go forward now, we've put in place regular meetings where we talk about any billing issues and make sure it doesn't happen again.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** But the supplier continues to be the supplier of record for the Archives.

**Ms. Miriam McTiernan:** These contracts are up this year, so we will be redoing them. We'll have a new supplier and we'll have all of this good learning so that we can implement better systems for the next contracts.

**Ms. Michele DiEmanuele:** Let me just reiterate a point of clarification: The contracts that are up will have a new RFP process. We have not yet determined who any supplier would be.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** That was going to be my next question, because of course the auditor's report indicates that the records for the previous RFP process don't exist. This is of concern, obviously, to everyone around the table, so it's good that there's an RFP process that's going to be documented and, I'm sure, archived.

**Ms. Michele DiEmanuele:** Also, frankly, this report couldn't be more timely, because it actually informs us to be able to write an RFP in a way that makes sure we're getting the kinds of supports, controls, security and protection of information etc. in a way that we might not have envisioned had we not had that information coming in to us.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** The temporary storage facilities and the transportation companies—are they the same? Is it the same company that would transport the records and store them, or different?

**Ms. Miriam McTiernan:** We have two provincially-owned records temporary storage facilities, and then we have a contractor who does the transportation. Then we also have a private-sector storage facility, and they do the transportation. We'll just have to sort out—

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** So it's a bit of a mix-and-match kind of deal.

**Ms. Miriam McTiernan:** Yes, so we'll have to do it better.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** All right. For the transportation company for which the RFP went missing, what is that company? What was the name of that company?

**Ms. Miriam McTiernan:** 4mode.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** 4mode?

**Ms. Miriam McTiernan:** Yes.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** F-O-R-M-O-D-E?

**Ms. Miriam McTiernan:** It's just a "4" and "mode."

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Okay. I'm just kind of curious. It's just that these kinds of things—they don't pass the smell test, if you will. I guess we're kind of a smell-test committee in some ways. That's very helpful.

Will you have someone on staff—or maybe you do already—who constantly monitors the quality of the various factors that you're going to be looking at for your new contracts? It's one thing to say, "We'll put an RFP process together; we'll make sure there are highly trained staff at our contracted facilities; we'll make sure that they understand the security issues; we'll make sure that records from the private sector and our records are kept separately for privacy purposes"—it's good to put that into contract language and to be really certain that that's what you're asking of your provider. What's the process to monitor that over the life of the contract, and what are you anticipating the life of those contracts to be—two-year, three-year, five-year or 10-year contracts?

**Ms. Michele DiEmanuele:** Let me tackle a little bit of the process, and then we'll see where we go from there.

With respect to the procurement process, let me just also point out that the Ministry of Government Services, where this has all been housed over the last few years, is also the expert in procurement for all of government. Naturally, given some of the issues that have been raised, as the deputy I will make sure that we have, through this next process, some of our best expertise supporting the Archives. This is not something they do as a regular course of action, so we will make sure that they get that kind of expertise on an as-needed basis as we work through developing that.

You've raised—even just for me today, as I think through that process which we're just starting to make our way through as those contracts become expired—that we need to look at: What is the right mode? Is it good to have two different providers in that supply chain? Is it better to have one? What kind of backups do you want? Those are the kinds of questions we'll be going through from a business perspective as we lay out what our needs are.

As we go through the process, we would have an independent fairness commissioner who will oversee the process. They will document—sort of a rubber stamp "yes" or "no"—with respect to any issues around the process. Obviously, if there were issues raised by the fairness commissioner, I would have to make a determination with the minister whether we go forward or not with a particular RFP. Once the RFP has been awarded, it would be incumbent upon the Archives to manage that contract. As you've heard, we've put some controls in place. There's also a new compliance unit that's working with ministries. We've just dedicated more resources to what has been a growing business for us over the last few years.

With respect to the lifespan, I wouldn't want to determine at this point. I certainly haven't had the benefit of looking at that yet. We try to negotiate—that's the

wrong terminology. As we write these RFPs, we try to look at what's going to give us the maximum sustainability and stability, for whatever business it is, against the value for the taxpayer. Sometimes a slightly longer lifespan can give us better value. Sometimes it may be an issue of such high security, with shorter time spans so that we have more flexibility. We look at out-clauses if we're unhappy. I think those are the kinds of things that we'll be looking at this time.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** What's the length of the ones that are expiring now? How long have they been in place?

**Ms. Miriam McTiernan:** Some of them have been in place for a long, long time.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Could you give me some details on how long some of these contracts have been around?

**Ms. Michelle DiEmanuele:** Some have been in place more than 10 years, and that's why we're refreshing the whole process.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Did they have firm expiry dates? Have they just continued to be renewed over time, or when they were actually completed, was it for a 10-year term?

**Ms. Michelle DiEmanuele:** Often, we write contracts that have an expiry date, with maybe one option to renew or two options to renew. These were renewable contracts. I'd have to get more detailed information for you; I don't know specifically. But the Archivist has said that they had an option to renew on these, and we did.

**The Chair (Mr. Norman W. Sterling):** Mr. Sousa.

**Mr. Charles Sousa:** Back to the stolen art: I just wanted to reaffirm that all art that's been stolen has been recovered?

**Ms. Miriam McTiernan:** All art that had been stolen in the last little while that we were aware of was recovered. I don't know back into the 1970s and 1980s.

**Mr. Charles Sousa:** When was the last time art was identified as being stolen or lost?

**Ms. Miriam McTiernan:** In 2001, there were three items that we were aware of that were stolen. We called in the police, and they were recovered. That was the last time.

**Mr. Charles Sousa:** Great. Part of the auditor's recommendations were around privacy controls over records. In it, he talked about privacy risk assessments of private contractors, security controls for storage facilities and some of the classification criteria—some of that confidential information that you've spoken of over this time. Can you just elaborate on some of the things that are being done in regard to improving privacy?

**Ms. Miriam McTiernan:** When we became aware that there were privacy issues—it was basically personal information on the outside of boxes in the records centre—we immediately took steps to have that changed. Now all of the boxes that did have private information on them have been replaced, and there no longer are any issues with privacy.

As we go forward with the new contracts that the deputy just spoke about, we plan on having much stricter controls around that. We plan on insisting that staff are bonded, that we're aware of who's handling our records. We also take great care with any of the transfer lists, which is the information about what's in boxes. If it contains personal information, it only goes by bonded courier. So we make a lot of effort to make sure that private information is protected.

In the Archives itself, for our front-line customer service, we regularly train our staff in terms of the privacy of personal information. We're continuously talking to them about the importance of maintaining it. It's something we take very seriously because we have a large collection, not only in temporary storage but also in the Archives, of information about the people of Ontario, and we want to make sure that it's very carefully protected.

**The Chair (Mr. Norman W. Sterling):** Mrs. Albanese.

**Mrs. Laura Albanese:** I guess the only question I would have is still regarding the art work. There is no artwork in basements or in precarious conditions at the moment?

**1120**

**Ms. Miriam McTiernan:** Currently, there is artwork in the basement of the Macdonald Block. We have an art storage area there. It's an area that's not ideal for the storage of art. The pieces that are stored down there are very large pieces, because when we became aware of the issues we thought about moving it over to the Grenville location, but they're simply too large; the building at Grenville won't take them. So to protect this art until we move we've implemented humidity control and we track it regularly. Staff are monitoring the area a couple of times a week to make sure that nothing is going seriously wrong. These will obviously be pieces that will get moved to the new facility at York and will be in the vault that's specifically designed for artwork.

**Mrs. Laura Albanese:** When they are placed in the vault, will the public be able to view them if they request to do so?

**Ms. Miriam McTiernan:** How we would manage that is we would take them out of the vault, bring them down to the reading room for people. But people can certainly view them if that's what they wish. These pieces are designed to be displayed on walls, so if somebody wanted a nice large piece we would obviously happily put it on a wall for them.

**Mrs. Laura Albanese:** I am familiar with the process. My husband is an artist, part of the Ontario Society of Artists, and I know that there is quite a process before they are accepted. So I'm quite impressed with the process that is in place right now. I just wanted to clarify about the storage of the art pieces.

**The Chair (Mr. Norman W. Sterling):** Thank you. Any further questions? Mr. Hardeman.

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** Very quickly, I was just going through my package here that was so ably prepared by our staff, the newspaper article about the missing pro-

ducts, shall we say, noted in the auditor's report. "The auditor's report cites an internal document prepared by the Archives that lists more than 60 groups of private and government materials that disappeared, including documents primarily from the 17th and 18th centuries pertaining to prominent families and individuals." Is that mostly artwork?

**Ms. Miriam McTiernan:** Actually, no. That refers to archival material. It was material that was stolen from the Archives in 1980—letters and letter covers, envelopes. What happened was that in 1980, when it first became clear, the Archivist of the day called in the police. The police investigated and discovered that it was an employee of the Archives who had stolen the material. The person was charged, and some material was recovered at that time. There was an understanding that all of the material had been recovered.

However, in 1990, they subsequently discovered that materials were coming on the market and being sold, and they understood at the time that this was material from the Archives of Ontario. Again, the police were called in, the person was charged with, I think, possession of stolen property this time and actually went to jail. About 1,000 items were recovered from his home, but there are still items that are outstanding. So we maintain this list, which is, if you like, our proof of ownership. We track auction sites, we track catalogues, we track various places; as material comes up that we believe is ours, we then follow up. We sometimes call in the police to recover as much as we can.

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** So, then, in the next paragraph—obviously, I know sometimes there is some question as to the accuracy of reporting in newspapers—the next comment is "‘This is not new,’ a spokesman for the government services minister said yesterday, ‘and we’re still trying to locate these things.’" So from that, as a citizen, I would read that they're still missing and we're still trying to locate them from something that happened, according to this, in the 1970s. I think if you were to ask the average investigator, you'd find that if it happened in the 1970s the chances of locating them today are getting minimal.

**Ms. Miriam McTiernan:** That's true but, as I say, it's probably two years ago an item came up that was part of that. So we don't want to give up. We would like to get as much as we can back, so we'll probably continue to monitor.

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** I appreciate the fact that you continue to monitor. At the same time, I would hope that you don't use a lot of your front-line resources in trying to follow up on the monitoring, because I think that your chances of recovery are getting quite minimal. Thank you very much for your presentation. I very much appreciate your being here this morning.

**The Chair (Mr. Norman W. Sterling):** Further questions? Andrea?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** I wanted to very briefly talk about the recommendation about getting the online database up to speed so that all of the collections are on

there and all of the information about what's in those collections is accessible to the public and government—all of that. In the summary report of the progress on this issue particularly, you've indicated that the Archives has developed selection criteria for prioritizing the collections to be added to the database. It goes on to say that new materials acquired will be fully described, that work will continue on the backlog as resources will allow and that the Archives is developing a multi-year plan for their remaining collections.

I just would like to have a bit of an understanding of where that project sits, what the timeline is for having not only all the collections eventually available on the online database, but also making sure that, as the auditor indicated in his report, the information is fulsome, so that people can actually identify what's available.

I think the way it's described in the report is that there are markers or some kind of finding aids, and that even for many of the collections that are currently on the database the finding aids are not really there. It seems to me this is an area that needs some work. I get concerned about language like "work will continue on the backlog as resources will allow," because there's a lot of work, obviously, that needs to be done, and with the move, a lot of focus needs to be on that.

I might as well get it all on the table, and then you can just run with it. The other issue is that there's some indication here that there is a significant amount of dollars paid to the private storage facility to start identifying some of the details around the records that can be then fed into this process, if I'm not mistaken. The Archives has paid a private storage contractor more than \$1.2 million to create lists of the contents of over 81,000 containers of records. Is that function of identifying more specifically and putting in place the markers or whatever that word is—I can't seem to keep that word in my head. Will your process for getting new transportation and storage contractors include doing some of this work, or is this again going to be another couple of million dollars added on to contracts when the money's available in the budget or when you can get funded for it?

**Ms. Michelle DiEmanuele:** Let me tackle the first couple, and then I'll let the Archivist talk specifically about the private storage.

Obviously, as the deputy minister, I constantly look at our priority needs. With respect to the Archives and the database, this past year we put 60,000 new pieces into that database. If you look at about 250 working days a year, that probably equates to around 200 to 220 items per day. So you can see we are actively working on this.

I have moved resources into the Archives, not just since the auditor's report, when we had some additional gaps identified, but over the last couple of years. That has allowed us to set up a compliance unit, for instance. We talked a little bit about controllership today. It's also resources to help make sure we move this collection effectively. It's not just about building a new building; it is also about the effect of moving. As you've heard today, in that particular project it doesn't just give us the by-product of an effective move, but we're getting a

number of other by-products around tagging and inventorying our collection. So we have been putting resources into this area to make sure that we are dealing with the recommendations. Last year, as I say, we put another 60,000 entries into that database, bringing it to a total of 800,000.

I'll let Miriam speak more directly to some of the other parts of your question.

**1130**

**Ms. Miriam McTiernan:** As we've said, it is our intention, over time, to have all of our collections described in that database. That database went live in 2001, so it's representing work that's been done since that time. As you can imagine, the Archives had used paper-based systems, so when we talk about going back, it's a matter of going back and using the legacy-based systems and then upgrading them.

We use in that database a system called the rules for archival description. It's the Archives' version of what a library would use in a library catalogue. So the work has to be done by the Archivist, and it is.

At this stage, we're standing at 76% of government records that are fully described in that database, and 73% of our private collection. Since 2001 to now, I think we've made great strides in getting there.

The other piece you were referring to is an activity we undertook for better access to the collections because the lists we had prepared are indexed and searchable. We had them done—not by our private sector storage provider, who does have fully bonded staff, because the collections are actually stored at their facility. It saved us some money in having them do it. This makes our collections much more accessible to our customers. It makes our FOI process a lot more effective in that staff are not having to look through hundreds of boxes, because they can access these lists and search them.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** That's great. So you'd say, of the 76% of government records, that would leave about 24% that still need to be put on the online database and, similarly, another 17% of the private holdings need to be put on the database.

Considering this database went live in 2008—let's just say, averaging, two thirds of both types of collections have been put online—what's the projected completion date for the online database to be full?

**Ms. Miriam McTiernan:** We're scoping it out this year, so I think we'll have much better information at the end. We need to understand what the remaining collections are, how large is the effort to describe them, and then we'll go forward. That scoping is under way right now.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** So at this point you couldn't say, "We're hoping within five years or within three years?"

**Ms. Miriam McTiernan:** I would say five years might be a more reasonable thought at this stage, but I don't know. I haven't seen the scope.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Then the issue about the finding aids: I think the auditor's report indicated that of the 60% of the sample they took that were described in

the database, no finding aids were available for almost one third of the things that were already in the database. The sample that was done to try to figure out what's happening is about halfway down page 50 of the auditor's report. It indicates:

"For instance, in a sample of archival items that we tested, including textual records, maps, films, and audio and video recordings, from the Archives' head office and its contractor's storage facility, 40% had not been processed and described in the database. Of the 60% that were described in the database, no finding aids were available for about one third."

**Ms. Miriam McTiernan:** We would regard the database as the finding aid.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Can I get an understanding, then, from the auditor what—

**Mr. Jim McCarter:** I think what we were getting at, and we discussed this in our in camera session: Often in the front of the container there's a fairly general description, and one of the issues we had was what was needed was a more detailed description of exactly what was in the box. So the key we were getting at was to make sure that all the information is readily accessible to the public.

From what I'm hearing from you, you're saying that once it's in the database, it's specific enough detail-wise—document by document, photograph by photograph—and it would be readily accessible by the public. That was kind of the general discussion we had on the issue.

**Ms. Miriam McTiernan:** We rarely catalogue items at the individual level. Mostly it would be at the group-of-records level. We will get the lists that I mentioned to you: If there are files in boxes, we will have file lists. But we don't go to the item level. It's just the nature of the business. It's not how archives do it; there's simply too much material and just not enough time. So we try to describe at a level of specificity so that a researcher can find what they need, but in the end they will have to spend some time doing the research.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Doing some digging.

**Ms. Miriam McTiernan:** Yes.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** That's very helpful. Thank you very much.

**The Chair (Mr. Norman W. Sterling):** Can I ask, on the revenue side of the Archives—this is a huge asset. Archives in general that are for governments: Do we do similar charges for services as there would be in the United States or in other jurisdictions or other provinces?

**Ms. Miriam McTiernan:** Yes, we do. In fact, we benchmark that type of activity on an annual basis to make sure that our charges are in line with what is being charged in Ottawa, and we look at some of the US too.

**The Chair (Mr. Norman W. Sterling):** Is there a difference in the charges between a resident and a non-resident of Ontario or a non-Canadian or a Canadian?

**Ms. Miriam McTiernan:** No. We charge the same for what people ask for.

**The Chair (Mr. Norman W. Sterling):** Is that fairly consistent in terms of, let's say—I don't know whether the state of New York has archives or not. If I went there

and asked them for a record or to search or whatever, would it be roughly the same for a New York resident coming here and asking the same thing?

**Ms. Miriam McTiernan:** My knowledge of archives—and I've been to archives in the US, in the UK, in Europe—is that you will have to show some ID as to who you are, but beyond that, there will be no differentiation in either the service or the charges.

**The Chair (Mr. Norman W. Sterling):** If there are no further questions, I did say to you that I wanted to give you the opportunity, if there were any areas where we might help in terms of writing our report, to get co-operation from other sources, be they ministry people or whatever. Our reports are not just directed at the Archives and the staff or you, the deputy, but they can be directed at a number of other people where co-operation may be needed.

**Ms. Michelle DiEmanuele:** Let me first say thank you. This is my third, I believe, trip to public accounts over the last few years and I've always found it to be very helpful. There were a few things today, obviously, that I'll reflect on, particularly as we're writing the RFPs for the process, making sure that we just don't write an RFP for the existing process but looking at how we best re-engineer it where it makes more sense, or some of the other suggestions that were made. So thank you.

I also want to thank the Auditor because I think the fact that we were selected in itself becomes an important tool for us to continue to improve the service and make it

more effective. I do believe we've had a co-operative relationship. Although we don't always agree, I think we always agree on one thing, and that is that we do want to make public services better for the public.

I'd like a chance to reflect on this and, if I could, Mr. Chair, write to you in the next 24 to 48 hours. In my letter to you, I would be highlighting very much what I think you highlighted in the report overall, which is to ensure we have roles and responsibilities clear, accountability lines very clear, that we're constantly looking at the business—for instance, the issue of storage today—that we're making sure that we're not just reacting to the moment but we're getting ahead of where we may be going with the archival processes of the future, as we think about electronic storage. I'll reflect on those kinds of things, but I think you'll see me trying to emphasize the two or three points that have been in the report and have come up here today. I absolutely would take you up on your recommendation to give you some advice.

**The Chair (Mr. Norman W. Sterling):** Thank you very much. That ends our session with you. May I, on behalf of all members of the committee, ask you to convey to your minister a speedy recovery and our best wishes to him.

For members of the committee, we will break now for five minutes. There are some sandwiches next door. We can bring them back in, and we'll talk to the researcher five minutes from now.

*The committee continued in closed session at 1138.*





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