

Legislative Assembly of Alberta

Title: **Wednesday, May 20, 1992**

2:30 p.m.

Date: 92/05/20

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

head: Prayers

MR. SPEAKER: Let us pray.

We give thanks to God for the rich heritage of this province as found in our people.

We pray that native-born Albertans and those who have come from other places may continue to work together to preserve and enlarge the precious heritage called Alberta.

Amen.

head: Tabling Returns and Reports

MR. HYLAND: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to table the annual report of the Alberta Water Resources Commission.

head: Introduction of Special Guests

MR. ROSTAD: Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure today to introduce to you and through you to the Assembly a group of eight people, two local Rotarians and six guests, that are touring Alberta over a period of six weeks, people who originated in Australia. They're participants from a cross section of cultural, business, and educational communities. I would ask that they rise in the members' gallery and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

MR. SPEAKER: Innisfail.

MR. SEVERTSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It gives me great pleasure today to introduce to you and through you to members of the Assembly 43 visitors from the Innisfail John Wilson elementary school. They are accompanied by their teachers Mr. Grant Klymyk and Mrs. Brenda Meding, who is also a parent, and parents Donna Gillrie and Trudy Sorensen. They also have a special guest, Karl Nygren, a Swedish student who is visiting Alberta for a year. Also, his grandmother is a member of the Swedish Parliament. I'd like to ask them to rise – they're in the public gallery – and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

head: Oral Question Period

Electoral Boundaries

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Premier said that he wants another select committee of MLAs to draw the final map of new electoral boundaries in Alberta. Frankly, what a sham that is. The government's strategy all along has been to gerrymander the boundaries to their own advantage, and this latest attempt is no different. This has led to close to \$2 million in taxpayers' money wasted and frankly no boundaries. My question to the Government House Leader is simply this: how can the government justify wasting even more taxpayers' money and time when it's obvious that the government with its majority will do whatever it wants in drawing up the boundaries?

MR. STEWART: Mr. Speaker, from the standpoint of the question being directed to the House leader, I think it's more appropriate to go to the Acting Premier.

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, all members of the Assembly have just recently received the report with many addenda and

many additional comments. Let's just put in context what has happened over the course of the past year that the member refers to. We have had an all-party committee of this Legislative Assembly, we've had a special committee tour the province, and in the backdrop of all of that, we've had some certainty provided to us with respect to the legal position of the courts in Canada, the Supreme Court level. All of that has been very instructive to the work of the committees.

It is unfortunate that they have not been able to unravel or put before us a unanimous report. I think the Premier's comment about who better to form these boundaries but an all-party committee of this Legislative Assembly would be in fact a good recommendation for us to undertake. It strikes me, though, that if the member of the ND Party, the Member for Edmonton-Norwood across the way doesn't want to participate, I suppose that becomes his loss.

MR. MARTIN: Well, Mr. Speaker, we participated all the way along in this charade, and the government members just outvoted everybody along the way. That's what this is all about. We predicted this process would end in failure much earlier on. I want to say to the Acting Premier then: here is our contribution to the select committee. It was there before and it's there now. If you'd gone through it, you wouldn't have had the problems. I'd like to file it with the House, if I may.

My question to the Acting Premier is simply this: will he recognize now that Albertans are sick and tired of these partisan games, the attempt to gerrymander? Abandon this select committee and set up a proper independent commission.

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, it's unfortunate that the Member for Edmonton-Norwood takes that extreme position. This is the kind of issue where I think all members should draw together, where all parties should take off their cloak of political position and try to find a position of common interest. It is in the interests of the people of Alberta that we put together an effective framework so that the democratic process can work in this province. That's what our government is about. You see the grandstanding from the member across the way suggesting, for example, that a member of the Provincial Court of Alberta is driven by political motives. That is just reprehensible, and if that is how the process unfolds in his mind, it is no wonder we have the problem we have today.

MR. MARTIN: It had nothing to do with the commission. It was the enabling legislation, the rules that this government set up. That's why we have a hung boundaries commission, Mr. Speaker. Don't hand us that. We said that at the time, and they didn't listen to the amendments.

Again I want to ask the Acting Premier simply this: will the government now establish, right now instead of wasting more time, an independent Electoral Boundaries Commission with clear and workable goals such as 83 seats, such as fairness, such as relation to the Charter? You'll get this done right away.

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, the Member for Edmonton-Norwood again seems to have missed the time continuity here. In fact, we've had this independent commission already at work across the province, and he also, by the way, had a person who was recommended to be on the commission. The commission members themselves had an opportunity to select an unbiased, independent chairman. It is unfortunate that they came down with this rather splintered report, but in it we can find at least the

consensus in the views of the people of Alberta, which on a principled basis can be reflected in the redraft of the boundaries.

In my mind we should all consider on an open basis whether or not it is a compromise among the Members of the Legislative Assembly to pursue the democratic objectives of providing a free opportunity to vote for members of this Assembly, if in fact it isn't within our will and power to find a resolution, and that's what the Premier has suggested. I think it warrants more of a discussion than a simple rejection as the socialist party across the way has done.

MR. SPEAKER: Second main question, Leader of the Opposition, please.

MR. MARTIN: Well, Mr. Speaker, we've had a discussion for three years. That's the problem.

Prostitution

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, I want to go from an area where the government interferes too much to an area where it shirks its responsibility. In my riding of Edmonton-Norwood prostitution is increasing in the backyards, in the schoolyards, in nearly all the residential neighbourhoods. It's true not only in Edmonton; it's also true in Calgary. Now, I want to file with the Assembly copies of a letter that was sent from a group called Action Against Johns to the Attorney General and a reply from the Attorney General's department. Rather than address the issue, the government says that all the responsibility is with the federal government, and I want to tell them that that didn't impress my constituents at all. My question to the Attorney General is simply this: why does the Attorney General refuse to use all the administrative tools at his disposal to address this very serious problem?

2:40

MR. ROSTAD: Mr. Speaker, I share with the hon. member and his constituents the frustration and the nuisance that prostitution and johns and all the various components of that activity in any neighbourhood. The backdrop to that letter is that prostitution is a criminal offence. The Criminal Code is a federal jurisdiction. There was more to the issue than that, and that related to whether it was a nuisance or a crime. If it's a nuisance, the jurisdiction is then in the hands of the people who are experiencing that nuisance. If it's a crime, then it's a matter that the police would have to pursue. That was the backdrop to it.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, what we're basically doing is washing our hands of it. The problem is growing, and it's a very serious problem in the inner city in both cities.

Let's look at what the minister does have responsibility for: the administration of justice. Most of these kids out there are under age. They're being exploited. It's a very serious matter, Mr. Speaker, when someone has intercourse with a child. So my question to the Attorney General is simply this: will the Attorney General now, then, ensure that Crown prosecutors push for the maximum penalties for johns available under the law?

MR. ROSTAD: Mr. Speaker, on any matter that comes before the court, the Crown attorneys pursue it with due diligence, asking for the maximum penalty that fits the crime.

If the hon. member wants me to answer the first part of his question relating to youth, if there is sexual intercourse with youth under 14, it is most definitely serious. It is for any youth. It's also an offence under the Criminal Code. In those instances when

you bring them to court, you usually need the victim, in this case the child under 14, to also be a willing witness, and in not all but most instances that becomes impossible. I can assure the hon. member and the people who have this going on and the victims that the Attorney General, his department, this government are very, very concerned about this activity. If the hon. member has some very concrete suggestions, I'm more than happy to listen to them.

MR. MARTIN: The minister may well be concerned, but it's growing and growing and growing and becoming more serious.

Let's look at some creative solutions then, Mr. Speaker, and I might throw out one to the minister and see if he'd look into this. Would the Attorney General now have his prosecutors seek creative sentences for johns like being forced to clean up the condoms and needles in the neighbourhoods afflicted with this prostitution? That would go some ways in that direction.

MR. ROSTAD: Mr. Speaker, when there's an offence under the Criminal Code, there's usually a penalty that is meted out for that. I'd be more than delighted to take that representation, to also pass it on to the Crowns and see how they can use it. The discretion on what penalty is meted out is with the courts, which are independent. Again it would be good for the hon. member to send *Hansard* to the chief judge to also register his representations in that manner.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Glengarry, on behalf of the Liberal Party.

NovAtel Communications Ltd.

MR. DECORE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have had it confirmed that NovAtel has been sold and that huge losses confront Alberta taxpayers on the sale of NovAtel. The Getty government has created a potential exposure to taxpayers of almost \$900 million; \$525 million alone is just for the loan guarantees that Alberta taxpayers are likely to have to pick up. My question to the Treasurer is this: what is the exact loss, Mr. Treasurer, that Alberta taxpayers are going to have to bear on this sale?

MR. STEWART: Mr. Speaker, yesterday in the House I addressed the matter on questions that were similar to those now put forward by the hon. member. I indicated that there is certainly a lot of speculation out there, and I regret that in many respects because it's really very hard on the employees and their families and the suppliers and the customers of NovAtel. All I can say is that at such time as an announcement is to be made, we will make that announcement. There'll be full disclosure at the time of any deal that may be announced, and I'm sure that the hon. member can wait in due course.

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, why is it so difficult to get an answer out of this government? Why is it so difficult when they preach freedom of information and the Premier stands up and says: ask a question and you'll get wheelbarrows full of information? Mr. Minister, I'm asking a question. I expect an answer in this Assembly.

My second question is to the Treasurer. If he pawns this one off, I guess he doesn't know anything about it. We've got a \$2.3 billion deficit that Albertans are looking at, seven consecutive deficits that this Treasurer has brought forward. I'd like to know what the new deficit figure is, recalculated for this year taking into account these losses, Mr. Treasurer.

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, the hon. Minister of Technology, Research and Telecommunications has already dealt with this issue, and if you read his answer correctly, you'll see that there'll be no impact on the deficit this year.

MR. DECORE: Usually the Treasurer blathers on and on and gives no answer, and he just provides no answer again.

Speaker's Ruling Insisting on Answers

MR. SPEAKER: Excuse me, hon. member. [interjections] Order please. [interjections] Order please. The Chair was willing to overlook it the first time. This is the second time, so now you'll have to listen to *Beauchesne* 416:

A Minister may decline to answer a question without stating the reason for refusing, and insistence on an answer is out of order, with no debate being allowed. A refusal to answer cannot be raised as a question of privilege, nor is it regular to comment upon such a refusal. A Member may put a question but has no right to insist upon an answer.

So now the question, please.

MR. DECORE: Thank you for jumping up and assisting the government minister, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Take your place. Take your place.

MR. DECORE: Answer the question.

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. [interjections] Order.

MR. DECORE: They're squandering Alberta taxpayers' money.

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. Order. Perhaps you'd like to give us the question, please.

NovAtel Communications Ltd.

(continued)

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, hundreds of millions of dollars have been spent by Alberta taxpayers on jobs for Albertans – 860 Albertans work in NovAtel – hundreds of millions more for technology to be Alberta based. I want to ask the minister: what has the minister done; what guarantees is the minister going to give us that those jobs are going to be secured and that technology is going to remain in Alberta?

MR. STEWART: Mr. Speaker, I can assure the hon. member that the management committee that has been in place for almost a year now has been looking at that very objective with respect to NovAtel, but if there is a possible future for NovAtel to continue what they are doing and have done in the past and project that into the future for the benefit of Alberta, then every objective along that line would be pursued. As a matter of fact, the very high-quality jobs that are associated with this company are very much an important issue; the hon. member is correct in that regard. Everything will be done in order to preserve that technology and preserve those jobs.

Senior Citizens Programs

MRS. MIROSH: Mr. Speaker, on March 17 of this year the minister responsible for Seniors announced a series of public meetings that were to take place across this province. Just recently, this week, in the *Calgary Herald* – this series of

meetings was to take place in Calgary at the end of this month, and this was a consultative process for our seniors. There is serious concern expressed in Calgary as to what the government plans to do with this consultative process. Would the minister responsible for Seniors please explain his plan once he's received all these written briefs and submissions from this consultative process?

MR. BRASSARD: Yes, Mr. Speaker. As I've mentioned in this House before, some time ago, almost a year ago now, we embarked on a consultative process to involve all seniors in decisions on programs affecting them. Part of that consultative process was to meet with 22 different agencies representing almost a hundred thousand seniors across this province, but we wanted to go further and talk to the people themselves, so we arranged 13 meetings to be held across the province. We prepared 10 position papers dealing with a whole range of topics and asked for their feedback on those various papers. In fact, we're almost three-quarters of the way through that process, and the results have been very good.

2:50

What we intend to do with the information that we receive is put it together in the form of an agenda, a rough draft of where we're going in this province in the delivery of services to seniors in the next 20 years or so. The meetings have been very productive and so far to date have been very helpful in our considerations.

MRS. MIROSH: Well, Mr. Speaker, I commend the minister for this consultative process, but you have already in place a seniors secretariat, a seniors advisory council, and you already have information provided to you with regards to seniors and their programs through the Member for Bow Valley. I was just wondering why you wouldn't be using these two groups for this consultative process.

MR. BRASSARD: Mr. Speaker, we are using those two groups. In fact, those two groups have been very helpful in our deliberations. This is a very complex issue. We spend almost 1 and a half billion dollars on programs for seniors in this province. We have a population that is going to double within the next 20 years or so. The issue is very complex. I don't think we can hear enough or discuss the issue enough to satisfy all of the concerns that are being put forward, so we're going to, I guess, leave no stone unturned to make absolutely certain that we have heard from everybody and looked at the issue from every side possible.

Child Welfare

MS MJOLSNESS: Mr. Speaker, concerns within the children welfare system are ongoing, and although the Minister of Family and Social Services has requested a review of the child welfare system, the Children's Advocate in his most recent annual report has identified serious weaknesses within the system that demand immediate attention. One is the completely unacceptable and destructive way in which adolescents are treated. The report states that the child welfare system refuses to value and even actively resists young people's input into the decision-making and planning of their own placements, and basic services are often withdrawn if they disagree with what the department and the system plans for them. So my question to the minister: given that this input is so crucial and in fact is required under the Child Welfare Act, how can this minister justify failing to allow input from these young

people when it means that many of them will end up unemployed, destitute, and homeless?

MR. OLDRING: Mr. Speaker, first of all, let me say how much I appreciate the good work that our Children's Advocate is doing here in the province of Alberta. I've gained a tremendous amount of respect for him and for his care for children here in Alberta.

In terms of his report, Mr. Speaker, I appreciate recommendations that the Children's Advocate brings forward not only on an annual basis, but I have the opportunity of meeting with the advocate on an ongoing basis. Together we're constantly looking at ways of improving the system and being able to better respond to the needs of children that come into our care.

I would want to say that there is every opportunity for children to be able to state their own position with workers within the department, with professionals that we make available to them to provide counseling and support. There's also an appeal process in place again where individual children would have the opportunity of stating their position. If there are ways that we can find to strengthen that, to make it even better, Mr. Speaker, we'll look forward to implementing them.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary, Edmonton-Calder.

MS MJOLSNESS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Clearly in this annual report there is a serious problem with adolescents being able to have input into decision-making, and I hope the minister would take that to heart. It's a very serious issue.

Mr. Speaker, given that I know of a 17 year old in the care of the department who was given the choice of either living at the YMCA or the Single Men's Hostel – those were his choices – and no one is listening to what he has to say and what he needs, will this minister take immediate action to ensure that young people currently in care have meaningful input into decisions that affect their lives?

MR. OLDRING: Well, Mr. Speaker, again it's always very difficult to comment on specific cases when you're not given the file or the name or all the information that might be involved. As it relates to individuals, we work hard to be able to make sure that appropriate steps, appropriate actions, appropriate responses are in place for individuals that come into our care. Sometimes they're in agreeance, and sometimes perhaps they're not in as much agreeance as we'd like them to be, but always we're guided by the very basic principle that we want to do what is best for these young people.

MR. SPEAKER: Calgary-North West.

Safety Codes Officers

MR. BRUSEKER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The discussion paper on the certification and designation of safety codes officers proposes a number of examinations to ensure that minimum standards are met by these safety codes officers. My question to the Minister of Labour today is this: can the minister assure those safety codes officers that have been in the field for a number of years that lower exam scores will not be used as grounds for dismissal but rather as grounds for retraining where it's deemed necessary?

MS McCOY: Mr. Speaker, given that most of the safety inspectors are in fact employees of municipalities, I cannot speak on behalf of those employers or what their practice may be. I can

assure the member that exam results of those inspectors that are employed by the Department of Labour would not be the basis on which their employment would be continued. However, as in all matters, there are performance appraisals done on an annual basis for all our employees, and those are maintained as an ongoing exercise, usually setting out goals and objectives for the following year and then discussions in consultation with the employee as to whether the goals were met or whether they were indeed appropriately set. That is an ongoing exercise in the continuing development and training of our employees.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.
Supplementary.

MR. BRUSEKER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The discussion paper was developed without input from subcouncils because the subcouncils have not yet been formed. My supplementary question to the minister is: before the final report is written and completed, will those subcouncils be formed so the people that have the expertise can provide input as to what the guidelines should be for the certification and designation of safety codes officers?

MS McCOY: Mr. Speaker, it's a very good point, and certainly the department has been concerned to get the stakeholders involved in setting the standards and the guidelines and the process for ongoing certification. I can't say at this stage whether the subcouncils will have been appointed. I certainly am hoping that they will be, because in fact the subcouncils themselves will be taking on the standard setting and enforcing functions. We would hope that we can have those in place in as short an order as possible.

In the meantime what we've been doing, in fact, is working with the various spokespeople and also the associations that represent the various professionals in the area and also with associations such as the AUMA, Alberta Urban Municipalities Association, and also the municipal districts association. So we have been attempting to keep all of our stakeholders involved in this process, because we agree with the member's point that they should be.

Aid to Ukraine

MR. DAY: Mr. Speaker, we all know only too well that seven decades of communist socialism in the former Soviet Union has really devastated the people of Russia and specifically Ukraine, and we all know that it will be some time before the ravages of that particular system are able to be thrown off by those good people. That's why Albertans are keenly involved in the present airlift to Ukraine. I'd like to know from the Minister of Public Works, Supply and Services to what extent there's government involvement in that airlift or possible future ones.

3:00

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, this past weekend Edmonton played host to a major international air show, and a couple of airplanes came over from the Ukrainian National Air Force to participate. As well, the world's largest airplane, the Condor, arrived in Edmonton. That sparked an interest in the Ukrainian Canadian Congress, the Alberta division, to in essence create a program called Na Zdorovia – to translate, in English it means to health – and ask citizens in Alberta to donate materials for this worthy cause in Ukraine. The government of Alberta assisted with it and through our surplus policy provided a wide-ranging variety of products that came from various hospitals in the

province that had already been declared surplus by individual hospitals, had been offered to other hospitals throughout the province, and had been declined. Only then were these surplus goods made available. There was a wide range of goods. The Minister of Health has virtually made it impossible for anybody to have a cigarette in a hospital any more, so included in the list were surplus ashtrays, goods that went from ashtrays to bassinets to bedpans to wheelchairs.

MR. DAY: Albertans, Mr. Speaker, are known for their openhearted generosity, though some may raise the question in future missions of medical goods. Will these always, as has been indicated, be in the surplus capacity, or if I can use a medical term, will there be a bypass around the health system here? Can we get some assurance on that?

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, the policy is very clear that once an individual hospital deems a product within its system to be surplus, that product, whatever it is, within the health care system is then offered to all other existing hospitals and health care facilities in the province of Alberta. Only after all other health care facilities in the province have deemed them to be unnecessary for their particular usage do these goods come to the Minister of Public Works, Supply and Services for disposal. The minister then has the authority under his Act to basically either make these goods available for sale or to have them donated to nonprofit organizations throughout the province.

On an annual basis approximately 2 to 3 percent of all of these goods are donated to nonprofit groups or other worthy groups within the province of Alberta and disposed of in that way. These materials that were donated to the Ukrainian cause over the weekend came from over a dozen different hospitals throughout the province of Alberta, ranging from the hospital in Medicine Hat, the hospitals in Canmore and Smoky Lake, the Grey Nuns, and of course the most recently declared obsolete building, the old Sturgeon hospital in St. Albert.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Avonmore.

Family Violence

MS M. LAING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are to the minister responsible for Family and Social Services. The Budget Address promised \$2.5 million to deal with violence in the family. We have heard of the priority to be given to treatment for men who batter, but agencies and shelters that want to provide support for battered women and treatment for their children cannot access the needed resources. Will the minister now commit to funding programs, like the one at the Edmonton YWCA, which provide support for battered women as they rebuild their lives?

MR. OLDRING: Mr. Speaker, I've pointed out on a number of occasions in this Assembly that family violence is something that all of us are concerned about. Not only those of us in this Assembly but society as a whole seems to be focusing more efforts and more attention towards resolving this very serious problem. The member knows that it is a multidimensional problem, and it does require a multidimensional solution. What we're seeing happen more and more is a partnership that seems to be coming forward between the federal government, the provincial government, municipal governments, and community agencies. The government has outlined a fairly significant course of action. We're going to be expounding on that in the very near future.

Municipalities are responding in a more cohesive and effective way. The member is only too familiar with the task forces and the studies that were commissioned by the cities of Calgary and Edmonton. They seem to be more active and more willing to work with us in finding solutions, as has the private sector. The member knows that last year one of the prominent law firms here in Edmonton came forward with \$75,000 to help fund a batterers' program here in the community.

It's that kind of cohesive effort. It's not going to be this government alone that's going to find the resources to solve all these problems. It's going to be government working in partnership with other levels of government and with the community.

MS M. LAING: Mr. Speaker, the women and children trapped in homes that are violent at the present time cannot wait. Recent events in Calgary revealed that violence in the home has serious and deadly consequences in society at large, including the schoolyard. Children who are not assisted in dealing with the emotional damage resulting from violence in their homes and in learning nonviolent ways of solving problems become violent themselves. Will the minister now commit to funding programs for children who are witnesses to or targets of violent behaviour in the home and ensure that such programs would be available in the community, including in schools and child care centres?

MR. OLDRING: Mr. Speaker, what I will commit to is to continue to work with my colleagues who share the concerns that the member has just raised and others related to family violence. We're all committed to finding meaningful and appropriate responses. I will commit to continue to work with other levels of government in partnership, to work very closely with the municipal levels of government that are actively looking for solutions and means of responding. I believe that it's that kind of commitment, that kind of partnership, that kind of effort by all of us that hopefully will lead to some meaningful solutions.

MR. SPEAKER: West Yellowhead, followed by Edmonton-Meadowlark.

Timber Quota in Peers Area

MR. DOYLE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In response to a question I asked a week ago on the allocation of a major timber quota in the Peers area, the Minister of Forestry, Lands and Wildlife said that he would take under consideration my request that he hold a public meeting or do a survey of the Peers area residents to determine where they stood on the removal of the local manufacturing conditions. Given that the receiver has made his recommendation on the allocation of the Peers timber quota, Mr. Speaker, and given that the ball is now squarely in the minister's court, will the minister commit to consulting the Peers community before completing his review of the allocation recommendations, and if so, how will this consultation be done?

MR. SPEAKER: One question is fine, hon. member.

MR. FJORDBOTTEN: Well, Mr. Speaker, I've been working very closely with the Member for Whitecourt to gauge what the community's concerns are. Also, I should say that the successful bidder with the receiver, Weyerhaeuser, is also working with the community.

MR. DOYLE: Mr. Speaker, the minister's unilateral decision to remove the requirement for the timber to be processed in the

Peers area is a devastating blow to a small, struggling community which badly needs those jobs a manufacturing operation would provide. What assurance can the minister provide to the other 19 Alberta communities that have local manufacturing conditions attached to their timber quotas that they won't similarly be betrayed by having these conditions removed by the minister when the quotas are reassigned?

MR. FJORDBOTTEN: Mr. Speaker, with all respect, that's a really ridiculous comment. First of all . . . [interjections]

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. Inflammatory language invites a return.

MR. FJORDBOTTEN: Mr. Speaker, in this case, A & V Logging went into receivership. The receiver then sought other buyers and went to an auction, and the successful company bid the highest. With respect, I said that I would only remove the conditions if there were employment opportunities for the community of Peers. In this case, we looked at the employment opportunities, ensure that the wood goes for full value and that the creditors get the best return, and the open market makes the decision. With respect, there are also other conditions in there that would allow some additional employment beyond that in the local community. So the community is looking at that, and I'm confident that they will come to the right decision.

Pension Liability

MR. MITCHELL: Mr. Speaker, no one can properly evaluate the government's proposed solution to the unfunded pension liability problem without seeing the actuarial assumptions and the actuarial analysis. Why does the Treasurer refuse to release the actuarial data on these public service pension funds?

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, the curious Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark, of course, is again wrong. What we have done since July of this year, when we embarked on a major reform of the pension plans of this province to provide security to those people now receiving benefits under the plan, was to have the widest possible consultation to bring into play the stakeholders' views across wide spectra. In doing so, we made one commitment on July 9, when I introduced the suggested set of reforms. That was that we would have open communication, proper consultation, and a full exchange of data. To this date we have maintained that commitment, and therefore the member is absolutely out of whack when he makes that kind of serious comment about the disclosure of information.

3:10

MR. MITCHELL: We have asked many times for that information, Mr. Speaker, and it has been denied by this Treasurer. The government refuses to release essential actuarial assumptions to the public, whose money this is that we're dealing with, such as survivor benefits, growth in salaries, age at retirement, and assumed rate of growth in the public service. Is the minister avoiding the release of actuarial data to this Legislature and to the public at large because he is afraid to reveal that he has assumed an unrealistically high rate of growth in the public service?

MR. JOHNSTON: Well, Mr. Speaker, all I can say is that the Liberal Party is desperate for questions here today, and it shows up in this kind of very silly approach to this process.

Two years ago, Mr. Speaker, they were here in the Legislature condemning the government for not dealing with the pension problem. At that time, they said that the outstanding pension liability of the province of Alberta under the five plans under Treasury was close to \$6 billion. Now, let me make it very clear what I announced in September with the support of the many unions across the province of Alberta, the members of the local authorities pension plan, the members of the public service pension plan. In that announcement alone, we did the following. We reduced the unfunded liability of this province from around \$6 billion to less than \$1 billion. We did that in co-operation with the stakeholders. We went to the people who are involved, we looked at each plan separately, and we designed a unique response to each one of these unfunded pension liabilities.

In doing so, Mr. Speaker, we made a major change in the way in which the unfunded liability is displayed here in the province of Alberta, established once again fiscal discipline in the province's fiscal plan, and fulfilled a commitment that we set out to do in the spring of 1991, when I announced to the House that this government was about to embark on and undertake a full and complete reform of the pension plan system in this province. We have maintained that commitment. We have done it on a reasonable basis in consultation with the stakeholders, and the results speak for themselves. [interjection]

MR. SPEAKER: Order please, hon. member. Watch your comments.

The Member for Dunvegan.

Highway 49

MR. CLEGG: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question today is to the Minister of Transportation and Utilities. We're always very happy in Dunvegan to get construction work. All the natural resources we've got are in northern Alberta. You know, the majority of revenue comes from northern Alberta so that we can have programs in central and southern Alberta. However, over the weekend I've had many phone calls from individuals and individual businesses that have bought a lot of promotional gimmicks, if I can use that word, for the amount of people in Alberta and south that want to come to Dunvegan and the northwestern part of Canada. [interjections]

MR. SPEAKER: The question, hon. member.

MR. CLEGG: There's a project on Highway 49. I was just going to ask the minister if he could give me the schedule on the work to be done on Highway 49 west of Spirit River so that these people won't be inconvenienced.

MR. TAYLOR: Where's 49?

MR. ADAIR: It's right next to 48.

Mr. Speaker, we do have a problem on that particular road. I'm getting the same phone calls, as a matter of fact. They have become part of a package where we've got something I'd sure like to clear up. We have two bridge culverts on Highway 49 west of Spirit River. One is in a stage of collapse, and the one two kilometres west of that is about to show some major signs of fatigue. We'd issued the contract for the first one when it was determined that the other one was a problem as well. So what we're trying to do is put the two projects together, and they would get them done as quickly as possible. I, too, recognize that the

people are trying to prepare for the Alaska Highway 50th anniversary, and we want to be out there as quickly as we can.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary, briefly, please.

MR. CLEGG: Well, thank you, Mr. Minister. The sun is shining in Dunvegan today, by the way.

Is there no possible way that we could delay those culverts till this cavalcade goes up north and back?

MR. ADAIR: Mr. Speaker, no, for two reasons. The contract is already let to Ledcor. They're on the site. What we've attempted to do to sort of appease the people of the area is put the two programs together. This is a major saving for all of us. There is a detour of 11 kilometres that is partially pavement and partly oiled. It's in that condition now ready for the work that would be done. The intent of the program is to actually dig out the one culvert and move that machine down to the next one. While it's down there, they assemble the multi-plate, put it in place, and start the packing, and then we go back and do it. I think the best I can say is that if we do it that way, we may be able to get it done in four to six weeks, and that would be early July. If not, it's going to be four weeks for each one of them.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Centre.

Royalty Rates

REV. ROBERTS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Now that the Minister of Energy has finished his lavish trip galaventing around the Gulf and is busy trying to figure out how many millions of dollars more he's going to sink into the Husky upgrader's cost overruns, I want to ask him about the major domestic energy issue, which is the continual decline of drilling activity for oil and gas in the province. Despite the fact that the minister last fall announced a temporary royalty holiday on new production, figures released just last week show that the sale of land leases and licences is down by millions of dollars and that in fact three land auctions scheduled for this fall are being canceled. Is the Minister of Energy now of the view that his temporary royalty holiday policies have in fact failed, and is he contemplating more permanent changes than the temporary ad hoc royalty policies of the past?

MR. ORMAN: Mr. Speaker, the royalty holiday program that was put in place was as a result of consultation with the Canadian Petroleum Association, the Independent Petroleum Association, the Canadian Association of Oilwell Drilling Contractors, and the Petroleum Services Association. At that time, the majority of those organizations felt that a royalty-free period would increase activity. Oil and gas are two different issues. We confined the program to oil because we have a large inventory of gas, and our priority in that connection is to open up and penetrate into new markets. That's part of our government's strategy. On the oil side, oil's becoming expensive to find, harder to find, and for those reasons there hasn't been the level of activity that we'd anticipated.

The last part of the question was: is it under review? I have had discussions as recently as last week with senior officials of CPA and IPAC to review that program and determine whether there are other ways the government could help in stimulating activity.

REV. ROBERTS: I want to thank the minister for that comprehensive answer, Mr. Speaker.

To pursue the question of a review of royalties, we notice that in the throne speech it was announced that the government will conduct a full review of natural resource royalty schedules in the province. Is the minister today saying that he wants to announce the details of such a review, which will in fact have enormous financial implications for oil and gas companies as well as for the financial life of this province, and that such a review will be public and open and immediate for all players to participate?

MR. ORMAN: Mr. Speaker, if I could quote my hon. colleague the Minister of Culture and Multiculturalism: stay tuned; film at 11.

MR. SPEAKER: The Minister of Transportation and Utilities, in reply to a question raised earlier by Edmonton-Whitemud. The minister.

3:20

Vehicle Inspections

MR. ADAIR: Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Member for Edmonton-Whitemud asked questions regarding vehicle inspections being carried out by students. I answered about the first part of the program that we have, but I didn't answer the second, and I'm going to do that today.

Transport field operations also conducts safety inspections, and we have a field placement program in place where we work in conjunction with the criminal justice program of Grant MacEwan Community College in Edmonton. As part of that program, three students are assigned for each semester to work with motor transport officers as trainees in the field. This permits students who are interested in criminal justice and law enforcement careers to get some hands-on experience with an organization whose goals are to protect the highway infrastructure and ensure a safe environment. The students do not conduct CVSA inspections, nor do they initiate any actions in the industry at all. These students are trainees and observe the activities of the highly qualified senior motor transport officers who are specifically chosen to work one on one with the students.

Also, Mr. Speaker, after reading the Hansard Blues, I left the impression yesterday that the Member for Edmonton-Whitemud was the one who said that the four-laning would not be done on the Yellowhead. It was actually the Leader of the Liberal Party who said that in Hinton in 1989.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Whitemud, supplementary.

MR. WICKMAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My supplementary question to the Minister of Transportation and Utilities: will the minister assure this House that when tractor trailer rigs are shut down, they are only shut down for failing safety or mechanical inspections conducted by certified, trained mechanics?

MR. ADAIR: Basically, Mr. Speaker, that's the case right now. I used the term "highly qualified senior motor transport officers." They are the ones that do the issuing of a shutdown order, not the students. I pointed that out. I hope I didn't read into that that you didn't want us to hire students.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

Might we revert to Introduction of Special Guests?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed? Carried. Thank you.
Calgary-McKnight.

head: Introduction of Special Guests
(reversion)

MRS. GAGNON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm very happy this afternoon to introduce to you and to members of the Assembly 44 visitors from Sir John A. Macdonald. They are an English as a Second Language group to whom we offer nothing but our best wishes. They are accompanied today by Miss Moir, Mr. Ford, and Miss Peyto and by bus driver Mr. Gary Sage. I ask that they rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

head: Orders of the Day

head: Committee of Supply

[Mr. Jonson in the Chair]

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I would ask that the Committee of Supply please come to order.

head: Main Estimates 1992-93

Solicitor General

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The estimates commence on page 287 of the main budget book and page 119 of the elements and details. I would ask the hon. Solicitor General if he has any opening remarks.

DR. WEST: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It's a lovely spring day and no better place to be than listening to the estimates of the Solicitor General's department.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

DR. WEST: Pretty eager today.

As noted on page 287, the amount to be voted today is \$288,884,000. It's comprised of five votes. I might make mention here at the start, Mr. Chairman, that vote 5, Native Affairs, \$4,731,500, was transferred over to Municipal Affairs under the able direction of the hon. Minister of Municipal Affairs, Dick Fowler, who used to be the previous Solicitor General. I will take questions today as a matter of notice and take them forward to him if there are any questions in relation to vote 5.

I also want to say at the start of this that I have the utmost admiration for Mr. Fowler, the Minister of Municipal Affairs, who directed the Department of the Solicitor General previously. He did an admirable job, and I wish to continue many of the fine programs he started.

I also want to comment on the staff of the Solicitor General's department and those many, many individuals that work throughout our corrections, law enforcement, motor vehicles branch, and other areas of this department. They have certainly done a tremendous job.

I took on the initiative of this department only a short while ago. I have become aware during that time that there are many complex issues affecting the public safety of Albertans, and I want to assure all Albertans that their safety and security will remain my primary objective.

Mr. Chairman, I'm concerned with the rising crime rates and resulting increase in public workloads and with the dramatic increase in the number of Albertans on probation or in custody.

There are approximately 17,000 Albertans on any given day on probation or bail or in custody or on parole or temporary absence. The number of natives caught up in the criminal justice system is of great concern to me. Over 30 percent of the people in custody are native, when they represent only 5 percent of the population of Alberta.

At the same time, Mr. Chairman, I am also concerned over the lack of confidence that the public feels for the ability of the system to deter and rehabilitate offenders from reoffending. In particular, I sense a high level of public frustration over the Young Offenders Act and the province's administration of young offenders' custodial programs. The public is simply not satisfied that we are getting the job done. I also sense that the public wishes us to maintain our strong position on impaired driving and on family violence. Albertans have also stated that they feel that victims deserve both more attention and consideration from the criminal justice system.

These are all difficult issues. While I have only been Solicitor General for a short period of time, I have met with groups and individuals all of whom have ideas on how to solve some of these problems. Needless to say, however, there is no single simple solution that emerges. These are difficult and complex issues today that will require co-operation and courage to resolve. Dealing with these issues is not made any simpler in a period of fiscal restraint. However, Mr. Chairman, it is fundamental that as we search for solutions to these very difficult issues, we do so within the context of the resources we are currently expending. History has indicated that spending more money on policing and correctional programs does not necessarily bring about the desired results.

Mr. Chairman, with those opening remarks let me now turn to the priorities for my department for the '92-93 budget year. Number one, native policing and corrections. As I indicated, I am concerned over the representation of native people in the justice system. Both the Cawsey report and the report completed by Judge Rolf into policing on the Blood reserve have provided a framework for making necessary improvements in policing and corrections. Both reports stress greater participation in the delivery of policing and correctional programs by native people as well as improved native awareness training for staff working in the criminal justice system. Increased levels of participation by native people as staff and managers in all aspects of the criminal justice system is also strongly recommended. However, both reports also stress that changes should only be made through a process of consultation with native people. I am pleased to report that this process of consultation is ongoing and that changes are being made in co-operation with native leaders and communities.

My department's community correctional programs have been extended to the native communities. Agreements are now in place with the Blood tribe, the Yellowhead Tribal Council, and the Tsuu T'ina-Stoney Corrections Society, which allows these first nations to deliver their own community-based correction programs and crime prevention programs. Negotiations are under way with other native communities regarding similar types of agreements. In addition, there are currently agreements in place for two bands to deliver their own policing in the province, several other agreements involving stand-alone policing or joint policing arrangements, and the RCMP and bands and Metis settlements are under negotiation at the same time.

3:30

Mr. Chairman, I am confident that the RCMP have made and will continue to make a sincere effort to address policing concerns in native communities. My department will also remain commit-

ted to working with native people to ensure that the criminal justice system is responsive to their needs.

Number two, Mr. Chairman, is young offenders. I indicated that Albertans are not satisfied with the Young Offenders Act and the programs for young offenders. I intend to look at measures that will provide more opportunities for young offenders, and in particular native young offenders, to avoid incarceration. I will be asking my department to review options for increased community service and for restitution programs for young offenders. At the same time, I am concerned that some young offenders do not seem to respond to existing custodial programs. My department is reviewing options for placing some of these young offenders in wilderness camps that will emphasize a structured environment and the development of work ethics and work skills.

My department is also in the process of implementing a highly structured program at the Calgary Young Offender Centre for difficult to manage young offenders. On average there are 350 young offenders in open or secure custody and 150 young offenders in temporary detention. Mr. Chairman, custody should only be used as a last resort for young offenders. However, young people must learn that committing crimes is unacceptable and that there are consequences for irresponsible behaviour. My department will continue to implement programs that are fair and effective in meeting the needs of these young offenders. We must always keep the public concerns of safety and the needs of the victims in mind.

Number three, policing. Mr. Chairman, an adequate level of policing is essential to ensuring that safety and security of all Albertans is kept. Family violence and impaired driving and young offenders are only a few of the components which comprise the overall general policing strategy. The government is contributing \$112 million to policing in Alberta through the provincial policing contract for RCMP service and through the municipal police assistance grant program. Our government is committed to law enforcement. This is evidenced by an increase of \$5.8 million for law enforcement this year out of an increased total in the department of \$8.3 million.

In March of this year I was pleased to be able to sign the new RCMP 20-year agreement on behalf of the province. In the past, Mr. Chairman, the RCMP have been a very important national symbol for the province and a very respected police force by Albertans. They continue to do their job well, and it is with pleasure that we commit to 20 more years of partnership with this renowned police force. The agreement was signed only after some very hard bargaining. The Hon. Dick Fowler did a great job on behalf of the province in bargaining on that. It commits the province to increased cost adjustments such as pension cost increases, UIC payments, rental rate increases for federal property, and the training costs of new officers. These costs are phased in over three years at an approximate increase of \$1.8 million per year. There were also costs associated with federal salary adjustments that were announced late in the current fiscal year. Finally, Mr. Chairman, the increased RCMP costs also relate to an increase of 10 additional officers, bringing the total RCMP force to approximately 1,045 officers in the province. Crime rates continue to climb, and the additional resources are badly needed.

The remaining costs of this program are primarily related to the 2 and a half percent general municipal police assistance grants announced recently by the Premier under the Alberta partnership transfer program. Funding is also provided on a formula basis through the municipal police assistance grant program to assist native communities in becoming more directly involved in the delivery of their own policing service. The Louis Bull, Blood, and Siksika bands are all involved in the delivery of their own

policing services, while the Lesser Slave Lake tribal council, the Tsuu T'ina Nation and the Samson, Montana, and Ermineskin bands are involved in developing community-based policing strategies. The Whitefish band, Gift Lake Metis settlement, and the RCMP are co-operating on a community-based policing model utilizing special constables. These programs follow on recommendations coming out of the Cawsey report.

Impaired driving initiatives. Mr. Chairman, let me indicate that my department will continue its strong approach to both enforcement and educational programs dealing with impaired driving. In this period of fiscal restraint the department's impaired driving budget of approximately a million dollars has been protected. As equipment purchased and grant programs funded in the '91-92 year will not need to be purchased or funded again this year, there will be resources to support other initiatives. This million dollars will be used to establish and maintain specific impaired programs in this province. Remember, it is over and above the funding provided to police services on an ongoing basis to carry out their normal duties, which include enforcement of impaired driving.

I just mentioned earlier that \$112 million went towards policing in this province. Previously somebody had indicated that impaired driving dollars had not been increased, but the normal duties of our police forces are involved in enforcing impaired driving, and they were increased this year substantially.

Mr. Chairman, in view of Albertans' strong feelings on the subject of impaired driving, perhaps it is time to look at some new programs such as administrative licence suspensions, the sale of impounded vehicles on subsequent impaired driving charges, random breath testing, and other strong measures to curb impaired driving – perhaps zero tolerance in underage drivers or the drinking age being raised. I am advised that some of these initiatives may not stand the legal test. However, if these are the types of programs that the public wishes to see, perhaps we should look at them; I don't know. However, I will be consulting with my colleagues and with Albertans to see what they want to stop the devastation and heartbreak that we see from impaired driving.

[Mr. Moore in the Chair]

Mr. Chairman, I recently released a report that provided a seven-year review of the impaired driving program. The report indicated that deaths from impaired driving had decreased. We can make a difference. But they haven't stopped, and therefore we must keep up the force and intent of our impaired driving policy.

Number five, Mr. Chairman, is family violence. This area is a priority for my department. The Premier's commitment to the family has been reflected in the fact that an additional \$200,000 has been allocated to this important area. My department will continue to enhance family violence policing initiatives including increased funding for public awareness campaigns that will continue to stress that family violence and spousal assault are crimes. Similar to the funding for impaired driving initiatives mentioned earlier, this funding is beyond that which is provided to the police services on an ongoing basis to carry out their operations, of which family violence is another component. The additional funding will allow us to make much needed program changes for female offenders who have been victims of family violence themselves. My department will be working with the private-sector groups and agencies regarding the best possible programming for these women.

3:40

My department will also be taking action to increase the general awareness of offenders regarding family violence, and existing

educational programs will be adjusted to deal with the perpetrators. Release planning for perpetrators will be stress counseling and anger management area. In addition, staff training in this area will be enhanced so that staff are in a better position to identify and refer offenders who are perpetrators or victims. These initiatives are in addition to those which will be brought forward by the departments of Health and Family and Social Services. Mr. Chairman, along with my colleagues the minister responsible for women's issues, the Minister of Family and Social Services, and the Minister of Health, I am confident that we can have an impact in this sensitive and very difficult area in our society.

Number six, adult correctional programs. My department is responsible for all provincial correctional programs, which includes the operation of 11 adult and six young offender correctional centres, parole supervision on behalf of the federal government, and providing financial resources to several community organizations delivering correctional services to inmates. Mr. Chairman, it is recognized that costs of providing these services have increased. With the spirit of fiscal restraint my department will be able to provide 22 agencies with some additional funds. This is important, as many of these contracts are with nonprofit agencies or volunteer associations.

Custodial counts for adults and young offenders are on the rise. As I indicated earlier, there are approximately 17,000 Albertans on any given day in this province on probation, on bail, in custody, on parole or temporary absence. This is more people sentenced to custody than Alberta has ever had. The rising offender counts make large-scale budget reductions impractical. I intend to ask my department to review options that would lead to offenders performing more work with value to the community and to the victims. Mr. Chairman, I am not satisfied that the present incarceration programs are as effective as they should be or perhaps in some cases as severe as they should be.

Number seven, vehicle registration and driver licensing. Mr. Chairman, there are 2.4 million Albertans who renew their vehicle licence each year and 1.8 million drivers who are authorized by the government to be on the road. The primary decrease of \$600,000 in this area will not affect the services we deliver to the public. The decrease will result in the three-year computer equipment replacement project being extended to four years. This computer equipment is the central core and is critical to our motor vehicle operation. However, it has become obsolete. Through this computer system approximately \$160 million in revenue is collected. I'd like you to note that \$160 million in revenue is collected by this division, and if you'll note under the votes, its cost is \$26 million. Through this system, 2.4 million vehicle registrations and 1.8 million driver licences are recorded, and approximately 4.9 million transactions are completed each year.

Two other major decreases in this area involve changing the quality standard of our driver licensing paper from the Canadian Banknote that you see to enhanced Dataguard paper and changing our licence plate tabs from reflectorized to nonreflectorized tabs, which saves \$250,000 a year. Converting our computer equipment repair contract to an in-house concept while the old equipment is being replaced has created another quarter million dollars savings. Just as a window to next year, those little tabs that go on the licence plates, I am looking at removing them completely because I don't see them as any benefit whatsoever to our system. That would save probably another \$250,000 to \$400,000. So there are ways that we can cut the budget in the future to be practical. Because of our advancing technology our new computer system will facilitate very well the legalized problems that used to be protected, perhaps, by that tab.

Number eight is Customer Service Initiatives. Customer service expectations are increasing. Nobody likes to stand in line too long. They like smiles. The motor vehicles division of my department has embarked on a five-year plan to implement a broad range of improvements to its programs and its systems. The replacement of the computer equipment about which I just spoke is one of the key elements of that plan. Another key element is the enhancement of customer service. We have approximately 168 privatized licence agencies in the province; we have 11 in-house. I will be looking at ways and means of increasing the privatization to help increase the service to our public within our system as it exists today. These changes will directly impact the public with respect to reduction in lineups and overall improved service. All of this will be carried out within the current fiscal framework. The challenge for the future will be to provide excellent service to the public at less cost.

As I travel through the province and learn more about this complex decentralized department that I have been appointed to, I'm most impressed with the dedication and concern and identification our staff have to programs and to all Albertans. I said when I started these estimates that I appreciate their tremendous discipline as well as their loyalty. As I said before, I have been in this portfolio not very long, and I have certainly appreciated their commitment to the many issues as I've learned the details and tried to come up to speed as quickly as I can. In saying that, I have done considerable reading. I will try to be as forthright and candid as I can today with your questions, and, Mr. Chairman, now I will entertain those.

MR. ACTING DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Edmonton-Strathcona.

MR. CHIVERS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd like to begin by complimenting the minister on his presentation this afternoon. I'm very pleased to learn of some of the new initiatives that he has described here, and I'll be looking forward to seeing the details of those programs and those plans and see how they come about in terms of actualization.

I'd like also to begin by echoing some of the comments of the minister with respect to the department that he now heads. I think it is a tribute to the efficiency of this department and the manner in which it has been run and the loyalty and dedication of the staff and the officials of the department. I think that they have a very difficult task in very difficult times. We do indeed have scarce resources. We do have difficult choices to make and decisions to make in terms of how those scarce resources are to be allocated in circumstances where there are burgeoning needs and scarce resources, so I don't envy them the task. I think that although I don't agree with all of the details and the choices that have been made, I commend them for having attempted to make wise decisions in difficult times.

I'd like to begin my comments by looking back to the past year, 1990-91. Unfortunately, as members of this Assembly know, and perhaps not too many of the public do know, we on this side of the House at least have to work with data that's outdated by the time we receive it. I'm referring here, of course, to the annual report of the departments. It's not intended as a criticism of the departments, but it is intended as a criticism of the manner in which the affairs of government are conducted. I think there are some improvements that can be achieved here both with respect to reports on public accounts - I note that in the federal jurisdiction there are quarterly reports available with respect to expenditures in public accounts in that jurisdiction, and I understand that that may be being considered in this jurisdiction. I would recommend it highly. In terms of annual reports I see no justification or no

reason why these reports cannot be made available a long time in advance of the present dating. This government is always quick to point at private business and how private enterprise conducts its affairs. No private enterprise could conduct its affairs on the basis that the data that is being provided is stale dated by a year by the time it is received.

3:50

In any event, the point that I'm wishing to make here is that when we look at that data, if you look at the estimates for the Solicitor General's department for the year 1990-1991, we were told that the spending was estimated to be something in the neighbourhood of \$265 million. I've examined the annual report of the department for the year 1990-91, and at page 39 of that report it reports the actual expenditures of the department at \$271 million approximately. Now, there's a difference of approximately \$6 million between the estimates for the year 1990 and 1991 and the actual expenditures for that same year. That's no insignificant amount. I appreciate that this is ancient history and that the minister was not the minister of the department at that time. I don't expect that he's necessarily going to be able to provide me with a detailed answer with regard to that, but I would like him to address the issue and look into it and make some inquiries. I think it illustrates the difficulty that we on this side of the House have. Of course, when you look at the estimates, you will see that they're set out on the basis of the current year's estimates, then the change from comparable estimates in the prior year, and comparative estimates in the prior year and comparative actuals in the prior year. Now, I understand that there are programs that are transferred from department to department of government from year to year, and I think we have a good example of that with the Native Affairs transfer that has taken place this year, but it's very difficult to reconcile these figures. I would appreciate the minister's assistance in helping me to reconcile the figures between the two areas that I've described for him.

In any event, last year we saw in 1991-92 estimates an increase in budgeted spending of about \$10.3 million or 3.9 percent. We saw an increase in the total amount appropriated to the department, up to \$276 million. This year the amount provided for in the estimates is nearly \$289 million, and that's an approximate \$13 million increase in the amount appropriated in 1991-92 and the amount proposed to be appropriated in this 1992-93 budget year. Again that's not an insignificant increase. I think it's important that we look at the real dollars and not merely the percentage increase, because of course when you look at the percentage increase of this year over last year, it is assessed at 2.9 percent over the comparable estimates for the 1991-92 year. But indeed when you're looking at the actual increase of departmental spending, you're looking at a \$13 million increase, which is over the estimates from the previous year of nearly 5 percent.

In addition, and I'm going to be going into this in a little more detail, we also have the transference of vote 5, the Native Affairs program. The Solicitor General has spoken somewhat about the revenue of the department. I think that also is a noteworthy consideration in terms of this department's budget, because of course the revenue last year showed an increase of almost \$25 million from the revenue in the year previous. I'm wondering whether it's expected that there is going to be any increase in the revenue for the year 1992-93 and, if so, in what areas that increase will take place and the amount it is anticipated that the increase in revenue might represent.

In terms of the sources of revenue, of course, the revenue sources are basically the vehicle registration, the vehicle licensing, the driver licensing, and the shared cost agreements between the

provincial government and the federal government. I'd like to ask the minister whether he anticipates that there is going to be any increased revenue in any of the cost-sharing programs. I think there are some seven or eight cost-sharing programs, the young offender program being a primary one, the maintenance of federal inmates being another example, the national parole system transfer payment agreement, the native court worker program, the gun control program, the native task force, family allowances, and immigration. I'd like to know if the minister anticipates that there will be any changes in the level of funding in any of these programs, the transfer payments from the government of Canada, and if so, what those changes will be, whether they are estimated to be increases or decreases. I'd also like to know whether the minister anticipates that there will be any increases in the fees, permits, and licences revenue that the department receives.

Now, the importance of revenue for this department is that this department is in the fortunate situation that a goodly portion of the money that is expended is significantly offset by the revenue that the department receives. Of course, this is a happy situation for this department to be in.

I'd like to comment a bit further on the estimates for this year which show actual expenditures in 1990-91 of \$268 million, but as I noted earlier, the annual report of the department shows total expenditures of \$271 million for that same year, so looking at those figures, again we have a discrepancy. I know that this has to do with the fact that we're comparing apples and oranges, but I'd like some explanation of what accounts for these differences.

Mr. Chairman, with respect to some other areas, the minister has addressed some areas that he anticipates some savings may be able to be achieved in the future, and I commend him for examining those initiatives. I hope that they bear fruit in the coming years. I'd also like to suggest to him that perhaps he should consider a decrease. I'm dealing now with the pari-mutuel tax situation. Presently 80 percent of the pari-mutuel tax is returned to the industry by a grant. I suggest that perhaps the department could look at a cut in that grant. If that grant was cut by approximately 50 percent, that would generate, according to my calculations, in excess of \$3 million.

DR. WEST: On what?

MR. CHIVERS: On the racing. [interjection] That's been transferred as well? Yes. I'm sorry; I'd forgotten that.

With respect to a number of the programs that the Solicitor General's department carries out, I was looking at the Solicitor General staff college program and examined that in some detail. That, of course, is the program that provides staff training and development services to departmental and contracted agency staff, including the police officer recruitment training program. I see that in 1991-92 the training there was provided to some 2,200 individuals. I'm just wondering if the Solicitor General could give us a breakdown on the nature of the training: how much of the training was allocated to departmental staff, how much of the training was allocated to contracted agencies, the cost of the training, and the nature of the training. What services are provided by the contracted agencies that are receiving the training from the Solicitor General staff college? In general terms I'd like to have some indication of the cost of this program. It seems to be servicing a large number of individuals, and it would be useful to have a breakdown of the costs of that program.

4:00

The Solicitor General spent some time speaking of the young offender programs and his intentions with respect to young

offenders. I'll deal later on in some of my comments with respect to the initiatives that he discussed today, but I'd like to look back at what happened in past years with respect to this. I see that there are a great number of programs that are already in place with respect to young offenders, programs that are conducted by the Solicitor General's department. I assume that it is expected that these programs will continue in operation and in existence.

[Mr. Jonson in the Chair]

I'm speaking here of the programs that are run by the department with respect to, for example, the living skills program. There's a training program which involves some training in living skills for young offenders. The education program and the library program are programs which are designed to assist young offenders in achieving some academic accomplishments and in meeting their instructional needs. There are also the young offender work programs which are intended to provide training to develop the practical and employment skills of young offenders. There's also the recreational skills training program which is designed to develop the social and living and leisure skills of young offenders, and of course there's the counseling services program which includes AADAC counseling, psychological counseling, psychiatric counseling, and medical counseling. Then there's the caseworker program. I'm sure I haven't enumerated all of them, but I am concerned in knowing what the plans of the department are with respect to those programs, and in light of the new initiatives that he's speaking of, I'd like some reassurance that it's not intended that some of these existing programs are going to be eliminated or cut back.

With respect to victim programs once again the minister has made some comments with respect to initiatives in this area. I agree with the minister with respect to his comments that there is certainly a growing public concern, a growing public recognition of the need and importance of victim programs. The victims' programs Act, of course, was proclaimed in 1991, and under that Act there is an eight-member committee appointed by the Solicitor General that makes recommendations as to grants being approved. I'm wondering if he can give us a bit of a progress report with the nearly a year's experience that we've had with that program: what programs were approved in the last fiscal year, the 1991-92 fiscal year; in what areas were those programs approved; how many people were serviced by those programs; has he had an opportunity to receive any kind of an evaluation of the efficacy of these programs; what kinds of costs are associated with the programs; and also what administrative costs have been incurred with respect to the operation of the committee.

Another initiative that has been in place for some time now is the victim impact statement program. I understood that there was going to be an evaluation. I think I'm correct that that was due sometime last year. I'm wondering if that evaluation has taken place, what the results of the evaluation were, what further initiatives are going to be taken with respect to the victim impact statement program, and whether it's going to be expanded and developed in the future.

The minister has spoken at some length with respect to family violence initiatives, and I want to commend him for the initiatives that he's described here today. Of course, these are programs that under previous arrangements in the department were intended to address the spousal assault problem which is a growing problem and a well-recognized problem at this point in time. As I understand it, the department addresses these needs in five areas: enforcement, police education, public awareness, victim support, and research. I'll be going through my notes, but I believe the

minister has addressed many of these areas, and I'm pleased to hear of his continuing commitment to these programs and to the funding for these programs. Perhaps we could have from the minister, however, an update on the impact of these initiatives. There have been programs in place for the past period of time, and I'm wondering if we could have an evaluation of the impact of these plans and whether it's anticipated that there should be any changes or whether there are any recommendations with respect to how these plans should operate in the coming fiscal year.

Once again I'm pleased to hear some of the comments with respect to the minister's commitment to the impaired driving programs, but I'm concerned. I know he has suggested that although the Check Stop program funding is being frozen at its previous year's level, he's suggested that some of that will be offset by increased funding in the policing area. However, it seems to me that doubtless there is going to be some impact on the total area of impaired driving programs. There are five areas here again: the enforcement, the education and prevention, the community action, the public awareness, and the research. I wonder if the minister could provide to the Assembly some information with respect to the cost of each of these areas. What was the cost in the previous year, 1991-92, in terms of enforcement, in terms of education and prevention, in terms of community action, public awareness, and research? Could we have that kind of a breakdown? I'd also ask the minister to address how he expects the present year's estimates are going to impact on these programs and the delivery of these programs.

I note that last year there was a new program that was announced by the Solicitor General, the so-called RAID program: report an impaired driver. I understood from the previous year's discussion of this program that this was considered to be in the nature of a pilot project, that there was going to be a statistical analysis of costs and benefits. I'm wondering if that kind of information is available and if the minister would make that available to us in order that we can conduct some sort of an evaluation or analysis of the efficacy of the RAID program.

I also understand that there was a research survey that has been under way for some time with respect to the knowledge of impaired driving laws and the attitudes of the public with respect to these laws and the initiatives of the department. I believe that survey has been undertaken. It may be available, but I've been unable to locate a copy of it. I would appreciate it if that information could also be filed and made available to the Assembly.

Mr. Chairman, with respect to corrections, the previous Solicitor General spoke last year of initiatives that he was introducing to meet the needs of female offenders. I'm speaking here of offenders who are in the correctional institutions. He spoke very eloquently with respect to the need to recognize their unique needs and of initiatives to address a whole range of problems specific to female offenders from preincarceration to community reintegration. I was wondering if we could have some sort of an update with respect to developments in this area: what initiatives have been undertaken, what initiatives are planned for the future, where these initiatives are ongoing, and what has been the efficacy of the initiatives. I believe the Belmont Correctional Centre was one of the areas where there was going to be some emphasis on the needs of female offenders, an initiative that was going to focus specifically on the needs of native women offenders. I think there was a program to transfer some of these inmates to cottages.

I'm wondering how that program has worked out. What is the number of native or aboriginal people who have participated in this program? What is the length of stay? What is the success of that program? I also note from the previous Solicitor General's

comments that it was expected that there would be some initiatives involving female elders who would assist in providing native programming, and I'm wondering how that has been carried out in practice and what the prospects are in this area for the future.

4:10

With respect to family violence, as I said before, I was pleased to hear the Solicitor General's comments with respect to his commitment to these programs. Again I believe that this is a series of programs that have really the five aspects: the enforcement, the police education, the victim support, the public awareness, and the research. I wonder if we could have some information provided with respect to the efficacy of these programs in terms of: are they actually achieving the objectives that are designed for the programs, and how effective are they in terms of producing some results for the public in these very, very difficult areas.

With respect to the native programs I appreciate that some of the responsibility for these programs has been transferred. However, there is in the Solicitor General's department a native programs unit, and I assume that the native programs unit is going to continue in operation. I'm not sure whether I'm correct in that.

DR. WEST: That goes to vote 5; that goes to Municipal Affairs.

MR. CHIVERS: The entirety of the native programs unit will be transferred to Municipal Affairs. The minister has kindly offered to receive the questions and to refer them, so perhaps I'll address them in my comments here.

The former Solicitor General, who will be answering these questions then, spoke of developing culturally sensitive programs to address the needs of women, in particular aboriginal women, particularly in the addictions and life skills area. I think there was some talk of a pilot community program for native women in this area, and I'm wondering what's happened in that area.

I'm not sure how this will work out given the reorganization and the restructuring of the department, but I do know that the Solicitor General, and he has spoken of it this afternoon, has made a commitment to redressing the apparent imbalance between the ratio of aboriginals within the custodial institutions and the people that are delivering the services to these individuals. I commend the department for the establishment of that kind of a hiring strategy. It seems to me that it's very important that we not only recognize the problem but that we do something about it in terms of our hiring program. I understand that there has been a hiring strategy in place in the Solicitor General's department for a number of years which has been designed to achieve a work force more representative of the aboriginal inmate population to whom the services and programs are provided. I'm wondering if the minister could give us a report on the progress that's been made. I would appreciate it if he could ask his department to go back over the past few years and provide us with comparative data for, say, the past five years as to the progress that has been made as a result of this hiring strategy. I commend the department for the strategy. I'd like to have some information with respect to the efficacy of the program and what progress we have been achieving.

Another program that has been in place in the department for some time is the commitment to establish native program coordinators within the correctional institutions. I'm wondering how many correctional centres now have the native program coordinator positions in operation, how many positions are in place, and if it is anticipated that some more positions will be added in this critical area. Of course, the mandate of these positions is that

they introduce aboriginal programming into the institutions to meet the special needs of aboriginal people. I think this is a very worthwhile initiative. I'm hoping that some of the restructuring and reorganizing in the department has not occasioned a loss of funding or a different allocation of funding in these areas, and I'd like some information from the department as to how these programs are anticipated to be impacted by the budget estimates and what the plans are for the future with respect to those operations.

Dealing with vote 5, and again this is the vote that is not the responsibility of the Solicitor General, it reflects a decrease in expenditures of approximately \$570,000 or a 13.1 percent decrease.

I see that I've run out of time. I hope we have an opportunity to rejoin the fray at a later time.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The Member for Westlock-Sturgeon.

MR. TAYLOR: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I, too, would like to congratulate the minister. I guess this is the first time I've had a chance to say anything to him. It's also a new portfolio for me to criticize. It used to be handled by the hon. Member for Calgary-Buffalo, who was much more experienced on this, but I will have a stab at it. I noticed the minister substituted a great deal of rhetoric and wind for substance the same way he did with other departments, so maybe I can address him in the same way.

To get down to the questions – I hope he has somebody making notes; he's walked out of the room now.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Order. Order.

AN HON. MEMBER: You know better than that, Nick.

MR. TAYLOR: I'm not supposed to comment on the minister's exit? Okay. As I say, I hope somebody's making notes.

MR. CARDINAL: I'm acting minister.

MR. TAYLOR: You're acting? As a matter of fact, you might do a good job on it.

One of the things that bothers me is the whole question of the Cawsey report. Actually, the Member for Athabasca-Lac La Biche might be fairly good on this. It's a case to do with native justice. I was representing the Liberal Party. That was the only party to make a presentation to the Cawsey commission, Mr. Chairman, and I was the only MLA to appear before the Cawsey commission. So I'm fairly familiar with what they have been trying to do. The minister has been extraordinarily slow in putting into place many of the Cawsey recommendations; so much so, in fact, that I believe the author of the report was moved to say that he's waited longer after he filed the report to see some recommendations than actually to see anything that had been done.

There's been very little done in the case of young native offenders, Mr. Chairman. I would like to see, and I think many of us on this side of the House would like to see some of the works that were already started before the minister came in. I think it was even before his progenitor, even before the other minister that there were attempts at sentencing in the community in Wabasca and Fort Chip that seem to be working quite well. I'd like to see that type of sentencing or binding over to the elders be extended over many other areas around the province for our native youth offenders.

4:20

We also have in the city proper, in Edmonton and Calgary, a couple of private or semiprivate institutions that have been turned down for funds from this government to help them teach heritage and culture to some of the inner-city native young offenders that are apprehended from time to time. These schools are doing a fair job, I think, at least helping by teaching our young aboriginal offenders their history and filling in on their background. They're giving them some pride of self and something – I guess you might say ethos – that they can cling to and that they're not left out on their own in the inner city. These can do a great deal of good, and I'd like to see the minister devote some of the attention and money he has on other questions in the report – and I'll be bringing them up later – to these areas, because I think there's room for private enterprise. There's room for people that are trying to help the inner-city youth, particularly our aboriginal youth.

Work camps. I'm not as excited as some other people in the opposition are when it comes to work camps. They will probably work out for some youth; it probably wouldn't hurt. I would suspect even if the minister himself had had the advantage of a youth camp, he might be thinking a little differently than his senior aides. But youth camps are a tendency to be a cure-all. Everyone thinks, "Oh, well, that'll solve the problem." And everyone has a different vision. I almost have the feeling, knowing the minister a bit, that he visualizes something like a Georgia chain gang with a huge ball being dragged along as they go out with a hammer to crush rocks for the road. Maybe over on this side we visualize something where there's a soft breeze blowing beside a lake as you cast your dry fly to see if you can catch a fish out there a ways away from everyone else. I'm sure that the reality works out in between. I think there are a lot of youth that are apprehended today that to get out and work regular hours and get back in the evening to sleep under the stars, even if they are in Rocky Mountain House or somewhere like that, it may be a lot better than in the close confines and all the counseling. On the other hand, one of the greatest threats you can give a young person today, I would think, is to threaten to lock him in the schoolroom and lecture to him all day too. So that could be a punishment too.

[Mr. Tannas in the Chair]

Because I asked the minister the question in the House the other day and I was surprised that he didn't know about it, next I want to touch on – I'll be darned if I haven't left the letters behind, Mr. Minister, but I'd like to remind you that you were going to look into it for me. My understanding of your predecessor's 20-year contract for the RCMP that you were taking some pride in – and certainly it's a great police force – is that there's a clause in there that the Alberta government let go by. Maybe the federal people are just a little quicker than we are. Apparently the police force in an area can serve a three-year notice to the municipality that the buildings and facilities aren't up to par, and if the municipality doesn't fix them up, then the federal government can do that after the three years and then bill the MD. In the city of Drumheller, for instance, that could amount to a \$2 million bill. It's a pretty hefty clause. I am not a lawyer, and I don't think the minister is either, but I read it as being a very onerous one. If the police force decides to serve an MD with a notice that they need more facilities, the MD has really no choice out of it as far as I can see. I would like the minister to elaborate on just how

tight that is. Maybe this government would be willing to cover up for the extra cost if it does occur.

[Mr. Jonson in the Chair]

The other area I want to touch on is that I think the minister's department has been lax on drunk driving. Drunk driving is probably one of the greatest curses we have in society today. I think – what is it? – 43 percent of fatal accidents or something have drunk driving as a part of them. It's not restricted to us. This is all around the world. I picked this up the other day. Somebody slid it under my nose. Different areas of the world, some of the offences. In San Salvador, for instance, your first drunk driving offence is your last one, because you're executed by the firing squad. That would have some attraction. Bulgaria waits till your second conviction before they execute you before a firing squad. The third one is most interesting. In Malaya – I have a son who lives there – the driver's jailed, and if he's married, his wife is put in jail with him. Now, that might be an interesting way to stop drunk driving, but all humour aside . . . Of course, the Member for Rocky Mountain House would be very pleased with that being one of the more eligible bachelors in here. He'd probably have his choice of who he could take to jail with him. Nevertheless, most areas – Finland, Sweden, Norway, England, France – all have a jail term connected with drunk driving.

I think we're actually way too soft on that, Mr. Minister, and I'd like to see the whole process of apprehending drunk driving stepped up. It's not the sentence for the offence that deters. It's the surety of being caught, the certainness of being caught. This is something that bothers me when I see us cutting funds or not funding properly the check stops in areas. Our late and very valued and esteemed Member for Calgary-Buffalo about eight or 10 years ago headed up a commission on drunk driving, and at that time not in government; it was done by private enterprise groups. The interesting part was that drunk driving can be eliminated if there's almost a 50-50 chance of the person being caught. It doesn't matter; you can put in huge fines, like even in Malaya threatening to send him to jail with his wife, and it still won't do it if there's only one chance in 50 or 100 or 200 that he'll get caught. So we have to upgrade our centre. That's the whole principle of law enforcement: it's the certainty of being caught not the sentence for the offence that makes the difference.

Leading on from that, the minister I think has been almost cavalier in his approach at times. I've questioned him on the fact that our hazardous pursuits, which are usually the chasing of some drinking youth by our Mounties, are going up and not going down. We set out a set of voluntary guidelines way back in October 1990, but since 1990 our ratio of death by hazardous pursuit as a percentage in Canada has gone up. We used to have about 24 percent of fatalities in hazardous pursuits in Canada in spite of having only 10 percent of the population. In other words, the cowboy and the rustlers, the old chase across the hills is still very much alive here, and we've moved on up to around 26 percent. So I don't think the voluntary guidelines are working. I really don't think that a lot of these chases are necessary. I know my Mountie friends will argue with me, but I would think that in a good 50 percent of the chases they already know the number, they already know who's present, and they're better to lay back and apprehend the person down the road. There's always the chance that they'll get loose, that they'll do more damage, but I think a lot of these are people that are enjoying the chase, and it ends up in death.

The Solicitor General's answers have been: "Oh, well, it's coming along. These people, we've got to change them so they

don't run away." That's not the point. They are running away. It's going to be a long time before any program that this government puts in changes the attitudes, so I think what we have to look at very carefully is maybe cutting back the hazardous chase. For instance, for nearly 26 percent of the deaths in hazardous pursuits in Canada in 1991 - 25.7 percent - to take place in Alberta with 10 percent of the population indicates that something's haywire. This is something I don't think we can necessarily blame on the native element. There's some reason or another that both the pursued and the pursuer put their foot to the floorboards and say to heck with everybody as they go roaring through the countryside. Those guidelines, if they were made mandatory or put into law for the police forces, I think would stop a lot of this.

4:30

Now to get into more details, and I hope you have some people up there where you keep casting your eyes, back over my shoulder here, that are very fast with their shorthand, because I'm going to rip through these fairly fast, Mr. Minister. I'm sure that you will be writing me a long letter back on that.

One of the things that puzzles me - and of course this may be more rhetorical than really factual - is why the Gaming Commission and the Racing Commission have been moved over to public works. I'd just say: why were they moved? Is it so that one minister is in charge of all this, or did you want to make sure that all job applications clear through the same office, or what was the reason that it got taken away from you?

Also, I'd like to ask the minister: would he consider raising the limits for compensation under the Motor Vehicle Accident Claims Fund? That's still at an amount that was set about 15 years ago, I think. If you look under vote 3.1.2, there is enough money to handle a raise in the claims. The fund is showing a fairly comfortable surplus. Now, I know from anybody that has ever tried to collect from it that probably one of the reasons it shows a surplus is that it's harder to get teeth out of - well, I was going to say something else, but I'm thinking of another analogy. But it's a very difficult prospect indeed to try to get money out of the unsatisfied judgment fund.

Again, in your vote 2.2.1, Administration is up 8.7 percent. Last year it was up 17 and a half percent. Why does it continue to rise when institutions are being downsized and two institutions in fact were closed this last year?

The 1990-91 annual report by the Solicitor General indicated that 415 males were in remand centres for between 32 and 92 days. That's three months; 415 males were in for up to three months, no less than one month and up to three months. Well, that's pretty slow. A remand centre was something that was figured to be for less than a week. It used to be just a few days. Now we're talking one month to three months. It's almost another jail. I don't understand why the delay. It may well be the shortage of judges, shortage of money or anything, but I'd be interested in an answer. [interjection] He was moving his lips, but I couldn't read them.

I notice the fine-option program I don't think has been used extensively enough. The annual report indicates only 143,000 hours of work in 1990-91. That's satisfying \$715,000 in fines; in other words, about \$6 an hour, Mr. Chairman. I think we could use a lot more of that in the community, especially as times are fairly rough and it's hard for a lot of these organizations to raise the money. It would seem fairly logical that instead of incarcerating a number of these people, they do a lot more hours of work, charitable work, for fines. For community service in 1990-91, only 51,000 hours were performed.

The \$2 to \$5 a day for inmates. If we're trying to adapt inmates for work in the outer world, wouldn't we be better to move it up into more of a realistic pay schedule? Then, if necessary, maybe charge room and board; in other words, get them to get in the habit of accounting and maybe saving. The \$2 to \$4 or \$5 a day I think is a carryover from back in the 1930s and '20s, and it should be looked at. If it weren't for the idea that the net cost would probably not be much more if you did charge - it would help educate the people there as to income and savings and also for paying what the costs are.

This has been touched on by the previous member, the Member for Edmonton-Strathcona. He mentioned quite often about natives being a high percentage of the people that are incarcerated, but if you break it down to male and female, it becomes worse. In other words, 48.8 percent - that's nearly half - of female prisoners are native, compared to 28 percent for the male. Obviously, we are not doing enough in that area to try to clean that up.

We go into the Victims' Fund Administration. It's down by 20.6 percent. That's vote 3.1.2. Will the minister explain what was to be done with these funds - although it's down 20.6 percent - as a result of the agreement between the provincial and federal governments to provide services and programs for victims of violence. This agreement expired on May 31, 1991, just a year ago, and there's still \$1.292 million - in other words, nearly \$1.3 million - not expended in a program that expired nearly a year ago. It would be very interesting to hear what's going on there.

Also, I'm kind of curious about vote 3.2.7, Police Phase-in Subsidy. What is this? It's down by 10.1 percent but last year was up 178 percent. Just what is a police phase-in subsidy? I'm just kind of curious. It's been jumping up and down like a yo-yo, and I'm wondering what it is.

The minister talked about many problems in our society, but he didn't touch on what we do about youth gangs in our inner cities. I'd be interested in his elaboration, and I don't want a simplistic solution, like sending them all away to work camps at Rocky Mountain House or anything like that. The gangs have different ethnic makeups, and they're moving in. Has there been any kind of attack made on that or any problems in the way they're handling the problem?

Vote 4.2.1, support systems, is down by 10 and a half percent. Now, that bothers me here, because as an MLA I get a number of complaints from people saying they have to stand in line for driver's licences for up to half an hour and wait for two and a half months to pass a special driver's licence test. All these are services to the public, yet the grant is down by 10.5 percent. Also, while we're on this thing, would the minister consider raising the age for learner's permits? Alberta has the youngest age requirement in Canada for a learner's permit for a driver's licence. I'm not so sure that's something you brag about in this day and age.

I've already complained to you on one in vote 4, the stagnant budget of Check Stop. If we have a problem, it is with alcohol and alcohol-related drivers, yet we're cutting our budget in that area.

DR. WEST: No, we did not.

MR. TAYLOR: Well, that's interesting. You nod your head and say it's not so. Indeed, if that's so, then I'm very pleased to hear it, but from my notes and research it looks as if the budget is stagnant.

The other thing I found puzzling under vote 5: why are native land claims in this department? Something like the lotteries and horse racing get taken away, which I can see quite oriented to the

Solicitor General, but you're left with something like the adjustment of land claims. That seems like a particular one and a peculiar one indeed. That comes in under vote 5.

4:40

DR. WEST: You should look at your notes before the session starts. Your researchers got it pretty well screwed up.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Order please.

MR. TAYLOR: I don't know. Don't step on the poor laddie. The only time he makes sense and then you try to jump on him. Sometimes he answers things.

MS CALAHASEN: Don't take forever. Some of us would like to get on. Hurry it up.

MR. TAYLOR: Oh, you have something to say. Is that it? Aha. I understand there are a few Tories lurking in the bush who want to get out there and tell the minister what a lovely job he's doing and how great he is, give him some puffball questions, ask for an extension to the jail in their area. [interjections]

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Order, hon. members. [interjections] Order please.

MR. TAYLOR: That's 23 minutes. I think I have seven minutes to go. Now that I know they're waiting, I'm sure to use them all.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Hon. member, order please. [interjection] Order please. Please be seated, hon. member.

MR. TAYLOR: When I have to wait, Mr. Chairman, I notice how kind and considerate they are, how quickly they tell me that oh, yes, they will cut their speech down so I can get on the floor. I think what this country needs is just some more back-bench Tories scratching the cabinet minister on the back. No, if you want to get your jollies, Mr. Cabinet Minister, you're going to have to do it somewhere outside the House, not get it from the backbenchers telling you how lovely you are.

I'd like a stand-up answer in the House, Mr. Chairman, as to why he has given the runaround to Drumheller. When the Drumheller police spoke to the federal Solicitor General, they were told to go to the provincial Solicitor General. They come to the provincial Solicitor General, and the provincial Solicitor General tells them to go to the federal Solicitor General, all on envoy, mind you. All envoy; there's no problem there. The fact is that there's just no question that the city of Drumheller has been give a horrible runaround by the minister. That's the only stand-up question.

He's hoping to get the answer from up on top, I guess. Why don't you let them send you a letter down there, and then I would be willing to give you time. Mr. Chairman, if it's at all possible, I would certainly like to know whether the minister is going to address the question of the inequity in the RCMP contract with the city of Drumheller.

With that, Mr. Chairman, I would look forward to his answer. Thank you.

Chairman's Ruling Decorum

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Just before recognizing the next speaker, I'd like to draw to the hon. member's attention that the Chair did ask him to come to order. Perhaps in consideration of

his condition, I let it go, but I think it should be emphasized that when the Chair requests a member to come to order and please be seated, they should do so.

Debate Continued

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The Member for Red Deer-North.

MR. DAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I might be making some comments which will be general in nature but comments that I think have to be made. Some of the specifics of the votes I've already been following up with the minister. Even though we hear comments about scratching the minister's back or making him feel good, that won't intimidate me. This minister has been responsive to a number of issues that I've brought to him in very specific ways. I appreciate that. I look forward to continuing to work with him and the folks in his department.

I want to start off in a general way. I think we need a wake-up call basically. I think the minister has heard the wake-up call even before moving into this department, but the things I'm talking about are things I've heard from constituents. Ever since taking office, it's nonstop. These concerns come at us regularly, and if I could just assure everybody that these are not hobbyhorses of mine. These are ones which constituents are continuing to come to me with, and obviously some of them would gibe with my own particular philosophic bent on some of the issues. We're hearing more and more that the public is giving up on the system, that the public is fed up with the system. When I say "system," obviously some of the things I'll talk about will be Solicitor General, some of it may stray over into the area of Attorney General, some of it's going to be provincial, some will be federal, and some will be municipal.

When I hear, as I did on the news today, that in Calgary the purchase of firearm acquisition certificates has leaped 30 percent this year, when we hear and look at the statistics that people are arming themselves at an alarming rate – and I appreciate all the little details and all the different votes and everything; we need to attend to all of that – we've got to just sit back and look at the broader issue, that people are getting to the point of frustration. People are getting angry, people are getting scared, and that's the bottom line. If we try and avoid that or if we just dismiss this as alarmist talk, I think we've got our heads in the sand. I can say that I'm glad that we do have a minister who has heard this call, recognized it himself, and is trying to do certain things to address this. We've got not just the citizens, but also I'm concerned when I talk with our peace officers around the province. I see them handling their frustration with a high degree of professionalism. The Solicitor General's department can be commended for whatever training programs they have in place that help our peace officers restrain themselves in their frustration, because they do an excellent job of it.

But I'll tell you, it is frustrating for them when they realize that, first of all, they can't even stop something from happening on the streets until people are practically lying there beaten and bloodied. They can't move to anticipate things even though their experience would give them the ability to do that. A good example of this and something that was very frustrating to me – and I think we've got to take some responsibility here as public officials. With this devastating and very tragic situation that happened in Los Angeles, you only noticed on the Canadian scene – and this applies to law enforcement here and has an effect – that as soon as the terrible tragedy began to break out in Los Angeles, what I heard was Canadian politicians, none in this House, starting to say: "It's going to happen here. It's going to happen here. It's going to happen here." I heard civil rights leaders saying: "It's going to

happen here. It's going to happen here. It's going to happen here." They begged long enough and finally got a little skirmish going in Toronto, and everybody was happy. We finally had something that we could call racial problems. When you look at the films, even the media coverage of that, what you saw was young hooligans who were not able to be restrained by police officers, who could have done the job had they been allowed to, finding an excuse to run rampant through the streets. We see it happening here in Alberta to a degree with this phenomenon which they call swarming, where groups of up to a hundred or more young people will gather and then swarm in a mall area and do all kinds of damage.

Our peace officers are frustrated by the way we, the legislators, have put unnecessary and unrealistic restraints upon them to do the job that they can do well. We have situations where they can hardly charge somebody or arrest somebody without almost having a degree in law just to get through the reading of the rights in the right way. They can hardly use any visible force necessary if the people they're trying to deal with are spitting on them or attacking them or intimidating them in different ways. They can't chase them if they do make a run for it. They can't blink an eye outside the courtroom when the particular offenders, be they young or old, get off on some technicality and go mockingly by the particular peace officers. Our peace officers are telling me that they constantly see repeat offenders, be they young or old, on the streets in the neighbourhoods again and again and again after having suffered virtually nothing in terms of any kind of incarceration, restitution, or anything like that. We have got a problem.

Yes, we do need to have our rights protected, as citizens. Yes, we do need to have appeal procedures. Of course we do. Yes, we need protection from possible abuse, but the pendulum has swung right off the map. It's gone too far, and our citizens are saying, "Crank it back," ladies and gentlemen. They're saying, "Don't be intimidated by the so-called liberal bleeding hearts," if I can use that common phrase. "Don't be intimidated by that. Do what has to be done." Our citizens are getting frustrated when they see that it's our peace officers who are handcuffed instead of our criminals. We've got a problem, and we'd better start addressing it.

4:50

We need to look at – let me use this situation here. Now, this didn't happen right in the province. I spoke on these issues a few weeks ago in the Legislature, so I'm not going to detail everything that I spoke on then; people can reference that. But when we have in one part of our country somebody sent to jail for 10 months for taking a run at somebody in their vehicle and killing them – I'm talking about Victor Davis here, a renowned Canadian swimmer – and somebody who kills some flamingos in Stanley Park goes to jail for eight months, people are saying: "What on earth is going on in our system? Almost the same amount of time for bopping off some flamingos as for running down a young man in the prime of his life?" I'm not saying we should allow people to go free for killing animals; of course not. But the system, folks, is out of whack. People are saying that something needs to be done. A message does have to go to the judges, yet we're told: "Oh, no; legislators can't influence judges. You can't speak to the judiciary."

Well, that's hogwash, because we have very recently seen the judiciary in Alberta and in Canada being required to take special courses on sensitivity to women's issues. I think that's wonderful. I think that should happen. But that's a very clear case where you have judges being commanded to take certain courses to make them sensitive to how the public is feeling about certain issues. I don't know how we do it, but we need to get a message to our

judiciary that they have a job to do, and at large our citizens are saying the job isn't being done that needs to be done. We can spend a lot of time talking about the Takahashis of the world going golfing. That's something that falls right into the Solicitor General role, the types of things that happen to people once they are convicted. I'm sorry; it's sending a very bad and a very negative message.

I hear an NDP member across the way suggesting that maybe what we need is recreational skills programs and leisure skills programs. I'm sorry, ladies and gentlemen. I'm sorry, Mr. Chairman, directing the comments to you here. I am sorry; we do not need leisure skills programs for our offenders. That's not what we need, and that's not what the public is asking us to give them, so why are we delivering them? Why are we delivering those expensive programs when we don't have a mandate from the public to do that?

Rehabilitation, so called, simply is not happening in any significant way, and that's what's being told to me. That's what's being told to us by our rehabilitation officers, by our correction officers, by the psychologists that are attempting to do all they can to work with people in the system. It's not working. It doesn't work. We need to change our course and change our tactics.

Now, I'd like to ask the minister if he could have his officials do some investigative work into some of the jurisdictions where the recidivism rates do not seem to be anywhere near as alarming or as drastic as ours are. I'm not going to take the time to go into the full documentation, but could I recommend and ask that some kind of investigation be done on the penal system in France, because we know from just cursory studies that we've done that they have a very low recidivism rate but also have very short-term sentences. A three-year sentence in France is seen as drastic; it's seen as terrifying. The recidivism rates are low. I don't mean we've got to fly to Paris to check it out. I'm sure there are ways that we can do that, but can we please get some kind of information back? Is this true, what we're hearing and what we read? Can we get some detailed information on that?

I talk to school kids, and they tell me that they went into the remand centre and saw how people are living there and come up and say to me: "You know, that remand centre isn't too bad. That's not too bad a place. I don't have a pool table at home; those guys in there have one. I don't have a big-screen colour TV; in there those guys have them." We need a wake-up call, folks. We need a wake-up call. We are bringing all kinds of treatment programs and things into the Solicitor General system that the public is not asking for. We've got some harebrained individuals somewhere in some ivory towers who are saying this is the way to do it. It's not working. The public is not giving us the mandate to do this.

This falls directly under the Solicitor General's department. I mentioned it also last year and nothing was done then, perhaps because time didn't allow. Could this Solicitor General look into the question of co-ed officers in our prison systems? If we have a jail that is set aside for strictly male offenders, then it should be male guards in there. We have situations where we have female guards also watching over the men. We've got situations where we have jails that are dedicated only to women inmates, and we've got male guards working in there. The people in these institutions have already been demeaned. They have already lost their self-esteem. The last shred of dignity they have is being taken from them by being observed by guards of the opposite sex. Could the minister please take a look at that and see who thought of that idea, why we have it, and if there is some kind of reason or benefit to the people in the system.

Young offenders I've dealt with to some degree already in previous comments here in a motion which I had before the Legislature. I would like to commend the minister for already asking his department to look into not just some of the confines of the young offenders legislation but in fact some different approaches that we can have in handling young offenders. It's very interesting that predictably around the province when we talk like this, the editorialists go berserk. They react like the Member for Westlock-Sturgeon, who says we're talking about putting cannonballs around peoples' legs and forcing them to be part of some kind of a press-gang. No reflection on the press there. You know, it's interesting that these people like the Member for Westlock-Sturgeon, like the editorialists, only want us to perpetuate programs that are proven categorically, absolutely not to work.

I realize that having a work-type program that incorporates work, education upgrading, fairly rigorous programs in confinement and away from an urban centre – and I appreciate the applause – is not the only answer. Now, the members opposite stand up and say, "They say that's the only answer, and that's going to solve everything." I've never once said that. It's one small part, one component of the system that needs to be looked at. So let's put this aside, that we think that's going to clear all the ills. It's not, but it's a very necessary component, a very necessary component, and I'm thankful that the minister is already looking into that.

Since addressing this issue and bringing it to the minister's attention, I have had meetings requested by psychologists and corrections officers who've been working in the system for 10, 15, 20, 25 years. They're saying the present system is not working; this is more of the approach that they have to have. I've had interesting presentations from people in the private sector and people in the system who are very experienced, and they are responding in very categorical and specific ways into how these types of programs can work. All we know now is that they're not working.

I'd like to also know if the Solicitor General could explore the area of parental responsibility. I say it from this point of view: again, whether we're talking about young offenders or old offenders, I believe there should be a process of restitution. There should be a means by which somebody who is incarcerated has to work at something, but they should also get, even if it's a small amount, some kind of pay for that, and some portion of that pay should go towards restitution in terms of the people they offended, the crime they did, or whatever. So if that could be looked into, if that's possible within the area – I realize there are some implications there for Attorney General, and that'll have to be looked at.

Also in terms of parental responsibility, if we're talking about young offenders, young people who are under age 18, there needs to be not just incarceration, not just follow-up for the young offender, but, whether it's a counseling program with the parents or parent, whatever it may be, there needs to be parental involvement and there needs to be some parental responsibility even in terms of costs. It may be a small amount, it may be a token amount, but we as parents need to know that if our kids – and I have three teenagers – are going to run rampant, if they're going to cause problems, we're also going to have some financial responsibility there as well as some social and parental responsibility. So if that could be looked at: if other jurisdictions are using that or if we could pioneer that particular area. Maybe we're doing some things in that area already, and if we are, let's see if it's working, and if it's working, let's really blow the horn on that; let's show the things that we are doing in that particular area. All we know now is that it's not working.

Not very long ago, as a matter of fact just several weeks ago, in visiting some friends in their home, their young 12-year-old son burst into the house in tears with six of his friends. They had just been robbed by two teenage individuals who had stopped them at knife-point and threatened to beat them, threatened to knife them unless they gave them money. I was there. I saw and heard this happen. These young kids gave them what money they had, and they also gave them some of their own personal items, which they were carrying. The two teenage individuals laughed and walked away.

5:00

Well, myself and two of the other fathers were there. We got in our vehicles. We got the description of these fellows. To make a long story short, we got the young guys that had been robbed and threatened at knife-point down to the police station. We actually were able to apprehend the two teenage individuals, who willingly came with us to the police station, waltzed in there. This is in central Alberta; I'm not talking Los Angeles or Detroit here. In terror, the six young fellows who'd been robbed at knife-point identified these guys. These guys waltzed into the police office. A matter of less than an hour later they had waltzed out. The police had to inform the parents in frustration that even if the parents did press charges, very little, if anything, would happen, but the police would be willing to press those charges if they wanted.

So the parents decided not to press the charges, and it was the kids and the parents who even to this day are in fear of these two young thugs coming back on them in terms of retribution. It's all backwards, ladies and gentlemen. We've allowed this thing to tilt too far. It's out of shape. This is happening here in Alberta today, and if I hadn't seen it as close up as I did and been involved in it, I probably wouldn't have believed it. These are the types of things that we've got to be looking at and we've got to be dealing with.

In education programs, I appreciate the minister talking about the need for education and the need for prevention, the need for getting some of the statistics out there in terms of who's at risk in areas of crime. I know that the opposition will not like this next statistic because they try and write everything off as just not being funded enough. But this is just one of a number of sources that could be used here. The source here is Douglas A. Smith and G. Roger Jarjoura, and the study is *Social Structure and Criminal Victimization*, coming from the *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency*. This is the February 1988 edition. The criminologists' study out of the University of Maryland found

that when differences in family structure are taken into account, crime rates run much the same in rich and poor neighborhoods and [the same] among black, white, and Hispanic populations.

I wish they would be listening across the way here when they hear the true statistics that go against their own philosophic bent. They don't like to listen. This was a study not of one or two people, but a study of 11,000 residents of different states: Florida, upstate New York, and Missouri. So there's a real cross section in terms of population.

The study found that

the percentage of single-parent households with children between the ages of 12 and 20 is significantly associated with rates of violent crime and burglary.

This is where education has to come in. In the situations where we do have families that are being faced with the challenge of raising kids when there's only one parent on the scene, these particular individuals, be they single moms or single dads, need the educational assistance, need the counseling assistance to let them know that immediately their kids are at a higher risk. Now,

this is not a biased statement. This is not a prejudiced statement. This is hard-core statistical data, done with a survey of 11,000 different residents.

It goes on to say:

The [University of Maryland] team points out that "many studies that find a significant association between racial composition and crime rates have failed to control for community family structure and may mistakenly attribute to racial composition an effect that is actually due to the association [of] . . . family structure."

Smith and Jarjoura go on to

criticize theories that attribute crime to poverty since when family structure is taken into account, "the effect of poverty on burglary rates becomes insignificant and [in fact] slightly negative."

It doesn't matter whether it's a rich upstate neighbourhood like New York or it's a tougher neighbourhood in Florida or something in Missouri; these are the factors that need to be considered. This is the type of education that needs to be out there so that we can put in the type of preventative and counseling programs that are necessary before these statistics become the harsh reality that we're told they will.

One of the members opposite already asked for – and I'll repeat the request – some evaluation on the victims program, on the victim impact statement. That's already been mentioned, so I won't get into that in detail, but I'd like to know the evaluation of that, and in terms of the family violence programs, what's being done there.

Moving away from the criminal element of things right now, I also appreciate the fact that in terms of customer service, the minister has mentioned that he's introduced plans for the enhancement of government services, and I know that's a challenge when we're trying to restrain our spending. I raised this some time ago with the minister. I'm pleased to see that they are looking at enhanced customer service. The taxpayers are customers. Any of us who work at all in serving the public have to see the taxpayer as the customer. The customer is right. When the customer is complaining, we need to listen to her and respond appropriately.

In terms of some of the things going on as far as dealing with impaired drivers, I realize the sentencing end gets into the Attorney General's area, so I won't address that specifically. But I don't think we need to shy away from really getting vigorous and aggressive in terms of dealing with and checking the possibility of impaired drivers. The public is demanding it. The public is requiring it. Who are we listening to if we're afraid of being aggressive in this particular area? Not two weeks ago I had to attend one of the saddest funerals I've ever attended in my life, a young man 21 years of age snuffed out in the prime of his life in a situation that absolutely did not have to happen. It was so tragic. The public is aware of these types of tragic things, and our public, our paying public is saying, I believe, to the minister: "Don't be afraid of getting vigorous in this area. Don't be afraid of getting aggressive." I don't even think we have to hide our Check Stops around corners where people can't see you coming. I say have our officers watching the bars themselves, and when they see someone get in a car, pull right up, get the breathalyzer out. Let's get it right where it starts.

We've got a situation in our province, again, where parents of young people, I being one of those with three young drivers, sit around at night terrified, wondering if our kids are going to get hit by a drunk driver. It should be the drunk drivers who are terrified at even the thought of getting behind that wheel, the thought, I believe the minister mentioned, of possibly impounding the vehicles and selling those vehicles. You know, in our wildlife regulations we have situations where if you break certain hunting laws and rules, you lose your hunting equipment, you can have your car or your truck sold; you lose it all because we're serious

about people with infractions on wildlife. What about human life? I don't have any difficulty at all with the thought of someone having their car not just impounded but in fact sold at public auction if they're arrested and convicted on charges of impaired driving. People are so quick to say, "Well, what about the hardship that would bring to the poor person and to their family?" Well, ladies and gentlemen, what about the hardship of a parent waking up every morning knowing they're never going to see their young son or young daughter again because they've been senselessly wiped out by somebody who was too stupid and too uncaring and too unfeeling, who gets behind the wheel of a car when they know they've had a couple of drinks.

These are the types of issues that the vast majority of our taxpayers are saying we've got to toughen up on. I encourage the minister to do that, and I thank him for action that he's already taken.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The Member for Edmonton-Avonmore.

MS M. LAING: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have just a couple of questions or points that I would like to raise with the minister. One of them is in regard to young offenders. He has raised the issue of work camps, and I think that with the right orientation that's not necessarily a bad idea. The problem with young offenders is the shortness of the term. Probably what they need is a long-term rehabilitation program that allows them to develop self-esteem, work skills, and to deal with some of the problems that bring them into conflict with the law.

I had a colleague who at one point was working with young offenders, and he discovered that all of them had experienced some form of abuse as children. It was only after some period of time that they were able to address that and work through the anger and hostility that they felt towards others, towards society, as well as to themselves. I think that what we do need is a structured setting where young people can get a sense of themselves and develop some degree of self-esteem and sense of worth and of what they can contribute. I'm not sure that they will work as they are conceptualized, that there needs to be a greater commitment to resources.

5:10

I'm also concerned about the treatment programs geared to the unique needs of women. I was happy to hear the minister say that he would be taking a look at the special needs of these women. My understanding in talking with the people from the Elizabeth Fry Society is that nearly all, if not all, women in conflict with the law have histories of abuse, and until we address those histories of abuse, we will not be successful in fully rehabilitating them. They need to have programs not only in terms of rehabilitation and treatment but in terms of recreation and skill development that address their abilities. A thing that I have heard is that women in prisons tend to get slotted into traditional-type, female-type job training or skill development programs, and that may not necessarily be what would be in their best interests. So I would ask that the minister be very aware of the unique needs of women.

I think we need to address clearly the issue of literacy. My understanding is that a significant number of people in conflict with the law have not managed to get themselves through school, and many of them cannot read. That certainly means that they cannot then take a useful place in society.

I look forward to hearing the details of the initiatives on violence in the family. I think that public awareness is only one part, and a very small part, of the solution. Without the backup

support programs that provide support to victims of battering and a strong, clear statement to the batterer that this is criminal behaviour, we will not significantly address this issue.

Those are all my comments, Mr. Chairman.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The Member for Lesser Slave Lake.

MS CALAHASEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I know we seem to get a lot of criticism whenever we deal with a number of issues in terms of native people. For too long I think we've had a lot of nonaboriginal people who have made decisions for aboriginal people, and I think finally the aboriginal people themselves are beginning to take responsibility and seeing how they can be represented better in Legislatures as well as in municipal councils and any way possible. I know that the NDs certainly feel that they can speak for the aboriginal people, and the Liberals themselves do take liberty in terms of speaking for the aboriginal people. I just felt that I had to get up to discuss some of the concerns that have been articulated here regarding aboriginal incarceration as well as aboriginal policing and anything to do with the aboriginal people in terms of policing.

I feel that this minister, if any minister I would say, has been on a long road to ensuring that the aboriginal people are consulted in terms of some of the things that are going to affect them. I'd really like to congratulate him in terms of what he has done and is continuing to do. I realize the Member for Westlock-Sturgeon certainly wants to get some facts on the scene. It's something that I'd like to talk about briefly as well as ask the minister to respond to some of the areas which I feel are very important.

We have a lot of programs that are starting to make life a little easier for the aboriginal people. I know that for many years, in terms of the delivery of the law and in terms of the delivery of anything to do with the criminal justice system, we have had a lot of studies done. I feel that now is the time to start putting things into perspective and trying to see how we can get those mechanisms in place to be able to start looking at how we can do a better job than what we have done in the past. It is true that there have been some areas where we have missed, and I'd like to see how we can try to fill in the gaps, which I feel are very important. I would like to talk about some of those areas today.

We see that the understanding of the legal process hampers the chances of aboriginal people to better understand the system. It looks like there are quite a lot of young offenders in the young offender population in custody as well as adult offenders, particularly speaking about aboriginal people. However, when we look at what we call the adult offender incarceration rate, it certainly has fallen, from approximately 56 percent in 1968 to approximately 28.6 percent in 1988. I think this is a result of a lot of activity which has occurred from various ministers who have been involved in the Solicitor General's position. I think we have to continue to maintain open lines of communication with those involved in anything to do with corrections in Alberta, as well as by providing the necessary information to clients that are going to be impacted.

Something I would like to talk about is that a lot of times we say that we've got to look at the existing problems, but I think those are being dealt with presently. However, I think we have to start looking at long-term initiatives. We have to look at how we can actually prevent native people from going to the courts, and this is usually by looking at the poverty situation of aboriginal people. We have to start looking at getting economic initiatives or economic developments in the communities. What we see in the native community is that in most cases there is a high unemployment rate, as high as 80 percent. I think we have to

start looking at items which are going to significantly help aboriginal people towards self-sufficiency and being able to say that they can do things, because when there's idleness, people want to find something, and it usually is not in the positive.

I see in my own constituency that we have a lot of communities who have nothing to do. What do you do when you're a young person? What do you do when you're an older person when you have absolutely no economic development occurring, when you've got nothing happening? I think we are starting to change that. Just to give you an example, what has happened in some of the areas in the Member for Athabasca-Lac La Biche's situation – he certainly has been trying to improve the situation with his communities. Rather than looking at band-aid solutions, he certainly has looked at long-term solutions. I think that once we begin to look at that and make sure that people's views are brought forward, we can start to begin to address the real issues and the real root of the situation in terms of what's happening in the criminal justice system.

I want to look at what has happened in this government. It's something that I feel we have really made significant progress on. We have what we call now a Metis framework agreement in place with the Metis people of Alberta. We have a Metis Settlements Accord, which has been extremely well received by the Metis settlements. They are implementing their own self-government and trying to see what they can do. I'm sure that as we go on, they'll start to take on additional items such as getting justice into their own hands and seeing what they can do. We have land claims which we have settled, and I'd like to say that this is the only government that has taken any steps to be able to settle land claims. We have what we call the Northland School Division, a native-oriented school board who is looking after native children's education. We have significant housing programs in the province of Alberta. We have water and sewers. We have adult education, and we've got a lot of involvement of aboriginal people on school boards and municipal councils and IDs and hospitals. We've got people with economic development on economic development councils, in chambers of commerce. Now, I believe, we have MLAs who are definitely representing native people in this government. As well, we have MPs like Willie Littlechild, who is definitely making sure that he represents the aboriginal people of Alberta as much as he possibly can.

As aboriginal persons we are beginning to deal with a lot of items which have been forgotten for so long, and people always feel that they have to bring a totally different perspective in place. I think we are now starting to deal with those, and I would like to see a lot of other native people, aboriginal people, involved in the political process so that we can begin to make sure that we take care of our own.

5:20

There are now a lot of items which we need done. I know we are starting to do a lot in terms of what has happened in the Cawsey report, and I see the implementation of some of those recommendations coming forward. I would like to encourage the minister to continue to make sure that he consults with the aboriginal people – whether it's with the treaties and the Metis settlements and the Metis Nation of Alberta – whenever he has anything that he feels he has to implement working with the aboriginal justice system, that he continues to consult with the aboriginal people. I think that no longer can aboriginal people sit back and say that that decision is going to be made by other people. We have to be involved, and I think they will continue to be involved as much as possible.

What has happened with the native policing directives is that the representation of native peoples is starting to surface. We find that the avoidance of incarceration is starting to come through in projects such as the Wabasca-Desmarais Youth Justice Committee. That committee is probably the best thing that has happened in Wabasca-Desmarais. It is now starting to look at additional responsibilities, and I feel that with these additional responsibilities what we are going to find is that people are going to start realizing that the people of the community are going to be doing the judging and basing their judgment on what's happening in the community versus having someone always from the outside coming to make the decisions. They are working very hard, and I would like to recommend that they continue to do the best that they possibly can, working from their cultural perspective, working with the families, working with the youth, and making sure that their sentences are being taken care of.

I commend Provincial Court Judge Clayton Spence for having the forwardness of thinking to be able to look at this and set this up by involving the community in Wabasca-Desmarais, and I commend those people in Wabasca-Desmarais who have worked very hard to see this come to reality and to see how they can make sure that crime drops. It certainly has come to that, where they are now starting to see that the offences are not as high as they used to be. I think some of these areas are really important when you're talking about native delivery. It's time that we started looking, as we would say, at putting justice in the hands of the people. The people will decide what kind of judgment should be made, and it's starting to show through significantly in what's happening in Wabasca, just as one example.

The other one that I'd like to comment on is what Whitefish Lake and Gift Lake are doing and maybe make a few recommendations. I feel that they are really working towards an innovative project, or at least a delivery mechanism, which will be able to help the people in that area deal with their own justice system. However, there seems to be a problem in terms of funding, and we need to see how we can encourage the federal government to continue to put money in aboriginal policing where there are joint ventures. Unfortunately, that's not happening, and I think it could really cause a problem for the group who is working very, very diligently towards this.

The other one that I'd like to talk about is that maybe what we should do is start working with the RCMP to find out whether or not they actually target aboriginal people when they're talking about their statistics. RCMP deal with statistics whenever they deal with anything to do with policing. I would like to know whether or not they are actually targeting aboriginal communities or aboriginal people to make sure their stats stay high. That's a question that I'd like to see answered, because the information I seem to get is that when you go to a court system, it seems like there are only aboriginal people who are in the court system, yet I'm sure there are a lot of other people who do the same kind of crimes as anywhere else. I would like to know across the province: what is the percentage of aboriginal people being ticketed versus those that are not being ticketed?

Mr. Chairman, with that I'd like to close so I can give the minister a chance to be able to reply.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Does the hon. minister wish to make concluding remarks?

DR. WEST: Go ahead with the question.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Call for the question?

HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Taking the question, then.

Agreed to:

1.0.1 – Minister's Office	\$260,000
1.0.2 – Deputy Minister's Office	\$236,400
1.0.3 – Finance and Administration	\$3,036,900
1.0.4 – Personnel	\$918,000
1.0.5 – Systems and Information Services	\$3,021,600
1.0.6 – Staff Training College	\$807,300
1.0.7 – Corporate Services	\$342,200
1.0.8 – Liquor Licensing Review Council	–
1.0.9 – Internal Audit	\$332,600
Total Vote 1 – Departmental Support Services	\$8,955,000

2.1.1 – Administration	\$5,911,900
Total Vote 2.1 – Program Support	\$5,911,900

Vote 2.2 – Institutional Services:

2.2.1 – Edmonton Remand Centre	\$13,847,500
2.2.2 – Fort Saskatchewan Correctional Centre	\$11,258,400
2.2.3 – Belmont Correctional Centre	\$2,754,800
2.2.4 – Calgary Correctional Centre	\$8,756,500
2.2.5 – Calgary Remand Centre	\$10,492,600
2.2.6 – Bow River Correctional Centre	\$1,574,500
2.2.7 – Peace River Correctional Centre	\$5,112,800
2.2.8 – St. Paul Correctional Centre	–
2.2.9 – Lethbridge Correctional Centre	\$7,579,600

MR. ANDERSON: Mr. Chairman, in view of the clock, could I move that we stop the clock?

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Hon. deputy House leader, we need to complete this proceeding, and then I will recognize you. We will try and go quickly.

Agreed to:

2.2.10 – Grande Prairie Young Offender Centre	\$1,009,700
2.2.11 – Grande Cache Correctional Centre	\$8,694,800
2.2.12 – Edmonton Young Offender Centre	\$6,297,300
2.2.13 – Medicine Hat Remand Centre	\$1,951,800
2.2.14 – Strathmore Youth Development Centre	\$1,958,200
2.2.15 – Calgary Young Offender Centre	\$5,818,500
2.2.16 – Kikino Young Offender Centre	–
2.2.17 – Lethbridge Young Offender Centre	\$667,600
2.2.18 – Red Deer Remand Centre	\$3,033,100
Total Vote 2.2 – Institutional Services	\$90,807,700

5:30

2.3.1 – North District	\$6,503,900
2.3.2 – South District	\$4,401,900
2.3.3 – Young Offender Services	\$1,178,500
Total Vote 2.3 – Community Correctional Services	\$12,084,300

2.4.1 – Community Residential Centres	\$7,991,500
2.4.2 – Native Courtworkers	\$3,413,000
2.4.3 – Community Service Contracts	\$3,617,900
Total Vote 2.4 – Purchased Community Services	\$15,022,400

Total Vote 2 – Correctional Services \$123,826,300

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: With the agreement of the committee I would propose to do the total votes for 3, 4, and 5. Are we agreed?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

Agreed to:

Total Vote 3 – Law Enforcement \$125,271,400

**Point of Order
Adjournment Time**

MR. FOX: Point of order, Mr. Chairman.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Yes, sir?

MR. FOX: Standing Order 60: “Committee of Supply and its subcommittees shall rise and report no later than the normal adjournment hour.” In Standing Order 59 the normal adjournment hour is 5:30 p.m.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Yes, hon. member, I note that this would be a reason for concern. However, there is reference, I'm advised, in *Erskine May* in which when you're in the middle of a vote, you complete the vote, and this would take precedence over that particular procedure.

MR. FOX: Mr. Chairman, on the point of order. We're not in the middle of a vote; we're doing a myriad of votes. It's not as if we're in the middle of one vote. We've had several different votes. We're well past the normal adjournment hour, and I'm not sure of the validity of the votes the Chairman's now conducting through the Assembly.

MR. ANDERSON: Mr. Chairman, with respect to the point of order, perhaps it could be solved by my moving, which I'm quite willing to do, that we show the clock to have been stopped at 5:30.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The Chairman appreciates the point of order raised and the advice or help being offered by the Deputy Government House Leader. However, the Chairman will take responsibility for completing the vote.

Solicitor General (continued)

Agreed to:

Total Vote 4 – Motor Vehicle Registration and Driver Licensing \$26,099,800

Total Vote 5 – Native Affairs [\$4,731,500]

Department Total – \$288,884,000

DR. WEST: Mr. Chairman, I move the votes be reported.

[Motion carried]

MR. ANDERSON: Mr. Chairman, I think it's appropriate that I now move that the clock be stopped at 5:30 and that we rise and report.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Having heard the motion, all those in favour, please say aye.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Those opposed, please say no.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: No.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Carried.

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

MR. JONSON: Mr. Speaker, the Committee of Supply has had under consideration the estimates of the Department of the Solicitor General and reports as follows.

For the Department of the Solicitor General: \$8,955,000 for Departmental Support Services, \$123,826,300 for Correctional Services, \$125,271,400 for Law Enforcement, \$26,099,800 for Motor Vehicle Registration and Driver Licensing, \$4,731,500 for Native Affairs.

**Point of Order
Adjournment Time**

MR. SPEAKER: Point of order before I take the motion.

MR. FOX: Mr. Speaker, using our standing orders 59 and 60, talking about the normal adjournment hour of a committee of the Assembly, we read that to be, according to Standing Orders, 5:30 p.m. on a Wednesday. We went past that hour and continued voting over the objections of the opposition, voted entirely on the votes before the House for the Solicitor General's department, and we're unsure as to the validity of those votes, having occurred when it appears from our Standing Orders that there's no provision for that to happen. We would like the Speaker to make some determination, perhaps, on this situation so that we have some guidance if this unusual occurrence comes before the House again.

MR. ANDERSON: Mr. Speaker, on the point of order. The usual time of adjournment is certainly 5:30, and we would appreciate any clarification you might wish to give us. Nonetheless, in my recollection of tradition in the House, we have often stopped the clock at 5:30 in order to continue a debate. In this case we were in the middle of a vote, and I would assume that we have worked in accordance with the rules. If not, we'd be pleased to do whatever the Speaker suggests with respect to making sure that everything is in order.

5:40

MR. SPEAKER: Only once do you get the chance to speak on the same point of order, hon. Member for Vegreville.

There are a number of difficulties involved here. The first one is from *Beauchesne* 822, which reads: “Procedural difficulties which arise in committees ought to be settled in the committee and not in the House.” That's one direction that needs to apply to this, and the Committee of Supply needs to deal with this issue when it next convenes, if members wish to raise the matter so that it's dealt with early in its meeting, rather than waiting till the last minute.

There are two other things involved. One is that indeed it's appropriate under *Erskine May* on page 241, Transaction of Business after Moment of Interruption, for the matter to continue to be voted on. However, having listened outside the Chamber, I'm concerned that, yes, one could proceed with the vote on one

particular vote; the question of whether it means votes, plural, as opposed to vote, one, being in process is indeed something for additional research.

Having said all that, the Chair is exceedingly concerned that while on occasion we have allowed the clock to go one or two minutes past the normal time of adjournment and that's fine enough and the House was acquiescent in it, today that is not what occurred. There was obviously a number of points of concern

being raised from at least one member of the opposition caucus, and raised more than once. In actual fact, the Chair now will not put the question, and the Chair admonishes the House, and in this case the government bench and the Deputy Government House Leader, with the greatest of reluctance that in fact the procedure has been violated this afternoon and should not again occur.

[At 5:42 p.m. the Assembly adjourned to Thursday at 2:30 p.m.]

