

Legislative Assembly of Alberta

Title: **Thursday, September 16, 1993**

1:30 p.m.

Date: 93/09/16

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

head: **Prayers**

MR. SPEAKER: Let us pray.

O Lord, we give thanks for the bounty of our province: our land, our resources, and our people.

We pledge ourselves to act as good stewards on behalf of all Albertans.

Amen.

head: **Introduction of Visitors**

MRS. McCLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure and an honour to introduce to you and through you to Members of the Legislative Assembly distinguished guests that are seated in your gallery. As members are aware, the ministers of health from the provinces, territories, and Canada are meeting in our province, and we are hosting them over these past days and today. I am pleased to introduce to you the Hon. Mary Collins, Minister of Health for Canada and co-chair of our meeting today; from Ontario the Hon. Ruth Grier, Minister of Health; Russell Williams, parliamentary secretary from the province of Quebec; the Hon. Ronald D. Stewart, Minister of Health for Nova Scotia; the Hon. Russell King, Minister of Health and Community Services for New Brunswick; the Hon. James McCrae, Minister of Health for Manitoba; the Hon. Alan Buchanan, Minister of Health and Social Services for Prince Edward Island; the Hon. Louise Simard, Minister of Health for Saskatchewan; and the Hon. Dr. Hubert Kitchen, Minister of Health for Newfoundland. I would ask all of our distinguished guests to rise, and I would ask the members of the Legislature to accord them a very warm welcome.

head: **Reading and Receiving Petitions**

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Highlands-Beverly.

MS HANSON: Yes. I would request that the petition I presented on Wednesday be read, please.

CLERK:

We the undersigned petition the Legislative Assembly of Alberta to urge the government to reinstate the cuts made to social assistance and in the future to consult broadly with clients, labour and professionals to determine where savings can be made that will not harm Alberta families.

MR. RENNER: Mr. Speaker, I would like to move that petitions for private Bills that I presented to the Assembly yesterday now be deemed to have been read and received.

[Motion carried]

head: **Tabling Returns and Reports**

MRS. MIROSH: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to file with the Assembly the 1991-92 Children's Advocate annual report on behalf of the Minister of Family and Social Services.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Avonmore.

MR. ZWOZDESKY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have the pleasure to table before this Assembly copies of the poem *Angel Too*, which was authored by Edmontonian Peter Cole and resulted in his winning the national competition in Eden Mills this past Sunday.

head: **Introduction of Guests**

MR. ADY: Mr. Speaker, every year postsecondary students across Canada band together during September to raise funds for the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation. I'd like to introduce to you and through you four very special students who are actively involved in Edmonton's Shinerama campaign. I'd ask all members to participate in their car-washing and shoe-shining fund-raising events around the city to support this very worthwhile cause. Seated in the members' gallery are Cynthia Snedker and Gayatri Kembhavi, directors of the U of A campaign, and Dean Andres and Dave Murray, directors of the NAIT campaign. I'd ask that they stand and receive the warm welcome and congratulations.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Avonmore.

MR. ZWOZDESKY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Moments ago I tabled the poem *Angel Too*, and I'm delighted to introduce to you and through you the native Edmontonian Mr. Peter Cole, who is with us today. This festival, Your Honour, is one that took place in Eden Mills in Guelph, Ontario. It's the fifth annual, and it has the esteemed company of writers such as Margaret Atwood, Myrna Kostash, and many others. Mr. Cole is particularly to be saluted on this occasion because he represents our native aboriginal element. I have the pleasure of having in my riding the Dreamspeakers Festival headquarters, whose purpose it is to engage in the active promotion of native artistry. So I would now ask that Mr. Peter Cole, winner of the national competition for the Eden Mills Writers' Festival, stand with his mother, Alberta Cole, and receive the warmest welcome from this Assembly. Congratulations.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Spruce Grove-Sturgeon-St. Albert.

MRS. SOETAERT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to introduce to you and through you two representatives from PACT, Parents against Child Support Taxation, and their family members. Their representatives are Linda Godwin and Karen Goodman. These people are working tirelessly to eliminate the discrimination and unfairness of taxation for child care. I ask that they please rise and receive the warm welcome of this Assembly.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Avonmore.

MR. ZWOZDESKY: It's my day. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd also like to briefly introduce to you a gentleman who is engaged in some private business ventures in the Avonmore area and bid him also a happy Rosh Hashanah along with so many of our other friends: Mr. Frank Farberman.

Thank you.

head: **Oral Question Period**

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Young Offenders

MR. DECORE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are to the Minister of Justice. Experts working with juvenile sex offenders

state that if these juveniles are not properly and effectively treated, there is the potential of hundreds falling victim to these offenders. Yesterday we heard much criticism of the federal government and what it should be doing about youth crime, but on the other hand the provincial government has seriously undercut the Phoenix program in Calgary, a program that deals with young offenders, sex offenders, and very recently has seriously impaired the ability of the Counterpoint House program in the Edmonton area to operate. My first question to the minister, then, is this: when will the minister start working and thinking and dealing with problems that involve youth crime in his own backyard rather than having us criticizing the people in Ottawa?

MR. ROSTAD: Mr. Speaker, I'm not so sure that I recall the incident of accusing the federal government. There have indeed been cutbacks. Our budget document has been out some time. Also, we've asked in every area but more particularly in the young offender area, where cutbacks have occurred, that the agencies sit down and have serious and informative dialogue with the department to make sure that there are alternative ways and there aren't gaps. I invite any of them, whether it's the Phoenix program or any in Edmonton, to in fact do that.

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, surely the minister himself has taken an initiative and spoken to these agencies. I'd like the minister to report to Albertans and tell us whether or not those agencies are in fear that young offenders won't be properly treated and that there well may be victims because of that.

1:40

MR. ROSTAD: Mr. Speaker, I would be delighted to in fact talk to any of these agencies if they wish to talk. I have not had to this date a request for that. There has been dialogue with the assistant deputy minister of corrections. If they want to talk directly with me, I'll be delighted.

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, we've seen two highly effective programs chopped up by the Conservative government. Women in Alberta have been put in greater danger, and I'm asking the minister: does he not have a sense of responsibility to all women in Alberta that may be in some peril because of this?

MR. ROSTAD: Mr. Speaker, anyone that is confronted with the justice system because in some manner they have breached the law and they come under our custody is taken very, very seriously. The Young Offenders Act says that the interests of the offender and the interests of society are two aspects of that Act. I do not agree with the hon. Leader of the Opposition's premise that these young women are being put at risk. They are in fact continuing to be treated. They're being treated in a different manner.

Speaker's Ruling Seeking Opinions

MR. SPEAKER: The Chair will only remind the hon. Leader of the Opposition and other members that questions eliciting an opinion are really not in order.

The hon. Leader of the Opposition, second main question.

MR. DECORE: I always like to hear the opinion of the Minister of Justice though, Mr. Speaker.

Hospital Accountability

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, our caucus has now discovered that there is yet another provincial hospital playing around in the

business world instead of caring for people. The Peace River hospital has set up a business to market an IBM System/38 computer program. It gets even worse. The hospital has set up an office in Calgary to market its product. Some experts believe that this product is already antiquated. Mr. Premier, you've now had lots of time to investigate these shenanigans. What on earth is going on with our hospital system in Alberta?

MR. KLEIN: Well, for the most part, Mr. Speaker, it's a highly efficient, well-respected hospital program. The university hospital right here in Edmonton has achieved international acclaim for some of its programs, especially in the delivery of various health care services.

MR. MITCHELL: Does it have any acclaim for software sales?

MR. KLEIN: Now listen. Mr. Speaker, I said yesterday that personally I would not be able to support this kind of business endeavour in this day and age. I've had the opportunity to further discuss this with colleagues in my caucus and with the Provincial Treasurer, and basically I'm going to have the Treasurer – and I've asked the Treasurer – to work with the Minister of Health and other appropriate ministers along with the Auditor General to ensure that the principles of proper authorization, accountability, and transparency are reflected in our legislation and practices, including the practices of our Crown-controlled operations such as universities, colleges, and provincially administered hospitals. So that should satisfy the opposition.

MR. DECORE: Well, Mr. Speaker, we're not satisfied. Members of our caucus asked for copies of the audited financial statements of the Peace River hospital from the Department of Health, and we were denied those statements. Mr. Premier, what is it that your government has to hide on this matter?

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, the question then is: was this wrong? That's what they're trying to get at. As far as I know and according to the Auditor General, these boards – and I'm just being made aware now of the Peace River situation but certainly with respect to the university hospital – were operating within their mandate. They had every right to do what they did. I'm just saying that in this day and age my personal opinion is that it would not be advisable. But that was then, and this is now, and we are committed to the principles of accountability and openness, and our legislation will reflect these beliefs.

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, the mandate is to care for people, not to run sideline businesses out of hospitals. Surely that has to be clear, and it should have been clear before, now, and into the future.

Mr. Speaker, clearly the Premier knew about the Peace River hospital . . .

MR. KLEIN: I didn't.

MR. DECORE: All right, Mr. Premier. I want to know whether or not you have done an investigation of all the hospitals in Alberta. Can you tell the people of Alberta where there are other sideline ventures that are being run out of hospitals in Alberta?

MR. KLEIN: No, Mr. Speaker, I have not done that investigation. I've only got about a thousand different things on my plate. That's one of them. As I said before, I will be discussing this

whole situation with the appropriate ministers, the Auditor General, and the Provincial Treasurer.

While we're on the subject of board autonomy, we might as well be on the subject of people who speak from both sides of their mouth. [interjections] The hon. Member for Calgary-North West – and I quote from *Hansard* of June 28, 1990 . . . [interjections]

AN HON. MEMBER: That was then, and this is now.

MR. KLEIN: This was his statement then, Mr. Speaker, and I'm going to read it just to remind him. [interjections] You see, they don't want to listen. They don't want to know the truth. They don't want to hear the facts. They don't want to know about hypocrisy.

MR. DECORE: Answer the question.

Speaker's Ruling Relevance

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. The Chair is having some difficulty in establishing the relevancy of what the hon. Premier is saying to the supplemental question, but the hon. Premier has had the opportunity of making the appropriate reference to *Hansard*, which I'm sure anybody who's interested in this matter will be able to pursue.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Glenora.

UniCare Integrated Software Inc.

MR. SAPERS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There's still so much to learn about this mess. Our information is that the University of Alberta hospitals board has had separate financial statements prepared for UniCare and reviewed by the Auditor General. These statements revealed losses year after year after year. Now, my question to the Premier is: how many years of consecutive losses does it take before it becomes transparent to get this government to take action?

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, I'm not going to waste the time of this Assembly to repeat the answer I gave to the hon. Leader of the Opposition. We are indeed taking action. I have said personally that I don't believe this is the thing to do in today's environment, and we are going to take steps to change the way that these boards account to government.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplemental question.

MR. SAPERS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, then why, Mr. Premier, is it not a matter of government policy to have these types of financial statements for publicly funded operations released as a matter of course?

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, I can only reiterate that the university hospital and this subsidiary company were operating within their mandate at that time, and what we're suggesting now is that perhaps the rules should be changed.

MR. SAPERS: Mr. Speaker, given that there are annual audited financial statements for UniCare that are in the possession of the government and that this Premier is committed to freedom of information, will he table those financial statements now?

MR. KLEIN: I don't have those financial statements now. I don't have them now, Mr. Speaker. I will discuss this with my

colleague the Provincial Treasurer and the Auditor General and follow up with the hospital board to really make a determination as to whether these statements should be rightfully tabled by an autonomous board.

Believe me, Mr. Speaker, the Liberals purport to believe in autonomous boards, and I quote the hon. Member for Calgary North-West, who says:

On one hand to say that the boards are to be self-governing yet on the other hand to say that you can be self-governing as long as you do it my way seems to me to be a serious contradiction in terms and really does not allow those boards to have the self-governing that is necessary.

Now, I wonder out loud again, Mr. Speaker: has the hon. member changed his mind again? [interjections]

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

The hon. Member for Vegreville-Viking.

1:50

Municipal Taxation

MR. STELMACH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In watching the news the other night and also catching up on some of the reporting in the print media covering the huge demonstration at City Hall, I not only heard the mayor of Edmonton on TV say that the provincial legislation was responsible for huge property tax increases for businesses in Alberta but also quoted in the September 15 *Edmonton Sun* saying, "If I could change (the way taxes are assessed), I would. But the provincial legislation doesn't allow us to do that." A question to the Minister of Municipal Affairs: was there any change in legislation?

DR. WEST: Mr. Speaker, the Member for Vegreville-Viking brings up a good point in that we're all concerned when we see a misinterpretation of how the taxes are applied sent out to the public. I hope that article was erroneous, and I will check with the mayor of Edmonton to ensure that she didn't mean what she'd said. In essence, the public have to understand that assessment is modified across this province and represents an evaluation of either a commercial or other type of property. It does not drive the direct tax that the person gets; the mill rate does. The mill rate is set at a level equivalent to the budget of the municipality that's operating. If their budget gets too high and they can't control it, then they put in an extra mill rate. So it goes on and on. The assessment on equal, fair evaluation of property values is the same in Edmonton as it would be in Calgary as it would be in Grande Prairie, and we use local modifiers in order to do that. I say one more time: sending a message to the taxpayer that misinterprets the way taxes are levied is wrong. Mill rates drive your tax in different municipalities, not the assessment.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplemental question.

MR. STELMACH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. No preamble here. Very simply: what can be done in the future so that businesses in Edmonton do not face such huge tax increases all at one time?

DR. WEST: There are several answers to that question, but I think it bears these types of answers. One, of course, if your budgets are high and you haven't cut them back so that you can lower the mill rates and your assessment is not current and you move to a new assessment, you could phase in the tax over a period of time, and any municipality has the ability to do that.

Second of all, bring your assessments up to current dates. The Department of Municipal Affairs is working on this, and we've

already sent the letters out to the municipalities. I want all assessments in the province of Alberta brought up to current dates by '96-97 in that range. Then we will fully automate the process of property assessment and taxes and update them every one to two years based on new construction or new sales. We will update the current commercial books and residential books so that our assessment books have good local modifiers and are used equally across this province. No longer, as I've said, will we send out the extension over seven years so that we get into some of the problems that we see in some municipalities where they're bringing in a fair market value, properties that have not been assessed for seven to 10 years. I think that as we move forward, we'll get a more realistic and less shock of impact of new taxation.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Rutherford.

Registry Services

MR. WICKMAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday the minister responsible for registry services rejected a motion for a return requesting information pertaining to the privatization of this service. Now, when one rejects a motion for information, it leads one to possibly suspect that the full-fledged comprehensive strategy was not developed before this announcement. To the minister responsible for Alberta registries: how does the minister intend to curtail the obtaining of fraudulent drivers' licences?

DR. WEST: First of all, let me correct one thing. No criticism of your question, but the House rejected this written question, not the minister personally.

What we are doing in Alberta registries, of course, is moving 25 percent of the computerized services in the province of Alberta into a one-window, one-stop-shopping policy. We will be putting that on stream and working out the quirks in it. We hope to go on stream here shortly with that part of the registry by November 1.

When we get to fraudulent licences or problems that we have with that, we are going to look internally at some of the types of products that we have. One of the things I sent over which will be a new, innovative way is to put in an untamper-proof licence module that is one piece of identification rather than two and uses new laser-type technology to imprint your picture right into the licence itself. It will not be able to be opened up or tampered with. You will have a licence that is one piece, and then information will be on a code. In doing so, we'll also be able to give that to underage drivers. We'll be able to put on those computers that run through any office exactly the information required for that licence, and we'll also be able to update that as people come back for renewal. It will also help the ALCB in putting an identification card there for people that are under the age of 18.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplemental question.

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Speaker, secondly, how does the minister intend to prevent the accessing of information improperly on disk form, whatever, as in the recent St. Albert example?

DR. WEST: In all cases of public information it's of utmost importance to protect that; I agree. As I say, we did an investigation into the hard disk drive that was taken out of one of the areas and inadvertently made available to somebody on sale through a private company. We are going to put in all the checks and balances that modern technology allows us, plus the people that are going to deliver these services must not only be bonded but

they must be credible. We've gone through an exhaustive – and I will say exhaustive – process to try to find the next hundred operators of motor vehicle and registry services. There is no secret to it. We have had many on-line businesses, some 800 right, now taking different services from the government offices, and they have shown the utmost professionalism in keeping that information.

It is not just the government sector that provides information and keeps it private for you. We have every law firm. We have all the accountants with your business. We have banks. We have hospitals. We have doctors' offices. Every professional has a responsibility . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Final supplemental.

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Speaker, my final question. The minister made reference that the House rejected a request for information. Will the minister himself voluntarily table in this House the strategy that was developed prior to his announcement on the privatization of registry services?

2:00

DR. WEST: Again in reference to your first comment, that innuendo that you put through, this is the Votes and Proceedings. You all have them. Just check that, please, before you make any more of those statements.

The strategy of the registries and how it evolved and the type of working documents that we have behind the scenes to come up with the way we deliver, as I say, we can discuss fully when we bring forth the Alberta registries Act that will be coming before this Assembly very shortly. It will go through first and second readings, committee study, third reading, and hopefully with your support we'll take forward a new direction for Albertans in one-window shopping.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Calgary-Shaw.

Water Exports

MR. HAVELOCK: Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Premier. Water is internationally recognized as a good, and therefore if it is not to be included in the NAFTA chapters on goods, it must be listed as an exemption. There was heated debate over the water issue in the last election, and the issue has not died. In fact, the government of B.C. specifically requested that bulk water exports be listed as excluded from the NAFTA, which supersedes free trade. I might mention that raw logs and unprocessed fish from the maritimes were excluded but not water. Writing water into the implementing legislation is inadequate unless the NAFTA document, which supersedes domestic legislation, also mentions the exemption. My question: does the Premier support the position that water should be listed as excluded from the NAFTA?

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, the simple answer is yes. That has always been the position of this government. Our water in its natural state is not for sale. That's not to say that there can't be the exportation of bottled water or something like that, but certainly to divert rivers and other bodies of water to accommodate the water needs of the United States is simply not in the cards.

MR. HAVELOCK: Thank you, Mr. Premier. In light of those remarks would the Premier then refuse to give consent to the side

deals which are presently being negotiated until such time as water is specifically listed in NAFTA as being as exclusion?

MR. KLEIN: I think this province will be as firm as we possibly can, and we will exert all pressure possible to make sure that that is an exclusion.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Belmont-Beverly.

Roundtable on Seniors Issues

MR. YANKOWSKY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This coming weekend yet another round of government-sponsored roundtable discussions will be held in Red Deer. This time it's the seniors' turn, and certain invited seniors and groups and individuals will be there sharpening the government's cutting axe, which will then be used to chop away at their programs to help balance the government's books. To the hon. Minister of Community Development: what criteria were used to select the participants who will be attending the roundtable discussions?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Community Development.

MR. MAR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In answer to the question, there are approximately 100 people who were selected to attend the roundtable on seniors' issues. Of that group, approximately one-third are individuals who represent organizations representing seniors' concerns throughout the province, approximately one-third are individuals who are seniors, persons 65 years of age and over, and approximately one-third of them are made up of individuals between the ages of 45 and 64. The selection criteria were established by Mrs. Bowker, the chairman of that roundtable. Literally hundreds of names were submitted for her consideration. With respect to her specific criteria in accepting or rejecting the recommendations, you would have to ask Mrs. Bowker.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplemental question.

MR. YANKOWSKY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My first supplemental is: will the minister make a commitment that the media will be allowed into the workshops instead of just the plenary sessions, as happened at the health care roundtable discussions?

MR. MAR: That is a decision that is being made by Mrs. Bowker.

MR. SPEAKER: Final supplementary.

MR. YANKOWSKY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My final supplementary is: will the minister please here and now assure Albertans and the roundtable participants that minutes of all proceedings will be taken and that a full report will be released to the public? Will he do that?

MR. MAR: Mr. Speaker, an appropriate summary of the consultation report will be prepared by Mrs. Bowker and will be filed in due time.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Bow Valley.

High School Enrollment

DR. OBERG: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Education. Presently there are 575 students in a school

in Brooks that has a maximum capacity of 600. There are 30 students that have re-enrolled in grade 12. The Brooks school board anticipates this number may well rise as university entrance requirements increase. Is there any plan to limit this type of re-enrollment?

MR. JONSON: Mr. Speaker, certainly the option will still be available for high school students that may be requiring a semester or possibly a full year of enrollment to complete their diploma requirements. I anticipate that certainly continuing. However, I do recognize that the hon. member has identified an issue that we've heard about across the province. It is of concern to the Alberta Schools Athletic Association. It is of concern to other groups as well. We will be listening to these concerns and looking at effective ways of providing for education for these students, perhaps not in a high school setting but perhaps in liaison with my hon. colleague the minister of advanced education and with colleges in the area.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplemental question.

DR. OBERG: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Is there any plan to charge tuition as occurs in the junior college located in Brooks as well for a similar curriculum?

MR. JONSON: Mr. Speaker, I have not received that type of representation to date, but I imagine that that may be raised during our consultation process that is now going on in terms of our long-term planning for next year. I think I would like to mention and emphasize that the hon. minister of advanced education recently announced a very comprehensive review process of the whole area of career preparation. This would certainly involve students who might be over 20 years of age and wanting or needing to take high school courses.

MR. SPEAKER: Final supplemental. No?

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Whitemud.

Provincial Budget

DR. PERCY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This government is off course in meeting its deficit target for this year. After two midcourse corrections, fire-sale liquidation of the assets of the Liquor Control Board, we now see trial balloons floated for a voluntary 5 percent wage rollback for public-sector workers in this fiscal year, prior to the contracts expiring. The goal of this balloon clearly is to dig up more cash to pay for the cost of bad business decisions the Provincial Treasurer clearly knows are coming home to roost. My question is to the Provincial Treasurer. With large write-downs of Gainers and MagCan looming, how could you stick in your budget such a ridiculously low number as \$10 million in losses when last year under the new accounting rules you had \$100 million in losses?

MR. DINNING: Mr. Speaker, I know that the hon. member will be able to extend his fury for a full four hours tomorrow morning, when we appear before the designated subcommittee of supply to discuss on a line-by-line basis exactly these kinds of issues from which the hon. member has drawn his first question today. I would refer the hon. member to the Financial Review Commission report, which made it very clear that the number of agencies and investments that the provincial government is involved in requires serious review, which we have done. It also requires us to exercise an abundance of conservative caution in writing down

those investments that are deemed to be and found to be perhaps falling short of our expectations, to do it, to do it fast, and to do it early. That's exactly what we did in 1992-93, and we believe that having taken that advice, our accounts properly reflect those values.

2:10

MR. SPEAKER: Supplemental question.

DR. PERCY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Treasurer, how can you justify budgeting only \$10.4 million in losses on program guarantees, which are quite different than these ad hoc guarantees, when last year this government lost \$139 million on these program guarantees according to your own budget?

MR. DINNING: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is asking a number of important questions, especially related to the government's accounting policy. We relayed that information to all members last Wednesday when we brought down the provincial budget. Taking the advice of the Auditor General and taking the advice of the Financial Review Commission, we exercised an abundance of conservative caution by writing those program guarantees down, especially in the area of student loans under the Canada Student Loans Act, the farm credit stability program, and a couple of other program guarantee programs. Accepting those recommendations of accounting policies, we have been able to take a large write-down in the 1992-93 accounts, such that in '93-94 our advice from the auditors and from various other experts in the accounting business, including the Member for Calgary-West - I'm sure he would agree that we have reflected the proper values in the province's books.

MR. SPEAKER: Final supplemental.

DR. PERCY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Treasurer, since last year these ad hoc and program guarantee losses amounted to \$239 million, and you have budgeted just \$20.4 million this year. Where's the money going to come from when you're wrong? Is it the rollbacks? Is it another program cut? Where's it going to come from?

MR. DINNING: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member really should read the Financial Review Commission's report, entitled Report to Albertans, dated March 31, 1993. Having now read that report, having now effectively accepted and begun to implement virtually every single one of those recommendations, we've taken the appropriate write-downs that the Auditor General would agree with, that the Institute of Chartered Accountants have agreed with, that the Financial Review Commission members have agreed with. I know that the hon. member would delight in his own creative accounting policies, but when you take a write-down once, you can't take it again and then again and then again. You can only do it once, and we've done it on the advice of the Financial Review Commission.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Calgary-Montrose.

Advanced Education Access

MR. PHAM: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My constituents like all Albertans are concerned about access to our postsecondary institutions. Access is an especially difficult problem in Calgary, where more and more grade 12 students are unable to meet the high eligibility requirements to enter our institutions. My question

is to the Minister of Advanced Education and Career Development. What is the minister doing about enrollment controls that are limiting access and preventing hundreds of young people from entering our universities and colleges?

MR. ADY: Mr. Speaker, the member poses a very interesting question. It is true in fact that our universities do have quite a high entrance requirement. I believe the University of Calgary is 73 percent this year. I would like to say, however, that access is taking a very high priority with this minister and our department in an effort to resolve that problem, but I think we also need to be aware that there's really no quick-fix solution for the access problem that we have in this province. We are asking our institutions to maintain or increase access, and they've done a very good job of that. In the last 10 years enrollment at our institutions has increased by 57 percent, and they've done a great job of accommodating that dramatic increase.

I think that we have to keep in mind that presently this department has the third highest budget component in our province, almost \$1.3 billion that flows through to postsecondary education, and I believe it's time that we looked at different and better ways to address the access problem than those that were used in the '70s and early '80s, when we just went out and tacked up more bricks and mortar. Mr. Speaker, we have to find a better way to do it within the context of our fiscal reality.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplemental question.

MR. PHAM: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Students in Calgary are being forced back to high school because access to the University of Calgary is being reduced by enrollment controls. Would it not be better to spend our limited education dollars improving access to postsecondary education rather than paying for a grade 12 graduate to stay longer in high school improving their marks?

MR. ADY: Mr. Speaker, again the member has touched on a very interesting problem that we do have - and the hon. Minister of Education addressed it to some degree earlier - in that we do have students staying in grade 12 for extended periods of time but for a variety of reasons. I've met with the Minister of Education, and we are addressing that problem in an effort to arrive at some solution that will allow them to move forward into postsecondary education.

MR. SPEAKER: Final supplemental.

MR. PHAM: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My final supplementary relates to tuition. Some argue that if tuition fees were deregulated, then they could generate more revenues and create more space in their institutions. Does the minister plan to deregulate tuition fees as a way of addressing our access problem?

MR. ADY: Mr. Speaker, the short answer is no. I don't support deregulation of tuition fees, because I'm not convinced that it's fair to students or to the taxpayer. Times are difficult for students right now. They're having a difficult enough time paying back their loans, and I don't think it's fair or reasonable to make them start their careers with enormous debt loads that may take them a lifetime to pay back. I believe in a balance.

Currently there's a tuition fee ceiling of 20 percent of operating costs that the institutions can charge for tuition. I admit that as institutions move closer and closer to this cap, our policy, like all other policies, may be reviewed, but I want to remind the hon. member that for every increase in tuition, we increase our student

assistance programs through the student loan program that we have. I have some very serious concerns about the cost to the taxpayers in a deregulated tuition fee environment.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Spruce Grove-Sturgeon-St. Albert.

Child Support Payments

MRS. SOETAERT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Forcing single parents to pay tax on child support payments is one of the most unfair and antiquated taxes to come out of Ottawa. Granted, it is a federal matter, but it is one that has had a very negative impact on hundreds of Alberta children and their single parents, the majority of whom are women. My questions are to the Premier. Does the Premier agree that this federal law is unfair as it forces single parents to pay taxes on their child support money while the noncustodial parent can claim a deduction?

Speaker's Ruling Seeking Opinions

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. The Chair would remind the hon. member that there is a rule against eliciting opinions from people. The purpose of question period is to obtain factual information. The Chair has possibly been too lenient in allowing this practice to develop. We must craft our questions to seek information of a factual nature rather than a minister's opinion.

2:20

Child Support Payments (continued)

MR. KLEIN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I agree with you again. Again, it's a question that comes without any advance warning. As I say, I've got about a thousand things on my plate these days, but I will take the thought under advisement and develop a reasonably thought out opinion.

MRS. SOETAERT: Mr. Speaker, it's not a new issue. We need leadership. I am encouraged that our Premier will take it under advisement. When he does, would he consider lobbying the federal government to scrap this harmful law?

MR. KLEIN: Again, Mr. Speaker, I haven't given this issue a lot of thought over the past three or four days or the past month as a matter of fact. If the hon. member would like to present me with some of her views – drop me a note, write me a letter, give me a phone call – I'd be glad to hear her out.

MR. SPEAKER: Final supplemental.

MRS. SOETAERT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll be glad to, and so will the people up in the gallery.

Will you meet with the provincial organization of Parents against Child Support Taxation who are in the gallery today?

MR. KLEIN: I would advise, Mr. Speaker, that they get in touch with my office, and we'll arrange a mutually suitable time. I haven't checked with my office staff. We're fairly busy, and I think if they have responded, I would imagine that they were advised to first meet with the minister who is directly responsible, so he can then advise me and consult with me as to what position we should develop.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Olds-Didsbury.

Barley Marketing

MR. BRASSARD: Yes, Mr. Speaker. Alberta farmers are in the process of harvesting an estimated 6 and a half million tonnes of barley. Last week's court ruling shutting down the continental barley market has already reduced the price of barley \$10 to \$15 a tonne and placed all past and current sales in limbo. My question to the minister of agriculture: can the minister advise as to the current state of affairs with regards to the court order which revoked the federal government's implementation of this continental barley market?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Agriculture, Food, and Rural Development.

MR. PASZKOWSKI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's certainly a very important issue to Albertans because we produce fully more than 50 percent of all barley that's produced in Alberta and it entails 15 percent of the actual return of total agricultural products to Albertans. It is my understanding that there was a hearing scheduled for today. Alberta had asked for intervenor status in this hearing. Unfortunately, I've been advised that because the Alberta statement paralleled the federal statement very closely, it was not granted. The federal hearing was conducted today. As of yet, I have not heard the results of this. Now, the federal intervention was basically to place a stay on the process so that the contracts could be ongoing so that Albertans would be able to continue to move the product that they had committed to. It is my understanding that the pools intervened and suggested that Alberta's hearing should not be allowed to proceed.

MR. BRASSARD: Can the minister advise on what basis the Alberta government determined its position of support for the continental barley market?

MR. PASZKOWSKI: Almost two years ago a survey of Alberta producers was done. At that time, it was determined that fully 72 percent of barley producers in Alberta that were surveyed had indicated a preference for the opportunities that the continental barley market would present. It's on that basis as well as discussions with groups such as the barley growers as well as many other farm organizations that the final decision was made.

MR. BRASSARD: This decision to shut this down has a tremendous impact on my constituency, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to know what the minister is doing to help rectify this current situation and work towards restoring a choice for Alberta producers.

MR. PASZKOWSKI: An interesting statistic has been developed in that all of last year approximately 200,000 tonnes of barley were contracted into the United States. In the first six weeks that barley contracting was allowed in the continental barley market; fully 500,000 tonnes were contracted. The trade tells us that there may even have been a lot more. So obviously it's a very successful process that has been developed. Not only that, but it was also alluded to that the barley prices took a very substantiative drop when the announcement of stay was made, so it's a very, very critical issue to all Albertans. I want to assure Alberta barley producers that we will continue to work in close conjunction with the federal government to see that this access to the American market is made available to our producers once again.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member for St. Albert.

Liquor Control Board Properties

MR. BRACKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is now clear that according to the Premier a \$50 million profit for the sale of ALCB properties is turning into a \$65 million capital loss. Once again Albertans are going to lose big time. Will the Premier explain to Albertans why this profit suddenly becomes a loss of up to \$65 million?

MR. KLEIN: Were you reading the *Edmonton Journal* today, or was it the *Calgary Herald*? You know, these people over there are supposed to ask the questions and make the news, not read the newspapers and ask the questions.

Mr. Speaker, the hon. minister advises me that we won't know what the profit, or hopefully no loss, will be on the situation. We do know that there's a book value. It's a book value – it's well published in the annual report – of \$115 million related to the building and the land. The minister is committed to getting as close to fair market value on all these properties as he possibly can. We don't know what the figure is today. We do know that on the 106th Street liquor store we got what was deemed to be a very, very good price. A very good price. You tell me . . . [interjections] Well, I challenge these great business minds over there to list any piece of property at an offered price and guarantee with absolute certainty that they're going to get that price.

MR. BRACKO: Albertans want to see the big picture at the beginning. To the Premier: why now did you rush into the fire sale of the ALCB properties without a proper business plan?

DR. WEST: I hate to do this, Mr. Speaker. There are people, I guess, in this Assembly who came here under the guise that they knew something about business. The hon. member who asked this question doesn't understand, I guess, the marketplace. They said: what is the rush about putting the pieces of property of ALCB on the market? Well, didn't they know that we're offering a class D licence, and we're going to put those out there for opportunities to run and operate liquor stores in the province of Alberta? If you were to hold your property off the market for a longer period of time, allow the licences to go out so people sourced other places to put the liquor stores, and then later – is this your business attitude? – offer your property for sale, you wouldn't get two cents on the dollar. Anybody that knows anything at all about business knows that you have to offer the real estate at the same time you offer the licences.

MR. BRACKO: To the Premier: do you have any plan for the orderly, cost-effective privatization of government services, or are you going to continue to fly by the seat of your pants? [interjections]

MR. SPEAKER: Order. Order please. That question is not properly crafted.

The time for question period has expired.

head: **Members' Statements**
2:30 **Viscount Bennett Centre**

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Calgary-Currie.

MRS. BURGNER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate this opportunity on behalf of the government to proceed with this new implementation. I recognize and appreciate the opportunity to address this Assembly not for the purpose of debate but instead to

inform colleagues with respect to issues which affect not only my constituency in Calgary-Currie but in many cases all Albertans. In that context, as the Member for Calgary-Currie I would like to focus on an issue which I believe in its eventual resolution will demonstrate the critical need for all levels of government to work in a collaborative fashion.

Currently Viscount Bennett high school is the host facility for students over 19 years of age to complete or upgrade their high school education. Both the economy and the dropout rate have affected the volume of students utilizing this institution, and the result has been a significant impact on the quality of life in the community of Killarney-Glenarry. The resolution of this issue will involve the departments of Education, Advanced Education and Career Development, the Calgary board of education, as well as the city of Calgary and the community.

I am committed as the Member for Calgary-Currie to facilitate productive discussions with these stakeholders to develop options and ultimately to resolve this problem. I encourage all members to address crossjurisdictional matters in a similar fashion of collaboration and consultation.

Thank you, sir.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Sherwood Park.

Sunridge Ski Area

MR. COLLINGWOOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Sunridge ski hill, a recreational area situated in my constituency, is an important facility for the people of Sherwood Park, the residents of the county of Strathcona and the city of Edmonton. The ski hill is used extensively by school classes, ski programs, and families who enjoy outdoor recreational activities within their community. This ski lodge is used not only for skiers but is popular as a location for wedding receptions, office parties, and other gatherings. This facility is under the control of the Department of Environmental Protection and is operated by a management company active in the area of outdoor recreation.

Earlier this year concern was expressed to me that this facility would not operate in the 1993-94 winter season. Constituents involved in the ski program and the school program were concerned, first, that the facility is important to the community and, second, because this led to uncertainty for planning programs.

I am pleased to learn, Mr. Speaker, that the government and the operator have come to terms and that the ski hill will be operational this winter. This will come as welcome news to ski enthusiasts and kids who, unlike you and I, can't wait for the snow to fall.

There is still a concern about the long-term future of this recreational area. I urge the minister to make a long-term commitment to the Sunridge ski area and to recognize the importance of this facility to our community on an ongoing basis.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Calgary-Bow.

Paskapoo Slopes

MRS. LAING: Thank you. It's indeed a pleasure and a privilege to rise today to make a member's statement on behalf of my constituents of Calgary-Bow. In the beautiful constituency of Calgary-Bow there is an area known as the Paskapoo Slopes. This is a beautiful natural area which contains environmentally sensitive features. There is a glacial erratic, and although not as large as the famous rock near Okotoks, it's a well-known landmark in the community. Mr. Speaker, 112 acres of this land is owned by the province. Developers have shown great interest in acquiring this

land for a housing development. My constituents are opposed to the sale of this land.

I grew up in this Bow River Valley, and as children we climbed and explored these slopes. The opportunity to discover birds and plants, to see animals in their natural habitat was part of my education. Discovery of the wonder and the beauty of nature enriches not just your intellectual growth but also your spiritual growth. This is the type of experience I would wish for every child to have. But times are changing. Demands of a large city create pressures for more houses and the development of more lands. Subdivisions spring up like wild mushrooms after the rain. It would be a gift to our children to protect this area from development.

Could not the options of keeping Paskapoo Slopes a natural area be seriously considered? Perhaps this area could be declared environmentally sensitive and come under the protection of Environmental Protection. Perhaps the area could be a Special Places 2000 nominee, or perhaps a land exchange could be made for other land more conducive to housing development. Perhaps the land could be gifted to the city as a natural area designation. These are options which must be considered and should be considered.

The constituency of Calgary-Bow but also Calgary-West, Calgary-North West, and Calgary-Varsity have all indicated to me their desires to preserve this valley of natural beauty. The Paskapoo preservation society has worked hard to research the area, and I would certainly urge the members of this Assembly to support the other options for the land, not development.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

head: **Projected Government Business**

MR. MITCHELL: Mr. Speaker, I rise in accordance with Standing Order 75 to request that the Government House Leader give notice to the Legislative Assembly of the government's proposed agenda for work in the Legislature next week. I will specify as well at this time that my caucus has established that the Department of Education will be the designated department for estimates debate next Thursday afternoon.

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, it would be our intent on Monday afternoon under government business to proceed to a conclusion of the throne speech debate. At 5:15, as per the Standing Orders, there will be the vote on the throne speech. If there's not sufficient interest by hon. members to conclude the first of three hours in the afternoon, we will then be putting and designating Bill 5, the Financial Administration Amendment Act, to proceed with the debate on that.

Monday evening in Committee of Supply it would be our intent to call the Department of Justice and Attorney General.

On Tuesday under Government Motions, the business time that the government has on the agenda on Tuesday afternoon, we would be proceeding with a continuation of the budget debate. In the evening we'll be calling under Committee of Supply the Department of Environmental Protection.

On Wednesday evening, September 22, under Committee of Supply we'll be calling the Department of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development.

Of course, then on Thursday, September 23, as has already been indicated, the Official Opposition has designated the Department of Education for Committee of Supply estimates.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Before calling Orders of the Day, the Chair would like to advise hon. members, who may have

noticed that there is a new addition at the Table, that that person is Mr. Rob Reynolds who has joined us effective last Monday. We hope he's enjoyed this first week of service in the Assembly, and on behalf of all members the Chair would like to welcome Mr. Reynolds to his work at the Table. [applause]

head: **Orders of the Day**

2:40

head: **Committee of Supply**

[Mr. Tannas in the Chair]

MR. CHAIRMAN: I'd ask the committee to come to order.

**Chairman's Ruling
Parliamentary Language**

MR. CHAIRMAN: At the outset of the committee this afternoon we have some unfinished business from yesterday. Last evening the Member for Redwater made some unfortunate remarks. This matter will be dealt with in committee when that member returns to committee.

Having said that, we'll now recognize the Minister of Community Development to make a few remarks on his estimates.

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Chairman, under Standing Order 1, the operation of the House. The matter that was raised last evening and the matter that the Chairman has just indicated a ruling on is a correct one in the sense that if an hon. member isn't here, the matter isn't dealt with. But there is an innuendo against another hon. member. Does the Chairman have any idea when the hon. member whom the point of order is all about might be expected to return to the House? There is still the old adage that "justice delayed is justice denied." It would be very helpful. We've had experience in this House before with respect to the actions of a certain hon. member who would create a situation and then not return, hoping that the event might be forgotten. Your ruling is absolutely correct; you certainly know what the rules are. My question here is: does the chairman have any anticipation or knowledge as to when this matter might be dealt with? Because another hon. member will thus be confined to the House in anticipation that the other hon. member might be returning in 10 minutes or three weeks. We don't know.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Deputy Premier, the chairman has no control over the other members as to what they do outside the Assembly and struggles his best to try and control them while in committee. No, I have no knowledge of either the member's whereabouts or when that member might reasonably be expected to return to committee.

**Point of Order
Referring to the Absence of a Member**

MR. MITCHELL: A point of order. We're not allowed to refer to a member's absence in this Legislature, in this place. First of all, we're happy to inform you of that matter, but let's stick to the rules of the Legislature when we're dealing with these kinds of issues.

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Can we just hold it here so that I can collect where I'm supposed to be at.

In response to the Member for Edmonton-McClung, the Chair has to state the member in order to refer it to a later time.

Subsequent to that, then we just refer to "a member." If the Blues support me, it was my hearing that the Deputy Premier only referred to "a member." It is my understanding that we have to refer to the constituency of the member. I quite appreciate that we are not to be commenting on the presence or absence of members; quite right.

With that dealt with, then, Deputy Premier you have a further? No. Good.

Now may we proceed to the matter at hand.

head: **Main Estimates 1993-94**

Community Development

MR. MAR: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm pleased to present to this House my ministry's 1993-94 budget estimates and some comments on the direction of the Alberta Department of Community Development. I would like you to now refer to the '93-94 Government Estimates book at pages 53 through 63 and the Supplementary Information Element Details book, pages 15 and 16.

Mr. Chairman, every decision that we have made reflects the Klein government policy on fiscal responsibility and the elimination of the deficit without restricting important public programs and services. This is a direction clearly supported by the people of Alberta, who gave us a strong mandate to complete the job we started when Ralph Klein became Premier last December. We are continuing in our efforts to simplify administration and eliminate duplication. We began by focusing on those programs that least affected the people of Alberta, and we've been very busy.

When Community Development was created last December, we merged two ministers' offices, two deputies' offices, and related administrative services. The savings: \$1.13 million. We have eliminated the Alberta seniors directorate and an assistant deputy minister's office. We've also amalgamated field offices to provide one-window delivery of services. The result: further savings, \$1.3 million. Other administrative savings in the early voluntary options program reduced spending by roughly an additional \$1.5 million. The total saved by these means: nearly \$4 million. We have not stopped at just saving tax dollars, Mr. Chairman. We have achieved greater efficiency by first of all reducing unnecessary paper flow, forms, and related administration; secondly, producing a leaner, more responsive management structure; third, rationalizing the delivery of services; fourth, streamlining the policy development process for the individual rights and citizenship services division; and finally fifth, by strengthening ministerial policy development. The final result: a more efficient and cost-effective department.

It's important to have a Department of Community Development. Its purpose is important. Strong communities clearly mean a strong province and an economy which will not only be able to survive but indeed will thrive in a global environment. The newly created Department of Community Development will work in partnership with seniors; women; artists, arts organizations, their audiences and their markets; recreation and sports groups, their volunteers; heritage groups, cultural groups, their communities. Alberta Community Development will strive to assist these Alberta communities to recognize their potential and support their efforts to use that potential in the best interests of each community.

Alberta Community Development knows that communities are more than roads, schools, hospitals, or what we call infrastructure. We also know that they are more than industrial and commercial activity generated by natural, physical, and human resources, that which we call the economy. They are also places where creative and athletic talent and our ability to appreciate that talent are

discovered, nurtured, and developed for the benefit of all Albertans. They are communities of understanding and acceptance. They are communities of fairness and faith in the future. They are communities where imagination, initiative, and opportunity combine to define all of us as Albertans and challenge us to be better Albertans. They are communities where economic growth and financial stability are viewed as important for the long-term economic security of our children. This last point is critical for Albertans in the 1990s, and that's why I'm proud to report that our cultural industries generate over \$40 million annually and employ thousands of people. I'm inspired by the knowledge that these areas are capable of generating more revenue and employing even more Albertans.

Our heritage sites are now major players in Alberta's lucrative tourist industry. Tourism is the world's fastest growing industry, and our network of world-class facilities carries the impact of that growth across our province and into many small communities. But there's more. Many arts and cultural activities – Edmonton's summer festivals, for example – have tremendous tourism potential that is now barely touched.

Our recreation and sports sectors also support and participate in activities which attract visitors from across this country and around the world. For example, this Legislative Assembly passed a motion earlier this week to offer congratulations to the city of Red Deer on being awarded the 1995 World Junior Hockey Championship. Similarly, Edmonton will host the 1994 Canadian figure skating championships, and that city will also host the 1996 world figure skating championships. Slave Lake has been awarded the 1994 Arctic Winter Games. Grande Prairie will hold the 1995 Canada Winter Games.

2:50

Mr. Chairman, all of these activities and many more which are in place play significant roles and have tremendous potential for growth in the area known as internal tourism. The resident of Edson or Medicine Hat or Legal, Alberta, who visits Edmonton's fringe festival, the Royal Tyrell Museum, or Head-Smashed-In Buffalo Jump is also a tourist, and that helps keep our economy going. It's important to remember that these actual and potential economic benefits are bonuses. They are increasingly important spin-offs from Alberta Community Development's original purpose. That original purpose is to support community activities which improve the quality of life of all Albertans. That's still the central goal of our efforts, but it is important to note that we are now at a point where our investment in quality of life is paying off in tangible economic dividends in addition to the social benefits which we originally sought.

Now, Mr. Chairman, I'd like to provide you with some of the highlights of the 1993-94 budget for Community Development. When my ministry started the budget process, the general revenue fund components totaled some \$84 million. Through streamlining and consolidation and improved efficiencies we have managed to save \$26.45 million, that being 31 percent.

On the matter of financial assistance to the arts I'm pleased to announce that the lottery-funded budget for the Alberta Foundation for the Arts will remain at \$15.7 million for 1993-94. As you may be aware, the Alberta Foundation for the Arts is the primary vehicle through which this government provides assistance to the arts.

With respect to financial assistance to libraries, library grants during the 1993-94 year will be maintained at the 1992-93 level of \$12.299 million. We have allocated \$250,000 in lottery funds to the Chinook Arch library system as a capital grant. At this time a major review of library grants is under way. I wish to introduce

more equity into the grants system and simplify the funding formula for the next fiscal year.

In regards to recreation, recreation and sports organizations and major event grants, total about \$2 million, will be removed from the general revenue budget. As you are aware, the \$15.8 million community recreational/culture program was allowed to end as scheduled on December 31, 1992. Municipalities and volunteer groups were aware of the CRC expiration two years ago.

On the subject of grants to historical and cultural facilities, Mr. Chairman, there will be reductions averaging around 10 percent at institutions such as the Provincial Museum of Alberta, the Royal Tyrell Museum, and other well-known historic sites operated by my ministry. Similarly, the grant to the Glenbow-Alberta Institute will be reduced by about 5 percent. The Glenbow will receive \$3.2 million in 1993-94, all from lottery funds. The proposed reductions will of course present some tough operational challenges. However, these challenges are no different from those faced by other major facilities owned and operated by the province of Alberta.

With respect to Individual Rights and Citizenship Services, Mr. Chairman, the government will continue its commitment to the Human Rights Commission and the women's advisory council. I'm pleased to announce that funding will be maintained at the 1992-93 level. I'm also pleased to state that there will be no reduction in the lottery dollars provided to the Alberta Multiculturalism Commission. As you are aware, the commission provides heritage program development and financial assistance to programs in Alberta's cultural communities through its multiculturalism action plan. The commission works to encourage positive practices toward cultural diversity by supporting programs which foster awareness, access, and participation of cultural communities.

Mr. Chairman, in summary, my ministry's general revenue fund 1993-94 budget is \$57.405 million, a reduction of \$26.456 million or 31 percent from the comparable 1992-93 levels. A total of 84 positions representing 12.7 percent of my ministry's human resources have been eliminated. These reductions have been made through the voluntary separation allowance options program, by attrition, redeployment, eliminating existing vacancies, and by the nonrenewal of some temporary positions. Community Development accepted every voluntary separation allowance request that came forward. I'm pleased to advise that no occupied permanent position will be abolished as the result of this compassionate approach to staff reduction.

I will be pleased to entertain questions. In an effort to entertain as many questions as possible, I will be pleased to answer those today for which there is a concise answer and provide written answers for the balance.

Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.
Edmonton-Avonmore.

MR. ZWOZDESKY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I haven't had the pleasure of rising before you before, so if you'll allow me the proper gesture, I would like to extend my congratulations to you on your appointment. I think you're doing a fine job.

On that vein of congratulations, I'd like to just take a moment if I could, Mr. Chairman, to congratulate Mr. Gary Mar, our hon. Member for Calgary-Nose Creek, on his appointment as the Minister of Community Development. He is new to this House, as I am, and he's new to the entire area of ministerialdom. I wish him every success in that regard. We had the opportunity of meeting in Red Deer. I found him very helpful and very insight-

ful at that time. He held nothing back from me in terms of what other members were receiving, and I thought it set a very good tone. I wanted to personally thank him, because I see in that kind of open approach a true advocate, I would hope, for this development portfolio. I would like to close that particular congratulations by wishing him every bit of good luck in convincing his caucus of the importance that Community Development plays in this province of Alberta. So congratulations to you.

I also want to make a brief congratulatory note to Yvonne Fritz, an hon. member from Calgary as well, on her appointment as chairman of the Alberta Multiculturalism Commission. It's interesting that I'm sitting at the desk of the former MLA who chaired that particular commission when he was here, the hon. Steve Zarusky. I know that the hon. member from Calgary and I have had a chance to meet briefly, and we've spoken a bit, and I sense the same kind of openness and spirit of co-operation emanating from her speech as I have from the hon. minister's comments. I'm very encouraged with the kinds of points of view that we were able to share a day or two ago. I want to wish you very, very much success, hon. Member for Calgary-Cross, as you approach the ever challenging and ever demanding role of trying to chair the area of multiculturalism. It is very dynamic, as I'm sure you already know and will experience very soon, but it is full of all the things that Albertans believe in. So congratulations to you as well.

Finally, I want to congratulate Jocelyn Burgener, chairman of the Seniors Advisory Council. We've met only briefly, Mr. Chairman, but in hearing her speak both today and on previous occasions, it seems like she is going to be working very hard in this area. Of course, seniors' advice is something that I guess we would all do well to heed. These are the people, after all, who built this province. I'm sure the hon. member will have two very open ears for all of those kinds of things. So congratulations to you.

I know there might be other appointments that the hon. minister may have made, but I haven't been made aware of them. Let me reiterate my congratulations to those three, and at the same time I'd like to thank and acknowledge the hardworking staff: the deputy minister, the assistant ministers, and so on, some of whom are here today with us, Mr. Chairman. They are truly the backbone of this system. They are the people that are on the front lines. Regardless of what we decide here today or in the next year or four years, these are the people who are going to be on the front lines delivering the government's message.

Finally, I want to also acknowledge the many, many volunteers who come under this particular ministry. These are the people who have been called upon throughout the years to help endlessly with their generous and valuable time to really implement everything and anything that comes within the purview of our Department of Community Development. So we have here in sum the designers, the developers, and the codeliverers of all the programs and services that are going to shape our life in Alberta insofar as community development goes.

3:00

I guess I want to just remind everybody here today that there is another element that is there that is going to be participating, and that is the caucus that sits on this side of the House. We are also here to help. I know that sometimes that may not come across all that clearly, but we have a specific role to fulfill here. I guess it's twofold, and I have said this with great delight to all of my constituents that I've met in the last long while and also to members of this honourable Assembly. The first part, I think, of our mandate is to indeed support those kinds of moves that the

government would make that truly benefit the people of Alberta in whichever way. Secondly, we also want to at the same time offer the kind of criticism that we hope will motivate new government moves or that might see some government initiatives corrected because they do not specifically benefit Albertans, that perhaps might place unnecessary liabilities on Albertans, that might detract from our quality of life here, and in the long run that perhaps might have the unfortunate impact of even taking away some sense of hope that our children might have in the future.

As I look, Mr. Chairman, at Community Development today and as our minister just indicated, I see an amalgamation of many areas of interests that have kind of been glommed together for the purpose of addressing the all-important deficit, the debt, and this particular year the budget. I see areas like women's issues, arts and culture, seniors, recreation, parks and wildlife, sports, historical resources, historical sites and museums, libraries, and so on. It seems to me that in the past a lot of these portfolios were viewed as being important enough to almost stand entirely on their own. I have a bit of a concern as we look at this kind of pulling together or amalgamating that we don't lose sight of the importance that each of these particular areas has of its own accord. I think there's a tendency sometimes that Legislatures have in bringing forward this kind of an amalgamation to lose the thrust of some of those departments because they become attached to something else. They suddenly become an appendage rather than a solid arm or foot of their own. I would hope that we do whatever we can, Mr. Minister and others who have this care and protection in their charge, to avoid that possibility from indeed happening.

This portfolio is indeed concerned with people, Mr. Chairman, and we're looking at mental, physical, and social well-being, which are important factors that help shape our moral fibre and our social character. Issues in these areas are frequently those that approach our position on values as a society. What's really important to us on the societal trends, on what our cultural and religious beliefs might be, on the legacies that we are choosing to leave behind for future generations to judge us by? Judgmental issues are frequent in this area. Hence the entire area of the Human Rights Commission comes into sharp focus. We also have the artistic forms of expression that are found here that are going to outlast many disciplines in many other areas. Be they literary or performing arts oriented or visual arts or whatever, they will be around long after many of our paper workings have been lost.

In that small buildup, Mr. Chairman, I think as we place importance on this all-important area of community development, we must do everything that we can as its purveyors and as its protectors to make sure that the budgets that we come down with reflect the importance, and so, too, should the administration of these budgets reflect that same importance at the same time as a system of fair play, if you will, of equality.

In some of these areas we see tremendous opportunities to gather new information and to sensitize all of society. For example, about women's issues: here we see the great need to truly listen to what women are saying about their safety, about job equality, about poverty, maintenance payments, child support, child care subsidies. While some of those, indeed, come under the area of Family and Social Services or perhaps even Health, the fact of raising them as issues is instrumental to this portfolio because this is where the Women's Secretariat lies. This is where the Advisory Council on Women's Issues lies, and it's important that they be retained in their funding. I am encouraged today, Mr. Minister, to hear for the first time that in fact you are extending funding for ACWI, the Advisory Council on Women's Issues, for a full year. Is that correct? I think I heard you say that that's happening. I

know it was extended to the end of November. I would just seek clarification because I didn't quite hear the end of the sentence, but I would hope that is the case because that is a very important group. It's important in this area, Mr. Chairman, above so many other areas, to become fully nonpartisan, because these are issues that rise above politics. They rise above patronage. Those are just a few of the concerns. So in listening, we should also be prepared, then, to act. Acting frequently means appropriating the proper dollars to carry out those actions.

On behalf of all women in Alberta and my own daughter, who one day will be herself a young lady in this province, a young woman, I felt it necessary to address some of these serious issues, and I would urge the minister and his government department to make sure that more than just lip service is paid. I'm sure he will take that under advisement. You have this Advisory Council on Women's Issues. It's prepared to guide you in this regard, and I would hope that you are prepared to heed its advice. Don't cut it off. Please don't try to downsize it too much or amalgamate it into yet further obscurity, because it will demean its importance and it may be taken as some form of punishment by some because from time to time these kind of arm's-length agencies or committees, even though they're volunteers, may be viewed in a negative sense by some because they don't say popular things to government, but they do present honest things, I would think.

Countless studies in this area have been done. Recently we saw *The Canadian Journal of Public Health* suggesting that something like 70 percent of divorced or separated women in Alberta report some type of physical abuse from their former partner. I find it alarming, as I also find the national report Violence Against Women quite alarming in what it says. That is just one issue that I think is very, very timely right now, and I'm very happy to have commented on it.

A couple of other quick areas that I hope will bear equal importance in the carryings-on of the minister and all of his people are in the areas of the Human Rights Commission, and I will speak a little more directly to that later. I know in general terms that the human rights in Alberta have been something that have fulfilled a very large need for a very large number of people, because we do have some inequities, unfortunately, that still do come across in our society. They happen in the workplace; they happen at the supermarket; they happen on the street. The people must have some very important and vocal arm to whom to address their concerns when those rights are violated, so I would be very pleased to see the level of support in this budget maintained for human rights, Mr. Chairman.

Similarly, with regard to the Multiculturalism Commission, the budget does maintain a status quo there, and I am very happy for the hon. chairman of that particular commission that that budget is being maintained, as with the Rec Parks and Wildlife Foundation and with the Sport Council.

I was a bit concerned, Mr. Chairman, when the movement of Mr. Sherrold Moore into the chairmanship of the entire amalgamation of those two bodies took place, because it certainly looked a bit like it was a patronage appointment. I do understand and recognize, however, that Mr. Sherrold Moore does have some credentials. It's unfortunate that he wasn't able to simply assume that position through a normal, more open process, because he might well have come out the recipient of it in any event. That's the point. We shouldn't be afraid from time to time to open up some of that process. We recognize these are volunteer positions, but there are volunteers out there who worked on more than just one party's campaign, and I think they had the general good of Alberta in mind when they did that.

3:10

Now, I'd also like to turn briefly to the area of the Foundation for the Performing Arts. I'm happy that the budget reflects a status quo there of, I think, something like \$15 million in lotteries, but by the same token, I would hope in making that determination that we would take a very close look at who we are appointing to the all-important board membership there. I know that we have several juries who serve and who are made up of people from the arts area, so-called professionals or experts in that area, and I would just be very concerned that those juries are doing the work and then the board is making the ultimate decision. I'm just wondering if there might not be a small duplication there. Perhaps we could look in the longer run, Mr. Minister, at some point at least, to see if we can't bring some real experts from the peer adjudication group, as we could call it, up into the board level as well. I think that's something that we'd like to see you address.

Similarly, with the Alberta Historical Resources Foundation: that is another area very near and dear to all of our hearts. As I get into critiquing the budget here a little further, I'm going to point out a few disappointments there, although I understand the current government's approach here in trying to balance the deficit. I'd be concerned that we don't lose a very, very important investment that we've made in our historical resources, in our historical sites by not allowing them, for example, to stay open long enough because we're cutting back in operating costs, to give one small example.

I see here, as I take a look at the overall budget now, Mr. Chairman, that we have a dramatic movement of tax-based dollars out of the system and an influx of lottery dollars. That may work very well in terms of providing the basic necessity of pure, hard and fast dollars, but I think what's a bit of a concern to me and to many Albertans is that in so doing, what we're really doing is subjecting so many parts of Community Development to the vagaries of lottery dollars. Now, lottery dollars do have some stigmas attached to them; they do have some moral conscience attached to them. There are people who would feel that these dollars may not be available in the long term and that it would be very hard, if we became too dependent on lottery dollars, for this department to build itself back up again to where it was several years ago. So we've seen a bit of an erosion on the one hand but thankfully some injection of cash from the other hand. I flag that as something that has been flagged to me by several people.

The other concern with regard to this budget that I would have overall is the input that we perhaps are not seeing from various stakeholders. I wonder if at some point the hon. minister might address that point. The question would be: what kind of consultative process would the minister and his staff perhaps have gone through in order to present the rationale, which surely exists somewhere, to backup the cuts made in this budget?

The other point I would also make quickly is that this government must recognize the importance of this department and the secretariats attached to it insofar as maintaining a quality of life for Albertans is concerned. I was encouraged when I heard the minister say something to that effect a little earlier, because health care and Education and Family and Social Services and advanced education are not the only things that make this province tick. I would ask the minister and all the support staff and other hon. members to become the true champions of that purpose for the betterment of all.

The other quick point here is that I would hope that in this budget, as we get into discussing it over the next while, there is a true recognition of the culture and recreation areas as tremendous growth industry areas. There is phenomenal potential for

growth here. There is tremendous opportunity for new initiatives that would involve so many of our volunteers with professionals, with departments in the delivery of our own infrastructure system. This impacts on economics in a very direct way through jobs, through the projects that they create. I think what we have to keep in mind here is the often misunderstood notion about – one example, let's take the arts as that example, wherein many people see the arts as some appendage, some leisure activity that is taken advantage of from time to time. In actual fact, there are thousands of people involved in the arts in this province. It doesn't matter if it's in theatre or if it's in performing arts or if it's in literary or visual arts or whatever aspect it is. Each person, each artist is a small business by him or herself. These are the little cottage industries that spring up as well, and I don't think that we should ever demean the importance of what that says and what that does, because each person involved in that – and I've been involved in it for many years myself, Mr. Chairman – sees him or herself as a small businessperson, as a businessperson who contributes, who employs others, but we don't show up in the statistics of full-time employment often.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Time.

MR. ZWOZDESKY: Oh, I'm sorry. Do I have a few minutes left yet?

MR. CHAIRMAN: No.

MR. ZWOZDESKY: Okay; thank you. I will simply say that as the outset, and I will come back and address some specifics in the budget later.

Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Thank you.
Lethbridge-West.

MR. DUNFORD: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm going to revise my remarks to some extent and express my appreciation to my colleague from Edmonton-Avonmore. I quite enjoyed your speech today. I enjoyed the positive tone of it, the things that you had to say, and I am sorry that we couldn't hear perhaps the whole speech, but I look forward to when you have an opportunity to rise again. They say, again to my colleague from Edmonton-Avonmore, that perhaps the best form of flattery is imitation, and I'm going to imitate you, then, in some of my opening remarks in the congratulations that I make.

[Mr. Clegg in the Chair]

I wanted to congratulate the hon. Member for Calgary-Nose Creek in his appointment as minister. I also want to warn him, however, that I have a cousin who has a wife that are members of his constituency, and they will be certainly keeping track of him and reporting back to me. I'd also like to say congratulations to the hon. minister's staff, some of whom I see sitting in the gallery, especially the deputy minister and the executive assistant. I want them to know and understand that the hon. Member for Calgary-Nose Creek is our boy. This is the person that has come from the rookie ranks of the class of '93, and we want you to know that he deserves special care and attention, and we'll be watching you folks to make sure that you deliver on that.

This is starting to sound like an admiration society, but I also want to congratulate the hon. Member for Calgary-Nose Creek as being the first of many of us to express his newfound freedom in

this House by voting against Government Motion 202. I'm not sure that the public has taken proper note of that, and I want to make sure, then, in my remarks today that that is acknowledged and want to also tell the hon. minister that as I saw him perform in that role in the House the other day, the thoughts and the words of Dr. Martin Luther King came back to me, if I could quote him right now: "Free at last, free at last . . . God Almighty, we're free at last."

There are a couple of questions that I have and some comments that I would like to make, and the first is under program 2 in the elements book, 2.1.2. I'm just asking, sir, for more details on your involvement with the western economic partnership agreements. I am unsure at this particular point what is involved in that particular area.

3:20

Remaining, though, with program 2 and specifically line item 2.2.4, again under the elements, the Library Operating Grants. In Lethbridge-West, of course, we are the seat of the Chinook Arch library system, and this has been a matter of concern for some period of time to constituents of mine. I would ask this question: with reference to the Library Operating Grants, can the minister tell us what action he has taken, if any, to provide operational support for the Chinook Arch library system? This system has been established for over a year and is eligible for funding. So what steps is the minister taking to ensure that this last library system is treated equitably in comparison with other library systems in Alberta?

On program 3 just a general comment. You've listed many of the interpretive centres in Alberta, and I want to indicate that we feel particularly blessed in southern Alberta with the interpretive centres that have been constructed in our particular area. I don't know what the total amount of dollars are that have been spent in our particular area over the last number of years, but if one is to look at the southern part of the province perhaps as being the gateway to that vast American market that might come north if we had an export highway, we could see a situation there of infrastructure that would be very, very supportive of an additional tourism trade. However, my concern is that there may be representations made by individuals and perhaps even other members in this House that we continue to spend money in the development of interpretive centres. I want to state that my position is that the amount of dollars that have been spent to date on interpretive centres should be viewed as perhaps start-up money or kick-start funding for tourism and that we take a serious look before the government of Alberta is to engage in any further construction. I think we have tended to spoil the private sector to some extent - at least that's a feel that I have - in that it is only the government that is going to be responsible for the development of tourism infrastructure. Clearly, this isn't the case, I don't believe, and shouldn't be the case. I think the private sector is going to have accept the responsibility in that particular area.

Under program 4 and dealing specifically with the Human Rights Commission, I just want to quote, if I can, from the Government Estimates book on page 60. Under Individual Rights and Citizenship Services the objective of the program is "to promote equal treatment and respect for all Albertans." Now, I don't have a specific question at this time, Mr. Minister. I just want to loosen and unfix a little burr that I have had under my saddle for many, many years in terms of how human rights commissions go about dealing with the matters that come to them. I'm not a lawyer as you are, sir, but it seems to me that in the system that we've developed particularly in North America and in Canada there is the premise that people are innocent until proven

guilty. However, in the current manner in which we handle ourselves as a society here in Alberta, I find that there are at least two examples of where people are viewed as being guilty and then are required to prove their innocence.

Now, one of these areas is not in your jurisdiction, and I only bring it up just to juxtapose the two positions. That is the matter of Check Stops. It is a situation where we are stopped on public highways and we are subjected to all manners of treatment by people in uniform. I understand that for the broader good of society we Canadians are interested in peace, order, and good government within our Constitution rather than life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness as are our southern friends. So we go along with this thing. Certainly I'm not standing here today indicating in any way that I am opposed to Check Stops; it's just the simple principle of what happens in a Check Stop system.

I want to draw the parallel, then, to what I believe happens under the Human Rights Commission when an employer is charged with a sexual abuse offence against an employee. I'm sure that by now there must be a manner in which the Human Rights Commission might approach this, but I would ask the minister to be continually vigilant as to matters that involve, then, a charge of sexual abuse by an employee against the employer. It forces the employer into this situation in front of the commission where he is immediately deemed to be guilty and then must prove his innocence. Now, we wouldn't do that in Justice, but with a human rights situation that seems to be happening or has happened. If there is a change to that, then I would be very, very pleased to hear that that has changed and would look perhaps for a reply in that direction.

Those are my comments, Mr. Minister. Again, congratulations and we look forward to an exceptional job from you.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member for Spruce Grove-Sturgeon-St. Albert.

MRS. SOETAERT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm a bit more direct than my counterparts here. I have a few specific items I'd like to discuss with the minister.

Directly with vote 4.0.4, the Women's Secretariat total is down to \$699,000 from \$839,000. The secretariat was established in 1984, and their mandate is to identify and analyze and make recommendations about government policy, programs, and legislation that affect women. It's to maintain co-ordination and liaison with the government departments, conduct research and collect data on women's issues, promote public and government awareness of issues to women, and undertake any activities that the minister deems appropriate.

So here are a few questions about the secretariat. Why is there a discrepancy in the funding between the secretariat and the women's advisory council? Why does the government still refuse to release an annual report on the secretariat? Will the minister consider publishing an update on the work performed by the secretariat? I guess what we want is a justification for it; it's a wonderful idea, but we want to see the work done. What are the projects currently being worked on by the secretariat? Has this cut in funding resulted in any staff layoffs, and has the office of the secretariat been merged with the seniors secretariat office? If not, will the minister tell us of his intention? What is the current staff load at the secretariat?

My second point is on vote 4.0.5, the Advisory Council on Women's Issues. The vote is \$338,000, down from \$343,000 over the last year. Now, the Alberta Advisory Council on Women's Issues' purpose is

to advise and report to the Alberta government through the Minister on matters relating to the opportunity for full and equal participation of Alberta women in the life of the province by

- (a) identifying specific matters . . . relating to women [and addressing them to the government],
- (b) making recommendations to the government with respect to any issues [and matters] relating to women,
- (c) consulting with and providing information to the public, and
- (d) carrying out any other activities that the Minister considers appropriate.

I have a few questions regarding the advisory council. Why has Catherine Arthur only been given a three-month contract? Since the advisory council's office is down very extremely to a skeleton staff, how does the minister propose the council will be spending its \$300,000 budget? What are the minister's intentions with respect to the council? I'm concerned about this. I feel that we're eventually letting its importance dwindle and that pretty soon we'll be forced to phase it out. I think it's far too important to be phased out.

3:30

What is the status of the government's review of boards and commissions, and how will this review affect the council? Why is the council moving to the Standard Life building, where the seniors' secretariat is housed? When I met with Catherine Arthur and her secretary at their office, that building was most conducive to meeting women's needs. They felt welcome. It was a wonderful place for it to be housed, and I was very disappointed to see that it was moving. I am concerned about them being swallowed by a big government department and not remaining an arm of the government. When will the minister be filling the board vacancies? Why are all the vacancies not filled as soon as they become vacancies? What projects will the council be involved in this year?

I have one other area I would like to address. Being the minister responsible for women's issues, I'm sure you are as concerned as I am about different aspects of that. The first one is improving the workplace. In 1990 the federal task force study of women in the public service called *Beneath the Veneer* reported that 75 percent of women in the public service are concentrated in four lower echelon categories – secretarial, clerical, administrative services, and program management – and almost half of those are clerical jobs. The survey also found that the majority of women in all job categories except management leave their jobs at a higher rate than men because they're frustrated over the lack of advancement opportunities. Does the minister intend to address the inadequacies in the civil service, and will he support our pay equity Bill? I'd like you to seriously consider that, convince the rest of your caucus that it's needed.

Poverty is one of the most debilitating issues confronting women today. In Alberta 71 percent of our elderly women live below the poverty line. I think that's a very sad statement on how we treat our elderly. Forty-three percent of women who head a lone-parent family live below the poverty line, and that was one of the issues I tried to address in question period today. Those things have to be addressed and considered serious and not just lightly brushed off. Eighty percent of all part-time workers are women. Will you be responding to the social assistance cuts? Are you monitoring the impact these cuts are having on women on assistance? I'd like you to step in and have a voice in that area and fight for women. They're being trampled, and I'd like you to advocate for them.

Is the minister participating with the Minister of Family and Social Services to ensure that women are given real opportunities for training and retraining? What is the minister doing in this regard? Is he looking at the employment standards Act to see

where improvements can be made for part-time workers? What is his position about expanding the widows' pension to include single and divorced women? Will the minister ensure that there is a mandatory review of the minimum wage? What steps or actions or legislation does the minister intend to take or introduce that will help improve the economic status of women? How does he intend to strengthen the maintenance enforcement program? I want you to be as concerned about these as I am. It's your role, and I respect that.

I will continue with I promise my last set of concerns. They have to do with child care. For several years the Liberal caucus has pointed out a number of serious and frightening problems with child care services. We would like the minister to comment on the following proposals that the Liberal caucus has made to strengthen enforcement and monitoring of day care regulations, especially where serious infractions have occurred: to establish parental monitoring boards of all day care centres, to address the serious shortage of child care in rural areas, to help business and industry provide on-site day care, to ensure that the decision of whether to work or stay at home to raise children receives equal taxation consideration. That one's very dear to my heart.

There are a number of areas in violence that need to be addressed. Will the minister tell us what he plans to do with the following family violence issues.

Provide women's shelters with 100 percent financing. We talk about not having a shortage, but just the other night one of our constituency workers had a mother and two children come to the constituency office, and she could not find a place in the city for those people to stay that night. They slept in their van. This is serious and has to be addressed. I want you to stand up for those people who need your voice.

Provide continual education and seminars for court judges, lawyers, and police to keep them better informed. Assist municipalities in developing and implementing their safer city strategy; for example, improved lighting, emergency call boxes, video monitoring of parkades, and increased foot patrol.

We think that violence doesn't affect us. On Friday this past week at 3:30 in the afternoon my constituency worker was attacked just outside the Leg. Annex. So that's something that has to be addressed. It's hitting pretty close to home.

In the area of health, the physical and mental health needs of Alberta women have never been a high priority. Access to treatment facilities continues to be a dream. Far too many women are rural and feel isolated. Recent immigrants have little knowledge of the services available and are often reluctant to seek assistance because of a lack of money and cultural barricades. What does the minister propose to improve access to health care for immigrant women? Women with low-income levels often avoid medical services because of the premium costs and prohibitive drug costs. What does the minister propose to do to ensure that low-income women have improved access to health care, especially in the inner city? What is he planning in terms of improving access for isolated women, especially natives? Has he consulted with the Minister of Health to develop, for example, mobile medical teams?

I appreciate the fact that you probably can't answer these right today, but I would appreciate your concern with these and your addressing them. I don't just speak for women. I speak for all Albertans when we say we're concerned about what's happening.

Thank you.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member for Medicine Hat.

MR. RENNER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to echo some of the comments made earlier. I, too, would like to congratulate the minister on his new appointment. As a first-time member in this House, as many of us here are, I'm sure we can all appreciate the tremendous learning curve that we are all going through. To add on the ministerial responsibilities, I think you really are to be complimented, sir. I do congratulate you, and I admire you for picking up as quickly as you have in your duties as minister.

There are really only a number of specific items that I would like to address this afternoon. I've gone through some of the estimates. There are a few areas that I have some questions on, and I would like at this time to discuss some of these. In program 2, in 2.1.3, Arts Services, I'm a little bit unsure on what exactly this program is. There's a significant decrease this year over last year, and I'm just wondering if the minister could comment on any possible consequences of a significant funding decrease in this program. It goes from some \$800,000 to \$600,000, I believe.

Also in program 2, in 2.2.5, Community Recreational/Cultural Grants, these grants are totally deleted from the budget this year, and again I wonder what the effect to programs will be with the elimination of these grants.

At the same time, 2.2.6, Provincial Association Grants have also been eliminated, and I wonder again what will be the result of the elimination of these grants on the service to the people of Alberta. Those are very specific concerns.

3:40

I'd like to now move on to program 3. Program 3 is the Cultural Facilities and Historical Resources and all of the different related matters. Rather than dealing with a specific program here, I'd just like to talk in generalities about some of the wonderful facilities we have here in the province of Alberta. I'm sure that all of us have on occasion visited the Tyrrell Museum, the Reynolds Museum, any of the other museums that are in the province, and these are terrific things to have for the people of Alberta. Indeed many of these, and very specifically the Tyrrell Museum, have attracted people and tourists worldwide to attend these facilities, and I think the ministry is to be congratulated on supporting these wonderful facilities.

A few years ago there was a change in government policy whereby, rather than free admission to these facilities, an admission charge was put in place. I have a problem with the way the estimates are presented to us here. I realize that this has nothing to do with the minister, but it would be interesting if, to go with these, we would be able to know what the revenue is from the admissions that are charged to people. Here we see only the costs involved, but we don't see the offsetting revenues, and I was wondering if at some point in time it might be possible to have offsetting revenues shown against some of the costs.

At the same time as the charges came into effect, there was a policy of these facilities being closed on Mondays. Because they are such a terrific tourist attraction, it seems a shame that these facilities would be closed on a Monday when we have the possibility of tremendous tourist revenue. I stopped at the Frank Slide Interpretative Centre on a Tuesday, I believe it was, awhile ago and was advised that Tuesdays were free. I think you might be well advised if rather than having free admission on Tuesday and closing on Monday, you considered opening seven days a week and charging seven days a week. It's just a consideration.

The other issue that I would just like some clarification on is under program 4, 4.0.4 and 4.0.5, the Women's Secretariat and the Advisory Council on Women's Issues. I'm a little bit unclear on what the difference is between these two programs and why

it's necessary to have two line items for these two programs. Does the fact that there are two line items mean that there are a whole lot of administrative costs involved that perhaps could be combined and brought together under one line item with possibly one administrative function in both of these? I must admit that I'm rather ignorant on the specifics of the programs. There very well could be a logical reason for having them separate, but it would seem that there might be some commonality between the two programs, and they perhaps could be combined.

Those are really all the questions that I have, Mr. Chairman. I'd appreciate it if the minister would consider what I've had to say and perhaps comment on them a little bit later.

Thank you.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member for Calgary-Buffalo.

MR. DICKSON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to join with the previous speakers in congratulating the hon. member on his appointment to this important portfolio. I think there probably is no one in the government caucus who perhaps is better suited to this important portfolio than the hon. Member for Calgary-Nose Creek, and I take a great deal of comfort in the fact that this member has been given this important portfolio. I think there is a reason why there has been a succession of people who have represented Calgary-Buffalo who have been involved in either the position of critic on the government side or some position in terms of advocating for human rights. I go back to Mr. Ghitter, now Senator Ghitter, who had been instrumental in the original Individual's Rights Protection Act – he did that when he was the Member for Calgary-Buffalo – and the late Sheldon Chumir, who'd been the MLA for Calgary-Buffalo. I think the connection is that there's probably no constituency in the province where human rights concerns are more important or come up as an issue more frequently than in that densely populated inner-city constituency in Calgary.

In any event, I think that the Premier made a wise selection. I also recognize, Mr. Chairman, that this particular minister has some sensitivity. I think we had the occasion to be on a panel at the Calgary Multicultural Centre during the course of the last election campaign, each of us representing our respective parties and responding to a wide variety of questions and concerns, many of them from new Canadians, many of them from groups that typically look for protection and invest a lot of importance in the Alberta Human Rights Commission. Although I didn't agree perhaps on all issues with the minister and his responses, I recognized his fairness and his sensitivity to that range of issues.

I've heard the minister talk about a leaner, more responsive management process. He's talked about strengthening ministerial control. Those items clearly are important, but my particular concern has to do with the Human Rights Commission, in making sure that it's not seen as simply another one of these odd functions that we sort of sweep into the corner. I think one of the fears that I have and many Albertans have is that the very nature of the department is that sometimes important matters, vitally important matters like human rights concerns, are seen as being trivialized or in some way diminished in importance.

It's important to me, Mr. Chairman, that when I shared this particular panel at the Multicultural Centre in Calgary in early June with the hon. minister, at that time he indicated, I think to the surprise of many in attendance, that he supported an amendment to the Individual's Rights Protection Act to include sexual orientation. I applauded that stand by the minister. I think it's clear that there's an education issue we have to deal with in

Alberta. I still think that there are a good number of Albertans who are concerned that amending the Individual's Rights Protection Act would somehow give special rights to gays and lesbians. I think the hon. minister understands that that is not the case when we talk about amending the Individual's Rights Protection Act to include sexual orientation. We're talking absolutely and only about equal treatment, about fair treatment. The reality is that each one of us has a sexual orientation, just as we have a race and an ethnic origin, a colour. All I've ever proposed and the stand I've heard the minister take was that when it comes to sexual orientation, as a heterosexual I shouldn't be discriminated against if I'm trying to find a job or rent an apartment any more than a homosexual should be discriminated against simply on the basis of sexual orientation. It ought to be a neutral feature.

Mr. Chairman, I have a concern that in this province there's been a great deal of hesitation at the government level in terms of dealing with amendment of the Individual's Rights Protection Act. I think it's clear, as a result of the Ontario Court of Appeal decision in the Haig case in July of 1992, that a statute like our Individual's Rights Protection Act will be construed, will be interpreted by the court relying on the Charter of Rights and Freedoms to read in sexual orientation. I think it's important that we anticipate that and make the appropriate amendment in the statute.

I think, Mr. Chairman, that the issue surrounding sexual orientation has raised another important issue that we have to deal with, and it's this: the Alberta Human Rights Commission still remains subject to the whims and the prejudices of a single minister. While I may have a great deal of confidence and faith in this particular minister to do the fair thing, to do the appropriate thing, I haven't always had that measure of confidence, and I'm not sure I will always have that measure of confidence in the future should somebody else occupy that position. So I reiterate a stand that's been taken by my predecessor and others in this House and outside the House, that it's time we depoliticize the Alberta Human Rights Commission. We should say that the commission and the chief commissioner, in particular, would be appointed by the Legislative Offices Committee, in which all parties are represented, accountable to the Legislative Offices Committee and no longer to a single minister. I think that would be a positive step forward, and I reiterate the call for such a change.

3:50

I have a great deal of concern, Mr. Minister, with the selection process whereby we came to have a new chief commissioner for the Alberta Human Rights Commission. The former minister, Ms McCoy, had started in the summer of 1992 a very elaborate, arm's-length process whereby she had recruited a number of volunteers, a number of ordinary citizens to sit on a panel, and they spent almost a half year receiving a large number of applications. Over the course of the fall of 1992, they short-listed it, I understand, to two or three applicants, both or all three of those people having a very strong background in terms of human rights concerns and issues and a good understanding of the importance of advocacy work. After the new Premier assumed office in December, we saw that process basically shuffled off to the side and locked away in a closet, and there was an appointment made directly by the cabinet or the minister of the time. I think that was an enormous step backwards, because I think that what we want to do, what I want to do is invest as much importance as possible in the work of the commission.

This has nothing to do with the individual who ultimately was appointed last year. My concern is with the process. I think it's

a basic proposition that if the process is seen as not being arm's-length, if it's seen that we're not getting the most effective advocate of human rights we can, the most expert person we can in here, it diminishes the importance of the Human Rights Commission itself. I think also that it's of concern that we've seen the reaction of groups. There's a reason why the Dignity Foundation has been started in Alberta. There's a reason why Mr. Fraser, the former chief commissioner, and Kathleen Mahoney, a professor of law at the University of Calgary, and people of that reputation and stature have come together to attempt to fight for a stronger and effective Human Rights Commission.

Mr. Minister, I'd like to know what the cost was of the selection process that was put in place in 1992. I'd like to know how much it cost the taxpayers of Alberta to go through that arm's-length process to find a new chief commissioner, costs which ultimately were thrown away in the end.

I'm concerned, Mr. Minister, and I'll be candid. There's a perception by many Albertans and certainly by the people involved with the Dignity Foundation that the review process that has been announced and the roundtable discussions are not intended, in good faith, to make the Act, the IRPA, stronger or to make the board or commission stronger but are really a first step to be able to neuter or dismantle that important body. I simply want to urge you, Mr. Minister, to recognize that the role of the commission is unique. The work of the commission cannot be done by the Department of Labour, employment standards. It is not simply an employment issue; it's much bigger than that. Not only should the Human Rights Commission be protected and maintained as an individual entity, but it ought to be strengthened.

It's a bit awkward to do a detailed examination of line 4.0.3. because we simply don't have a program breakdown when we deal with the human rights area. We can only deal with a global sum. I'd like to know how much of those funds are dedicated to education. I think that all members in this Legislature and most Albertans recognize that the way you deal with intolerance is through education. Contrary to a number of commentators, I don't believe that people in Alberta are rednecks. I don't believe that people in Alberta are less caring or less charitable than people anywhere else in the country. I'm a native Albertan. I think, though, that sometimes Albertans don't have a lot of information. I think sometimes Albertans in some centres don't have as much opportunity to live with people who have a different religious faith or a different ethnic origin. That's why education is so vitally important and why I'm anxious to see it strengthened. I want to know what we spend on education now. In the last report from the commission, the one that was produced for two periods, April 1990 to March 1991 and April 1991 to March 1992, at page 4 there's a reference: "With the overall increase in caseload, education resources were reduced accordingly." So I'm keen on finding out to what extent those resources have been reduced.

I'd like to know, Mr. Minister, how much was spent on boards of inquiry. I'd like particulars. I understand that public inquiries have been paid for in the past by special warrants, so I'm not sure whether that still falls within your jurisdiction, but I'm interested in finding out what the cost is of those boards of inquiry.

I'm interested in finding out more about the administration costs of the Alberta Human Rights Commission, and I'm interested in finding out the differentiated costs between those costs attributable solely to the Alberta Human Rights Commission and then those costs that relate to the administration of the Act – the enforcement, the education, and the investigative procedures – to the extent that those two items can be separated.

I'm interested in finding out, Mr. Minister, and I'd like to know what the process is by which individuals are candidates for a board

of inquiry. I'd like to find out if there's a list that the minister maintains. I'd like to know what the criteria are for those individuals who are appointed to those boards of inquiry.

With respect to the roundtable process that's been initiated, I'm interested in finding out what the costs are. What's the budget for this consultative process that's been undertaken?

I'm particularly concerned, Mr. Minister, that your predecessor had suggested that we would hold some public opinion polls to determine what rights in Alberta we're going to protect and not protect. If there's any message I can give you, sir – and I want to do this with as much emphasis as I can muster – human rights in Alberta are not subject to public opinion polls. If we start looking to do polls to determine what rights we're going to protect in this province, we're going to find that we have very few groups that have protection. There's a reason why there was a head tax imposed on Chinese immigrants a century ago. There's a reason why Japanese-Canadians were expelled from the west coast. There's a reason why those kinds of things happen, and it's because majority opinion is going a different way. So I'm looking for assurances from the commission. I'm looking for assurances from you, Mr. Minister, that you're going to make it clear, that the commission will make it clear that this roundtable discussion is not about shopping around for different rights and protection and determining which have majority support and which don't. If they had majority support, we wouldn't require an Individual's Rights Protection Act; we wouldn't require an Alberta Bill of Rights.

4:00

I'm interested in finding out what the plans are for education. I am concerned that the money being spent on this roundtable discussion process that's under way could have been far better spent on education, on providing materials for school children in this province. Mr. Minister, I'm concerned that this review that's been announced and is under way is something to satisfy demands from your own caucus. I can tell you that I don't sense any large support, any great ground swell of Albertans demanding a review of the Individual's Rights Protection machinery. I think we can always do a better job in terms of making the investigative arm, the enforcement procedures more effective and fair. But for the most part, those Albertans who are concerned about this tell me and, I expect, tell you as well, sir, that what they want is more emphasis on education. Let's fulfill that educational part of the mandate that I don't think is being met.

I understand that a corporate plan had been prepared and implemented on April 1, 1992. I'd like some indication from the minister what process there is to measure the objectives of that original corporate plan. I'd like particulars of that plan for both year 1 and year 2. I'd like to know to what extent the reorganization process has met the objectives that were laid out when the plan was proposed and then ultimately implemented.

Mr. Chairman, I then say finally to the minister, since my specific concern is dealing with human rights – and I think my colleagues have adequately covered the other areas – what I'm looking for is the Human Rights Commission and the machinery in the process to be animated by a tremendous and visible and consistent commitment to ensure that every Albertan, regardless of colour, ethnic origin, race, and so on, and sexual orientation too, gets equal access. That's all I've ever heard being proposed: equal access to ensure that they're not discriminated against when it comes to jobs, when it comes to accommodation. I'm hopeful, Mr. Minister, that you will be able to be an advocate for those people. Be an advocate for all of us. We're counting on you to be able to provide that kind of leadership.

Thanks very much, Mr. Chairman.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

The hon. Member for Wainwright.

MR. FISCHER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I, too, would like to congratulate the Member for Calgary-Nose Creek on his recent appointment as minister. I know that you look forward to the challenge of leading your department through the next few years. Certainly if the example you've set since your appointment in the last month is any test, then I know you'll do very well. I also would like to compliment our deputy minister, Julian Nowicki, and his department staff on the excellent way they've guided this department in the past year. Certainly streamlining and making difficult cuts is always very stressful for everyone working in that department.

I would also like to mention to the minister that I respect your stand on your first free vote, mentioned by the Member for Lethbridge-West. It does seem a bit ironic that the Member for Lethbridge-West would be quoting Martin Luther King's famous statement "free at last" when he's only been married for a couple of months.

I know that as the government streamlined the number of departments and cut down from 26 to 17, this department you have taken on has had a lot of important additional responsibilities, which in turn has increased the workload a lot. I commend you for taking on that workload.

I'd like to ask you – under program 4, vote 4.0.2, Citizenship and Heritage Secretariat, and vote 4.0.3, Human Rights Commission, there are capital expenditures of \$25,000 and \$87,000 respectively. I know these aren't big dollars, but I hope this is not the beginning of a policy of larger capital expenditure in this area. I wonder if the minister could identify these expenditures, just what the moneys were spent on.

Under program 2, vote 2.2.2, the municipal recreation/tourism areas program, there's \$3.8 million that goes into operating the MRTA program. I would like to say that from our perspective in the Wainwright constituency, that has been an extremely beneficial program for attracting tourists and making our area something special for people to visit. We do have in that area probably 120 miles of the beautiful Battle River valley, and anytime we put a few dollars toward enhancing its tourist attraction availability, then it is money that's very well spent.

I would like to also thank you for the urban parks information you sent me the other day when we were debating the supply estimates. I appreciated that information. Looking at the urban parks money that is spent, certainly we are developing a great tourist attraction in this province. My thoughts always come back to: are we doing the same kind of job in the rural areas?

I would just leave those two questions with you.

Thank you.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Beverly-Belmont.

MR. YANKOWSKY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would also like to congratulate Gary Mar on his appointment to the Ministry of Community Development.

Mr. Chairman, Alberta seniors are a diverse group with diverse ideas, concerns, and solutions. Possibly it's because of this that they have been invited to share in the process of making decisions on necessary budget cuts to reduce the provincial deficit and debt. Many seniors will be traveling to Red Deer this weekend to participate in the seniors' roundtable discussions. There they will voice their recommendations for cuts to balance the budget. It's so sad to see this, because they are the innocents that had nothing

to do with the government getting into debt in the first place. The blame must be laid squarely on the government's shoulders, as they were the ones who squandered taxpayers' money, squandering it through thoughtless loans, loan guarantees, and foolish spending. Now they are coming cap in hand to one of the most vulnerable groups and saying, "Seniors, can you spare a dime?" This government just spent a large amount of money in 1992 on a consultation process on seniors' programs. The 1992 consultation process was written up into two reports titled *Looking to the Future*. Sadly, only the highly censored version was released to the public. The full report – and it's an excellent report – was never released. What a waste of time, energy, and money. If the health care roundtable discussions report is any indication, we will again be getting a highly censored report on the seniors roundtable discussions.

4:10

Now, regarding 4.0.6, I observe that there is no increase in the 1993-94 estimates as compared to the 1992-93 estimates. My question here is: is this an adequate amount, given the rising seniors' population and added problems seniors will be facing due to the economy and cutbacks? Seniors will be wanting a lot more information on what's happening to them.

I would like to address some concerns the government may want to consider when they draw up their next budget estimates. I think some of these are good ideas which could save the government many dollars if they apply them. Firstly, the government must adapt to an aging population. Demographics show that by the year 2021, 16.5 percent of the population will be over 65 years of age. Seniors need to plan ahead for the future, and the government can help them in this area by laying out some long-range plans. Seniors often have fixed amounts of income which must be allocated to last a lifetime. Lower interest rates in the last while have certainly cut their income from savings and are hurting them badly. Hopefully, rates will come back and their income will be restored.

Maintenance of good health is extremely important to seniors as it is much less expensive to provide programs to keep seniors healthy than to look after them when they have multiple health disorders. As the well-known saying goes, an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure, and I think that is good advice.

Also, keeping seniors in their homes is much more cost effective than providing publicly operated facilities to look after them. Maybe we should consider allowing proposals such as Carewest, which would allow seniors to own their own condominiums as part of a complex where health care services are readily available. This provides for financial security as the condominium is purchased. Seniors are not faced with monthly rate charges which may increase greatly over several years. Rumours continue to circulate that the Youville geriatric centre may be forced to close. This facility provides unique services for seniors, encouraging health maintenance and often allowing seniors to return home after short hospitalizations. I think the government should consider supporting leisure day centres, which would permit families to keep grandparents at home rather than requiring lodge or nursing home care. Overall cost reductions could be significant. Why were rates for extended care facilities raised in such a way that standard rates rose by 17.3 percent while private rates rose by only 3.7 percent? Those least able to pay are being asked to carry the heaviest burden. Regarding the property tax reduction program, is it at stake? If it is, it would be a great mistake, because the property tax reduction program is one program that keeps seniors living in their homes.

The proposal to limit physiotherapy services to seniors should be reconsidered. These services are cost effective if they keep seniors walking, thus able to live at home. They also allow for early discharge after hip surgery, et cetera. Falls or other minor injuries can often be dealt with by physiotherapy as an outpatient. Far better to keep seniors out of the hospital.

Also, seniors should not have to live in fear of the future. Cuts to services leave them wondering if they will have enough money to last a lifetime. Will they be able to receive medical care when it is required? Will they be able to find help when they can no longer completely look after themselves?

These are questions we in government and opposition need to ask ourselves every time we consider any changes to seniors' programs.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member for Bow Valley.

DR. OBERG: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would again like to congratulate the minister on his appointment to a very interesting and diverse portfolio. I would also like to state that the minister took time out from a very busy schedule to tour the world heritage site at Dinosaur provincial park in Brooks, Alberta. Again, my unprejudiced opinion is that this is one of the most visually stunning places on the planet, and I would love to tell anyone all about it.

I have a question about the Blue Lake Centre in Hinton. I recently received one of their brochures and have been looking through it. I'm quite amazed by a lot of the things being offered there. I would like to mention just a few. It says that it's in an idyllic location with flexible programs. There are programs on volunteer development, leadership development, and athlete development. Those are several things that I'm sure I would like to do myself. I could go on. There's a seminar on personal leadership effectiveness – again, a very good program – co-operative games programming, major event planning, association fund-raising. These are all things that seem to be extremely critical to us as a society.

There's also a group of environmental programs dealing with things like basic natural history and ecology, alpine field study, and even geology of the Canadian Rockies and foothills.

[Mr. Sohal in the Chair]

I can go on and on, and indeed I'm going to. There are special interest programs such as fly-fishing and even things called family fun weekends. You can become an amateur astronomer. The list continues and grows. The one point I would like to make is that all these courses are paid for by the people attending the courses.

Somewhat distressed, I recently heard of media reports that have noted that the Blue Lake Centre is going to be closing. I would like the minister to answer why this is happening and what is going to happen to the centre, which I understand is a world-class centre with convention facilities. I think the programs being offered, as I've alluded to, are extremely important and should be maintained. They're an aspect of culture that our society certainly needs. I would welcome the minister's comments on this.

MR. ACTING DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The Minister of Community Development.

MR. MAR: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. A number of comments have been made. At the outset, I want to respond by saying thank you for all the very kind things that were said. Indeed, at the outset of the hon. Member for Edmonton-Avonmore's comments,

I could have closed my eyes and thought it was a Conservative caucus meeting we were attending. I indeed thank him for his very, very kind comments and the kind comments of all others as well.

4:20

As I indicated at the beginning of my comments in reporting on the activities of Community Development and its plan, I'd like to keep my answers here at this time brief and we'll provide further answers for the many, many other questions that have been asked.

One of the questions raised by the hon. Member for Edmonton-Avonmore was whether Community Development will fund the Alberta Advisory Council on Women's Issues for the full year. The answer to that is yes.

With respect to issues the hon. Member for Edmonton-Avonmore raised regarding multiculturalism, he noted that under program 4 support for the Citizenship and Heritage Secretariat has been reduced. I think his concern was with respect to how this would impact on the delivery of programs aimed at Alberta's culturally diverse population. I'm pleased to turn that matter over to Yvonne Fritz, the chairman of the Multiculturalism Commission, to respond to.

MRS. FRITZ: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Albertans have told this government that they place a high priority on community harmony, stability, and unity, which has been discussed earlier in debate. Yet at the same time, as the minister said, they are looking for a shift from cultural retention. Today I, too, would like to take the opportunity to thank the minister for the support he and his department provide in assisting the Alberta Multiculturalism Commission to carry out its programs and services so that shift can occur.

Mr. Chairman, the Citizenship and Heritage Secretariat does provide program and administrative support to the Multiculturalism Commission. As the minister indicated earlier, it has by no means been exempt from downsizing. Reductions that have affected all aspects of the government are undergoing, but today we have some very qualified staff here. I thank you for the support you have given as well to the commission and the secretariat overall. We do appreciate it, and I want you to know that. We know that the resources, as the minister indicated, have been reduced by 12 percent. However, very importantly, the programs of the commission continue to be delivered efficiently and effectively because they are at status quo. Once again, I thank the minister for that sensitivity. We appreciate that. The commission is in the final year of a three-year action plan that was unveiled here in 1991, and they are continuing their efforts to help all Albertans better understand, appreciate, and benefit from the cultural diversity of Alberta as a whole. I believe we're going to be discussing that even more. As the Member for Edmonton-Avonmore indicated, I think we'll be having even further dialogue here in regard to that.

I'd like to share with you, though, an example from the past year of what I've learned the commission has accomplished. I've learned that they have worked with young people from across Alberta to develop a youth cultural ambassadors training program and that this program helps young people in schools and youth groups to better understand and deal with the diversity in their daily lives. I think it's important that we listen to that, Mr. Chairman, because at least I have heard from members in the Legislature the very question: why do we have a Multiculturalism Commission, and do we need to continue that and its programs?

There are other programs too. The commission has worked in partnership with an Alberta publisher and an Alberta filmmaker

to produce an award-winning book and video which provides a contemporary view of Alberta diversity. I'm sure that certainly the members that are here and were here previously have seen that video and read that book. I know that I have had that opportunity and will be sharing that with other new members. I understand this video was shown across the province and country on CBC television and was quite successful, and we are proud of that.

Also, the commission held their third annual symposium for senior executives in partnership with the Royal Bank of Canada, Canadian Airlines, Xerox Canada, and Suncor Inc. I understand the fourth one will be happening here in November, and we will be inviting members of the Legislature and the public in business to attend. Also, the commission is continuing to work in partnership with business, public institutions, and, importantly, nonprofit organizations such as PanCanadian corporation, Calgary and Edmonton health boards, and the United Way of Calgary. They're helping these organizations to better manage diversity in their workplace and to provide their services to an increasingly diverse clientele. That we know that is occurring is really fundamental and important, because as I said, that would certainly help the shift from cultural retention occur.

Also, Mr. Chairman, the commission continued their efforts to assist Alberta's cultural and racial minority communities, to help their members integrate more effectively into Alberta society. I would be more than pleased if any member of this Legislature attended a commission meeting and became part of the excitement there and what is being shared in a very educational way.

The Multiculturalism Advisory Council is working with Alberta Education to look at ways educators can better manage diversity in the schools. What we've seen here, whether it was the question earlier from my hon. member to the left, answered by the Minister of Education, in regard to what has been happening in the schools most recently and ongoing - I can see that we do need this education, and hopefully that's a program that will even be enhanced. I know the minister discussed with me as recently as a week and a half ago that we need to look at the overall commission and do what is best for Albertans.

As I stated previously, the commission is in the last year of its action plan. When we introduced the plan in 1991, we made a commitment to Albertans to consult with them on the effectiveness of the plan. I really do appreciate efforts of the staff that have gone into that plan. I understand we're going to be discussing here in Edmonton tomorrow how that will unfold for Alberta. Mr. Chairman, I know the minister's guidance and firm hand will be very much a part of that, and I do appreciate that. So thank you. We'll work together for Albertans.

Thank you. I hope that's answered some of the questions that were put before the House.

MR. MAR: Mr. Chairman, a further answer to the questions asked by my learned friend from Edmonton-Avonmore. He did ask what kind of consultative process is taking place prior to these changes happening. I can advise him that in the area of recreation there is an annual presidents' forum with all recreation and sports associations in attendance. Secondly, in the area of culture, the Let's Talk Culture workshops occur from time to time; and finally, in the historic resources area, regular meetings are held with the Alberta heritage network to discuss general program directives.

With respect to comments made by the hon. Member for Lethbridge-West, again I thank him for his kind comments. One of the questions he asked was: essentially what western economic partnership agreement does this department have? In response to that, this department administers the federal/provincial cultural industries agreement, a four-year, \$7 million agreement which

provides financial assistance to Alberta companies to aid in the development of important film, publishing, and sound recording industries in the province of Alberta. This figure represents the administrative cost. The actual amount for the financial assistance is found in the Ministry of Economic Development and Tourism's budget in the amount of \$2.062 million.

In further answer to the issue raised by the hon. Member for Lethbridge-West on the subject of the Chinook Arch system, of course this was a question raised in question period yesterday by the hon. Member for Edmonton-Avonmore. Project support for the Chinook Arch system will continue. As indicated the other day in question period, the budget for library grants has been capped at \$12.3 million, and the library grant task force which was established is in the process now of making its recommendations on how to deal with a number of matters, including how to meet the commitment to the Chinook Arch library system. I expect the report of that task force later this fall.

4:30

In response to the hon. Member for Spruce Grove, I too and this government are also concerned deeply and seriously with women's issues and issues respecting children. At the end of the day the hon. member and I may disagree with respect to the manner and the appropriate manners in which those issues should be addressed, but we can certainly agree on the importance of those issues.

With respect to the hon. member's question regarding the Alberta Advisory Council on Women's Issues and the appointment of Catherine Arthur for a further period of three months, it was intended to be an interim measure, on which I took a decision on an interim basis.

There were many questions raised by the hon. member from Spruce Grove, and just a general response to the many questions which he raised. I think a concern was stated by the hon. member that the budget for the Women's Secretariat has been reduced by 17 percent and what will be the end effect of that. That reduction reflects the fact that three employees of the Women's Secretariat asked for the voluntary severance package offered by the government in the earlier part of this year. By absorbing the reduction within the restructured individual rights and citizenship division, we maintained the budget for the Alberta Advisory Council on Women's issues, and therefore that group is able to carry out the necessary and important work they do.

With respect to the comments made by the hon. Member for Medicine Hat, I think he noted that there was an element cut in 2.1.3, half a million dollars in funding to the arts. This reflected some administrative savings. A slight reduction was made in the amount spent on a showcase marketing conference, and there was a transfer of six art summer schools for handling by the Alberta Foundation for the Arts. So many of the programs in that program line have been maintained.

The hon. Member for Medicine Hat also made reference to the community recreation/cultural grant program. I would like to advise this House that communities have known about the termination of CRC grants for some time. The grants have been reduced over a period of eight years on a per capita basis, with the object of making sure that some of these facilities become self-supporting and operate on their own.

The hon. Member for Medicine Hat also noted that there was an apparent cut of sports association grants. I can advise the hon. member and this House that the grants have not been cut. In fact, they've simply been transferred to administration by the Alberta Sport Council and the Recreation, Parks and Wildlife Foundation, which is lottery funded.

The hon. Member for Medicine Hat also made mention of a policy of Monday closures at facilities that this province operates. I can advise the member that all historical facilities in fact are open seven days a week during the tourist season. However, Monday closures are in effect during the off-season, when tourist volumes decline dramatically.

As a follow-up to that, he did ask a question regarding free Tuesdays at our historical facilities. I'm currently reviewing the policy of free Tuesdays, a policy which at the outset was first adopted to ensure access by low-income Albertans. I expect we will be revisiting that policy to ensure that our revenues are appropriate, during the major tourist season in particular.

Comments were made by the hon. Member for Calgary-Buffalo, and I again thank him for his kind comments made on my behalf.

With respect to the Alberta Human Rights Commission and the education function which is served by that body, the commission receives requests from schools and employers and community groups and individuals. In the 1992-93 fiscal year public education activities included 154 presentations, seven train-the-trainer sessions, two seminars, 17 displays, 38 special projects, and 230 consultations, as well as education sessions on a variety of topics. These activities were conducted in a total of 43 locations throughout the province of Alberta.

The public education budget for the Alberta Human Rights Commission for 1992-93 was \$163,424, which included the salaries of two full-time education consultants. I would point out that much of the costs of the education function of the Human Rights Commission are picked up by the groups: the schools, the employers, and the community groups that request such public education services.

Also in response to the hon. Member for Calgary-Buffalo, on the subject of the Individual's Rights Protection Act, that Act is now 20 years old, and that is the reason it is being reviewed. The Alberta Human Rights Commission will be conducting a full and comprehensive review of that Act and the operation of the commission. I've asked the chief commissioner to ensure that the costs of that review are kept to a minimum, consistent with the need to ensure that there is full public input in this important legislation.

The hon. Member for Wainwright asked whether we were providing programs like the urban parks program in rural areas. The 274 sites which were built under the MRTA program were our response to rural areas, and at the present we're finishing construction of the last six to 10 sites set out under that program.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Beverly-Belmont asked about seniors, and he repeated his comments regarding a 164-page report entitled Looking to the Future. The reason why the report was reproduced into a 39-page document was to make it more readable, more usable, and more understandable. Accordingly, I have reviewed both reports, and I'm satisfied that the 39-page report is an accurate summary of the 164-page report, which contained very difficult language to read and also contained a great deal about the methodology of the report which was not, in my opinion, necessary to repeat in the summary. The summary is an accurate reflection of the recommendations and the actions set out in the larger report. I have frequently found it not useful to have a 164-page summary of a 164-page report.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Beverly-Belmont I believe also raised an issue with respect to the Seniors Advisory Council and his concerns in regard to that body. I can assure this House that the Seniors Advisory Council will continue to play an important role in providing government with advice on seniors issues. As all members here are aware, the council is involved in a consultation with seniors which is scheduled for Red Deer this coming

Saturday, the 18th and 19th. The council will continue to be important in the future.

Perhaps at this point I can ask the chairman of the Alberta Seniors Advisory Council, the hon. Member for Calgary-Currie, to speak to that matter.

4:40

MRS. BURGNER: Thank you. I'd like to take this opportunity, first of all, to thank first the Premier of this province, who extended me the opportunity to chair this important resource, the Seniors Advisory Council, and continue allowing the seniors to have a very active voice in this province. It's a very significant honour and privilege for me to be asked to undertake that. In concert with the comments to the Premier, I would also like to thank the minister, Mr. Mar, for his confidence in me and the tremendous consultation and support process that I have received as I kind of get my handle on this issue from a provincial perspective.

I think it's important to note the welcome from the hon. Member for Edmonton-Avonmore, and I'm sure he is reflecting the comments of my Liberal colleagues that this is an issue that crosses partisan lines. We all have parents, and someday we may all be elderly ourselves, some sooner than later. It indicates there is a concern and a consensus within this House to deal with issues facing the elderly not only in a consultative fashion but in a way with an element of dignity that allows for their input, which leads me to respond to some of the comments that came from the hon. Member for Edmonton-Beverly-Belmont.

I'd first like to say something briefly on the roundtable that is going to be taking place Saturday and Sunday. The Seniors Advisory Council has a unique role at that roundtable in that we are observers in the sense that being a council that reports directly to the minister – and dealing with the perception that because of the fiscal restraints we're now involved in, there are many items that are already a done deal – we have opted for a role in conjunction with Mrs. Bowker that we would be there with resource information from the advisory council with respect to programs, with respect to input, use of the hot line, the kinds of issues that seniors may need clarification on. It has been my experience that seniors have an overwhelming amount of information to absorb when it comes to programs and services, which cross over a number of ministries, and the work of the Seniors Advisory Council has been to try to assist in clarifying that process.

I also think it's important to give the perspective that a number of seniors, while they are concerned about rental rebates and whether or not they have certain programs continued or reviewed, are not comfortable with the fact that only seniors' agencies and groups that support them be their spokesperson, that they have an opportunity to speak for themselves because individual seniors, who sometimes don't even regard themselves as seniors because of the life-style they have, want to have an opportunity to say what's important to them and not always be at the other end of public opinion.

So I'm very confident that because of the makeup of the roundtable, in terms of having the independent, freethinking, notified-to-an-organization senior representation, we're going to get a very balanced picture of what their concerns are. At the end of the day, under fiscal restraint, which they all recognize, they will determine their priorities, and it will not be done by the Seniors Advisory Council and I daresay not by the ministry.

The other issue that the hon. Member for Edmonton-Beverly-Belmont made which I feel has to be clarified – I believe it's a misconception; I hear it at the door – and I believe is important

for us as representatives of government to address is that there are a number of seniors who feel that because they have paid their taxes and lived in this province and supported governments, they are now at a time when they are able to take. In fact, in talking to a number of seniors, one of the reasons they are able to contribute in their volunteer capacities, in their education, et cetera, is because they have a great deal of personal well-being. That well-being comes from the fact that their children have had access to public education that is second to none in this country. Their children have access to affordable housing, to job opportunities, to a unique economic climate in the province of Alberta. In fact, when they look at it, their grandchildren are now at that opportunity of wanting to be able to access the quality of life that their children and they themselves have had a chance to participate in.

When it is discussed in that context, a number of seniors will tell you that they are not, at this point, wanting to take. It is not time for them to get their dues. They have paid in, and they have been using the system. They have had the just rewards of having a number of their own personal family, societal, and educational opportunities available to them. I urge you, as you talk with the seniors in your community, to address that issue in that light, because a great number of them feel that similarly. I believe we do a disservice to them simply saying that at age 65 you sit back and do nothing. We would not encourage our young people to take that attitude on completion of their education, when they finish taking from the system and getting their advanced education or career development. Seniors don't expect that of themselves, and I believe we demean them by limiting their options at this point to staying and taking from the system.

Having said that, I'd like to speak a few moments on the role of the advisory council. There are a number of concerns because we have been doing some restructuring. At this point I would like to first of all compliment the department, which has been downsized from a ministry. It has been restructured within the Women's and Seniors' Secretariat. They have had their facilities moved and some of their space allocations revisited. I think it's very important, as we go and talk about the restructuring of government that we endorse because of the fiscal restraints, that we give considerable accolades to the departments that have worked very, very hard to meet those directions within very short time lines. I am personally very, very complimentary of the staff that I have been introduced to and the total commitment they have expressed to me on behalf of the advisory council, with the minister's assistance, to make sure that this group of community members has and is a voice in this province.

Having said that, I think it's important to clarify that downsizing from a ministry and restructuring into the Women's and Seniors' Secretariat has been done for a number of reasons. I'd like to just focus, if you will. When the Seniors Advisory Council tabled their annual report for '92-93, there were a number of recommendations. These recommendations crossed the jurisdictions of housing, health, education, municipal affairs, and social assistance. I believe if you ask seniors, "What is confusing in your life?" one of the problems is: how do I access programs at a single entry point? Why do I have to go to one office for this and one office for that? I've noticed in the department that there's a tremendous interest in assisting seniors program development to have some consistency. The advisory council was very pleased to meet with the Health minister in the previous term and, as recently as August, to have an opportunity to meet with the Minister of Municipal Affairs and also the Minister of Community Development and discuss some of the concerns they had regarding this restructuring.

One of the things that became very evident was that if we were to take across-the-board cuts in budget because of fiscal restraint, we could see changes to housing programs, social programs, health programs, and education programs. If we use the example of a 20 percent cut in each one of these departments, we would see some seniors being hit four times. It's a totally inappropriate approach.

By this restructuring we have a great deal of sensitivity, that if it's appropriate to work in one area, we will hold back in another. It will be the seniors who tell us where their priorities are. Probably for the first time but not for the last time, there's a strong sense that government departments are working together to assist not only their own administrative opportunities but the actual needs of the seniors themselves. I am very supportive of that change, and I have spoken to my committee members and asked them to make certain that that is understood amongst their colleagues in the community.

In addition to that, there are a number of initiatives the advisory council is undertaking. I believe it's important in light of the current federal election to consider the fact that some of the health issues that we face and some of the issues that affect seniors have some connection to the national decisions with regard to health. In that responsibility Alberta has demonstrated tremendous initiative and lead in dealing with seniors' issues at a national level. Last year the gerontology convention for Canada was held here in Edmonton, with a great deal of support from the department and the Seniors Advisory Council. In addition to that, out of the Seniors Advisory Council budget we will be attending the gerontology convention in Montreal at the end of October, assisting in developing the Alberta perspective on health issues and gerontology concerns so that we can continue to be the leaders in caring for our seniors.

4:50

One of the items that we will be looking at will be the specific concerns of native Canadians, and in that capacity our council has been involved with a survey regarding the needs of our native Canadians. In conjunction with the hon. minister for social services and Ms Calahasen, we've had an opportunity to work within the native community, determine what their needs are from the perspective of the aboriginal people. It would appear that with their social surroundings collapsing because of some of the problems that are inherent and that the minister of social services has alluded to on a number of days in question period, we have the opportunity to show tremendous leadership in programs and planning for our native Canadian seniors. I applaud the advisory council for maintaining this initiative in this time of restructuring.

In addition to that, there is a tremendous amount of concern for elder abuse. It's been pointed out to me that if a child is left in a day care centre – we know these by the examples that come before us in the media – and that child has any element of abuse, there are a number of advocates who deal with that issue on an immediate basis, whereas our seniors, who are often alone and sometimes in a state of ill health, are subject to tremendous abuse, none of which is appropriately reported, causing a great deal of stress for both the elderly and of course their support group, be it the institution or their families. So I'm very pleased to see that the elder abuse issue maintains a high profile for the advisory council. In fact, we will have representation from the Alzheimer Society at the roundtable in Red Deer to give us some specific perspective on this issue.

In conclusion, I would like to suggest to you all that you access the advisory council when you have questions about programs. We have a hot line number that was deemed to be an appropriate way of delivering information to the seniors on programs, but it

also has the opportunity to give us on a day-to-day basis the issues that affect seniors in a significant way. So we believe it is very current, and it allows us to form documentation when we make our annual report. There's also a proliferation of seniors' groups. They come from residential; they come from recreational. They have a whole variety of reasons to be in place, and they serve their community very well. We are hoping that by enhancing the profile of the advisory council in each community – and it's a mandate that I take very seriously – we will assist these groups in having the right information so that they can work with us in their individual communities. It's this kind of co-operation that I think will be a significant turn in giving that information to the seniors.

So, in conclusion, I thank the Premier and the minister for this responsibility. I welcome sincerely the questions and concerns that may come from my colleagues as they deal with seniors' issues, and I would be more than happy to deal with them through the council.

Thank you for your time, and thank you, Mr. Minister.

MR. ACTING DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The hon. Minister for Community Development.

MR. MAR: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think I only have one question left to deal with that the hon. member from Brooks asked, and that was with respect to Blue Lake Centre. Blue Lake Centre has provided outstanding leadership and recreational training programs for many, many years. At this time the decision has been made to look at options through which a partnership can be struck with another body to continue to provide the good services and good programs that Blue Lake Centre offers.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. ACTING DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Centre.

MR. HENRY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have a few brief questions and observations that I'd like to raise. Given that the minister has just responded to a question about Blue Lake, I'd like to perhaps share some of my experiences at the Blue Lake Centre. Specifically, the point I'd like to make to the minister is that I recognize that the plan has been to either privatize or enter into some sort of joint arrangement to change the operation of Blue Lake. As a former recreation board member in rural Alberta – in Lacombe, actually, and also quite involved in the Yellowhead area – I can tell you that a lot of communities depend on Blue Lake Centre. One of the things that makes it accessible, especially to rural Alberta, when sending young individuals and all members of the community is the affordability of Blue Lake Centre. I would hope that the minister, in the plans to change the management of Blue Lake Centre, keeps in the back of his head to make sure that those very high quality programs I've experienced – and I've had the pleasure, in chairing a recreation board, to send members of our community too – are still accessible to local recreation boards. I know that we're in difficult financial times, but I'd like to point that out to the minister.

This has been raised, but I'd like to bring it to your attention again: the CRC grants. I recognize that the dollars for CRC grants have gone down. In contrast, from the lottery fund we've seen an increase in dollars over the years to the community facility enhancement program. The community facility enhancement program has provided some excellent, excellent opportunities for Albertans. I'm quite proud of some of the things it has done

in my constituency as well as some other places in Alberta that I've had the pleasure to live in.

My concern, however, is with the decision-making process and that very subtle shift in how we fund recreation, sport, cultural facilities and programs throughout the province. It's always been my experience that the closer one is to the action, if I can call it that, the better the decisions are that one makes. I certainly found that when I was a recreation board member, when I was a member of several other advisory boards to municipal councils over the years. If a decision needs to be made about where to fund a facility or a program, specifically in recreation or a community facility in Edmonton-Centre, it makes much more sense for the people who work on a day-to-day basis in Edmonton-Centre to make that decision rather than that decision being made by one person from Edmonton-Centre and 82 other well-meaning and intelligent people who have capacities and capabilities but don't live in Edmonton-Centre. It's much more appropriate, I believe, for our government to pass those dollars, with some guidelines and with some parameters, to local governments such as municipal councils and allow them to make those decisions. I would hope that at some future date we can return to that state.

I recognize that we're not debating lottery dollars here, but there are a couple of mentions in the budget with regard to sport and recreation bodies. I applaud the minister and the government for having made the move to amalgamate the Alberta Sport Council and the Alberta Recreation, Parks and Wildlife Foundation. One of the difficulties we have, and perhaps I'll just raise this now and we can deal with it when we get into the lottery dollars debate, is that it is difficult to offer constructive suggestions, it's difficult to provide any sort of analysis, unless we have a more detailed breakdown. The last breakdown of any sort for those two agencies, which are now amalgamated, is from the 1991-92 year. I have some questions about how they operate, and I'm basing my questions on '91-92 data. I would hope that we would be able to get more up-to-date detailed budgets or perhaps more up-to-date financial statements, even for the last fiscal year, to see if my questions are still relevant or not, because I certainly don't want to waste the members' time in doing that. With regard to the parks and recreation foundation and the Alberta Sport Council, it seems to me that the organizations have strayed somewhat, and I would hope this could be corrected when we actually look at the amalgamation.

5:00

The Alberta Sport Council was created back in the mid-1980s, and I think it was a mistake to create it in the way that it was created. We had Sport Alberta. I see a trend throughout the government decisions, and I find it disturbing. This is one illustration of moving from representative bodies that advise the government to appointed bodies that advise the government. We had Sport Alberta, Mr. Chairman, that did make decisions and did advise the government. Sport Alberta was made up of representatives of the sport governing bodies around our province. It was a fine organization that provided some very good leadership and very good advice to the government over time. That was eventually amalgamated with the Alberta Sport Council, which has been operated by a body that is appointed by order in council. That's now been amalgamated, and we still have government appointees.

I'm not going to suggest that those appointees are not necessarily making good decisions, and I'm not going to suggest that they are not good people. In fact, I have one from my riding who has been involved with the Alberta Sport Council who doesn't share the same political affiliation that I do - and that acknowledgement may be a coincidence - who I think makes very sound decisions

and provides very sound advice. However, if you're going to want the purist and if you want to guard against any sort of perception that governments simply want to hear from people of their own and don't want to hear from the public, then what you do is get rid of the representative bodies and create appointed bodies.

This has happened in multiculturalism. I give the former minister of multiculturalism, Horst Schmid, flying colours. In a very difficult situation and a very difficult time he developed a consensus among ethnocultural groups in our province to create a council that was representative of ethnocultural groups throughout our province. That is no longer existing. Instead we have a number of appointed individuals, not individuals representative of their own communities but appointed by order in council, and I think that's a danger. Again, the decisions that are being made by those councils are not as important as the process, and I think the perception certainly that I hear is that if you want to be appointed to a government board, you'd better have the right card.

Now, I know that's not always the case. Certainly the recent appointment of Marjorie Bowker is an excellent example of a good community person who's been appointed regardless of her political ties. I think we all need to work very, very hard to ensure that we have the appearance of less political bias.

I will try to send the minister perhaps a list of detailed questions that I would like to have answered when we get into lottery debates, and I'll close my remarks on that point.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. ACTING DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member for Calgary-Bow.

MRS. LAING: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd also like to congratulate the Member for Calgary-Nose Creek for his appointment as Minister of Community Development. This is a very diverse and interesting and even challenging portfolio with so many different strands to it, and I know you'll do an excellent job. Community development is very much about the quality of life and therefore touches the life of every Albertan, and I know that your staff and yourself will work very hard to continue the quality of life that we enjoy.

Mr. Chairman, I had the privilege of serving as the MLA member on the Glenbow Museum board of directors for four years. I was very impressed with the support that was always given to me by the staff that work for Community Development these days, including Dr. Bill Byrne who was very supportive and very helpful in keeping me apprised of things that were happening and helped me also to represent the board. I have the sincerest admiration for these fine volunteers, and they are volunteers. They receive no remuneration for the work they do, and they work very diligently to retain the international status that this world-class institution has achieved.

In recent years the board, the staff, and volunteers have collaborated to produce an excellent and widely recognized strategic plan which will prepare this institution to meet the challenges of today's fiscal responsibilities, realities, and maintain its high standard. The board and the staff have faced the challenge of downsizing and restructuring to address the fiscal realities of today. They have certainly met this challenge with resolve and courage, and I would like to congratulate the board of directors and staff for their fine achievement in these challenging times.

Mr. Minister, you mentioned in your opening remarks that the Glenbow Museum will now receive funding through the lottery funds. You indicate on page 15 of the elements that there are no funds for them, so the entire amount will be coming from lotteries, I assume. I'd like to ask a couple of questions about this change

in funding. Will the funding that's generated be sufficient funds to keep the programs going? Will they have a regular allotment of funding from lotteries? Will the Glenbow Museum be able to receive notice of funding for a longer period of time; for instance, over three years? Will they have an indication of their funding so that they can indulge in more long-term planning?

One concern that was expressed to me was with the lottery funding. Previously the annual funds were allotted in one lump sum, and this could be banked, and then it generated revenue from the interest. Will the method of payment from lotteries continue to be in a lump sum, or will it be in monthly or periodic disbursements? Would they then suffer some shortfall because of this lack of interest on the funding they receive?

I'd like to again congratulate you very much on the work that you've done. Thank you very much. I'd be quite keen to hear the answers.

Thank you.

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

MR. ZWOZDESKY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to just comment briefly on something that the hon. Minister of Community Development indicated a little earlier. Apparently some of my remarks made him feel quite comfortable and reminded him of sitting in a Tory caucus meeting. I assume he's referring to my remarks of congratulations which I was extending to some of the members on the other side of the House, and I want to just thank him for providing us with a little insight of what it is they do in their caucus meetings. I hope they do more than just congratulate each other, but the congratulations were sincere nonetheless.

I want to just address some budget questions now if I could. Specifically I would hope within the very short future the minister could explain the drastic cut of approximately a 50 percent reduction in the area of Community Services and explain in a little more detail what kind of downsizing those cuts are going to result in. I'm very concerned that under vote 2, Community Services – that is our link to the community – we not overpenalize our outreach programs to Albertans such that some areas might receive some benefits of those services, Mr. Chairman, while others perhaps have to stand in a longer line to achieve even the most basic ones.

In so doing, I wonder also if the minister would perhaps just for interest's sake provide us with some indication of the source of funds that are buoying this particular department, in percentage terms, where we would see a comparison between how much of this department is supported by tax-based dollars versus lottery dollars. Again my concern is that we not place too much dependency on lottery funds given the unpredictability of them in the longer range.

[Mr. Clegg in the Chair]

With regard to program 1, which appears on page 15, the summary by elements, my first question there would be with regards to 1.0.2, Deputy Minister's Office. I see that there is a very, very large cut being made to Deputy Minister's Office, and I'm sure it's probably quite justified. It begs the question of what was being done with the larger amount of money in the previous administration. What does this loss mean in terms of the new administration? It's a loss of some \$488,000, Mr. Chairman, and I think that half a million bucks is fairly significant and bears some explanation, particularly when it's at the discretion of one deputy minister, who I'm sure intends to do a good job this year

as with last year. With lesser funds I just wonder what's going to suffer in the process.

5:10

I note quite interestingly that right above that the minister himself has graciously conceded to a cut of only \$3,500, and perhaps there might be some explanation given there. It doesn't seem that the cut in the minister's own department is commensurate with the broader cuts, which for the entire portfolio turn out to be approximately 30 percent.

As I look at 1.0.3, which is the Finance and Administration area, it's interesting that here we see an actual increase of some \$15,000. I'm just wondering how it is that we need an increase in the administration and financial side of even \$15,000 when there have been such dramatic and even drastic cuts everywhere else. The question really arises from a comparison that I think we can relate back to: the estimates debated in 1990 and perhaps some estimates that have been debated since. It seems to me that when we look at those numbers, Mr. Chairman, we are likely going to point out the fact that in 1990 we had under this vote something approximating \$800,000, and now I would like to just see why it is that we have an increase rising up to \$2,640,000, which is a rise of something like 400 percent in three years. I respect the fact that there are new areas that have been brought under this portfolio that may not have existed then. Nonetheless, I do think that a 400 percent increase would bear at least some form of explanation.

I'm looking now at 1.0.4, which is the Communications aspect of support services. I note here again a rather paradoxical increase from what I've been given to see at least, and that is that there is an increase of some \$40,000 estimated for this particular area but Communications spent approximately \$150,000 more than in the estimates from last year. It's again curious to me that we are cutting back so much in some areas of this portfolio, Mr. Chairman, yet there seems to be a need to communicate something by adding \$40,000 more to do it. I'd just like a small clarification of that if I could.

The final point there, Mr. Chairman, would be with regard to Former Minister's Office. I'm not sure what that is, and I'm sure it's probably a fairly direct answer, but perhaps the current minister could just clarify for us at some point what that is.

The summary for me for vote 1 in general is this. The question would be: with fewer programs and services to administer, why the increase in Communications and why the increase in Finance and Administration, which total somewhere around \$55,000?

In vote 2 where we are looking at Community Services, this is where the single largest cut appears to come. It scares me a little bit on the opening line, Mr. Minister, that we see a cut in Program Support of \$180,000 in that line alone, and by the time we get down to the total bottom line for Community Services, we see in fact a cut of \$20 million. I think that that is a highly significant amount of money that definitely should be supported with some more detailed explanations. I think we need to see why services are being reduced to this extent. Why are capital investments up by \$11,000? What kinds of things are being bought for those moneys, and what kinds of services are being lost as a result of those decreases? What kind of downsizing is this really going to result in? It doesn't immediately strike me as being all that coherent from the information given, but I'm sure there will be some explanations forthcoming.

As I look at 2.1.1, again I see that we're going from something like \$559,000 to \$381,000, and that 180,000 bucks is for the support of some services. I'm not sure what forms of support are now left, and I know that a lot of Albertans would be interested to find that out as well.

In 2.1.2, where we see the Administration of Western Economic Partnership Agreements, I believe, if memory serves, Mr. Chairman, that one of our cultural industries and perhaps more are affected by this western economic partnership agreement. I refer in particular to the Alberta recording industry, a group of volunteers with, I think, one, perhaps one and one-half staff people, who do a very nice and admirable job in this province to support that aspect. I'm a bit concerned that there is a \$12,000 cut there when this is actually, I think, a jointly sponsored program between the government of Canada and the province of Alberta. I'm just wondering: has there been a cut, Mr. Minister, from the government of Canada which precipitated some form of a reciprocal cut here provincially or not?

Then as I move to the next area where I'm looking at the Arts Services column, 2.1.3, I'm again queried by the cut of approximately half a million dollars. It seems to me that the Foundation for the Arts moneys are coming rather entirely from the lotteries portfolio, and every artist in Alberta, I'm sure, is grateful for that. However, it concerns me a little bit that our services are being cut, and perhaps some explanation of which particular services are affected to the tune of half a million dollars might be in order.

Then I see in the Regional Offices allocation, under 2.1.4, an actual increase in capital investment, and I'm curious how it is that we can justify an increase of \$11,000 to Regional Offices. Are we creating more offices out in the regional areas, Mr. Minister, or are we buying stuff, are we upgrading computers, or what is it that we're doing out there with that \$11,000? I'm wondering whether or not perhaps some of those capital investments are truly necessary, but I'll await the appropriate response.

Under 2.1.5, Recreation and Support Services, here again I see another large cut of about \$1 million, and again the same likeness to the expenditure comparisons that I made for lottery dollars earlier with regard to the Foundation for the Arts are perhaps applicable here. I'd be very curious to see what kind of recreational support services are being cut to the tune of \$1 million. I'm very concerned that those losses be explained, and I would also ask the minister whether or not those particular cuts arise out of some consultative process that perhaps took place. I think a million dollars suddenly being withdrawn is quite dramatic.

Now to this issue of these libraries. I'm not sure, Mr. Chairman, if I was completely and clearly understood during question period yesterday when I asked the minister how it was that they intended to secure operating funds for the Chinook Arch library system. I was asking particularly for some fresh moneys to be brought in. I wasn't suggesting that we go upping things, but I was suggesting that what we do is look again perhaps at the lottery area, if that's what it takes, Mr. Minister. It doesn't seem fair that we would, on the one hand, spend \$250,000 to create or renovate a facility to house the Chinook Arch library system and then not have thought of how to actually provide operating funds for it, other than to perhaps penalize the rest of the libraries by making them share an equal load in bringing it in.

These libraries have consistently and constantly been attacked in their budgets over the years, and I think that is a travesty, Mr. Chairman, to have that happen with regard to libraries. They provide a very valuable resource, as we all know, in the rural areas in particular, and I fear again the advent of more user fees or increased membership fees or whatever it is. I think there might be some different if not more creative ways of handling that particular situation.

5:20

I would be curious to see how the minister is going to introduce the new grant structure that he referred to and what those quasi

roundtables are going to yield somewhere at the end of this month with regard to this question.

The other thing under library cuts that I think bears mentioning here, Mr. Chairman, is the parceling off of the specialized talking book collections, which is much to the disadvantage of rural Albertans. I would hope that kind of selling or parceling off could be reviewed by the minister and less of it felt. There is a great concern in the regional areas, in this case by the handicapped or the blind, about not having more than four or five books available to them. I think that is a gross injustice to those people. So I would ask the minister to please undertake a review of that particular point.

Financial Assistance. In this vote clearly the most major change is the change being made with the withdrawal of the community recreational/cultural grants, the CRC, and the provincial association grants. I think it's a method of granting that we on this side of the House supported all the way along.

Point of Order Speaking Time

MR. DOERKSEN: Mr. Chairman, point of order.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Excuse me, hon. member. A point of order.

MR. DOERKSEN: Under Standing Order 29 – and these are new rules, so help me out here – it says that a member should not speak longer, or something like that, than 20 minutes. Does that not refer to accumulated time? This is the second time this member has spoken, and it's got to be more than 20 minutes.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Under the rules of Committee of Supply the member can speak as many times as he wants as long as it's no longer than 20 minutes at a time.

MR. DOERKSEN: Thank you very much.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Hon. member.

MR. ZWOZDESKY: Thank you. It's a learning process for all of us. I was happy to have learned that point earlier.

Debate Continued

MR. ZWOZDESKY: Mr. Chairman, under Financial Assistance we're talking about CRC. I know that the squeeze is on and that budgets have to be balanced and that deficits have to be retired and so on, but I'm wondering if there will in fact be any form of replacement from any kind of dollar pool that would help the recreational and cultural communities by some form of restitution of some other type of program. I know we've had CFEP and CTAP and a few others, but it still seems to me that this is one granting program that worked and worked very well. It had the full support of members on all sides of the House. Congratulations would be in order to the people who ushered it in certainly, but I'm not sure that the same congratulations are in order as we see it ushered out. Again, it's a bit of an erosion, and in this case a very large one, to our larger portfolio of Community Development, and I wonder what we might look forward to, if anything at all, after October 1.

Under 2.2.7, our Provincial Recreation/Sports Grants, I see here a cut of approximately \$300,000, and that seems to be down by about three-quarters of its previous year's budget. Once again I would wonder which particular grants the hon. minister has in mind are going to be cut. I would hope that as he looks into that,

we would in particular not penalize those grants that are aimed at our healthy and very active youth, because it seems to me that those people do remain as our most precious resource, and I would hate to see them penalized unnecessarily. So a brief explanation would be very much appreciated.

I note that just above that, Mr. Chairman, we had a point that I wanted to raise, and that is that the CRC void along with the Provincial Association Grant void totals a loss of about \$17 million.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Hon. member, I hate to interrupt you, but due to the time, we have to rise before 5:30 and report.

MR. ZWOZDESKY: I move that we rise and report.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Yes, we have to so we can be out of here at 5:30. Did you move that we rise and report?

MR. ZWOZDESKY: Yes.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

[Motion carried]

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

MR. SPEAKER: Order please.

The hon. Member for Dunvegan.

MR. CLEGG: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Committee of Supply has had under consideration certain resolutions of the Department of Community Development, reports progress thereon, and requests leave to sit again.

MR. SPEAKER: Does the Assembly concur in this report?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed? So ordered.

[At 5:30 p.m. the Assembly adjourned to Monday at 1:30 p.m.]

