

Legislative Assembly of Alberta

Title: **Wednesday, March 6, 1996**

Subcommittee B

Date: 96/03/06

8:00 p.m.

[Chairman: Mr. Tannas]

Committee of Supply: Subcommittee B Community Development

THE CHAIRMAN: I call subcommittee B of the Committee of Supply together. I don't know that I need to go over the rules again because we've already had them when we met here not so long ago.

Tonight we have under consideration the estimates of the Department of Community Development, and we begin this evening by asking the minister to lead off, followed by Edmonton-Avonmore.

The Minister of Community Development.

MR. MAR: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My opening comments are going to be brief. Perhaps what I'll do at the outset is table copies of the business plan with supplementary information dated 1996-97 through '98-99. I will make some brief comments, entertain questions, answer them to the best of my ability at this time, and undertake to review *Hansard* and provide answers for those questions that I do not deal with tonight.

I'm pleased to be here to review the Alberta Community Development 1996 through 1999 business plan, and the '96 through '97 estimates. This is my ministry's third business plan. The strategies and actions continue the new direction that we set out at the beginning of 1994. That direction was to realize a vision that would see Alberta as a strong province with a high quality of life and fair opportunity for all Albertans, and we would do that by supporting community goals and aspirations.

My three-year business plan identifies and supports four core businesses that help us achieve this vision. First of all, building community partnerships to enhance Alberta's quality of life. Through partnerships we can work with Alberta's communities to help them achieve their goals and aspirations. Two, ensuring that lower income seniors receive the income support for which they are eligible, which is essential for seniors to live in security and dignity. Three, promoting fairness and equity for all Albertans. This translates into fair opportunity for each and every Albertan, and those individual achievements taken together build the Alberta advantage. Finally, four, promoting our unique heritage and natural history at home and abroad. Building pride in our roots give us strength to face the future, and the economic impact of visitors to our historic sites should not be underestimated.

Now, I want to look more closely at each of these core businesses and talk about just what it is that we propose to do. First of all, on the subject of community development, this is our first core business, promoting community development, and our strategy is to promote the independence and stability of the culture and recreation sectors. Where feasible we will devolve program and service delivery to representative associations which will take a greater responsibility for the decisions affecting their communities. We will work in partnership with these associations and communities to establish consistent and fair criteria for program and service delivery. That includes arrangements with Alberta's library community.

In keeping with focusing government priorities on essentials, we will wind down the municipal recreation/tourism areas granting program because it is no longer consistent with our core businesses. As we reduce the programs we deliver, we will further reduce our staff complement. We will also continue our direct role in film classification. Colleagues may recall that in our 1994-97 business plan, we anticipated a national or western regional film classification system, so we deleted the budget for this activity. But the regional or national system takes agreement

and that agreement could not be reached among the parties. So we have reinstated the budget for this essential service. Classifying films gives Albertans the information they need to make intelligent entertainment decisions for themselves and for their children.

Now, with respect to seniors and looking at the core business of income support for Alberta seniors, the strategies in our business plan help ensure that seniors can live in security and dignity. By expanding the services offered in seven of our regional offices, we will make it easier for seniors to get information and to apply for the Alberta seniors' benefit. Seniors have told us that they would rather deal with people face-to-face than through a phone line or through the mail, and I'm pleased to be able to provide that kind of service.

We are committed to developing a strategy for combating elder abuse. My ministry will consult and work directly with service providers and agencies in communities throughout the province. Together we will educate Albertans about this problem and develop protocols for intervention to protect Alberta seniors who need that kind of help. Seniors have also told me that residential care is a priority. We will co-operate with other departments and stakeholders to develop policies, guidelines, standards, and legislation for residential care.

On the subject of human rights, looking at the core business of protecting human rights and promoting fairness and access, our strategies are intended to improve our response to discrimination and social equity. Consolidating Alberta's equity agencies to create the new Alberta human rights and citizenship commission lets us focus our resources on protection and on education. Redirecting the multiculturalism fund to the important work of rights and citizenship education will help the new commission achieve its objectives. Again, because of the consolidation of agencies and functions, fewer staff will be needed to do the job.

On the subject of heritage and history, we've also created strategies to support our core businesses of preserving, protecting, and presenting Alberta's unique cultural and natural history. These strategies will strengthen our ability to operate provincially owned museums. By privatization of admission fee collection and visitor services, we will broaden our partnership with those communities that are home to our major historic facilities. That will help us focus our efforts on research, curatorial preservation, interpretation, and presentation activities, which are the core functions of these facilities. We have recognized that the Glenbow-Alberta Institute is capable of managing its own affairs without direct government involvement. We will, however, maintain a funding relationship with the Glenbow via a contractual agreement.

On the subject of performance measures, our performance measures present a clear picture of the results my ministry wants to achieve in each of our core businesses. As the Ministry of Community Development our performance measures are designed to assess the impact we have on the quality of life in Alberta's communities. Like all government departments, measuring the effects of our work instead of the work itself is still new territory for us. Accordingly, in some areas we are still collecting data or developing realistic and achievable targets. These measures will assure Albertans that we are achieving the results that we set out to achieve and that their government is being accountable. The regulatory review work plan reflects our continuing efforts to streamline government, eliminate unnecessary or outdated regulations, and update regulations consistent with recent or planned legislative changes.

In conclusion, the changes in my estimates are the result of my business plan strategies. They reflect the changes to programs

that I've just mentioned, and they show the effect of our programs as the number of seniors in Alberta increases. I would be pleased to answer questions at this time. I would ask that members refer to page numbers within the business plan or the budget papers for easier reference of my answering those questions.

Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: Okay. Committee members, are you more comfortable if the minister, whenever he's got a few people and has some answers, answers at the next opportunity rather than question and answer, question and answer? Is that agreeable? Okay.

Edmonton-Avonmore.

MR. ZWOZDESKY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just because this is my first time through this process, I wonder if I could just come to a quick understanding of some basics, the ground rules if you will. I'm of the understanding that the minister leads off, then the first critic leads off, and then after that it's back and forth. Or is it just as recognized by the chair?

THE CHAIRMAN: Well, tonight we happen to be sitting – well, not entirely. There will be a sort of back and forth, but if there isn't anybody on the other list, then I'll go down the list. For people who have their hands up, I'll just tick you off like any kind of committee.

MR. ZWOZDESKY: Thank you. Are we being restricted to 20 minutes at a time? Is that the rule? Is there a clock?

THE CHAIRMAN: Yes. There's a clock up here that will go after 20 minutes, if you choose to take 20 minutes.

MR. ZWOZDESKY: I'm sorry; I can't hear.

THE CHAIRMAN: If you choose to take 20 minutes or whatever period of time, you know, the clock will time you, and at the end of 20 we'll cut you off.

MR. ZWOZDESKY: All right. Thank you. I just wanted to understand.

MRS. HEWES: Mr. Chairman, just to clarify. If we finish all the questions, Edmonton-Avonmore can have another chance; right?

THE CHAIRMAN: Certainly.

8:10

MR. ZWOZDESKY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, all members, for coming together tonight to discuss a very important department and its future.

I want to make a couple of opening comments in a general sense, if I could, Mr. Chairman, with regard to the entire issue of the fundamentals that underlie the Alberta Community Development department. I think that more so than in any other area of government, this one underscores those issues which we really understand as being tremendous contributors to the quality of life. Notwithstanding Health and Education and environment, I think when we look at the Department of Community Development, we look at it through the eyes of: what kind of quality of life does this department and its programs, its services provide for the benefit of all Albertans?

In a general sense, I want to express some concerns about what I have said before with regard to the current ideology that I see

permeating at least some government members and perhaps those who may not be as supportive of the endeavours of Community Development as they might like to be. I note, for example, that there are certain movements, if I can call them that, that I have observed over the last couple of years which I think clearly point toward the wishes by some members of the government to perhaps even do away with this department or at least certain aspects that are contained within the department, and if not to do away with them, Mr. Chairman, then perhaps to significantly reduce them either in size and/or in terms of moneys that flow to them, and that causes me some alarm.

On the ideological side, I just want to express again a few fundamental concerns – and we'll get into some details perhaps later – with regard to some of the larger movements that impact, for example, the Alberta Foundation for the Arts, which comes up under this department. I have said many a time and given many speeches and other presentations in an attempt to try and protect and preserve at least one arm's-length organization that would speak up for the arts and that would represent the arts and cultural sector not only in a token way, Mr. Chairman, but in a very direct way. I'd like to see it on the government's letterhead somewhere. I fear that if we allow the amalgamation of the Alberta Foundation for the Arts with the Alberta Historical Resources Foundation and others into one super lotto foundation, we will lose that all-important voice of advocacy. I think we will also, therefore, lose what would otherwise be a very positive signal sent to that community by the government. It's almost like the arts and cultural sectors aren't being given their proper due, Mr. Minister, by allowing that amalgamation to go through.

It comes as no surprise to members here, I'm sure, that the arts and culture sector contributes an enormous amount to our Alberta economy, so we benefit financially. The arts sector contributes significantly in an educational sense, and certainly in a cultural sense they contribute an unquestionable amount of overall common good. As I read through some of these plans, I see the forced amalgamation of that section within a larger whale which is swallowing it up.

Similarly I see other attacks, if I could refer to them that way, on things like removing the musical services here at the Legislature with the cancellation of the carillon program. I'm beginning to receive some letters and phone calls that say please don't take that away too. But underlying that is much more than just a savings of \$9,000 to the government. There's a basic ideology that says: we don't need it; it's in the arts and culture sector. I think that's wrong, Mr. Chairman. So I would ask one question in regard to the carillon. Has the minister or his department explored the possibility of having the carillon recitals continue, albeit with the participation of perhaps the private sector? If we're that strapped for cash, can we find some other way of keeping the carillon recitals happening with a live musician playing? If not, why not? Perhaps they could undertake that.

Getting back to the Alberta Foundation for the Arts, there's a question I neglected to ask earlier. I wonder if the minister is prepared to tell us in no uncertain terms exactly what the specific intentions are for handling that foundation. In the future what can we expect? It seems to me, Mr. Minister, that in the business plans or in some of the government information that I have received, there is a reference – perhaps it's in the lotteries report – that says that the Alberta Foundation for the Arts will be amalgamated with the other foundations somewhere during the 1997-98 term. I wonder if the minister would be prepared to alleviate the concerns of myself and numerous others by telling us very point blank: yes, we will allow the Alberta Foundation for the Arts to remain more or less as it is for at least this current

year. Perhaps that would give the organizations a little more of an opportunity to provide the information to their elected representatives that might see either that foundation kept alive as it is or perhaps some constructive suggestions on how else it might be handled.

The other point of ideology doesn't go directly to the Community Development department, but it touches on it through the Alberta Motion Picture Development Corporation because of the organization called AMPIA, which is supported by this Community Development department. We have concerns coming forward in large numbers, Mr. Chairman, regarding the future of the movie, television, and film industry. That, too, is something that I would expect the Minister of Community Development to try and stand up for with his caucus, to try and point out some of the benefits that that particular community brings to the quality of life in Alberta as well as the tremendous economic impact of over \$100 million in terms of our GDP, not to mention several thousand jobs that go with it.

I know that you've been hearing something from a lot of the local mayors. There has been a lot of mail come to us from outlying communities where some of these films have been shot. Those small communities rely a great deal on this type of activity to rejuvenate and/or attract business to their area, attract tourists or whatever. So I would ask that the minister please do something to help the many, many wonderful people involved in the arts and cultural sector, specifically in this instance those involved with the motion picture industry, to put forward a case, to try and work something out with the economic development minister.

I don't know if you've talked about some form of perhaps an endowment fund, Mr. Minister, where you would see moneys – let's just say arbitrarily \$2 million or \$3 million, maybe \$4 million – being set aside by government and then matched by the private sector. It would be a fully repayable type of endowment. In other words, the government's money would never be at risk, yet the industry would be allowed to use the interest on an annual basis. That's really one of the things contained in a proposal that they're interested in seeing.

I advanced this for the first time to His Worship Bill Smith as well as all the council people of Edmonton at a breakfast meeting last Friday. They're planning to take some action on it, and I hope when it comes to members in government opposite, you will look at that very seriously, because once the film and television industry, as an example, packs up and moves to another province, it just doesn't come back. They find a comfortable home. For example, *Jake and the Kid* will be moving to Saskatchewan because there is that all-important seed money that's necessary in many arts and cultural endeavours, and from that they will build the infrastructure there, Mr. Minister, and will be inclined, I'm sure, to stay there.

It's not just that one or two producers or directors or playwrights seek perhaps new residences in another province; they take with them a large part of our own infrastructure, and whatever's left behind simply doesn't have those same opportunities, so it starts to crumble. If the government were on a track to try and destroy or create some form of devastation, at least, in the film and television industry – and I'm not suggesting they are, Mr. Chairman – then I would say that they're on the right track by canceling out AMPDC funding.

8:20

Anyway, let me move on here. I have a few other concerns with regard to, for example, the Glenbow institute Bill – Bill 4 was it? – that we brought in and spoke to a couple of weeks ago. As you know, Mr. Chairman, we supported that move because we

knew that the Glenbow institute people had been consulted. We knew, through the minister and through other sources, that they had worked out a situation that worked well for the Glenbow institute, and it also accommodated the government's desires as well. So there was a win/win that took place there.

That's the kind of win/win situation that I'm looking for in terms of the Alberta Foundation for the Arts or the AMPDC or the women's secretariat, whatever it is. I mean, I think there are ways of doing these things and working in co-operation with government. So anytime that I have an opportunity to try and advance the assistance to government, I always take that opportunity. I'm suggesting that they look a little more carefully into that now. I wonder if the minister would undertake to do that, in particular with the AFA as well. Will you undertake to find a way, if possible, of making that organization stay alive and afloat by consulting the stakeholder groups and really listening to them, in the same way that you did with the Glenbow institute group? Will you undertake to relook that issue?

Mr. Chairman, in the document *New Directions for Lotteries and Gaming* it's very clear that over 70 percent of the respondents to it told government that they want top priority funding from lottery moneys to go back into the arts and culture sector. Now, there was something like over 18,000 written submissions to the Member for Lacombe-Stettler's commission that traveled the province, and something like 2,000 – was it? – or 2,200 people who appeared live. So that's a significant number of individuals. Please listen to their recommendations. I'm looking forward to seeing them reflected somewhere within the government's business plan.

Incidentally, I'm grateful for the business plan that was just handed out as supplementary information. Mr. Minister, I don't know if there's anything really new in here or not. I glanced at it really quickly, and it looks like there's a lot of similar information, at least at the beginning, but if there is anything that is really new here, perhaps you could take a minute and just point out where that new information appears. It would save us all a little bit of time.

I want to go quickly, if I could, Mr. Chairman, to this notion under *New Strategies* on page 167 of Agenda '96, item 1, where you're talking about devolving the delivery of certain services. My concern here is with regard to the statement that says, "Community associations will make final granting decisions based on criteria established in partnership with the Ministry." I think this recommendation arises out of the lotteries report, at least in part.

My question is this: is this now a done deal? Is it a fait accompli, as they would say? It comes forward in the lotteries report as being just a recommendation, and now I see it in the Agenda '96 booklet stated a little more firmly, and I wonder: is that a done deal now? Is that how that's going to be? Are you in fact going to have local lottery boards set up making these decisions? If that's the case, my supplemental question would be: who is going to determine who the people are that sit on that board? The third question there would be: are they going to be appointed? Are they going to be somehow elected through their municipal process? Who is it that is going to play the role of judge or appointer in this case? How are those decisions going to be made? The Minister of Community Development knows from the panel on community standards, which he and I and the hon. Member for Calgary-Bow attended on Saturday in Calgary, that that was a major concern. From that of course stems the whole issue of community standards and who's going to be judging the judges. So it's a major concern that we have on this side of the House as well.

The other area that catches my attention is with regard to library grants. I know, Mr. Minister, that there was a report done I think somewhere around August 30 with regard to libraries, and there were a number of recommendations made in that report. Subsequent to that, I think the minister issued some type of a rebuttal, perhaps, in January of '96. In there he states that a number of recommendations are being accepted, a number are perhaps being looked at for further comment, and then there are five or six, as I recall, that are being rejected, but I can't find which ones are being rejected. Now, that might just be a housekeeping item, Mr. Minister, but if you could just inform me specifically which recommendations fall into which particular area, I would be very grateful for that and so, too, would the entire library community, unless they've already been communicated with and they know the answer, but my sense is that it hasn't been made public at least.

There are increased fears amongst some people – and maybe fears is a little bit too strong of a word here. But the point is that the funding that goes on for libraries is so critical. I don't know how much money from government flows out of what we call core revenues, or straightforward taxpayer dollars, and how much of it comes about as lottery dollars, but clearly the majority of it, as I understand it, does come from core moneys.

MR. MAR: All of it.

MR. ZWOZDESKY: All of it comes from core funding, and the occasional injection of lottery money goes toward improvements or new buildings or stuff like that. Is that right?

MR. MAR: Correct.

MR. ZWOZDESKY: Okay. Then that core funding moves down to the municipalities, or does it go directly to the libraries?

MR. MAR: To library boards.

MR. ZWOZDESKY: Okay. It goes to library boards. Now, the municipal levels of government in certain instances enhance that cash flow; do they not?

MR. MAR: Invariably.

MR. ZWOZDESKY: Invariably. Perfect word. A perfect word, but it doesn't clarify it for me, because I sense that there are some apprehensions that certain libraries across the province may have with regard to how that money flows and where it flows from. As my colleague for Spruce Grove-Sturgeon-St. Albert says: it's a question of secure, solid, stable, predictable funding. Insofar as core dollars are available, then I really would appreciate a commitment from the minister that current funding levels will continue. It may be in the report; I may not have caught it, but that's a critical issue. By the same token, I would appreciate the minister telling us that he will work a little harder, if possible, to secure more moneys out of the lottery fund for some of the additional items they need which core funding presently may not cover. There are other things on libraries we'll get to a little bit later as the session moves on.

I want to just move to the area that follows that, and that's the ministry staff that is devoted to program and delivery services. It says here that you're moving program and service delivery to the community and that that will reduce your need for staff. I think, if memory serves, we're losing about 42 full-time equivalents this year, and I think also in the first year or two we lost

over 100 positions. Is that correct, somewhere in that neighbourhood? I just wonder if the minister could tell us overall how much downsizing really has taken place.

The reason for that question, Mr. Chairman, is because, as I said earlier, there seems to be an ideological bent by certain members of the government to so significantly reduce the staff that pretty soon there won't be anybody left to deliver those services, unless there is imminent privatization of the entire area or large chunks. If that's the case, I'd like the minister to perhaps comment on that as well. How many staff now totally have we seen moved out of the area of Community Development, are there any contemplations to replace any of those, or is the private sector picking up a lot of those displacements?

I know that there is something within the strategies on page 167 that I really like, the development of the electronic Alberta library network. I think it's very good to move in this direction. I'm sure it has the full support of the library system. I only wonder how much money has been allocated toward accomplishing this, Mr. Minister, and when will we see it come into being. That may be covered somewhere, and I may have overlooked it, but I'd just like that clarified, if I could.

The other point here is the section that falls just below that on page 167 where it says you're encouraging "private sector partners to complement the intergovernmental initiative to stabilize arts organizations."

Is that it?

8:30

THE CHAIRMAN: Order, hon. member.

We'll move on now to Three Hills-Airdrie.

MR. ZWOZDESKY: Was that 20 minutes?

THE CHAIRMAN: Yes. It goes fast when we're occupied.

MR. ZWOZDESKY: Good heavens. I'm only on the first page.

THE CHAIRMAN: Well, you have an opportunity again if your colleagues permit you.

Three Hills-Airdrie.

MS HALEY: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I just have a couple of quick questions for the minister. With regard to the municipal recreation/tourism operating grants, there's a tremendous reduction in these. I guess the most important question I can ask you, Mr. Minister, is: how do you expect these sites to survive without any funding?

From there I want to move into some of the councils that are in place; for example, the Sport Medicine Council. I understand there's quite a number of things like that, for rafting, various forms of recreational programs. I'm wondering if . . .

THE CHAIRMAN: Can we just stop this for a minute? You're fading out. Are you speaking into the microphone, or are we picking it up poorly? It's just my advanced years and my retiring ears? Okay.

MS HALEY: All right. Well, I'll just keep trying there.

With regard to the councils that you have – for example, the Sport Medicine Council, and different organizations like that – have you done a cost-benefit analysis on those to determine if they're actually fulfilling their mandate or if there is in fact a better way to run those types of organizations?

The last comment that I wanted to bring up to you – my hon.

colleague across the way there already brought it up – was with regard to merging the foundations. He was concerned more from an arts perspective, and my interest, if I'm really honest with you, is along the sports side. I want to ensure or have some level of comfort that the sports profile we've worked so hard to develop in the province with the Summer Games and Winter Games and programs for amateur sport will in fact continue to survive and that we will nurture that from the youth right through to the highest levels of amateur competition.

Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: Okay.

The hon. Member for Spruce Grove-Sturgeon-St. Albert.

MRS. SOETAERT: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I think it will be no surprise to the minister that I am going to start specifically in the area of women's issues. With all due respect to the minister, I think you've missed the boat there when you're going to get rid of the advisory council, which seems to continue to be in the plans.

Maybe for the benefit of the minister I might remind you of some of the things that this council has done. It certainly deserves all of our appreciation and acknowledgement of the hard work they have done. They have published 13 research reports and discussion papers, and I would recommend that everybody have a good look at them. They've suggested 14 different ways that the council has used to consult with and provide information to the public. They have suggested 86 recommendations to the government of Alberta. Of those 86, from my understanding I believe nine have been accepted. Now, you could correct me on that if I'm wrong.

That's rather a sad statement, to the empty chair. We can't mention that they're not here, but I'm sure he can hear me. I'll speak to you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you. I'm sure you'll relay my messages to him.

MR. CARDINAL: It's in *Hansard*. That's all you want.

MRS. SOETAERT: No. I want some response from the minister.

I think there were some significant concerns identified by people about the lack of support that the council receives from this government. Certainly it was evidenced by delays in appointing replacement members and the chairperson of the council. I'd like to take this opportunity to congratulate Marilyn Flegler on the excellent, excellent job she has done in that role.

The government has only acted on – here I read seven recommendations. I had given them credit for nine. I take that back. It's seven.

Budget reductions have restricted research and consultation activities. I think there's still a need for greater autonomy of the council from the government, and my colleague from Edmonton-Avonmore suggested that. We continue to need organizations at arm's-length from this government, and we're losing those arm's-length bodies. That's regrettable. There is a perception out there that there's no one organization that can effectively represent the diversity of women's views on such a wide variety of issues, and I would say that the Alberta Advisory Council on Women's Issues has been able to do that.

Some specific questions to the minister, through the chair, about what he's going to do about some of the latest recommendations from their last report, Breadmakers and Breadwinners: The Voices of Alberta Women.

With the demise of the Alberta Advisory Council on Women's Issues, I am wondering how the government will develop tools

and methods to help analyze how legislation, policies, and programs differentially impact women and men. How will the government implement the use of tools and methods for gender analysis in the formulation of public policy, programs, and legislation and monitor their use and make adjustments as required? May I suggest a type of gender filter that the government should look at when making legislation, to see how it impacts on women and men.

How will the government, in partnership with the women's community, act to improve communication with women? By initiating and sponsoring – this is just a suggestion; will they do it? – an annual consultative forum?

How will the government ensure appointments to provincial committees, councils, and task forces as well as senior levels within your bureaucracy and reflect a more balanced representation of women?

How will the government continue to work or try to work in collaboration with women and women's groups to ensure timely, independently conducted public policy research addressing issues of concern to women and to ensure that funding for the research is established and maintained? In case you missed some of the other remarks, I'm asking how you will ensure that these recommendations from the last report of the advisory council will be followed through with, with the demise of the council.

One more question in that regard is: how will the government demonstrate accountability to the women of Alberta for legislation, policies, programs, and decisions that impact women and that this process be integrated into each department's business plan using benchmarks or targets in relevant areas?

So those are my concerns. I am very disappointed to see the demise of the Alberta Advisory Council on Women's Issues. I think they've done some excellent work. I think it's sad that the minister has not been able to see his way clear to keeping that very effective council alive.

To go to some other areas within Community Development, I'd like to talk for a moment about a couple of the goals. I know that my colleague from Edmonton-Gold Bar will be dealing mainly with seniors' issues, so I will give her that time to do that. In the meanwhile, I'd like to address goal 1.

To work in partnership with geographic communities and communities of interest to build and maintain a high quality of life in Alberta.

That's a rather vague goal, and I would question how you measure that. What's a high quality of life? My concern is that usually when this government says "in partnership with communities," you usually download or pass on a responsibility for which your department was once responsible. To me this is evident in the strategies outlined on page 167. For example:

Devolve delivery of recreation, sport, arts, culture, library, and heritage grants to representative community associations where feasible.

You mention privatizing admission fees and collections, visitor service, and major historic sites.

"Wind down Municipal Recreation/Tourism Area Grants." Now, many of us were just at the banquet at which what was stressed to us was that one out of nine people will work in the tourism area by the year 2000 and something; I wasn't listening all that well I guess. With these areas of our province becoming a major industry, I have some grave concerns there. What's going to happen to the quality of some of these strong heritage buildings and facilities and occasions that we are very proud of in Alberta? With the downloading and the admission fees and privatization, I have some concerns there that we're going to lose some of those quality things that make Alberta what it is.

8:40**Goal 3:**

To reduce discrimination and foster equality so all Albertans can have the opportunity to participate fully in the social, economic and cultural life of the province.

The goal is not flawed by what it says but by how the minister claims he will achieve it. The strategies that are outlined include reducing the multicultural fund as well as combining the Alberta Human Rights Commission and Multiculturalism Commission. I would ask the minister to explain how these moves will help achieve his department's goal. As I recall, wasn't it the Environics survey that said in January of '95 that 53 percent of people surveyed opposed the amalgamation of the Human Rights Commission and the Multiculturalism Commission?

A couple of other concerns. I know my colleague from Calgary-Buffalo will be dealing more with the Human Rights Commission and review, but I'm just interested in asking the minister: how many cases are now waiting for the Human Rights Commission to review them? Has the backlog been reduced at all?

We'll go to goal 4.

To ensure that Albertans are aware of their cultural heritage and natural history and to share these treasures and accomplishments with the rest of the world.

It's difficult to see how the minister will ensure awareness among Albertans through the use of strategies outlined on page 170 of the agenda. How does privatizing operations at the Jubilee and Glenbow – which we supported, by the way, in Bill 4 – ensure that Albertans are aware of their cultural heritage? Just a question there on how that will create awareness.

Looking at the key performance measures, the first one is measuring “community self-reliance and volunteerism.” Who was being surveyed when the department determined that there was 97 percent community satisfaction with the assistance received? I didn't get that survey. [interjection] Maybe you did. We're all volunteers in our community, but I'm just interested to know who was surveyed and what questions were asked during that survey. Why is the target for '96-97 lower than what was achieved in '94-95? We volunteers are burning out. That could be.

The second key performance is measuring “participation by Albertans in cultural and recreation activities.” Now, why is there not a performance measure of how many new jobs are created due to increasing demand for cultural, artistic, and recreational activities? I think that would be a good performance measure, because certainly I don't think this area of our province gets quite the credit it should when it comes to employment. Why is there not a performance measure of how many dollars Albertans spend on cultural, artistic, and heritage type activities? That would be another interesting performance measure. Why is there not a performance measure of how many outside investment dollars come to Alberta as a result of cultural and/or artistic endeavours by Albertans? I know my colleague from Edmonton-Avonmore has mentioned some of the movie industry that, sadly, will be leaving our province.

Now, just a couple of other things specific to my community of Spruce Grove-Sturgeon-St. Albert. When I met with the Horizon Stage people, who do wonderful volunteer work in Spruce Grove – and many of you may have had an opportunity to be at the Horizon Stage in Spruce Grove – they were concerned about consistent funding so that they know exactly what they're dealing with. They were pleased with the way it was funded in the past – they knew what they had to work with – but now everything seems to be up in the air after the lotteries review. I would appreciate some reassurance for them from the minister as to what

they can expect. If those community dollars go to the community and a community values maybe the recreation side of the things rather than the cultural side of things, some areas would not get the money that they have been receiving in the past to implement some very fine programs that they have there. Some of these programs have taken years to develop, and certainly the youth in Spruce Grove and the county of Parkland have benefited a great deal from some of the programs offered through the Horizon Stage. It would be very sad to see those go by the wayside when they keep so many of our young people very interested in the arts. So my concerns there would be that those are consistent dollars that they can expect.

You're well aware that the Yellowhead regional library is right in Spruce Grove. We're very proud of it and the fine work they do out there. Once again, to reiterate what the Member for Edmonton-Avonmore said, they'd like some consistency and security about what kinds of funds they can expect and whether they will be funded by lottery dollars, which are up and down, or a commitment from the government.

My final statement. I know you're all breathing a sigh of relief over that. Community Development talks about the goal of quality of life. May I recommend that the minister read the report by the Quality of Life Commission and maybe from that gain some knowledge of some of the things that could and should be done for Albertans.

Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: Okay.

Before calling on Calgary-Bow, Mr. Minister, would you like to make comments now?

MR. MAR: I would, Mr. Chairman. I'll do my best to address the questions. I humbly apologize for being absent for a portion of Spruce Grove-Sturgeon-St. Albert's. However, I would point out, perhaps as a reminder, that members are not to make comments about the absence or presence of other members.

With respect to the elimination of the women's advisory council, Mr. Chairman, the legislation, which was created in 1986, called for a sunset of that agency in December of 1996. I think it's important to note that the interests of women are very diverse, and a strong argument can be made that no single agency can represent the interests of women. In fact, women have come forward and said, “We would choose to have our representations made to government without the need for an agency to filter our opinions. We are perfectly capable of dealing with government directly ourselves.” Accordingly, the Advisory Council on Women's Issues will be sunsetted in accordance with its own legislation at the end of this year.

With respect to some of the recommendations that have been made by that agency over the last 10 years, there have been a number of recommendations that have been made and a number of reports that have been issued, and many of them have been valuable. In the council's more recent reports they've suggested that only nine of some 86 recommendations have been accepted.

MRS. SOETAERT: Seven.

MR. MAR: I stand corrected. Seven. I'm not certain where that number comes from, because a lot of the recommendations that have been made by the council over the years have been starting points for discussion and have resulted in changes to government policy, and also a number of the recommendations that have been made over the years were already consistent with things that government was doing. So in my own view, although I don't

have a clear number, significantly more than seven of the recommendations that the council has made over the years have been acted upon and implemented in some form or another by government.

With respect to the goal that Spruce Grove-Sturgeon-St. Albert mentioned, goal 1, about building a high quality of life in the province of Alberta through partnerships and how would that be done. Clearly, Mr. Chairman, the hon. Member for Edmonton-Avonmore has underscored the importance of this department to the quality of life that we enjoy in this province, and I know that Edmonton-Avonmore would not restrict his comments to things like the Alberta Foundation for the Arts but would also go further to speak of the quality of life impact that the Historical Resources Foundation has and the Alberta Sport, Recreation, Parks and Wildlife Foundation has and the Human Rights Commission and Multiculturalism Commission have with respect to fair treatment of people and the quality of life issues that those agencies address.

8:50

How would we build that quality of life in the province of Alberta in our heritage facilities? Well, very clearly, Mr. Chairman, upon an examination of the performance measures that are contained within appendix 1 of the document that I tabled earlier today, members will see the performance measures that we are applying to make sure that we are keeping up the standards in our heritage facilities and the education and tourism functions that those facilities serve.

Indeed, Mr. Chairman, I think that we can stop saying that museums like the Royal Tyrrell Museum are world class, and we should start referring to them as world-best facilities. I think that the same can be said of places in Fort McMurray like the Oil Sands Interpretive Centre, the Remington Carriage Centre in Cardston, the Reynolds-Alberta transportation museum in Wetaskiwin, the Provincial Museum of Alberta here in Edmonton, and other facilities that truly contribute to outstanding quality of life and help make Alberta an interesting place to live and an interesting place to visit.

With respect to the merger of the Human Rights Commission and the Multicultural Commission that was mentioned by the Member for Spruce Grove-Sturgeon-St. Albert, it strikes me and I think it strikes many people that the issues which are dealt with by those agencies do have some overlap. As an example, the most important functions that the Multiculturalism Commission serves are with respect to education and particularly in the area of discrimination and of diversity of our population. The issues of discrimination and racism, which are education programs that are dealt with by the Multiculturalism Commission, clearly fall within the broader ambit of human rights, and accordingly a great deal can be said for the elimination of administration by merging those two agencies together and operating education programs, which I think are critical, and having them housed within the Human Rights rubric.

The hon. Member for Spruce Grove-Sturgeon-St. Albert asked a question about the backlog of cases with respect to the Human Rights Commission. At one time there were about 300 cases that were backlogged with the commission. What I have done is I have seconded five people from other parts of my department to be trained in the area of conflict resolution in human rights cases. Those five individuals have worked very hard at dealing with those 300 cases, and I'm happy to say that by this fall there should be zero backlog. We intend on applying the appropriate resources needed to make sure that the backlog does not increase again.

One of the questions that was raised by Spruce Grove-Sturgeon-

St. Albert was with respect to the privatization of fee collection at some of our heritage facilities and her concerns regarding that. The privatization of those types of services, like the gift shops and the fee collection, has in fact been recognized as being outstanding partnerships with the community. In 1994 the cultural facilities and historical resources division received a national award from the Institute of Public Administration of Canada for its innovative approaches to managing provincial heritage facilities. This specifically recognized the wide range of partnerships with local communities, that are often referred to as friends groups, to assist with the operation of our museum and historic sites. It's these community groups or these friends associations that have assumed responsibility for a wide range of programs and services, including the gift shop operations and food services and also front-of-house type of fee collection responsibilities.

[Ms Haley in the Chair]

The Member for Edmonton-Avonmore asked a number of questions. I am compelled to say that I've often found his questions to be searching and good ones, and I will attempt to do my best to address his questions. He spoke about the ideology of the amalgamation of a number of different agencies and how there may be a dissipation or dilution of the services that were done by these agencies. In my view, and as I've said many times before, the deeds of government are more important than the words.

With respect to support for arts and culture in the province of Alberta, I would be the first person to point out that levels of lottery funding for the Alberta Foundation for the Arts, the Historical Resources Foundation, and the Alberta Sport, Recreation, Parks and Wildlife Foundation have not been reduced from their 1992-93 levels and in fact are continued into the current business plan. Accordingly, at a time when other budgets have been reduced, these quality of life areas have been considered to be of significant importance and have had their funding remain level. I would point out that that is also the case with respect to library funding, which has remained level since the 1992-93 level.

Over and above that, since '92-93 the province has undertaken a number of initiatives, such as contributing some \$15 million towards the concert hall in the city of Edmonton, being a significant partner in the amount of about 2 and a half million dollars to be contributed to the arts stabilization fund, which is one of the first such funds in Canada and even in North America and I believe is a very cutting-edge way of looking at funding for the arts.

We've also entered into a federal/provincial agreement that will contribute more money towards arts and culture. That's a multimillion dollar agreement. We've also maintained our commitment to the western heritage centre in the amount of about \$5 million for the creation of that museum in Cochrane, which I know the Minister of Justice is very committed to.

So, accordingly, Mr. Chairman, we are very committed to the services which are provided by those agencies. However, we are not committed to the structure of maintaining agencies as stand-alone agencies, such as the AFA or the Historical Resources Foundation or the ASRPW. Again, for further emphasis, we're committed to the services provided by those agencies, although not necessarily that structure.

With respect to his question on the carillon, certainly we have heard from a number of people who have spoken about the enjoyment of the carillon music. I would point out that the music will continue to be played on weekends with the carillon. The carillon is a very, very special part of the Edmonton river valley indeed. At this point the intention is that the carillon will operate

on its computer-generated music rather than having a live musician playing songs on the carillon. The hon. member did mention that if there could be a corporate partnership struck that would allow the continuing of live music to be played – certainly we would entertain that possibility.

I thank the hon. member for his comments with respect to the Glenbow. The Glenbow is another such institution in this province that contributes greatly to the quality of life of not only the people in the city of Calgary but throughout the province and people who come from all over who have seen its collection. Many millions of people have in fact seen parts of their collection over the years because a large portion of their collection is located at the Calgary International Airport.

9:00

With respect to library grants, which he raised, I would be happy to send a copy of the government's response to the library review committee's report, which made a number of recommendations. The majority of the recommendations were accepted, some of them were accepted for further consideration, and only four or five of the recommendations were rejected. I will confirm to him that almost invariably municipalities contribute money to local library boards, and how much their percentage is depends on the community. In some cases, the province makes up only 10 percent of the overall operating grant of the Library Board, and in other cases it's up to 80 percent, again depending upon whether it's a small or a large one. But municipalities have recognized the value of their libraries as being key amenities that contribute to their communities.

With respect to staff reductions that he asked about, I'd refer the hon. member to page 73 of the budget papers. The interesting thing about the staff reductions is that 103 of them are related to the privatization of the Glenbow. You would not have seen that 103 staff that were working in the Glenbow in the 1992-93 budget because consolidated budgeting did not happen until this year. In a sense, the numbers were down and then they were inflated by 103 of the Glenbow and now they're being reduced through privatization. So the actual staff reductions within the department outside of Glenbow I believe are 42 FTEs. I'll try and seek some confirmation of that at another time.

With respect to the electronic network for Alberta libraries, the exact costs have not yet been determined. We have started a pilot project that appears to be very cost-effective, but I would certainly be pleased to inform the hon. member of the amounts allocated at such time as they are done.

Going to the issue that he raised with respect to, again, the foundations and seeking some clarification as to when such a merger might take place. All our foundations will remain as they are for 1996-97. So for the current year it will remain the same.

With respect to undertaking to consult stakeholder groups and keeping the functions of the Alberta Foundation for the Arts available, this government is committed to continuing to consult with Albertans, and that is a serious responsibility, certainly, that I undertake, not only with the AFA but also with other agencies, such as the Historical Resources Foundation and the Alberta Sport, Recreation, Parks and Wildlife Foundation.

Finally, the comments that were made and asked by the hon. Member for Three Hills-Airdrie. I don't recall all of them, but one question that she did ask was with respect to the elimination of MRTA, or municipal recreation/tourism operating grants. She asked the question about how sites would survive with the elimination of that grant. Sites have been encouraged to become self-sufficient by charging user fees or fees for service, and certainly my staff will continue to provide assistance to those

communities to become more self-reliant.

That, Madam Chairman, are my responses at this time.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much, Mr. Minister.

Our next speaker is the Member for Calgary-Bow.

MRS. LAING: Thank you, Madam Chairman. Mr. Minister, regarding the ministry consolidated income statement, '92-93 – and it's on page 10 in the business plan that you gave us this evening – the community development revolving fund shows no revenue or expense after 1996-97. Why is this? It's on page 10.

MR. MAR: Page 10 of what?

MRS. LAING: It's on page 10 of the business plan that the minister handed out this evening.

AN HON. MEMBER: You mean the supplemental.

MRS. LAING: Yeah, the supplemental booklet. I'm asking about the Community Development revolving fund, which shows no revenue or expense after '96-97.

MR. MAR: I apologize for my slowness in responding.

MRS. LAING: Should I go on with the rest of them, then, or did you want to respond?

MR. MAR: That would be a good idea.

MRS. LAING: Okay. My second supplemental. The Community Development business plan indicates that the management of the Jubilee auditoria is scheduled to be contracted out to private sector interests in this fiscal year. This is in my own constituency, so naturally I'm interested in what the implications of this will be.

Then talking about the urban park development grants, on page 72, 2.3.5 on the budget line. At one time I was understanding that this grant had a time line and that it would be finished, so I'm just wondering what is covered in this remaining part and what the time span is for that program.

Then on page 76, options for the regulation of residential care, with the seniors programs. What type of residence does this cover, and who will monitor these residences? I know it's not lodges, because those come under Municipal Affairs, but the regulation of residential care – I'm just wondering what type of residence this does cover.

On page 167, the strategies for '95-96 in the business plan, it mentions there a line on "Help not-for-profit organizations conduct their own governance and financial management." I was wondering what kind of plans you had to implement this strategy?

That concludes my questions. Thank you very much.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

Edmonton-Gold Bar.

MRS. HEWES: Thanks, Madam Chairman. Thanks to the minister. Minister, I think you probably know of my continuing support for this department. I've supported it through its many transitions over the years, and I'm hoping that it will be strengthened as we go along, that it will not in any way be eroded. I believe in many ways that this department really describes and identifies us as a society and differentiates us as a society. I think this department is the custodian of civility in Alberta. This is the

department that somehow ensures that we are caring and beautiful and we're a society that is concerned about its communities being safe, that we preserve our history, past and present. I want to see it strengthened, Minister, and I want to see its components strengthened. I think that's very important.

The carillon that my colleague mentioned, I think, Mr. Minister, is not so much the issue itself as the fact that the public sees that as a lack of love for that kind of thing, that kind of beautiful experience. So somehow, perhaps, in ending it, we didn't describe what was going to happen as well as we should. I'd like to see your department think carefully about those kinds of things. If that sounds like a criticism, I don't intend it that way, Minister. I mean it as an honest statement of my own views, just watching.

9:10

Madam Chairman, I want to make my comments, really, not restricted but intentionally, I suppose, aimed at seniors, because this is my area of responsibility. I'm grateful, Mr. Minister, for your sending us this new summary of a business plan, whatever you call it. I'm sorry I didn't have it before tonight, because it helps in directing my questions, and if they are a little jumpy, I apologize.

The notion that a core business of the department is supporting the dignity and independence of seniors – at some point it seems to me there was an idea that there would be a division responsible for seniors. Perhaps you can describe to me what that consists of. Is it a section? How do we describe what you are, and will that continue and expand and grow?

Mr. Minister, over on page 23 of that particular document – I don't know if you have that in front of you, sir. This is the summary that you gave us. Yes, there it is. The second paragraph says: the “cumulative impact of changes to seniors programs.” Recent changes may have a cumulative financial impact. “Seniors wish to be assured that changes are being monitored and that government will respond appropriately where required.” I say: you bet they want to be assured. They certainly do. They want to be assured for themselves, and they want to be assured for their neighbours, and they want to be assured that down the road, as they become seniors, that promises and contracts won't be changed. This kind of statement is not a great comfort to seniors because what you're saying is that they want to be assured, and there's an implication there that they aren't. I think you're right in that. I think they aren't assured that the changes are being monitored and that if in fact there were findings that the cumulative impact was inappropriate, the government would respond. So I'm curious about the way you described that statement.

The next paragraph, under “elder abuse and neglect.” I know the throne speech, Mr. Minister, speaks to the need for a hot line, and I appreciate that. But, Madam Chairman, I'm worried, as I think many of us are and ought to be, about what happens with 800 numbers. We have 800 numbers for a lot of purposes across the province. What happens if I phone up and say: “My son is coming and taking my money. He takes the money out of the sugar bowl.” I tell that on the hot line. This is abuse. Now, the person on the other end, what access do they have? Seniors want to know this. They're not going to say, “Gee, that's too bad.” They're going to say, “Here's what you should do about it” or “Here's what I will do about it.”

Now, in some cases where we have hot lines of this nature, there is a SWAT team that goes out immediately and deals with it. Is that what's envisioned here? It was said in the throne speech, and people are interested and excited about this. I've

been working with a consortium of community groups that are dealing with elder abuse in the city of Edmonton. A very good group: police, Catholic Social Services, a whole 30, 35 people. They want to know. It's great that the government has acknowledged this. I take it that your department is going to be the sponsor of it, but what will happen when I call up? Abuse is in the eye of the beholder. It isn't just in a definition of what abuse is to you. You and I know that most of the abuse of seniors is financial abuse. Yes, there's some physical abuse, but most of it is financial. I think that's very obvious. So I'd like again some small comfort about how extensive that action is going to be, because it isn't satisfactory just to have an information service.

On the page of principles, Mr. Minister, where you say involvement and participation, “Seniors should have the opportunity to participate in decisions affecting their well-being.” That's the third principle down. I would hope that you're speaking there not only about decisions that affect individual well-being but decisions in legislation and programming that affect well-being. This was the big anxiety that was expressed when the ASB came in – and I'm sure you recall that very well – that there had not been sufficient consultation. Please tell me that's what you really mean, whether it's individual well-being, legislation, or seniors' programs. I think they need that reassurance.

If we can go on to the next page where you state your mission and your goals, the third goal is “to provide services . . . affordable, sustainable and achieve intended and measurable results.” I know you have some performance measures both here and in the budget document, but they're indecisive. In some cases they say to be determined and so on. We need clarification on those as soon as they're available. I realize that it takes a year or so of functioning before you can figure out how to measure some of the things.

Goal 1:

Shifting of funds from institutional to community care will provide more supports for seniors living on their own, and prevent inappropriate institutionalization.

This week in the House, Madam Chairman, Mr. Minister, there have been some questions asked about seniors being sent off to some place 60, 70 clicks away from their home base. I know health care and extended care really attempt to place seniors near their family, their church, their community, but it's not happening. This is one of the big fears, as well as the experience, that seniors are having, and I wonder, when we say that this is a strategy, how we intend to do that.

The second one is on the same issue, the fourth one down: “appropriate policies for . . . drugs, equipment . . . to enable individuals . . .” One of the great worries is the seniors cannot afford the drugs that have been prescribed for them. They are telling me that over and over.

The last one, “the Seniors Information Line and published information like the Programs for Seniors will help them find out about government services. Mr. Minister, my constituency office is besieged with calls from all over the province from people who have the information but cannot either interpret it or cannot make appropriate use of it. I expect that's not a surprise to you. So we need not only someone on an information line and someone who presents a book with the information in it – and the data is helpful; we've made great use of it – but someone who will interpret it and walk a senior through it and help them through the complexities of government.

Strategy 1.2. I have supported and I will watch with interest the two pilot projects that Alberta Health is doing. I commend the ministry in involving itself in this. These are the kinds of things where we have choices for seniors that down the road will

pay off in dollars as well as in human satisfaction.

Strategy 1.4. Yes, seniors are living to be older, and they're living to be healthier. Dr. Dossetor tells me we're all going to die of old age; we're not going to die of diseases anymore. I'm not sure whether I'm comforted by that or not, but that's what he insists on. In this one you speak, Mr. Minister, about legislation and "advance directives." Do we expect that in this session?

9:20

Further down in the last paragraph. Legislation regarding "increased self-determination and control in personal matters," such as the Power of Attorney Act did, and this will be separate from dependent adults. Is this a separate piece of legislation from the advanced directives? I'm not clear on that.

One of the things that seniors talk to me most about is their worries – and you don't speak to them here – in the health restructuring that's going on and the problems that has caused them: waiting lists for hospital care, inadequate home care, their inability to pay for home care with early discharge when home care is not described as medically necessary but may be very necessary to their being able to be at home, the extra costs of intravenous drug therapies, the great confusion as to what services are available, seniors sent home when the spouse or caregiver is also old and frail, the problems with long waiting lists for elective surgery for hips and knees. Mr. Minister, seniors are really desperately worried about what's happening in health restructuring. Some of it, sir, may be worries that are unnecessary and may simply be a question of getting better information and building confidence, but I think some are also real fears that have developed from real experience.

On goal 2, Mr. Minister. We have halfway down that paragraph "appropriate policies . . . put in place to ensure that the most vulnerable . . . are protected." Why would we not have standards in this province for commercial boarding homes for seniors? The Seniors Advisory Council has recommended this. Various municipalities have asked for it. I believe there is a public responsibility to develop and monitor standards and to license facilities. I would hope, Madam Chairman, that boarding houses and group homes would want to be accredited on their own, and I think we need some leadership from the government in order to accomplish that. So we need to do that.

Now, you tell me that "the definition of 'in need' will be reviewed." Who's going to do that kind of review? It seems to me that we need to have an indigenous group decide for you what "in need" will be.

You tell me further that you're going to consult with the Senior Citizens Housing Association and ACA "to determine the required range of residential and service options." I would hope that's happened and is not something that's down the road but that you have good information on that already.

How am I doing for time, Madam Chairman?

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Four and a half minutes left.

MRS. HEWES: Oh, I've got dozens of questions. I'll have to write them to you, Mr. Minister.

On the SNA. I think this program has some real problems. In a recent letter of February 26 you have given one of my colleagues some stats on it. These stats tell me this: 27,000 special needs assistance applications were mailed out; 6,700 have been returned, which I gather means 6,700 have applied; of those, 6,600 have now been reviewed; so you're only 100 short; of the reviewed 1,500 require further information before a decision can be reached; 5,100 have been evaluated; and to my horror the

committee has approved 425. Now, what does that tell us? I suppose you can interpret this, Madam Chairman, by saying, "Well, that means that nobody needed it," but I know and all of us know that's not the case. This program was too difficult. It was too specific. It was too constrained. It was too impossible to prove. As a result, Mr. Minister, it became almost cruel in a way because seniors had expectations and hopes raised that couldn't possibly be met. They didn't have the requirements for it, and they're terribly hurt by this. It goes on to say: to date, 319 appeals, and the committee's decision has been upheld on 295 occasions and reversed only 24 times.

Now, we've helped many seniors fill these out, and they are complicated, and they don't have the receipts, and they don't have the proof, and they don't have the things that are required. I think the people who have to deal with this must be hard pressed. I don't know how they manage this. I don't know how even the appeal committees – we haven't had anybody accepted that hasn't gone to appeal incidentally – are managing at all. So I want you to look carefully, Mr. Minister, and I want you to tell me if that program's going to continue. Is there going to be more money, less money, what money into it?

Mr. Minister, my colleague is pointing out my question. Where did the \$14 million go? I haven't had a chance to ask you that in the House, sir. Where did the money go? You know the \$14 million I'm talking about, I expect, and I wasn't satisfied with the Treasurer's answer, that the promise was made the year there was no money and that presumably the year there was money, it wasn't necessary to keep the Premier's promise that it would be funneled back into seniors.

Now, let me see. I've got one or two more serious ones here to ask you about. Performance measures. The proportion "of eligible seniors receiving the Alberta Seniors Benefit." Surely the performance measure is 100 percent, sir. I'd like you to verify that.

The other one I would assume would always be an outcome and performance measure is out of your information services, sir, which you speak to on a number of occasions through these documents. Surely, a performance measure would be whether or not seniors in fact receive the information and were able to act on it. I can't imagine an information line that wouldn't have that as a performance measure.

Now, let me see if I've covered all of my questions. Yeah. Here's a couple more, Mr. Minister. I've only have a minute or so left, I expect. Will the growth in ASB keep pace with the growth in the seniors' population, or is there anticipated to be an allowance for inflation or for the increased user fees and taxes that seniors face? Is it just according to the numbers of seniors?

The other one I want to ask about. The increases in program support and operations, whether or not the increases there are going to go to the seniors or are they going to increased staff to review the income tax forms and so on that seniors have?

Madam Chairman, thank you very much. I'll save the rest.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Calgary-Fish Creek.

MRS. FORSYTH: Oh, good. It's always hard following Edmonton-Gold Bar, and I have some questions also. I'd like to follow up on the seniors' issues, Mr. Minister.

[Mr. Tannas in the Chair]

It's been said that some of the seniors are living on the edge, and I'd like to know what the department is going to do to address this. That would be my first question.

The second question. The hon. member before me has covered a lot of these. What new services will be provided for seniors in the regional offices and how will seniors access them?

I want to follow up on some of the concerns that Edmonton-Gold Bar had on the abuse hot line. I'd like to find out when the 1-800 elder abuse hot line will be set up. How will it be monitored? I have worked a hot line before, and I know about the extensive personal training that I had to have for the crisis team and the time commitment that I had to have to be able to tell people where to go – well, that doesn't sound right – what to do or who to access. I think that's something I'd like more clarification on, as did Edmonton-Gold Bar: how are you going to utilize that? Is someone just going to be picking up the phone and maybe saying, "Well, gee, call the police" or what?

9:30

I want to follow up on something else that she asked, and that's about the action your department is taking to date investigating options for the regulation of residential care. I think that's important.

I'm sort of flicking around here, Mr. Minister. I'm sorry, because a lot of these questions have been covered. It just caught my eye, actually, when I was reading this Agenda '96, page 172, the fourth bullet about reviewing the "Insignia Regulation and the Official Emblems regulation to ensure that they are still needed." I guess I'd like to ask: why are we doing that? I haven't had a lot of calls saying get rid of the emblem. Why are you doing that is the question I have. I don't know. Is it creating a job share or some sort of a work program?

I want to refer to page 72, 2.2.1 on the Human Rights Commission. I know probably the Member for Calgary-Buffalo will have a lot more questions, so I'm just going to keep them down to a minimum.

MR. DICKSON: We'll work together, Heather.

MRS. FORSYTH: Work together.

The Human Rights Review Panel has called for an increase in resources to the Human Rights Commission. Does the increase of \$102,000 from '95-96 to '96-97 reflect the increase in the resources is the question I have.

MR. MAR: Yes.

MRS. FORSYTH: Yes? You answered that. Okay.

When does the minister plan to introduce amendments to the Individual's Rights Protection Act?

Now I'm going to go to my favourite subject, Mr. Minister, and it's libraries, because I love libraries. I'm going to ask: what is the possibility of increasing library grants? I'm an avid user of the library, and I just really have always been. I remember when I was growing up, the little bookmobile that used to come down the street, and I'm not going to say any more because it'll show my age. But I just think it's a wonderful resource for everybody, rich or poor. Just anybody can use it.

One of the things I found very interesting in a discussion we had was what is being done to simplify access to the province's library resources through a single library card for Alberta. I'd like nothing more than to be able to use my library card, especially when we've, you know, done some traveling across the provinces on different committees. When I'm in this city, I haul my library books back and forth, and if there's anything I hate more, as you know, it's overdue library charges. I have a real pet peeve about that.

That's really about all the questions I have. Thank you, all. I'll allow someone else.

THE CHAIRMAN: Okay. Are you wanting to begin, or can we move to Calgary-Buffalo?

MRS. FORSYTH: Oh, no. I should talk if Calgary-Buffalo's going to go. I should keep talking.

THE CHAIRMAN: Hon. member, I think you gave up your position. We're now deciding whether before going to Calgary-Buffalo the minister wants to catch up now.

MR. MAR: Mr. Chairman, I'll make a few brief comments at this point, but I don't want to restrict overly the time that Calgary-Buffalo speaks, because I know he'll have a number of questions to ask.

Perhaps I'll start with the hon. Member for Calgary-Fish Creek. The hon. member spoke on the issue of how will we monitor those people we see to be on the edge, and she was referring to seniors. Certainly we've done some work with respect to investigating cases where people are not able to meet their basic needs, so we're acting upon that. That of course was one of the critical reasons why the special needs assistance program was created, to be able to identify those people who were not able to make their basic needs.

With respect to the 1-800 line and the question of when will it be set up, because this, as the Chairman will know, was a private member's Bill sponsored by him, we haven't had the opportunity to do as much work with it as we'd like. We want to ensure that we do it right before it's implemented. What we'd like to do is consult with stakeholder groups that will be affected by that legislation and ensure that we do things right, and that will of course address some of the concerns raised by Edmonton-Gold Bar.

Both the Member for Calgary-Fish Creek and the Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar spoke to the issue of residential care options. I can advise members that in February of 1995 I recommended to my colleagues the ministers of Family and Social Services, Health, and Municipal Affairs that the four departments review the matter of residential care facilities, including private care homes and group homes. As a result, there is an interdepartmental working group that was established, and that working group is examining government's role with respect to setting, monitoring, and enforcing standards in residential care facilities.

As well – the Member for Calgary-Bow would know this – the initiative addresses Motion 505, which was passed unanimously in this House on March 28, 1995. That motion stated:

Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly urge the government to ensure that health and safety standards are being met in all personal care facilities by establishing regulations and a comprehensive monitoring system.

I'm very supportive of that.

The hon. Member for Calgary-Fish Creek spoke to her love of libraries. I have also had a great love of libraries, and I'm very supportive of the work that they do and the importance that they have not only in small communities but large ones as well. I will share with members a story from my past. Every Saturday morning my mother and father would take me to the library, and they went to the Woodward's food floor. They'd drop me off at the library at 9 in the morning, and they'd come and pick me up at 1. It wasn't until only a few weeks ago that I found out that they went home while I was at the library. Anyways, it wasn't until very recently that I found this out, and I was shocked and stunned.

With respect to the single library card that was referred to by

the Member for Calgary-Fish Creek, that of course is contingent upon our ability to link up libraries throughout the province, and that is part of the electronic network of libraries that we'd like to see happen.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar made some interesting comments on the department being a "custodian of civility." I've never really considered the department in that light, but upon reflection of her comments I find that to be a very apt description indeed. She asked a number of questions particularly about seniors, and I'll do my best to try and address those.

First of all, a brief description of what the seniors' division would look like. It would continue in its three main functional areas of Alberta seniors' benefit operations; that is, the processing of applications, maintaining current files, and things associated with the ASB. Secondly, customer information services: that's where our 1-800 line and our storefront community development offices will come in. Thirdly, it will continue to have responsibility for programs and policy issues and be an interface with other government departments.

9:40

The Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar also raised the issue of consultation with seniors, and I am compelled to say that there has been a great deal of consultation with seniors. I take exception to her suggestion that in developing things like our legislation and the seniors' special needs assistance program that somehow they were done with inadequate consultation. Mr. Chairman, I believe that consultation is something that takes place not only at round-tables but throughout the year and throughout the province. We've done a significant amount of that and received a great deal of feedback from seniors with respect to things that they would like to see done and how our programs can be improved and be more accessible.

The creation of seven Alberta community development offices throughout the province to provide access to information for seniors on seniors' benefit applications and special needs applications is one example of a response. Members will recall in my opening comments that I had said that seniors wanted to get information face to face rather than through a telephone or through some other means, and accordingly we have set up staff in those offices to deal with people one on one.

The hon. Member for Calgary-Bow had a number of questions. One was with respect to the revolving fund. The purpose of the community development revolving fund is to operate and administer front of house services in the northern and southern Alberta Jubilee auditoria. Since operations of the Jubilee are scheduled to be privatized by April 1997 there will no longer be a need for that fund, and that is the reason there is no revenue or expense shown after '96-97.

Calgary-Bow also asked about the reduction to the urban park development grants. That program is winding down, and the termination of phase 2 of that program will occur on March 31 of 1997. The following cities will receive their final urban park funding in the following amounts: Airdrie, \$50,000; Camrose, \$255,000; Fort McMurray, \$964,875; Fort Saskatchewan, \$252,672; and St. Albert, \$417,913.

That, Mr. Chairman, will conclude my responses at this time, and I'll look forward to questions that I know will come from the hon. Member for Calgary-Buffalo.

THE CHAIRMAN: Okay. Thanks, minister.

Our next questioner is the hon. Member for Calgary-Buffalo.

MR. DICKSON: Thanks, Mr. Chairman, and in light of what was

said a moment ago by the Member for Calgary-Fish Creek, I guess I'm asking questions on my own behalf and as a limited agent for my colleague from Fish Creek.

Minister, a number of things I wanted to ask you.

DR. OBERG: It's not billable time, Gary.

MR. DICKSON: I thought this compounded the time. Doesn't this give me 40 minutes?

I wanted to start off, Mr. Minister, acknowledging what I think has been a very effective job you've done in terms of some historical site issues in the city of Calgary. You appreciate that in my constituency in downtown Calgary we've got a number of historic buildings, and I want to acknowledge the work you did in terms of Lougheed House. In fact, the leadership you provided in that has been helpful in terms of trying to leverage support from the city council in that city, and I appreciate that. I'm hopeful you'll look with the same kind of keen appreciation for history with the proposal to demolish the block between 8th Street and 7th Street SW and between 11th and 12th avenues that's currently the subject of much discussion in my constituency.

I want to move on and deal specifically with a number of issues relative to human rights. I think I want to start by putting to you a proposition that I've always thought was particularly important in a quote from Justice Frankfurter. The quote's about 40 years old. When he was on the U.S. Supreme Court he made the observation, and I quote, "It is a wise man who said that there is no greater inequality than equal treatment of unequals." When I ask you questions in terms of the performance of the Human Rights Commission, it's because I believe that statement. I believe it to be true, and I think that Albertans look for something other than just a statement that this ministry believes in equal treatment. I expect some acknowledgment that there is systemic discrimination in this province and that some groups start from a disadvantaged position right at the outset.

Maybe we should move directly to the key performance measures, which appear on page 78 of the estimates booklet. I find it curious, Mr. Minister, that when you cite "Satisfaction of Albertans with Human Rights Protection," your target for 1996-1997 is that you'd like 75 percent of Albertans to "believe human rights are fairly well or very well protected in Alberta." I guess my first question is: why would you set a target that's lower than the 79 percent which existed in 1994-95? Why is it good enough to have 75 percent satisfaction with the Human Rights Commission, but you want 85 percent satisfaction when it comes to eligible seniors satisfied with the service they received? Why would you accept 75 percent satisfaction with the human rights regime when you want 90 percent satisfaction from visitors to provincial historic sites and museums? Why would you be ambitious enough to want an 85 percent target when it comes to "Community satisfaction with assistance received," under the heading Community Self-Reliance but be content with a mere 75 percent satisfaction in terms of human rights protection? I'm curious, Mr. Minister, and I hope that you give us some explanation with respect to that.

Just a parenthetical observation. I think I'm appreciative of your supplementary information, but I note that the date of your cover letter was February 7, 1996, and here we are on March 6 dealing with it. It would have been helpful, I think, to me and my colleagues and I assume all members to have this additional information sometime in advance. I just think it means that we make more economical use of the precious time we have in this committee.

Moving on from the key performance measures, what I wanted

to ask you is why it is, Mr. Minister, that although we talk about education in this business plan, the Human Rights Commission and Alberta Education still haven't followed up on that key report done in 1991, the analysis of attitudes among grade 8 and grade 11 students in the province that showed some disturbing indicators in terms of attitudes of intolerance. The recommendation was that the study be replicated three years later. I've asked this question a number of years, and I've got no satisfactory explanation in terms of why we're not proceeding to track that. I think that there may even be members in this Assembly that will quarrel over whether we have any intolerance in this province, and I think that baseline, you'll appreciate, is important to establish and to do the measurement.

Now, moving on to elements 2.2.1, 2.2.2. It's interesting to me that you have segregated the Human Rights Commission and citizenship, yet as I understand it, the two functions are going to be managed by the same Alberta human rights and citizenship commission. If in fact that's the case, then is the expectation that these two elements are going to be tracked separately throughout the next year by this multifocused commission? I have some concern that – and I'll have more concerns if I can't find the page item – what we're going to see is a diminution or reduction in the important service of the Human Rights Commission. I need some comfort from you, Mr. Minister, not just me but the people in the Dignity Foundation, the people in the multicultural community need some measure of comfort that the protection of human rights, that has been the responsibility in the past of the commission, isn't going to receive fewer resources with the merger. So far all we know is that these two things are going to be rolled together.

9:50

Which takes me to page 77 of the estimates booklet. You'll see the second bullet from the bottom that refers to "\$3.9 million provided for human rights and citizenship education." Now, am I to take it that that is education both of citizenship and human rights or that the education only relates to citizenship and that human rights is a separate matter? This is key, because you'll appreciate that the budget for the Alberta Human Rights Commission education has been a very modest sum, a very modest \$15,000, and I know that the chief commissioner has urged me that that's unrealistic because it doesn't factor in overhead and part of salary and things like that. He acknowledges that the segregated, identified amount is only \$15,000, but I'm wondering if in fact there's more money going to education. That would be good news, but I need to hear it from you, because the bullet I referred to on page 77 is somewhat confusing. Of course, there's the issue of reconciling it with element 2.2.1. That seems to suggest that this isn't education we're talking about at all; this is absolutely all of the money that's going to be spent in this area.

Mr. Minister, I'm interested in what your target is to spend on human rights education, if I can call it that, whether with or without partners. In Quebec they have an impressive commitment that 35 percent of the budget of the Quebec Human Rights Commission is dedicated to education. That's the kind of goal I'd encourage you and your ministry to target because I think ultimately we recognize that's the place where we're going to be able to make a difference.

I'm interested in how many boards of inquiry have been appointed over the last fiscal year. I'd like to know, Mr. Minister, why in question period some weeks ago you responded that it was hypothetical when I put to you the suggestion that there was going to be a \$10,000 fine levied on any complainant who is subsequently found to have made a complaint that was frivolous,

notwithstanding the fact that that had never been recommended in the Equal in Dignity and Rights report and seems to have originated in the Conservative caucus. Now, you said that was hypothetical, and I'd like to take some hurt from that and think that's because that will not appear in the legislation that we expect is going to come this spring. So you might tell me whether it's in there or whether it is not.

Now, I wanted to just jump over for a moment. You talk about a regulatory review plan on page 9 of – I think it's your supplementary information booklet. I'm asking whether you'll make a commitment that the changes to regulations – whether it's the dispositions regulations, the Amusements Act regulations, the seniors' benefit regulations. Will you make a commitment that that will be referred to the Standing Committee on Law and Regulations, and if not, why not?

I think, Mr. Minister, I have to ask you again why you persist in announcing that the commission is independent and is seen by Albertans as being independent when you refuse to require all commissioners, all members of the Alberta Human Rights Commission to refrain from partisan political activity while they discharge their function on the commission. You and I have exchanged some correspondence on this, but I still have to ask you why we're not seeing any progress in that respect.

A curious thing, Mr. Minister. In your response to the Equal in Dignity and Rights report, our commitment to human rights – and of course you know the document I'm referring to – there are some curious provisions in there where you talk about education: the educational programs are going to be directed at the victims of discrimination. I have to ask you: why are we targeting education programs at the victims of discrimination when I think most Albertans would expect that the people we're trying to give educational information to and change attitudes of are those people who may have attitudes of intolerance if not outright hostility? Curious wording. Maybe I misapprehended what was intended, but if you go back and look at the commitment document, it's clear that the education references are about educating victims, and it seems to me that either you're saying we want to teach people how to use the complaint process – well, that seems to be the explanation. If that's the case, I take the strongest possible issue with that because that misses completely what Quebec is doing, what the Cornish task force in Ontario recommended.

Speaking of the Cornish task force from Ontario, I assume that your department has looked at that report. Although you suggested in your response to the Equal in Dignity and Rights report that most provinces do not have independent commissions, I'd like you to acknowledge that Quebec clearly has an independent commission. The Cornish report made a very powerful report recommending an independent commission, that there's activity under way at the federal level for an independent Canada Human Rights Commission, so it seems to me that we ought not to be striving for the lowest common denominator but in fact trying to lead, as this government prides itself on doing in other areas.

I'd like to ask you some questions about systemic discrimination. This gets back to the quote from Justice Frankfurter that I put to you earlier. It seems reasonably clear that if we've learned anything in the last 20 years, it is that waiting for an individual complainant to come in and register a complaint and then dealing with it is absolutely the most costly and least-effective way of dealing with systemic discrimination. I'd like to ask you firstly: do you acknowledge that there's systemic discrimination in this province? Secondly, what are your plans, beyond sort of the policeman's role of dealing with individual complaints on a case-by-case basis, for the commission to deal with systemic discrimination? Once again, the Cornish task force in Ontario has come

up with some suggestions, where the Human Rights Commission would be focused on education and there's a different vehicle dealing with complaint resolution. I'd be interested in why you've presumably looked at and rejected that approach in this jurisdiction.

I'd like to know, Mr. Minister, why you rejected the recommendation from the O'Neill task force that the time to make a complaint should be extended from six months to one year. It was interesting, Mr. Minister, that today in the Legislature we dealt with a Bill which rationalized limitation periods. Even physicians and medical people that formerly had the protection of a one-year limitation period now have a considerably longer one. That was done because it was the fair thing to do. I think you'll recognize that in a large number of cases what we've got are women who are being sexually harassed at their workplace. It's a very common problem, and sometimes it takes a period of time for these people to come to terms with what's happened to them and then to seek relief. So I very much encourage you to look at ensuring that there's a full one-year period to be able to make that complaint.

Mr. Minister, a couple of questions just in terms of seniors. You've talked about the Protection for Persons in Care Act. I guess my concern is that the Kerby Centre with some modest support from the provincial government and very substantial support from the federal government published the Synergy II report last year. I've tabled it in the Legislature; I've referred to it in debate. What the Synergy II report told us is that the greatest instance of abuse is not in the kinds of places covered in the Bill that was passed last session, but indeed abuse to seniors happens in much smaller settings. So I'm interested in what steps you're prepared to look at to try to fill the void that isn't addressed by the arguably very narrow ambit of the Bill passed for protection of persons in care.

10:00

I guess the other thing I'd ask you is: what do you propose is going to happen to the hotline which was created by the Kerby Centre, run by the distress centre? It is a response to the Synergy II report. That's up; it's operating. It's been working for a period of time. Are we simply duplicating that service? Have you considered taking that and expanding that to be able to do the job? That's in fact where the impetus and the leadership came from to deal with this, Mr. Minister.

I assume that the reason you've held off proclaiming the Protection for Persons in Care Act was to be able to put the machinery in place. So whatever you can provide us with in terms of detail, in terms of how that's going to work and how it would mesh with the distress centre line would be helpful.

Mr. Minister, you've heard the comments from my colleagues about shortcomings in the special assessment program, and hopefully you're going to move to deal with that.

The other question I've got is relative to the Human Rights Commission. Is there going to be some person in a senior position responsible for discharging the educational function with the Human Rights Commission?

With that, Mr. Minister, I think I've used up my time, and I look forward to your responses. I'd just say that I'm hopeful you'll be able to provide us with responses before we're in a position where we have to vote on the estimates. I appreciate that in the past you've been forthcoming and prompt at responding to requests. I think it's important in principle that before members are asked to vote on spending money for this department or any other department, they have the benefit of the information and inquiries answered.

Thanks very much.

THE CHAIRMAN: Okay.

The next speaker on my list is the Minister of Justice and Attorney General.

MR. EVANS: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I'll try to keep my comments brief. I do want to comment on a number of items in the budget estimates. I will, in fact, concentrate primarily on issues that are relevant to my own constituency. Then I'd like to ask the minister a couple of questions about some of the specifics in his estimates.

I would like to begin, though, Mr. Chairman, by complimenting the minister not only on these estimates but on the job that he has done in what is an amazingly diverse, complex, and oftentimes controversial portfolio that he learned about through a baptism of fire when he was elected in 1993. I think he's done a tremendous job, a very commendable job in that portfolio. I can say that from practical experience because I've had the pleasure of having the minister in my constituency for a number of openings and a number of functions related to his portfolio. He is always upbeat. He is always extremely visible, extremely accessible, and does us in government but I think more importantly all of us as MLAs a good turn by showing that there is a human side to government. I'm always pleased to have him in my constituency.

To give compliments to my colleague the minister is incomplete without giving compliments to his staff, because his staff deal with the many issues that are faced by this portfolio with great dedication. They seem to be able to deal with the valleys and the peaks with equal ability and equal enthusiasm, and I think that's a real compliment to the department itself.

In terms of some of the programs that I want to touch on, I appreciate the minister's comments about the MRTA program and the fact that it is being eliminated over time. Now, that program has been very beneficial to my constituency both from a capital works point of view as well as from the operational funds that are available. I see a 20 percent reduction this year. Like all good programs they should come to an end. We should not have programs that just continue because they've worked in the past. We have to continue to be more creative about the use of resources that we have. I think this program has been very beneficial, but I can see the reason for the reductions in the budget over time.

When we talk about reductions, Mr. Chairman, I think I would be remiss if I didn't make some comments on the amalgamations that are occurring in the department. I don't take the view that some hon. members have taken and expressed this evening that an amalgamation means we are going to have a less effective program or less of a voice for the many diverse groups that are represented in the various elements that we see in this budget. I think just the fact of having money for programs doesn't necessarily mean those programs will be successful. But I think there is a tremendous commitment both in the department and I think in Alberta generally to the many important initiatives in this department. Human rights are important in this province. The cultural life and the artistic aspects of this department are extremely important to the quality of life in this province.

The seniors responsibilities that the member has are extremely important to the lifeblood of this province. I firmly believe that notwithstanding that issues arise and that there are differences of opinion as to how matters should be dealt with, the Alberta community generally is a caring community that looks out for those who are in need, that appreciates the importance of cultural diversity and artistic opportunity and has great feeling and respect for the contributions that seniors have made to this great province of ours.

That said, I go back to some of the specifics in the estimates. I do want to make a comment about the western heritage centre and compliment the hon. minister specifically and his department for the continuing commitment the department has made to a promise back in 1989, when I was running, that if the private sector through partnership with the government was able to secure some \$5 million to \$7 million in funds to create a western cultural tourism facility that would concentrate on the cattle past and rodeo past of this province, the government would be there to assist on a matching-fund basis. The continuing commitment, I think, will come to fruition and will be recognized this coming summer, when hopefully on July 1 or thereabouts we have the official opening of the western heritage centre, which will be a great complement to the other cultural/tourism opportunities that we have in this province and I'm sure will generally contribute to the tourism that we have in this great province.

I want to as well compliment the minister and his staff on the other cultural/tourism facilities that we have in this province, such as Head-Smashed-In Buffalo Jump, such as the Reynolds Museum, such as the Royal Tyrrell Museum, where I took my family and some friends from both sides of the country for the first time this summer and who were absolutely amazed by what they saw there.

10:10

In terms of the Alberta Motion Picture Development Corporation, I've had the good fortune to deal with that corporation directly for a number of years when they had their head office in Canmore. They then moved to Edmonton, but of course that move did not take them away from the Bow Valley. That is one of the premier locations for high-class and high-grossing movies as well as those regional and more localized movie productions that are expanding the economic opportunities that we have in this province.

I don't believe that Canadian culture has to be promoted by the taxpayers' funds indefinitely so that it can remain and can prosper. I think that seed money, if you want to use that terminology, had to be there initially, but I get very disturbed when I hear that without money from the government, there would be no culture. I'm not that pessimistic. I think there is a Canadian culture, and I think that just as the CBC nationally has to look at its budget and justify its budget, so too does the AMPDC.

The AMPDC is not being left in the lurch this year. There's been discussion with the AMPDC about their budget for a number of years, and this is a transition year for them. I really find it hard to believe that given the budget we've allocated to that worthy corporation and relative to the amounts that are paid by the film industry in the province, we will lose much, if anything, in the long run. In fact, I think the ability that has been shown by the Alberta industry is going to see more and more films coming to this province, and quite frankly I want to see that film industry become more independent. I think, hon. minister, you are working in the right direction. I'll say that the seed money is important, but I think the time has come and passed for that.

I want to then move on to another source of pride in my constituency, and that's the Banff Television Festival. Yes, hon. members on the Liberal side may argue that that festival is receiving funds from the Alberta Foundation for the Arts, and yes, it is. Hopefully that's going to decrease as well over time as it becomes more well known. It's been said that the motion picture industry has Cannes and that the television industry has the Banff Television Festival. Again, as that reputation increases, these kinds of very positive initiatives in the province are able to operate on their own. So I compliment the minister on his

involvement in the Banff Television Festival and the people who are involved in that festival. They may shudder, if they read my comments, to hear that I am suggesting they will be independent at some point in the future, but I think they recognize that as well.

In terms of the fundamentals of this department and the fundamentals of Alberta, I am pleased that we have a Multiculturalism Commission. I am pleased that we have the Individual's Rights Protection Act in this province. I think those are important matters to be dealt with by a caring province, a province that has a great diversity of heritage and cultural backgrounds, and I think that the minister is doing very well in managing those responsibilities.

Before I go into some of the elements, I will make one comment on something that my colleague the Member for Calgary-Cross has brought up a number of times and just ask the minister a question about this. There's been some talk about video classifications and some prohibitions on younger kids obtaining restricted adult movies. Perhaps I'm a little sensitive to this because I have an 11-year-old son who loves to watch the Arnold Schwarzenegger types of movies. I know there are some substantial enforcement issues and costs that have to be considered in this and that by and large these are small business operations. We don't want to unduly impact them, but I would appreciate some comments from the minister as to his current position on this video classification.

Now, in terms of specific element questions, I notice that in element 1.0.3, finance and administration, there's an increase from 1995-96 of almost \$300,000. I wonder if the minister could make some comments on that.

MR. MAR: PWSS downloading.

MR. EVANS: PWSS downloading. I've heard that once before. In fact, I think I said it last night myself, so it rings fairly true. Nothing more need be said, hon. minister.

Under 2.2.1 and 2.2.2 I see that there is an increase in the Human Rights Commission funding at the same time that citizenship services are reduced by more than \$400,000. I wonder if the minister might make some comments on that in his summation.

Then, finally, just one more compliment. I know the minister is getting a swelled head, but I want to compliment him on retaining thus far the Alberta Sport, Recreation, Parks and Wildlife Foundation and increasing the revenue actually for this coming year. That's been an interesting amalgamation, and I think it's worked quite well because the minister has been open enough to recognize that those two bodies could amalgamate and still retain some of the historic uniqueness that they have had.

With that and seeing that I've burned up past quarter after 10 in the evening and that it's almost time to report back to the Assembly, I would now move that we adjourn debate.

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. Deputy Government House Leader has moved that the subcommittee now adjourn and report to the Committee of Supply. All those in favour of this motion, please say aye.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

THE CHAIRMAN: All those opposed, please say no.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: No.

MR. ZWOZDESKY: Could we just have five more minutes? I just wonder: will there be an opportunity to extend this debate at

some later stage?

THE CHAIRMAN: There is another date set.

MR. EVANS: There is opportunity for debate.

MR. ZWOZDESKY: Mr. Chairman, could I just get a clear

ruling? Will there be an opportunity to ask more questions at some point in the very near future?

THE CHAIRMAN: That's certainly my understanding, and we are in fact adjourned.

[The committee adjourned at 10:18 p.m.]