

Legislative Assembly of Alberta

Title: Wednesday, May 21, 1997 **8:00 p.m.**
Date: 97/05/21
 [Mrs. Gordon in the Chair]

head: **Committee of Supply**

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I'm going to call the Committee of Supply to order.

head: **Lottery Fund Estimates 1997-98**

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I would ask the hon. minister to lead off debate.

MRS. BLACK: Thank you, Madam Chairman. I'm very pleased to be here to discuss the lottery fund tonight, and I do have some officials with me in the members' gallery who will be listening with great anticipation to the debate that will ensue in the next few minutes. With the indulgence of everyone I'd like to introduce these people. Many of them are in new positions. We have the chairman of the Alberta Gaming and Liquor Commission, Norm Peterson. Beside him is the CEO of the commission, Roy Bricker, and Carl Royan, who is doing a lot of the grants for the CFEPs and the granting, is with him as well. My EA, who is in charge of lotteries, gambling, liquor, and racing, is Celeste Santos, whom many of you know. She's been in the Legislature since 1989 in the offices here. And you, Madam Chairman, are the chairman of the secretariat in this area, so it's nice to have you in the chair.

When we talk about lotteries, we're talking about both sides of the equation: the revenue and the expenditure sides. Revenues, of course, from lotteries are generated from VLTs, the tickets of the lotteries – the 6/49s, pull tickets – and of course the bingos and the casinos and gaming terminals. The estimated revenues for 1997-98 are going to be roughly \$654.5 million, an increase of \$10 million over last year's forecasted revenues. The lottery fund payments are estimated to be at \$123.3 million, the same as fiscal 1996-97. Lottery payments are divided into eight different categories, and these payments are made to various foundations, agencies, and programs, each with its own particular and unique mandate. The foundations are there, in fact, to benefit the people of Alberta. Some of the beneficiaries include culture and arts groups, libraries, museums, sports and athletic events, wildlife and conservation projects, health care and wellness, seniors' groups, recreation groups, recreational facilities, tourism, historical resources, agricultural fairs and exhibitions.

For the past three fiscal years, up to March 31, 1997, funding to beneficiaries has been based on a three-year lottery licence commitment. Currently commitments are generally based on annual allocations. I'd like to go through some of these initiatives, the first one being the agricultural initiative, just to explain particularly to new members what the objective of this is. Under the agricultural initiative their objective is to further develop provision of services by Alberta's exhibitions and agricultural societies. These are directed toward improved agricultural awareness and agricultural lifestyle and enhancing agricultural activities and related leisure activities. The grants are provided to agricultural societies in good standing under the Agricultural Societies Act, including major exhibitions. The total funding for this category is \$22,530,000. This is the same funding as in fiscal '96-97. The funding for agricultural society and agricultural initiatives grants is in fact recommended by the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development.

Cultural initiatives. The objective there is to develop and promote the arts, historical resources, and multicultural heritage of Alberta through arts and cultural organizations. Financial support is primarily through Crown agencies in the way of grants. The Minister of Community Development assists in the administration of these funds. Total funding is \$29,679,000. This again is the same funding level as fiscal '96-97. Each group or organization has specific guidelines based, again, on their individual mandate. An example is the Alberta Foundation for the Arts. Its mandate is to support and contribute to the development and promotion of the arts in Alberta; to foster and promote enjoyment of works of art by Alberta artists; to collect, preserve, and display works of art by Alberta artists; to encourage artists resident in Alberta in their work. The funding guidelines cover Alberta artists and organizations in the disciplines of visual, performing, literary, and media arts, including libraries in Alberta for certain projects. Funding is also provided to the Alberta Historical Resources Foundation. That funding is \$5,913,000. The human rights, citizenship and multiculturalism education fund receives \$1,062,000. The Wild Rose Foundation receives \$6.6 million.

The next initiative is recreation. The object of the recreation initiative is to develop further Alberta sports and recreational programs, services, and events for the benefit of Albertans. Financial support is provided primarily through the Alberta Sport, Recreation, Parks and Wildlife Foundation through grants. The funding this year is \$14,885,000. The foundation provides financial assistance to some 109 provincial associations and agencies in support of their programs in the areas of organization, leadership, participant development. Again, the Minister of Community Development assists in the administration of these funds. Some of the special projects that we refer to in 1997, in fact '98, are Alpine Canada and the Canadian Hockey Association.

The next grouping is the community facility enhancement program 3. The objective is to assist in planning, upgrading, and development of a wide range of community-use facilities and places to enhance community life and citizens' well-being. Thirty-one million dollars has been allocated to this program for fiscal '97-98 compared to \$35 million for fiscal '96-97. The Alberta Gaming and Liquor Commission administers this fund. This is the second year of the three-year, \$75 million program. Financial support is provided to municipalities, native bands, Métis settlements, and registered community not-for-profit groups. The community facility enhancement program 3 responds to local and regional needs. It encourages overall facility cost savings, improves facility use, and through their own initiative development, helps to upgrade through capital projects.

The next initiative is in health and wellness. The objective is to respond to expressed health and wellness needs that are considered to be in the public interest. Advanced medical equipment purchases has funding this year of \$7,266,000. In fiscal '96-97 funding was provided, for example, to the Alberta Cancer Board to replace a simulator and selectron at the Cross Cancer Institute. There was money also given to the Calgary regional health authority for a new ENG system, for example. The Northern Lights regional health authority received money for a new intensive care patient monitoring system.

There was also funding given to service problem gamblers, funding of \$2,294,000, which is an increase of \$423,000 over fiscal '96-97. This was due to the demand for preventative services. AADAC has been designated as the province's lead

agency for problem gambling prevention and treatment. AADAC will once again take the lead responsibility for funding, monitoring, and evaluation to support a range of community-based initiatives for problem gamblers. AADAC realizes that most Albertans gamble without harmful consequences; however, a small minority gamble to excess. The commission is committed to working with key partners in government and the community to help prevent and minimize harm associated with problem gambling.

Science and environmental initiatives. The objective is to support community-based science and environmental initiatives for awareness and benefit for Albertans. There have been \$750,000 earmarked for the Science Alberta Foundation. Its mandate is to increase understanding and awareness of Albertans in science and technology through planning to create, develop, and expand science and technologies and for support of exhibition programs and facilities. It is also to promote science education in the province and to encourage Albertans to pursue careers in science through developing community science workshops, educational activities, and by establishing a grants and awards program to support science competitions and summer science camps.

8:10

The final initiative is for new initiatives, funding related to new programs that have come forward from communities. Funding commitments to date for fiscal '97-98 are Calgary's World's Fair bid of \$2 million. This is to assist in preparing a bid on behalf of Calgary and Alberta and in fact Canada in seeking selection as a host city and province for the 2005 World's Fair.

There's funding of \$2.5 million for advanced education infrastructure. This is to create new investment in the public postsecondary school system through technology upgrades. Examples of the eligible class include computers, computer labs, instructors' offices, and lab equipment for science labs and language labs. There's also \$2.5 million committed to education computer funding. This is so that all Alberta schools and classrooms will be equipped with modern computer technology. The funding would cover things like the purchase of new computers meeting the recommended hardware configurations. It would cover the cost of upgrading old computers, and it would provide for such peripheral equipment as adaptive keyboards and switches.

Madam Chairman, I think it becomes obvious when you go through the eight different categories of initiatives that are funded through the lottery funds that these funds do go back to the community in very needed areas, and it's incumbent upon every member of this Assembly to talk to their constituents and let them know that these funds are put to good use through all of our communities. It's very important that they know that. I think there's a grave misunderstanding as to what lottery funds are used for. When you see the wide range of initiatives that come out of this funding, I think it's important for all of us to go back and explain that to our constituents so that they know that these funds are being put to good use.

Madam Chairman, I will take my place now and take questions on the lottery funds.

MR. WHITE: It's interesting that the minister ended her speech by imploring Members of this Legislative Assembly to go back to their constituents and tell them what wonderful things the government is doing with the funds generated from lottery revenues.

MRS. McCLELLAN: No, no, no. What the communities are doing.

MR. WHITE: What the communities are doing. Yes, yes, yes.

The difficulty I'm having is: what did those communities do before lottery revenues? There were grant programs granted by the Legislature. Agricultural societies did a great number of wonderful things throughout rural Alberta. The community league system through the major centres did some wonderful things. A lot of things were done.

I have to come back to the question: what damage has been done to the fabric of this society in the name of aiding it? Now, there'll be those that are saying: no, no, there's no damage done by gaming in this province. To those I say balderdash and many other adjectives. It's just not so. There is damage done, and those in this Legislature that had the opportunity to tour the province and to listen to those that did have those concerns know of what I speak. I speak on behalf of a number of people that I know personally that have had brushes with the difficulties of gambling and lotteries and gaming in general. They have not had the same experience that we hear about in this Legislature: all the glowing reports of aiding and abetting all that is wonderful in the province and aiding in so many areas. Incidentally, the areas that the minister outlined are in this member's view reasonable expenditures. It's just the generation of these funds that I have a little difficulty with.

Just a case in point. I read for you the current mission statement of this portion of her ministry. It reads: "To maintain the integrity of gambling and liquor activities in Alberta and collect revenues for the Province." Full stop. As opposed to what it was last year and the year before: the mission statement of Alberta lotteries and gaming was "to facilitate the development and management of the lottery and gaming industry in Alberta, while ensuring the integrity and social responsibility." That end has sort of dropped. What we have is social responsibility and integrity dropped for the line called "collect revenues."

We've done away with concern about the average soul out there that puts the dollar in the slot and touches the buttons. We don't seem to be horribly concerned about it. In point of fact, what this budget is showing both in support for AADAC and their liquor-related activities is that less than a third of 1 percent – I repeat for emphasis: less than a third of 1 percent – goes into that. I don't know about you, but I mean, when you're looking at helping some of the citizens of Alberta that are having some difficulties with something that the government in the name of people is the storekeeper of, both liquor and gaming, then surely it falls upon the government to ensure that for those that are having difficulty – not now dealing with those that don't have difficulty with problem gambling or problem alcohol but just dealing with those that do – you'd think that the government could do a little more. In lotteries it's the same thing. It's .3 of 1 percent. It's unfathomable to me that this government can be so hard hearted and not see that there is a need in this area.

Another area that concerns me a great deal in the mission statement is "facilitate the development of native gambling in keeping with the government's gaming policy." That says to me: just keep the natives out. That's been the policy. I can't see anything working in trying to deal with that which has occurred across a great deal of the other provinces in cutting in some of these people, a group of major users of gaming and gambling, on some of the returns. Certainly, some members that are here present recognize that they live very, very close to a number of organized bands that would love to be in the business and in fact have the management skills and could in fact be in the business, although it is specifically prohibited, and this government doesn't seem to be doing anything about it at all.

I look at another area as an opposition member and through my querying of other opposition members throughout Canada find that it's another unique part of Alberta. When funds are disseminated from a government body to do public good in the way of grants in aid of community activities, the member is generally made aware of all applications and is asked for some kind of an opinion as to the relative worth of those, whether they're government or opposition. It doesn't happen in this case. I, personally, for all the time I've sat in this House have not been made aware of one, not one single grant, application, or a successful grant application and certainly have never – never – been invited and have been specifically excluded at times from coming to a presentation of a cheque or something. This doesn't sound to me like an open government at all. I'm not going to spend a lot of time crying about it, but I do represent the people. They did elect me and none other. They didn't elect a member from the outlying area to come and deliver their cheque, and quite frankly it's an affront to the intellect of a lot of those that are receiving those cheques. [interjections] It's crass. It's just plain low-level politics, and it should be beneath a lot of those members that are here.

I do wish the members would speak up so I could hear their jibes so that I could return in kind, but I'm missing it. [interjection] No, no, no. I'm sure you didn't.

8:20

There's another element I'll move to now. The Auditor General has spent some time in successive reports that specifically outline the areas that he believes should be subject to the full scrutiny of the Legislature and the Auditor General. Those are a lot of the lottery revenues: how they're generated and specific locations and that sort of thing. It seems to me that's one area where there could be a great deal of improvement, specifically in light of the government's newfound interest since the last election in limiting the proliferation of the video lottery terminals.

I draw your attention too to page 122, that outlines the net revenue contributing to the general revenue fund some \$1 billion, 1,017.9 millions of dollars, and pose the question that has been posed to many members of this House prior to this as well as in their public consultation as well as in the local media: who in fact is the major gambling addict in this province if it isn't the province of Alberta itself? It's a question that needs to be answered by each and every member of this House many, many times. It seems to this member in any event that there has to be some kind of moral judgment made on this, and that's what each and every one of us has to do in our own communities to deal with the difficulties that these kinds of generations of funds cause.

I don't know how each and every member has to deal with it, but I've had no end of consultation with some of the people that I represent. They are almost universally in condemnation of this although they don't see the revenues contributing to the general fund as I do, and to try to inform them that their neighbours are contributing to the tax that they're not having to pay is a rather difficult argument to make when they see that their neighbours are hurting to the extent that they are and have been. I don't try and make the government's case, but certainly I try to explain the other side oftentimes and have been singularly unsuccessful in convincing anyone of the benefits.

Mind you, I represent a different riding than a great deal here in that the average income of my constituents is in the order of less than \$40,000 a year. That's including an awful lot of the working poor. I also have to admit that there are a great deal of seniors in my constituency. Some of them come from the days of prohibition and wish it were still here in fact, so they have a little

different view of how the world should turn. So convincing them of any kind of revenue generated from alcohol and/or gambling is, to say the least, an uphill battle. But the argument has been made, and this member has tried to explain the government's point of view. Quite frankly, it always comes down to the moral question over and over and over again, and in the final analysis it's indefensible.

There are a couple of other anomalies in this Economic Development and Tourism update. On page 123 it's called "administrative productivity." Well, what kind of rating is that? You say, "Productivity is defined as operating expenditures as a percentage of gross revenue." Well, when the gross revenues are going up and it doesn't cost you any more to retrieve them, it's natural that the percentage will be coming down. To call that a great success rate is a little deceptive to say the least.

A couple of other areas on the expenditure side do concern this member somewhat. Correct me if I'm wrong, but it's the fund that distributes the funds to – I just have to find it here. I seem to have misplaced the page. I know it's, oh, so unusual. The investment – no. The tourism questions we passed long ago. Madam Chairman, I'm afraid I'm going to have to momentarily take my seat until I find the right location of these numbers to question further. I'll leave the floor to another hon. member.

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

MR. DICKSON: Thanks very much, Madam Chairman. You know, I was thinking, in looking over the lotteries estimates, that it might be useful to just mark the progress we've made in this province and to remember it wasn't so long ago that we never had the opportunity to deal with lottery estimates in this province. For the most part, most of the lottery fund spending was done independent of the Legislature. I think it's a very progressive thing, although you may hear some comment tonight about additional information sought and some questions perhaps go unanswered, that we are seeing lottery funds come in and be subjected to the same kind of scrutiny that every other item of government expenditure is. I think that's a very positive thing for the province, and it takes us some further distance in terms of greater transparency. So I just wanted to make that observation.

Now, a couple of concerns. Let me start with the most general one. It has to do with goal 3 of the business plan. This is perhaps more of a philosophical point of departure. I think it's one thing for the provincial government to earn substantial money from gambling activity in the province, but I have an enormous difficulty when the province is seen not simply as enabling but in fact promoting. It seems to me when you look at goal 3 in the department goals in the business plan, "achieve gross revenue levels of \$1.0 billion prior to operating expenses and lottery fund disbursements," that what we're doing is we're creating a goal, we're creating a target which in fact I think may well be inconsistent with what Albertans want to see in this province. I think it's just an exceedingly dangerous thing to do to, to build a goal in, because once you identify that kind of a goal, it's a very short step then to the government getting out and being very active and very aggressive in terms of trying to achieve the goal. What happens if it looks like we fall short, Madam Minister? Is the question then that suddenly there's a flurry of activity and the cry goes out, "We've got to increase the take from video lottery machines"? I think, frankly, it's a dangerous precedent.

8:30

I'm mindful as I say this that Calgary-Buffalo, the last time I looked, probably receives more lottery funds than any of the other 20 Calgary constituencies. I'd like to claim credit for that, Madam Chairman, but the reality is it's a function of geography, and it's a function of my buddy on the government side. Aside from her generosity, I just wanted to mark that and indicate that I do recognize that.

Some questions I've got with respect to the summary of payments for the lottery fund. We look at item 8, new initiatives. There's an item of \$4.7 million in other new initiatives that are undescribed. I'd like the minister to explain at least the major items that comprise that item of \$4.7 million. That's a significant sum of money, and I'd be interested in some particulars on that.

I had a question in terms of page 11 of the business plan. There's an item 5 in the business plan goals that talks about "grant programs will be reviewed based on recommendations of the Lottery Review Committee." Madam Chairman, this is something that you're all too intimately familiar with. I'd like somebody to clarify: is it all of the recommendations of the lottery review committee? My recollection is that not every one of the recommendations had been accepted by the government of the day. I'd like the minister to clarify which recommendations specifically we are referring to, because, as I say, my understanding is that the government hasn't accepted or didn't embrace each one of them.

Now, the other questions I wanted to pose had to do with the Calgary World's Fair contribution, which is pegged at \$2 million. I'd like the minister to indicate: what's the plan? June will soon be here, and we'll find out whether 2005 in fact is awarded to Calgary. What would happen at that point is that there is going to be probably an all-too-short time line in terms of writing the city to host that World's Fair, given the fact that this budget is going to take us through until next March. I'm interested in some clarification from the minister in terms of - there had been talks certainly about the province providing further support, although it would be directed towards infrastructure items. I'd be interested in some clarification on that.

The other item I was interested in is the services for problem gamblers. We're now up to almost \$2.3 million, which is an improvement, an increase from last year and certainly a positive move. It may be that this minister isn't able to provide that, but AADAC happens to be in the same building that my constituency office is, and I'm interested in terms of what sort of waits people have to be able to access counseling through AADAC. I'm not sure whether I'd be able to get that information this evening, but it's significant to me. Clearly we've got a bump-up, an increase in funding for people with a gambling addiction, which is positive, but I'd like to be able to relate that to something really concrete like: what does that mean in terms of a wait list for problem gamblers being able to get into programs and access that service?

The other question I had had to do with the current status of one of the proposals, of course, from can I call it the Gordon report, Madam Chairman? This business about community boards that were going to have input into allocating funds. I wonder if I can get an update in terms of what the status of the recommendation is. There is still a considerable interest in the nine communities that I represent. I continually field questions about where we're going with this. I understand it's now not going to be the city council, which had been suggested at one time, that it's going to be a stand-alone board. Madam Minister, through the

Chair, maybe there's been some clarification and an update on that, and if there is, I haven't heard it. So I'm most interested in finding out where we're going with that proposal. My questions would be, firstly: what's the model that this government is going to use for distribution of lottery funds or any portion of lottery funds at the community level? Secondly, when is that program going to take effect? I think that would be a positive move, but I'd like to see it on an accelerated rate.

I'm not sure of the genesis of the Gordon report. It seems like the Member for Lacombe-Stettler has been studying lotteries since she got here in 1993. So it's been a long process. It may seem longer to the chairperson. But I'd like to know when we're going to see that operational. When do we actually see that in a form that it becomes an operational part of our lottery spending?

The other question I think is this. It's helpful to me to actually see the lottery fund summary which appears on 108 and 109, summary of payments, because in some respects one sits back and says: what does this tell us about the priorities of the Legislature? What does it tell us in terms of the things that we find most important in this province? You know, I look and I see the human rights, citizenship, and multiculturalism education fund, which had been cut in half last year when the multiculturalism fund had been eliminated. I'm just going to suggest to the minister now - unfortunately I can't move an amendment that increases a spending item. I wish I could. If I were able to do that, what I'd say is that of all the initiatives I see, the ones that seem to be of particular merit: the advanced medical equipment purchases which have been identified by the minister and are very important but also the citizenship and multiculturalism education fund. My understanding is that a lot of meritorious requests have gone in and been refused, and that suggests to me that there may not be sufficient funding to deal with that. As we saw recently with some of the concerns raised in the Red Deer area, you know, this continues to be a significant problem in this province, and I'd sure like to ensure that there's adequate funding. I think as I look at the different items of support, we could do better in terms of that education fund.

The other question would be this. It would appear from the summary of payments that the Calgary Exhibition and Stampede is at the same level it's been for some time. There had been a lot of talk in conjunction with 2005 and land acquisition of Victoria Park subdivision. I guess the minister might confirm. I take it from this that again the provincial government has said that they're not interested in underwriting the very ambitious goals of the Exhibition and Stampede association in Calgary in terms of expansion. Frankly, I think that's a positive thing, refusing the additional money, not granting it. Perhaps the minister could confirm that the provincial government is not going to be supporting stampede expansion in the immediate budget year.

I think those are the issues or the questions I wanted to raise. I'd just say again that I'm very appreciative of the fact that we are getting somewhat better in terms of accountability with respect to lottery moneys. I think that's what Albertans expect, and I think they've been amazed in the past that this hasn't been treated like other items of government expenditure, subjected to the same degree of scrutiny.

With that, Madam Chairman, I'll take my seat. Thank you very much.

8:40

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Edmonton-Riverview.

MRS. SLOAN: Thank you, Madam Chairman. I appreciate the

opportunity as well to scrutinize the lotteries both with respect to revenue and expenditures. I'd like to start specifically in the health and wellness initiatives. It speaks specifically with respect to the allocations that have been made in that area. I note the first one, advanced medical equipment purchases, is a repetitive one. It is one that was made last year, and I guess, to a degree, I do not have the ability to determine why it is that advanced medical equipment purchases continue to necessitate expenditures from the lotteries commission and why that is not rightfully an expenditure within the Health budget. Obviously they're utilized for that purpose. In many respects they will contribute to efficiencies within the Health budget, and so I question that allocation on that basis.

I also question it on a second basis, and that is: why advanced medical equipment purchases and not other health-related initiatives, whether they be equipment, technology, or human initiatives that have been proven to save money? What is the basis for, I guess, a repetitive allocation from the lottery fund with respect to medical equipment? I did not find within the document provided to the opposition that there was rationale with respect to that decision. I believe, if I recall from reading *Hansard* last year, that the allocation was somewhere in the neighbourhood of \$7.2 million at that time as well. It seems to me there's a pattern developing. I question first of all whether it should in fact even be an allocation made from the lottery fund and if in fact it should not rightly be one that is made within the Health budget.

The second topic in that area is services for problem gamblers. It was of interest to me to read a report in the *Calgary Herald*, I believe it was this year, in fact May of '97. Basically the report said:

Calls to a provincewide hotline for gambling . . . have jumped more than 10 per cent over last year as more Albertans sought help for the problem, new figures show.

A record 3,020 calls were made to the 24-hour gambling help line in the 1996-97 year - up from about 2,700 the year previous. And for the second year in a row, nearly six out of 10 callers were having trouble with government-regulated video lottery terminals.

Another 8.4 per cent calling the Alberta Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission's line said they were addicted to casinos and a further 4.6 per cent said lottery tickets were their vice.

Edmonton topped the list with more than 24 per cent of all calls. About 19 per cent came from Calgary and more than five per cent from Red Deer.

The statistics emerged two months before the Alberta Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission plans to unveil a \$100,000-plus TV and radio campaign advertising gambling treatment services.

I look at the allocation that is made in that area. I think it's laudable. The government has recognized that there is a problem. But it's a self-perpetuating problem when the government continues to foster opportunities, to expand lottery, gambling provisions within our province, and fails to heed the cries for help that are being raised through petitions and other mechanisms at the municipal level to actually ban VLTs.

[Mr. Herard in the Chair]

I suppose I could go on and talk about it to some degree at the provincial level, but it really struck home to me in a letter from a constituent this month. The constituent was a teacher, and she has her doctorate, teaches at the University of Alberta as well as in an elementary school in my constituency. Basically, her letter went like this. She said: I'm writing to tell you about a small

problem; it's a small problem that a small person has, and that small person is a child in a school where I teach, and he doesn't have any crayons. When the teacher asked him why he didn't have any crayons, his response was: because my mom spent all her money at the slots. A small problem but a symptom of a bigger problem, a symptom of a problem where a government has continued to perpetuate an addiction.

We're very self-righteous in saying that we're going to bring in Bills in this Legislature to protect people from second-hand smoke, yet at the same time, on the other hand, we're providing mechanisms whereby people increasingly become addicted to another devastating practice. We can say: well, it's their fault. We can also say that we're providing services to treat them for that problem. But I say: why do we provide the opportunity in the first place? Why do we provide that in the face of not wanting to pursue other alternatives like increasing the tax base within the province. So I want to make a statement for that child, a small person with a small voice who has a small problem, but it is a symptom of a bigger problem in this province that the government has to this point in time failed to address.

Just to flow, then, further through on the health and wellness initiatives, the special projects. I would ask the hon. minister, with respect to details about those special projects - if they are provided, I was not able to determine what they were in the documentation, again, that was provided. I would be curious to know what those projects were. I have in my experience come across initiatives that have been brought forward, initiatives that incorporated both cultural and health objectives, examples of which take women with a cultural background, train those women to do self breast examination, and have them work in their cultural community to provide that service and to increase the frequency with which women in that culture do those examinations. That type of initiative has come forward in the last year and was not funded by this government. It was left, in fact, to private funds to sponsor.

So I look at that and I say: well, what are the special projects? How are they arrived at? What is the process for advertising, for applying, et cetera, with respect to those? I think there are many great opportunities out there that broadly overlap the initiatives within the summary of payments that are not being considered.

I also want to touch upon, again, other issues that in my reading of last year's discussions were raised and continue to be problems. I believe it was an hon. member from the opposition that touched upon the issue of safety being a concern. He cited the privatization of inspectors of the roadway, that there was concern about transport trucks, that the fines were minimal, his concern as to whether those are kept up in terms of the features that lead to safety. We see in other parts of Canada where there have been major accidents involving injuries and deaths as a result of trucks being driven with faulty brakes, faulty equipment, whatever the case may be.

It involves the Racing Commission, the Gaming and Liquor Commission, the lotteries, the VLTs, and so on, all those things. His questions and my questions relate to the fact that that continues to be an ongoing problem. It continues to be a problem that the minister of transportation refuses to address with compulsory checks and mandatory programs, and I do not see within the context of this that it's being addressed.

8:50

THE ACTING CHAIRMAN: The hon. Government House Leader is rising on a point of order.

Point of Order Relevance

MR. HAVELOCK: Yes. Relevance, *Beauchesne* 459, Mr. Chairman. While I certainly find the discussion to be interesting, perhaps we could stick to the lottery fund estimates as opposed to making sure that vehicles are properly maintained, et cetera.

THE ACTING CHAIRMAN: Hon. member, on the point of order.

MRS. SLOAN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I was speaking in the context of the 1996 lotteries discussions. I was raising issues that were of relevance to the estimates at that time. I had initiated the discussion with respect to the health and wellness initiatives, the figures with which gambling as an addiction was a problem at that time, and I followed through. I think it's relevant, Mr. Chairman, because what I'm trying to create is a broad basis of discussion for the estimates. I don't believe that what we should do is look at them in an isolated period of time. I don't believe we should look at the estimates singularly in one fiscal year but rather how we're spending those estimates and funds on a much broader basis.

THE ACTING CHAIRMAN: Well, hon. member, certainly the record is there with respect to what the comparables are for '95-96 and '96-97 and so on, but I think we need to try and deal with the current estimates because that's what we're here to do. So I'll be listening to see if we can make some relation here to what's going on in these estimates based on the history that you're trying to bring forward.

MRS. SLOAN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I acknowledge your comments with respect to that.

Debate Continued

MRS. SLOAN: The point I was trying to make with respect to reviewing the estimates of last year is that I think there is a pattern of revenue and expenditure that must be examined with respect to lottery estimates that goes beyond one fiscal year. The government of the day can say: "Well, this year transportation is not within the confines of that budget. Last year it was. Next year it might be completely different." I guess for any that are somewhat circumspect or paranoid, they might say that the government changes the confines of the estimates so that there cannot be a consistent pattern of debating and analyzing exactly what we do with that revenue on an annual basis.

For the purposes of this discussion, I believe from my review that I see within the performance measures that were cited – I'm relating directly to the performance measures – an increasing expectation that every year more and more money from the Alberta Gaming and Liquor Commission will be allocated to the general revenue fund. That is of concern to me. It is of concern to me because we have a government that will not consider any type of additional taxes, a completely abhorrent suggestion, yet will exploit vulnerable people, people who have a vulnerability to addictions, and utilize that money to fund essential programs, to fund, Mr. Chairman, the most basic of tools that children are provided in school, like the crayons that I mentioned. That particular child, while his mother didn't have the dollars to buy the crayons because she spent them at the slots, was also in a school that was in a low-income area, that didn't have a surplus

of funds, that perhaps didn't have a base of parent support that could come up with the additional money to buy the crayons, and the government of the day says: well, as a direct result of its birth that's something that that individual child is going to have to deal with and deal with on its own. I say it's unnecessary. I say there are other alternatives.

It is of concern to me that there is a continual and increasing reliance on lottery funds. I look forward to the opportunity next year to scrutinize the lottery estimates on the same basis. In fact, regardless of whether or not the government of the day provides this within its reporting, I continue to look forward to the debate of these estimates on a broad basis and connecting those expenditures from year to year.

With that, Mr. Chairman, I will conclude my remarks. I thank the hon. minister for her attention.

Thank you very much.

THE ACTING CHAIRMAN: The hon. Minister of Economic Development and Tourism.

MRS. BLACK: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thought I would get in and start answering some of the questions, but before I do, I do want to say that I am disappointed sincerely that the hon. Member for Edmonton-Rutherford is not able to be here, because this is an area he focuses on, and it was very important to him that he have an opportunity to discuss the estimates of the lottery fund. For hon. members that may not realize it, the hon. Member for Edmonton-Rutherford is quite ill, and I will make a commitment to him to discuss these at a later time because I know he specifically wanted to be here this evening to dialogue on the lotteries estimates, and we had hoped he would be here. So we do wish him a very speedy recovery.

We have another member, the Member for Whitecourt-St. Anne, who is also ill and not able to be here, and this was one of the dialogues that he enjoyed participating in as well. So we hope both members will have a speedy recovery and be able to join us.

Mr. Chairman, the Member for Edmonton-Calder talked about the damage to the very fabric of society that had been done by gambling and gaming. I guess one can always look back and say: "Was this damaged? Was that damaged?"

I look at Alberta and realize that you have a couple of options that you can look at. You can either have a very controlled and regulated environment to make sure that if gambling is to occur, it occurs according to the law and that it is supervised and regulated and monitored, or you can drive it underground – because it will occur – and have all sorts of other problems evolve and bad elements come in. So you have a choice.

In Alberta today, just so you know, there are 10,400 registered charities with gaming and lottery. Gaming and lotteries, of course, don't just include VLTs, that we continually hear about. It includes a number of different things such as bingos, casinos, pull tickets, 6/49 tickets that people buy. I think you have to look at what your choice is. If you want to have this policed and regulated and controlled to keep bad elements out, then I think the framework that is here is appropriate and is working very successfully, particularly when you compare that to other jurisdictions.

I think it would be naive for any of us to assume that if you didn't have that, it would go away, because you're sadly mistaken. It will not. It has been there for generations, for decades, for centuries. So, please, don't be foolish. Unless you want to stand up and ban entirely bingos and pull tickets and horse racing,

that is all part of gambling. You'd better face it. In fact, if your mission is to deal with addictions on gambling, I suggest you look at some of the other forms that have a far more addictive program than what some of them have been led to believe in the press. I come into this with a perfectly objective opinion on this program because I'm a new minister and have not been involved in this, but I've been looking at some of the numbers, and quite frankly I think there are some misrepresentations as to what the problems are. I'm not going to stand up and defend one forum or another, but I do defend the program that is there because it must be controlled and policed and it cannot be left to go underground. So as long as there are people who have the intention to go out and gamble, I am fully supportive of the regulations and the commission, the way they monitor it and keep it in tow.

9:00

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Calder also complained about CFEP grants, and I did quickly have my assistant go and get the most current listing. I gather you've got about three times as much going in your riding as is going in my riding, so I think your riding's being very well represented.

The Member for Calgary-Buffalo talked about funding for his community. I was the buddy that worked on his riding for three years, and I can tell you that I'd be real happy if he'd do his job, stand up and say, "CFEP grants are the greatest things since sliced bread for my community." I wouldn't have to do the work in his riding, and that would please me to no end. If he wanted to go out and deliver cheques in his riding, he could go right ahead and do it. It would save me a lot of time.

The other question he brought up was a moral question of governments legislating morality. I don't believe that that's the place of the government. I think morals have to be brought from home and from their own personal beliefs. It's not the place of the government to put morals into legislation.

Calgary-Buffalo then got into the 2005 program, the Expo. As most hon. members know, the vote on 2005 I believe is on June 12, and there's a fierce competition on right now between Japan and Canada for the bid. It is fierce. Hopefully we will be successful in that bid because of the benefits for not only Alberta but all of Canada that we will realize by hosting that World's Fair in our province. We have been supportive of the bid committee, which is a volunteer committee, I might add, of people who have come forward to work on this for quite a few years now. Alberta is quite known for its volunteer spirit, for being able to bring groups together to be supportive of this type of bid program, and naturally we are supportive of it. We have, as I say, a fierce competition ahead of us in the next three or four weeks; well, three weeks I guess now. Hopefully, all members will be contacting any delegations they know from other countries, if they've been in contact with officials who are in the bid countries, to try and make sure they support Canada's bid, because it is very important to us. We have put funding in to help on the bid process, and hopefully we will be successful, because the spin-off at the end of the day is hundreds of millions of dollars to this province and to Canadians.

The Member for Calgary-Buffalo also talked about initiative 6, the problem gamblers and the work that AADAC does in that area. I would commend AADAC. They've taken on the challenge, along with their many other challenges of addiction, and offer a hotline for problem gambling. I think it's been quite successful. It's encouraging to see that people are actually phoning in and saying, "I have a problem." It's better than people ignoring the problem and not seeking help and counseling.

Some of the numbers were brought out. Edmonton-Riverview talked about there having been a 10 percent increase in calls and that 24 percent of the callers from Edmonton had addiction problems. Well, that's 24 percent of the people who call. That's not 24 percent of the people who gamble. So when you factor that in, then it's not 24 percent of the people who are gambling; it's 24 percent of the people who called in from Edmonton, 10 percent overall. I think it's encouraging to see them pick up the phone and say, "I have a problem," because once someone who has an addiction says that, there are places that help people, whether it's an alcohol addiction, a drug addiction, a gambling addiction. Until the addict says, "I need help," you can't help someone with an addiction. They have to want to be helped. I think clearly the record and the history of places like AADAC, Narcotics Anonymous, and AA has been that once someone reaches out and asks for that help, they can in fact receive it. That's encouraging, that they call.

My former experience was in drug addictions, and quite frankly the way you measure the success of a program is if someone phones back and says, "I need a little bit of help to continue on." You know they're staying with the program and they're committed to a recovery program, and that's the best way you can measure it. So when you tell me people are phoning, I say good; get them phoning. Get them phoning and reaching out for help, because the help is there for them. It's when they don't phone that we have the problem, because they're not recognizing they have a problem or they have a problem way to go around, but if you're ever dealing with addiction, that's the only way it works.

The member also asked about community boards, what model we were going to use and when it would become effective. As you know, the – well, the Chairman is back again. Madam Chairman is chairman of the secretariat on gaming, and she is working very hard to come up with that model. As members can well imagine, there have been a number of varieties of suggestions that have come forward for the community model. They are not all the same. It's a matter of finding an appropriate framework that works. I know the hon. chairman of the secretariat has been working feverishly with the various communities and seeking their input on how this framework should work. We would like to have some form of a basic framework ready by the end of June, but we are going as hard and as fast as we can to factor in all of the variables that have come forward from the various community organizations. I know that even in the ones I've met with, they've all had different ideas. So hopefully we can bring them together and provide something that is a workable solution for these community boards.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Could you hold up, Madam Minister, just one moment?

Hon. members, it is getting a little tough to hear in here, so I would ask that we respect the hon. minister and keep it down. Thanks.

MRS. McCLELLAN: We're sorry, Madam Minister. We'll explain this later.

MRS. BLACK: Yes, you will explain it later.

There was another question on money for the multiculturalism and citizenship education fund. The comments made by the Member for Calgary-Buffalo I will take under advisement for when I look at this next year's business planning and budget submissions on how we deal with that. We do have a member

who is the head of the multicultural and education commission, and I'm sure that she will be giving you some input into that funding formula for this next fiscal year.

The Member for Edmonton-Riverview also talked about funding for health and wellness initiatives. Actually, when I think about the funding that goes back to the community and I look at the funding – you know, wellness is more than being at the doctor. Wellness is being active. Wellness is head and body. When you look at the support that goes into parks and recreation and to amateur sports and amateur sports facilities through the community facility enhancement program – I know in my own riding my objective through CFEP is that if I can keep kids busy, I can keep them out of trouble. If I can put in more ball diamonds and playground areas to keep kids out of malls so they aren't hanging out and getting into trouble, then I feel I've done my job. Working with little league communities, hockey teams, et cetera, that is a wellness concept to me that keeps people – that's part of health. That's a healthy kid. Healthy kids are kids that are busy. They go to school, they're busy, they're worn out, and they don't get into trouble. There's a lot of, I think, good points to that.

9:10

Some of these initiatives through our CFEP funding, et cetera, help build those hockey arenas, those ball diamonds, and the parks and the playgrounds. I hope all hon. members are taking advantage of that program in their own constituency, utilizing it so that the kids have a place to go, so they're not hanging out, not hanging out in the wrong places and looking for trouble. That keeps them healthy, keeps them busy, and that's all part of the health initiatives.

The other part I know you were looking at is the actual equipment, and that's another part of the component, where there's a need for equipment. Maybe that isn't needed throughout the whole province, but it's needed in a specific facility. Then there is accommodation, and recommendations come from Alberta Health and the Minister of Health to acquire that equipment or that initiative. This is just a funding formula that is there, but most of the funding for Health of course comes through the Health budget. That's dealt with in a global sense, and this is on special initiatives. You can go through just about all of these initiatives and see where they are very, very positive.

I know the other one that was in here was – what was the other one? – the responsibilities. You know, we have all had difficult stories from our ridings, every one of us. Particularly if you're a parent, you look at it and say: "There but by the grace of God go I. If that was myself and my child, how could that possibly happen?" Sometimes it's pretty hard to understand how these things do happen in communities, but the government cannot be the gatekeeper and the brother or sister or parent of every person in this province. Government can't be everything to everyone. Responsibility has to be there, not only with the individual but within the community.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Calder asked: what happened to the fabric of the community? Why do we need to have these things? Well, our society has changed. Probably when you grew up, if there were problems in the community that you lived in, the neighbours got involved and helped out. People neighbored. Today people put on blinders, and they go right by it. They don't look at it. They just sort of drive right on past. I think it's a shame. I think we've lost something. We used to have service groups that used to go out and fund organizations and kids' groups and that. They've gone and got too busy, and they haven't bothered to do it anymore. We've taken that component out of

our communities, so something came back in. Communities still needed to be there, but nobody was supporting them. A lot of them were trying to run older facilities without the funding coming in to support them.

We lost something in that whole equation. I don't know what it was that made it change. Maybe it was that everything was moving too fast; we were getting into a high-tech area. I don't know what stopped people from being neighbours, but I think it's a sad scenario when that occurs. I don't believe you can ask and expect any government to be able to look after every person in society, but I do feel – and I believe this to be true – that if in fact there is a problem in your community and you know of a person who needs help, then you have the ability to pick up the help line and get that person help. If they will not take the help, then you cannot make them take it, but you can show them how they can get help. You can't make them take it; our laws don't allow that to happen. You can make the offer, show them where it is, give them the guidance, and they can get help. Otherwise, they cannot.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Edmonton-Riverview.

Point of Order Questioning a Member

MRS. SLOAN: Madam Chairman, I'm just wondering if the minister would entertain a question, specifically on the topic that she's speaking about right at this moment.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Hon. minister, will you entertain a question?

MRS. BLACK: Sure.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Go ahead, Edmonton-Riverview.

Debate Continued

MRS. SLOAN: Thank you, Madam Chairman. Thank you Madam Minister, through the Chair. I guess my question is: why computer funding but not funding for crayons? If we can justify an allocation to provide advanced technology to assist children's education, why is it that we cannot also justify an allocation for an elementary tool, very simply, crayons for children?

MRS. BLACK: Quite frankly, Madam Chairman, I think that question probably should have been raised under the estimates for Education, but I can tell you that if a school in my riding did not provide a package of crayons for one of the students that was in my riding, I'd be in there after the principal asking him why. Because a package of crayons can be provided . . . [interjections] Well, no. Hold it. There is a petty cash fund in every school, and if they can't go out and buy a \$2 package of crayons for a kid in a class, a humiliated child, then there's something wrong, and I would be the first one in there. And I've been there. If I were the MLA, quite frankly, and found out there was a child without a package of crayons, I'd deliver it over to the house myself, and I would think that you should do that.

Now, you cannot blame the lottery funding because something didn't respond. Your school should respond, and if it doesn't respond, phone your trustee and find out why, because they should be there doing that. That's their job, to provide that education. So I think I answered your question. I would phone my trustee – and I do quite often actually – and ask questions,

why there was no response. You should do that.

Madam Chairman, I think I've answered all of the questions so far, and I guess if there are any that I've missed from the first three opposition members, I would be prepared to make sure that I check the *Hansard* and respond to those at a later date. At this time, I'll take my seat and see if there are any other questions.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Calder.

MR. WHITE: I did find my place now with your assistance, Madam Chairman, and thank you kindly. Most of the other areas will and have been covered by my colleagues, save one. I draw your attention to page 115 of the estimates, part 8, the category called "other". A very interesting category. In the comparable 1995-96 there was nothing in that category. It jumped to a '96-97 budget of \$9 million, of which the expenditure forecast appears to be \$550,000. Then the budget again is at \$4.7 million. Tell me: what is this fund, and how does it vary from nothing to \$9 million, to half a million dollars, to \$4.7 million, in no time at all? It seems to me, unless this can be explained, this is an area that surely the Auditor General would like to have some look at. It seems to be one of the larger slush funds that have come about.

Thank you.

MRS. BLACK: Madam Chairman, I'm sorry I didn't answer that question. I believe it was Calgary-Buffalo that asked for that line, and I did miss it.

There is money sitting under "other", and that is there specifically in the event that something comes along. It has not been allocated. Now, there are lots of requests for it, as you can well imagine whenever you have something that has not been identified for a specific project. One of the things that may be considered in that: as members remember, the Man in Motion was in our Legislature, and there may be some consideration for some help or funding for his project from "other." Those things have come along and it's there. It doesn't necessarily mean it has to be spent. If it's not spent, then it reverts back to general revenue at the end of the year. It is a provision there that in the event something like that comes along, there is an ability to participate in that.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark.

9:20

MS LEIBOVICI: Thank you. I finally get an opportunity to rise to this important branch within the Department of Economic Development and Tourism. I have some general comments and then some specific questions to ask of the minister. I found her viewpoints rather interesting as to what society has become over the last few years, and I must say that I beg to differ with the hon. minister, that I don't really think we have become a society of uncaring individuals, that I don't really think we have become a society where communities do not care for each other. In fact, we have often sat within this Legislative Assembly and have applauded the efforts of the many volunteers within the province of Alberta without whom a lot of the initiatives that have been put forward over the last three to four years by this government, in terms of downloading on the shoulders of volunteers, would not have been able to occur.

If I can just draw the minister's attention. I realize she is from the beautiful city of Calgary. But there was a bit of an, I agree,

unscientific survey that was done through one of the reporters of the *Edmonton Journal* that looked at dropping 20 wallets in different locations throughout the city and seeing who and how many would be returned. I believe 15 out of the 20 were returned intact with the dollars, with the ID, and with all of the personal belongings. So in fact we have not degenerated as a society that does not care for each other.

One of the other points that the minister made on a couple of occasions was that government can't be the gatekeepers and that in fact government can't be responsible for other people's morals. I agree with that, but I think you need to take that one step forward to see what this government has done and what we are talking about. We have not said within this Assembly, though that probably should be the topic for discussion, as to whether gambling should be banned within the province, but what we are saying is that we should not be encouraging gambling, and that is something this government has done over and over and over again. In other words, we are not the gatekeepers, but we should not be the pied piper that is leading Albertans down the road to gamble more and more. So there are differentiations that need to be made.

With regards, in general again, to the lottery fund estimates, I look at what the estimates were last year, and I notice that there's a lot more detail in terms of the lottery fund summary of revenue disbursements and fund equity, which was at that point under the Department of Transportation and Utilities, and that was in the '95-96, '97-98 business plan. I know that the past Treasurer and the current Treasurer pat themselves on the back at the openness of this government and pat themselves on the back at the fact that this is one of the few provinces, I believe, that do have business plans. But when I look at . . .

Chairman's Ruling Decorum

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I would ask if we could have it a little quieter. It is difficult to hear the hon. member, and there are some that do definitely want to hear the debate that's taking place here. So I'd ask that those of you who want to have conversations, please feel free to use either the patio or the Confederation Room.

Carry on, hon. member.

Debate Continued

MS LEIBOVICI: Thank you, Madam Chairman. When I look at the front of the Budget '97 highlights update document on page 5, I notice that it says in here

For the fourth year, business plans for each ministry are made public. There is increased focus on measuring performance and timely accountability. Albertans will see regular reports on a watch list of measures that track progress in health, education and jobs.

Yet when I turn to page 122 of the selfsame document, that's the closest I can come to finding anything that vaguely resembles the lottery fund. What it says here is "Alberta Gaming and Liquor Commission Business Plan," which I am assuming the lottery is part and parcel of. But if we have separate estimates for the lottery fund, if we have a separate night that has been dedicated to the lottery fund, then I would hope that there would be a separate mandate, goals, and strategies, and definitely performance measures by which we can actually measure whether the lottery fund is attaining what the goals are.

What we have here are three performance measures that deal

with a level of net revenue contributed to the general revenue fund, the administrative productivity, and return to charities. What each of these depends on is how much people are spending on gambling. It has absolutely nothing to do with the competence of the department. It has absolutely nothing to do with whether or not the fund is being administered properly. What these measurements are is: how much can people in the province of Alberta be encouraged to gamble?

Now, in conjunction with that, I think it would be interesting to know – and I don't see it anywhere. Again, with the figures that are here, perhaps I am missing it. I'm not an expert in accounting. But I don't see anywhere where the dollars are for advertising. Where do the dollars come for those big signs, the commercials that say: gamble. The only spot that I could potentially find it in is on page 112, program 9, Racing, Gaming and Liquor Commissions, where it talks about financial assistance to the Alberta Gaming and Liquor Commission, financial assistance to the Alberta Racing Commission. I would be interested in knowing what the \$71 million, I believe it is . . .

MRS. BLACK: Point of order, Madam Chairman.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Hon. minister.

Point of Order Relevance

MRS. BLACK: Those are the estimates of Economic Development and Tourism, and they were dealt with by the Assembly a week or so ago. We are dealing with the lottery estimates tonight.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: That is true, and I would ask if we can stay within the lottery fund estimates.

MS LEIBOVICI: Well, that's exactly what I'm trying to do, but when I look at the business plan . . . If anyone over there can read and pick up one of these documents, I would like for you to show me where, in this business plan, it has lotteries. Can anyone show me that? If you can, then perhaps you can correlate it to the lottery fund estimates, but if you can't, then what you're looking at is Alberta Gaming and Liquor Commission plans. Otherwise, there are no measurements for the lottery fund. If there are not, then the minister can indicate that. If there are, then on program 9 it says Racing, Gaming and Liquor Commissions. Either that is or is not part of lottery funds. The minister seems to indicate that it is not. Then I would suggest that the minister, when she brings forward her budget plans for next year, have a mandate, goals, and strategies and performance measures for the lottery fund.

Debate Continued

MS LEIBOVICI: The other areas of concern deal as well with the mission as stated. The Member for Edmonton-Calder was very astute in picking up the difference in the mission statement and that it appears that there is no role for social responsibility within the mission of the Alberta Gaming and Liquor Commission business plan/lottery fund. I would hesitate to be so bold as to indicate to the minister that perhaps one of her missions should be to look at the social responsibility aspect that this government has with regards to maintaining the integrity of gaming and liquor activities.

I think it's also interesting to note that gaming and liquor have

been put together, and the only way we get dollars for the lottery fund is through gaming. Whether it's through charities, which is a form of gaming at times, or – well, that's the only way we get lottery funds, through gaming. There may be other areas that we get dollars from for the lottery fund, and if there are, I would be interested in knowing where those dollars do come from.

There are questions that I have with regards to – number them for ease – “improve the return to the charities for charitable gaming activities,” which on one hand sounds as if it is a laudable goal. On the other hand, one of the reasons for the problems with regards to the returns to the charities is because of the incidence of VLTs. It's been proven within this province that VLTs take away dollars from charities who fund-raise through other forms of activities.

9:30

There was also an issue that I'd be interested in knowing what the minister's thinking is. I believe one of the members from her side and the hon. Member for Edmonton-Rutherford also had talked about providing tax deductions to charities that would equate to tax deductions that are given to political contributions, and I would be interested in knowing what her opinion is on that.

In going through the list of different measurements, I would like to thank both this minister and the prior ministers for the CFEP grants that have been allocated to my constituency. I would like to know that this minister will follow the initiative of the former minister in tabling the listing of CFEP grants that are provided in each constituency across the province on a regular basis.

I noticed under lottery fund on page 114, item 6, health and wellness initiatives, that there is an item called special projects and would be interested in knowing if the minister would be able and willing to table the list of projects on an ongoing basis that have been and will be receiving funding under those particular initiatives.

Under lottery fund, page 114, the item under cultural initiatives, human rights, citizenship, and multiculturalism education fund. I know that since the human rights and multicultural commissions have been combined, there is great distress amongst the multicultural organizations with regards to their funding, especially the umbrella multicultural organizations. I notice that there are dollars allocated to that particular area. The dollars have decreased substantially from last year to this year. Perhaps the minister could outline which projects have not received funding and whether the minister could commit to a stable funding base for the umbrella multiculturalism groups.

The World Police/Fire Games, I know that they're within the next month. The World Police/Fire Games will be held in Calgary, and I know that all of Alberta is looking forward to that happening. I notice that there are dollars in '95-96 and none in the last couple of years. I'm wondering if there is any potential, if there are going to be overruns, that the lottery fund will be picking up any of that or whether in a sense that's all been taken care of.

Other projects under new initiatives, number 8. If the minister is looking for a worthy cause, I know that this is one that all the Members of the Legislative Assembly will agree is a worthy cause, and that's the DARE program that is throughout Alberta, that has originated with the Edmonton Police Service. We are now training police officers from across Canada. They have only one officer that is dedicated to that particular program, and we know that is a program that saves dollars in the long run in terms of crime prevention.

The minister is indicating: apply to Wild Rose. We will pass

on that very valuable piece of information. Sometimes people don't know under which particular initiative, under which section an application should be made. I must say that the department has always been quite helpful with requests from our particular constituency around funding requests.

The other areas are the Calgary, Alberta, World's Fair, and of course we all would very much like to see the World's Fair be held here in Alberta. There are approximately \$2 million, I believe, that have been estimated for this fiscal year. What I'm sure Albertans, however, would like to know is: what is the government's commitment over the longer term, over the next, I guess it would be, eight years until the World's Fair, hopefully, does in fact happen?

Also, I notice that there are no dollars that have been allocated for Alberta's centennial, which is a project that I understand the Premier's wife is involved in. I'm wondering whether there will be any dollars allocated out of the lottery fund – my understanding, I believe, was that there were going to be some dollars allocated as the project continued – and whether there have been any contingency plans made for that particular project.

There is, I believe, some conflict even with some of the requests that I have made. On the one hand I say there are dollars that should be allocated through the lottery fund. On the other hand we know that these are dollars that have come from, in some cases, people's addiction to gambling, and that is not something that we can condone within this Assembly. So there is a dilemma with that.

Where the dilemma becomes more difficult is when this government increasingly relies on the lottery fund to provide essential services. We've seen that within the hospital sector. We've seen that within the education sector. You need only look at some of the lottery fund items that are here to know that is the case. In fact, all one needs to do these days is pick up a newspaper, and you can see the number of funding areas that are being approached as charities. In particular, I can think of the Children's hospital in Edmonton that is actually fund-raising for, I believe it is, some of their equipment to run the hospital.

It was always my understanding that essential services such as health and education and social services would not be contingent upon lottery funding, would not be contingent on how many people can we get in this province to gamble away their hard-earned dollars so that we could provide basic education and health care services. Unfortunately, I think we are moving, under the guise of community, towards communities taking care of each other. We are moving more and more towards a situation where it is the communities, albeit it through the charities, that will be picking up some of the basic services that government should be providing.

I just had one other comment that the minister might or might not agree with. I noticed that she indicated to the Member for Calgary-Buffalo that she had been in his riding to work on some CFEP grants. I can almost remember verbatim that that's what the minister had indicated to the former Member for Calgary-North West, and I'm just wondering how the minister has all that time to keep going into opposition members' constituencies to help them with their CFEP grants. But I do thank you for your involvement in those areas, and I'm sure the communities thank you as well for the dollars that they have received.

With that, I will close my debate. Thank you.

9:40

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Ellerslie.

MS CARLSON: Thank you, Madam Chairman. I have a few comments tonight and just an opening comment in terms of what the Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark just said. The feeling in the province is that if you need to get money from a CFEP grant, then you need to talk to a government member. So that would be why you are approached so many times, even in opposition ridings, to help with the applications and to put the letters of support. While it's never been the case where I've been turned down in my riding for an application, I think there is the appearance in some instances that it certainly helps to have a government member onside.

I am going to be going through the lottery fund summary of payments on pages 114 and 115 to begin with. It's been a concern to me and a number of people on this side of the House for a long time that under agricultural initiatives the Calgary Exhibition and Stampede and Edmonton Northlands continue to be called agricultural initiatives. Yes, there is that kind of component to what it is they do there, but they also do many things that are competing with other organizations in the area, like trade shows and trade fairs and hosting a variety of things that are not really agricultural in nature. I'm sure that when they first got started – and Edmonton and Calgary were much smaller communities – there was a need for that kind of support there, but now in fact when they're competing in the marketplace and many other areas, I'm wondering why year after year they continue to get money from the lottery funds.

Now, having said that, I know that tomorrow I will get phone calls from both associations defending their reasons for getting it, but I think in the instance of fairness certainly this is something that needs to be relooked at. I think it is not fair to give large organizations, well-established organizations, money-making organizations like those two, dollars as compared to the kind of support that may be needed in other parts of rural Alberta.

When we go down the list, then, to the human rights, citizenship, and multiculturalism . . .

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Hon. members, I would ask again – it is difficult for those members that are trying to listen to the debate – if we could try to keep it down. I would appreciate it. Thank you.

MS CARLSON: . . . education fund, the money hasn't increased over the last few years. We do have an increase in multiculturalism. There is a concern there that there isn't enough money often in this kind of a fund, and certainly from a human rights perspective the number of concerns are not decreasing. In fact they're increasing. I'm wondering why the minister is not looking at more dollars there or new and innovative kinds of programs that can help increase awareness in the province and eliminate the need for even anyone to be concerned about human rights in the province. That's not the case right now, so I am hoping she will address that.

The Wild Rose Foundation. In all sincerity I think it would be a good idea if the minister took a look at the organizations that have received money from Wild Rose over the last four or five years, not from the perspective of the names of the organizations but who the boards of directors are, and look to see the . . . [interjection] The Wild Rose Foundation. The boards of directors for those people who are receiving funds. I think she will find that there are a number of organizations who have exactly the same board members under different names who are receiving funds who I'm not necessarily sure fall within the mandate of the foundation.

**Point of Order
Clarification**

MRS. BLACK: Madam Chairman, could I just interrupt for a second? I do not administer the Wild Rose Foundation. I simply provide the money. I don't administer it. All I do is provide money to everybody. The list of requests comes in, and then they're administered by specific departments. I don't administer these things.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Thank you for that clarification.

Again, members, I would ask if we could keep the conversation to a minimum, as we are trying to hear.

Go ahead, Edmonton-Ellerslie.

Debate Continued

MS CARLSON: Thank you, Madam Chairman. Well, if the Chair will allow me just the ability here to talk about this for a few more moments, because it is a money line in the estimates. I think there have been some concerns raised in communities about some boards of directors receiving moneys on an ongoing basis for similar projects. So I think it is something that you seriously need to investigate and take a look at.

[Mr. Clegg in the Chair]

Now, having said that, the Wild Rose Foundation has done a lot of good work in this province over the years. We would not want it to get to a state where there was any sort of perception that the funds were being misused so that then you would have to move to a point where you'd have to cut it or change its mandate. So just a word of warning in that area.

Then down to services for problem gamblers. This line item has increased by 20 percent just in the past year. I think that is something for all of us to be remarkably concerned about in this province. A 20 percent increase in a line item when every other budget in the government is decreasing indicates some sort of problem there. [interjection] Problem gamblers.

**Chairman's Ruling
Decorum**

THE ACTING CHAIRMAN: Order. We have to have some order in the House because the minister of lotteries cannot hear one word of the hon. member. So we don't want to be miserable, but you've got to keep it down to a dull roar. There's lots of room back there, if some of you really have to talk. Just calm it, please.

Hon. member.

Debate Continued

MS CARLSON: Thank you very much. The need for an increase in services for problem gamblers speaks specifically to the increased gambling with the VLTs.

MRS. BLACK: No, it doesn't.

MS CARLSON: I think it does. The minister is saying no, but if you take a look at the specs in the information released by AADAC, we see since VLTs were introduced in the province, that specifically problem gambling has risen and that there's a direct correlation between the two. I think that's a problem that this province really needs to take a look at.

Specifically, there are some real concerns about the age groups

and gender of some of the people who are becoming increasingly problem gamblers. If you take this back to where they get started in the cycle, it is primarily at the VLTs. I think there are a couple of reasons for that. When you can get a conditioned response every three seconds when you're playing the machines and you tie them into alcohol, there's an increased ability and opportunity for people to abuse it and to become addicted to it. Certainly all of the information that I've read from AADAC would indicate this to be true. AADAC is the only government agency that is increasing the number of employees and the space that is required now. I'm not criticizing that increase, because it's needed. It's desperately needed right now in this province. I'm saying: take a look at the problem from the other side and solve it before you get there.

The minister talked about not wanting to supervise and regulate the industry or else drive it underground. Well, I think that's fine in terms of the kind of gambling that we had in the province before. Certainly with bingos and horse racing and casinos, at the introduction in each of those of an increase in venues and seasons that they could run in, we didn't see a correlation in terms of the number of increased addicted gamblers. With VLTs we do see that correlation. It's quite a clear correlation. It's strong enough that provinces like B.C. took a look at it and decided not to move into that field. So I think it continues to be an area of concern, and I hope the minister takes that under advisement and at some point reviews that in terms of what VLTs are doing to the fabric of the society here and the kinds of hardships it places on people who for whatever reason fall into the cycle of the addiction.

9:50

I just want to refer back to some of the comments that were made last year around AADAC and see if we can get a progress report in terms of where they're at. They have many initiatives for kids that are under the age of 18. These initiatives are primarily for raising awareness, but we've had an increase in the number of young people under the age of 18 who are also addicted gamblers or chronic gamblers. I'm wondering what successes AADAC can measure in terms of the programs that they've got, whether they're specifically addressing anything to problem gamblers who are adolescents.

If the minister could update us in terms of what's happening at the Nechi Institute. That was a pilot project for gambling.

**Point of Order
Clarification**

MRS. BLACK: Once again, Mr. Chairman, just for clarification on a point of order. This fund just provides the funding to the various initiatives. I don't administer the AADAC program or the addictions program. That goes through AADAC itself, and I think your questions are better directed through those estimates or to the minister responsible for AADAC. I'm only, again, providing funding in support of their initiatives. I think you're dealing in the wrong estimates again. I just give the money.

THE ACTING CHAIRMAN: Just to clarify it more, if the hon. member would like to have the hon. Minister of Community Development answer some questions, that would be in order. Hon. member, just go ahead with your questions and with the proper person. I think it's clarified for you now.

Debate Continued

MS CARLSON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Certainly I just have

a few more questions in this regard, and if the appropriate minister will take them under advisement – you don't even have to answer them tonight. I just would like a progress report on them.

The Nechi Institute then. If you could tell me what's happening here. The elective program at the U of A: I would like an update on enrollment, the success of the program, and how it's working out in the field. Then just in terms of the gambling treatment initiatives, I'm wondering how AADAC measures their success in those areas and how successful they feel they are. Is it comparable to alcohol addictions? I don't know what they compare it to, so if we could get some clarification there. Then, also, the "Slim" Thorpe Recovery Centre. How many clients have been receiving inpatient treatment there this year, and in a general thought, how successful is the program, and what kind of feedback do you get from the community?

The minister responsible for supplying all of this money stated in her earlier comments that government can't be the gatekeeper. Then I would respectfully ask what role government plays when government sets up the gambling, when in many cases it's linked with access to alcohol, when in all cases the regulation is set up there for it to be instituted and regulated by government, and you provide the assistance for accessing help to people. I don't know. If that isn't a gatekeeper role, then what function is it that the government has? Certainly it's almost a Big Brother function, then, and I'm hoping you can clarify that.

Just for a few moments over to the Alberta Gaming and Liquor Commission income statement. Is there a full-fledged audit done on this commission by the Auditor General? Do you know offhand? Yes, there is? Okay. Do they specifically identify the gaming and liquor operations expenses and measure those to a mandate by the department or a set of directions that would outline where they should be paying the expenses? Also, who gets the licences? I think there's a concern there in terms of its being a fair playing field, and I'm wondering if that's included in the audit and if the minister actually looks at that at any point in time.

With that, Mr. Chairman, I conclude my remarks.

MRS. McCLELLAN: Mr. Chairman, I'll just undertake to the hon. member, as it is lotteries estimates tonight, that rather than taking the time, I have taken some notes and I will review *Hansard* and I will give you the information on the Wild Rose and take your comments to the group and give you some full information on AADAC.

Regarding "Slim" Thorpe, maybe Lander would be of interest to you as well.

If you look at the performance measures under AADAC, in their business plan you will see that they indeed do have performance measures. It's a bit difficult, because after a person leaves the program, unless they voluntarily come back – generally, in alcohol many of them receive their support through AA, which we don't monitor. The dollars for addictions in gambling were allotted exactly on the amount of dollars that AADAC asked for. They asked for that amount of increase to carry their program, and that's what they received. I guess we'll just continue to respond in that way. If they feel they need more money, we'll do it.

I will undertake to do that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for that.

THE ACTING CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Norwood.

MS OLSEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just have a few questions. I think most of them have been asked. One question I have is in relation to – this may have been asked as well. There was a lot of chatter, and I couldn't hear. Human rights, citizenship, multiculturalism. There's been no funding allotted. Is that because there's been no specific programs? On page 108. Is this a new area?

MRS. McCLELLAN: It's Community Development.

MS OLSEN: Okay. So my question then is: were there any programs in the past that no longer exist within this funding, or nobody submitted any initiatives? Why no funding to that program?

The other comment I have is that I'm happy that the provincial government responded to the World Police/Fire Games. It will bring a tremendous amount of activity to Calgary, and I look forward to going there. I'm not able to compete this year. However, I know that it's a tremendous support to the policing community. It's a large brotherhood, and these things really do help bring everybody together, and they're able to have exchanges on different issues arising. So I'm very happy for that.

My other issues really are around the aspects of gambling. Of course, I know that without drugs, alcohol, and gambling I would never have had a job as a police officer. However, that's not the way it is. I do feel that the more we focus on and increase revenues from the gambling industry, the more dependent we become on it as a government for that kind of revenue. I really have a problem when I hear an operator or a hotel owner say, "If my video lottery machines are taken out of my hotel or my bar, then I'll go broke." Well, I don't have any sympathy for that mind-set. If you go broke, then that's the market. You shouldn't be there to exist off the lottery revenues. If this government says they don't want to control the market, then they shouldn't be concerned whether or not somebody's making money off a VLT. The VLT should go. We're only contributing to existing problems. Many people recover from drug or alcohol problems, dependencies, then turn to other addictions. In many instances those other addictions are bingos, gambling, horse racing.

The government talks about facilitating and supporting the revitalization of the racing industry. That was also in the '95 estimates a goal that they wanted to achieve. Maybe somebody can answer that question: was this goal not achieved? Why, again, do you want to continue to enhance the racing industry? It's another form of gambling; it creates more problems. So we're creating bigger problems by trying to increase the gambling mechanisms for people.

10:00

Yes, the issue around addictions is that if you don't recognize your problem, then you won't deal with it. However, the stories that my colleague from Edmonton-Riverview spoke to regarding the child without crayons: that's just one small issue. I have policed in a constituency that I now am a representative for, and I can tell you that there are many, many children who are offspring of parents who have severe addiction problems, and those addiction problems are not just alcohol; they're gambling. Many, many kids are left home alone because Mom and Dad are out playing the VLTs, they're out playing bingo, they're out at the horse races.

It's not a small problem when you look at the kids that are impacted and affected. You know, to have only \$2 million given to deal with the problem gamblers to me is not reflective, certainly, of the amount of money that's brought in. I know the

minister answered that question in relation to: that's what AADAC asked for; that's what they got. I guess I look at the issue and I say that it's bigger, it's much bigger than that. I can take either one of the ministers into my constituency on any given day, and we can talk about gambling and you can see the results of it. It's unfortunate. The kids are not responsible, but we need to respond in a responsible manner as a government.

MR. BONNER: Take them to the Cromdale, Sue.

MS OLSEN: Well, yes. One of my colleagues says to take you to the Cromdale. Well, I wouldn't do that to any of my friends, so I wouldn't take you to the Cromdale either. It's a place where there are video lottery terminals. It's a place that is just not desirable. Unfortunately for the community it exists, and it creates problems.

[Mrs. Gordon in the Chair]

I have some questions also about the aboriginal groups wanting casinos on reserves and becoming dependent upon that kind of revenue. How many reserves have requested casinos on the reserves as revenue generators? I know that many reserves do make a lot of money and employ people in the gambling industry in Ontario, in the U.S. I know that in Saskatchewan many of those casinos are failing, and they're not getting the business they anticipated. I'm happy for that in that province, and I would hope there isn't that need in this province and that we don't allow that to occur.

In terms of outsourcing operational activities that can be performed by the private sector at the same or lower cost, if you can do it at the same cost as now, why would you outsource it? Why would the government choose to outsource something when they can get the service at the same cost? It doesn't make any sense.

In terms of the Gaming and Liquor Act, is there going to be – I can't remember, actually, off the top of my head if there is in fact a surcharge on the violation tickets issued under the Gaming and Liquor Act. So if you're fined under that Act, is there an additional surcharge? If there isn't, will there be, and will that money go to the victims of crime compensation fund?

I find it interesting that the mandate of the department is to "ensure integrity and social responsibility in the operation of gaming and liquor activities," and at the same time it seems that another conflicting goal is collecting gaming and liquor revenue. They seem to be at odds with each other.

I think that's pretty well all of the questions and comments I have. I truly am concerned about all areas of the gambling industry. I think if we really look at the money that's coming in to slot machines, to the race track, at the bingos, it's much of the money that this government is putting out. I really think it's a vicious circle, and the less the government is involved in gambling and counting on those revenues to fund other aspects of government and government services, the better off this government would be. I think there's a responsibility to get out of gambling, to get away from the VLTs, and to stop counting on that source of revenue to fund other services.

I think that's all the comments I have.

MR. MacDONALD: Madam Chairperson, I appreciate this opportunity to ask a few questions this evening. I respect the minister's time. I'm not only an MLA, but I'm a community volunteer in my local community league. In the business plan one of your performance charts is the return to charities. We raise a

lot of money, we depend on, we're reliant on money for our community league from the casino. Here the performance chart states there will be a return of 40 percent. This year it is targeted to be 50 percent. Now, with the growth of gambling, with VLTs, with all the other pull tickets, the raffles, the bingos, and the demand on the dollar, how is this possible, this 10 percent increase in returns to charities? I would be curious about this. If the minister would like to reply in writing, I would like to bring this back to my community league.

For the other questions that I have, if the minister would like to respond in writing at a later date, that is all right. I have a few more questions. The lottery fund, the summary of payments, the agricultural societies and organizations: how much of that \$9.5 million, if any, is to the 4-H organization in this province? [interjections] Okay. Thank you.

Believe it or not, 30 percent, one-third, of this caucus are graduates of 4-H programs in various provinces across this country.

Alberta Sport, Recreation, Parks and Wildlife Foundation: you're spending \$14.8 million.

MRS. BLACK: That's hers.

MR. MacDONALD: That's hers? Okay. If you have a moment . . .

MRS. McCLELLAN: I'm writing notes.

MR. MacDONALD: Okay.

And for your special events, projects, \$2.2 million, there's an increase in this budget.

MRS. BLACK: That's hers too.

MR. MacDONALD: That's hers too?

MRS. BLACK: I don't spend anything.

MR. MacDONALD: You don't spend anything. Okay. If you could kindly respond to this in writing, please, I would be very grateful. [interjection] Well, they're sitting in close proximity to each other, so perhaps this is true.

Those are the questions I have this evening, if you would respond in writing.

10:10

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Does the hon. minister want to respond to the hon. member?

MRS. McCLELLAN: I'll respond in writing. He knows that.

MR. MacDONALD: Okay. Thank you very much.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Glengarry.

MR. BONNER: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. I just have a few general comments here and a couple of questions. I do appreciate the position that you're put in. Having worked with municipal grants from a hockey perspective, I realize that there are great demands not only with the number of groups but the increasing dollar value that each one wants. When we are dealing with gambling and liquor, the regulations do have to be tight. I

think what I would question more than anything is the availability that there is for some of these people. I was very happy to see the funding go up for AADAC. They do have some very fine programs. I did agree with you when you said that the admission is only the first step. These are extremely serious problems, and unfortunately the success rate of even these excellent programs is low. So we do have a very identifiable problem with people in our communities.

If I could speak for Murray Costello and the CHA, the Canadian Hockey Association, I know they would thank you greatly for your contribution to that organization. You're doing a marvelous job. The Canadian Hockey Association is facing the same difficulties that all sports organizations are facing. The line between them and the Americans is getting finer and finer to allow us to stay on top. So if you could give her more money to give to them, if somewhere you could find extra dollars, I know they would spend them wisely.

In recreational initiatives under the lottery fund summary of payments, yes, there was an increase of \$2 million that was spent. If we could find out where that went, and that question was asked by the Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar.

Under the community facility enhancement grant I see that this has been decreased from \$35 million to \$31 million. At a time particularly when a number of our senior facilities and a number of our community leagues are getting much older, I would think, if you could, that this would be the area where we would require an increase.

Under your lottery fund summary of payments in number 6 for special projects, there was just a small increase of \$30,000 for special projects, and I was wondering if you could be more specific on what that was.

Finally, in number 8 I was extremely happy to see that there are funds being allocated to schools, particularly in the area of computers. Two and a half million dollars is a drop in the bucket, particularly in the field of career and technology studies, where the whole idea of preparing our students for the future has changed drastically. When we start talking about robotics in schools at junior and senior high and particularly where their entire focus has been changed, these are extremely expensive. If you could please allow more funding in that direction, that would be tremendous.

I thank you very much.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: After considering the proposed lottery fund estimates for 1997-98, are you ready for the vote?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

Agreed to:

Program 1 - Agricultural Initiatives	\$22,530,000
Program 2 - Cultural Initiatives	\$29,679,000
Program 3 - Recreation Initiatives	\$17,091,000
Program 5 - Community Facility Enhancement Program	\$31,000,000
Program 6 - Health and Wellness Initiatives	\$10,550,000
Program 7 - Science and Environmental Initiatives	\$750,000
Program 8 - New Initiatives	\$11,700,000
Total Payments	\$123,300,000

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Shall the vote be reported?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Opposed? Carried.
Hon. Deputy Government House Leader.

MR. HANCOCK: Madam Chairman, I move that we rise and report.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Hon. Government House Leader.

MR. HAVELOCK: Thank you. I'd like to seek unanimous consent of the House to revert to the Introduction of Bills.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: No. Government House Leader, we have a motion on the floor by the Deputy Government House Leader to rise and report.

[Motion carried]

[Mr. Herard in the Chair]

MRS. GORDON: Mr. Speaker, the Committee of Supply has had under consideration certain resolutions of the lottery fund estimates for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1998, reports the approval of the following estimates, and requests leave to sit again.

Lottery fund payments: agricultural initiatives, \$22,530,000; cultural initiatives, \$29,679,000; recreation initiatives, \$17,091,000; community facility enhancement program, \$31,000,000; health and wellness initiatives, \$10,550,000; science and environmental initiatives, \$750,000; new initiatives, \$11,700,000; total lottery fund payments, \$123,300,000.

10:20

THE ACTING SPEAKER: Does the Assembly concur in the report?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

THE ACTING SPEAKER: Opposed? So ordered.

MR. DAY: Mr. Speaker, I'd request unanimous consent to revert to Introduction of Bills.

THE ACTING SPEAKER: Having heard the motion, does the Assembly agree to the motion to have unanimous consent to revert to Introduction of Bills?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

THE ACTING SPEAKER: Opposed? Carried.

head: **Introduction of Bills**
Bill 14
Appropriation Act, 1997

MR. DAY: Mr. Speaker, I request leave to introduce Bill 14, the Appropriation Act, 1997. This being a money Bill, His Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor, having been informed of the contents of this Bill, recommends the same to the Assembly.

[Leave granted; Bill 14 read a first time]

head: **Government Bills and Orders**
 head: **Committee of the Whole**

[Mrs. Gordon in the Chair]

Bill 5
Persons With Developmental Disabilities
Community Governance Act

[Adjourned debate May 12: Mr. Dickson]

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Riverview.

MRS. SLOAN: Thank you, Madam Chairman.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I'm sorry, hon. member. I really should allow the sponsor of the Bill, the hon. Member for Calgary-McCall, to speak.

MR. SHARIFF: Thank you, Madam Chairman. I am pleased to speak to the committee about Bill 5, the Persons With Developmental Disabilities Community Governance Act. There were some questions raised during second reading which I would like to answer and clarify for the committee members.

This government places a high priority on providing quality services to persons with disabilities. Bill 5 will ensure that persons with disabilities, their families, and their communities will be involved in planning and delivering services. This is not a cost-saving measure. It is anticipated that the government will increase funding for the services to persons with disabilities program by \$20 million over the next two years to ensure that the needs of adults with developmental disabilities are being met. The entire budget for the services to persons with disabilities program will be transferred to the community management system.

It has been raised that amendments could possibly be made to include handicapped children's services within this Bill. The handicapped children's services program has a legislated base within the Child Welfare Act to ensure that necessary services are provided. This Act will remain in force under the child and family services authorities. As children with disabilities have a wide range of needs, their needs will be better met through the child and family services authorities. The community planning process that is under way is working with parents of children with disabilities to ensure that adequate funding and services are provided for these children and their families.

This Bill has come about through extensive discussions with parents, individuals with disabilities, community agencies, organizations, and interested community members. These people have played an integral role in the creation of this legislation. There have been some concerns raised that certain stakeholders may guide this process. Family and Social Services works with a wide range of stakeholders. Some have competing views and interests. Some have higher profiles than others. We look for input from a wide range of stakeholders to ensure that decisions are being made which represent the needs of persons with disabilities. The regional and provincial board members will represent many areas. There will not be overrepresentation by any one stakeholder on a board.

The nomination process will be established through regulations in the Act. These regulations will allow plenty of participation of staff, individuals with a vested interest, and other criteria for board membership. Candidates for these boards will be selected based on the skills and knowledge they bring to the board. A

public nomination process has been used to ensure there is a wide range of community representation on the boards. As well, a department panel with community representation will do the interviews and provide recommendations to the Minister of Family and Social Services for consideration. We have seen the success of this process in the Michener board members. This group of highly qualified and committed individuals are looking at new ways to meet the needs of Michener Centre residents.

In regard to the concerns raised about remuneration, these are volunteer boards, and the members will only receive an honorarium and compensation for travel and out-of-pocket expenses.

There will be three types of boards established in the transition to community management. There was some concern about only one facility board being mentioned in the Act. The first board to be established was the Michener Centre board. There are nine government-operated facilities in the province, of which Michener Centre is the largest. The persons with developmental disabilities Act is broad, enabling legislation that is intended to allow services to adapt over time, and identifying the facilities would narrow the opportunities to change and adapt as needed.

This government has no plans to deinstitutionalize or close facilities. It is the choice of families and guardians to decide where their son or daughter shall live. Whether they choose the community or a facility, supports will be made available. Establishing three types of boards will make it easier for boards to be responsive to local needs and make effective and timely decisions.

Each of these three boards has different mandates. The community boards will be responsible for ensuring services at the local level. Because these boards are based within the community, it will be easier for people to work with these boards in planning and delivering services. The facility boards are only responsible for the management of facilities currently operated by the government. They will be looking more to assets and operations rather than the actual services provided. The provincial board will make sure that services are meeting the needs of persons with developmental disabilities and that they are being provided consistently throughout the province. The provincial, community, and facility boards will collaborate and work cooperatively to ensure that the needs of persons with disabilities are being met.

The preamble of the Act states: "the provision of services that are based on equitable opportunity, funding and access to resources." This Bill will ensure that services for adults with developmental disabilities are available when needed. The greatest advantage of these boards and the community management system is that they can be more responsive to the needs of people within their communities. The facility and community boards have the responsibility to assess local needs and develop plans for the delivery of services at the local level. The provincial board will take these plans and consolidate them into our provincial plan. These business plans must be approved by the Minister of Family and Social Services. These business plans will indicate how services will be delivered in each of the six regions. These six regions fall within the same six regional boundaries currently used by the department, which are coterminous with the health authorities' boundaries. A wide range of programs and services currently exists within each of these regions. Any changes that are made to these services will only improve the services available.

If a person moves from one region to another, section 10(e) gives authority to the provincial board to establish policies in this

area to ensure that appropriate services are available.

To ease the transition to a new system, current services to persons with disabilities staff we'll assign to the provincial community and facility boards. This Bill will enable the provincial board to become the employer during the transition to the community management system. This will make it easier to give community and facility boards the authority to manage their own human resources in the future.

10:30

The area of accountability is an important one for any legislation. The provincial community and facility boards will be fully accountable to the Minister of Family and Social Services. The business planning and reporting requirements are outlined in the Financial Administration Act and the Government Accountability Act. Therefore, it is unnecessary to mention these Acts in this legislation. Under section 22 of this Bill the minister can request information, records, and reports from these boards. The boards may also be required to have an annual audit under section 9 of Bill 5. By increasing community involvement in planning and delivering services to persons with disabilities, we also increase the focus on our own accountability.

There were also concerns raised about inspections. Inspection powers only apply to premises owned or operated by a community board, facility board, or service providers. It doesn't apply to premises owned or rented by individuals.

A few members also raised the issue of bylaw and meeting. It is a legal convention in written legislation to refer to these areas in singular form rather than plural.

All legislation in Alberta has an expiry date. This allows government to review legislation and determine if it is still required or needs changes prior to renewal.

I hope that I've addressed your concerns about the persons with developmental disabilities Act. I urge you to support this important Bill that will ensure that Albertans with developmental disabilities continue to receive the highest quality of services available. If no members have any questions, then I propose that we call the question.

Thank you.

MR. DICKSON: The Member for Calgary-McCall certainly can't be accused of being a pessimist in terms of hoping to get to the question so quickly.

With respect to Bill 5, Madam Chairman, since I last spoke on this at second reading, I've been contacted by three constituents. One woman in particular works with people with developmental disabilities and has for the last 12 years and asked me some questions that I'm going to relay to the Member for Calgary-McCall, because I wasn't sure what the appropriate response was.

She started off by pointing out to me that in her experience it's very rare that she works with a client with only a developmental disability. In fact, cross disabilities are a very frequent issue that clients typically present, not a single disability but a number of disabilities, different types of disabilities. One of the questions would be: are the other disabilities simply ignored? If there is developmental disability, is that all that's required? Is there any particular contemplation or provision in terms of dealing with cross disabilities and where those people fit under this Act?

I guess the other point that was raised was that we're developing actually quite an elaborate model to deal with Albertans with developmental disabilities. Not that that's inappropriate, but when one looks at the three clauses in the preamble, and if you were to drop the word "developmental," so you simply had "adults with

disabilities" – actually, the three workers I talked to raised with me the question: why is it we have this very elaborate system to deal with developmental disabilities and we don't seem to focus this same kind of energy on Albertans with other kinds of disabilities? That's not to say this is bad or doesn't warrant support, but it does raise a question. We've sort of hived off and focused on one kind of disability and sort of constructed what I think has got to be a fairly elaborate set of mechanisms to deal with that population. In terms of some congruence or symmetry or balance, one would think that the government might be dealing with other kinds of disabilities as well.

So those are the concerns. There are some other technical ones that I'll raise later, because I'm confident there'll be some amendments that would remedy some of the other concerns that were brought to my attention, but those concerns were ones I hadn't frankly considered before when I spoke to Bill 5 at second reading. I'm hopeful that before the end of this stage we'll get perhaps some response from the sponsor of the Bill.

Thanks very much, Madam Chairman.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Riverview.

MRS. SLOAN: Thank you, Madam Chairman. I appreciate the opportunity again to speak to this Bill. I had the opportunity to raise some questions at second reading. The direction of my questions will be in somewhat of a different perspective now that we're in committee.

First of all I'd like to talk about the whole move towards shared governance, and by that I mean a governance model which even in this Bill is unique unto itself. It has not adopted the health authority model; it has not adopted the education sector model but has chosen to create another hybrid model of regional governance. One of the first questions that I have with respect to that is: why another hybrid model? Respecting the need for people in this sector to be involved at the community level, I wonder about the risks, the rationale, the logic in creating all these different patchwork governance models across the province. Why did that come about?

To critique some of the finite pieces of the Bill, I looked at – and I believe I did raise this with the hon. member in second reading – the whole concept of having provincial facility and community boards. It seems to me in other sectors we went through tremendous chaos for the government to rid itself of those layers. We had facility boards in health care, approximately 147: all disbanded, all eliminated, all the history and the protocol from those archived. Now we are moving, for this particular area of service, back to incorporating those. I think to some degree there are some communities in the province, specifically in health care, that say: "Well, why couldn't we have kept that model for our specific health services? Now the government's approving it or proposing it for developmental disabilities." So again the rationale with respect to that is not clear.

The other question that comes to mind with respect to this is that we chose in the development of these many hybrid models of governance to say that some services were important enough that the need necessitated their being provincially based. I raise the Alberta Cancer Board as an example. Again, why has that model not been considered or examined rather than a three-tiered, complex model of governance for developmental disabilities?

Those are all questions that I don't have answers to. I would be most appreciative if the hon. member could provide some

background information, rationale with respect to that.

What I've tried to project is that the ideas behind shared governance in the province have been many and varied and Bill 5 proposes another. I'm not saying it's not worthy of exploration, nor am I saying that it's not worthy of support. I guess I want the models to be fully examined and fully assessed, and I think it's only through an understanding of that that the broader concept of shared governance and the particular challenges attached to that can be appreciated.

I think one of the routes of these types of Bills, this direction, is the idea around a minimalist government reflecting a variety of beliefs, whether it's to reduce the role of government, the cost of government, to cut government, which would bring decision-making closer to the people, or to reduce the role of government and thereby reduce the intrusion of government into the public sector and into the lives of individuals, families, and communities. That's one component of these directions.

10:40

I think another component is the idea of public choice, and here again I think the hon. member who spoke to that reflected that in his preliminary comments. There was a desire for a greater degree of choice and involvement. To some degree we've seen that in all other sectors, and while it's not again an idea that I think should necessarily be stymied, again we have to fully understand the reasons and assess whether or not those reasons are valid.

There is unquestionably also an issue and a concern about privatization, about deinstitutionalization. Particularly, that concern I know has arisen around the province with respect to this Bill. The government with respect to this area I think is of the view that if government intervention impedes a free market economy – and I'm not sure. Is it the free market economy we're trying to achieve with respect to developmental disabilities? I don't know, but the whole move towards regionalization, the whole move toward government interference, government playing a direct role in governance all has to be encompassed and assessed with respect to that.

As we proceed to analyze that and look at the impacts of those ideas, I think that if we are going to move to that, we also need to consider that there will potentially be some impacts. One is the impact of individuals being defined the way the economy would define them, as an economic man or an economic person, thus just creating, I guess, a self-sufficiency or an individual responsibility to care for oneself. I think that's particularly concerning in the context of developmental disabilities.

There are other concerns around if you get into the free market, allowing that to determine priorities in the allocation of resources. The market may not always allocate resources or view the allocation of resources to disabilities as a priority, and certainly we have a component of the population that requires the services encompassed in this Bill that are vulnerable. If we divulge responsibility away from legislation, I think there is a potential risk that resources always . . .

Chairman's Ruling Committee of the Whole Debate

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Hon. member, I just would remind you – I have allowed some leeway and some latitude here – that basically at this stage of the Bill, Committee of the Whole, we're dealing with the clauses within the Bill. I think really what you're talking more on are the principles of the Bill, and that is the second reading stage, where principles of the Bill are debated. So

I would ask if you could try to focus on the committee stage and clause-by-clause debate.

MRS. SLOAN: Thank you, Madam Chairman. With all due respect, to some degree I think the preamble, though, sets the stage for the intent of the Bill, and I'm trying to contrast that intent, I guess, with some of the risks that I see inherent in the Bill, some of the risks that I see towards moving to, as I termed it, a hybrid governance model, one unlike any other governance model in the province.

Thank you for those comments.

Debate Continued

MRS. SLOAN: I think for the purposes of the discussion this evening I have sufficiently outlined my concerns with respect to that and am quite happy, then, to move specifically to the components of the Bill of which we speak.

On a humorous note, I just wanted to raise a question with respect to a statement that the hon. member made in reference to saying that the regions would be coterminous with the health regions, that there would be six. That, with all due respect, was news to me. I thought we had 17 health regions. I found that of interest. I'm not sure the intent with respect to that. I am certainly aware that there is a consultation ongoing about the health regions, the number of them. If it is six, I wasn't aware that had been announced to date. It was of interest to me certainly that that announcement was inherent in the discussion of this Act this evening.

I spoke in my preliminary remarks with respect to the roles of the provincial, facility, and community boards. I talked to some degree about: why the three-tiered approach? Is that going to lend itself to administrative efficiency? Is it going to lend itself to an easy or a complex system of tracking? Is that going to lend itself to accountability? I would anticipate and I would hope – and if not the case, then amendments may be in order – that all of these boards would be accountable and responsible to report to the provincial government on their activities. As I reviewed their responsibilities, as I looked at the provincial board's role being to “promote,” to “develop a plan,” to “oversee” and implement, to “co-ordinate,” to “establish policies,” to “ensure consistency,” et cetera, et cetera, the community board's very similarly is to develop “priorities,” to “oversee,” to “assess,” to “manage.”

While I did hear the hon. member say that the facilities were only responsible for management, assets, and operations, I read inherent in the responsibilities within the Act itself that in fact their responsibilities are broader than that. They are to determine priorities with respect to the provision of services. They will have a role in the development of regulations. They are to oversee and implement a plan with respect to the regulations and assess on an ongoing basis the needs of those who receive their services. So their role is much more, in fact, than assets and operation or management. It's policy setting. It's priority setting. It's planning.

My point on that. There is then not much that differentiates that role from the community board, which is to determine “priorities in the provision of services,” to “allocate funding,” to “develop in accordance with the regulations . . . a plan,” to “oversee and evaluate the implementation of the plan.” The point I'm trying to make is that all of these things are duplication. Perhaps there is a justifiable rationale that accompanies that. I would appreciate more detail from the hon. member, because, to me, it's creating a matrix of overlapping duplication, I guess,

complex administration and governance. I think that for the individual, whether it be an individual who is accessing services or a family member advocating on behalf of an individual, it's going to lead to a system that is very complex, very difficult to understand.

I would move then to a section speaking directly to that, the section on appeals. In this section on appeals we've outlined a process whereby we're going to, basically, first of all, "attempt to resolve the matter informally". I think that's certainly supportable. If that doesn't work, then we would "refer the matter" to

a member of the Community Board or Facility Board . . . to a person chosen to mediate and to attempt to resolve the matter.

I do believe that there is in that proposed structure an inherent chance of conflict of interest.

If that doesn't work, then we're going to propose a hearing that will be conducted by three members of the provincial board, and lo and behold, that board is not going to be subject to any review. Their decision will be final. I guess I wonder how three members of a provincial board who oversee the facility boards and community boards are going to be in a position to be unbiased. How are they going to be in a position not in a conflict of interest with respect to this? I submit that to the hon. member for his consideration and would have an interest in hearing his response with respect to that.

10:50

I think any appeal mechanism must be open to the laws of natural justice. To say that we're going to construct a process whereby three members of a board that is part of a matrix, part of this three-tiered approach, are then going to determine not just at one level but the final decision on a matter I think is extremely concerning, particularly when, as I referred to earlier, what is proposed with respect to the structure for this sector, for these services, is going to be confusing to the average individual and their family members.

It has happened in health care. I recall that I made reference to this, that in health care now with the regional governance model we have no less than five advisory and appeal mechanisms. I'm not sure if the government just hasn't recognized that or if in fact what they're trying to create in this governance model is a much more restrictive, constrictive process of either not having appeals, making it too difficult so that appeals are not forthcoming, or to ensure that appeals are not subject to the laws of natural justice within this area.

[Mr. Herard in the Chair]

I find the area of dismissal of boards of interest. Again, from experience it seems to me that while there is reference made to this, it has not been our practice or experience in this province that sections of this nature are ever acted upon. We see perhaps anecdotally, because the government won't release specifics, tremendous increases in administrative costs with regional delivery models. That has been accelerating from the onset of those models being instituted. Given that the government doesn't report that, that they don't appear to have mechanisms in place to demonstrate to the populace, the citizens of this province, that regional delivery models are efficient, more efficient than provincially administered models, I find it somewhat amusing that

we would incorporate a board dismissal section.

I again make reference to administrators in other sectors in this province that have for a variety of reasons incurred increases administratively to some degree to their own salary, tremendous increases in fact. Some of the highest paid people in the public service are administrators for the regional health authorities. All of that being said and all of the deficits that are now accruing not only within the health sector but other sectors, what in fact will it take for an action to be undertaken with respect to the dismissal of a board?

I guess just a finite question with respect to this: does this apply to any or all boards inherent in this Act? So is this section of the Bill intended to be activated at the community level, the facility level, and the provincial level?

I think that we have a need to be more accountable. I heard the member make reference to the fact that the Bill was intended to ensure that services were accessible when needed, that this had to be the objective. I am introducing an amendment to ensure that is the case.

THE ACTING CHAIRMAN: Hon. member, your time expired prior to introduction of the amendment. I guess we'll have to wait until you try again.

The hon. Government House Leader.

MR. HAVELOCK: Yes, Mr. Chairman. I do now move that we adjourn debate.

THE ACTING CHAIRMAN: The hon. Government House Leader has moved that we adjourn debate. All those in favour of the motion, please say aye.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

THE ACTING CHAIRMAN: Opposed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: No.

THE ACTING CHAIRMAN: Carried.

MR. HAVELOCK: Mr. Chairman, I move that the committee do now rise and report.

[Motion carried]

[Mr. Herard in the Chair]

MRS. GORDON: Mr. Speaker, the Committee of the Whole has had under consideration certain Bills. The committee reports progress on the following: Bill 5.

THE ACTING SPEAKER: Does the Assembly agree with the report?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

THE ACTING SPEAKER: Opposed? Carried.

[At 10:59 p.m. the Assembly adjourned to Thursday at 1:30 p.m.]

