

Legislative Assembly of Alberta

Title: **Tuesday, April 30, 2002**

8:00 p.m.

Date: 02/04/30

head: Committee of Supply

[Mr. Shariff in the chair]

THE DEPUTY CHAIR: We shall call the committee to order.

head: Main Estimates 2002-03

Solicitor General

THE DEPUTY CHAIR: As per our Standing Orders the first hour is allocated between the minister and members of the opposition, following which any other hon. member may participate.

The hon. Solicitor General.

MRS. FORSYTH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm pleased to present the Alberta Solicitor General 2002-2005 business plan. Before I begin, I'd like to introduce some of my staff that are seated in the gallery. We have Arnold Galet, who's the ADM for correctional services and Acting Deputy Solicitor General; Gary Hutnan, director of special projects and acting assistant deputy minister for public security; Bronwyn Shoush, who's the director for aboriginal affairs; Rita Lauterbach, who's the executive assistant to the deputy minister; and my executive assistant, Maureen Geres.

The Alberta Solicitor General 2002-2005 business plan follows the government reorganization in March of last year. We maintain a working relationship with Alberta Justice in the business planning process and in other joint initiatives. The financial content of our business plan reflects Treasury Board approvals over the past year, federally funded programs, and funds for continuing core programs and services. The Alberta Solicitor General 2002-2003 budget of \$268 million is a \$9 million increase over last year's forecast and a \$13.4 million increase over last year's budget.

The budget includes an increase in overall spending on policing in Alberta. It also includes salary and classification adjustments for more than 2,000 employees in correctional facilities, probation officers and other staff in community corrections, and court and prison security staff. Because Solicitor General is a people ministry, the collective agreement between the province of Alberta and the Alberta Union of Provincial Employees in 2001 has had a significant effect. The 2002-2003 budget includes over \$11 million to cover negotiated salary and pay grade increases for our employees.

Overall spending on policing in Alberta increased by \$1.8 million over forecast. Alberta has close to 4,600 police officers, or one officer for every 624 Albertans. Albertans are served by eight municipal police services, five First Nations police services, and 104 provincial RCMP detachments. Our budget puts safe communities first by focusing on policing and corrections.

Because of fiscal constraints we had to make some very difficult decisions in our budget process. As a result, crime prevention and restorative justice grants for community-based programs are eliminated. However, funding for community-based crime prevention programs is still available through the proceeds of the crime fund and the community mobilization fund, coadministered by the federal government and Alberta.

Our business plan takes into account the many issues affecting the administration of justice in Alberta. Alberta's population growth outpaces the national rate, our young and growing population presents challenges, yet Alberta's overall crime rates continue to decline. At the same time, we see growing public concern over

perceived increases in crime. Through our many programs and services we strive to improve public confidence in the justice system. There is no doubt that September 11 changed our way of life and our way of thinking. The attacks make us realize that no one is safe from terrorism and that the double-edged sword of new technology presents us with new challenges. We face threats from complex global economically organized and Internet crime, but at the same time we rely on technology to protect Albertans. An example of this would be our commitment to the national sex offender registry to protect children and other vulnerable Albertans.

Through our programs and services the Alberta Solicitor General is committed to building a democratic and prosperous Alberta based on respect of the law, a province where all Albertans are safe in their homes and communities. Our mission is to serve Albertans by promoting safe communities and by communicating with Albertans about the administration of justice.

I'd like to briefly outline the three core businesses that make up my ministry's \$268 million budget. We are responsible for an effective and efficient corrections program. In addition to the custody and supervision of offenders we also provide opportunities for offenders to rehabilitate themselves so that they can return to their communities as contributing members of society. This accounts for \$131.3 million, or 48.9 percent, of our budget.

THE DEPUTY CHAIR: Hon. members, there is an issue with the noise level in the Assembly. I'd advise everyone to please be honourable enough to allow the Solicitor General to continue making her remarks.

The hon. minister.

MRS. FORSYTH: Thank you.

Providing adequate and effective policing and supporting crime prevention accounts for \$127 million, or 47.4 percent, of our budget. Alberta Solicitor General also ensures that victims are treated with dignity and respect. This makes up \$10 million, or 3.7 percent, of our budget. Alberta Solicitor General is not a program-driven department; it's a people department.

I would like to also mention a few highlights, significant changes from last year, and new strategies to meet our goals and improve our services to Albertans. The first goal in the Solicitor General business plan reflects goal 15 of the government of Alberta's business plan: working to ensure that "Alberta will be a safe place to live and raise families." Achieving this goal is a shared responsibility. We recognize the importance of strong partnerships with other government departments, aboriginal communities, and our stakeholders in policing, community organizations, and local governments.

Our major priority over the next three years is working with the federal government to develop and implement a national sex offender registry, and we have helped develop and implement the government of Alberta's crisis and consequences management plan. We will continue our close partnership with the RCMP through the provincial police service agreement, and we'll continue to support the provincial crime prevention strategy and the provincial impaired driving enforcement strategy. We will develop implementation plans for policing standards from recommendations arising from the MLA policing review committee, which was chaired by the MLA for Lacombe-Stettler, with the aid of the members for Dunvegan and Calgary-Buffalo. I have recently received the report and have requested that my department review the report carefully and provide recommendations.

Our second goal recognizes that victims are an essential part of the justice process. For too long the justice system has been preoccupied with the rights of the accused and spent too little time

focused on the victim. The Member for Calgary-Shaw is chairing a consultation to review current legislation from a victim's perspective and will make recommendations for changes as needed. We will develop a 10-year victims' vision statement to provide direction for victims' programs and services in the province, and in partnership with Alberta Justice we are taking the lead in reviewing the process and procedures surrounding victim impact statements and will revise the guidelines when necessary. We will help community groups and organizations establish programs and initiatives that meet the needs of victims of crime. We will develop a provincial training manual for victims' services volunteers, and we will work with community and government organizations to increase awareness and enhance training for victims' services program co-ordinators and criminal justice staff. We will also improve accountability for funding victims' services programs, and we will make changes that empower victims through long-term compensation through the Victims of Crime Act. The Solicitor General will also make changes to the victims' financial benefit program in line with the Victims of Crime Amendment Act, and we will establish a new financial benefit program database to reflect changes to the act.

Our third goal, Mr. Chairman, is the rehabilitation of offenders. Most people who come into contact with our corrections system are back in the community in a short time. Therefore, it is important that we identify and deal with the root causes of crime and encourage offender rehabilitation for successful return to the community. To facilitate offender rehabilitation, the Alberta Solicitor General will continue its emphasis on offender work service. We will partner with Alberta Health and Wellness to provide appropriate treatment for young and adult offenders with mental health problems. We will help develop more alternatives to the criminal justice system for those who are mentally ill.

This year we have added a fourth goal to our business plan: ensuring secure and effective and efficient custody, community supervision, and transportation of offenders. We currently have the most cost-effective correctional system in Canada, and we will continue to ensure the efficiency of our correction services. We will expand the secure inmate telephone system to prevent unauthorized calls, while providing inmates with access to lawyer and advocacy groups. We will work with Alberta Justice to enhance the integration and effectiveness of the Provincial Court security program.

8:10

I would also like to focus on aboriginal issues within my department, including options for First Nations policing in Alberta. As well, I'm looking at ways to address the high proportion of aboriginals in the criminal justice system, and I hope to find an alternative means of addressing people in conflict with the law who suffer from FAS, fetal alcohol syndrome.

Mr. Chairman, that concludes my comments on the 2002-2005 Solicitor General business plan. I'd like to introduce two other of my staff: Shawkat Sabur, executive director of finance services, and Dan Mercer, who is the ADM of strategic services division. I would be happy to address any questions you may have regarding the plan and will provide a written answer to any question.

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

MS BLAKEMAN: Thanks very much, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the opportunity to debate the estimates for Solicitor General for 2002-2003. I appreciate the staff from the ministry being with us tonight to assist the minister. I'm sure the notes will be flying back and forth, and I appreciate their assistance. Of course, for any questions that could not be expected to be top of mind for the

minister, I'd appreciate getting responses in writing. I recognize that I'm about to put pressure on the staff. I don't mean to, but I have to. In order to be able to vote for the appropriations bill in a week, I'd appreciate getting answers as quickly as possible. That's not always possible, but I can try.

I'd like to thank the minister for the overview. That was very illuminating, and I will come back to some of the points that she brought up as she went through that.

Starting on page 422, under Core Businesses, core business 1, "Policing, crime prevention and security operations," goal 1: "Promote safe communities in Alberta." Under 1.2, ensuring the safety and security of international events, this question is essentially on the G-8 summit. Can the minister tell us: where is the provincial funding coming from for the security arrangements? Where does it appear in her budget? What is the budget for all of the costs for the ministry? I'll be interested to see whether there's an answer here, because the answer that can come back from her is: oh, I can't tell you because that would give away what we're doing for security reasons. But we are here to approve a budget for this department, and that's part of the planned spending, so I'll be very interested to see what the response is to that. Otherwise, I'm being asked to approve – we're all being asked to approve – a secret budget if we don't know how much it is or what's being spent for what. So I look forward to the minister's response on that.

As well, I'm aware that there are joint agreements between the provincial government and the federal government on who's going to pay for what. Perhaps the minister can talk about whether those arrangements have all been secured. We're five weeks away, six weeks away?

MRS. FORSYTH: Fifty-nine days.

MS BLAKEMAN: Fifty-nine days and counting from this event. Where are we with the arrangements with the federal government? Can we be assured in Alberta that the taxpayers are not going to have to foot the bill for anything unexpected or anything above a certain amount of money or any damage above a certain value? What are we on the hook for here?

MR. MacDONALD: We're going to be in the money.

MS BLAKEMAN: Yeah. Well, it would be wonderful to hear that we're going to be in the money, but I highly doubt it.

So if I can get some answers and explanations about ensuring the safety and security of international events, specifically the G-8 summit, and if there are any other international events that are being contemplated under this goal, then I'd love to hear about it.

Strategy 1.4, "Draft policy and revise programming to adhere to the Youth Criminal Justice Act." I'm wondering what the time line is for this and whether there is extra revenue that's being anticipated. Do we need to revise our programming to adhere to this new act, and how does the response or the work that's done by the policing review hook into what's being anticipated here?

Under 1.5, "Develop a response and implementation plan for approved MLA Policing Review Committee recommendations." Now, this one I'm really interested in because the minister has now admitted that in fact the report has been handed in, and it's in the department working its way through the people with the microscopes that are going to look at this and advise the minister. So I'd like to get, on behalf of Albertans, an idea of when this report's going to be made public. This was a long time in coming. A lot of taxpayer dollars went to support this consultation. People are very interested in what the result is going to be and what the recommendations are,

so when will it be made public? I'm also interested in who actually is going to approve the recommendations. I imagine that's probably the minister in consultation with cabinet and caucus, but I'd be interested in what the process is exactly that's going to be followed there.

This is something that I got phoned about the other day: if it's done, why can't we have some better idea of what's in it? I've been told, or it was whispered in my ear, that for some reason this wasn't going to be released until after the G-8 summit, and this didn't make particular sense to me. But I might as well ask the question here and see why I'd be hearing that rumour.

"Listening to Albertans in reviewing the approved recommendations." Describe the feedback in implementation process. What is the feedback in implementation process that's anticipated from this police review? I think this police review could have maybe farther reaching implications than many of the other reviews that have been taken on by this government in the last couple of years. Certainly, I've sort of had a small but steady trickle of letters about this particular issue. So I'm most interested in what the process is, time line, resources, budget, release date, implementation date, and what kind of feedback loop. I mean, once the government has accepted or rejected or the minister has accepted or rejected various components of this, then what? Does it go back out again for "this is what is going to be suggested or is accepted by the government," or is that it? Once the decision is made, bingo, we're going to have our own police force here, the Alberta police force. When does it come into effect? What's the longer range time line of that?

If in fact that's where we're going, then I'd be interested in what models have been looked at, in what areas, for a success. One of my complaints about this government is that they keep going: well, that sounds like a good idea. I ask them at the time: "Well, what makes you think that's a good idea? What report did you read? Where did you go? How did you study this? Where's an example of a world model where it's in operation today?" They go: oh yeah, we've looked; we've looked. Then it gets implemented, things start to fall apart, and they go: well, no, gee, we didn't actually look at anything or read anything or have any report or go anywhere and look at it. So what models are being looked at that make the government think this is a good idea if in fact that's where they're going? I know we'll come back to that, but for now I'll move on.

Section 1.9, "Support the National Crime Prevention Strategy." Okay, how? What exactly is being anticipated here to promote the national crime prevention strategy?

Strategy 1.12, "Support police officer recruit training for First Nation Police." Now, this is under strategies. Is this new or a different approach being tried here or are aboriginal nations trying something here? Why is this turning up under strategies? I take it this is something new or a new approach or direction, so tell us what it is. Why? What's new about it?

8:20

Section 1.14, "Focus resources on serious and violent crime." All right. Does the government have a priority list that they sort of run down and go: this is more serious than this, and this is less serious than that? Perhaps they're using somebody else's criteria or rating system. What criteria does the government use to determine that a crime is serious and then more serious than something else? That would be very interesting information to have in the public domain.

Okay, 1.16, "Develop a Provincial Impaired Driving Enforcement Strategy." Now, I'm wondering why the province is involved in developing a provincial impaired driving enforcement strategy. What is this in response to? Have there been increasing numbers of people dying from drunk driving on the roads, more hospital

admissions, more fatal accidents? Has there been a demand for this is what I'm asking. If there hasn't been a demand for it, then is this someone's personal crusade? That's fine too. I just want to know where it's coming from, what it's in response to, and exactly what's being anticipated underneath this strategy. Again, time lines, implementation, resources, and staff that's dedicated to it.

Strategy 1.17, "Improve information sharing among enforcement agencies and stakeholders in compliance with the First Nations Gaming Policy." Now, this is interesting. What is the government's policy, or what is the Solicitor General's policy as it relates to enforcement of gaming? How is it anticipated that any additional policing resources will be paid for? Is that to be paid up front from the proceeds of the casino as part of its expenses before net proceeds go off to the various charities or whoever is the recipient of the proceeds here?

In attending a gaming conference put on by the Gaming Research Institute at the beginning of March: very interesting to see what other countries are doing around monitoring enforcement and compliance in gaming, and I had already given this particular example in another context. In some of the big casinos in New Zealand, I think it is, they actually have a police detachment and inspectors on site in the casino. That's where they work. That's where they go every morning, and they work out of there, and that's where all of their job takes place. What's being anticipated here? How big a project is this? How much compliance or noncompliance are we expecting? How much resource is going to get dedicated to this? How many officers are anticipated being dedicated to this? Tell us all about it. We'd be interested to know.

I'm sure that the minister is working hand in glove with the Minister of Gaming on this, so I look forward to hearing what the strategy and approach is so that we can anticipate how the government is approaching these new – new to the province anyway – First Nations gaming endeavours. What kinds of issues or problems or concerns is the Solicitor General's department expecting to arise? What kind of research has this department done that it would need to develop to come into compliance with a First Nations gaming policy? Have they researched in other areas? Have you gone somewhere else and looked at what the problems could be? What are you anticipating here? I'm looking for a very thorough response on that.

Last, under core business 1, strategy 1.18, "Implement the Government of Alberta Crisis and Consequence Management Plan." Well. Is this available? Does it exist? Could we have a copy of it? Can it be made public? How far-reaching is this? Does this just involve the Solicitor General's department, or does the Solicitor General hold the plan for all of government? What's being anticipated here? Are we getting into an area where we would be infringing on or curtailing civil liberties? Are we talking about shutting down or nonpublic access to public buildings? What's anticipated in a crisis? Consequence management plan: good name, good name. It gives me the shivers. Is there a component of this? Does that include a resumption of a business plan with that as well? I'm looking for a very detailed response on that one as well.

Moving to the next section, core business 2, "Victims services." Just a couple of questions here: 2.7, "Enhance accountability of funded victim services programs." I'm wondering what problems have been identified with the funded victim services programs and therefore what's prompting the government to enhance their accountability. I guess that's what I'm digging for here. What's given rise to this particular perceived need? Have there been problems with accountability, or is this part of an overall enhancement of accountability because problems have been noticed elsewhere and we're doing a broad stroke here and enhancing everybody's accountability? Why in particular here?

In 2.12, "Disseminate information on legislation, programs, and services for victims to police, victim service programs and criminal justice staff." I take it here, if this is under strategies – again I'm assuming that under strategies this is a new program, because if it's just what you do as a core business, then is it something special? What's being anticipated here? Has there been an identification that in fact "services for victims to police, victim service programs, and criminal justice staff" don't have enough information? Have they been asking for it? Is it out of date that it has to be redone and sent out to people? Given, you know, the year that we're in and in Alberta and with the encouragement we have for immigration into the province and the number of new Canadians that we're welcoming here, is translation of information being anticipated by the Solicitor General?

I know that I'm working with my municipal and federal counterparts to sponsor a little family fun day in two of my communities, and I asked the local detachment of police if they had any translated brochures on anything that we could have out, because I have a lot of people who don't speak English as their first language. For many of them that are new to the country, they're not quite up to speed on how everything works here, so little brochures that give them kind of basic information about how things work is very helpful. In fact, my local beat cop got back to me and said: no; sorry. The Owls brochure wasn't translated. He thought maybe they might have some translated brochures in Calgary. Maybe the Solicitor General is aware of that and can give me some feedback or information, but I'm wondering if she's anticipated that: if she's going to be looking at disseminating information on legislation and programs, whether she in fact is looking at translating, and if so, what languages is she anticipating translating into? I think where we most want to work is with people coming from countries that have a system that is most different from ours, where they really have to learn a whole different way of doing things.

Now, my last question under victims services is a question to do with something else we're debating tonight, which is around Bill 20. Part of what's being anticipated in Bill 20 in fact is – and I did talk about that when that bill was being debated, but I'll bring it up here as well. I'm wondering how Bill 20 affects the victims' surcharges. Perhaps I'm not reading that legislation correctly – and the minister hasn't had time to answer me, to be fair – but it did strike me in the reading of legislation and consulting with some others that what was written into the original legislation was to have the victims' surcharges taken off, and it seems like Bill 20 is going to interfere with that. So was the minister in consultation at all with her colleague the Minister of Justice to ensure that in fact the integrity of the surcharges remained intact? I'd be interested in hearing about that.

Moving on, then, to core business 3. Oh, sorry. One more thing under victims. There's a victims of crime consultation process that's going on right now being chaired by the Member for Calgary-Shaw. I was hearing this described – it must be in the House sometime today. It struck me as very odd, because this is a by-invitation-only consultation which is taking place behind closed doors, and I'm wondering: why so secret? Why is everything being done under cloak and – well, I don't know about dagger but definitely under cloak here. Why is there a need to have it by invitation only and then have it all take place behind closed doors? Very interesting consultation process when we're trying to – I'm assuming this is being thought of as a public consultation, because it's going on outside the confines of the department, but that's a very interesting way to go about it and not what I would have called public. Again, because the taxpayer dollar is funding this and the travel and – you know, there's a budget for this. I find it very frustrating when taxpayers have to pay for something they don't get to be involved in

and don't get to see what the results are. I frankly don't think that it's very fair of the government to make choices like that, where they want somebody to pay but then say: no, no, you can't know what's going on; no, you can't know who got involved; and, no, we're not going to tell you what came out of it either. Well, how do we know you did anything at all?

I'll come back again when I get another chance. Thank you.

8:30

THE DEPUTY CHAIR: Hon. member, your time has run out.

Hon. minister, would you like to respond?

MRS. FORSYTH: Well, Mr. Chairman, I'll try and respond. I've got about four or five pages of notes on some questions, and I indicated that we will endeavour to respond in writing.

Her first question was on the G-8. The provincial funding for security: where is it contained? The G-8 conference that we're dealing with is a federal initiative and a federal responsibility, hon. member, and the federal government will be responsible for all of the security costs related to the G-8 within my department and all the other departments that are involved with the G-8, federal and intergovernmental affairs, et cetera.

You also asked us about the MOUs with the federal government. We have been in continual conversation and consultation with the feds on MOUs and are in the process of signing our MOUs with the federal government on the framework of agreement on security costs and all other related costs. As I explained, it is a federal initiative and a federal responsibility, so they will be responsible for the dollars that are incurred by the province.

You asked me about the Youth Criminal Justice Act and the time lines, et cetera. The Youth Criminal Justice Act was passed on February 4, 2002, and received royal assent on February 19, 2002, and the proclamation will be on April 1, 2003. The hon. Minister of Justice and I have attended federal/provincial/territorial meetings and have continually pushed the Justice minister in regard to the implementation or proclamation so that we can get ready for the process. Justice Canada is providing Alberta with \$931,000 to help us with the implementation. We support the provisions in the Youth Criminal Justice Act and have some concerns on some of them, but we are looking forward to working on youth justice.

You asked me about the policing review, and I indicated that, yes, I have received the review. The review that was done by the members for Lacombe-Stettler, Calgary-Buffalo, and Dunvegan was a very well-done report. When I initiated the committee, I asked the committee to look at long-range policing. I asked them to think outside of the box on how they saw policing in the future. The consultation process that they worked with was very in depth. I have indicated to my department that we have a 50-page report with around three dozen recommendations. My department is reviewing it right now, looking at what we can do and what we can't do, the cost implications of the report, and I give you my word that the report will be released.

You mentioned the fact that you've heard through a little bug or something that was placed in your ear about the G-8 summit. The G-8 summit is on June 26, 27, I told you, in 58 days. It has nothing to do with the policing report. The policing report is on policing in Alberta, so it has nothing to do with it whatsoever.

You talked about the national strategy on community safety and crime prevention. Their priorities in consultation with Alberta include children, youth, women, personal safety, aboriginal people, and the fear of crime. Our department coadministrates the community mobilization program with the federal government. The Alberta government has continually been committed to providing safe

communities for Albertans, and we continue to partner and coadministrate with the federal government. They provide us with \$2 million per year per program to address the root causes of crime in the community, and the national strategy is complemented by the provincial crime prevention strategy. Both look to support innovative crime prevention practices throughout the province.

You talked about 1.12, which is, "Continue to support Police Officer Recruit Training for First Nation Police." The First Nation police officer candidates must successfully complete the Alberta police abilities test and written communication test. Successful candidates attend the RCMP cadet insertion training program in Regina. It's to move ahead First Nation policing, which has been determined as a priority for us, so we continue to keep it as a strategy.

You talked about serious and violent crime. We will "continue to focus resources on serious and violent crime." In 1996 Alberta Justice, the RCMP, and the Alberta Association of Chiefs of Police actually launched this. It's important that we address these issues on serious and violent crimes. The primary goal of the strategy was to develop approaches by which offenders committing less serious crimes could be dealt with by using more effective resources through a diversion program. The steering committee on serious and violent crimes considered developing strategies on defining serious crime, and through that came about 20 recommendations. We're going to continue to work on that.

You talked about the provincial impaired driving enforcement strategy, which is in conjunction obviously with Alberta Justice, Alberta Transportation, and the police services. Through the co-operative work of stakeholders it is anticipated that the enforcement of impaired driving laws in Alberta is going to be enhanced. Enforcement is one component of a multifaceted approach on dealing with impaired driving, and my department is making sure that effective enforcement strategies are in place.

You talked about First Nation gaming. As you are aware, on March 1, 2002, the gaming moratorium was lifted. First Nations are now able to apply for First Nation casinos, and it's anticipated with the First Nation casinos that policing issues will arise, so we thought it was important to put it in our strategies and be aware of the policing issues that could arise from First Nation casinos. We want to work with the police to ensure that people around that area are protected.

You asked me about the crisis and consequences management plan implemented by the government after September 11. Many departments are involved in it. The crisis management plan is a significant factor in the safety and security of Albertans. As such, it will continue to receive priority, and we're dealing with security around the province.

You asked about funded victim services, 2.7, I believe: "Enhance accountability of funded victim services programs." Victim services programs are funded by the victims of crime fund and are accountable for the grant moneys that they receive. Funded programs provide financial statements and statistical data about systems provided. Commencing in 2002, funded victim services programs will be expected to identify outcome-based performance measures so we can evaluate the programs.

8:40

You talked about strategy 2.12: "Disseminate information about legislation and programs and services for victims to police, victim service programs and criminal justice staff." The surveys and consultations have determined that victims of crime need information about the status of their case, their roles in their prosecution, court procedures, and the many opportunities to make representation

to the courts on the impact of offenders. The Alberta Solicitor General has produced a series of brochures that we feel has been extremely helpful: a victim's handbook, awareness handbook, victim impact statement, restitution guidelines, victim program status report, a child witness court preparation manual.

You also mentioned, which I found very interesting – I believe that was the languages.

MS BLAKEMAN: Translation.

MRS. FORSYTH: Right. I'm sorry; I don't have that information. But it's very interesting, and I'll talk to the department about that.

I think that's about it for now.

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

MS BLAKEMAN: Thank you very much. Just a couple of things. I understand how difficult it is for the minister to listen to what I'm saying and very quickly try and write an answer. In some cases I think she'll find when she checks *Hansard* that the specificity of the question has been lost a bit. For example, I was talking about the accountability, why we would feel we need to concentrate on accountability of the victims' services groups, and that wasn't quite the way, I think, that the minister answered the question.

Another place where that happened was around gaming and First Nations gaming. What I heard the minister say was that the reason for looking at this was a concern for the safety of people in the vicinity of the casinos. So you're not looking at any of the crime issues that happen in the casino or any of the crime issues that happen as a result of problem gamblers? Am I correct in assuming that the focus of what the Solicitor General is looking at around the First Nations gaming is kind of like making sure that the parking lots are safe? Maybe I'll leave that with the minister in case she wants to have another look at what's actually being anticipated there, because, gee, I sure hope that if there's going to be a First Nations gaming policy with police, it's more than the parking lot, a bit more in depth than that.

One more thing. Just so that we're absolutely, positively clear on the record here, the G-8 will result in absolutely no cost to the Alberta taxpayer. Absolutely not one red cent, not one sweat-soaked loonie is going to be coming out of the provincial coffers to pay for the G-8 or anything to do with it. I just want to get this on the record here so that we're really clear about it, because what I heard the minister say was that this was entirely the responsibility of the federal government, that there was a memorandum of understanding that was being signed that they're responsible for all costs. So I just want to get it on the record. Not a dime is Alberta going to have to pay for this. Let's just get that one straight and get it out there.

In the minister's opening remarks she talked about new challenges and in particular technology being a new challenge to the sector and then talked about as an example of that the national sex offenders registry. I'm not quite tracking here, not understanding what the focus of the concern around new challenges and technology is. Maybe I can get the minister to respond more in detail in writing later, because that didn't make sense to me.

Let's look at page 424. Core business 3: "Custody, supervision and rehabilitative opportunities for offenders." Goal 3: "Facilitate the rehabilitation of offenders. So under 3.3, "Review and expand the Adult and Young Offender Alternative Measures Program where appropriate," I'm wondering what specific actions are anticipated in a review and expansion of these alternative measure programs. Have we come up to a regular due date here? Are we at five years or something that we'd want to be doing a regular review to see

where we are with this? Or do you review it every year? Why is this showing up under a strategy or under a highlight? What specific actions are being anticipated under this?

Under 3.5, "Ensure the availability of alternatives to custody for young offenders." Now, what alternatives are currently available, and what alternatives are being anticipated in the future? I'm thinking part of this is around open custody and secure custody for young offenders, and I remember talking once with the minister in response to a query that I'd had about there being no open custody arrangements in Red Deer anymore, I think. They lost their one centre there, and therefore any youth had to be put in a lockup facility. I'm vaguely remembering all of this. Is that what this 3.5 goal is anticipating or discussing? If I could get a bit more detail about what alternatives are currently available and what's being anticipated under this strategy.

Under 3.7, "Develop a provincial diversion framework for mentally ill offenders." Very interesting. Now, how did this come about? How is this being driven? What prompted this coming up as a strategy? Again, are there swelling numbers that are driving this, or is it just time that we needed to look at this? What caused it to come up on the radar screen? I'm interested in what the plan is.

Provincial diversion framework: that's a very interesting choice of words, and maybe I could look for a clearer explanation of what's being anticipated here. What are really identified as the issues under this? I'd be interested in what stakeholders have been consulted or are going to be consulted around this. Again, what kind of time line is being anticipated? What resources are being dedicated to it? Are there some alternative measures that are being anticipated here? There's been a lot of work done in the justice and corrections areas in the last 25 years around alternative measures for things. We know now that it doesn't always work to throw somebody in jail. There are other ways of perhaps finding justice that work better in some situations. So is that what's being anticipated here?

I'm very interested in this because in Edmonton-Centre we have a lot of people with mental health issues. Most of them cope very well, and some of them don't. My phone number is in the phone book, and just about every weekend I get a call from somebody in the Remand Centre who's obviously very ill, mentally ill, and doesn't understand why they're there. You know, the radio waves are causing the voices in their head, and they just want someone to come and take them away from there. So I'm always really interested when we start talking about the police and people with mental health issues. I used to work helping to train police officers by doing live role plays for them so they could kind of develop their skills in working with green tags, which at that time was what the police called people with a mental health problem. One of the things we all learned really quickly is that once someone has had an experience with the police, they're very quick, they're very alive to catch on that they're stumbling into the same situation, and they don't want to get nabbed by the police and put in the forensic unit at the Remand Centre and then be shipped off to Alberta Hospital. So they're very alive to that.

I think we have a situation that doesn't really seem to work for anybody very well right now. In a lot of cases I can't get help for the people I need to get help for, in other cases we have people that are causing disturbances that we can't get taken off the street, and nothing ever quite seems to knit as it should on this one. So I'm really interested in what's being anticipated here and why it has come up. What's the approach that the department is taking? Why is it taking it? Are we looking at new measures? Have we found a program that works somewhere else in the world that's absolutely fabulous and we want to try it too? Where is this coming from, and where's it going to?

I guess the other part of this is that I know that people who are mentally ill can be really frightening to people. The tendency is to pick up the phone, call the police, and say, "Get this person off my front lawn," or out of the hallway or the doorway of the apartment building. "They scare me. Make them go away." We tend to phone the police to do that, and in fact they're ill. They're sick, and having the police come is not going to solve anything. It's not going to make them better. It may not make them take their medication. So I'm very cautious about this. What's being anticipated here? I've even had scenarios where we've had people phone us up, and they want us to phone the police and have someone who is mentally ill taken away, but we won't do that out of my constituency office. I think we've developed a more highly tuned antenna for people with mental illnesses, so I'd like to know what's behind all of that.

8:50

Okay. Let's move on then to goal 4: "Ensure secure and efficient custody, community supervision and transportation of offenders." Under 4.5, "Review opportunities for Aboriginal contractors to deliver community based correctional programs," could we get some examples of the community-based correctional programs that the government is considering delegating to aboriginal providers or contractors? Sorry, it looks like these are already being provided. Could we get some examples of what's being provided and what's under review? What direction is the ministry thinking of going? Again, is this just a regular time to review it, or is there something that's caused or prompted this review? What are the possibilities that are being looked at?

Under 4.6, "Develop a crisis management plan to enhance the safety and security of Albertans using the courts." The note I wrote in the margin here is: why is this needed? Is there a concern about security of people using the courts? Have we had a lot of people getting beaten up in the hallways, or what's the problem here? What exactly is the crisis management plan, and why do we need this? I'd be interested in knowing that, and I think other Albertans would be interested in knowing, too, if we had problems. Or is this just a regular part of doing business in the courts?

Under 4.8, "Ensure Provincial Protection officers complete basic and advanced training," I must be missing something here, because this strikes me as a really obvious thing: if we have provincial protection officers, they're trained, and they're trained for both basic and advanced training. So why is this a strategy? What's important here? It strikes me as pretty obvious; therefore, I'm assuming that I must be missing something. I look forward to elucidation there.

I've noticed that this department tends to take on a lot of reviews, and I'm just wondering if we could get a quick rundown of how many reviews have been undertaken by this department in the last couple of years and what the status is of all of them. I'm beginning to think that I've lost track. I've had some issues with the minister over the last year where I feel that choices were made around cost over safety, and I'm challenging the minister a bit here to defend department direction so that ultimately the safety of Albertans is in fact what's going to come first here, not budget cuts and not reduction in what's being done because we think the government can get away with it.

Money for the DARE program: I bring this up every year. I'm sure the minister is aware of how successful the DARE program is in the schools, and I know that we don't have enough money and there are not enough officers who've been trained to deliver this program. There's a huge demand for it. An excellent program, terrific results. We know this works; it's proven. Is there money in this budget to train some additional DARE officers? Is there going to be enough money to train enough officers to meet the demand

here? A very successful program, and if there isn't, then I guess I'm challenging the minister again on where the priorities are in the department. It's crime prevention, because it's affecting young people that don't get involved in drugs and have self-esteem and self-respect and choose some goals in their lives and follow through and all of those good things. Why wouldn't we be supporting it? I'm challenging the minister on decision-making that would take away from this.

I'm also wondering if I can just get some sort of background factual information here. How many provincial positions is the province currently paying the RCMP for in this budget? How many of those positions are filled? Can we get any kind of documentation of these positions with the RCMP? What's the current strength? How many members per detachment? The authorized strength versus the actual strength? In other words, I'm looking for the breakdown. Are they including First Nations officers and highway patrol positions in that breakdown? Are we also looking at including recruits that are still partly finishing their training in that breakdown? In other words, if a detachment says that it's got 10 officers but two of them are recruits that are still away finishing their training, two of them are First Nations officers and are off doing something else, and we've got a couple of highway patrols, how many do we really have that are working at that detachment? I've been trying to dig this information out of this department for about eight months now, so I'm continuing to try to get the information.

Also, this is a question that I have to ask: are we aware if any of our RCMP officers that were part of our protocol were seconded away as part of September 11, particularly the sky marshal positions? You'll probably have to go and look that one up. I certainly understand.

That's all the questions I think I have at this time, so I'm going to cede the floor to some of my colleagues that I know have questions as well. Thanks very much.

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

MS CARLSON: Thanks, Mr. Chairman. I thought the minister might respond, but I guess perhaps after I speak she'll address some of the issues.

I want to go over quite a few things, including some of the minister's opening comments, but I think that first of all I'm going to start with the issue that concerns me the most in this particular ministry. I'm looking at page 347 of the business plan. We heard the minister in her opening comments talk about goal 3 there, which is to "facilitate the rehabilitation of offenders." Specifically what she talked about was more alternatives in the justice system for the mentally ill, but that isn't actually what the goals are that are stated here, that "Alberta will be a safe place to live and raise families," which is motherhood and apple pie. Measure that; that's what I'd like to see some information on.

Then "the well being and self-reliance of Aboriginal people will be comparable to that of other Albertans," also, as it stands here, a bit of a motherhood and apple pie kind of statement. If I reflect back on what the Auditor General has said repeatedly over the years, he has requested that these goals be tied to measurable outcomes, and I don't see any of these things in this particular business plan. Perhaps the minister can provide that information.

Let's just take aboriginal people to begin with. First of all, I would like to know whether or not you break down treaty and Metis. I just recently had a meeting with a bunch of chiefs who were quite concerned about the increased reliance on this government of treating all aboriginal people as the same people, which in fact they are not. Neither treaty Indians or Metis are really happy to be

lumped in that same group, but in terms of what this government does, it seems that that's how it's broken out. So if the minister could comment on that.

Just in terms of tying these strategies back to the business plan goal that "the well being and self-reliance of Aboriginal people will be comparable to that of other Albertans," what are your measuring criteria for that? Clearly you must have already established what the well-being and self-reliance are of other Albertans in order to have something to measure against. I would like to see exactly how in your measurements aboriginals fall short. I know they are hugely overrepresented in the justice system, and I'd like to see those statistics. I want to be able to compare the two lines, because clearly if that's your goal, you need to have an end benchmark, something to measure whether or not you've achieved success. What is your success criteria, and what do you qualify as a success? If you get 80 percent of the way to where your success criteria states, then do you call that a success? What about if you only get 10 percent? So far I haven't seen anything in what the minister has had to offer here this evening that would tell me that there is that kind of criteria established. So if we could have that.

9:00

Under Strategies, 3.2, you talk about: "Support the youth justice committee program and expand to other eligible communities including Aboriginal communities." So what does that mean: "Support the youth justice committee program"? Could we have some information on that program and what "support" means? It doesn't say here "direct." It doesn't say "determine." It says "support." To me it doesn't seem that your focus on that is taking a lead role. So if I'm mistaken in that, I would certainly like to have the information that expands that definition and tells me what some of the criteria are. "Including Aboriginal communities": does this mean that they're in or they're out now? If you could answer that.

Then specifically to the other strategies that you list that have to do with aboriginals. Strategy 3.10 says, "Continued delivery of Aboriginal cultural and spiritual programming in young offender and adult correctional centres." So you've been doing that for a while. I hear that it goes over quite well. But how do you measure the success there? What are the criteria? I wouldn't actually mind knowing how long you've been doing this, because everything I hear about it is quite good, but let's have some more information on that here.

Strategy 3.11 says, "In cooperation with Aboriginal and Justice stakeholders, develop recommendations on the enhancement of the Alexis court model." Very good, too, but how far has that come? How often do you meet? What's the cost of putting that together? Do you have any sort of progress report on what the recommendations are? Who's involved actually in making those decisions? If we could have that information and particularly the information on how many people from First Nations and Metis organizations are involved in that decision-making process.

Strategy 3.9 says:

Contingent on the capacity of the community, Alberta Solicitor General will consider the transfer of community corrections program management to Aboriginal communities expressing an interest and demonstrating a readiness.

First of all, how many have expressed an interest in aboriginal communities? How many then have demonstrated a readiness, and what is your criteria for having demonstrated a readiness? Then you qualify this by saying, "Contingent on the capacity of the community." So once again you must have a criteria, and we would like to see what that is.

Nice to have all these excellent strategies, but if they aren't

actually followed up and there isn't a real game plan with measurable benchmarks and measurable outcomes and criteria for what the success or failure is, then they really don't do any good at all. So what we need actually in those areas is more information.

To go back to some of the stuff that the minister talked about, I too would like her to tell us whether in fact what I thought I heard was true about the G-8 summit, and that is that there's no cost to the province. It seems that even if there aren't any dollar costs, which I'm very surprised at and I think probably we misheard what you said or what you intended to say, there are some transferrable costs. Certainly there's your time and involvement in the meetings, and while you're paid a salary and you're paid regardless of what program you're working on, to put you on the G-8 takes you away from something else, so there is a cost associated with that as well as your senior staff and whoever else is helping to implement that. Have you divided your cost structures down to more than just hard outflows but the internal transfer of resources within the department? If you could answer that question.

You talked in your opening comments about your major priority being the registry of sex offenders, no doubt a laudable goal. It is 1.1 in your strategies under goal 1: "Promote safe communities in Alberta." You then go on to talk about the MLA committee and the report. If I look down those strategies, I see that that pops up at 1.6 in strategies, "Revise the policing standards' implementation plan in view of the recommendations arising from the MLA Policing Review Committee," and 1.5, "implementation plan for the approved recommendations arising from the MLA Policing Review Committee." So here we have down on the list two goals that relate to the review committee, yet it seems to me like you've already set your agenda for the year.

You talked about now having that report inside, and you're going to see what the outcome of recommendations are from your department, but I don't believe that that report has been made public. I think it should be. I think that the feedback and information that they collected is good information for a number of organizations and should be tabled in the Legislature if it hasn't been. Perhaps I missed that. If I have, I withdraw those comments. If not, could you comment on whether or not that'll be available and why it's such a low priority on your goals and whether or not the outcomes of those recommendations could impact your strategy for the year? If you could answer that question, I would be very pleased.

You talked about fiscal restraints and some stuff that got cut, and you talked about the crime prevention program and also restorative grants, I believe is what I heard. So the question is: what was the criteria used to decide which was and which wasn't beneficial? If you could give us some more information on that. What it sounds like, when you just cut a program out like that, is that it was either completely useless before and didn't achieve the goals or according to some criteria that you weight decisions on, it fell far short. Not only is it reduced, but it's gone in both cases.

You talked about one other existing crime prevention program, so I would like to know the differences between the one that is still existing and this one that you cut and whether or not the other one has been expanded, whether the funds have been expanded to it, and what it is we're losing out on by having those two particular areas cut.

It brings to mind to me the increased security that we have seen around this building and the grounds since September 11. It seems to me often that some of the security is excessive and not very effective.

MR. MacDONALD: I saw a skunk last night out by the fountain.

MS CARLSON: There you go. Well, clearly somebody was not doing what they were supposed to be doing.

On a serious note, Madam Minister, we now have all these name tags, and we've got people who work in the booths at certain hours of the day, and we have to swipe our security passes to get into the parking at other times. But, in fact, that really isn't very effective. I can't count the number of times since the spring break when I have particularly been paying attention that I have seen more than one car scoot into the parking lot at a time. You know, that completely eliminates the benefit of swiping a card. More than one car is coming in. There is no control on what happens in that parking lot still. If you could please respond to that. I know that a number of your own colleagues are not very happy about having to wear the identifying name tag, so I would like your response on that too.

I would like to know what weighting you use to give the increased costs that we see assumed around here as compared to something like the crime prevention program. While we may think that we're very important, I'm not sure that Albertans would all share that particular point of view. Perhaps the Premier, yes. Security around him I think is important.

MR. MacDONALD: And the Member for Edmonton-Calder.

9:10

MS CARLSON: Well, I don't know about that, I gotta tell you. But, anyway, there has to be some sort of criteria. If the minister could share that with us.

Now I would like to just go to some of the budget line items. I think that first of all I'd like to start with program 2, public security. We see that there was an 8 percent decrease – an increase in security around this building but an 8 percent decrease – for public security support services in obviously other areas, which really means for them more, because you're spending more money on these grounds now. So can you tell us what got cut and what are the long-term effects of this budget cut and how you justified the cuts in the areas that you did?

Crime prevention. Now we see that there was a 40 percent lower forecast for actual spending than budgeted. We talked about cutting that program, so if you could tell us why the money wasn't spent last year. Does it have anything to do with the government's cross-ministry 1 percent cut last year? Specifically where did you make your cuts in this department? The crime prevention budget is so much lower. You say that the program is just gone, but we'd like some more information on that.

Then the correctional services. The victims of crime fund received 30 percent less funding this year than last, yet in your opening comments you talked about this being one of your key priorities for the year. So that's very interesting, and perhaps you could comment on that.

That reminds me of something else you said in your opening comments. When you talked about the provincial employees, it reminded me of the concerns I have from constituents of mine who work at the remand centre. They have an ongoing litany of concerns about work conditions, how people are treated either very well or not very well at all. So I'm wondering what's happened there over the past year and what your expectations are for the next year specifically with regard to the remand centre, because that seems to be where I hear the complaints. Have you done a review of how people are treated and handled there?

Also on the employees' side how many grievances come out of that place in a year? How do you handle them? The big concern always has been that those who place formal grievances end up with formal notices of loss of jobs, so if you could comment on that.

FTEs: can we get a breakdown of where all of them have been employed?

Then I'll go back to the business plans for a bit, back to goal 1. I'm wondering: when you talk about your strategy 1.16, "Develop a Provincial Impaired Driving Enforcement Strategy, in conjunction with Alberta Justice, Alberta Transportation, and police services," will you be consulting with any community organizations such as MADD in order to implement an impaired driving enforcement strategy? This still seems to be a really big problem in this province, and it seems like it's pretty low on your priority list. So if you could tell us why that is. Maybe you have some good reasons for it, but we'd sure like to hear what they are, and I'm sure organizations such as MADD would as well.

Madam Minister, will you consider allocating any more money to the proper training for police who conduct Check Stops into the proper monitoring of roadside Check Stop equipment like breathalyzers? Ongoing problem. I know that it's tough to calibrate that equipment on the road, and I know very well, having been married to a policeman for many years, the kinds of problems that they encounter on Check Stops and roadside Check Stops and actually the risk that they're at from a security perspective, more than the tragic accident that we saw by Banff this year. But the Check Stops themselves are of great concern, so can you tell us what you're doing in that regard? I think that there's a lot at risk here for those people in those jobs, and it's very much your responsibility to ensure their safety to the greatest extent that you can. I have every belief that you do that, but could you share that information with Albertans so that we all have a high level of comfort with that?

Performance measure 4 talks about, "Crime rate: violent crime and property crime." Can you tell us what the explanations are for why the Alberta rate of violent and property crime is above the Canadian rate? A very interesting phenomenon and statistic. While you're at it, perhaps you could comment on the dollars allocated to police forces in general and particularly the downloading. Violent crime gets a fair amount of attention; property crimes do not. We simply do not have enough police people to do the work. I think that is the bottom line. So if you could address that.

Interestingly enough, in the FOIP review committee Monday morning we had a presentation from the Alberta Association of Private Investigators. They also commented on a problem facing police forces these days in that they simply do not have the budgets nor the time to investigate white-collar crime. More and more it is falling to companies to do essentially the full investigations and all the paperwork and present that to police forces. Now, perhaps this is your idea of a good way to pass on the costs and to download responsibility. I don't know, because we haven't heard from you on that particular issue. So if you could give us some information on that. It seems to me that white-collar crime is as serious as any other crime, and in fact it's very, very costly to consumers. If it isn't being investigated to any degree, then I think that's of interest and should be discussed and debated in this Legislature. So if you could address that for us, it would be very beneficial.

Then in goal 2 you talk about: "Provide services to victims and work with Alberta Justice to ensure victims have a more meaningful role in the criminal justice system." What exactly does that mean? You talked about that in your opening comments. It's here in goal 2. You must have a list of things that you think need to be done. So could you do that? Could you also give us a breakdown of the number of awards that the Crimes Compensation Board has awarded to victims of crime annually for the past three years?

THE DEPUTY CHAIR: The hon. Member for Little Bow.

MR. McFARLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'll make this very quick. If I could ask the indulgence of the Solicitor General, would your department be able to let this Legislature know that one of your colleagues has actually turned 58 today, or would that kind of information be contrary to what you're able to tell us? I believe he had some police duty in the past, so you may be able to check it out. I believe his riding is Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills. I think he's around 58 today. Could you check it out, please?

MRS. FORSYTH: Mr. Chairman, because of security reasons I can't divulge that information. I'm sorry.

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

MR. MacDONALD: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I've been listening with interest to the estimates debate this evening on the Solicitor General's department. There certainly has been an interesting range of questions by both the opposition and one government member.

There has been great emphasis placed on the G-8 conference that's coming up at the end of June, and there's in excess of \$400 million being spent on this. Can the minister please answer: what infrastructure will be left behind in Calgary and in the Canmore area after the summit for the use of Albertans, whether it'll be municipal officials in the city of Calgary, perhaps the Calgary city police force, or the RCMP in Canmore? There's a lot of money being spent. Are there going to be any helicopter pads, for instance, that could be used to fight forest fires in the future? Is anything of this nature going to be left behind out of this money that we're spending? The hon. minister mentioned several different police forces. Will any of these police forces in Alberta receive any of the surplus equipment left over or the infrastructure from the summit?

Certainly there are police officials coming from all over the country and, I would imagine, from all over the globe to this summit. They certainly have to be housed somewhere. Is there going to be any of that infrastructure that's going to be constructed left for this province and its citizens after?

9:20

Now, the 400 million plus dollars is a significant sum of money in the view of this member. If this is going to be a sincere, genuine discussion on the conditions that many of the African nations are facing and if it's going to be more than just an elaborate \$400 million photo op – I think that in the future these G-8 summits should be held in a much more secure location. I can think of the Second World War and Allied leaders meeting offshore on naval ships, and in this case I think it would be much cheaper and much safer if summits were to be held somewhere on a naval ship with significant air support to protect the leaders. Instead of spending \$400 million, we could perhaps spend \$40 million. Everyone could be secure. All the world's leaders could be secure, and that money could perhaps go directly to, let's say – we could pick any number of countries in Africa that could certainly use the money. I think that in the future, in light of the security changes that have to occur as a result of the September 11 disaster or attack on the World Trade Center in New York City, this is an option for all governments to pursue and save this money and put it into programs that are directly going to help the citizens of, in this case, Africa.

Now, Mr. Chairman, the hon. Member for Edmonton-Ellerslie talked about the security arrangements here. I think one of the most shameful acts I've seen occur in this Assembly – and I think it was done inadvertently – was the closing of the disabled entrance at the east door of the Assembly at ground level. Now, there were injured

workers in this Assembly last night in the public gallery from various coalitions across the province. There were injured workers in this Assembly the afternoon the hon. Minister of Human Resources and Employment introduced Bill 26, and they literally had to hobble up the front steps to the Legislative Assembly. I think that is inappropriate, I think it is wrong, and I think it is disrespectful. That east door, with the disabled ramp, has to be reopened. I would ask the hon. minister at this time to please refer to architectural guidelines again and if necessary measure this ramp down by the media availability room that is considered as sufficient. You'd have to have air brakes on a wheelchair to negotiate that 90-degree turn. That is unacceptable, and again it is disrespectful. I would urge the minister: with part of this budget in this province we can afford to have access for disabled citizens and for seniors to their Legislative Assembly.

I think that in the next couple of days, if the hon. minister will just keep her eyes open, in the gallery she's going to see lots of injured workers coming to visit the Assembly and hear the debate on Bill 26. If she would escort some of them to the front door and see how difficult it is for them to get down that long series of steps, I would be very, very grateful. Thank you.

I, too, Mr. Chairman, have some specific questions that in light of the hour I would like to direct to the hon. minister and her staff, please. The first question is: how effective is it to measure the number of victims' services initiatives? Now, the target is for the Solicitor General to support 190 such services from the year 2002 through to 2005, but isn't this kind of measurement backwards in that it measures administrative inputs rather than actual outcomes? Doesn't this kind of performance measure encourage bureaucratic inertia; for instance, creating yet more committees, subdividing existing committees merely to create the impression of action? How many of these initiatives will be undertaken by NGOs? Will these NGOs have funding in part or in whole for all of the work? Is the government taking credit for work conducted and funded by other people?

Now, there's another goal here, goal 3, "Facilitate the rehabilitation of offenders." My next question to the hon. minister: is the Solicitor General taking any steps to deal with domestic abuse that is perpetrated by police officers? What concrete steps will be taken to improve police investigation of domestic abuse cases?

Further on here, in light of the time, Mr. Chairman. Why is the target for successful completion of young offender probations lower than the actual completion rate of the past three years? An additional question, please, at this time is: why is the target for the percentage of offenders involved in work, education, treatment, or life management programs actually lower than the participation rate of the last two years?

Further along here, goal 4, "Ensure secure and efficient custody, community supervision and transportation of offenders." Why is the target for successful completion of temporary absence supervision lower than the successful completion rate of the past three years?

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Ellerslie certainly touched on the issues that concern MADD, Mothers Against Drinking Drivers.

In conclusion, I too would like to mention the excellent presentation that I had the other morning in the FOIP Act Review Committee, chaired ably by the Member for Edmonton-Calder. The presentation concerned the drop in the number of police officers that are on active duty, not only in Alberta but across the country. What measures are going to be taken by the Solicitor General and the department to ensure that there is not a shortage of police officers, police personnel, in this province in the future?

With those comments, certainly for any questions that I raised that the hon. minister would like to reply to in writing, I will be looking

forward to the replies. If we could get a general overview now, I would be grateful.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, I again would like to urge the hon. minister to certainly have another look at this ramp situation for the disabled in this Legislative Assembly. It's a poor reflection on all of us, and if someone in that department would kindly contact the architects' association, I'm sure that they will find that those guidelines have not been met with that ramp at the media availability room.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I look forward to the response from the hon. minister.

9:30

THE DEPUTY CHAIR: The hon. minister.

MRS. FORSYTH: Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman. I've been trying to take notes as quickly as I can. Obviously, the members across the way have asked a fair amount of questions, so I'll endeavour to sort of go by what I've caught.

One of the questions that has been asked over and over again is in regard to the G-8. Again I want to repeat that the G-8 is a federal responsibility. It's a federal initiative. It's a federal party, but it's in our province. We have endeavoured for the last I don't know how many months and days and weeks to negotiate with your federal counterparts and your federal cousins. I would encourage you, if you have so many concerns about G-8, to call your Liberal cousins in Ottawa. It's very important. We as a province have been negotiating with them in regard to the memorandum of understanding and agreement and trying to get all the costs that we perceive for the G-8. Can I guarantee that it has no cost to the province? No. You can't guarantee anything in life. We can only negotiate to the best of our abilities, but again I have been arguing back and forth with them on the cost of prosecutions within this province for the prosecution of protestors. They have steadily refused. I encourage you as members of the opposition who are with the Liberal Party to please call your Liberal counterparts and ask them if they would please participate in it.

One of the questions that was brought to my attention was the technology and the national sex offender registry. Well, I think people in the Assembly have to understand that CPIC is very old and it's outdated, and to add the sex offender registry to CPIC is virtually impossible. Technology changes. It's a very useful tool that the police have used, but they have continually said that it's outdated, that the technology isn't useful. We have lobbied the federal government, and I must admit that they made some movement at the last federal/provincial/territorial about establishing a national sex offender registry and making it mandatory to register so we have the ability to track the sex offenders who tend to move from province to province. So that was my comment.

The other thing about the technology is cybercrime. That changes, and that is continually on the move. That is a technological challenge. So we will continue to push the feds on that.

One of the questions asked was about strategy 3.3, the adult and young offender alternative measures program. Will it be reviewed and expanded when appropriate? As we're well aware, the alternative measures program is a program that the Crown uses as a diversion for less serious crimes to keep the accused person out of sort of the formal justice system. The individuals that are referred to the alternative measures program agree to conditions, community service work. If it's a young offender, a poster, writing a speech, restitution to the victim. So we're going to continue to work on that, and we've got a review that has been under way for some time to examine what's happening in other alternative measures programs

across other Canadian jurisdictions. Identifying problem areas that we see in the program and the impact on the new Youth Criminal Justice Act, identifying some areas where it can be expanded, identifying areas where the program can serve aboriginal people better, that the hon. Member for Edmonton-Ellerslie asked, and other groups, including the mentally ill, instead of putting them into our correction facilities. People with FAS is another big problem that we're dealing with in the correctional facilities, and we're going to continue consulting with the stakeholders. We feel that it's important to consult with the stakeholders, and we'll review it from there.

Someone asked the question about whether the ministry will continue to emphasize ensuring the availability of alternatives to custody for young offenders. I touched on that with the alternative measures.

Alberta's incarceration rate. It's important, I think, for people to understand that it's the third lowest amongst Canadian provinces. The use of custody in correctional facilities has steadily decreased, and of course we're seeing more people in the community, and that's something that we have to address. Again we're struggling with the implementation of the new Youth Criminal Justice Act.

Another question was about the facilitation of the rehabilitation of offenders in co-operation with the Alberta Mental Health Board and my department. We're developing a framework strategy to provide additional alternatives to the criminal justice system for criminally involved individuals who are mentally ill, and that was a question that was asked by Edmonton-Centre. We are working together with Alberta Mental Health and a number of other departments, stakeholders, and agencies to minimize the reliance on the criminal justice system for individuals who are mentally ill, and it's related to their offending behaviour. Individuals with mental illness are at risk and are being placed in the correctional system regardless of the appropriateness in relation to their offence. The correction system is used as a complement to mental health treatment, and the justice system is not intended or designed or funded to provide the intensive level of services for individuals with mental health, so we're developing a framework.

I was asked about the "ensure secure and efficient custody, community supervision and transportation of offenders." The department continually holds contracts with four First Nations societies to deliver community corrections and court work service in the community. It's been very successful. Ongoing discussions continue with the four First Nations at Hobbema for the delivery of these services in the Samson, Ermineskin, Montana, and Louis Bull First Nations. The Metis Association zone 5 and the Kainai Community Corrections Society, who currently operate aboriginal corrections programs, have expressed an interest in expanding.

We were asked again about ensuring "secure and efficient custody, community supervision and transportation of offenders." We are fulfilling that mandate. The type of people that we're dealing with as far as large gang trials, weapons, and the tendency of gangs to use threats and intimidation has created some problems that we have had to deal with.

We were asked about the provincial protection officers completing "basic . . . training to enable them to carry out their security, custody and escort functions." CAPS officers, who are very good officers in this province and do a wonderful job, are exceptionally well trained and professional, and we want to continue that training program so they can continue to do the good job that they've always done.

I was again asked about the policing review, and I made comments on that when I spoke before.

I was asked about how many reviews I have going on right now. We've just finished the policing review, that I mentioned, and we've got the victims' review that is being carried out by the Member for

Calgary-Shaw, two very important committees that I think have to be addressed and looked at.

I was asked about supporting the youth justice committees and expanding to the eligible communities, including aboriginals. A highly, highly successful program. We've currently got 92 youth justice committees up and running. I'm launching another one I believe next week. I met with the Strathcona Youth Justice Committee a week ago and talked to them about how they see the service delivery, and they shared some concerns, as some of the youth justice committees are, with the new act that's going to be implemented in 2003. We feel it's a very, very successful program, key to diversions of youth. We've got small grants and administrative support to support these committees. I have dedicated volunteers, and I've got dedicated staff that are continually working with the youth justice committees. One of the goals is to work more into the aboriginal community and do more work with them.

We were asked about the continued delivery of the aboriginal culture and spiritual programming in the young offender and adult correction centres. It was mentioned by either Edmonton-Centre or Edmonton-Ellerslie, the success of those. Highly successful. We're going to continue doing that. We've got two adult aboriginal minimum security camps and one community correction camp. It's important that the native elders and the aboriginal community members regularly provide culture programs to the offenders as far as sweat lodges and pipes and sweet grass ceremonies.

9:40

I was asked about the Alexis court model. The endorsement of the court process at Alexis by all key holders – and that's the court, the Crown prosecutors, the contractor, the community – indicates that all reasonable measures should be taken to ensure its continued success, including adequate resourcing. The department is working with Justice, the Yellowhead Tribal Community Corrections Society, and other stakeholders to undertake an evaluation of the process used at Alexis, its results and its effectiveness, and the result of this will be to develop recommendations on additional support and an expansion of the model to other communities.

The Member for Edmonton-Ellerslie talked about our priorities and the way we had prioritized, and it's really unfortunate that you can't prioritize everything at one. If we could do that and we lived in Utopia, we would have prioritized everything at one. It's difficult to prioritize from one to 20 or one to 15 on your prioritization because everything is a priority, and I wish I could, but everything in our department is a priority, all of the things we work with, whether it's a sex offender registry, police standards, the policing review, the aboriginal initiatives, any of them.

We talked about security around the guards, and I guess my only comment to the members is: why don't you call? If you have a concern and you have a problem with security, there is nothing wrong with picking up the phone and calling me and trying to address the issue instead of using the Legislature as a front. I have not heard yet about the scooting in and out of the parkade.

I will give the member credit. He brought up his concerns about the disabled. I've spoken to the member beside me on the Premier's council on persons with disabilities, and we have not had a complaint. We checked originally into your question when you questioned me in question period, and they do have access to the east loading. I was assured by security. So if it's a problem again, please give me a call. If you have a problem with the security in the Legislature, call. That's what I ask you to do.

We talked about G-8 again and the excess of \$400 million. I haven't seen those figures. I don't know what the numbers are for the G-8. You talked about the infrastructure left behind and the use

for Albertans. I'd again encourage the Liberals over there to call. The police force, I understand, can buy the surplus equipment at a cost factor.

I think that's all for now.

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

MR. MacDONALD: Yes, Mr. Chairman. At this time I have one additional question. Of course, every member of this Assembly is concerned about the increase of identity fraud that's occurring in this province, particularly with the deficiencies there are whenever we privatized the registries. You know, there seems to be one case after another of ID cards and drivers' licences. The market value in Calgary has been determined, I believe, at \$200 for a driver's licence. In light of the fact that that driver's licence can be used to gain access to America through the Montana border crossings, what initiatives is the Solicitor General's department taking with the police forces from across this province to curb this unsavory practice of identity fraud because we have a lax registry system? Certainly the hon. minister must be very, very concerned about this in light of the unsavory practices that have been exposed. Precisely what is the department doing to ensure that identity fraud is stopped completely in this province because of, again, the deficiencies in the registry system?

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

THE DEPUTY CHAIR: Okay. After considering the . . .

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

THE DEPUTY CHAIR: Hon. Member for Edmonton-Ellerslie, are you rising to speak?

MS CARLSON: No, I was expecting the minister to respond.

MRS. FORSYTH: I'm sorry, Mr. Chairman; it seems like the Assembly would like the question.

The hon. member brought up the ID cards, and I can assure him that the Minister of Government Services and I have been working on this. We're in discussion about how to deal with it. We're very fortunate in this province that we have a very, very good and effective police force, and I will also be bringing up that to the Alberta Association of Chiefs of Police when I meet with them next week in Calgary. I can assure the member that the Minister of Government Services and I are both working on it.

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

MR. MacDONALD: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. At this time I would also like to direct a further question to the minister, and it's in regard to the police force. What studies is the department currently doing regarding the start-up of an Alberta police force, the APP? Has the department conducted any studies on the cost efficiencies of initiating an APP?

MRS. FORSYTH: I think what the member is referring to is similar to what we saw in the Ontario Provincial Police model. I think what he's alluding to is he's trying to find out if that is incorporated or one of the recommendations of the police review. You can tell by his smile. I'm not asleep yet, though it's been a very, very long day. As I explained, I have received the report, have indicated and have my department responding to the report on the recommendations and the cost implications of putting forward some of the recommendations that were brought in the report.

THE DEPUTY CHAIR: After considering the business plan and proposed estimates for the Department of Solicitor General, are you ready for the vote?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

Agreed to:
Operating Expense and Capital Investment \$258,367,000

THE DEPUTY CHAIR: Shall the vote be reported? Are you agreed?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

THE DEPUTY CHAIR: Opposed? Carried.
The hon. Government House Leader.

MR. HANCOCK: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would move that the committee rise and report the estimates of the Department of the Solicitor General and beg leave to sit again.

[Motion carried]

[Mr. Shariff in the chair]

9:50

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

Resolved that a sum not exceeding the following be granted to Her Majesty for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2003, for the following department.

Solicitor General: operating expense and capital investment, \$258,367,000.

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

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

THE ACTING SPEAKER: Opposed? So ordered.

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

[Mr. Shariff in the chair]

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

Bill 19 **Veterinary Profession Amendment Act, 2002**

THE DEPUTY CHAIR: Are there any comments, questions, or amendments to be offered with respect to this bill? The hon. Member for Lac La Biche-St. Paul.

MR. DANYLUK: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm pleased to rise today to present Bill 19, the Veterinary Profession Amendment Act, 2002, to Committee of the Whole.

The proposals contained in Bill 19 were developed by Human Resources and Employment in conjunction with the Alberta Veterinary Medical Association to improve the quality of veterinary service in the province by improving the regulation of professional veterinarians. These amendments bring the Veterinary Profession Act's investigative, disciplinary, and appeal provisions into line with

the Health Professions Act, which is the current model for Alberta professional legislation.

The amendments also respond to the AVMA's request for greater transparency, accountability, and fairness in its governing legislation by increasing public representation to the AVMA's disciplinary and appeal bodies, also by replacing the current disciplinary processes relating to the professional misconduct with those contained in the HPA, also by providing for an alternative dispute resolution and allowing the provincial Ombudsman to investigate complaints about the AVMA.

There is also one amendment that addresses the veterinarian's traditional ability to prescribe, dispense, compound, and sell drugs. This amendment reflects other Alberta legislation that deals with drugs, namely the Pharmaceutical Profession Act and the Livestock Diseases Act, by including this activity in the definition of the veterinary medical services.

The Alberta College of Pharmacists has expressed concern that this proposed amendment will restrict the scope of practice granted to the Alberta pharmacists under the Pharmaceutical Profession Act. I am introducing for your consideration a House amendment to Bill 19 to address the college's concern. The House amendment is to section 2(2) of the Veterinary Profession Act, which specifies those persons who are exempt from the act's scope of practice provisions. The House amendment adds a new subsection.

THE DEPUTY CHAIR: Hon. member, can you just hold for one second, please? The amendment that you are moving – has that been circulated?

MR. DANYLUK: No, it hasn't, and I was going to ask you to after about one more sentence.

THE DEPUTY CHAIR: Okay.

MR. DANYLUK: But if you would like to do it now . . .

THE DEPUTY CHAIR: Maybe you can just pass it to the pages so that it can be distributed to every member. They've got it now? Great. You may proceed.

MR. DANYLUK: So would you like me to wait till everybody gets one?

THE DEPUTY CHAIR: You may proceed.

MR. DANYLUK: Okay. The House amendment adds a new section under section 2: 2.1, which states that a person whose professional or occupational practice is carried out under the authority of any other Alberta legislation is exempt from the Veterinary Profession Act's scope of practice. Mr. Chairman, I would like to clarify that this amendment is amendment A1, and there are two changes under one amendment. The one that I have just mentioned, if I can read it, please, is that section 2(2) is amended by adding the following after clause (h): "(i) the carrying out of the practice of a profession or occupation under the authority of any other enactment." Also, under section 16 we have a small misprint, and it is amended from the proposed section 34.1(3) by striking out "under subsection (2)" and substituting "under subsection (1)."

Mr. Chairman, if I could just briefly clarify, first, as I stated before, the Alberta College of Pharmacists together with a number of individuals and businesses have expressed concern about the proposed amendments contained under Bill 19, the Veterinary Profession Amendment Act, and the belief that this amendment will

restrict the scope of practice for pharmacists and agriculture distributors. The House amendment that I have moved that specifies those persons who are exempt from the act's scope of practice will clarify this matter.

I think that's all, Mr. Chairman.

THE DEPUTY CHAIR: We shall refer to the amendment that is before us as amendment A1. On the amendment, the hon. Member for Edmonton-Ellerslie.

MS CARLSON: Mr. Chairman, I just have a question for the Member for Lac La Biche-St. Paul. We had a fairly aggressive lobby from the pharmacists' association about this particular bill and their inability to dispense veterinary medicines with the changes proposed in here. Can the member assure the House that that particular problem is fully and adequately addressed through the proposed amendment?

MR. DANYLUK: To the hon. member opposite, yes, we have made contact with the pharmaceutical association. We have given them a copy of what the amendment is going to be. We have also contacted individuals, and I don't want to say all individuals because, yes, you are very right; there were a lot of individuals that did have concern, pharmacists that had called us. But the pharmaceutical association along with the agricultural dispensers as well as the veterinary association have given us, I guess if you want to call it, the okay and believe that our direction is right.

THE DEPUTY CHAIR: The Minister of Human Resources and Employment.

MR. DUNFORD: Yes. Thanks, Mr. Chairman. I would like to give the same assurance that the amendment that is being proposed by the hon. member clears the way, then, for the pharmacists, for any of the other particular dealers to carry on with the normal business because the floor amendment exempts them from the veterinary act.

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

MR. MacDONALD: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I would like to make the following comments for the record regarding amendment A1 to Bill 19, the Veterinary Profession Amendment Act, 2002. Certainly I, too, have had contact with not only the Alberta College of Pharmacists but certainly concerned consumers who for one reason or another across the dispensary counter became aware of what was considered a deficiency in this legislation. It is also my view that research has been done, and certainly the work that the hon. Member for Lac La Biche-St. Paul has done on this bill is going to adequately address the concerns.

10:00

Now, there was no doubt that pharmacists did at one time have some concerns. We all recognize in this Assembly that pharmacists are trained to compound, dispense, and sell drugs for veterinary use. They are certainly knowledgeable about veterinarian medications. This includes drugs sold pursuant to a prescription and others that do not require a prescription.

In a letter that was copied to me from the pharmacists, the pharmacists themselves add that they currently provide compounding services to veterinarians and dispense medications prescribed by veterinarians. They state that this amendment would have certainly a substantive effect on the practice of pharmacy, the interrelationship between pharmacists and the veterinarians and the animal owners for

whom pharmacists provide services. However, this is slightly different, but I think this will stand the test. The pharmacists thought that at section 2(2), "Subsection (1) . . . the practice of any profession or occupation by any person practicing under the authority of any other enactment," would be sufficient to deal with their concerns. There's an omission here of the phrase "by any person," but I don't see how that will affect the amendment, because they would be covered under the professional standards in this case of the Alberta College of Pharmacists.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, one has to understand that this bill is centred around Alberta's veterinarians, which have traditionally dispensed and sold medicines and drugs as part of their scope of practice. Certainly it is recognized in that, but somehow the role of the pharmacist was overlooked, and I believe this amendment will go a long way towards correcting that oversight.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

THE DEPUTY CHAIR: The hon. Member for Lac La Biche-St. Paul.

MR. DANYLUK: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I guess my response would be that it is very much to clarify that the Pharmaceutical Association and the dispensers, if you want to call it that, under agriculture have their own act that entitles them to dispense drugs for veterinary use only. In Bill 19 it says that veterinarians are able to dispense drugs for veterinary use. What ends up happening is that it didn't clarify that this did not give them exclusivity. So I think that the amendment very much addresses that it is not exclusivity, that there are other enactments that allow other bodies to dispense drugs. I don't know if that answers it.

MR. MASON: Mr. Chairman, I understand the intent that the hon. member has sent out, but I would just appreciate a little bit of guidance in terms of where to find the change and where the change goes and how it will actually work.

I see that A of the amendment says that "the following is added after section 2," which I am assuming is after section 2 of Bill 19, which is right at the beginning of the act. Correct? On the first page. Can you tell me . . . [interjection] Just this once, hon. member.

MR. DANYLUK: If you would look at the bill itself – right? – on page 3 after (g) we would add the section that would pertain to section 2(2)(i), which would be a new part to the amendment. This is basically the amendment act, Bill 19. If you look under the Veterinary Profession Act, on page 5 where you have (h) and then you have a (1), it would take place right before the (3) under (i).

MR. MASON: That's on the actual act?

MR. DANYLUK: On the actual act.

The amendment to Bill 19 would basically put that amendment into the bill, which is the Veterinary Profession Act, and it would put it in, as I said, on page 5, (i) right after (h).

MR. MASON: I want to make sure I understand this. Pardon my slowness. You know, sometimes you can vote for things and you don't understand them. That's not always the best way to do it.

The member indicated that on page 3 of the bill, the amendment here comes after (g), and it adds a letter (i). Is that correct? [interjection]

THE DEPUTY CHAIR: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Highlands has the floor.

MR. MASON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Except that the amendment says that this is amending . . . Yes. Thank you. It's clicked for me now. Thank you.

[The clauses of Bill 19 as amended agreed to]

[Title and preamble agreed to]

THE DEPUTY CHAIR: Shall the bill be reported? Are you agreed?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

THE DEPUTY CHAIR: Opposed? Carried.

Bill 16

Racing Corporation Amendment Act, 2002

THE DEPUTY CHAIR: Are there any comments, questions, or amendments to be offered with respect to this bill?

The hon. Minister of Gaming.

MR. STEVENS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I wish to make a few brief comments in committee. This bill has much to commend it. First, it's short; it's seven pages long. Secondly, it is the work of the horse racing industry that gave rise to this. They were unanimous in recommending to government these changes to this legislation, which provides governance with respect to the horse racing industry.

Briefly, I wish to just highlight some of the sections. There is a name change reflected in sections 1, 2, and 3; namely, the act and the corporation being changed from Alberta Racing Corporation to Horse Racing Alberta. This change was requested by the industry to recognize the formation of one industrywide organization that can represent the interests of all Alberta horse racing industry stakeholders and their associations.

10:10

In section 4 of the bill there is an amendment expanding the board from seven to 12 members, and there is also a provision that amends the current board membership, which remains the same, to add representatives of A tracks, for example Northlands and Stampede; B tracks, for example Lethbridge and Grande Prairie; and other racing breed associations, for example, quarter horse, Appaloosa, and Arabian. Section 4 also deals with appointing the chair and public board members and term of office, eligibility for board membership, subsequent name change, appointments by minister, and quorum.

Section 5 deals with the designation of "chair."

The reporting requirements in section 6 of the bill are important in that the current requirement for an annual audited end-of-year report to the government and the tabling of this information in the Legislature are maintained, but it is expanded in the sense that the reporting requirements will include a multiyear business plan and performance measures, which will improve the accountability of the industry to government and Albertans.

Section 8 sets out transitional provisions.

That would basically cover the pith and substance of this bill.

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

MS BLAKEMAN: Thanks very much, Mr. Chairman. I'm happy to have the opportunity to speak in Committee of the Whole to Bill 16, the Racing Corporation Amendment Act, 2002. Having looked at this bill and considered it now for a couple of weeks since it was introduced and since second reading, I'm less and less inclined to support the bill.

A couple of reasons. I heard the minister just say that the horse racing industry in fact requested it, and this follows what they're interested in seeing or changes that they approve of. I'm also aware that a number of the changes were requested or recommended by the Auditor General according to some deficiencies that were pointed out by the Auditor General around the Alberta Racing Corporation. Well, the Auditor General went in depth quite a bit in the '99-2000 report with concerns around the racing industry renewal initiatives, the division of the purse:

1. Slot machine revenues paid to date to the Alberta Racing Corporation and the racetrack operators have not complied with governing legislation.
2. The accountability for slot machine revenues paid to date to the Alberta Racing Corporation and the racetrack operators has not been adequate.
3. The accountability of the Ministry for the performance of the Alberta Racing Corporation is not adequate.

There was legislative noncompliance by

Alberta Racing Corporation and Northlands Park with respect to proceeds from slot machines at the racetrack in Edmonton. Similar arrangements exist between the Commission, the Corporation, and the racetrack operator in Lethbridge, and between the Commission and the racetrack operator in Calgary.

All of those agreements were looked at, and there were a number of issues of noncompliance. In particular, "certain expenditures made by the commission are not in compliance with the applicable governing legislation." The commission paid to retailers for operating the electronic gaming activities were 15 percent of gaming revenues, wagers less prizes, but as disclosed in note 11 of the financial statements

agreements between the Commission, the Alberta Racing Corporation, and racetrack operators . . . provide for payment of 33 1/3% of gaming revenues at these facilities to the Alberta Racing Corporation and 33 1/3% to the Operator.

Essentially, in the opinion of the Auditor General, and all of this is coming out of the '99-2000 report,

the payments to the Alberta Racing Corporation, and the payments to the Operators and the Stampede in excess of the normal retailer commission of 15%, appear to be payments intended to support the Racing Industry Renewal Initiative and are not retailer commissions.

As a result, payments to the Alberta Racing Commission totaling . . .

And he goes through and details it: \$5,891,000 and \$4.4 million in '99, and \$4.7 million in the previous year.

. . . do not comply with s.26 of the Gaming and Liquor Act because this lottery revenue was not transferred to the Lottery Fund.

Now, there were actions taken by the commission following the Auditor General's concerns, but part of the action that was taken was in fact this legislation. I observe that this government has an uncanny ability to come in to prop up a sector exactly when it's too late, and that's my impression about this.

Certainly the people that I talked to all indicated that in 10 years' time there seems to be no question but that all horse racing would likely be simulcast of the large races and that for a small market like Alberta we would definitely still have what we call the B tracks but that we likely wouldn't have any of the A tracks left because no one is interested in attending and betting on the races. If we're looking at 10 years down the road to that, why are we looking at injecting significant amounts of money into this sector now? Total pari-mutuel betting has declined by 48 percent since 1991. The number of live race days has dropped from 381 days in 1999 to 221 days in 2001, so that's 42 percent fewer race days. This is a sector that is diminishing and seems to be on a gradual decline, and now's the time the government decides to come in.

Now, what we've heard the Premier say in press conferences and

things is: well, allowing the slot machines to go into the racing centres diminished and harmed the racing industry, and therefore we're now going to allow them to have more slot machines, which is somehow going to help them dig themselves out of this, which just strikes me as a circular argument and circular logic as well. If we accept that having the slot machines in the racetracks in the first place detracted from the betting on the horse races and affected the betting on the horse races, I don't know that the solution to it is now putting more slot machines in there so that there could be more money going into the slot machines, which is then taken from that in a split with the racetracks, and the horse owners and breeders get a larger percentage to help give larger purses. This is not making a lot of sense to me here. I mean, the government may feel bad for having hastened the decline of this, but I don't know that that's a good reason for taxpayers to have to forgo revenue.

I've also heard the excuse coming from the other side: well, don't worry; this is not taxpayer money that's going to these people. Well, excuse me; it's forgone revenue that would be benefiting taxpayers were it not now redirected into the purses and being won by the horsemen. If that split was not the percentage that's being contemplated, then there would be more money that would be going into the lottery fund and that would be disbursed out through the charities and nonprofits and to the other core businesses that the government pays for out of the lottery fund dollars. In fact, we are talking about forgone revenue here very clearly. So it does affect the taxpayers because there's less money there to give them programs and services.

10:20

So we have a situation where we have a sector that is diminishing or declining for a number of reasons. Now the government comes in and says: "No. We want to change the deal so that hopefully the sector would thrive again." But nothing is giving indicators that in fact that would happen. The needle is pointing in the other direction.

We are not changing that much when I look at the act. We're increasing the board members from seven to 12 and we're changing the name of the thing, but frankly there's a section in here that says that for anybody that was appointed to the old organization, the ARC, we won't count the number of years they'd served on that board. They can start over again from zero and be appointed to this new one. So we could have people that would have served a total of 12 years. Well, how much of a difference is this making in a renewal and a new direction if you end up basically taking everybody from the old board and having them on the new board and they get to serve twice as long?

Part of the increase was to allow for more seats for the other voices that need to be brought into this discussion. It was felt that there was an overwhelming preponderance of votes and voice from the horse owners' sector. So, well, yes. All right. This allows for racetracks to be represented on the A level.

(g) 2 persons agreed on and appointed by the operators of race tracks licensed under the rules as "A" level race tracks;

(h) one person agreed on and appointed by the operators of racetracks licensed under the rules as "B" level racetracks.

But then that's countered with three members of the general public, who traditionally have been horse owners or horse breeders. So we're two steps forward and two steps back on this one. I don't see how this is going to solve any of the problems that have been identified.

Now, there have also been some things incorporated that were addressing the issues that were raised by the Auditor General, in particular that there be reporting and that there be compliance with the rules that were set out for the rest of the government to operate by. That was a complaint of the Auditor General in the past, that the ARC didn't listen to what the ministry was telling it to do, didn't

report, and wouldn't respond: that sort of thing. So that's now put into the legislation, but is that the reason to go ahead and support the legislation? I don't know that it is. It does strike me that there's a lot of effort and a lot of money being put into a sector that seems to be going backwards, not forwards. I don't know that that's a good enough reason to be taking money out of the lottery fund that could well be going to enhance more Albertans' lives. I don't know whether the money going here is going to have as much effect or touch as many Albertans positively than if in fact that money was directed through the lottery fund into other things.

I guess part of it is that essentially we are talking about an entertainment here. I tried to think about any other commercial entertainment that's provided for the public that gets that kind of subsidy and assistance from the government. For anybody else it's paid for by their providers. I mean Hollywood movies are paid for by the providers. Golf courses are paid for by the providers. The monster truck rally, ski resorts: I mean, they're paid for by the people that are going to be making the profit out of it.

So we have an instance there where there's support being put into a sector that's diminishing. I don't see that Horse Racing Alberta is significantly different than the Alberta Racing Corporation. It's the same people. Their term starts over again. The number of seats that were meant to balance between the horse racers and the tracks ends up coming out in the wash because, yeah, there were two more seats there but there are three more possibilities out of the public members.

I don't think we're that much further forward. I haven't heard convincing arguments from the minister on the bill, and I don't see a good reason to be supporting this. I don't think it's that much to the advantage of Albertans. So having put in my nonwagered two bits on this, I'll take my seat and listen to others and what they have to say.

Thank you.

MR. STEVENS: There are two or three comments, Mr. Chairman, from Edmonton-Centre that bear some response. A comment was made with respect to the Auditor General's report regarding the horse racing industry a couple of years ago. That particular matter was dealt with in the year 2000 through new agreements and through payments from the Alberta lottery fund that go through the annual appropriation process. So this particular legislation does not deal with that particular issue, as suggested by the member.

I note with some interest the degree of certainty that Edmonton-Centre has about the demise of this industry in about 10 years' time. I certainly would appreciate any information that the hon. member has in that regard, because of course as government we will be working with this industry to ensure that their business plan does in fact the opposite, and that is, grows the industry. Since the hon. member is concerned about accountability and the appropriate use of government funds and wishes, I am sure, the best for this industry, I would ask that she share with me, as an hon. member who cares about those things, the information that she has showing that this particular industry is doomed to demise within the next 10 years. So I'll be waiting with some interest for receipt of that in the next few days.

With respect to the appointment of the board and the transition period which allows existing members to continue on without taking into account previous time, once again that is something that this particular industry asked for. We do not do the appointment of the board, and this particular group has asked for it. They feel that that is the best way to deal with the matter, and candidly, I can see no reason not to accommodate them if that in fact is what they think is best for the industry.

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

MS CARLSON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will not be supporting this bill. It's interesting, the kind of precedent that this government is willing to set in terms of their interest in and willingness to prop up or subsidize businesses at a huge cost to those programs that government should rightly be in such as properly taking care of children who have no one to take care of them. We see the government now involved in studies from two various departments, in spite of what the Premier has said, for pet shoots, where they extend the ability of those elk farms to continue to operate regardless of the kinds of costs associated with them such as disease and contamination. We see them now propping up commercial fishermen. Why? Because the fisherpeople asked for this, as did the pet-shoot people. What they want is government to bail them out and to provide subsidies or supports for them so that they can . . .

MR. MacDONALD: Did you say "pet shoots"?

MS CARLSON: Pet shoots. Yes. Elk ranchers, who have been harvesting elk for more than 20 years, mostly for the velvet on the antlers, now have an overabundance of supply. The elk antler velvet market has dropped. It's virtually collapsed.

AN HON. MEMBER: Who could've predicted it?

MS CARLSON: No kidding.

DR. NICOL: The little blue pill took over.

MS CARLSON: Yes, that could be exactly what happened. [interjection] I wouldn't know. I mean, that's more your venue than it is mine.

AN HON. MEMBER: It's worse than the Peruvian anchovy collapse.

MS CARLSON: That's right. Who could've anticipated that market collapsing?

THE DEPUTY CHAIR: Hon. members, the hon. Member for Edmonton-Ellerslie has the floor.

MS CARLSON: What else has this government looked at propping up or subsidizing or expanding at the request of industry? Of course, we have the Swan Hills waste treatment centre, which the government has various ways of deciding how they will prop up and defend here in this Assembly. So that's right off the top of my head. Pet shoots have asked for help. Commercial fishermen have asked for help. Swan Hills waste treatment plant. How about the Ridley Grain terminal? Once again, more dollars propping up that. If we go back just a little way, we see some huge fiascoes: NovAtel, MagCan. The list is endless on how once this government gets involved in propping up a business industry, it collapses or it completely distorts the marketplace. It just doesn't work, and it costs this government and therefore Alberta taxpayers lots of money. So when the minister asked the Member for Edmonton-Centre how it is that she thinks that this industry is going to collapse within the next years, well, I tell you: how does he say that it isn't? Why else would it be coming to government for a bailout, and why else would government be supplying it?

10:30

I can't support that when we see day after day in this Assembly children left at risk, a government who refuses to take responsibility

for them. All they can talk about is that the sole responsibility for raising these children is with the parents. Well, I tell you that the sole responsibility for raising children is with the communities, and when the parents aren't able to or don't want to for whatever reason, then it is our responsibility as good citizens of this country to provide that support, a responsibility that this government refuses to accept even though they were duly elected to do so.

So for those reasons I cannot support this bill.

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

MR. MacDONALD: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I, too, would like to get on the record regarding Bill 16, the Racing Corporation Amendment Act, 2002. Certainly the Alberta horse racing industry has been a proud part of Alberta's history, and I would like to see it continue.

Now, we look at the horse racing industry in this province, and there certainly have been problems. There have been problems with standardbreds. That part of the horse racing industry seemed quite resentful that the thoroughbreds were getting a lot more racing days than they were. The total number of live racing days at A racetracks in Alberta dropped from 382 in 1991 to 221 days in 2001, and that's quite a decline. Certainly in that same period of time we saw an increase in other gambling activity. Mr. Chairman, there has been an influx of VLTs and various forms of gambling at casinos, whether it be card games or dice. I don't go to casinos that often, so I can't tell you what exactly goes on there, but certainly there is a huge increase in the number of casinos and ways for one to part from their hard-earned dollars at such facilities. As that activity rose in this province, certainly horse racing declined.

Many of the horse owners, particularly the standardbred owners, were so frustrated that they contemplated leaving the province with their stock. In fact, this led to a realization of the high quality of standardbred horses in this province, because with the frustrations that were expressed here, people actually trotted to other provinces, other jurisdictions, and their horses did very well at those levels. That's an indication of exactly the quality of horse breeding and certainly horse training in this province. Not only has the number of live race days at A tracks declined in the last decade, but as I understand it, horse breeding in Alberta has declined to levels too low to support race meets in the future. If the hon. Minister of Gaming has a figure that is more up to date than what I have, then I would be very grateful if he would share that not only with this member but with all members of the Assembly.

Now, certainly I didn't realize the consequences and the significance it had on the government of the race last December between the hon. Member for Whitecourt-St. Anne and the Premier conducted at Northlands. The hon. member will have to excuse me. It's the Premier's horse that I remember as being Dukes Cigar, and I can't recall the name of the hon. member's horse, but it was a distant second. The Premier's horse, Dukes Cigar, was much faster on that cold night.

MS BLAKEMAN: If you were a backbencher, would you beat the Premier?

MR. MacDONALD: You bet.

Mr. Chairman, the significant event of that night was the fact that there were going to be extra efforts made to support the horse racing industry. In recognizing that the number of live race days has certainly declined and that as a result of that horse breeding activities and training in this province have also declined, I don't think the changes that are proposed here are necessarily the best changes.

The hon. minister was talking earlier about the industry and the position the industry would be in in 10 years, and I just don't know if this is going to solve the problems. It is possible that this is only a gesture to the horse racing industry. The proposed increase in slot allocations to the tracks and expansion of gaming entertainment centres may well, as the hon. members have discussed, doom the live racing industry to a continued downward trend. We're talking about business plans and that in 10 years it's going to be a centre of considerable excellence for the province, but what about the estimates of the revenues needed from slot machines over the next four years? It's going to increase, I believe, from \$3.7 million in this current year to close to \$40 million in four years. That's over a tenfold increase in four years. That's a significant amount of money. The hon. Member for Edmonton-Ellerslie was talking about children and priorities, and a pool of cash like that could go a long way to solving a lot of problems with children's issues in this province. It certainly could.

Also, how many machines in total are taxpayers looking at purchasing, and what is the cost of these machines? As I understand it, the individuals who do the maintenance on these machines are considered an essential service, and it is noted with a great deal of interest by this member that the individuals, the electronic technicians who calibrate and service these machines, are considered an essential service. So who's addicted to what here? That would have to be the question.

Before I conclude, Mr. Chairman, I would like to know what percentage of the projected revenue from these operations will be allocated to addiction treatment. Will that be in the budget of AADAC, in the corporate business plan of AADAC? Certainly there is money set aside in there for problem gaming, but is there going to be a little bit of money set aside from this revenue source to provide AADAC with perhaps an increase in their budget? Now, there are three expenses here: treatment, prevention, and information. Certainly AADAC is following through with information for Albertans to inform them about addictions and AADAC's services. What amount of money, again, what percentage of revenue if any would be used for this purpose?

10:40

Now, certainly we're all aware of the recommendations from the horse racing review and the indications that the board of the new corporation is responsible for appropriate positioning to control its destiny with respect to the potential legalization of Internet wagering on horse racing. Again, I would have to ask the hon. minister: what concern for both these A tracks and B tracks does the government have regarding the competition from Internet wagering on horse racing? Also, how does the province propose to legalize this Internet wagering?

Mr. Chairman, there's certainly been much mentioned throughout this province in policy debates after this budget, after this unfortunate budget, and it seems to have struck a chord with the citizens of this province that there were so many cutbacks, yet horses are certainly not cut at all.

MR. MASON: Not even cutting horses?

MR. MacDONALD: No, not even cutting horses. The hon. Member for Edmonton-Highlands is concerned about cutting horses, but cutting horses are not going to be cut by this government, regardless of what sort of fiscal dilemmas they face.

Now, I won't get on my high horse about the increase in gaming revenue from \$17 million to over \$30 million for the horse racing industry, but it is symbolic of a government that seems to have lost

direction. I would have to say that whenever you look at the past and you look at the proud history of horse racing and horse raising in this province, one would have to conclude that it's certainly a part of our heritage, a rich part of our heritage. But I would have to side with the hon. Member for Edmonton-Ellerslie that at this point in the province's history children come first.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

THE DEPUTY CHAIR: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Highlands.

MR. MASON: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I would like at this time to introduce an amendment to Bill 16. Would you like me just to pause for a moment while the pages distribute the amendment?

THE DEPUTY CHAIR: The pages have just begun distributing the amendment, so, hon. member, you may proceed.

MR. MASON: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I would, then, move that Bill 16, the Racing Corporation Amendment Act, 2002, be amended in section 6 in the proposed section 10 by adding the following after subsection (1):

(1.1) For the fiscal year 2002-2003, a multi-year business plan referred to in subsection (1) must outline the measures necessary for the Corporation to become self-sufficient by the fiscal year 2005-2006 at which time the Corporation would not be eligible for funding from the Lottery Fund or any other provincial agency or program.

Mr. Chairman, I just would like to make a few comments on this. I put my own position on the record at second reading with respect to this bill as providing the prerequisite from the government's point of view of continuing subsidization of this industry on an ongoing basis. I quoted from some sources in the industry indicating that that in fact was a part of the government's desire. We of course expressed concern that this one industry in particular had been singled out as an exception to the government's otherwise sound policy of not providing public subsidies for private industries, and that of course had been something that the government had made quite a political point of over the years, yet we have a situation here which is a glaring exception to that principle. The hon. Member for Edmonton-Ellerslie has elucidated several other examples, all seem to be involving the raising of some kind of animal, whether it would be a thoroughbred or a fish or an elk.

MS BLAKEMAN: PCBs.

MR. MASON: Well, I suppose PCBs or three-headed chickens in Swan Hills. I don't know.

Nevertheless, Mr. Chairman, I think that there is nothing wrong with this bill except for one thing. It sets out, as it now stands, the requirement that there must be a multiyear business plan, and that has to include "measures . . . used in assessing the performance of the Corporation," but nowhere is there a plan or a clear direction coming in this bill or apparently from the government in general to wean this industry off the public tax roll, and I think that that's what is missing.

So the amendment would require the business plans, which are a good thing by themselves as long as they say something, as long as they do something meaningful, to include a plan to get off the public dole for the horse racing industry and provide a three-year time frame to do that. So we're not saying, you know, that just right now you have to go out and earn your own living. We are saying that we'll give you some support. I think this is a concession. It's

certainly a concession from my point of view, because I honestly think, Mr. Chairman, that the horse racing industry shouldn't get a nickel of public money.

Now, the Premier in response to questions put to him by myself and other members in the Assembly has talked about this not being a subsidy. He's repeated this line. This is the message box of the government with respect to this: it's not taxpayers' dollars; it's money that comes from gambling. [some applause] Of course, some people who are not going to think about this in too critical a way would be tending to applaud that, Mr. Chairman, but in fact it's not the case.

What has happened is that the government has gotten into gambling in a bigger and bigger way as a means of supporting public programs. They are of course getting out of taxing corporations and wealthy individuals in a bigger and bigger way, so the proportion of revenue that is necessary to maintain some of these programs from gambling sources has risen accordingly. We're now over a billion dollars of budgeted revenue from gambling, most of which supports ordinary government operations that provide valuable programs to the citizens of this province. It may not technically be tax revenue, but it is revenue that the government uses in place of tax revenue to fund programs. Of course, if you take that money away from public programs and you apply it to a subsidy of a declining industry in this province, you are in effect taking taxpayers' money or money that would otherwise benefit taxpayers and giving it to a private industry.

So, Mr. Chairman, the Premier is quite, quite wrong in his characterization of this as not a subsidy and not taxpayers' money. It may come from a VLT, but it belongs to the taxpayers, and it ought to support their programs and not the programs of a private industry.

10:50

What the amendment does is require the business plans to have a three-year program in a planned and systematic way to become self-sufficient, and this government should be committing to that. If they insist that today this horse racing industry requires public subsidy, then they need to say when that's going to stop and how much it's going to be in two years and how much it's going to be in three years, and if it's going to continue after three years, the government needs to have a plan and not just keep pumping money into this industry with no accountability and with no intention on the part of the industry to ever give up the money.

Do you think, Mr. Chairman, that this industry will of its own accord say to the government: "Listen, we feel kind of bad about taking your money. We'd like over a period of three years or five years to stop taking your money, and we're going to work really hard to get off the public dole, because we don't want that \$33 million anymore. We don't feel right about taking it." Well, of course they won't. So it means that the government has to say that to them. It's the government that needs to take the responsibility to say: "Listen, you're big boys now. You're grown up. It's time you got a job."

I think that the government has given us no indication that they're prepared to take their responsibility seriously in this regard, and that's why this amendment is before the House. We think that the act by itself is fine, except what's behind it is a reorganization of the industry to continue subsidization, and this would put a stop to the subsidization. We are not quite frankly expecting the minister to agree to the amendment, I regret to say, but I hope that some members will. I think nothing is more consistent with the avowed aims of this government with respect to subsidization of private business than this amendment. So I really would hope that some members on the opposite side will stand up and vote for this amendment. I think it's a reasonable thing. I think it's a good

balance, and I think that it ought to be considered the fiscal responsibility act for the horse racing industry and for the Minister of Gaming. If the Minister of Gaming can't support this, I would hope that he would bring forward his own plan to show on a sustained basis how the government is going to get the horse racing industry to stand on its own two feet.

MR. MacDONALD: Four feet.

MR. MASON: Its own four feet. Thank you, hon. Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar, for that nice little addition to my speech.

Mr. Chairman, just in conclusion, I believe that this is a prudent, fiscally responsible amendment to the act. I think that it's consistent with the government's philosophy in most areas of business. It addresses a serious concern, and that is the concern of priorities for the government. This gambling revenue, not the best source of funding for government programs, is nevertheless something the government has become very dependent upon to finance ordinary programs for ordinary Albertans throughout the province in education, health care, social services, a wide range of programs, and if the government is going to finance programs that way, then it ought to apply the same priorities to that money as it does to income tax money or oil and gas money and not exempt it from that. I think that this will be helpful both to the horse racing industry and to the government to help it find its true principles. Certainly, from our point of view, being a fiscally responsible party in this Legislature, it's something that we strongly advocate that all parties ought to support.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

MR. MacDONALD: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. In regard to the amendment as proposed by the hon. Member for Edmonton-Highlands, it certainly is noteworthy. Now, a multiyear business plan as was outlined would have saved a lot of grief with the community lottery boards. They were pulled out from under the feet of many different community organizations across the province without warning, and this amendment from the hon. Member for Edmonton-Highlands certainly provides ample warning to the horse racing industry of notice that they have to be back on all four feet, or four hooves here, by 2005-2006 or that's it and that there has to come a time. I don't know if that's too little time or too much time, but certainly it is noteworthy.

Now, all other government departments follow three-year business plans. Other jurisdictions, other governments have 10-year business plans, and that's also noteworthy.

I will keep my remarks brief regarding this amendment, but when hon. members vote on this amendment, please consider what was done to the community lottery boards. They were just cut unannounced. There was no planning. For instance, there was an arena in the constituency of Edmonton-Gold Bar, Kenilworth arena. The city of Edmonton was planning a major overhaul of that arena after many years and was planning on using \$300,000 of the community lottery board money. Unfortunately, they're going to have to do without, because the rug was pulled out from underneath them. The Citadel Theatre is the same. If we were to pass this amendment as proposed by the hon. member, that certainly wouldn't happen to the horse racing industry. The horse racing industry wouldn't be faced with the dilemma that the city is going to have over the Kenilworth arena or the Citadel Theatre. That's just yet one example.

With those remarks I would urge all hon. members of this Assembly to please support the amendment as proposed by the hon.

Member for Edmonton-Highlands. A business plan is a business plan.

THE DEPUTY CHAIR: The hon. minister.

MR. STEVENS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd like to start by thanking the hon. Member for Edmonton-Highlands for his interest in this bill and for taking the time and effort to put forward an amendment and giving forward a very cogent, well-reasoned speech in favour of his amendment and also the hon. member opposite of the Liberal Party for his comments.

It seems to me, however, that in this particular case I'm going to have to urge my colleagues not to support this. I think that when it comes to accountability, the legislation provides for accountability in a couple of ways. First of all, there is going to be a business plan as part of the process that the horse racing industry is going to have to put together on an annual basis. It is going to be part of an audited process, and it's going to be part of a report that is presented to the minister and which is going to be tabled here on an annual basis. I can encourage the member to continue to show up during Gaming estimates for the years ahead so that we can continue to see how the horse racing industry is in fact doing in accordance with the business plans which will be part of that particular report.

Now, I would also like to thank the hon. Member for Edmonton-Highlands for listening to answers of the government, questions that you have posed to the Premier, questions that you have posed to me in Public Accounts. Clearly, you understand what our position is on this. I would say this: the money that is involved in the racing industry renewal initiative does come exclusively from racing entertainment centres, which were set up exclusively as part of this particular program. It is not a matter of taking casinos and diverting something from there. Rather, it is establishing specific locations which are proximate to racing centres and taking revenue that is generated from those centres and using part of it for support of this particular industry. I think it is reasonable to say that such revenue is derived solely as a result of this particular initiative and that but for the initiative those locations would not exist, that revenue would not exist. It's further reasonable to say that that type of revenue is not tax dollars.

So with those comments, once again, I am unable to support the amendment as proposed.

11:00

THE DEPUTY CHAIR: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Highlands.

MR. MASON: Just to close very briefly, Mr. Chairman. Well, I think that it is unfortunate that the minister is advising his colleagues to vote against the amendment. I had hoped that some of them in their hearts would think that this was perhaps a good way to go.

I do want to just clarify one point I think that the minister made, and that is that the revenue comes out of the so-called racing centres. What these really are, Mr. Chairman, are VLT centres established at racetracks at which the operators of the racetracks are allowed to keep a very much higher percentage of the VLT revenue for their purposes than is the normal take from a VLT anywhere else. So they've been set up specifically for the purpose of providing a VLT financial opportunity for the owners of racetracks in order to provide subsidies to them. In other uses of VLTs the money is used in a different fashion, and the revenues derived therefrom are used to support a wide range of government programs. So it's a very, very fine distinction that the government is making.

In actual fact what it is is a gambling subsidy to racetracks because they cannot generate enough money from betting on horses

to sustain the industry, and it is propping up an industry that's been made obsolete and been made obsolete largely because of the government's decision to get into electronic gambling in a large way. So I think the government may feel some guilt about it, and perhaps this guilt has been used to extract this policy. It's not other competing private businesses that have put the horse racing industry in trouble; it's the government getting into the gambling industry, seeing it as a golden goose to finance government operations and to finance tax cuts.

So with those comments, Mr. Chairman, I will take my seat and await with bated breath the vote on my amendment. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY CHAIR: Hon. members, the amendment before us will be referred to as amendment A1.

[Motion on amendment A1 lost]

THE DEPUTY CHAIR: On the bill as we have before us.

DR. NICOL: Just very briefly, Mr. Chairman, what we've got here is a bill that basically looks at what is in effect putting in place the organizational changes as requested by the industry. What we're dealing with subsequently is the whole bunch of issues that come up under the context of budget debate, lottery fund allocation, regulations associated with lotteries in terms of the issues that come out about the appropriate level of sharing of revenues from lottery, and of course the issue of how we deal with forgone revenue in the context of these different changes and the issues of letting an industry have a preferential rate of retention of revenues from the gambling licences that they hold in conjunction with these racing centres.

In the context of this bill it does provide the structure that is set up for the industry as they would like to see it, to get more people involved in the decision-making on the industry and to provide them with the broader scope that they can deal with. I guess, Mr. Chairman, when you look at it from the perspective of how to do it, what we end up with is a very significant, different structure here than what we have in a lot of the other agriculture enterprises. This is a very legislated, very rigid form of participation on the board. It's much less industry-driven than what we see in a lot of the other sectors, but I guess that ties into the fact that here we do have that interrelationship between the agriculture community, the horse racing community, and the gambling/wagering sector.

But if we look at it, you know, from the other perspectives of the rest of the ag community, they end up not having those kinds of same restraints because they're dealing with a commodity that doesn't have the social implications that are reflected here. So when we look at it from that perspective, I think that, you know, there are a lot of things that are wrong with the way the government is dealing with the allocation of dollars out of the lottery fund, setting the rates and that, but in the context of the structural change that's allowed by this bill, it does do what the industry wants, so we have to look at it from that perspective.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

[The clauses of Bill 16 agreed to]

[Title and preamble agreed to]

THE DEPUTY CHAIR: Shall the bill be reported? Are you agreed?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

THE DEPUTY CHAIR: Opposed? Carried.

Bill 20

Justice Statutes Amendment Act, 2002

THE DEPUTY CHAIR: Are there any comments, questions, or amendments to be offered with respect to this bill? The hon. minister.

MR. HANCOCK: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd like to offer just a few comments in response to comments that have been made earlier in debate both at second reading and committee just to clarify some items that have come up. It's been pointed out that under Bill 20 we're dealing with a number of different statutes, and in particular first I'd like to address the question of the Limitations Act and the Public Trustee Act amendments.

The amendments to the Limitations Act are in the nature of dealing with an issue that has come up, a potential challenge to the Limitations Act relative to the running of limitations periods against children. The Member for Edmonton-Centre, in addressing that in her debate, I think perhaps inadvertently confused what was being done here, and that's understandable because this is a fairly complex piece. The situation as it stands now is that there's a distinction between children who have guardians and children who don't have guardians: children who have guardians limitation periods run against, and children who don't have guardians limitation periods don't run against. The potential challenge that could be taken to that would be that we're discriminating against children by class. We don't of course wish to discriminate against anybody, so we want to make it so that the Limitations Act operates consistently with respect to children, regardless of whether they have a guardian or don't have a guardian in place. So that's the clear intention of the amendment here: to make sure that all children are treated the same with respect to limitation periods.

Having said that, then the question is: should a limitation period ever run against a child? So the next step is to put in place the mechanism by which in appropriate circumstances or at appropriate times somebody who ought to be sued by a child can move that process forward.

11:10

Then we come to the question of: how do you protect the child's interests? How do you make sure the child's interests are protected in that process? Thus the provisions relative to the Public Trustee Act, which says that if you wish to start a limitation period running where a child is involved, you have to give notice to the child's guardian, if there is one, and you have to also give notice to the public trustee. The public trustee is then put in a position where they must investigate to make sure that somebody is appropriately taking care of the situation and if necessary can apply to the courts for instruction.

If an adult, a parent is in place and is taking care of the child's interest, then the public trustee need have no further involvement. If the public trustee is concerned about whether the child's interest is being protected, then the public trustee can go to court, ask for instructions, ask for the opportunity to appoint a next friend or act on the child's behalf themselves or in some way ensure that the child's interest is protected and in appropriate circumstances can ask the court actually to ensure that the limitation period doesn't run against the child so that the limitation period wouldn't run until the child turned 18.

Those are the mechanisms that are in place. It's really a question of making sure that the law is constitutionally sound and can be defended, runs against all children regardless of distinction about whether they have a guardian or don't have a guardian, and puts in place a mechanism whereby the public trustee can ensure that a

child's interests are protected. When I read the debate and listened to the debate from the hon. member with respect to that, I thought that there was some confusion with respect to those items. I hope that that clarifies what the clear intent of those provisions are.

There were also comments made with respect to the Provincial Offences Procedure Act and in particular – and I heard these comments again with respect to the Solicitor General's estimates – the surcharge with respect to the victims of crime fund. What is implicit in the act and implicit in the budget but probably not expressly stated someplace is that the victims of crime fund actually benefits from the changes, not from the changes in POPA. The Provincial Offences Procedure Act allows us to keep 20 percent of the funds coming in from ticket revenue for the operations of the process. In order to do that, however, under the budget the actual fines were raised by 20 percent. The fined amount is 20 percent higher than it was before so that municipalities still get just about the same revenue. It doesn't quite work, but it's close to the same revenue as they got before.

However, the corollary of that is that the 7 percent surcharge goes on top of the fine revenue, so the 7 percent surcharge to the victims of crime fund has also gone up by 20 percent. The victims of crime fund actually benefits, although I don't think that that's been explicitly stated anywhere. So I thought I'd take the opportunity to clear up that particular issue.

I won't dwell on the issue of the Fatal Accidents Act and the Survival of Actions Act, because I think that's been presented ably by Edmonton-Calder earlier in discussion. I appreciate the support that has been given by Edmonton-Centre with respect to what's happening there. It's not an easy issue for many people, but it's important that we do the right thing with respect to the issue. Now, that's what we have attempted to try and accomplish: to ensure that families of victims of wrongful death have an opportunity to be fairly compensated but that the problem that was created with respect to the Survival of Actions Act is corrected so that we're consistent with other jurisdictions. As I say, I won't dwell further on that, but I did want to take the opportunity to clear up those two other items.

MS CARLSON: Point of order.

THE DEPUTY CHAIR: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Ellerslie, on a point of order.

Point of Order Approval of Amendments

MS CARLSON: Mr. Chairman, under Standing Order 74, do government amendments not have to be stamped by Parliamentary Counsel for approval? Mine's not. Amendment to Bill 20, government amendment, amends section, A, 2(2)(b).

THE DEPUTY CHAIR: Hon. member, I have been advised that . . .

MS CARLSON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I see it now. It's very tiny, up in the corner.

Thank you.

THE DEPUTY CHAIR: Okay. Thank you.

Hon. members, the amendment that has been referred to hasn't been moved. Okay. So the hon. Minister of Justice and Attorney General has not moved an amendment as yet to which a clarification was sought.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Centre on the bill.

Debate Continued

MS BLAKEMAN: Okay. This is part 3 of responding to everything

that's been brought forward in this omnibus bill, Bill 20, the Justice Statutes Amendment Act, 2002. With the changes in the Standing Orders we no longer are allowed the half hour in second reading to speak to omnibus bills changing more than three statutes, so I've had to come at this in three different parts, one in second reading and two in Committee of the Whole. This is my third go at it, and the only part that I haven't spoken to now is the civil enforcement section.

Just before I go into that, I will thank the minister for the clarification on the Public Trustee Act and the Limitations Act, sections that I had spoken to earlier. My concern there is obviously that we not be inadvertently creating a situation where minors can be pressured or squeezed to get involved in an action when they don't want to and that they should be fully supported in allowing the clock to not start running until they reach the age of majority. So I'm glad that I did bring that up. I may well have misunderstood, but I'm glad I did it so that we get the clarification on the record.

The second issue the minister brought up has totally slipped my mind. Oh, the fines. Actually that's very good news, and once again I'm glad I brought it up because now I have the minister on the record with it. If that's in fact going to give us a slight nominal increase in the fines that are going to the victim's surcharge, that's fine by me. It probably should have been more clearly set out in either the minister's remarks or in the legislation itself, but nice to have that clarified.

The last part but by far probably taking up the most room in Bill 20 is the changes that are being proposed to the Civil Enforcement Act. I understand that these changes have been recommended as the result of a review process that is coming forward from people working in the area who are saying that these are deficiencies or these need to be updated or changed so that the process works more smoothly. I appreciate that, but at the same time I'm reluctant to let this go without any commentary at all, because in fact in many ways the changes to the Civil Enforcement Act are more likely to touch Albertans' lives than some of the other changes that are being contemplated here.

For example, the Public Trustee Act with regard to minors and the Limitations Act aren't going to come up that often in people's lives, but the chances that you're involved one way or another in the Civil Enforcement Act are much higher. A full third of the bill deals with changes to the Civil Enforcement Act. So when we say, "Well, who will be affected by this?" really it's all creditors who will be subject to the act, and that's virtually every business in Alberta, since most of them at one time or another are trying to recover funds that are owed to them. Then the rest of us as consumers are also affected by this, because I think we have an interest in ensuring that whatever process is in place to recover funds is fair and provides an adequate opportunity for debtors to discharge a debt before things get out of control and property is seized or other steps are taken that can be difficult to recover from.

So the Civil Enforcement Act does deal with a mechanism to recover money or in some cases objects to which an individual is legally entitled. This would usually happen in one of two ways. One, you get a money judgment from the court, you register that judgment, and you attempt to collect on that judgment. The second way would be that certain kinds of contracts carry with them the ability inside the contract to allow the creditor to seize under what's known as a power of distress. The difference there is that you wouldn't have to first sue to get the court judgment; you rely on the contract.

The sections that are being amended deal with these processes for sorting out priorities and who gets first claim and second claim, competing complainants in other words. It's also, I'm sure, the experience of many that when there's somebody in trouble, a

business or a person in trouble, there's going to likely be more than one person looking to collect a debt from them, so there has to be a way of determining who's first in line, who's second, et cetera, just kind of working out all the ground rules for everybody to follow. So I'm not going to go through each and every section that's being talked about here, but I want to touch on some of the ones that I think need to be highlighted just so people are aware of what's being contemplated here.

11:20

When we look at the existing section 9, it enables certain civil enforcement agencies to contract to the sheriff's office, acting on behalf of the Crown, to carry out certain things done traditionally by the public office. Now, this is an area that the Liberal opposition has expressed concerns about in the past. The concern is that if there isn't pretty strong oversight by the Crown, it can lead to activities like we sometimes see with our neighbours to the south. I remember that when I was younger, there was a very popular movie called *Repo Man*, and that's the kind of activity that you can get involved with, where private civil enforcement agencies may not be as fair to debtors as we would like to see them be or they decide to cut corners in order to accommodate large commercial creditors that are indeed paying them. So we need to be on guard about that one, and I'm going to put our concern on the record again.

The specific section that's being amended, section 9(6), deals with those assets described as serial number goods. That's the larger, more expensive movable items that have a serial number on them, and this amendment would allow a larger number of firms to seize assets that tend to be the more valuable of the movable assets. So under section 9(6) anyone could effect seizure, but the seized goods could not be removed from the debtor's shop, home, or other place except by a duly authorized civil enforcement agency. That would mean that someone can attach a notice of seizure to a car, but they would have no power to physically remove it, to tow it away, without the intervention of a civil enforcement agency. To delete this section makes it appear that only the civil enforcement agency has the power to seize. In other words, the extraordinary power to seize is going to be retained by a small number of agencies that can presumably be more closely monitored and held accountable.

Section 13(2) deals with the entry of a bailiff into a residence or a business to seize property. Now, we have to note here that section 8 of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms guarantees every Albertan the right to be secure against unreasonable search or seizure, and this affirms the traditional sanctity of a citizen's own dwelling. The amendment deals with two situations: where the premises being entered belong to a debtor and where the premises being entered belong to a third party. Essentially, if the premises are residential premises or if they belong to a third party, the bailiff can enter only if an adult is present, the person that has the ability to say: yes, you can come in. They have to consent to that. There's also provision for obtaining a specific court order to enter the residence of either the debtor or the premises of a third party, and under this amendment the bailiff may use reasonable force to gain access; in other words, forcing a lock or something like that. Without consent, then the court order is required to do this. The major difference is the requirement that an adult be present before entry into residential premises can be forced. I think this is a positive move, and it's very clear in here.

There is a minor change in section 15. It sets out a number of offences, but it's also amended by the addition of a limitation period, so the prosecution under section 15 will have to commence within 12 months after the alleged offence has been committed. I think that given the extraordinary powers that civil enforcement agencies are

given, it has to be argued that the period should be extended perhaps to even longer than that, because otherwise the people that may be complaining are financially strapped and are unlikely to get legal advice right away or at all. These may not be sophisticated people, and an early limitation would prejudice them.

The next section I want to have a look at is section 88, and that is dealing with exemptions. It usually would be particularly important because it's as a result of the 1930s, when there was too little protection available for families and a lot of folks lost all of their assets to the banks. The amendments recognize that in law "property" means a bundle of different rights that accrue to an owner. In recognition that a debtor may have an interest in something – it may fall short of outright ownership – the amendment addresses the interests of the enforcement debtor.

Under 88(f) the exemption is of particular importance to Alberta farm families because the former exemption required that the debtor be a bona fide farmer whose principal occupation is farming. That places a very strict, too narrow definition on what's happening today, where you may have people working off the farm or making more money working off the farm but in fact they still are a farmer and should be considered that, and we don't want those people to lose definitions here. So the bona fide farmer qualification has been deleted, replacing "principal occupation" with "primary occupation." It may be of questionable value, but nothing else has been changed there.

Section 88(g) is dealing with exemptions for a residence and provides an exemption of \$40,000. That seems pretty low given today's house prices, and this value of \$40,000 hasn't changed.

Finally, section 99(3) is amended by deleting the provision giving a priority to harvesting or marketing costs incurred in a case where this is funds from the sale of a crop. I guess it's interesting to me why this priority would be disappearing. Do we not have farmers that have debt and creditor problems that would be using the value of their crops? Can crops no longer be seized or cultivated and sold to pay debts? I don't think that's the case, so that's of some concern and I wanted that highlighted.

I understand the impetus behind these amendments to the Civil Enforcement Act, but I didn't want to let them go by without comment. I think it's important to have it discussed in the *Hansard* and available for others to read to understand exactly what's being proposed here. Other than the objections that I've raised, I don't have any particular problems with it.

Once again we have a bill that is amending a number of statutes: Civil Enforcement Act, Fatal Accidents Act, Interpretation Act, Limitations Act, Motor Vehicle Accident Claims Act, Provincial Offences Procedure Act, Public Trustee Act, and Survival of Actions Act.

Just as a recap I think that in the Fatal Accidents Act the changes are substantive but positive. Interpretation Act: they're positive and relatively minor. Limitations Act: I still have some concerns. Motor Vehicle Accident Claims: I think they're positive and probably remedial. The Provincial Offences Procedure Act: my concerns there have been answered because in fact it does uphold the commitment that was made to victims in 1996 with the Victims of Crime Act. My concerns around the Public Trustee Act have also been answered, but I'm glad we got a chance to air that as well. The Survival of Actions Act: I think the right choices have been made there, and I'm willing to support it.

11:30

So I understand that there's an amendment coming from the government. I'll make way for the debate on that, and then I'll

return with an amendment of my own. So given the hour, I will make way for the beginning of the amendments.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

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

MR. RATHGEBER: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I am pleased that the hon. Member for Edmonton-Centre supports the vast majority of the substantive changes and substantive contents as contained in Bill 20, Justice Statutes Amendment Act, 2002.

It is my intent to pose an amendment to Bill 20. I've caused an amendment to be circulated to the members of this House, Mr. Chairman, and specifically I move that Bill 20 be amended as follows. Section 2(2)(b) is amended by striking out the proposed clause (b)(ii) and substituting the following: "(ii) was not a minor but was unmarried and was not living with a cohabitant." Section 2(2)(c) is amended by striking out the proposed clause (c)(ii) and substituting the following: "(ii) is not a minor but is unmarried and is not living with a cohabitant."

Mr. Chairman, essentially the purpose of this proposed amendment is to remove the residency requirement for an individual to claim grief compensation under the Fatal Accidents Act. We've previously discussed the provisions of Bill 20 that propose to amend the Survival of Actions Act and the Fatal Accidents Act. Presently through the Survival of Actions Act the estate of a person fatally injured by another's negligent or intentional act can sue the wrongdoer for damages including future loss of earnings. This interpretation of this act was confirmed by our Alberta Court of Appeal in the often-cited case of Duncan estate as against Baddeley. However, as the Law Reform Institute has correctly pointed out, this created an artificial situation whereby the estate of a child killed by a reckless motorist could recover compensation approaching a half-million dollars from that motorist's insurer, said proceeds to go to the child's parents. Our law reform commission was of the view that the Survival of Actions Act compensation in such a circumstance would be somewhat of a windfall for the parents, who would not have reasonably expected an inheritance from their child but for that child's untimely death. Accordingly, the Law Reform Institute recommended that future loss of earning claims be abolished under the Survival of Actions Act.

It should be pointed out, however, that the Law Reform Institute recognized in their report that it might be gravely unjust to simply abolish future earnings loss claims under the Survival of Actions Act without expanding the scope and compensation available under the Fatal Accidents Act. Under the Fatal Accidents Act spouses or cohabitants are entitled to a \$43,000 bereavement award should their spouse or significant other be wrongfully and fatally injured. As well, minors and unmarried 18- to 26-year-olds not living with a cohabitant currently receive \$27,000 in grief compensation if their parent dies. Similarly, under the current law and before Bill 20 parents receive \$43,000 in grief compensation should one of their minor children or, for that matter, an unmarried 18- to 26-year-old child not living with a cohabitant die, such death being caused by the wrongful act of another.

Mr. Chairman, under Bill 20 the age limit is removed. This was a move that was precipitated by the courts finding age discrimination under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. However, Bill 20 as introduced has a residency restriction which was imposed so that parents would only be compensated for the deaths of their minor children or unmarried adult children living with them and not with a cohabitant and, likewise, so that only minor children or unmarried adult children living with their parents and not with a cohabitant would be compensated for the wrongful death of that parent. The

awards, as we have seen, have been increased to \$75,000 and \$45,000 respectively. Mr. Chairman, the amendment that I am proposing removes the residency requirement to bring Bill 20 more in line with the existing scope of the Fatal Accidents Act.

Now, I appreciate that the insurance industry is not in favour of this amendment and has undertaken a considerable lobby effort in that regard, but I say that every life has intrinsic value and that every person, regardless of their age, who is wrongfully and fatally injured has someone who will grieve for him or her. By way of illustration, if I could cite an example of a set of twins who live in rural Alberta and are 19 years of age. The twins move to Edmonton, and one of them enrolls in the University of Alberta and moves into university residence. The other one decides to enter the workforce and gets a job and an apartment.

AN HON. MEMBER: I've heard this story before.

MR. RATHGEBER: But it's a good story.

Now, under Bill 20 as it's currently stated, if these twins are returning home for the weekend and are fatally injured in a head-on collision caused by someone else's negligence, their parents would have a grief claim for the child who is living in university residence because she is still considered to be a resident of home but not for her twin sister, who has entered the workforce and is living in a private apartment. Mr. Chairman, I submit to you that that is inconsistent, that it is inequitable, and that it is simply wrong. By removing the residency requirement, Bill 20 becomes a fairer bill and represents that all lives have intrinsic value and that everybody has somebody who will grieve for them if they are fatally injured by someone else's negligence.

With that, I encourage all members to support this bill and the amendment to Bill 20 as proposed. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

THE DEPUTY CHAIR: Hon. members, we shall refer to this amendment as amendment A1. Are you ready for the question on the amendment?

HON. MEMBERS: Question.

[Motion on amendment A1 carried]

THE DEPUTY CHAIR: Are you ready for the question on the bill?
The hon. Member for Edmonton-Centre.

MS BLAKEMAN: Thanks very much, Mr. Chairman. I would also like to propose an amendment. I will get it distributed. There's a copy of the amendment at the table already. Would you like me to pause and wait while it's distributed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: No.

MS BLAKEMAN: My goodness, Mr. Chairman. There's such enthusiasm for this.

THE DEPUTY CHAIR: Hon. members, we shall refer to this amendment, that is being circulated, as amendment A2.

Hon. Member for Edmonton-Centre, you may proceed.

MS BLAKEMAN: Thanks. For those of you that are following along, this is on page 15 of your bill. This amendment is proposing that section 2(3) of the bill, which is amending section 9(1), be amended by striking out the date "September 1, 1994" and substituting "June 1, 2002". This section is intended to deal with an

automatic review of the level of damages that are set out elsewhere, that the review should happen every five years. The way the changes have resulted in the amending act brought forward by the government is that this would happen upon proclamation, which doesn't give us a set date to go from, and it's much harder for people to find out what that proclamation date was exactly. So just for ease of when the review would come up, I'm suggesting in fact that we put a specific date in place, and that date would be June 1, 2002. That would tell us, then, that the next review would be due five years down the road, June 1, 2007. So it's just for clarity and ease of people in understanding when they could be expecting the next review of these damage amounts to take place.

11:40

I did supply this amendment some two weeks ago to the Minister of Justice, and I'm assuming that there's been an opportunity, then, for the government caucus to have a look at this amendment. So I'm expecting to either hear from someone or have overwhelming support for it. I think the amendment is pretty simple and straightforward and clear and easy to understand. However, if there are any questions, I'd be happy to answer them.

I do now move this amendment. Thank you very much.

THE DEPUTY CHAIR: The hon. minister.

MR. HANCOCK: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd like to just briefly indicate that the hon. member provided me with a copy of this amendment some time ago, and I had the opportunity to look at it. I certainly concur that it makes it clearer on the face of the statute as amended when the review period runs, and for that reason it doesn't change the import of the section but really just makes it clearer for somebody looking at it. So I would encourage members to support the amendment.

[Motion on amendment A2 carried]

[The clauses of Bill 20 as amended agreed to]

[Title and preamble agreed to]

THE DEPUTY CHAIR: Shall the bill be reported? Are you agreed?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

THE DEPUTY CHAIR: Opposed? Carried.

The hon. Government House Leader.

MR. HANCOCK: Yes. Mr. Chairman, I would move that the committee rise and report bills 16, 19, and 20.

[Motion carried]

[Mr. Shariff in the chair]

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Speaker, the Committee of the Whole has had under consideration certain bills. The committee reports the following: Bill 16. The committee reports the following with some amendments: Bill 19 and Bill 20. I wish to table copies of all amendments considered by the Committee of the Whole on this date for the official records of the Assembly.

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

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

THE ACTING SPEAKER: Opposed? So ordered.

The hon. Government House Leader.

MR. HANCOCK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that we adjourn until 1:30 p.m. tomorrow.

[Motion carried; at 11:44 p.m. the Assembly adjourned to Wednesday at 1:30 p.m.]