

## Legislative Assembly of Alberta

Title: **Thursday, March 23, 2000**

**1:30 p.m.**

Date: 00/03/23

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

head: Prayers

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Good afternoon.

Let us pray. O divine Father, as we conclude our work and prepare to return to our constituencies, help us to draw strength from the opportunities to renew our friendships and acquaintances with the people we were elected to serve. Guide us to reflect upon Thy bounty so that we may more deeply appreciate how fortunate we are to live in and to serve in Alberta. Amen.

Please be seated.

head: Introduction of Visitors

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Justice and Attorney General.

MR. HANCOCK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This year marks the 100th anniversary of the founding of a famous regiment with a long association with this province, the Lord Strathcona's Horse. Raised in 1900 by private subscription from Lord Strathcona for service in the Boer War, the regiment moved by train from the district of Alberta, North-West Territories for embarkation and departure from Halifax. The Strathcona's achievements in that campaign and subsequently in world wars I and II and Korea were marked by courage, selfless sacrifice, spirit, and dogged perseverance. Collectively and individually the Strathcona's have served in every United Nations and NATO operation since 1947.

The regiment is part of the One Canadian Mechanized Brigade group headquartered in Edmonton. At present the regiment's A squadron is serving with NATO forces in Kosovo. The regiment's reconnaissance squadron, as part of the Fourth UK Armoured Brigade, served with distinction and great professionalism while demonstrating their customary panache in leading this brigade into Kosovo in June of last year. While there the reconnaissance squadron was honoured with a visit from their colonel and chief, His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales. The officer who led the reconnaissance squadron on that tour is here.

Mr. Speaker, with us today are the colonel of the regiment, Lieutenant General Jim Fox; the commanding officer Lieutenant Colonel Craig Hilton; the regimental second in command, Major John Stuckart; B squadron leader, Major Paul Pickell; C squadron leader, Major Pascal Demers; reconnaissance squadron leader, Major Paul Fleury; headquarters squadron leader, Major Rick Brown; and the regimental sergeant major, Chief Warrant Officer Doug Gardner.

I know that all hon. members will want to join me in wishing these soldiers and all members of the regiment, past and present, well with their centenary celebrations from the 17th to the 21st of May. They are in your gallery, Mr. Speaker, and I'd ask them to rise now and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

head: Presenting Petitions

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Centre.

MS BLAKEMAN: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. With your permission I would like to present a petition signed by 234 individuals from Edmonton, St. Albert, Sherwood Park, Spruce Grove, and

Mayerthorpe. They are asking "the government to stop promoting private health care and undermining public health care."

Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Leader of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition.

MRS. MacBETH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I beg leave to table petitions including 219 signatures from Edmonton and Sherwood Park and on behalf of my colleague from Lethbridge-East 271 signatures from Lethbridge, Milk River, Coaldale, Magrath, Coalhurst, and Raymond. These are citizens who petition the Assembly "to urge the government to stop promoting private health care and undermining public health care."

Today's total of the presentations of our petitions brings the number to 32,493 Albertans.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Glenarry.

MR. BONNER: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I beg leave to table a petition signed by 237 Albertans from Edson, up the coal branch in Robb, Hinton, Onoway, Gunn, and Darwell. They are urging "the government of Alberta to stop promoting private health care and undermining public health care."

Thank you.

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

MS CARLSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I beg leave today to present a petition to the Assembly signed by 240 people from Edmonton, Camrose, New Norway, Sherwood Park, and St. Albert. All of these people are urging "the government of Alberta to stop promoting private health care and undermining public health care."

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

MR. DICKSON: Thanks, Mr. Speaker. I'm delighted and very proud this afternoon to present a petition that has been signed by 267 Albertans residing in Cochrane, Airdrie, Cayley, and Calgary. These Albertans petition this Assembly to "urge the government of Alberta to stop promoting private health care and undermining public health care."

Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Manning.

MR. GIBBONS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, have a petition signed by 253 residents of Alberta from Edmonton, Leduc, Ardrossan, Sherwood Park, and St. Albert supporting public health care in Alberta and urging "the government of Alberta to stop promoting private health care and undermining public health care."

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MS LEIBOVICI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, have a petition to present this afternoon. This petition has been signed by 256 Albertans from Edmonton, Leduc, Spruce Grove, St. Albert, and Beaumont. They are requesting that the Legislative Assembly "urge

the Government of Alberta to stop promoting private healthcare.”  
Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Mill Woods.

DR. MASSEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With permission I would present a petition signed by 117 citizens from Edmonton, Onoway, Whitecourt, and Smoky Lake asking the government “to stop promoting private health care and undermining public health care.”

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar.

MR. MacDONALD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a petition today signed by 114 individuals from Edmonton, Ardrossan, Fort Saskatchewan, Stony Plain, and St. Albert. These “citizens of Alberta petition the Legislative Assembly to urge the government of Alberta to stop promoting private health care and undermining public health care.”

Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Norwood.

MS OLSEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, have a petition to present to the Assembly from 287 people in northern Alberta from the areas of Grande Prairie, Valleyview, Wembley, Manning, Fairview, Beaverlodge, Grimshaw, Peace River, Falher, Sangudo, and Slave Lake. It says:

We the undersigned citizens of Alberta petition the Legislative Assembly to urge the government to stop promoting private health care and undermining public health care.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Glenora.

MR. SAPERS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With your permission I would like to present to the Assembly a petition that has been signed by 204 residents of this province who know exactly what’s in Bill 11. They live in Edmonton, St. Albert, Spruce Grove, and Devon. The petition reads as follows:

We the undersigned citizens of Alberta petition the Legislative Assembly to urge the government of Alberta to stop promoting private health care and undermining public health care.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MRS. SLOAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I’m pleased today to rise and table with the Assembly a petition signed by 120 citizens of Alberta from Edmonton, Tofield, Redwater, Bruderheim, Cold Lake, and Calmar. These citizens know the truth and found the truth, and they want this government to stop promoting private health care and undermining public health care.

Thank you.

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

MRS. SOETAERT: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I, too, have a petition signed by 235 people from Edmonton, Redwater,

Calmar, Legal, and St. Albert. They are urging “the government of Alberta to stop promoting private health care and undermining public health care.”

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Rutherford.

MR. WICKMAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a petition signed by 215 Albertans from Edmonton and Spruce Grove who are urging “the government of Alberta to stop promoting private health care and undermining public health care.”

Thank you.

1:40

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Strathcona.

DR. PANNU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a petition signed by 341 Albertans from Edmonton, Hilda, St. Albert, Calgary, Boyle, Athabasca, Falher, McLennan, Donnelly, and Girouxville. They are petitioning this Assembly “to pass a Bill banning private for-profit hospitals in Alberta so that the integrity of the public, universal health care system may be maintained.”

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

head: Reading and Receiving Petitions

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

MR. BONNER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I ask that the petition I presented to the Legislature yesterday be now read and received.

Thank you.

THE CLERK:

We the undersigned citizens of Alberta petition the Legislative Assembly to urge the government to stop promoting private health care and undermining public health care.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar.

MR. MacDONALD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I ask that the petition from 233 Edmonton and area residents that I presented to the Assembly on Wednesday be now read and received.

Thank you.

THE CLERK:

We the undersigned citizens of Alberta petition the Legislative Assembly to urge the government to stop promoting private health care and undermining public health care.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Centre.

MS BLAKEMAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would ask that the petition I presented on March 22 against private health care be now read and received.

Thank you.

THE CLERK:

We the undersigned citizens of Alberta petition the Legislative Assembly to urge the government to stop promoting private health care and undermining public health care.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Mill Woods.

DR. MASSEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With your permission I would request that the petition I presented on March 22 be now read and received.

THE CLERK:

We the undersigned citizens of Alberta petition the Legislative Assembly to urge the government to stop promoting private health care and undermining public health care.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Strathcona.

DR. PANNU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I request that the petition I presented yesterday, March 22, be now read and received.

THE CLERK:

We the undersigned residents of the province of Alberta hereby petition the Legislative Assembly of Alberta to pass a Bill banning private for-profit hospitals in Alberta so that the integrity of the public, universal health care system may be maintained.

head: Introduction of Bills

### Bill 22

#### Alberta Corporate Tax Amendment Act, 2000

MR. DAY: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to beg leave to introduce Bill 22, the Corporate Tax Amendment Act, 2000. This being a money bill Her Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor, having been informed of the contents of the bill, recommends the same to the Assembly.

This bill will implement certain changes to the Alberta royalty tax credit program, changes that have been drawn up in concert with industry and others. It will also deal with provisions related to tax-deferred dispositions of property, and it will parallel federal amendments in Bill C-28 and C-72 that are technical in nature but important to be done.

[Motion carried; Bill 22 read a first time]

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Learning.

### Bill 23

#### Apprenticeship and Industry Training Amendment Act, 2000

DR. OBERG: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I request leave to introduce a bill being the Apprenticeship and Industry Training Amendment Act, 2000.

This bill will increase the responsiveness of Alberta's apprenticeship and training system while maintaining Alberta's high industry standard. The changes contained in this bill will complete a four-year consultation with industry and enable the results of this consultation to be fully implemented.

[Motion carried; Bill 23 read a first time]

head: Tabling Returns and Reports

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Associate Minister of Health and Wellness.

MR. ZWOZDESKY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise today and table with the Assembly five copies of a news release that was issued yesterday by the Alberta Chambers of Commerce stating their "overwhelming support" of the thrust of Bill 11, the Alberta

Health Care Protection Act, 2000, and applauding the government for "taking a bold first step in exploring new initiatives" to help improve our publicly funded, publicly administered health system.

Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Municipal Affairs.

MR. PASZKOWSKI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to table eight copies of the amended response for Motion for a Return 11. The reason for the amendment was to be consistent with our auditing process.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Rutherford.

MR. WICKMAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to table appropriate copies of a letter from Fred Debre of my riding, who is very, very, very much opposed to Bill 11 and the government's attempt to dismantle the health care system.

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

MS LEIBOVICI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a number of tablings this afternoon. The first is from Constance Jones. She is with the Canadian Federation of University Women. It's a copy of a letter to the Premier wherein she asks that the reports on the government's vision with regards to the privatization of health care in this province be shared with that particular group and states that there's a very real fear of a further shift to an American model of health care.

My second tabling is from a Robert Betty, who has a furniture sales company, and he undertook an initiative whereby he sent out a survey to 170 furniture retailers around Alberta . . .

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. member, the tabling, please.

MS LEIBOVICI: Yes. And the tabling indicates that 46.3 percent of respondents disagree with the government's plan. [interjections]

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. members, the chair has chastised the member for speaking at length, and now we'd like to hear her. She has a number of tablings, which she indicated when she first stood up to table them.

Edmonton-Meadowlark.

MS LEIBOVICI: Thank you. My next tabling is the AMA position statement with regards to RHA contracting with private surgical facilities.

My last tabling is the list of 39 associations that are affiliated with the Alberta Alliance for Mental Illness and Mental Health.

Thank you very much.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Community Development.

MR. WOLOSHTYN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In 1996 three Albertans – a Sikh, a Jew, and a Christian – decided to hold an international conference on human rights in Edmonton to mark the 50th anniversary of the United Nations universal declaration on human rights. Their ambitious purpose was to educate the world about human rights and to promote the principles and values of the declaration.

The conference, held in November 1998 and supported in part by the Alberta human rights and citizenship education fund, attracted over 700 delegates from 35 countries. At the conference dinner the 1,500 persons in attendance heard Archbishop Tutu, Chief Justice Antonio Lamer, and UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Mary Robinson show that peace, justice, and freedom can come to all parts of the globe when nations sincerely respect the rights and dignity of each human being.

Mr. Speaker, 54 of the papers presented at the conference have been compiled into a book titled *Peace, Justice and Freedom: Human Rights Challenges for the New Millennium*. I'd like to table five copies.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Leader of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition.

MRS. MACBETH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to table a copy of a letter which I sent today to the Hon. Allan Rock, Minister of Health for the government of Canada, regarding the apparent practice by the Institut de la Polychirurgie de Montreal to charge facility fees for minor surgeries. The point of the letter is to say that "there must be equal treatment of [all] the provinces by the federal government on violations of the Canada Health Act."

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

MRS. SLOAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased today to rise and table letters of invitation that I have sent to the members for Calgary-Bow, Calgary-Lougheed, Innisfail-Sylvan Lake, and Vermilion-Lloydminster.

Thank you.

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

MR. DICKSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have but two tablings this afternoon. The first one is a copy of a letter I sent the Speaker dated March 21, 2000, clarifying a reference I had made to the hon. David Carter in an incident he'd been involved in on April 29, 1992. I've clarified it in this correspondence.

The last tabling, sir, is simply copies of a letter I had received. The original letter, dated March 17, 2000, went to the Premier from Bob, Chris, and Kym Lichacz in the Deer Run community of south Calgary expressing their concern and taking the issue with the Premier's characterization of any opponent to Bill 11 as, quote, a left-wing nut, close quote.

1:50

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Strathcona.

DR. PANNU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to table copies of 54 cards circulated by the Raging Grannies whom I will have the honour of introducing to this House later on this afternoon. The main message of these cards is Health Care For People, Not for Profit.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Centre.

MS BLAKEMAN: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to table five copies of a letter to me from Klaus Harder, who's thanking me for initiating the challenge to debate Bill 11 with the

MLA for Clover Bar-Fort Saskatchewan and stating that family, neighbours, and the community will appreciate knowing why he supports the bill.

Thank you very much.

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

MRS. SOETAERT: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I have the appropriate number of copies of a letter sent by Elke Blodgett to the Premier that I was asked to table. In it she says: you know, politicians who don't listen to concerns about Bill 11 will find themselves not elected next time. Then she says she was very upset with "the well-orchestrated and controlled truth dissemination session" held in St. Albert on Monday night by the Member for St. Albert.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Glenarry.

MR. BONNER: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. With your permission I'd like to table the appropriate number of copies of evidence package 15, put together by an injured worker. In it he outlines where an injured worker requires neuropsychological assessment. This was recommended by a doctor in 1999, and of particular interest to all members here in the Assembly is a letter from the department of psychology, Calgary regional health authority, where they "do not accept referrals for neuropsychological assessments in personal injury litigation." So after four and a half years this man can still not be assessed.

Thank you.

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

MS CARLSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have two tablings today. They are both letters to the editor from the *Oyen Echo* dated March 14, 2000.

The first is from Keith and Eileen Leal, where they talk about the fight for public health care. They state: "Senior Albertans, it's up to you. People under 40 have absolutely no idea of what Klein, the corporate handyman, has in store for them."

The second is from William Dascavich of Vegreville, where he talks about glossing over the issue of the private health care bill. He states that in his view "the response from the Alberta government smells fishy" and "not referring to fresh fish."

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Norwood.

MS OLSEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a letter from the hon. Member for Athabasca-Wabasca declining my invitation to debate him on Bill 11 in his constituency. Instead, you know, what he doesn't understand is that Canadians want to debate health . . . [interjections]

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: This is a tabling, hon. member, not a debate. I mean, I know it's a chamber of debate, but there are appropriate times to debate. Table your letter and a brief characterization, which I believe you've given, and then we can get on to the next tabling.

MS OLSEN: Thank you. I just want to say that I'll debate him on rural Alberta and anything else he chooses.

head: Introduction of Guests

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Children's Services.

MS EVANS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my distinct pleasure today to rise and introduce to you and through you to Members of the Legislative Assembly a very special guest who is seated in the members' gallery accompanied by Mr. Dennis Pommen. Let me explain. Melissa Hallett is a student on exchange with the International Rotary program. She is residing with a family in Sherwood Park and attending Archbishop Jordan high school. Melissa has been a delightful addition to the local Rotary club. I would ask if both Mr. Pommen and Miss Hallett would stand and receive the warm welcome of the House.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Associate Minister of Health and Wellness.

MR. ZWOZDESKY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's indeed a pleasure to stand up and introduce to you and through you 65 of the brightest students that we have in our school system today. They come from Blessed Kateri elementary school in my area. They are accompanied by seven adults: Mr. Neil Hutchinson, Mrs. Joanne Sorochak, Miss Lesley-Anne Petcoff, Mrs. Cathy Bereznicki, Miss Brigitte Berube, parent helper Mrs. Asselin, and student teacher Mr. James Van Rye. I would ask that they now stand and receive the very warm traditional welcome of the entire Assembly.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Spruce Grove-Sturgeon-St. Albert, followed by the hon. Member for Leduc.

MRS. SOETAERT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure today to introduce you to a young gentleman. He's taking grade 6 home schooling. He's here on a great tour of the Legislature and was very sharp with the questions, and he knew lots of the answers today. This is Taylor Will, who is in our gallery today with his mom, Rosie Thornton. I would ask them both to please rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Leduc.

MR. KLAPSTEIN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm delighted to introduce to you and through you to members of the Assembly 13 students from Leduc Estates school. They are accompanied by teacher Mrs. Christine Loose and parent helper Ms Pat Blais. I would ask the Assembly to extend to them our warm welcome.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Glenora.

MR. SAPERS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly 15 guests with us today in the public gallery. Mrs. Colleen Simpson and 14 residents from McQueen Place and Northway lodge are visiting today to keep an eye on their representatives in this Chamber. I would ask them now to please rise and receive the warm welcome from all members.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for St. Albert.

MRS. O'NEILL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have two separate introductions today. First, I would like to introduce to you and

through you to members of this Assembly 14 distinguished, well respected, and much appreciated residents from Ironwood Estates in St. Albert. They are accompanied by the bus driver, Mr. Bill Fedeyko, and his wife, Darlene. They are seated in the members' gallery. I would ask them to please rise and receive the warm welcome of this Assembly.

Also seated in the members' gallery, Mr. Speaker, are a former colleague of mine in the real estate business in St. Albert, Mr. Martin Sideen and his daughter Amy Sideen. I would ask them to rise and receive the warm welcome of this Assembly as well.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Rutherford.

MR. WICKMAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's always nice to introduce Albertans that are interested in what's happening in the Legislative Assembly. It's my privilege to introduce two fine gentlemen this afternoon, one from my riding of Edmonton-Rutherford and one from the neighbouring riding of Edmonton-Whitemud. Kuldip Riar and Ranjit Bhangoon are in the public gallery. If they could please stand and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Strathcona.

DR. PANNU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It gives me great pleasure today to introduce to you and to all members of the Assembly seven members of the Raging Grannies of Edmonton. They are highly respected for their work on all kinds of public policy issues, including opposition to Bill 11. They are Elvira Leibovitz, Betty Mardiros, Louise Swift, Marg Stephens, Brenda Manasse, Evelyn Tomlinson, Wendy MacDonald. They are seated in the public gallery. I would now request them all to please rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

2:00

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Learning.

DR. OBERG: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise today to introduce to you and through you three people. The first is Mr. Brian Bickley, who has more than 30 years experience in industry and is an industrial relations manager with Syncrude Canada Ltd. and a member of the Alberta Apprenticeship and Industry Training Board. The second person is Mr. Don Lezetc, who is a member of the Apprenticeship and Industry Training Board as well as the Alberta Building Trades Council and the Western Apprenticeship Coordinators Association. They're accompanied by Ms Shirley Dul, who is the executive director of the apprenticeship and industry training division within Alberta Learning. I'd ask two things: first of all, that they accept my thanks for all the help and work that they have done on Bill 23 and, second of all, that they rise and receive the warm welcome of the Legislative Assembly.

head: Oral Question Period

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: First main question. The hon. Leader of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition.

#### Private Health Services

MRS. MacBETH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The government of Alberta has overseen a massive spin campaign costing millions of dollars in public money, but apparently they forgot to tell govern-

ment MLAs what's in the bill. As proof, yesterday two government members indicated that Bill 11 does not allow for overnight stays in hospitals when of course clearly that's indicated on the very first page as to why this legislation is needed. My questions are to the Acting Premier before he leaves. Did the minister of health or the Premier deliberately misinform their own caucus, or did they just not tell them the truth about what was really in Bill 11?

MR. DAY: Mr. Speaker, I'll tell you what government MLAs know about this bill. They know that the bill has been mailed to all Albertans. That's unprecedented, that every citizen will have a copy of it. We all know that this will protect the Canada Health Act. This particular bill will protect it. We all know that this bill will prevent a two-tier system from ever evolving in this province. We all know that this bill will lead to reduced waiting lines, and it will lead to enhanced care. That's what we know about this bill.

MRS. MacBETH: Well, maybe we can try the acting minister of health, Mr. Speaker. Isn't the real reason that the Premier and the minister of health have kept government members in the dark about this bill is so that their own PR campaign could control the message?

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. members, questions shouldn't be argumentative; however, the hon. minister may wish to respond.

MR. ZWOZDESKY: Thank you. I'd be happy to respond, although I do take some exception to the phrasing of the question because, Mr. Speaker, nobody is being kept in the dark.

This policy, at the request of federal cousins in Ottawa, has been out in the hands of Albertans and other municipalities and jurisdictions across the country since November of last year. Just recently, to further the full disclosure of what the intentions are, to improve the health system in this province, we did a mass mail-out to almost every household in the province. Surely that's not keeping anyone in the dark.

In fact, we're doing quite the opposite. We're encouraging discussion; we're encouraging debate. We're looking for constructive assistance with respect to how to better protect an excellently funded, excellently administered, publicly funded health system in this province, and we hope to continue doing that with full disclosure.

MRS. MacBETH: So, Mr. Speaker, can this minister tell us why even his own government caucus members have been kept in the dark about this bill?

MR. ZWOZDESKY: Mr. Speaker, no one is being kept in the dark, as I just said. However, I would like to state that in particular the bill does state that major surgeries will remain and only be done in fully accredited public hospitals, so the bill specifically precludes overnight stays for major surgeries. However, at the same time, as an option regional health authorities are well within their right to consider proposals for minor surgery to be looked at in their area.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The chair was unable to hear the last part of the hon. minister's response and wondered if it would be possible for all members to curtail their enthusiasm for his response so that we all may hear it.

MR. ZWOZDESKY: Thank you. As I was saying, major surgeries will remain in fully accredited public hospitals, but regional health authorities would be allowed to consider as an option overnight stays for minor surgeries that are low-risk, that are provided in a fully

accredited safe environment at no cost for insured medically necessary services, no cost to the patients.

MRS. MacBETH: You know what? I think we should give them a course on what's in this legislation, Mr. Speaker.

My second question is to the acting minister, and it concerns the issues of honesty and clarity in the bill that bears his minister's name. My question is: if Bill 11 protects public health care, as the government has alleged, then why is it that they chose to call the bill the Health Care Protection Act instead of the public health care protection act?

MR. ZWOZDESKY: Well, Mr. Speaker, that's probably the nicest puffball question I'll ever receive on this, and I'd be happy to answer that. It is deemed and titled the Alberta Health Care Protection Act because that's what it does: it protects public health care.

Let me read to you how it does that. It states, for example, in the preamble:

Whereas the Government of Alberta is committed to the preservation of the principles of universality, comprehensiveness, accessibility, portability and public administration, as described in the Canada Health Act . . . as the foundation of the health system in Alberta . . .

Furthermore, it also states that "no person shall operate a private hospital in Alberta." It further states that no one will have to pay for an insured medical service regardless of where it might be provided.

There are a number of other things that protect consumers and level the playing field and standardize and make more uniform things with respect to charges. These are things that consumers and patients of this province want, and that's why it's called the protection act.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. minister, you might want to save some for the supplemental.

MRS. MacBETH: Mr. Speaker, given that the Manitoba Private Hospitals Act clearly and honestly defines a private hospital to be "a house or building in which four or more patients are received and lodged at the same time for medical or surgical treatment," why did this government try to fool Albertans into somehow thinking that approved surgical facilities aren't private hospitals?

MR. ZWOZDESKY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. No one is trying to fool anyone with anything here. The bill is out there. It's in the hands of people. People are taking a reasonable amount of time to read it through, to understand it, seek clarification from all of their MLAs. I would hope that the opposition MLAs would be fair and consistent in their own practice that way.

Specifically, however, with reference to what's going on in terms of similar legislation in at least four or five other provinces, I want to just remind the Official Opposition Leader that there will be a meeting of provincial health ministers starting tonight and going on tomorrow, which I will attend, and I want to find out about a few of these inconsistencies that perhaps may exist in other provinces and ask the federal government why they haven't addressed them.

MRS. MacBETH: Well, Mr. Speaker, will this minister come clean and recommend to his minister, who he'll be seeing later today, that they be as forthright and frank and honest in Alberta's legislation as the government of Manitoba has been and admit that Bill 11 simply paves the way for private hospitals?

2:10

MR. ZWOZDESKY: Mr. Speaker, this bill specifically bans and

prohibits private hospitals from starting up in this province. Not only that, but there are definitions . . .

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: One can readily see the excitement that occurs at these public meetings that are held from time to time across the land.

Hon. minister, in conclusion.

MR. ZWOZDESKY: Thank you. The question comes down to: what is a public hospital and what is a clinic? There are numerous examples across this province. Some of them are right here in the city of Edmonton, and I would presume that the opposition leader may have visited some of those when she was the health minister, and she should well know the difference between a hospital and a clinic. If she or any other members don't, I'd be happy to take them on tour with me and show them the difference.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Third main question. The Leader of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition.

MRS. MacBETH: Second supplementary; right? [interjections]

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The records of the Speaker, who is a novice at this, and the table are in alignment with one another. This is your third main question.

MRS. MacBETH: Mr. Speaker, in 1994 the ministers of health across Canada agreed to take whatever steps were required to maintain quality public health care, all the provinces except one, however. Can the Acting Minister of Health and Wellness tell us which province did not agree with that protection of public health care?

MR. ZWOZDESKY: Mr. Speaker, the ministers of health right across this country have a strong commitment, I'm sure, to the Canada Health Act. However, I want to spell something out very clearly in this regard, and that exists on page 4. [interjections]

#### **Speaker's Ruling Decorum**

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. members of the opposition, it is difficult to understand why one would ask a question of someone and then hoot and holler while they give the answer that you presumably needed. Remember that part of the admonition of *Beauchesne* is that this is an important question and you should know the information: bringing government to account and all that kind of thing. So let us hear the hon. minister.

#### **Private Health Services**

*(continued)*

MR. ZWOZDESKY: Thank you very much. What I wanted to say was that on page 4 there is specific reference to how in this province under Bill 11

where a person receives an insured surgical service at a designated surgical facility,

- (a) the operator of the surgical facility shall provide facility services to the person, and
- (b) no person shall charge or collect any amount in respect of the provision of facility services.

And it goes on. That's why it's important for the ministers across this country to get together, like they're doing tonight and tomorrow, to address issues like the hon. Leader of the Opposition mentioned with respect to some possible contraventions that are occurring in Montreal, I think she said.

Finally, let me just give you a little quick quote here from some of the other Premiers across this country. Here's a quote from national television by Premier Brian Tobin of Manitoba. He said: in Newfoundland and Labrador today we're sending people into . . . [interjections] I'm sorry. Newfoundland and Labrador.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. members, if the chair recalls the question, the question was: which province? Presumably we're still answering which province it is that was referred to.

MR. ZWOZDESKY: Well, I'm attempting to. I'll just correct that comment, Mr. Speaker.

Premier Tobin of Newfoundland and Labrador said on March 2: in Newfoundland and Labrador today we're sending people into the United States for both cardiac surgery and for cancer treatments; that's happening all across this country; we are already supporting private health care in another country; it's time to deliver the service here in Canada. End quote.

Now, the point is that there are some inconsistencies across the country with respect to how certain principles of the Canada Health Act are being administered, and we need to clear those up. That's why the Premier of this province is meeting with the Prime Minister this afternoon, and that's why I and the minister of health are meeting with other ministers later today and tomorrow.

MRS. MacBETH: Well, Mr. Speaker, for the information of the acting minister of health it was Alberta that didn't sign on to the protection and the quality of public health care in that 1994 accord amongst ministers. So can this minister tell us: is the reason that Alberta did not buy in because they knew all along they were planning to set forth private hospitals?

MR. ZWOZDESKY: Mr. Speaker, there is no private hospital being contemplated or allowed for establishment in this province under Bill 11. That's very clear. However, I would ask the hon. Minister of International and Intergovernmental Relations to supplement the earlier part of that question, please.

MRS. McCLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, as this . . .

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hopefully that is in the hon. minister's present capacity.

MRS. McCLELLAN: Yes, it is.

Mr. Speaker, as the hon. Leader of the Opposition is referring to an intergovernmental agreement that applies across Canada, I would like to take this opportunity to fully explain what occurred at the time of that signing, and I will do it with brevity.

The Minister of Health for Canada changed the interpretation of the Canada Health Act as we understood it. The hon. Leader of the Opposition would know that because under her leadership as then minister of health there were some 38, maybe plus, private clinics operating in our province.

MR. SAPERS: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

MRS. McCLELLAN: When the interpretation of that act was changed, it required agreement from all parties in Canada to legislation around the protection of private clinics. As I recall, Alberta at that time asked for time to work with the private clinics who were operating in this province, that would be negatively impacted, to come to an agreement. There was an agreement reached, Mr. Speaker, and there are 12 principles regarding the

involvement of private clinics. That agreement was reached with the government of Canada and Alberta Health.

MRS. MacBETH: Mr. Speaker, back to the acting minister of health. If an approved surgical facility is not a private hospital, then can he explain why the definition of an approved surgical facility in Bill 11 is virtually identical to the definition of a hospital in the Canada Health Act?

MR. ZWOZDESKY: Mr. Speaker, the bill and the definitions that it contains are there for very specific reasons. First of all, it's important to clarify what a lot of the lingo surrounding medical services and medical delivery is all about. That is done.

Secondly, it's also important to clarify what it is that we're not allowing, and the definition is very clear. We are not allowing any person to "operate a private hospital in Alberta." That's why it's there, and that's why it's defined, and it's clearly stated.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. leader of the third party.

DR. PANNU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Albertans are curious as to why, almost three weeks after the release of Bill 11, government MLAs remain dangerously misinformed and totally in the dark about the contents of Bill 11. I have a constructive suggestion to address a seemingly intractable problem for the government caucus: invite noted researcher and author Kevin Taft to make a half-hour presentation to the full government caucus. I, like thousands of ordinary Albertans, have had the privilege of hearing Kevin's presentation, and he's incredibly powerful and convincing. My question is to the Acting Minister of Health and Wellness. Will the associate minister recommend to his government that the respected author and researcher Kevin Taft make a presentation to government members to clear up confusion on Bill 11, and if not, why not?

2:20

MR. ZWOZDESKY: Mr. Speaker, I won't commit the entire caucus to a meeting like that, but if the hon. author that is being referred to wishes to have a meeting with me, I'd be happy to meet with him.

DR. PANNU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the minister for the generosity of giving me the invitation, but will he invite Mr. Taft? Let me ask the question again. Why would the government pass up an opportunity to hear accurate, timely, and powerful evidence from a respected Alberta scholar as to why contracting out overnight surgeries to for-profit hospitals would be a costly and irreversible mistake?

MR. ZWOZDESKY: Well, Mr. Speaker, as I said in reply to the first question – and I think the second question is basically a regurgitation of the first – we have a consultation process that is ongoing and under way right now, hon. member. As part of that, we're allowing all Albertans to bring their ideas forward. Some of them are making their way into various offices right now, and at the same time so too are a number of groups and organizations requesting more information and clarification. I'd be happy to receive an invitation from Mr. Taft, and I would personally meet with him and listen to what he has to say.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Final supplemental, hon. leader.

DR. PANNU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My last question will go to the Acting Premier, who probably is enjoying his last day in the House. Why does the . . . [interjections]

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: I imagine the group is reacting to the pun as well as to the comment. Could we just address a question to a minister and not editorialize what the minister may or may not be doing?

Third party, let's have the question.

DR. PANNU: Mr. Speaker, my last question is to the Acting Premier. Why does the government refuse to let its own members hear both sides of the story when it comes to contracting out complex surgeries to private, for-profit hospitals?

MR. DAY: Mr. Speaker, a lot of people are presuming on my future here today. I don't know if they're happy about the prospect that I may or may not be here, but I'm here today and may be here tomorrow. [interjections] They're begging me to stay, Mr. Speaker, begging me to stay.

Mr. Speaker, members of the government caucus decide who they wish to hear and speak to, and they listen to Albertans. They do that in an increasing way across this province. If I were to suggest to them that they listen to Mr. Taft, that would be a decision they would have to make, but I think they would question why I would want that to happen.

Here's the reason I say this. Back in 1993, when the government policy was to reduce debt and deficit, Mr. Taft followed with a book that seemed to insinuate that we were making up the story about even having a debt or a deficit. I wish Mr. Taft could have been in my office to phone the credit rating agencies for me and say, "Actually there is no debt," and to phone the bankers and say, "Actually we don't owe you any money; it's all a big trick." So I would not be surprised if members here were to say to me: well, we can listen to this guy, but he's running around saying that we made up the story about debt and deficit when international agencies, provincial agencies, banks, and institutions around the world said that we indeed did have a debt.

So I would be somewhat reluctant to say: you've got to listen to this guy. But his book is available. It is out there. It's gathering dust on a number of shelves, and they can take a read of that book, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Bonnyville-Cold Lake.

### Tourism Marketing

MR. DUCHARME: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Some of my constituents have raised questions regarding the government's recently announced \$4 million Travel Alberta marketing campaign to attract visitors to Alberta from key areas in the United States and Canada, and specifically they raise a question regarding a television commercial only offering images from the province's more southern communities, especially those neighbouring the Rocky Mountains. I ask the Minister of Economic Development the following: who's responsible for tourism, and what is he doing to address these concerns?

MR. HAVELOCK: Hon. member, that is a very good question. I would first like to remind the hon. member and all members of this House that a consortium from Edmonton and Calgary, Travel Alberta International, was awarded a contract last year by this government and was delegated the responsibility to manage the province's international marketing campaign.

As concerns the specific television commercial referred to, Travel Alberta International produced the 30-second commercial which the

member refers to as part of the new Americas campaign. Mr. Speaker, this TV ad was produced in close consultation with private-sector tourism representatives from across the province, and I can tell you that all of those representatives agreed unanimously that in light of the fact that they only had a 30-second time slot to work with, they wanted to concentrate and focus on those icons which were the most recognizable icons from this province.

However, I want to assure this House that this government is in charge with respect to this issue. I have discussed the concerns raised by the hon. member with Travel Alberta, and Travel Alberta recognizes that there is some sensitivity to this issue. As a result, a new wider-reaching commercial has been cut and will be used in the near future. [interjections] Mr. Speaker, please, this is important. I will tell you that the new commercial will show activities and icons from a wider variety of locations around Alberta including the Legislature Building, West Edmonton Mall, and some cultural events.

Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. member will have a first and a second supplemental.

MR. DUCHARME: Mr. Speaker, the communities within the constituency of Bonnyville-Cold Lake want to be assured that they will receive fair and equitable representation in the province's tourism marketing efforts. Can the hon. Minister of Economic Development tell them what else is being done to assist these communities to market themselves as tourism destinations?

MR. HAVELOCK: Mr. Speaker, I'll speak much more quickly, because there's a lot of information that I want to get out. There are other numerous elements and publications. In fact, I have with me a publication that will be distributed to anyone who calls our 1-800 number, and that 1-800 number is being advertised through the international marketing campaign. In this package – and I have five copies which I will table – we have an all new 60-page Travel Alberta vacation planner. We also have accommodation guides and campground guides.

Also, Mr. Speaker, just today we announced a new in-resident marketing program of \$1.1 million, and we are going to be advertising to Albertans the activities and events that are available for them to take advantage of. So we're effectively increasing destination awareness. We want to promote a wide variety of special regional events and attractions. I will also say that as part of this package there will be a private-sector company participating with respect to an exciting promotion which will be focused on north-central and northern Alberta.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Final supplemental. Bonnyville-Cold Lake.

MR. DUCHARME: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the same minister: given that the strategic tourism marketing plan has been in effect for over a year now, how are we assisting communities to better market themselves?

MR. HAVELOCK: Mr. Speaker, I'm happy to say that in the first year of its operation this industry/government partnership attracted more than \$2.5 million from Alberta companies with respect to participating with government dollars. In fact, that is a leveraging ratio of in excess of 2 to 1, and that exceeded our target of 1 to 1. As a result of this past year's experience we have revised our partnership policy for investments into marketing so that the private sector,

particularly the Alberta private sector, will be even more stimulated to invest. We're increasing the ability of privately funded destination marketing organizations to participate.

We also realize the important role that in-kind contributions play, especially in smaller communities, so we're raising that level from 5 to 10 percent. We've also cleared away an impediment that made it difficult for us to partner with other organizations such as the Canadian Tourism Commission.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, during my tour of tourism regions last summer I discussed with a number of the tourist destination regions some of the difficulties they were having with respect to their boundaries, and we have undertaken a boundary review. In fact, I believe that's impacting the hon. member's riding.

2:30

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

### Private Health Services

(continued)

MS LEIBOVICI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Daily we've been hearing in this Assembly that the reason for Bill 11 – and I'm going to quote the Premier – is to put “in place some very stringent regulations relative to contracting to private surgical clinics.”

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MS LEIBOVICI: Well, I'm glad we're all agreed, because right now, section 62(a) of the Hospitals Act – and you can all look it up – gives this minister, the Minister of Health and Wellness, the power to make regulations – I'm quoting again out of the act – “prescribing the basis on which the Minister may make contracts with . . . private hospitals, or other institutions, facilities or persons.” So I'm going to ask the Acting Minister of Health and Wellness: will he confirm that section 62(a) of the Hospitals Act gives him the power to regulate the contracts with private hospitals and approved surgical facilities?

MR. ZWOZDESKY: Mr. Speaker, Bill 11 is quite clear with respect to the process for any potential proposal that may come in that would require a review of the terms and conditions, also the full disclosure of it. In fact, if the hon. member would refer to the act where it talks about these agreements, what the conditions are, what the issues are with respect to freedom of information and protection of privacy, what the issues are with respect to the conditions that must be met, what the approval processes are, I think she would be quite convinced that it's extremely thorough, extremely detailed, and that patients' concerns are well addressed in that respect.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: First supplemental. The hon. Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark.

MS LEIBOVICI: Thank you. Well, given that the acting minister has the authority right now in current legislation, the Hospitals Act, to make regulations governing the contracts with either private hospitals or approved surgical facilities, why do you need Bill 11?

MR. ZWOZDESKY: Mr. Speaker, Bill 11 is needed for several reasons. First of all, we do not currently have legislation to ban or prohibit the establishment of private hospitals in this province. Bill 11 will specifically ban those. Secondly, we do not have enshrined in local provincial legislation a commitment to the Canada Health Act. This bill will specifically do that. We do not have in legisla-

tion tight enough controls and protection issues with respect to some of the potential for contracting out of all and various clinics. Those are some of the highlights.

### **Speaker's Ruling Decorum**

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. minister, I'll let you continue. There are some hon. members who are insisting on speaking from their place, and as you know, the rules of the House are that one member stands and speaks at a time. When the chair recognizes the hon. minister, hopefully, since the opposition asked the question, they would give him the courtesy of hearing the answer.

Would you conclude, hon. minister, or have you?

### **Private Health Services**

*(continued)*

MR. ZWOZDESKY: There are many more reasons why people are looking for issues that are covered here under Bill 11, but let me just conclude in the interest of brevity to allow more questions to come up. One of things that we were asked to do by the federal government is to look at creative, innovative, cost-effective new ways of delivering health care in the future, because we all want to preserve an excellent system. We just want to make it better. One of the key things here is to remember that the federal Minister of Health has commanded us to look at innovative and creative ways because in his words: the status quo is not an option. This bill provides some options that are being discussed now.

MS LEBOVICI: I'll keep my questions short, though I wonder why we bothered passing a motion in this Legislative Assembly saying that we agree to the principles of the Canada Health Act.

My question is: is the only reason, then, for Bill 11 so that the new private hospitals in this province and the new approved surgical facilities in this province can bypass the standards in the Hospitals Act? Is that why we have Bill 11?

MR. ZWOZDESKY: Mr. Speaker, that question really hinges on something between the irrelevant and the absurd. There are no private hospitals going to be allowed in this province under Bill 11. Now, let's get that message out there very clearly.

What Bill 11 does is provide an option for regional health authorities to consider under very strict and firm type guidelines the possibility of an insured minor surgery to be done in a safe, fully-accredited setting where the patient doesn't have to pay one cent for it. If they are insured under the Alberta Health Care plan, it doesn't matter if they receive the major or minor surgery in a public hospital or if they receive one of a very narrow range of safe minor surgeries in a private clinic. They won't have to pay a cent for it. What could be more clear than that? [interjections]

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. member, I thought you were going to practice for Tuesday, when we had the television on.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview.

### **Sale of Provincial Buildings**

MR. YANKOWSKY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A recent news release by the Minister of Infrastructure indicated that a number of surplus government-owned buildings have been put up for sale. Since that announcement, I have heard some comments and questions from constituents and Edmontonians regarding the sale of especially the old federal building and the Charles Camsell hospital.

My questions are all to the Minister of Infrastructure. Could the minister inform this Assembly as to why he is selling a building such as the federal building instead of renovating it to house government departments, many now housed in expensive leased space?

MR. STELMACH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We're not selling the federal building. What we are doing is consulting with five expert authorities on how we can redevelop the federal building for a different use. We've sent letters to people like the architects, the Museums Association, the Alberta Construction Association, and others to form a blue-ribbon panel. We'll get them to review the building, have a look at it, and see what uses we could accommodate in that building in the future.

As to the present leases, there are some that are long term. We'll have to wait for those leases to expire in terms of government accommodation.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: First supplemental. The hon. Member for Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview.

MR. YANKOWSKY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that the city of Edmonton is projected to be Canada's fastest growing city this year, could the same minister inform this Assembly why he is selling the Charles Camsell hospital when it may indeed be needed due to Edmonton's growth?

MR. STELMACH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Charles Camsell hospital, which the hon. member is referring to, is now sitting empty. Many of the programs have been redeployed to other newer facilities. We've had the hospital assessed by a consultant, and we are looking at finding some other uses for that building. It's presently in a residential area. To redevelop the present building – we're told it's not quite suitable for long-term care, but certainly there may be other areas where we'll be looking at renovating that facility by the private sector for other uses, fitting within the context of what is allowed within the general municipal plan of the area.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Third question. Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview.

MR. YANKOWSKY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Could the minister inform this Assembly if there will be full public disclosure before any deal is signed as to who the prospective buyers are, what plans they have for each respective building, and the sale price?

MR. STELMACH: Mr. Speaker, there are appraised values that are attached to all of the surplus properties that we have listed. These will go out in terms of either requests for proposals or tenders, and the successful bidders will know quite well that whatever use they intend the building to put to has to conform to the current existing municipal general plan. After the sale is done, of course, all of the sale prices are totally public. That's part of government's policy: transparency.

Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Glenora.

2:40

### **Private Health Services**

*(continued)*

MR. SAPERS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Would the Acting Premier please explain why spending a million dollars or more on the Bill 11

propaganda campaign, which contains errors which the government's own members seem to have ignored, which didn't anticipate the many amendments that the Premier is now speculating about – would the Acting Premier explain why that kind of a campaign is not a waste of taxpayers' money?

MR. DAY: Mr. Speaker, when you take the unprecedented step of sending to every Albertan, every household in the province, a copy of the bill so that Albertans themselves can be the judge and give us the feedback, that is never a waste of money when you go directly to the people to see what the people think. That's an investment. It's not a waste of money.

MR. SAPERS: Well, then given the failure of that campaign, given the fact that Albertans in droves are saying, "Return to sender," how much more money is the government going to spend trying to sell Bill 11 to Alberta taxpayers? How much more?

MR. DAY: I've already indicated clearly, Mr. Speaker, that this has been sent to every Albertan in the province, and it's interesting how things are beginning to turn right now. We are in a time of listening, listening very carefully to what Albertans say.

But it is fascinating to listen and to read the letters from a growing number of doctors who say that they agree now with Bill 11. It's very interesting to see representatives of communities right across this province – and we don't take the time to put in one letter per day on the issue – chambers of commerce, the people who are the driving force to a prosperous economy in this province, the families and the small businesspeople of this province who have gathered together, analyzed the bill, and indicated clearly that they are in support of this bill. The tide is turning on this, Mr. Speaker, as people have the opportunity to read it themselves, uncluttered by any opposition filtering, and then give us the feedback.

Again, Mr. Speaker, that's an investment, and it's one that is bringing dividends in good insights to us as a government.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Glenora, final supplemental.

MR. SAPERS: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Will the Acting Minister of Health and Wellness please tell the Assembly how many hip surgeries or knee surgeries could have been performed with the money that's been spent on the Bill 11 sales campaign?

MR. ZWOZDESKY: Well, Mr. Speaker, there are a lot of people on waiting lists for the very surgeries that are being referred to. One of the things that Bill 11 is intended to do is to help reduce some of the waiting lists, and I'm going to explain now so that all the members understand how that might happen. At the moment in the public hospital system all minor surgeries and all major surgeries that require an overnight stay can only be done in a public hospital. What Bill 11 would allow regional health authorities to do is to extract some of the people who are on those waiting lists for minor surgeries, consider having them done in a safe, fully accredited private clinic over here, and that would reduce some of the waiting lists over there. So that is one of the considerations, and it is only an option. It may not apply across the whole province, but in those regional health authorities that are facing those long lineups, such as the hon. member has referred to, they should be looked at, and we've added more money to have that done, by the way.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Peace River.

### Provincial Fiscal Policies

MR. FRIEDEL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I noticed with a great deal of interest the recent Fraser Institute study that compared the federal and provincial budgets for the past year, and it ranked the governments in terms of fiscal performance. I was quite pleased with Alberta's overall performance, but I was concerned by our province's relatively poor ranking in the spending category. My questions are for the Provincial Treasurer. Can he tell us, for the benefit of those in the Assembly that may not have read it, where Alberta ranked in the spending category and explain why the subpar performance?

MR. DAY: Mr. Speaker, this study certainly shows that Alberta scored top marks across the country, the top performer in terms of the overall fiscal management of its resources and revenues. On the spending side we achieved a fourth-place rating, and that is because, in fact, we increased spending per capita. We have done that very openly and very clearly especially in the areas of health and education: a 9.3 percent increase in health in terms of our spending this year and a 9 percent increase in terms of spending in the area of learning and education. On those two items we have made a commitment to Albertans that we will not only match growth and inflation but in fact look at ways of increasing because of the increased needs that are being felt there. That's why we scored overall fourth in that particular category.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: First supplemental, the hon. Member for Peace River.

MR. FRIEDEL: Thanks again, Mr. Speaker. Given these results and the Fraser Institute's analysis of Alberta's spending, can the Treasurer tell us what Alberta is doing to maintain its fiscal leadership role and to ensure that we stay there?

MR. DAY: Well, that is very important, Mr. Speaker, because Albertans continue to tell us to stay the course, so we're making the commitment very clear. We've made the commitment clear in Budget 2000. We will continue to have balanced budgets. We will continue to have no deficit. We will continue to pay down debt. We will continue to lower taxes. We will continue to manage effectively. We will do all of those things to maintain the number one position – the number one position – in this country right here.

MR. FRIEDEL: My final question, Mr. Speaker, is also to the Provincial Treasurer. Given the ratings, can he tell us what impact these studies like the ones from the Fraser Institute actually have on our economy?

MR. DAY: The impact of the positive news going out across the country about the sound fiscal management that occurs in this province as a result of the input of all MLAs listening to the citizens of Alberta who are saying to stay the course is that it continues to cause people to want to move here to this province. They know that this is a jurisdiction where prosperity and opportunity will continue to abound because we continue to manage things in a good way and create the fiscal capacity to lower taxes and pay down debt and do those other sorts of things. So whereas we can't measure precisely this particular report and its impact, it does continue to enhance the news that this is the place to be because of the policies that we have in place.

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

### Private Health Services

(continued)

MS CARLSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last fall this government rammed Bill 40, the Health Information Act, through the Legislature before Albertans could find out that it stripped them of their health information privacy and paved the way for connecting private hospitals to our public health care system. Now the government has brought in Bill 11, which finishes the plan to sell Albertans' public health care system out from underneath them. My questions are to the Acting Minister of Health and Wellness. Will private hospitals, approved surgical facilities, be custodians, affiliates, or both under the Health Information Act?

MR. ZWOZDESKY: Mr. Speaker, if a contract or if a proposal for a private clinic to be established for doing minor surgeries is approved, then that is exactly what it will become and that's what it will stay. By definition it will be a private surgical facility within which a limited range of services are fully paid for provided they are medically necessary and insured services. So the answer to the question is that they will remain as defined in the act under Bill 11.

MS CARLSON: Mr. Speaker, we expect the minister to be able to answer the questions having read the legislation which isn't there. I'll ask it again.

#### Speaker's Ruling Insisting on Answers

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: All hon. members who've read *Beauchesne* about question period know perfectly well that the Speaker has no ability to require anyone to answer the question, so reflecting on whether they do or not is not valid. So would the hon. member ask the question, and if you feel it hasn't been answered, then you can repeat the question. Edmonton-Ellerslie, first supplemental.

2:50

### Private Health Services

(continued)

MS CARLSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will in fact ask the question again very slowly. Will private hospitals, approved surgical facilities, be custodians, affiliates, or both under the Health Information Act?

MR. ZWOZDESKY: Mr. Speaker, let me say this again and for the viewers who are watching this. I don't know how many times this has to be said so that people across the way here understand: there are no private hospitals that are going to be allowed to start up under Bill 11.

However, in fairness to that particular member asking the question about the custodians of health information, there are a number of people who are custodians of health information. They include doctors, they include nurses, and they include staff who work in some of the facilities: lab assistants, lab technicians, people who do diagnostic services. I mean, there is a wide range of people who Albertans trust with their information, and that is very clearly spelled out.

MS CARLSON: Mr. Speaker, one more time. Will the minister please answer the question with reference to Bill 40: will approved surgical facilities be custodians, affiliates, or both under the Health Information Act, as is written in his own legislation? Just answer the question.

MR. ZWOZDESKY: Mr. Speaker, I believe I have answered that question. If the member wants a specific definition of what a custodian is or what an affiliate is, I'll be happy to provide her an extended answer in writing with respect to those particular issues.

#### head: Members' Statements

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: We have a number of members' statements. We'll take a 30-second break, and then we'll call on the hon. members.

Hon. members, we have this afternoon three members' statements. The first is Calgary-Fort, followed by Edmonton-Ellerslie, followed by Wetaskiwin-Camrose.

### Health Care System

MR. CAO: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I rise to speak about a real story of health care service. Earlier this year my elder brother Vuc was not feeling well. After being examined by his family doctor, he was referred to a specialist for further diagnosis. The specialist ran several tests and diagnosed that he had cancer in the bladder and one failed kidney. It was terrifying news for our family even though he was a military officer, wounded several times and survived the Vietnam war. Due to the seriousness of his health situation, he was scheduled for hospitalized surgery a few weeks after that. With the amazing advanced technology in medical science he had an eight-hour long surgery. His bladder was removed and replaced by parts cut from his small intestine. His nonfunctioning kidney was also removed. He is now recuperating at home with continuous and regular reporting of his progress to the hospital.

Mr. Speaker, with the current health care debate going on in Alberta and across Canada, I asked my brother a few questions and received answers. My brother is an average American, very similar to an average Albertan. I want to share with the Assembly some points about health care service. The health care service he receives is excellent. He is under a health care insurance program through his work organization. He does not care about how and by whom his health care service is delivered as long as his life is preserved and as long as he doesn't have to pay outside of his insurance premiums. With his personal experience he believes that the American health care system is the top in the world. It attracts both the top professionals and the most critical patients from all over the world. Of course, American people always feel that way about their ways in their country. My brother's advice to me is to keep the health care insurance program public and for everyone, and I believe in his advice.

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

### Kananaskis Development

MS CARLSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In recent weeks I have received many letters from Albertans who are worried about proposed developments in the Spray Lakes area of Kananaskis. If plans go ahead, there could be a large four-season resort at the southern end of the Spray Lakes as well as heli-skiing and boat tours on the lake. A large resort in this location with the volumes of traffic that it would create would cause serious fragmentation of important wildlife habitat. Studies have shown that grizzly bears are particularly vulnerable to human intrusion, and the Spray Lakes area is one of the last relatively undisturbed north/south corridors.

In survey after survey Albertans have made it clear that they do not want further commercial development in Kananaskis Country.

The provincial government has ignored Albertans' wishes by permitting developers to proceed with their application despite the fact that there is so much opposition to it.

We know that the government intends to proceed in due process, which in this case includes an environmental impact assessment and a hearing by the Natural Resources Conservation Board. However, the repercussions of this development are so far reaching that many people believe it should be stopped now before further costs are incurred. This would mean negotiating with the developer and offering an alternative location outside Kananaskis in a less environmentally sensitive area. It could also mean providing compensation. I believe this is a cost that many Albertans would be willing to pay to rectify the current government's mistake.

Development of the Spray Lakes area would have irreversible and far-reaching effects not only for animals in the immediate vicinity but for their movement along the eastern Rockies. We need to protect this very valuable area now, and I urge the government to act immediately.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Wetaskiwin-Camrose.

### Agriculture Minisummit

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise today to thank the participants of the Wetaskiwin-Camrose constituency agriculture minisummit that was held in Camrose last night. The minisummit was attended by over 70 people from the agricultural community of my constituency and nearby farms. Main themes included the rural way of life, land use, youth and agriculture, marketing, transportation, globalization, agriculture research, subsidization, and the role of government and the private sector in agriculture.

Recently in this House through the debate on Bill 204, introduced by the Member for Little Bow, concern was expressed about the future of the family farm and our rural way of life in Alberta. Mr. Speaker, that is also a deep concern of my constituents, as expressed last night. Equally important is the strong resolve on the part of my farming community for meaningful and constructive input and dialogue in helping to solve the problems faced by our primary producers in agriculture.

I was pleased that the minisummit was attended by the hon. Minister of Innovation and Science and by co-chair of the Ag Summit 2000, Brian Heidecker. I'd like to express my thanks to the steering committee members: David Samm, Curtis Vesely, and Susan Malone. I would also like to thank the speakers whose introductory comments and questions helped us to focus on the issues, the group leaders who directed the small group discussions, and the recorders who made sure all ideas and suggestions discussed were recorded. The results of this meeting will be shared at the regional Ag Summit 2000 meeting in Wetaskiwin on April 12 and the provincial Ag Summit 2000 meeting in June.

Thank you.

head: Projected Government Business

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Acting Opposition House Leader.

MRS. SOETAERT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would ask under Standing Orders what the projected government business will be for the week following next week.

Thanks.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Government House Leader.

MR. HANCOCK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to advise the House that beginning on Monday, April 3, in the afternoon under Government Bills and Orders for second reading we will consider Bill 16, Condominium Property Amendment Act; Bill 18, Alberta Personal Income Tax Act; Bill 19, Alberta Income Tax Amendment Act; Bill 20, Justice Statutes Amendment Act; Bill 17, Fair Trading Amendment Act; and as per the Order Paper.

At 8 p.m. under Government Bills and Orders in Committee of the Whole: Bill 2, First Nations Sacred Ceremonial Objects Repatriation Act; Bill 4, Surveys Amendment Act; Bill 5, Land Titles Amendment Act; and Bill 10, Securities Amendment Act; and as per the Order Paper.

3:00

Tuesday afternoon, April 4, at 4:30 p.m. under Government Bills and Orders private bills for second reading: bills Pr. 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5. Under Government Bills and Orders for second reading, if time permits: Bill 3, Statute Revision Act, and as per the Order Paper.

Tuesday, April 4, at 8 p.m., as the House has been previously advised, we will schedule for second reading Bill 11, Health Care Protection Act, which, as the House knows, will be televised for the period 8 p.m. to 11 p.m. on Access television; and as per the Order Paper.

Wednesday, April 5, at 8 p.m. under Government Bills and Orders for second reading: Bill 11, Health Care Protection Act; and as per the Order Paper.

Thursday, April 6, in the afternoon under Government Bills and Orders for second reading: Bill 21, Appropriation Act; Bill 11, Health Care Protection Act; and as per the Order Paper.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: We have a point of order. The hon. Member for Spruce Grove-Sturgeon-St. Albert.

### Point of Order

#### Questions outside Ministerial Responsibility

MRS. SOETAERT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Under *Beauchesne* 409 and 412. Under 412:

A question may not be asked of a Minister in another capacity, such as being responsible for a province, or part of a province, or as spokesman for a racial or religious group.

And under 409(6):

A question must be within the administrative competence of the Government. The Minister to whom the question is directed is responsible to the House for his or her present Ministry and not for any decisions taken in a previous portfolio.

The question was handed off to the Minister of International and Intergovernmental Relations, and in her present capacity in that role she had no jurisdiction to answer a health care question, that obviously was not within her mandate right now. I would appreciate it if that kind of thing was not accepted in this Legislature.

Thanks.

MR. HANCOCK: Mr. Speaker, it's with a great deal of pleasure that I would like to inform the member opposite, as I know I don't need to inform you, that any intergovernmental agreement that is entered into by the province of Alberta must be approved. I can tell you not only in my capacity as Government House Leader but also because I was formerly the minister of intergovernmental and aboriginal affairs, which is the department now represented under the name International and Intergovernmental Relations, that any intergovernmental agreement executed by the government of Alberta must first be approved by the Department of International and Intergovernmen-

tal Relations for execution. Any intergovernmental agreement is entirely within the purview of International and Intergovernmental Relations. Therefore it is entirely within that minister's purview and her administrative competence to speak to an intergovernmental agreement that was executed.

The fact that she happened to have additional knowledge of this particular agreement that was being referred to because she also had in a previous capacity been minister of health does not preclude her from answering a question that is entirely within her administrative competence as Minister of International and Intergovernmental Relations.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Spruce Grove-Sturgeon-St. Albert has raised a point of order with regard to the capacity of the Minister of International and Intergovernmental Relations to answer the question. Hon. members may recall that the Speaker rose on that very same issue and said, hopefully, that it is in the hon. minister's present capacity, thinking, as presumably others may, that the hon. minister might be thinking of her previous capacity some years ago. But in the answer that was given, it seemed fairly clear that she was responding, as the hon. Government House Leader has suggested, in the capacity that she presently serves, so therefore there wouldn't be a point of order.

head: Orders of the Day

#### head: Committee of Supply

[Mrs. Gordon in the chair]

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I'll call the committee to order.

head: Lottery Fund Estimates 2000-2001

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: This is day 2 of the lottery funds. I will ask the minister if he wants to lead off, followed by the opposition critic.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Rutherford.

MR. WICKMAN: Thank you, Madam Chairman. I just want to make some additional comments and some responses to some of the minister's interesting comments yesterday. The minister implied that I was sort of contradictory in the sense that on the one hand I was saying that gaming was becoming a big industry but then on the other hand recognizing that there's a review in place, a freeze, and how could I be talking about expansion and such. [interjection] I'm missing out on something over here.

In any case, the freeze is good, first of all. I'll say that publicly. The freeze is good. The concept of a review is good, but it's never been fully explained what the terms of reference of that review are to be or if they've been established. If the review is being done on the basis of trying to determine whether the VLTs should remain in the hotels or be relocated to the nonprofit casinos, then that type of review is good. If it's going to try and minimize the impact of gambling in the province of Alberta, that type of review is good.

However, if the review is being done and the freeze is in place to allow the Gaming ministry to look at ways of expanding this empire that is now bringing close to, counting the liquor, a billion plus dollars into general revenues, if it's looking to expand that by allowing for the minicasinos in the hotels, allowing for full-fledged Windsor-type casinos, for example in the Banff area – and that was speculated some time ago, trying to draw the American people to gamble in Canada, where it's tax free, and of course they wouldn't have to worry about taxes on any winnings they had. It would be

nestled in Banff, where tourists like to go, even tourists from the Far East.

Now, if you were only concerned about how much cash you could raise, that's a good concept. However, if you're concerned about the impact of increased gambling, then you start to question if it is such a wise idea. Would being located in those types of areas be harmful to the natural environment? Would it paint the perception that Alberta is simply Nevada North? Those are the kinds of concerns I would have, and that's why I don't really regard my position as being a contradiction.

In fact, if I were made the minister for one day, I think a couple of simple solutions – bang, bang, bang – and it would be done. We'd take the machines out of the hotels. I know the hotels would not be happy about that.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Hon. member, just one moment, please. Could I please ask people to sit down. We're not having a convention. This is the Assembly. Thank you.

Go ahead, hon. member.

MR. WICKMAN: We've got to remember that the hotels were not built to be gambling centres. Businessmen that built hotels or bought hotels bought them on the basis that their revenue would come from certain sources. Yeah, certainly things have changed, but things have also changed for a lot of other industries, like the small bookstores, for example. When you see the giants coming, of course it impacts on the small bookstores.

3:10

Look at the stationery stores. I used to see Willson Stationers in Southgate and Heritage malls, and they're gone. They're gone because you now have Staples and Office Depot and that. Government doesn't go to those little outlets and say: because you've fallen upon hard times because of a change in marketing approach and a change in people's taste, we're going to allow you to put some VLTs in your bookstore so that when people are looking through the books, they can be popping a few dollars into the machines at the same time. I can sympathize with the Hotel Association to a degree, but there has to be other ways. They have to use their resources and their ingenuity to increase their revenues.

I remember that when I was in the hospital, one of the other patients there came over and talked to me. He was a bit upset with our position on the VLTs. He said that he had bought into an Edmonton hotel on the basis of the VLTs being in there and that the VLTs would continue to be in there and, in fact, that the numbers would expand. Well, I sort of felt sorry for him, but on the other hand you don't buy a hotel on the speculation that increased numbers of VLTs are going to be popped into that hotel. Then he tried to explain to me that there were really no social implications as a result of that hotel. Well, sometime later, when I got out of the hospital, I stopped by that hotel on a Saturday afternoon just to look. I could not believe what I saw. It was not what you would call a four-star hotel by any means. There were people that had overindulged in alcohol, no question about it, some of them trying to play the machines and a guy touching me up for 10 bucks. He had gone through \$120 and wanted a \$10 loan. I felt sorry for him, but no, I wasn't going to give it to him for that purpose.

I guess that's the first thing I would do, is say that, well, we've got to get the VLTs out, but even before we do that, if we talk about true democracy, we could leave it up to Albertans to decide, because I'm confident that if you gave Albertans the option of relocating gambling, as I've said before, they would do it. So allow Albertans to do it in a provincewide plebiscite, once and for all resolve the

issue. Then what you do is you get these minicasinos in place that are going to raise a certain amount of dollars, in fact pretty good dollars. Even before the VLTs, lotteries raised pretty good money. We gave money to the Calgary Stampede board, the Edmonton stampede board, the community facilities enhancement program, the various arts foundations, recreation, and so on and so forth. Even after all that I remember that one year there was \$25,000 shuffled into general revenues because there was extra money, and that was before the days of the VLTs. So you don't need the VLTs to support those programs.

The second part of the Liberal philosophy would be to take the proceeds and abide by what the gaming summit has said. Now, I know that we have a motion on the Order Paper further down the road, that I'll deal with at that particular time. But take the proceeds and run them through general revenue as a technicality, and then put them where they should be properly – and that's in concurrence with the recommendation of the gaming summit – to true nonprofit groups.

Now, I'll look at some of the nonprofit groups, but before I do that, I want to first take a look at this article, because this misperception has to be corrected. This is in the *Calgary Herald*, where they said: "VLT dollars buy hospital beds." "Patient independence and freedom continues to improve at Calgary's Rockyview General Hospital, thanks to video lottery terminal dollars." Then it goes on to say that a cheque for \$157,000 came from the Calgary Community Lottery Board. Okay, that's fine.

Now, the dollars that the municipalities get to distribute to these nonprofit groups and hospitals and libraries and health authorities and such don't just come from the VLTs. They come from all forms of gambling. We can't identify it and say that VLTs bought these hospital beds. Maybe scratch-and-win tickets bought those hospital beds. Maybe Sports Select bought them. Maybe 6/49 bought them. That's an error that pops up repeatedly, and it's not only a mistake made by government members. I recall one press release – I believe it was the Premier that sent it out, or it could have been the former minister – that implied the same thing. Well, we had a correction on that one because it was obvious that that was incorrect.

Now, when we look at the dollars that are spent on community groups, when you look at the annual report, there are hundreds and hundreds of groups. Many of them are great, great groups. Even the introduction earlier of our special guests involved the Lord Strathcona's Horse, celebration 2000. I looked at the brochure that was left behind, and you all have a copy of this brochure. You look at the back of it. It says: our sponsors are very valuable to us; Lord Strathcona's Horse (Royal Canadians) Regimental Society is a charitable organization and accepts donations of any kind. Then it thanks four different organizations, one being the Wild Rose Foundation. Now we know that the dollars that the Wild Rose Foundation gets and that they turn around and distribute to nonprofit groups such as the Lord Strathcona's Horse, celebration 2000 come from lottery dollars. That's a good cause. That's the type of purpose, I think, that the gaming commission was talking about when they said: to nonprofit activities throughout the province.

I look through the list. If you look at the annual report, there are pages upon pages of hundreds upon hundreds of organizations throughout the province that received lottery dollars in some form. I can look at some of them. I'm not playing favourites here, and I'm not being critical of any. I just have to use some as examples.

I look at the Banff Senior Citizens Society. I don't know that much about that organization, but it sounds to me like it's great. It's a group of seniors, and possibly it's social activities that they get together for in probably a centre where maybe they do various activities together. Now, that sounds great, and our seniors deserve that type of attention.

I look at the Baturyn Community League. Again, from the community facility enhancement branch. That's great. Community leagues should get those dollars to enhance their facilities. That to me is the main purpose of the community facility enhancement program.

I look at the Beiseker Arena Management Society. [interjections] Beiseker. I'm thinking of Frank Bruseker. Remember Bruseker?

AN HON. MEMBER: Yeah, the guy that lost.

MR. WICKMAN: Yes, he did. Yes.

MRS. SOETAERT: A good guy.

MR. WICKMAN: A good guy, yeah. He's coming back. Anyhow, that again sounds like a good organization.

MR. SMITH: He'll come back when Lance becomes mayor.

MR. WICKMAN: Lance may make a second run at it. Who knows?

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Edmonton-Rutherford, it's you, sir, that has the floor.

MR. WICKMAN: This is interesting.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Please.

MR. WICKMAN: I look at the Canadian National Institute for the Blind. Now, can you ask for a better organization than the CNIB? Again, a very, very worthwhile recipient of dollars.

The Big Brothers and Sisters of Red Deer and District. I don't see either member from Red Deer – that's another great organization.

Then I look at some here, and I have to question these. There's a whole bunch of golf courses. I look at Barrhead Golf and Recreation Area Society. I look at Collicutt Siding Golf Club, Connaught Golf Club, Foremost Golf Association. It's in the annual report, and a copy can be obtained from the Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark. Now, I'm not sure if these golf courses are nonprofit societies or exactly what. Are they operated by municipalities? How do they qualify? I'm not being critical. I'm simply asking. I'd like the minister to kind of explain further down the road what these organizations are about and what justifies their getting this type of money.

Here's one called the Bob Clark Library. Now, maybe this has something to do with the former member of the House Bob Clark. I don't know. The Bob Clark Library is a new one to me. I've heard of presidential libraries in the United States, but I'm not sure what the Bob Clark Library is, and I would be quite curious about that one.

I see a whole bunch here: city of Airdrie, city of Calgary, city of Camrose, city of Edmonton, city of Grande Prairie, city of Lethbridge, city of Medicine Hat, city of Spruce Grove, city of St. Albert. These are cities, municipalities. I guess you could argue in a way that municipalities are nonprofit, but they're not really a nonprofit society, or they're not really a charitable cause. So are these dollars given to the city? This is under the community facility enhancement program now. This isn't the lotteries board. Are these dollars given so that the city then turns around and uses it for parks and recreation? I'm not really sure.

3:20

I see the Coronation Curling Association. Now, that could

possibly be for a new curling facility. The Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar pointed out a couple of instances where we saw dollars being used for a capital purpose, putting new roofs on some facilities because of the pine shakes. It's possible it's that type of thing. I don't know. I'm simply asking.

The Lakeland Snowdusters Snowmobile Club. Now, that sounds like an interesting one. Does that buy snowmobiles for the members to ride around with? That's a curious one. I don't know what type of snowmobile facility you would build. Maybe it's some type of place where you park these things. I'm not sure.

The High River Tennis Club. I would have to assume that those are tennis courts. The Hinton Flying Club is probably where they would store airplanes. Again, I don't . . . [interjection] Yeah, the member over there is occupied.

So those are the types of questions that I have on those types of causes. I guess the point that I'm trying to make is that all lottery dollars are not wasted, Madam Chairman. Many of them go to causes right in my own riding of Edmonton-Rutherford. Many of the community leagues have enhanced their facilities thanks to the community facility enhancement program. I go into even my own community hall, the Royal Gardens community hall. What's the first thing I notice? A big fireplace in an addition, a very nice room where I even periodically hold my board meetings. I pay rent, of course, and hold my board meetings there. But right over that fireplace, guess what's there? A great big picture of who? Not the Queen. Not me.

AN HON. MEMBER: Who?

MR. WICKMAN: Guess.

MRS. SOETAERT: Kowalski.

MR. WICKMAN: Exactly. The former minister, now the Speaker. A big picture of him handing over a cheque.

MS LEIBOVICI: This is where?

MR. WICKMAN: In my community hall just by my house.

When I went there to see the presentation of the cheque being made, the minister wasn't there himself, but a staff member from his department was there. I guess this picture had been taken sometime prior, and it was framed and a plaque was given. I sat right there as the member, and I wasn't even recognized. Nobody said: MLA Wickman, you come up and be in this picture as well. My board members could have reacted a little more kindly to that had I been in there. They have to sit there and look at this picture while we conduct business.

MS BLAKEMAN: Do you think it's a slush fund?

MR. WICKMAN: Well, it could be a slush fund.

AN HON. MEMBER: We wanted a picture of Murray and we didn't get it.

MR. WICKMAN: A picture of whom?

AN HON. MEMBER: Murray.

MR. WICKMAN: You mean it's going to be replaced by a picture of Murray?

AN HON. MEMBER: Yeah.

MR. WICKMAN: A big picture. That means another grant is forthcoming then; eh?

Madam Chairman, before I get carried away, I'm going to conclude because we have a number of members that want to speak. Edmonton-Centre here is anxious.

Thank you.

MR. SMITH: Madam Chairman, as much as I am extremely, extremely anticipatory and excited about the Member for Edmonton-Centre rising with her questions, I was so electrified by such an accurate illustration and improvisation of the past that I feel absolutely compelled to talk about the present and in fact even return to the subject of the day, which is lottery estimates, which is talk about the future.

Again, Madam Chairman, as I was going through some of my letters of support for Bill 11 and some of the detailed descriptions of accurate information pertaining to the bill, I was able to find some notes that reinforced the continuance of the contradictions from the Member for Edmonton-Rutherford, who last night talked about: I am entirely in opposition to minicasinos; I think the Hotel Association proposal is absolutely the wrong proposal. Today it was: there are minicasinos; I think there's revenue in there, and VLTs apply to that; I think the hotels should come up with more creative ways of finding revenue, and there should be more regulations surrounding how they make a living.

Well, I know the Liberal way is a regulatory way. We've seen it federally. I think we can work closely with the Alberta Hotel Association on this matter, as we have on other matters pertaining to this department, and come up with some strong recommendations that work for them.

I do want to talk about the member's keen comments and recognize his vigil watch over VLTs and how VLTs have been a part of this province for I guess well over – what? – 16 years now, 11 years, a long time, and the member's been there to watch them grow to this year, where they have revenue of approximately \$600 million.

He in fact started to address some of the areas that we actually need to take a look at from a policy perspective, Madam Chairman. In fact, if you have multiple licences and they are recognized as the VLTs in the network that have increased revenue, compared to the singles and the doubles in other areas, that could be interpreted as a signal of a destination gaming place because the revenues are higher. So through network management it may be in the interests, to prevent the ubiquity of gaming and to reinforce the revenue opportunity that the member alludes to, to in fact look, examine, listen, and revise that policy.

So I take those comments for change in the future as good solid comments. I know the member will want to participate not only in photo opportunities – if I'm ever close to one and he's around, he's going to be the first guy I'm going to call: come on up to the front, Percy, because you look good in pictures.

Madam Chairman, I'm not going to focus on the contradictions that continue to come about: supporting VLTs, supporting casino gaming groups, not supporting them, destination casinos, Banff park, national jurisdiction casinos. There are just too many contradictions across the broad spectrum to address them one at a time. Again, I'd remind the member that his motion is on the record, which I'll repeat today:

Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly urge the Government to eliminate the Lottery Fund, with all lottery revenues deposited into the General Revenue Fund.

Mr. Wickman did propose that motion, that is absolutely one

hundred percent against and contra to gaming summit recommendations, which of course is one of the main cornerstones of gaming policy as it exists in the province today.

I do want to speak a bit about some more of the confusion of community lottery boards and the just superlative job, Madam Chairman, that you did last night in illustrating and explaining and making clear how the community lottery boards work. I would have thought the member would have been poring over the Blues and getting all that information, but let me just supplement in my poor way the very, very good explanation you made last night.

The community lottery boards expect to fund about 4,500 projects this year. The program supports community initiatives which "enrich and enhance" local services, "recreation, culture, libraries, parks, health, education, social services and the environment." Funding has been recognized through your good work, Madam Chairman, and has increased from \$50 million originally to \$53.3 million from the '99-2000 forecast of \$50.8 million, an increase of \$2.5 million, or 5 percent.

Let's talk about meeting population growth and cost increases with program growth. Per capita funding is nearly \$18.09 for the ensuing years. An important note to underscore, that you made so clearly last night, Madam Chairman: the spending decisions were made, are made, and will continue to be made by locally based community lottery boards. These 4,500 projects that went through are those that the community expressed a keen interest in funding. It is devoid of government influence, gerrymandering, or any other such invective the member wishes to hurl this way.

Now, let's focus for a minute on the community facility enhancement program, affectionately known as CFEP. This program has averaged about 700 recipients per year over the past three years. It provides financial assistance for the expansion and upgrading of community-use facilities, and it provides matching grants to municipalities, Indian bands, Metis settlements, and registered community nonprofit groups to build, renovate, or otherwise improve related family and community wellness facilities. This budget, Madam Chairman, provides \$25 million per annum, the same level of spending as in 1999-2000, and received a commitment for \$75 million in April '99 for a three-year period, to April 2002, to continue to review the program on an ongoing basis.

3:30

Now, the member talks about the various things, including the community hall in Edmonton-Rutherford, including our community-owned golf courses, including community-owned libraries. Why he would be opposed to increasing learning, furthering books – if it weren't for books at the Red Deer library in a far and long past time, Madam Chairman, I doubt that I would ever have been fortunate enough to be able to come to this great Assembly today. So I'm certainly in support of libraries, and I'm certainly in support of libraries in rural Alberta. I think I hear the sounds of a rural Albertan there in that fabulous desk thumping that just occurred from this side.

One of the reasons that the member is able to key on all the individual expenditures of the CFEP program and all the individual libraries, parks, community-owned facilities is because the information is all there, Madam Chairman. It's all there in an accountable, disclosing, transparent format. It's published in a report. It's published in the lottery fund. It's published at [www.aglc.gov.ab.ca](http://www.aglc.gov.ab.ca). This member for the first time in his career has absolutely one hundred percent search capability, and anything that he can't find in that search capability our department stands at the ready to be able to assist him where he needs to go.

I'm so glad that he brought up the question of community lottery

boards purchasing hospital beds in Calgary, electronic hospital beds and enhanced service health beds. It's a critical part of the lottery fund, because as we said last night – and I saw the member taking notes last night – 60 percent of the lottery fund is directed towards health, infrastructure, and educational expenses.

Now, I hear members behind me saying: well, what exactly are you spending the lotto fund on in medical expenses? With that questioning roar behind me of members on the government side, I will go into that. As a matter of fact, the day that Bill 11 broke, I was over at the Royal Alexandra hospital in Edmonton, the number one health authority, as it's rated in Canada today by an outside of Alberta party, a health authority which combined with the Calgary authority were two metropolitan health authorities that handled the Christmas bed and flu crisis better than any other major urban centre in Canada. I was fortunate enough to be invited over there to see the installation of a new process for angiograms. The process is less invasive than the former process. It's more efficient, and if a problem is discovered, it can lead to immediate angioplasty. The machine was funded by the lottery fund, which the member correctly points out is an amalgam of moneys from video lottery terminals, from casino gaming terminals, better known as slot machines, and from tickets, from pull tickets, Sports Select, and the like.

That lottery fund, which is, again, fully transparent at the web site as well as through this process, was able to fund in this case an advanced device for the benefit of Edmontonians and for the benefit of rural Albertans outside of Edmonton working in the northern section.

This year alone, Madam Chairman, Health and Wellness will receive \$10 million for advanced medical equipment. They'll receive \$38,207,000 for health authority supplemental capital equipment funding. They'll have \$15 million directed towards Alberta Wellnet, and you will see that they will be able to use these funds in an efficient and efficacious manner.

Madam Chairman, I want to go on and talk about education, and I want to go on and talk about infrastructure funding, but that might be anticipating some of the comments from the Member for Edmonton-Centre.

I do want to close with a clear statement to the member that he's doing a lot of his homework. He's on the web site, I know, now. He's working through the documents. He's seeing the benefits of 100 percent transparency, of 100 percent disclosure, and of 100 percent accountability.

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

MS BLAKEMAN: Thanks very much, Madam Chairman. Oh, the lottery fund. I think the issue for me around the lottery fund is one of responsibility and accountability. I've read the minister's comments from last night in *Hansard*. I don't know whether it's a matter of my having a different interpretation or belief in a certain use of language or whether there's just a very sly, slick way this government has of presenting and getting their own way when it comes to using lottery dollars for things.

I am one of the three MLAs that was actually at the gaming summit and was able to hear what people were saying and how definitive they were that gaming funds, lottery funds, should not be used to fund core services. In my definition core services would include health, education, and infrastructure.

I see an inconsistency here. If those are no longer core services, then why do we have ministries of Health, Infrastructure, and now-called Learning? If they're not a core service, why do we have a ministry for them? If they're not a core service, why do we have an

entire budget for them? If the government is going to define these three very large areas as not being a core service, why are they raising taxes under the name of education under property taxes if education is no longer a core service of government?

There's an inconsistency here. When it suits the government to call something a core service, they do, but when they want to use lottery moneys to fund things that should be funded under general revenue, should be budgeted for and should be acknowledged that this is an important expenditure and needs to be done, then the money should be coming through revenue. This government has used the lottery funds to subsidize themselves all the way along. The lottery funds are not reliable funds. They can be transient, and that bothers me as well.

Let's look at the flip side of that coin. Well, if these are not core services and sort of onetime only funding and it doesn't matter if this is funded through lottery dollars, which, as we know, are not reliable – you can't count that people are going to gamble X amount of money every year. There's no way to determine that. You can forecast it in the budget, but unless the minister is going to personally supervise people plugging those loonies and toonies into the VLT machines, this is not a reliable source of funding. What are they saying, then, about health and education and infrastructure if they're willing to fund it out of an unreliable source of funding? So I have a real problem with the sleight of hand that goes on here.

Now, I notice that the minister in his opening remarks states that "gaming and lottery profits [are] not [to] be directed to the province's General Revenue Fund." That's referring specifically to the gaming summit recommendation 4: "Gaming and lottery profits should not be directed to the province's General Revenue Fund." His response to this is: well, we created the lottery fund for it. Once again, those two sides don't quite match up.

3:40

When I look in the Auditor General's report, the Auditor General is pretty clear in his description of how money is moved around. I'll refer the minister to page 121 of the Auditor General's report 1998-99.

Quarterly payments are made from the Lottery Fund to the Ministries requesting Lottery Fund grants and are deposited in the General Revenue Fund and included as revenue of the departments of those Ministries. The departments then draw cheques in favour of the Lottery Fund grant beneficiaries as needed.

The Auditor General is essentially talking about the need for accountability in this money and who is ultimately responsible for the money. Is it the individual ministers that are receiving lottery money? Is it now the Minister of Gaming? Is it the Legislative Assembly? Who's taking the ultimate responsibility for this? I'm questioning the minister's statement there. I see he's just sent a note off, so I'm sure he'll get an answer back right away.

I also notice the statement he made that of the fund's estimated budget of \$837 million, 88 percent "is directed to thousands of public nonprofit community and charitable projects across Alberta." Excuse me? And 88 percent, the minister is claiming, is going to nonprofit community and charitable projects. Well, how does the minister then describe something like the agricultural initiatives funding of \$11,620,000 from the lottery funds in this year? What nonprofit is that, may I ask? Or perhaps we could talk about the fetal alcohol initiative, which I've heard described by other ministers, an excellent project and I certainly do support it. Which nonprofit is this? Or is the government just referring to itself as one huge nonprofit and therefore they can disburse lottery money as they choose?

How about the Alberta Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission? I wasn't aware that that was a community-based nonprofit. I think

that's an arm of the government; isn't it? Well, the minister is saying: "Eighty-eight percent of the fund's estimated budget of \$837 million is directed to thousands of public nonprofit community and charitable projects." I've just described millions of dollars that are very clearly on government initiatives. All right. The minister is smiling at me.

Let's talk about funds that are coming out for federal nursing stations. What community-based, nonprofit organization is that? Or how about alternate compensation strategies? Those last two are both under Health and Wellness initiatives. Let's talk about the north/south trade – oh, I'm sorry; that's not funded this year.

The water management infrastructure. Now, that project is receiving \$20 million. Which community-based, nonprofit charity is that? Or perhaps we could look at the transportation subsidy school support. Is that a community-based, nonprofit charitable group?

So I'm really wondering about the interesting choice of language. The minister is a clever fellow; I'll admit that. I think he's using very clever language to have Albertans think that one thing is going on when in fact it's quite another thing that's going on.

Another statement that the minister makes. He's talking about: one of the goals of the lottery fund and the Department of Gaming is to be open, clear, and transparent. I appreciate the fact that there's a list of projects that are receiving funding that are listed on pages 174 and 175 of the 2000-2001 government and lottery fund estimates, but this does not give me a lot of description of the projects that are going on. I can't look through this and find any kind of a subvoter that describes to me what these projects are, whether there's any additional revenue going into them. Where is the revenue coming from, and how is that money being spent?

This government likes to claim that they're open and transparent, but I have to tell you that there is not a lot of information given in these budget books, so I don't know what the minister's definition of open and transparent is. If it's giving a one-line description of a project, the name of a project, and the amount of money, okay. If that's the way it is, fine. Let's accept that as the definition.

But if I want to understand how this money is spent, even where, what part of the province it is spent in, how am I supposed to get that information? More to the point, how are Albertans supposed to get the information about what these projects are, even given [www.aglc.gov.ab.ca](http://www.aglc.gov.ab.ca), or whatever the web site is, which I suspect is not giving a full breakdown of exactly how these projects are funded and where the money is being spent on them.

I appreciate the comments from the Member for Lacombe-Stettler on the community lottery boards. I don't want to be misunderstood on what I'm about to say. That money that is going through those community lottery boards is much needed by the community, and my understanding, when this program was set up, was that it was in response to all of those nonprofit charitable groups in the community saying: "We don't have enough money. We need help here. You have not put additional funds into the Alberta Foundation for the Arts, Alberta Sport, Recreation, Parks and Wildlife, the Wild Rose Foundation, and those other lottery-based grants that are providing operating money to us, and there is no ability to get funds for other smaller groups that exist in a smaller, perhaps ad hoc way in the community."

[Mr. Herard in the chair]

The program was set up to do that, but it was meant to augment things. I'm now hearing that other programs are under pressure to cut off people who qualify, not necessarily get but who qualify, to apply for community lottery board money. They're now being told

that they're cut off from applying for other lottery foundation moneys, and that was not the point of that. It was meant to augment, not to replace.

I know a number of citizens of Alberta who have volunteered their time, a considerable amount of time, to sit on the local community lottery boards. I admire them deeply. It's a great commitment, and they take their job seriously and work very hard. But my initial concern expressed with this program was that there be overriding criteria from the government to make sure that all of the community lottery boards would be able to operate within sight of the same framework.

At the time I said: is there any guidance whatsoever? Should the lottery boards be looking for a certain percentage to be granting to arts groups, for instance? The concern I expressed at the time was that individual artists in Alberta may not be known or recognized in their own community, or people on the community lottery boards may not feel they have the personal background or expertise to know whether what this person was doing was valuable and therefore wouldn't fund them. So what was supposed to be an augment to a program – you could have artists especially in rural Alberta at a tremendous disadvantage because there wouldn't be any kind of criteria guiding the local board that they should be looking for arts endeavours in their community to support. I think that is still a concern.

The second concern. I notice that there are additional funds in the community lottery board pot of money this year. It's \$53 million. I've looked and I didn't see the answer to the question, so perhaps the minister can enlighten me. Is the additional money money that is being distributed through the grant program, or is it to cover administrative expenses? I know from talking to some of the boards that I have spoken to – and I think I can refer specifically to Edmonton – they need support money to administer their grants. Again, it's a group of volunteers. I know a couple of years ago they were trying to work through grant applications that would be funded to the tune of \$11 million. That is a lot of administrative work. They need some help to do this. It's an onerous task to expect that they're going to do on their own. So I'm questioning whether that additional money is going to be going into administrative assistance for these lottery boards or whether it's some sort of cost of living increase or something that's going into the actual amount being granted out.

3:50

I'm wondering if the minister was able to respond to the Auditor General's request that accountability for grant expenditures made from the lottery fund be improved. Given the long list of different projects, most of them government projects and many of them core service projects, how is this accountability being dealt with as per the Auditor General's recommendation?

Now, I'm also wondering why – and I'm referring specifically to page 174 of the estimates book – the lottery programs administration has increased fairly significantly. In looking through the *Hansard* from last night, I noticed some people asking about increase in wages and increase in travel costs. Is that what's accounting for the increase that I see on that particular line item? There's also a fairly substantial increase in the Alberta Gaming and Liquor Commission lottery operations, just about \$2 million. That's a fairly substantial increase as well, if the minister could elucidate on that.

I'm wondering if there are any initiatives planned or under way for efforts to assist organizations in developing performance measurements as part of their accountability back to the lottery fund. Having worked with the Auditor General's staff for some time on this, I'm aware that this is a difficult process to get started and to test

and evaluate and review and revise and move forward. What assistance, if any, is coming through the lottery fund to assist the organizations that are recipients of grants to be able to both develop their goals but also develop the performance measurements that would help them evaluate that?

I've asked the Minister of Community Development and I will ask the minister responsible for this lottery money, as well, whether there have been any plans or anticipation of assistance to nonprofit organizations in Alberta for capacity building, further to the federal government voluntary sector report. If the minister hasn't had an opportunity to read that report, I highly recommend it. Seeing as we have a recess next week, perhaps he can work his way through the book then. There are some very good points that are being raised there.

Under the major strategies, on page 179, there's a strategy to "develop and implement benchmarks and best practice initiatives." For whom, or for what section? Or is this for anyone receiving lottery money? As I pointed out, mostly the government is the recipient of that. Could the minister detail who that benchmark and best practices initiative is directed towards.

I'm also interested in why the minister sees fit to have a highlight of "implement a strategy to further inform Albertans about Alberta Lottery Fund support for community initiatives." Is the minister feeling heat to have to explain to Albertans where their lottery money is going? What has given rise to that as a highlight?

I note again the actual amount of money that is going to charities, the \$160 million that is quoted under financial highlights on page 180. It states that "for 2000-01, charities in Alberta are expected to receive over \$160 million as a result of gaming revenue generated on their behalf." Now, I can do my math; \$160 million out of the \$837 million is not 88 percent. I do note that that \$160 million is for the most part essentially the same amount of money that is brought in through the ticket revenue.

I urge the minister and the Minister of Community Development to go back and have another look at the money that is actually going out to those charitable groups. It has pretty much stayed stagnant, with the amount of money coming into the lottery fund generated by ticket revenues, and I don't know if that's an official or an unofficial tie together or benchmark or association. But it's high time that more money was going to those charitable groups, and that's what they were expecting from the gambling summit. Having been there, I know that's what they meant. They expected that that \$160 million the minister admits to would be upped and that more money would be going into those charities.

I regret I've run out of time, but thank you very much for the opportunity to raise the questions.

THE ACTING CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Manning. Oh, I'm sorry, Edmonton-Manning. I didn't look to the right.

MR. SMITH: Mr. Chairman, thank you so much, and I'll certainly take that advice and always look to the right in this Assembly.

So many opportunities to clear up misconceptions compel me to rise to my feet. Firstly, there is no *Hansard* from last night, Mr. Chairman. There are the Blues, and we hope the member has directed her attention to those. Let's go back to those Blues where it says:

Eighty-eight percent of the fund's estimated budget of \$837.5 million is directed to thousands of public, nonprofit, community, and charitable projects across Alberta.

I want to read that into the record again.

Eighty-eight percent of the fund's estimated budget of \$837.5

million is directed to thousands of public, nonprofit, community, and charitable projects across Alberta.

So, in fact, there is a great amount of money directed to very, very good organizations driven by very, very good Albertans who come to the lottery fund, who look at it not as a source of government controlling largesse but as a legitimate access source to funds.

One of the greatest funds, which I've looked on with fondness since my first being elected, is the Wild Rose Foundation. Gosh, I've always thought, there are so many special parts of the Wild Rose Foundation when you see dollars from that foundation helping individuals in places like Calcutta, in places where there's extreme poverty. We can see that Albertans do take that extra moment, spend that extra time in realizing how much misery there is in the world and what little bit we can do to take a part to try and alleviate some of the poverty, the overwhelming question of poverty, to give opportunities. For example, it's one of the reasons why there are athletic scholarships in the lottery funds, so that individuals can rise up through education and break through the walls of poverty and be able to move ahead.

Of course, the 88 percent of the public, nonprofit, community, and charitable projects across Alberta was clearly stated in a response from the government way back when, in 1998, when the government said in a press release in response to the gambling summit – it was a commitment to communities and charities reaffirmed. I encapsulate, Mr. Chairman: the government agrees that gaming and lottery profits should not be used to fund ongoing essential core government programs. However – *quand meme, en Francais* – the government does support the use of these profits for broad-based community projects that benefit Albertans.

Then the member started to talk about agriculture, and if that isn't my favourite topic, Mr. Chairman. They often say that farming is not our past; it's our future. Indeed, they've said that farming is not our past but our passion. She asked for a detailed explanation of the lottery fund commitment to agriculture Alberta, that paragon of hard work, that very thing that emphasizes, that defines Albertans' core values, the embodiment of which is two words, Mr. Chairman, the family farm.

4:00

If you look into the Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development community estimates, as the member has clearly pointed out – and I thank her for that by repeating our web site, [www.gaming.gov.ab.ca](http://www.gaming.gov.ab.ca) – she found that there was \$11,620,000, and she said: now, what's nonprofit about agriculture?

Of course, if she would have been able to be with our minister, who's down in Ottawa this week taking on the case of beleaguered farmers not only in this province but looking at agricultural disastrous conditions throughout the prairies, throughout the second largest breadbasket of the world, she would know that it's a difficult business. There are lots of community organizations, lots of nonprofit organizations – in fact, that's the very spirit of volunteerism in Alberta, and that's where it came from, Mr. Chairman. It came from places like Carmangay. It came from places like Stavely. I mean, I'd like to talk about the Granum White Sox. That was a baseball team that existed in the early '30s that brought people together, that put community together, that embodied the very community volunteer spirit that the lottery fund and the Progressive Conservative Party of Alberta represents and brings forward today in today's politics.

Mr. Chairman, I may digress, so let me just return to the \$11,620,000 in agriculture initiatives. The agriculture initiative provides grant support to nonprofit agricultural organizations throughout Alberta. It includes annual support to over 281 agricul-

ture societies located in Alberta's rural community. It includes grant support to nonprofit organizations with objectives related to improvement in agriculture.

Because I'm a city guy, I guess I always refer to it as the square tomato group, where you could make tomatoes square and they'd ship easier and bruise less, but in fact if you look at what is happening in today's agriculture world, there's a worldwide debate on genetically modified food. There are farmers storming the bastille of McDonald's in France, pelting them with tomatoes because of the use of genetically modified organisms. I can remember a pelting taking place in Vegreville not too far back, and I don't think it was tomatoes.

Mr. Chairman, I know the member comes from Edmonton-Centre, but if she could just go out to Alberta west or Grande Prairie-Smoky or Grande Prairie-Wapiti, even as close as Clover Bar-Fort Saskatchewan, there's just a wonderful richness of vitality, character, integrity, and the great volunteer spirit in the great Albertans that sit outside of our urban environments.

So we take a look at developing the people in these agricultural venues, Mr. Chairman. We look at the development of people – and I wish *Hansard* could record the raising of hands as I ask the question: how many people know what 4-H stands for? What are the four Hs? How many people know here? [interjections] See; there we go. We've got "I was in 4-H." There's a hand from Camrose-Wetaskiwin, Edmonton-Manning, Vegreville-Viking, Edmonton-Whitemud, Drumheller-Chinook, from Edmonton-Gold Bar, from Peace River.

Now, I'm not going to say what the four Hs are, because as someone comes up with the next question, the next set of comments, they may want to inform us what it is, and I don't want to take that away from them. But I can tell you that "head" is one of them, and that means training and leadership skills for adults and youth in local communities, board effectiveness training for agricultural/industrial organizations, increasing the awareness of agricultural issues, expanding the capacity of local leadership to make decisions and improve their communities. Estimated expenditures, \$711,000. Enablement of organizations, successful delivery of agriculture shows, trade shows.

You know, that was one of the things I remember going to in Red Deer, when it was 8,000 people, with my father. We would go and look at all the new machinery that was coming in and being used, and that was way before there were enclosed cabs on tractors and multiple-use equipment and four-wheel drive tractors. They did have rubber tires. They were just moving into rubber tires, it seems.

That is \$2.4 million. Development of vital infrastructure contributes to the operation of fairgrounds, rodeo grounds, and multiple-use community facilities that add to and enrich the quality of life of over 250 rural communities. Capital development and renovation of community multi-use facilities in rural communities: \$3.6 million. Annual operating, program, and capital funding to ag societies: \$4.87 million.

You know, I'm so pleased that the Member for Edmonton-Centre asked about this, because it gives us an opportunity to exchange and share some of those views that differ between rural and urban. Often it's said that if you walk a mile in another man's shoes, in another woman's shoes – although my feet would probably get tired from the heels – or, as they said in *To Kill a Mockingbird*, place yourself in another person's skin, that gives you that opportunity to see the difficulties, the problems, the opportunities. I bet you the Member for Edmonton-Centre will probably want to go out right now and check the Hs in 4-H and say: does it mean head, health, heart, and hands?

So having said that, Mr. Chairman, and having been able to

exchange those views and provide that important amount of information, I look forward to the comments from probably Edmonton-Manning.

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

MR. GIBBONS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I can never match that. That is – I won't even say what it is.

You know, I'm going to talk about municipal and infrastructure, and I'm going to talk about the lottery going a few different ways. I, too, did go to the gaming summit, and I did also work from room to room and watched how it was manipulated, facilitated to the answers that . . .

MS LEIBOVICI: Was it something like the Bill 11 forum?

MR. GIBBONS: Yeah. Same way that the Bill 11 forums are being handled right now.

You know, under lottery funds one of the items is Municipal 2000 sponsorship. I've got a question under that on where the money is going, because a lot of it should be coming out of the community enhancement program, the viable community initiative programs, the Infrastructure department, the Health department, the Learning department. Everybody is all part of trying to put money out to Alberta, which is good, because we read from the AUMA last edition. One they're talking about is:

Delegates adopted a "Viable Communities Definition" at the 1999 AUMA convention, the first step in creating a framework designed to help municipalities move towards greater self-reliance. Municipalities currently operate without a clear definition by the Province of the basic "Viable Community" that the Alberta government will support. This creates difficulties for many municipalities, particularly in the wake of reduced provincial grants and support.

They go on and they talk about what do you call viable community initiatives. Then they go on to talk about a "community which has the will and resources to sustain itself economically and socially." That's what they're really pushing under this. Then they go on to say that "Alberta Economic Development has an initiative entitled 'Self-Reliant Communities' that is coordinated with the Alberta Economic Development Authority."

Now, we do see and we do know that today's communities face a number of serious challenges, and we need leadership which will move us towards solutions in partnership with local governments. Talking about infrastructure deficit, the Capital Investment Planning Committee estimated that the \$1.2 billion infrastructure deficit is a major, major problem in this province. An AUMA infrastructure task force estimated a \$1.77 billion infrastructure deficit, including an \$888 million deficit for non transportation related infrastructure, storm drainage, wastewater systems, water supply and treatment systems, parks and recreation facilities, protective and emergency services, solid waste management, and mobile equipment.

4:10

Now, as I started asking questions around the program under the Municipal 2000 sponsorship, this really falls into place. It says that there's a \$1.77 billion infrastructure deficit. Mr. Chairman, why won't the government release the corporate capital plan overview development by ministry, instead of just throwing it all into lotteries?

We look at who the backbone of the province of Alberta is. We have the Minister of Gaming talking about agriculture, farming, rural. It's very true. If you take my constituency, probably 65 percent of the people are from northeast Alberta and have moved to the closest route out of the city right back to the farm. So our

communities are the backbone of Alberta society. We live and work and raise our families in our community. The quality of life within our communities is dependent on the availability of local infrastructure. Maintaining our infrastructure is critical to Alberta's future competitiveness, providing the means of adding value to products and services we produce and sell both here in Canada and abroad. Infrastructure planning should and must be the core business function of the province in close collaboration with our municipalities.

The province likes to take credit for the \$4 billion surplus at the provincial level, but why do they refuse to take responsibility for the infrastructure deficit they've created over the past seven years at the local level? Between 1992 and 1998 general and specific-purpose grants from the Alberta government to municipalities declined by \$402 million, which is 48 percent, the second highest level of decline of provinces in Canada. Our municipalities have been subject to a financial squeeze by the government. Not only were provincial grants to municipalities reduced; the province has taken over a portion of the local property tax base.

My questions today on the Municipal 2000 sponsorship program. The 2000-2001 operating expenses of \$12 million were funded through the lottery funds. This represents a \$2 million, or 20 percent, increase over last year's estimates for comparable and forecast of \$10 million. My question, though, to the minister, probably through the Minister of Gaming, is: what are the criteria under municipal co-operation that the ministry of Municipal Affairs will use to determine whether the project is eligible for the 25 percent bonus pool under the Municipal 2000 sponsorship program?

MR. PASZKOWSKI: They're municipal programs.

MR. GIBBONS: It is? But is it going to be forever? Is it going to be for one year? Is it going to be for two years? It's a carrot as far as I'm concerned. Last year I asked the same question here, and I didn't get an answer whether it was going to be for next year, two years.

My next question to you, Mr. Minister. What are the selection criteria and the composition of the review panel that will evaluate the applications for enhanced grants? Who's on these boards? How did they get picked? If you could submit that to me, I'd really like that.

Next question is to the same minister. He should be taking note of this so he can give an answer back as soon as we come back on April 3. Has the ministry conducted a cost-benefit evaluation of the Municipal 2000 sponsorship program for its first two years of operation? What specific performance criteria or benchmarks have been established by the department to evaluate the effectiveness of the program? Is it the intention of the minister to make the Municipal 2000 program a permanent program? Is it not more appropriate that the programs are under the general revenue fund rather than the lotteries? That's what I referred to in my first sentence. Maybe it should be under Municipal Affairs, Community Development, Infrastructure, Health, Learning.

Can the minister indicate how projects such as upgrading a number of skating facilities, road sign installations, the purchase of roadside spray units, upgrading access roads, construction of potable water fill stations, roof repair, and building renovations could qualify as an enhancement to innovation and excellence under the program? Shouldn't these projects be funded under the community facility enhancement program or the street improvement program or the highway infrastructure program? Is there an established percentage of projects that are funded on the basis of excellence and innovation versus regional co-operation under the Municipal 2000 sponsorship program? Is the funding split 50-50, 60-40, 70-30, et cetera?

You know, I read through your release on this program the other day, and again I would like to know the criteria there. If this government hadn't played their one-string guitar for the last few years on downloading, did we need to put this out? Could we not have built this into all the different programs of Infrastructure and Health and so on? You know, I can see under different items here the deadline for the grant, June 30, 2000. I hope there are people out there that are actually helping with the actual thoughts of intermunicipal co-operation, because as I read through it, I see communities tying together on this one. This one, for example, for the county of Smoky Lake, the villages of Vilna, Warspite, and Waskatenau. Funding was provided for a five-part regional recreation facility upgrade. The five components of this project include Vilna's arena upgrade, the Warspite community park expansion, the Waskatenau curling upgrade, the Smoky Lake recreation complex.

MR. PASZKOWSKI: And all the people use it in that area.

MR. GIBBONS: True. But maybe it should have been funded out of some other program. Maybe it should be established as a community facility enhancement program.

THE ACTING CHAIRMAN: Hon. member, I understand that the minister is trying to be helpful, but through the chair if you don't mind.

MR. GIBBONS: He's just finding out what kind of personality I have. When I get going, I get going.

Now we look at Starland county, village of Delia. Funding has provided for the joint purchase of four sets of self-contained breathing apparatus to be shared by six area fire departments. Great. There's no problem with that. But why isn't it out of the regional health budget? Why isn't it just out of the Health and Wellness budget instead of this particular one?

MR. PASZKOWSKI: Because the municipalities wanted it this way.

MR. GIBBONS: Okay. That's the answer I needed on paper.

Now, the town of Brooks. This is the one around the raw water irrigation system. I've sat with the municipality down there, talked about it. I totally understand what it is. But here again I'm wondering: why isn't it under an Infrastructure program?

As we go through the whole list of different communities that got money during 1999 under this particular program – and I don't want to let anybody believe that I think it's a bad program, because it is a good program. But, you know, there are a few things I want to highlight as we talk. Why the program was actually set up: that was around information, computers, and so on. We can see geographic information systems; no problem. Registration information; no problems. We've got computer systems; that's what it's for. We've got software to convert scanned maps and images into electronic format; no problem with that. Now, I see a number of items like this, but here we're going back to arenas. As long as there seems to be partnership in these types of things, we see it go through.

Beaver county: signs for range roads. Yesterday at a meeting with the Alberta Chamber of Commerce a representative from Oyen talked about signs and getting flak from the government. They're off the beaten track. They've got old signs? Big deal.

MRS. McCLELLAN: They don't have old signs. They're new signs.

MR. GIBBONS: Well, through the chair, they're complaining that

the government is giving them a rough time, and they have to get new signs. Okay?

Then we get into the MD of Bonnyville No. 87. The MD of Bonnyville and the town of Bonnyville partnered to hire and share services of two special constables. Well, why aren't we just bumping up our police budget in this province through the justice system instead of coming through this particular item?

We have Cardston county: purchase of a roadside spray unit system. This is Agriculture; this is Environment. Maybe we could be passing that all over the province to start doing our weed control for the thistle epidemic last year and giving it to the CN and CP railroads so they can actually be spraying their problems with the thistles. We have Flagstaff county: a rescue vehicle. This should be Health or Justice again.

4:20

Now, I could keep going all the way through. We set up a Department of Infrastructure, which is massive, but we're using Gaming dollars to do it this way, piecemeal, \$12 million, \$170 million, whatever. Potable water truck fill station for the county of Lethbridge: we all know what that's about. Well spent. Nothing wrong with the county of Lethbridge partnered with the town of Coaldale to establish a regional potable water commission. But why out of this particular program? Mountain View: expand and renovate the county office. Nothing wrong with that. But we've got items in here like purchasing a one-way snow plow for a grader; this is for the county of Two Hills. You know, I think it would be really appropriate if that one came out of Infrastructure just because of the Minister of Infrastructure.

The town of Bon Accord: upgrade town sidewalks by replacing old and unsafe sidewalks in residential areas. Had another complaint yesterday from Beiseker, wondering why they have to be pushed into the lowest bid. Well, I didn't get into that one in front of a lot of people. I'll call them back and talk to them about that one. I was looking for the actual dollars and cents that Beiseker got through this program, but I didn't see it in here.

Town of Claresholm: build an addition to an existing fire hall. Town of Claysmore: replace the existing fire truck cab and chassis. Well, if it's a 1947 International, I guess they had to make a plastic one to make it fit. Crowsnest Pass and Crowsnest: this is all upgrading local sidewalks, snowmobile trails, installation of irrigation system, to improve the ball and soccer fields. The town of Fort Macleod: upgrading recreation centre, replacing the curling piping system. Mr. Chairman, I can go on and on and on. These are all good projects; I'm just wondering why they come out of here. Town of Picture Butte: install an underground sprinkler system. An underground sprinkler system. I know it's dry down there.

The main thing with this is that we're looking at a lottery-funded item that should be directly funded out of general revenue under different programs, whether it's Infrastructure or whatever, but not just: pick the program; let's do it. It should be budgeted and applied for and dealt with through each one of the departments I talked about.

Mr. Chairman, with that I will sit down. I know I didn't take my 20 minutes, but I never do.

THE ACTING CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much.

Hon. minister.

MR. SMITH: Thanks very much, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, Edmonton-Manning, for those good comments, well-researched and well-thought-out comments.

I do want to just respond very quickly to his last comment. The

budgeting process is truly from the bottom up, and the lottery fund is not one that picks projects and then hands out the money. The lottery fund is one that responds to operating departments such as Municipal Affairs, such as Infrastructure, such as Agriculture, and when those operating departments define onetime areas, specific areas of spending, it's that grassroots process, from the MD, from the farm, that comes up, that is identified, that then the lottery fund can respond to.

The lottery fund is able to effectively respond to those because of the good work that those departments do in continually liaising and co-operating with those individuals who form those municipal jurisdictions. I don't know if the Minister of Municipal Affairs and the Minister of Infrastructure wish to comment on the specific comments from the member at this stage or simply table their responses at a later time, but should they wish to do that, I'm certainly able to give them the floor.

I do want to make one further comment that harks back not only to the Member for Edmonton-Manning but more specifically to the Member for Edmonton-Centre. The \$160 million that goes to volunteers, Mr. Chairman, is outside of the lottery fund. That's money that these individual groups and charities earn from participating in bingos and charities throughout this 660,000 square kilometres that make up the province of Alberta. Those funds are theirs, for their use in accordance with specifically drafted guidelines, and are not included in the overall promulgation of the lottery fund, that now is budgeted at \$837,500,000.

If the ministers want to supplement my answers by adding, specifically on Municipal 2000 and those types of programs, they can, or I'm sure, hon. member, they will do it perhaps more completely and definitively through a written tabling.

Thank you.

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

MS LEBOVICI: Thank you. I, too, rise this afternoon to ask some questions with regards to the lottery fund estimates and will probably focus the majority of my questions around the Health and Wellness part of the estimates. But before I do, I'd like to just ask some general questions that have come up through my constituency as well as through looking at the estimates in some of the other areas.

One of the first questions I have. It appears, at least in the Edmonton area – and I'm not sure if it's transferred to other municipalities across the province – that there is now some question as to what the CFEP grant covers vis-a-vis what the municipalities are covering. To be a little bit more specific, I know that with regards to a grant to one of my community leagues, they were told that a particular portion of that grant would no longer be funded because in fact it was deemed to be now the responsibility of the municipalities.

In the past what the province has done was picked up some of the costs that were formerly provided through the municipality structure. As they have cut back, CFEP would pick up those costs. Now CFEP has changed their policy and are not doing it anymore. As a result, this one community league is out \$40,000, even though they have been planning for a park enhancement now for a period of two to three years. So it significantly impacts what they can and can't do. My question is: is that specifically a conflict, in a sense, between the city of Edmonton and the CFEP program, or is that more general across the province? Will it be applied equally across the province if that is now the new policy with regards to CFEP funding?

Another question that I've had asked of me and that in fact the Member for Edmonton-Rutherford had brought up as well is the

grants that are provided to golf and country clubs. I will look forward to the information that the minister provides with regards to that particular area.

In noting the facilities that have been granted funding, I'm just wondering what the SGS parents' group is, if we could get a little bit of explanation around that. I'm sure it is a worthwhile project. I'm just wondering what it is.

With regards to the funds that are provided, what type of monitoring is carried on by the department to ensure that the dollars are being used as requested and that the dollars are being utilized in a proper fashion? We've seen what happens at the federal level when there is not a proper oversight function with regards to the provision of dollars, and I would like to know what monitoring mechanisms are in place within the department right now to ensure that that doesn't happen here.

I have a question around lottery fund estimates, page 174, with regards to the Community Development portion of the Trans Canada Trail project. I have received a number of letters with regards to individuals who are not supportive of the project in that the trail will infringe on their property. Especially if we're providing public dollars, I would like to know what the minister is doing with regards to working with I guess it would be Infrastructure and I'm not sure actually which other department in order to ensure that the concerns those individuals have with regards to the Trans Canada Trail project, which I personally do support, are being met. It's a group of individuals at this point, an organized group, it's my understanding.

4:30

Before I move to Health, I just want to make sure that I've looked at the other areas that I wanted to touch on. I think I have. If I move to the health care facilities portion on page 175 under Infrastructure, there is a substantial amount of money, \$120 million, that is being provided out of lottery funds into the health care facilities. My question is: what is the breakdown between private, private for-profit, and public? Which health care facilities are receiving funding, and how are the priorities established with regards to the funding? For instance, is the Red Deer hospital one of those facilities that will be accessing funds out of this program?

My colleague from Edmonton-Centre had, I believe, made a very good point when she indicated that lottery funds were not to be used for core funding programs. When I look at the Health and Wellness budget and their business plan summary in the government and lottery fund estimates, in fact some of their major items that the funds are being provided for from the lottery fund either through Infrastructure or through Health and Wellness are major strategies that have been outlined by the Health and Wellness department.

If lottery funds are not to be core funding for programs, one wonders why in fact we are looking at funding areas that are major strategies under Health and Wellness. The fact that these facilities or these programs that are funded by lotteries require dollars I'm not disputing. What I'm asking is: why are we funneling dollars that are not sustainable dollars to Health and Wellness when in fact what is required in that department is sustainable funding for ongoing projects and for facility planning? That is the crux, I believe, of some of the problems within the Department of Health and Wellness right now, that it is hard for the regional health authorities to plan when in fact they don't have a sustainable funding base.

To move directly into the Health and Wellness portion of the lottery fund – and that's on both page 174 and page 175 – I have a question around the federal nursing stations. Actually I could have asked it as well in Health and Wellness. I'm surprised that there are provincial dollars being provided to the federal nursing stations. I

would have assumed that that would have all been part of federal expenses. So I'd like to know what the breakdown is. Perhaps the minister can inform me as to what the program is and the contracts to have what looks like cost sharing between the province and the federal government.

The Calgary regional health laboratory facility. It's interesting that there was some funding that came from '98-99 to that facility. I believe that was part of the start-up funds for that particular facility. We know that that facility is inadequate and that there are no further dollars being provided through the lottery fund, which in fact supports my earlier argument that here we have a facility that's been set up and has received significant dollars from the lottery fund, \$9 million, and is receiving no money now, so there isn't that sustainable funding base. In fact, we have a facility in Calgary that we know is stretched to the limit. There may be inadequate dollars that are being provided to it out of the Health and Wellness budget. That budget can only stretch so far because of having planned for moneys from the lottery fund. So we've got disjointed planning perhaps occurring.

I have another question with regards to the health authorities' supplemental capital assistance funding, which is interesting. There's a little over \$38 million that's being provided for that particular part of it. I'm not sure if the minister is aware, but according to the Auditor General's report there are only 2.8 years of useful life left in the regional health authorities' capital equipment base across the province. My guess is that those dollars will not even make a dent in the capital equipment replacement that is going to have to occur within the next 2.8 years. The question I have is: what, again, can we in fact expect from this ministry with regards to working together with the minister of health to ensure that we do have adequate turnaround of capital equipment?

I have some very specific questions with regards to the health innovation fund. It was just announced yesterday as to which projects have been approved through Health and Wellness. Now, my first question is with regards to the dollars. When I look at the lottery fund and then I take the Health and Wellness budget, the dollars don't match up, so I'd like an explanation as to why that is. When I look at the news release from the minister yesterday, the news release indicated that \$7.2 million will be allocated in the 1999-2000 year – that was last year actually – for the 33 projects that are coming out of the health innovation fund. Your document indicates that the health innovation fund for 1999-2000 will receive \$4 million out of lottery funds. When I look at the Health and Wellness part of the program, it indicates that the 1999-2000 operating expense for Health and Wellness is \$5,900,000. If we have a total expenditure for '99-2000 of \$9,900,000, which again is last year even though we're talking about this year's budget – it's a little confusing – it means there's a shortfall of \$2,700,000 sitting in a fund somewhere. So I'd like to know where that \$2.7 million is.

Then I notice that in 2000-2001 the total expenditure for the program will be \$14,900,000. That's almost double what the expenditure was for this year. Actually it was this past fiscal year. What I'm wondering is: how many more programs are going to be announced? As of yesterday, we're looking at double the amount, and it would be interesting to know what other projects are going to be announced and what in fact the sunset dates are for these projects.

As the lottery fund is providing significant dollars to the health innovation fund, I've got some specific questions that I'd like to ask the minister. It appeared on overview of these projects that a fair amount were core projects again, that in fact some of them were not as much innovative as required for providing health services to different regions throughout this province. In fact, without continued funding, if these programs were found to be useful, they are not

sustainable given the current budgets within regional health authorities.

My questions. If in fact a program is evaluated – and I'd like to know what the evaluation process is for a particular program and, again, what the sunset dates are on particular programs – what happens if it's deemed to be a useful project? Will the health authorities then receive ongoing funding? Has there been the commitment made from the minister of health to ensure that those programs can continue? There is nothing worse than starting a program, having a two-year program, perhaps, be successful and then all of a sudden it's taken out of the community and is gone.

4:40

What were the criteria for selection, and how in fact will other organizations know for next year, because the funding is doubled, that this program is available and that they in fact can apply for this particular program? Now, the reason I ask that is that in the summer of this year when the program was announced, the people who were informed of the program were selected. They were brought into a room in the Calgary region, and they were informed that this was a fund they could apply for. It wasn't a broad-based call throughout Alberta so that organizations throughout Alberta could apply for this health innovation fund. Given that there is more notice now and more dollars, I'd like to know what the process will be for ensuring that not only the RHAs but other community-based agencies can actually apply for this program.

The outcome. I know that the government is very interested in performance measures and outcome measures, and I'd like to know what in fact those are and if in fact those will be made public.

Now, in terms of some of the specific programs, I'd like an explanation of how this differs from what's currently being provided in the areas or how it differs from the major strategies that are outlined in the minister of health's business plan. For the Chinook health region breast health centre one of the major strategies is to "implement provincial population-based breast cancer screening and province-wide metabolic screening programs," yet here we have a major strategy that's not funded through the minister of health but has to depend on lottery funding to access and to provide that particular program. I'm not arguing whether the program is needed. I'm questioning as to the basis of funding and perhaps the way that this program is providing the dollars.

Another program that I've asked for some information about already is the primary care partnership, and this is the program through the Crowfoot Village Family Practice. Now, it's interesting that we're providing more money to that particular program and I've yet to see an evaluation of that program. My question is: before we provide more dollars to a particular program, why in fact do we not have an evaluation first? If it is such a successful program, maybe we should be, as well, spreading out the advantages of that program to other family practice groups in Calgary.

The CUPS program, the community health centre, and the Alberta Mental Health Board. Now, I have a lot of problems with the way the Alberta Mental Health Board has been dealing with its community groups. Here we have the CUPS community health centre, which I understand provides a very good program, but on the other hand they have to get a grant. Again my question is: is it sustainable, and for how long will those dollars be available that will provide mental health support services to persons who are homeless and suffering from mental illness on the east side of downtown by adding a psychiatrist and social worker to the existing team? How is that innovative? That's a necessity. That's not an innovation.

Ditto for the nurse practitioner and physician collaborative partnership in the David Thompson region. Nurse practitioners and

the idea of nurse practitioners has been one that has been floating around for years, and the minister of health just recently said that he was going to be talking to the AARN to encourage the use of nurse practitioners. Again, is it innovative? It may be new for that particular area, but the idea is not an idea that has not been thought of before. Again, should this not be an ongoing program provided through Health and Wellness?

Medication management. I have a question as to how that particular program will work. Is there going to be information sharing between the physicians and the pharmacists in order to identify and reduce drug-related problems? That would be one way of doing that. What are the health information implications of that particular sharing of information?

The collaborative maternity care team's shared maternity care project. [Ms Leibovici's speaking time expired]

THE ACTING CHAIRMAN: The hon. minister.

MR. SMITH: Thanks very much. I originally thought that the party opposite would be saving the best for last, but I understand that with some of the changes now in speaker order, they really save the antepenultimate for last. [interjection] That is the next to second to last; in other words, you.

I'd like to thank the Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark for good questions. I really wish the member would have been able to rise to her feet last night when the minister of health was ready with his responses to the lottery fund. But they're very, very good questions, and those good questions deserve very, very good answers. We'll undertake to answer every one of those comments, hon. member. As well, if you do have further and you'd like to table them, that's certainly in accordance with what the other speakers over there would like to do. I'd certainly like to hear more. I always sit on the edge of my seat when the member speaks.

I do just want to make one very quick comment that I think may help in further questions, and that is on the volatility of oil and gas prices over the last 18 months, from \$12 a barrel to a high of \$32 and change and back down to \$27, and the volatility of corporate income tax over the last seven years. I think it has moved from \$350 million to over \$1.56 billion. There's more volatility in other revenue streams to this government than there is in the lottery fund. I mean, if you examine the lottery fund revenues and the normative growth that's occurred in the last five years, this is not funding that's put in jeopardy. What it is is recognition of opportunities in funding streams that operating ministries take from this fund and in a clear, transparent manner apply to their specific ministries.

So I did want to clear that up as well as giving answers to the technical questions and commenting that the Auditor General actually thinks we're better than we were before. He makes comments like: I am pleased to report that the department is making progress. So it's not all bad news from the Auditor General, and it's good news from the funding stream.

I look forward to hearing more from the opposition members.

THE ACTING CHAIRMAN: Go ahead, hon. member.

MS LEIBOVICI: Thank you. I want to just finish off the list that I have here as to the questions, and then they'll be provided all in one shot. I recognize that the Minister of Health and Wellness will have to be consulted in terms of the questions and will respond in writing, and that's just fine.

I was at the collaborative maternity care team's shared maternity care project. The question I have there is that that seems to be more

of a public health function and should be provided and could be provided through the public health delivery system. In the Capital region there are a couple of programs that I have some questions on. One is the adult brain injury caregiver college program, which actually does sound like it is a good, innovative program. I'd just like to know where the caregiver college will be, in case I have constituents who would like to be able to access that, and how far outside the Capital region people will be able to access this particular college.

If I might just add onto that, the idea of a caregiver college is a good one, not only for individuals who have family members who are suffering from adult brain injury but also for individuals who have family members who are suffering from a variety of physical and/or mental disabilities that could use help and support with regards to providing care to their family members.

4:50

The Grey Nuns rehab outreach service I understand has been an ongoing program – and I could be wrong – for the last couple of years, so this is not a new program. What I would be interested in knowing is whether the women's centre at the Grey Nuns hospital did in fact apply for any of the project dollars. If they did and were refused, what was the basis of the refusal? I understand that there is a project that is floating around the Capital region area, as well, for individuals who have weight problems, and I'd like to know if in fact that was a program that was requested in terms of funding.

The Aspen health region. I notice that there is a project called the Aspen Alzheimer's cottage. I'm wondering if that's connected with Aspen house at all or if this is a separate and stand-alone facility and if this cottage is a private, for-profit or public or private operator in the Aspen area.

The Aspen regional diabetic program. I've noticed this with other services that have been talked about by the minister of health with regards to diabetics and their needs. It seems we are doing wellness services and we are doing education regarding diabetes, but the reality is that what people need is to be able to access the supplies, and the dollars that are provided for individuals to access supplies like needles or insulin or what have you are inadequate. As one individual said to me: needles are provided for free to drug addicts but are not provided free to those with diabetes. So this is a huge concern.

The other area around that whole issue is dialysis services. I notice that there was the shared remote diagnostic imaging, which sounds like actually a very neat idea. I would like to know if there were any projects that were submitted with regards to dialysis services and traveling around from region to region or from centre to centre.

The Metis health project. I just have two other questions after this. If I could get an overview. It sounds the way it's written here as if one on-settlement nurse will do both public health and home care nursing to several Metis communities in the Lakeland region. That seems like an impossible task, and I would like to know if I'm reading that properly or if it will be a number of on-settlement nurses that will be providing those services.

The adult day program in the Mistahia region is also a program that is a good program by the look of it, but again the question is around the innovativeness and the sustainability of that particular program. How long is the funding being provided for? Is it two years, three years, five years, or an eternity?

My last question is around the Alberta Cancer Board. I was surprised at this one, where it indicated that there would be a palliative care discharge co-ordinator at the Tom Baker cancer centre

who would provide referral services for regional palliative care programs to terminally ill cancer patients being discharged. My immediate reaction was: is that not being done now? That is an essential service to patients who are being discharged from the Tom Baker who are terminally ill, and I can't quite understand how that would be a program without guaranteed sustainable dollars in the long run.

Those are some of the specific questions that I have with regards to the lottery fund estimates. I thank the minister for listening attentively, as he always does.

Thank you.

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

MR. BONNER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have just a few comments today that I'd like to make on the lottery fund estimates. I must thank the minister for remaining behind today in the House to field this vast array of questions. I do know that he's a very proud and concerned Canadian and that he would certainly rather be down in Calgary getting ready to attend the Prime Minister's dinner this evening.

MR. SMITH: I was invited. I would have gone.

MR. BONNER: Well, that's what I said. I knew that you would rather be there, and I do congratulate you for staying behind in the House today to answer our questions.

MR. SMITH: I didn't know if I could get in or not.

MR. BONNER: We will leave Bill 11 and all those other things out of this.

I do appreciate the comment that gambling is a matter of choice. I would be the first person to say that I've been involved as a volunteer with many organizations that have reaped the benefits of moneys that we receive in the way of grants from the lottery fund. I think it is essential, particularly when we look at our smaller communities and we look at our volunteers, that we do give them a hand, and particularly volunteers. These are the people that are having an increasing number of demands put on their time. We expect these people to be experts as volunteers. They attend programs. They attend coaching clinics. Accreditation has been a major part of their getting involved with their communities or with the children in communities. They have demands placed on them not only by the organizations they represent but also by parents, for example.

I was glad to see that the Calgary Minor Hockey Association came out with a plan which would provide a safe atmosphere for their participants and that in this plan they also had as part of their plan an environment where parents would be responsible.

As well, in speaking about volunteers, another component of being a volunteer, of being a parent is to raise funds to provide those opportunities for the youth of today, for people in our communities, whatever it may be, so that they will have opportunities that many of us just dreamed of when we were coming through the program. So we have to look at those things.

Certainly in looking at gambling, we do have a balance between choice and responsibility and accountability. I heard an interesting comparison to gambling the other day. It was a comparison where it was compared to death. In some instances gambling can be described in terms of death: as a friend or, in other terms, as a thief. Certainly when we look at death being a friend, we have to look at

our communities that so many of these funds go to. I was quite impressed when I saw the extensive list and the extensive programs that these funds go towards.

I agreed with the Member for Edmonton-Manning, who certainly indicated that communities are the backbone of this province. We have to look, for example, at what is happening to community life here in the province. I look at the municipal district of St. Paul, for example, which has experienced a 30 percent decline in population over the last decade. I know that these types of funds that go for projects in the municipal district of St. Paul are very, very needed dollars.

5:00

The question I get as I tour around this province is that so many of the VLTs, the bingos, the lotteries, whatever it may be, take so many dollars out of a community, yet so few of those are returned. I look at an example when I was in Cold Lake last summer, how the people of Cold Lake built a marina a number of years ago that was referred to as a white elephant. Well, when I was in Cold Lake last summer, it was very interesting to see that the marina that was once a white elephant now is too small. So many things have happened. The number of boats has increased greatly, the size of those boats has also increased, and so the town of Cold Lake, which is doing a fabulous job of developing and promoting tourism in their area, is faced with a problem where they not only have to expand the marina but bring it up to par for the size of boats they have to deal with today.

Now, as a community they certainly cannot raise those kind of funds for the marina. I certainly would rather see funds being provided for those types of projects out of lotteries rather than seeing that money going to core services. I know core service needs all the help it can get, but I would also like to see where communities that are out there, communities that see themselves in a state of transition, where industries that are in those towns, whether it be the number of farmers in the area is declining or whether, for example, the town's resources have declined, where they can see that at some time in the future those resources are not going to be there to sustain the viability of the town and they wish to move into tourism, then they certainly need some help. I would wonder, in all of these deliberations, if in fact the minister or the lottery fund would ever look at the possibility of providing funds for those types of facilities for towns that are in transition, that require something to keep them viable, to keep them going when there is such an attack on towns in rural Alberta.

As well, in looking at all of this I want to look at the percentage of funds from slot machines from our casinos. Especially the volunteers who go out there, they work hard. Many of them don't get home, if they're on an evening shift, until 2, 3, 4 in the morning, depending how long they're tied up in the count room or whatever, and to see that only 30 percent of those funds goes to that volunteer organization – I would like to know if there is in fact any possibility that more of these funds could be returned to the volunteer groups.

Also, when I look at those funds, it again brings me to the question that when we look at casinos, every casino that I see being built or modified or renovated now is absolutely increasing in size. The number of casinos: I don't know how their limit is regulated. Also, I notice that in all the new casinos there is just a tremendous number of slots. At what point is there a limit? The VLTs were limited at 6,000, and I have to wonder if there is a cap on the number of slots.

As well, in my opening remarks I certainly said that gambling is a matter of choice. It's a matter of choice, but also there is a balance between that choice and responsibility and accountability. The

accountability is something that I would like to look at here for a few minutes. This is one of the areas where gambling is a theme.

Now, in all of these types of gaming that we do have in the province, we have the demographics that I believe indicate that the majority of gamblers and the percentage of gamblers in the lower income group is quite high. It has been said that in many cases this simply is a tax on the lower income groups, tax in a different form.

More importantly, when I look at what is happening in many of our communities here in Edmonton, I'm looking at this whole monitoring aspect. For example, in northeast and northwest Edmonton we have some things that are happening where volunteers have gone out and earned a tremendous amount of money. For example, the community of Lauderdale had raised \$30,000 for community projects through lotteries, through bingos, whatever, and this money disappeared. Their biggest complaint right now is that even after two years they have not been able to get this person into court to try and recover that money. We have a hockey organization in northeast Edmonton that was just defrauded out of \$60,000. We had another hockey organization in northwest Edmonton that was defrauded out of \$120,000, and we hear that there are going to be at least two or three more.

So my question to the minister is: how is Gaming looking into this whole aspect of monitoring what happens to these moneys? There are too many of these hard-earned dollars by volunteers that are going missing out of volunteer organizations, and I would certainly like them to explore different methods by which these organizations could be protected.

Now, I hear the minister's getting a little impatient, certainly not the minister responsible for Gaming, but I look and there have been numerous references here, Mr. Minister, to moneys being spent on golf and country clubs. Certainly, if this is the case – I enjoy golf every bit as much as the minister does, but to get back to my original point, I think if we are spending money on golf and country clubs, then certainly there are other facilities in these municipalities that could be used. For example, I used the case of the Cold Lake marina. I would certainly like to explore that possibility as well.

With those comments, Mr. Chairman, I will take my seat. Thank you very much.

THE ACTING CHAIRMAN: The hon. minister.

MR. SMITH: Thanks very much, Mr. Chairman. As I see members start to tidy up, pack up, and ship out for what's going to be a much, much welcome break – that time, of course, will be spent by this ministry and individuals in my department and myself assiduously reviewing the comments of the Member for Edmonton-Glengarry and ensuring that he has good, solid answers to good, solid questions. We will undertake to do that. We know it's important to him, we know it's important to his constituents, and we'll certainly be complying in doing that.

So short of wishing members *bonne semaine, bonne vacance*, M. le President, I think we can look for the vote on these estimates, and I'd like to thank all members of the opposition who were charitable in their acceptance of my comments and also keenly interested in their type of questions. For that I thank them.

Thank you.

Agreed to:	
Agriculture, Food and Rural Development	11,620,000
Children's Services	1,200,000
Community Development	60,664,000
Gaming	164,033,000
Health and Wellness	127,528,000

Infrastructure	\$280,000,000
Innovation and Science	\$40,832,000
Learning	\$89,300,000
Municipal Affairs	\$12,000,000
Treasury	\$50,323,000

5:10

THE ACTING CHAIRMAN: Shall the vote be reported? Are you agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

THE ACTING CHAIRMAN: Opposed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Opposed.

THE ACTING CHAIRMAN: Carried.

The hon. Government House Leader.

MR. HANCOCK: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would move that the Committee of Supply now rise and report the estimates of the lottery fund.

[Motion carried]

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Calgary-Egmont.

MR. HERARD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Committee of Supply has had under consideration certain resolutions, reports as follows, and requests leave to sit again.

All resolutions relating to the 2000-2001 lottery fund estimates have been approved. Mr. Speaker, I wish to table a list of those resolutions voted upon by the Committee of Supply pursuant to Standing Orders.

Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, \$11,620,000; Children's Services, \$1,200,000; Community Development, \$60,664,000; Gaming, \$164,033,000; Health and Wellness, \$127,528,000; Infrastructure, \$280,000,000; Innovation and Science, \$40,832,000; Learning, \$89,300,000; Municipal Affairs, \$12,000,000; Treasury, \$50,323,000.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Does the Assembly concur in this report?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Opposed? So ordered.

The hon. Government House Leader.

MR. HANCOCK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I request unanimous consent of the House to revert to two items: Introduction of Bills and then Projected Government Business.

[Unanimous consent granted]

head: Introduction of Bills  
(*reversion*)

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Government House Leader.

MR. HANCOCK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the House for allowing unanimous consent.

**Bill 21**  
**Appropriation Act, 2000**

MR. HANCOCK: Mr. Speaker, I request leave to introduce Bill 21, the Appropriation Act, 2000. This being a money bill, Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor, having been informed of the contents of this bill, recommends the same to the Assembly.

[Motion carried; Bill 21 read a first time]

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Government House Leader.

head: Projected Government Business  
*(reversion)*

MR. HANCOCK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This afternoon under

Projected Government Business I erred in indicating to the House that on Tuesday, April 4 at 4:30 p.m. under second reading of private bills we would deal with private bills 1 to 5. I'm now advised that those bills will not be ready to be presented at that time, so I would amend projected government business at that time to provide for Government Bills and Orders for second reading: Bill 3, Bill 7, and Bill 14.

That having been said, Mr. Speaker, it would be my pleasure to move that pursuant to Government Motion 6, agreed to by the Assembly on March 7, 2000, the Assembly stand adjourned until Monday, April 3, 2000, at 1:30 p.m.

[Pursuant to Government Motion 6 the Assembly adjourned at 5:17 p.m.]