

Legislative Assembly of Alberta

Title: **Tuesday, March 30, 2004** **8:00 p.m.**
 Date: 2004/03/30
 head: **Committee of Supply**
 [Mr. Tannas in the chair]

The Chair: Good evening. I'd like to call the Committee of Supply to order.

head: **Main Estimates 2004-05**
Community Development

The Chair: Are there any comments or other to be offered with respect to these estimates? The hon. Minister of Community Development.

Mr. Zwodzesky: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, indeed, there are many comments to make, and I'll do my best to get them all done within the brief time allotted.

Before I begin, however, I'd sure like members here to help me welcome and thank some of the staff who are here in support of Community Development initiatives. Beginning with Deputy Minister Bill Byrne; our assistant deputy ministers, Rai Batra, John Kristensen, Mark Rasmussen, Hugh Tadman, and missing in action tonight due to illness, David Steeves; Terry Keyko, our executive director from the Alberta centennial office; Pam Arnston, who works in the budget area; and from the PDD sector, Jim Menzies and Garry Donald. Would you all please rise. Please welcome these hard-working staff members.

Mr. Chairman, it's a pleasure to be here to present the three-year business plan and the budget estimates for 2004-2005 for the Ministry of Community Development. Since I will be delivering some of it in French, I have provided translations to your table and would ask that these translations now be distributed to all members. For purposes of official tabling, here are five copies for the pages.

Mr. Chairman, the mandate of Community Development is very diverse, and it would take a great deal of time, indeed, to cover all the exciting work that we do in support of pillar 4 of Today's Advantage, Tomorrow's Promise: Alberta's Vision for the Future, which is making Alberta the best place to live, work, and visit. The full picture of my ministry's three-year business plan is found on pages 135 through 147 of Budget 2004. Here, then, are just some of the budget highlights.

To begin with, our operating budget for 2004-05 will be \$691 million. This reflects an increase of 7.8 per cent, or about \$50 million, from the '03-04 forecast. The '04-05 budget also includes an increase of \$25 million, or 5.7 per cent, for PDD, our persons with developmental disabilities program, which means our budget for PDD will rise from \$443 million to \$468 million. This \$25 million increase will help us to accommodate the growth in the number of PDD recipients and other cost-related increases.

Furthermore, an increase of \$5 million to our capital investment budget is seen, which brings the total to \$7.3 million for '04-05 in that area. This \$5 million increase for this year is part of the additional \$21 million over three years and is primarily for upgrading water and sewage treatment systems in Alberta's provincial parks.

We have a one-time allocation, an increase if you like, of \$800,000 for public libraries, which will be used primarily toward the purchase of computer hardware and software to connect libraries to the SuperNet.

There is a \$1 million increase for our Alberta film development program, which will bring the total funding up to \$11 million annually for Alberta's creative film and video community.

I would also like to add that our plan includes an additional \$30 million over two fiscal years, '04 through '06, for Alberta's 2005 centennial. These funds are over and above the \$12.5 million budgeted for '04-05 in Alberta Infrastructure for the centennial legacy grant program, which reflects funds previously committed to community projects. I will announce more details on centennial related funding very soon.

So here are some of the details of the budget. I'll begin with PDD. A breakdown of the funding for the PDD Provincial Board and for the six regional boards can be found on pages 90 to 96 of the 2004-05 government and lottery fund estimates book. Our PDD system helps develop and maintain and ensures the delivery of quality programs and services for about 8,700 adult Albertans who live with a developmental disability. We try to ensure that PDD recipients have the opportunity to participate in the social, economic, cultural, and community life of our province to the largest extent possible, and I believe and I am proud that we are succeeding in that objective.

With respect to disability issues in general members will recall that in this year's throne speech we announced that an office for disability issues has been created for government and other service providers to take a more inclusive and collaborative approach to disability issues, needs, and services. The office for disability issues will also assist government in responding to the recommendations contained in the Alberta disability strategy, which was authored by the Premier's Council on the Status of Persons with Disabilities. We need better co-ordination of disability-related matters, and the office for disability issues will have that as one of its main objectives. We have the budget to establish this new office, so no additional financial implications are involved.

Turning to the area of parks, as announced by our Premier last month, an additional \$21 million will go towards ensuring that Albertans have access to safe, quality recreation opportunities and facilities in Alberta's parks and protected areas. Of this \$21 million in new funding \$16 million over three years will go toward necessary repairs and upgrades to drinking water and sewer systems at several provincial parks. A safe drinking water supply is particularly important to our parks, and this new funding will bring water systems and water wells up to current provincial standards. This, by the way, is also in a general way part of our government's Alberta water for life strategy.

The remaining \$5 million will be allocated over three years to address other safety hazards such as repairs to boat and marina docks and boardwalks. Our parks staff have developed an implementation plan, and we will begin repairs and upgrades at at least 26 sites in '04-05. We will also address the condition of our facilities, including items such as new picnic tables, repainting buildings, refurbishing, and improving whatever we can wherever we can to enhance the visitor experience in our Alberta parks.

Beginning in the 2004-05 year, some new fees will be implemented to partially offset the ever-increasing costs of providing educational programs, groomed cross-country ski trails, and bus and auto tours in provincial parks and protected areas. But I want to stress, Mr. Chair, that all the revenues collected through this new fee structure will go directly back into those same program areas and associated facilities.

Secondly, these fees are being implemented based on feedback from our stakeholders and visitors to our parks, who indicated a willingness to pay a cost recovery fee provided that those same fees got redirected back towards the cost of providing those particular

programs. These fees, then, are compatible and comparable with public-sector and nonprofit organizations who offer similar services.

With respect to our interpretive and environmental education programs, including bus and auto tours, these programs enhance visitor experiences and help everyone to better understand and appreciate our natural environment. Guided interpretive services are offered at 11 flagship parks across the province. Revenues from the user fees will help to ensure that these important programs remain available and will enable us to meet the requests for increased services such as community outreach or science camps particularly in rural communities. Many services provided in our parks such as amphitheatre and children's programs and so on will continue to be offered free of charge.

Regarding fees for specifically groomed cross-country ski trails in Kananaskis Country, such fees will only be applicable on groomed trails in the Evan-Thomas provincial recreation area and Peter Lougheed and Spray Valley provincial parks. Visitors will continue to ski for free in all other areas of Kananaskis country, including groomed trails in Sheep River provincial park and West Bragg Creek provincial recreation area. We will continue to have free day-use access to provincial parks and protected areas, including access to hiking trails, picnic areas, beaches, boat launches, and playgrounds.

I would now like to turn to libraries. The \$800,000 in new funding in '04-05 will be allocated to public libraries towards SuperNet access, as I indicated. Over the next three years Alberta's 309 public library service points will be connected to the SuperNet, giving Albertans throughout the province access to a wide range of information, programs, and services online, including improved access to learning opportunities, government information, health information, research materials, and so on.

The total cost of connecting all of Alberta's libraries to the SuperNet is \$1.3 million, of which we provided \$500,000 earlier for the research, readiness work, and equipment installation. Our next step, quite clearly, is going to be to assist libraries with ongoing monthly connection charges, and I'm working on that now.

Turning to our Alberta film development program, I'm proud to report some very impressive numbers for the '03-04 year. For example, our support for this growing sector, \$10.3 million, resulted in \$83.8 million worth of film productions by Albertans in Alberta. This program produced 3,648 employment opportunities for Albertans, and the film productions used 407 Albertans in key creative positions, such as directors, writers, composers, and so on.

8:10

I would now like to address the Alberta 2005 centennial. Our Alberta centennial 2005 program is guided by the following principles. The primary focus is on people and legacies. Provincially funded centennial activities address both community and government priorities and goals. Overall costs reflect the importance of our centennial while simultaneously recognizing the government's policy of fiscal responsibility. Program costs are shared among participants, beneficiaries, and other levels of government. We seek a balance of funding between local and provincial activities. Finally, municipalities, organizations, and communities are encouraged to plan and implement their own activities. Our centennial funding announcements are very consistent with those principles.

Mr. Chairman, from a provincial government perspective we opened a brand new, state-of-the-art Provincial Archives here in Edmonton, and we are now working on the renewal of our Provincial Museum and also on the complete rejuvenation of our two Jubilee auditoria, which will begin this year. Planning for our provincial park interpretive centres is also now underway.

Through phase 1 of our centennial legacy grant program we

distributed approximately \$56 million to 24 community-based projects across the province. Through phase 2 I also announced that 35 community-based projects were awarded \$25 million. Now, in the budget before us tonight we have an additional \$30 million allocated over two fiscal years for our centennial. This will include \$26 million for community organizations and municipalities to share and \$4 million for recognition, awareness, and celebratory activities regarding our centennial year including, for example, our Alberta official song, an anticipated royal visit, and numerous other plans. Please note that funding for provincial government capital projects for the centennial is found in the budget of Alberta Infrastructure.

Now I would like to review the funding we received, with thanks, from the Alberta lottery fund. Community Development's '04-05 budget includes a \$13.7 million increase in funding, which can be found on page 172 of the estimates. Total funding for the ministry from the Alberta lottery fund will be \$85.8 million this fiscal year. Lottery funding supports provincial, regional, and community-based organizations and individuals through five lottery funded agencies.

First, the Alberta Foundation for the Arts will receive an increase of \$1 million, for a total budget commitment of \$30 million from the Alberta lottery fund for '04-05, plus a further \$600,000 from other revenue sources. The \$1 million increase will of course go the Alberta film development program's budget, which I mentioned a bit earlier.

Secondly, \$17.7 million will go to the Alberta Sport, Recreation, Parks & Wildlife Foundation in '04-05, which is the same amount as last year. Additional revenues for this foundation are \$2.4 million, for a total budget in '04-05 of \$20.1 million. Additional revenues include an increase of \$500,000 related to anticipated funding from Sport Canada for the sport participation initiative under provincial programs.

Thirdly, the Wild Rose Foundation will receive \$7.8 million, which is the same amount as last year, from the Alberta lottery fund. That along with about \$700,000 of other revenue brings the WRF Foundation total budget to \$8.5 million. This foundation, as we all know, exists to promote and assist volunteerism and to strengthen the relationship among the voluntary sector leaders and government.

Fourthly, the Alberta Historical Resources Foundation will again receive \$6.9 million this coming year from the Alberta lottery fund. Together with \$200,000 of additional revenue the total budget for this foundation in '04-05 will be \$7.1 million. This foundation supports community-based heritage initiatives, including historical building restoration, research and publications, educational projects, historical markers, and area conservation through the main street program.

Fifthly, \$1.3 million of Alberta lottery funds will go to the human rights, citizenship, and multiculturalism education fund. This fund receives \$200,000 in other funding, for a total budget of \$1.5 million. Project funding is provided to organizations that foster equality and promote fairness and access to help Albertans participate in the social, cultural, and economic life of our province. One example of an educational initiative undertaken last year is the Help Make a Difference campaign, which was developed and broadcast as a series of ads on Global Television. It specifically encouraged Albertans to take action to help build a fair and respectful society.

By the way, while I'm on the topic of human rights, I should also point out, Mr. Chairman, that the total operating expense for the human rights and citizenship branch in '04-05 not including the multiculturalism education fund will be \$3.8 million. This is an increase of \$364,000 over the forecasted expenditures from '03-04. These additional dollars will fund three additional human rights officer positions as well as increases in salaries. That means that we will be able I hope to more swiftly address human rights issues and

complaints as well as see a reduction in the number of backlogged cases as a result of this increased funding.

The human rights and citizenship branch is also responsible for women's issues; however, it should be noted that specific programs, shelters, services, and legislation of particular benefit to women are found in a number of other provincial departments. Nonetheless, as the minister responsible I do attend the FPT meetings of ministers responsible for the status of women, and I was very pleased to host that group at its annual meeting last fall in Edmonton. One of the important results of that meeting was the release of *Workplaces That Work*, a report that discusses women's roles in meeting Canada's critical shortage of skilled workers and shows how both employees and employers can benefit from open and inclusive workplaces.

Before I conclude this section, I also want to mention that Community Development receives and distributes Alberta lottery funding for specific, one-time projects. For example, \$1.3 million in '04-05 will go toward hosting the 2005 World Masters Games in Edmonton. This is a spectacular centennial year event, drawing upwards of 20,000 athletes aged 25 to 100 from Canada and throughout the world. As well, \$500,000 will be provided to Strathcona county in 2004-05 for the operation of the 2007 Western Canada Summer Games in Strathcona county. One other example, quickly, Mr. Chair, is the city of Edmonton's centennial project for 2004, which is scheduled to receive \$1 million in 2004-05 as part of a three-year \$4.2 million commitment from our government.

Le Secrétariat Francophone recevra \$250,000 en projets spéciaux du ministère du Patrimoine Canadien du gouvernement fédéral pour appuyer deux projets de centre communautaire dans la communauté francophone. Un projet de \$125,000 est pour aider la Cité Francophone d'Edmonton dans la préparation des plans pour le développement de sa phase 2. L'autre projet, aussi de \$125,000, est pour l'établissement d'un centre communautaire à Falher pour servir les besoins de la communauté francophone de la région de la Rivière-la-Paix. Comme contrepartie à ces contributions fédérales les deux projets cherchent à obtenir des contributions équivalentes de notre CFEP.

[Translation] The Francophone Secretariat will receive \$250,000 for special projects from the federal government's Canadian Heritage ministry to support two community centre projects in the francophone community. A \$125,000 project is intended to assist La Cité Francophone d'Edmonton, Edmonton Francophone Community Centre, with the planning of its phase 2. A second project for \$125,000 is intended to assist with the establishment of a community centre in Falher to serve the needs of the francophone community of the Peace River region. To match these federal contributions, both projects are applying for contributions from CFEP, community facility enhancement program. [As submitted]

Mr. Chairman, I had some comments with respect to key changes to our business plan which time will not permit me to go into in any detail. Suffice it to say that our new vision statement is now this: "A superior quality of life reflecting fair, inclusive, and active communities engaged in valuing Alberta's cultural, historical, and natural heritage."

Finally, Mr. Chair, may I just quickly add that this revised format and content of the business plan came about as the result of a lot of hard work of the people in the gallery and individuals with whom they work. Regarding our performance measures, I should add now in conclusion that we have 15 performance measures, all of which are set to gauge our results.

Finally, in closing, I hope that everyone will agree that we have a very solid and concise business plan and budget estimates before us, and it's one of which I, frankly, feel very, very proud.

This concludes my formal remarks, and I'd be pleased to entertain

any questions. I'll answer as many of them as time will allow, and others I will respond to in writing as soon as possible. I would please ask members to provide a page number first if possible and then the line number or element number before asking their question.

On that, Mr. Chairman, I will just remind everyone that the most exciting musical event in our province's history and one which we feel so proud to be the first western Canadian prairie province to host are the Junos, and those are coming up on the weekend, April 2, 3, and 4, but they really all started yesterday. There's a great buzz in the arts community, and I think that as a result of that we will see just extremely clearly how much value our citizens in this province place on the arts and how that is matched by the enthusiasm of our government as well.

We have many areas to address, and I'll sit now and take questions from members who may have them for me. Please give us a page number to start.

Thank you.

8:20

The Chair: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Centre.

Ms Blakeman: Thank you very much. That was a pretty good overview from the minister. He's actually answered some of the questions that I had written. Thank you very much. I will join him in noting the hard work of his staff who have joined us in the gallery.

I'm looking at page 21 of the fiscal plan, but it appears in several other places, which is the breakdown of the centennial legacy money. Now, I wrote as fast as I could. I'm trying to read this properly, so I'll have the minister explain the whole thing for the record. At the bottom of page 21 it's got:

providing \$225 million for centennial projects, primarily to construct and upgrade community, historic and cultural facilities.

\$109 million has been provided over the last four years to start planning and construction. The remaining \$116 million will be allocated primarily in 2004-05 and 2005-06.

Then it talks about "a total of \$113 million to assist municipalities and not-for-profit groups." Am I correct then, Mr. Minister, that the Provincial Archives, the Provincial Museum, the Jubilee auditoria, and the park interpretive centres are all coming out of the \$225 million for centennial projects? Does that \$225 million also include the 24 community projects in phase 1 that you mentioned in your opening remarks and the 35 community projects in phase 2?

Then you've got \$30 million over two fiscal years, \$26 million to community organizations to share and \$4 million for recognitions. Does this \$30 million over two years fit into the \$113 million total that is listed as being "to assist municipalities and not-for-profit groups"?

It gets a little confusing, Minister, when you're giving us figures that are for this year, and then you're talking about \$30 million over two years, and then there's \$109 million that's already been spent, and \$225 million. The figures just flow, but I'm trying to allocate them to the proper years and the proper projects.

While I'm at it, I believe I have the original list of the 24 community projects. Could I please get the list of the 35 projects in phase 2 and the projects that are being paid for out of any additional funds that are coming there?

Part of my concern, Mr. Minister, is that I've heard a number of announcements that have been made, and it strikes me that what I would have considered projects that are regular infrastructure, regularly scheduled or planned upgrades, and regular maintenance are in fact being paid for as a centennial project and called a centennial project. That's what I was hearing because I was hearing the minister talk about these centennial projects and the legacy projects so often, and it seemed that every project that came up was being included under that.

So I just want to get a very clear idea of exactly what is being considered a centennial project and whether we're, you know, regravelling a road somewhere and calling that a centennial project. That's what it was starting to sound like. I'm sure that's not the case, but I'd like to have the list, please. I know you try to do it, but let me get you on the record on that one.

Okay. Now, going to the government and lottery fund estimates, I just have a series of questions that have come up as I've gone through. Starting on page 74, it appears that the library operating grants – that would be vote 2.2.2 – have gone down from \$19,542,000 to \$18,734,000. Could you tell me whether that's true, what I'm seeing, because that's sure what it looks like on the books. In the comparable 2003-2004 forecast it shows as \$19.5 million; under '04-05 it shows as \$18.7 million. If money has been moved around or things are being paid for from another area, could we please get an explanation of that.

The other one that's going to come up – I'm going to get asked this, so I might as well get it on the record with the minister – is an increase from \$5.8 million last year to \$7 million this year, vote 2.2.4, Alberta NHL teams initiative. Now, this is the flow-through money from that lottery ticket on the NHL teams, one for the Flames and one for the Oilers, \$5 tickets, and they were increased to \$10 tickets. Could I get an update on that program from the minister, please. What is the current price of the ticket?

An Hon. Member: What page is that?

Ms Blakeman: That's page 74. Just an update on what's happening with that NHL teams initiative for the Flames and the Oilers. It is looking to go up by \$1.2 million or so. I'm assuming that that's just expected better profit from the game, but could I get it on the record, please? Also, an update on the ticket prices and any other changes in that program.

I had my original question here under vote 2.2.5, assistance to the Alberta Foundation for the Arts, going from \$29.034 million to \$30.034 million. That's a million dollars. I was asking if that was all going to the film fund, and the minister said that three times, so I don't have to get him on the record again on that one.

A small increase, about \$400,000, on human rights and citizenship on page 75. Could the minister expand, please. I'm looking for some statistics on the activity in the human rights and citizenship area with the board. What was the number of new cases that were accepted? Of course, not all cases that come to the Human Rights Commission are accepted. So what was the number of new cases that were opened last year? What's the expected number of cases that are going to be opened in this year of '04-05? How many of those were satisfactorily closed? How many of them are still pending? How many have gone forward to the Human Rights Commission, to the board, for a decision?

There has at different points been a backlog in this area. The minister referred to it. I'm just wondering if he can expand on that, please. What is the current backlog? How long are things backed up? If he can just give us some additional information on that.

Program 5 on page 77, the cultural facilities and historical resources. Could the minister just put on the record the explanation of the credit or recovery amounts that appear in that column under several areas. I'm pretty sure that this will be the friends-of groups. Page 77, vote 5.1.2, Provincial Museum of Alberta is showing a \$290,000 credit or recovery; last year it showed \$100,000 in the same column. The historic sites and cultural facilities is showing \$405,000; last year it showed \$1,378,000. Provincial Archives of Alberta: \$305,000 this year; last year \$25,000. Heritage resource

management: this year \$739,000; last year \$755,000. If I could just get an explanation for what that money is. Those are the specifics.

8:30

Now, under more general questions, on page 139 of the business plan: "connecting Alberta libraries to the SuperNet." Obviously, I've been talking about that recently. What is in this budget for the hookup charges to get hooked up to the Alberta SuperNet that the ministry is paying on behalf of the libraries to actually get hooked up to the Internet? Then what is the ministry expecting to do over the course of this three-year business plan? How much money is it going to cost to have them pay the ongoing service fee?

There are always two fees involved here. Well, three actually. There's the laying of the actual cable, which has happened and has been paid for under the \$200 million. Then there's the hookup to actually get them physically connected to the SuperNet, and then there's the ongoing service fee, the one that's being paid to Axia. So what is the ministry setting aside to pay on behalf of the libraries? Is there any other group or municipality or provincial building category, like museums, for example, or arenas, where the ministry is anticipating having to cover those costs, the hookup and the ongoing monthly service cost, and how much?

I'm going to go back to the centennial legacy project, which was originally talked about in the fiscal plan on page 21 and shows up a number of times, even under core business 3, the fourth goal, under strategy 4.2, around co-ordinating Alberta's 2005 centennial project. What is the ministry anticipating to happen with the \$26 million that he said is being set aside to encourage the communities to get involved? I think it's saying:

In partnership with other ministries, foundations, communities, non-profit organizations, municipalities and the federal government to provide opportunities for Albertans to participate in the celebrations and leave a legacy for future generations.

I know that in the 75th anniversary the government set aside \$75 million and that each community was assisted with a project to write a local history book. I'm wondering if there is some particular project that the government is going to launch and say: "Okay; everyone, please build a walking trail," which was once talked about using the Trans Canada Trail, and that might have become a centennial sort of birthday present that everyone participated in. Is the ministry following a particular theme or a particular idea that it's pitching to the communities, or is it just sort of a free-for-all, everybody do whatever the heck they want?

Is there some sort of pot of money that these communities can apply to? If there is going to be a grant program or matching money program, when will that be in place? I mean, we are – what? – at three full months, so we've got eight months until we're starting into that birthday year. That's not a lot of time for communities and voluntary-based organizations to start to organize themselves for that sort of thing. So I'm looking for what support services the ministry is going to offer.

A grant program. How is that going to be set up, or how could people plug into it? Will there be restrictions to the grant project? Will this \$26 million only be used for activities but not for bricks and mortar? Just a lot more detail around this. I'm quite concerned that we're only eight months out and there's virtually no information about what the government expects communities to do or is encouraging communities to do or how much they're on their own. I keep getting calls, and I send them on to the minister's office, but we're getting a little close here.

When I look at the \$1 million increase for the AFA – and that, of course, appears in a number of different places. I think it's under the votes under community services. Yes, that's right because that's where the million bucks was: assistance to the Alberta Foundation

for the Arts. That's where that increase was, particularly vote 2.2.5 on page 74.

I always do a stakeholder loop before we have this debate and send an e-mail out to everybody I've got on my list and say: "Okay. I'm doing this debate. Do you want me to raise any issues or raise any questions?" Certainly, the film people that I heard back from over and over again said: "I couldn't have made my film without the support that was available through this fund. We're really grateful for it. We just need more."

One of the issues that was raised that surprised me is that the film development fund is already spoken for, maxed out, allocated through 2006. So even though you've put a million more dollars into it for this budget year, people are still in a lineup. They're queued for money that would be coming free in I think '06-07 at this point. So is the minister anticipating any additional funds? Has he lobbied his colleagues or the Minister of Finance to be in line to get another amount of money?

I will come later to the specifics that were suggested as to what was really needed by the people in film. One woman went into a great deal of detail about exactly how much money was needed, and it was a lot, and I'll come to that later in my notes. I'm just wondering if the minister can comment, then, about having had the program maxed out at this point and already allocated for this year and, it sounds like, for next year.

Their concern was that unless there was some serious infusion such as \$10 million a year, producers would be leaving the province, taking experience and jobs with them. They're saying to add \$10 million per year and also requesting that the current Alberta film development fund be increased to \$15 million to \$20 million per year to accommodate purely Canadian/Alberta production and ensure that

this continues for at least a 10 year period, whereupon it can be reviewed to see its long term effects. This will allow the Alberta producer to know that, since it takes anywhere from two to five years minimum to develop a drama program/film, there will be a potential to actually finance it at the end of the development day.

Yes, a very good point.

You work so far out in film trying to put together all your amounts of money and your talent and your locations and everything else. To have a film fund that, you know, sort of rolls over on a three-year basis or, in the case of what's being said here, is already subscribed through this fiscal year and into the next fiscal year – I mean, how do they start planning? Will there still be money left for them by the time they get there?

Of course, they're leveraging money. Part of what this particular group was doing was trying to leverage foreign market money, and their point is that the foreign market will not ante up any financing or presales until they can prove that they've got the money in the bank, so to speak, in Alberta. Well, if we're already subscribed into 2006, they're not going to be able to leverage money from foreign investors. So it becomes a circular problem.

I'll leave those on the record for the minister to respond to and return with more issues.

8:40

The Chair: The hon. minister.

Mr. Zwozdesky: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As always, the critic from the opposition party has provided a very large number of questions, and all of them are very good questions. I just don't think I'll be able to address them all in 20 minutes, but I would like to address some and then provide greater detail in writing. For example, to provide a complete and detailed breakdown of all the centennial legacies monies committed and/or already paid out to date

would in itself take close to 20 minutes because we have so many excellent projects, not only in Community Development, but we also have quite a few that are looked after by Infrastructure.

Nonetheless, I would just like to say that in a general sense we have in the current budget \$30 million, which I alluded to earlier. Now, \$26 million of that will go out in the form of grants, and I will be announcing that very shortly. We're just finishing off a new grant application form, and I will talk more about that soon. I can't give you an exact date, but it will be coming fairly soon. People are expecting it. We have about 1,200 or so groups, individuals, what have you on an interest list. They wouldn't all be eligible necessarily, but still this has been a growing momentum for us ever since Mrs. Klein and Mr. Donahue out of Calgary undertook the Klein/Donahue report in 1995. We had over 20,000 persons respond to that particular thing. We've done two phases, as the member knows, and we'll now look at another phase because that's what those monies are budgeted for.

The \$4 million in addition to that, which will be for centennial celebratory events, will include some staffing costs, the new office that we have set up, and a number of other related costs pertaining to some specific projects that we'll be undertaking. As you know, there are history books planned. There are other projects we're considering. There's an encyclopedia, an atlas, a commemorative stamp, commemorative coins, a royal visit, and the list just goes on and on and on. It's all very good stuff, and as we put more details onto the plans, we'll be rolling them out during the next couple of months. So there will be quite a bit more coming out in that regard.

Now, specifically you had wanted a list of all the phase 2 successful awards. Those were put out in a press release in April of last year, but I'd be happy to provide it again. And so was phase 1 put out by my predecessor in September of 2000, but we will put it out to you again, hon. member.

Then you asked the question: are these regular upgrades or maintenance-type projects which the government owns, or is everything now being done called centennial? Well, ongoing upgrades and maintenance and so on are a regular part of every different ministry's budget plan, as you will know. But there are some flagship items that we didn't necessarily have to do but we chose to do because there was a need for us to do them and because they are sort of connected to the history of the province or they're an icon of the province or they were given as a gift to the province, as in the case of the Jubilee auditoria at a 50th anniversary. We included those few projects as part of our centennial package.

There are others, of course, but when we talk about the Provincial Museum, that came about I think as a result of Canada's centennial in 1967. So we're looking at that as a major flagship for Alberta's centennial as well. Similarly with the Jubilee auditoria. The auditoria are in need of some refurbishing and fix-ups, but what we're doing is changing them from just regular maintenance upgrades to, again, state-of-the-art, first-class, best anywhere type of performance venues as afforded by the dollars available. I will give you more specific details on all the related questions that you had. That won't be a problem at all.

Now, with respect to the library estimates on page 74 or somewhere thereabouts, you asked the question: it appears that library funding has gone down. You're correct that there is an appearance of that, but that's not actually the case. The base funding remains the same as it was last year.

The difference is that last year, you may recall, we injected an additional – I don't recall the exact amount – \$1.3 million, \$1.6 million in one-time funding to assist with maintenance and related operational costs due to increases they were experiencing. That was

a one-time deal. Libraries all understood it. It's just that we can't repeat it this year. That was helpful at the time.

The other thing is the libraries and the connection to the SuperNet, which you mentioned. You wanted to know what is in this year's budget for actual hook-up costs. It's \$800,000. That's what is there. In my opening comments I had mentioned that we had made a commitment of \$1.3 million. About a year and a half ago we had committed the first \$500,000, and we did a lot of research and site placement work and so on for \$500,000, which helped the libraries know exactly what was needed and in what amounts and where and how the process would work and so on and so on. Now we're finishing off that project with the hook-up costs.

Please remember that we have over 200 library boards in the province, and they service about 310 or so individual library service points. With that in mind, we're going to do the best we can to ensure that they all have the hook-up costs through the \$800,000, which again will be a one-time injection.

Your other question was to do with: are we going to assist museums, arenas, and whatever else in the same way? I wish we had the money to do that. The unfortunate thing is that we don't, but we are hearing from those communities, so I will undertake to have a look at what may or may not be possible. I'll just ask my staff to make sure that they make a note of that for me so that we don't overlook it.

The other questions that you had were with respect to the NHL initiative. Let me just point out that under program 2 in the community services area, item 2.2.4, Alberta NHL teams initiative, this is basically for support to the Edmonton Oilers and the Calgary Flames hockey clubs. It's based on NHL players' tax revenues that will be collected each year, and we will simply be turning them back over to them, hon. member, to assist them to remain competitive.

We're small markets, as I think all members here would know, and until the league and the players actually sit down and finish their negotiations – I don't have it in my notes, but I think it'll be done during this next year – we won't be flowing any of those monies out because we're not collecting any in. So it's always a juggling, but we have to provide for it just in case it happens.

The collective bargaining agreements that they're experiencing right now should come to some conclusion in the '04-05 year. At least we're hoping that they do. Then we'll begin to receive that money, and then we'll flow it back out. It will come in through the Department of Revenue, and it will come over here, and we'll transfer it back out through our grant-making capability.

With respect to film development, that's been answered, so I'll just move along, except to come back to what you ended your comments with about the film program. It is indeed an incredibly active, vibrant, and contributing sector of our artistic and economic picture.

In many ways that Alberta film development program is, well, to be blunt, a victim of its own success. As I indicated, the \$10.3 million or so that we provided last year parleyed itself into well over \$80 million worth of film production. That doesn't include other films, offshore films, that have been attracted to our province, which we don't fund in any way, shape, or form, but they are attracted to our province because of the excellent crews that are now stabilized and living and remaining here. So there is another spinoff effect, if you will, over and above the \$80 million worth of production, all of which contributes a great deal.

We are happy to have increased the fund last year from \$5 million to \$10 million in base funding and this year to \$11 million. I think the indications are quite clear that if we truly want to grow this into the potential that it has to become a billion-dollar industry, then we will need to look at some point at increasing the funding beyond the

\$11 million. I just don't have the money right this minute to do that. But, yes, I am lobbying whoever I need to and trying to gain the support that we need to help bolster that particular industry further.

8:50

It is a very long-range planning industry, particularly the larger films, generally at least two to three years out, and it's always a challenge to try and keep up with it because, as the member may know, we don't actually pay out the monies from the film development program until all the other funding is in place and until they've actually got their licensing agreements and so on in place. That doesn't always happen perfectly on or before March 31, and that's just an anomaly of the industry, as you well know. So sometimes we see a lapsed funding situation occur, and that will cause some of the numbers to fluctuate. Nonetheless, I appreciate the feedback that you've received from stakeholders. So have I, and so have I met with them just recently.

Now, the other issue that you mentioned was with respect to human rights. I would just say quickly here on the issue of human rights – I think you wanted some statistics, if memory serves. I can tell you that the human rights stats are as follows. In terms of complaint files that were actually opened in 2002-2003, that number was 835. Up to and including a few days ago, in other words for '03-04, we were at 848. So we opened a few files more than the previous year.

In terms of complaint files that were opened and thereafter we were able to close off, in 2002-2003 that number was 772. As of a few days ago, for 2003-2004 we had already closed off 729. So it's not a huge increase, but still it's an increase in the number of complaints that the commission is opening.

The rising number of complaints can be caused by a combination of many and overlapping factors. There is, for example, a growing refusal by groups who are protected by human rights legislation, particularly people with mental disabilities and physical disabilities, to accept anything less than full participation in the workplace or in the school system or in postsecondary or in other areas of life, and that is fair and fine, and I agree and I support their desire for full inclusion. But as we create more awareness around the issues and as we ourselves get educated more about it and we in turn educate others, we do see more and more attention being paid.

For example, the ads that are on Global Television, which I referred to, the Help Make a Difference campaign, are a wonderful way for people to see themselves, and it's a great way to also increase our awareness of the cultural diversity and the issues related to disabilities which we're working on now. It'll be a separate piece at some point, I hope. But, still, what it does is it generates a lot more awareness, and that in turn generates a lot more complaints.

I think it's also fair to say that our cultural diversity is growing. It's much greater than it ever has been, particularly in the last five years. So in light of that and in light of our efforts around issues pertaining to racism, for example, and our desire to help cure society of racial discrimination and other forms of racial prejudice and what have you, we're doing a great deal more now than we ever have in terms of our awareness. For example, the Human Rights Commission is now working with the chambers of commerce across the province, increasing the focus on human rights in all parts of the province, and that's a very good thing.

The final thing on this point I think is simply to say that the vast majority of files that have been closed and dealt with through the complaint resolution process have yielded fairly good results, and we have a fairly high satisfaction rate in that respect. That isn't to say that everyone is happy, but when you talk about settling things through conciliation or settling them through investigation or some other form, we're batting quite high in that respect.

I think the other issue that the hon. member mentioned was to do with the centennial: is there a particular theme? I outlined what the major principles are in my opening comments, and perhaps if you just review those, you'll see what the theme is. To put it sort of more succinctly, though, our intention, our hope is to ensure that every community in the province – every city, every town, every village, every hamlet, everybody – is activated to do something that celebrates not only the province's 100th anniversary but also, perhaps, the role that that particular community played.

There are many communities who are also turning 100 in the centennial year, and some already have. For example, Edmonton is turning 100 this year. So we've accomplished some of those objectives already. There will be other opportunities for individuals to participate.

I think I should make it clear that the funds that we're talking about in the '04-05 budget, specifically the \$26 million that I referenced earlier, are anticipated to go to vertical infrastructure type projects. We have already funded a large number of community centres, community halls, recreation complexes, aquatic centres, hockey arenas, curling rinks, and the list goes on and on and on. We will hopefully be able to continue doing that in lead-up to the magic date of September 1, 2005.

With respect to the specifics about restrictions and so on, in the previous grant application phase, which was phase 2, announced with a deadline of March 1, 2001, we had very specific criteria. Those particular criteria can be viewed, I suppose, as restrictions. Let me say that in a general sense with any new monies that we're able to roll out into the community, in my view at least, at this point in time, priority should be given to those areas of the province who have not yet received, for whatever reason, centennial legacy grants, and there are a few areas like that. It might be because they didn't apply, or it might be because the projects that they had in mind were smaller projects and they could be handled through the community facility enhancement program or the community initiatives program. So there are a variety of reasons why a few parts of the province may not have received any centennial money so far, but quite certainly, wherever possible, they probably received some other form of provincial grant funding.

I think my time is just about up, so I'll take my spot and look forward to someone else who may have some additional comments to make.

The Chair: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Centre.

Ms Blakeman: Thanks. One question that the minister missed was around the SuperNet. I did understand the first time that he said that the department had put \$1.3 million in, that they'd already invested \$500,000, that there was \$800,000 there to hook up the libraries, which at 310 libraries is going to be around \$2,200 apiece to hook up.

The question that was not answered – and I'll leave it with the minister if he needs to do the research on it – is: what is the ministry also lining up to pay or budgeting to pay for the monthly service cost, the provision of service that goes to Axia? In this case that's the third party that's providing it.

I mean, if you're looking for an analogy – and this is not an exact analogy – if you get high-speed cable in your home or in your business, you pay the initial hook-up fee, which is what the \$800,000 is covering here, and then you pay a monthly fee to Shaw or Telus or Rogers or whoever else is doing it. So my question to the minister was: is he budgeting to pay that monthly service fee or the fee for the service provision that goes to Axia for the libraries or for any other group that would fall under his ministry? That

included looking at the three-year rollout that these budgets are now giving us. So if it's not in this year's budget, is it coming in the next year's budget? He specifically was addressing the libraries. I know that there are other ministries that are covering other parts of it; the Learning minister covering schools, the Minister of Municipal Affairs covering municipalities, et cetera. A couple of the stakeholders wrote and pointed out that the provincial funding is one-third or less than the funding received from either the municipalities or through the federal funding and that the province's share of the contribution continues to be significantly less than the other two.

9:00

Further on the Alberta centennial I'm wondering if there's a particular piece that's being offered to Alberta's arts groups and festivals participating. Would there be money set aside for them as well as being set aside for the various municipalities? Or are they expected to come up with something out of their funding that they're already getting to do something for the centennial? The minister says that he'll be making announcements in the future. Could I get an idea of whether that's two weeks or two months so that we'll all understand what it is that's being expected of people and who's going to pay for it?

Another issue that's out there, other comments particularly from the visual arts sector this year – again, very grateful for the funding that they do get but always pointing out that it is hardly enough to cover everything they're contributing and everything that they contribute overall: education of children and other programs that they offer. I understand that the institutional galleries have been cut off or that their grants have been eliminated, and I had a number of visual art galleries contact me and say, "Well, is that \$100,000 going to stay in the visual art gallery pot, or will it be reallocated into a different sector?" They're most concerned about this.

So this was the public gallery operations. Institutional galleries are no longer receiving funding, so that's all the ones that are attached to educational institutions like the Walter Phillips Gallery in Banff, or the FAB Gallery here in Edmonton, and a number of other ones. These five galleries were getting about a \$100,000, and there's a great deal of interest in whether that \$100,000 is going to stay in the public gallery operations pot and be redistributed amongst organizations like SNAP and Stride and the TRUCK Gallery in Calgary, Latitude 53 here in Edmonton. Is that \$100,000 going to stay in the pot for those galleries, or is it going somewhere else?

There's also a concern around the galleries this year – and I heard it from more than one – that the AFA policy is stating that galleries can apply for up to 30 per cent of their annual community support, yet none of them get that. They're all pro-rated back, and they're all getting something in the 8 to 12 per cent range. So why are they being told that they can apply for up to 30 per cent of their annual community support if nobody ever gets that? They're in the range of sort of 45 per cent of that. Yeah, that's right; 13.7 per cent of their annual community support. They're wondering why AFA seems unable to meet that 30 per cent of support for public galleries and artist-run centres.

There's also a concern that has been raised about the situation that has shaken down as a result of one grant per organization. I don't think that the government understood what was going to flow from that. I know that some members felt that there was double-dipping. At the time I argued that, no, there wasn't. They were receiving grants for different things that they were doing. They certainly weren't receiving more than one grant to do the same thing.

You know, those grants were originally invented so that they could augment and allow the groups to expand or take on additional projects. Now that all the rest of those grants have been pulled away

from them, they can't continue to exist with that. They're having to continue to cut back and cut back what they're doing. So would the minister be looking at augmenting that one grant per organization?

Further, is there any point where he envisions adding the CFEP and CIP grants as part of that one grant per organization? In other words, if you've got a CFEP grant, you're done. You don't get an operating grant; you don't get anything else. I want to know where the minister is on the record with that one grant policy and whether he can see it becoming more restrictive than it currently is.

Here's another one from another gallery. The last one talked about a range of – they were actually getting 13.7, but they were eligible for 30 per cent. This one's getting between 8 and 12 per cent, and again they're eligible for 30. This gallery is pointing out that in Britain there's just been a new program started to assist arts organizations to buy their own spaces. It was using the lottery program to help them do that. It's been very successful, and the groups were able to use the money from high rents and things and plow it back into their programming. Does the minister anticipate that kind of a program happening in Alberta?

Concern from an individual artist who, again, is very grateful for the money that they were able to receive. She points out that she was able to receive funding over two grant periods, so sort of an initial exploration or development grant and then a second for actual creation and production. She's hearing that that may be curtailed, that ability to line up the grants in sort of a part A and a part B. Could I get something on the record from the minister on that one? She points out that it would have been impossible for her to do the project if, in fact, that kind of a rule is going to come into play, and I would tend to agree. She notes that the province is one of the few resources that the individual independent artist has to turn to for funding. Canada Council does fund artists but not at the smaller level that the province does.

I just want to go back to libraries briefly. My understanding is that libraries are currently at a per capita grant of \$4.26. Libraries are advocating to see this doubled to \$8.52 to allow them sustainability in funding. Is that being worked into the minister's budget in this three-year business cycle? Or when could the minister see it attaining that level?

Finally, another concern raised about the loss of the community lottery boards, because it was able to allocate larger amounts of money to groups without the requirement for the matching funds. It was local decision-making. That's not under this minister's control, but there are certainly a number of agencies that receive operating funds that fall under him that are feeling the pinch because of that.

9:10

One more thing still on the arts and human rights side of Community Development, and that's around the creative class. Sexual orientation is still not written in although it is read into Alberta's human rights legislation. When can we expect to see the legislation amended to actually write in the inclusion of sexual orientation as a prohibited grounds of discrimination?

That ties into a larger discussion around a concept about the creative class written by Richard Florida, *The Rise of the Creative Class*. The point that he makes in there is that you need a large and vibrant gay community and also a large and vibrant arts community to start to build and fuel that creative class that charges that change and rejuvenation in our cities. There's a plea that Alberta Community Development recognize the economic benefit that the arts provide to the community, not only the direct economic impact and ensuing multipliers but the secondary economic benefits of attracting smart and talented people to our province, leading to long-term, ingrained support of our cultural institutions.

Questions around parks and protected areas, which appear as core business 5 on page 143, and specific numbers under program 6 on page 78. So either or both of those is what I'm referring to. Protection of the Chinchaga is an issue. The government recently announced that it would not allocate the forestry management unit P-8 to new forestry companies. This offers an opportunity for increased protection in the Chinchaga area, which would protect important habitat for species of concern but also contribute to economic diversification in northwest Alberta.

[Mr. Lougheed in the chair]

My questions. Given the ecological and economic importance of the Chinchaga, when will this ministry engage in a land use conservation planning process with the conservation groups to enlarge the Chinchaga site to include significant old-growth forests and more caribou habitat? Second question: when will the government follow the recommendations from its own reports and put in place a meaningful and comprehensive strategy for the management of old-growth stands to ensure the long-term maintenance of forest biodiversity? Third question: will this ministry place a moratorium on further development in the Chinchaga until permanent legal protection for the area is established and transition funding is provided for affected communities?

Again on these same issues, vote 6 appearing on page 78 of the estimates book or under goal 5, the Castle wilderness protection. Albertans continue to ask for protection of the Castle wilderness. It's one of the most diverse ecosystems in Alberta, but it continues to be degraded by industrial and recreational use. Three questions: why does the ministry continue to put business interests before the natural habitats? It's part of a discussion that springs out of the bill that we had earlier this spring. Second question: will the ministry provide protection to this area before its value is destroyed further? And third, when will the ministry provide protection for the 1,000 square kilometres needed for the critical wildlife habitat in the Castle wilderness area?

A couple of questions about avalanche funding. This winter saw an unprecedented number of Albertans killed in avalanches while skiing both here in Alberta and in B.C. Both the B.C. and the federal governments are contributing \$125,000 a year, guaranteed for the next three years, for a national avalanche centre. Given that Albertans represent almost 60 per cent of the avalanche fatalities for the '02-03 season, why has the government not matched the \$125,000 contribution to the Canadian Avalanche Association? Given that it's been four years since this government has contributed anything to the Canadian Avalanche Association, when is the government going to resume contributing to a national avalanche centre?

Some questions on PDD. Overall, the survey that was done in 2003 on PDD services by the Vocational and Rehab Research Institute shows fairly high levels of satisfaction with the service provided but does have some areas of concern. One of them is the overall satisfaction of the families and guardians. That dropped from 90.2 per cent in 2001 to 88 per cent in 2003. So there are two things happening here. One is the drop in the satisfaction, and two, it's below the PDD Provincial Board's target of 90 per cent. Can the minister explain the drop in satisfaction amongst the families and guardians? Do you know if it's connected to budget? Is it a concern around management issues? Or is there some other reason for the decline in the satisfaction rate?

The survey does indicate that some people were concerned that there was not enough funding to participate in available programs. Is the minister planning on addressing this issue? He did indicate

that there were 25 million new dollars going into PDD this year. Does he think that's enough to change this satisfaction rating?

In this survey a number of the questions are asking about internal operations of service providers, but PDD doesn't have very much control over the internal workings of service providers, so I'm wondering why these questions are being asked about a service provider if PDD has little control over it.

Another concern raised in the survey is that fewer respondents know what to do if they're not satisfied with the service provided. What is the minister doing to address that?

The Acting Chair: The Minister of Community Development.

Mr. Zwozdesky: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you to the hon. member for the questions. I just couldn't write fast enough, but I'm sure the good folks in *Hansard* will have picked them up, and whatever I can't get to in the 20 minutes or whatever that's allowed here, we'll try and get to in writing.

The hon. member asked further about the SuperNet. I'm glad that we were clear and we both understand what I had referred to earlier. The issue about hookups I think has been sort of satisfied.

One of the things I should point out, however, is that in terms of the library boards that we have, which is over 200, and in terms of the library service points, I think we would all recognize that one library board such as Edmonton, for example, can have several library points. So we have to just work out some of the logistics of not so much what the one-time hookup fees would cost and how they would be applied and so on, but the monthly service charge issue that is being raised is one that we are looking into further. I did indicate in my opening remarks that our next step is in fact to try and see if we can assist the libraries with ongoing monthly connection charges, and I am working on that now. You may have missed it in my opening comments; nonetheless, I did refer to that.

9:20

Then there was another point that I'm sorry I didn't hear at all. I was looking for some other notes, so I'll have to read that. The next point I jotted down was something to do with the Alberta centennial. So I apologize for missing the second point that the hon. member raised, but I'll read it and respond to her.

[Mr. Tannas in the chair]

The question was: will there be specific dollars allocated for arts groups? I should probably indicate that we have already announced \$500,000 in funding for arts groups, and it's in relation to one of our flagship centennial projects called Alberta Scene. We announced that about a week ago, two weeks ago – I can't recall – just sometime recently. We'll be providing that \$500,000 specifically to assist over 600 Alberta artists and arts organizations to travel from our province to Ottawa, where they will be showcased over 13 days at 19 venues in 94 events.

It's a huge, huge centennial showpiece for us that will really kick off the new budget year, for one thing, because it occurs in April and in May, and at the same time it'll also showcase our province through the arts to a national audience and also to an international audience. We do have information from Atlantic Scene that occurred a year or two back, which was very similar to what Alberta Scene will be all about, that indicated that the artists who went – and they represented every discipline of the arts – were talked to by international producers and promoters, international record labels and recording engineers, and so on and so on, and a number of deals were struck. We already have the same interest happening and

building around Alberta Scene, and it will include, you know, the performing arts, be it music or dance or drama or some other form. It will include the visual arts, it will include the culinary arts, and the list goes on and on. So that will be a very large centennial project dedicated specifically to the arts, and it's really very significant, and we're very pleased with that.

I should just briefly mention that there's sort of a bit of a reciprocal thing happening also. In the fall of 2005 for the first time, at least in my knowledge, perhaps the first time ever in the province's history, we will be hosting the National Arts symphony orchestra in Alberta, thanks to special arrangements and funding provided directly to that organization by EPCOR. So I think that's a pretty good focus on the arts as well because it will enliven our communities and there will be other artists involved peripherally or directly. We'll see. The arts have really come alive in the last few years, and we're very pleased about that.

The other point was specifically to municipalities, I think, in relation to the centennial. I think that if you check my previous answer, you'll see what I said there, so I won't repeat it for the saving of time.

Turning to arts funding in general, I know that there are concerns and there have been concerns about the level of arts funding, and I think the hon. member knows what my passion is. I made a living in the arts for many, many years, and I'm very proud of that. But the fact is that the arts always have required some form of additional government support and they always will require some support if we are to have them flourish and grow and develop at the rate that we would like them to.

So last year, as members here would know, was the first year we saw an increase to the arts budget in something like 14 years. But, in fairness, when the cuts happened to virtually every living and breathing program in '93 and '94 and perhaps a little bit into '95, the arts were not cut – it was kind of an anomaly – so we didn't have to regain perhaps what areas like health care and education had lost through the cuts of the day. Since that time, of course, everybody has increased and gone way beyond, almost into the stratosphere of funding in some of these areas, and I'm not bragging or complaining. I'm just saying that that's a fact, and I was happy that finally the arts did get an increase. But now I think we have the challenge of looking at the fact that every area in every part of the economy in every part of the society that we live in are all experiencing cost increases. So we have to do what we can with what we've got, but I do continue to raise the issue and will continue to raise it, as the hon. member has as well.

Now, specific to institutional galleries I don't have all of the answers here and I couldn't quite get all of the questions jotted down, but I think you were referring specifically to those that are attached to educational institutions. I'll have to check and see what our role in that is because I'm just not really sure right here, right now, beyond the funding. I know that we work with the Department of Learning when an educational institution is involved, and to my knowledge institutional galleries were likely rolled into postsecondary funding where that was possible to do so. I think they might continue to see funding being received if the institution where they are housed makes the application for them. That is certainly the case, for example, with Grant MacEwan College. I know they contacted me for some financial assistance for some touring projects, and because they're attached to an educational institution and because we provide monies through another ministry's budget for those institutions, I had to, you know, seek advice for that particular issue from the ministry who funds it. In general, I'll just say that this was all part of the one grant per institution policy, as I recall, and in most cases it's working well, I'm told.

Now, the AFA, the Alberta Foundation for the Arts, was dealing with about six or seven different facilities or departments per institution, and it just got a little bit too large, perhaps. Maybe there was some confusion as well because there always is the possibility of some overlap, some duplication that might be going on. So it was felt that it's better to have sort of a one-window approach, but I'll have to look up more detail for the hon. member as I try to answer that question more fully.

The issue about the 30 per cent. I think you were referring to a different group – were you? – than public galleries. I just don't recall. I would say that if you were talking about galleries, I don't believe there are any reductions contemplated to the galleries at the institutions that you were asking about, but if you're talking about the 30 per cent of eligible expenses for other projects in AFA and the fact that we can't always provide 100 per cent of what they're eligible for, that would be correct. There has had to be some pro-rating, and that is tied directly to the lack of funds available for disbursing. I'm sorry that's the case, but I guess we could do the other thing. We could say: okay; those of you who are eligible for 100 per cent, we'll give you 100 per cent of the 30 per cent that you're eligible for. But that would mean some groups would get nothing, obviously. So the AFA's thought was to pro-rate and ensure that everybody who was eligible got as much as possibly could be given. So that's what they've done, and for the time being, at least, I've agreed with it.

The other point about one grant per organization. I have to confess that I, too, have some problems with that, but again it's tied to the shortage of funds. In a way we have sort of a very good bad problem to deal with because the arts have come so alive, more so than ever before, in the last few years in particular, and we now have arts organizations and artists undertaking far more projects than they ever have before. I can tell from the letters and the phone calls and the grant applications that come in, and that's been a trend that's been developing, hon. member, for quite some time now. So when the AFA brought in that particular policy, it was purely as a matter of survival and a matter of trying to ensure that the largest amount of dollars possible were spread out amongst as many recipients as possible and spread out across the province to the largest extent possible.

9:30

You made a comment about the initial reason why these foundations were set up in the first place. As I recall, the first one was the Alberta performing arts foundation or something close to that title, and it was about 1976, '77. My recollection of that era is that those foundations were set up for a few very specific reasons. First of all, the most obvious was to distribute funds that would be forthcoming from the new lotteries program that had just started up.

But, equally important, when the criteria were being designed for those programs, they were being designed so as to allow a foundation that was arm's length from government the ability to fund things that the government at the time could not fund and/or to fill voids in government program funding. Those were two of the main reasons those were set up, because I remember inputting into that particular issue. In other cases they were established to augment what the government may have already been funding, and all of that was accomplished.

Now, of course, there's a much closer working relationship because of all the partnering that occurs, and that's a good thing. We have far more money to work with, and in the end the government is accountable for it. In this case specifically, I am. So I do share the sensitivity of the history. We've moved far and beyond where we started. It's all good, and it's all working quite well. We

just don't have quite as much money as we'd like to be able to lift at this time that rule of one grant only per organization.

Now, the second question there was the issue of: does this restriction apply also to the CFEP program or the CIP program? I think the hon. member was asking in terms of those possibly becoming more restrictive. The answer is no, and I need to explain that a bit. CFEP and CIP, as we all know, are two completely separate programs. They're in Gaming, and they're not ours, but CFEP and CIP do fund a lot of arts programs.

The reason I want to flag that for all members is that so often we get accused of having the lowest per capita funding in the arts and all that kind of thing. If you take just the envelope that is labelled arts, that might be true, but if you take and roll in all the other monies that come from CFEP programming, from CIP programming, from the centennial programming and probably some others that I'm leaving out, we fare extremely well compared to all other provinces. I would challenge anyone to disagree with that and provide me information to the contrary. We never get credit for the tens of millions of dollars that flow out to arts organizations and ag society grants who host artistic endeavours in their particular communities. There are so many more monies that go out there.

But that's not the main reason why I flag this question. I just wanted to say that there are occasions when we look at what other government departments are providing by way of funding to a specific project as we are evaluating and reviewing whether or not that particular project should receive funding from a Community Development program. Where an applicant is using money from one government department to match government monies that would come from Community Development, we wouldn't allow that. But they are certainly welcome as an organization to apply to CFEP or to CIP over, above, and beyond what they would be eligible for in a Community Development project. They are completely separate programs.

Then there was another point the hon. member raised, and I'm sorry I couldn't write fast enough to jot it down. She did ask about exploration grants or creative grants or something in that vein. I think the question was: is the AFA planning to curtail it? The answer is: not to my knowledge. Now, I don't know if somebody has any information that they can shed on that. I don't know if there's a plan like that in mind. I would be surprised if there is, but I'll find out and respond in writing.

Because there's not much time left, I'll just cut quickly to a couple of the other areas that were mentioned. One that we haven't talked about yet is the parks area, and I think the hon. member referenced some issues with respect to the Chinchaga. This is of course one of the largest and most recently protected areas that we have in the province. Issues that surround that area that the member specifically referenced are outside the Chinchaga park area, so I'll have to talk with the Minister of Sustainable Resource Development. I'm not sure if you mentioned the P-8 management plan or something like that. I'll undertake to get you the answer from Sustainable Resource Development if that's where in fact the question should have gone in the first place.

We have no plans, however, at this point to enlarge the Chinchaga area. It was one of the flagship dedications and designations under the special places program, and as all members here would know, the special places program concluded very successfully on July 24 of 2001. So it remains to be seen whether there would be additional initiatives or further opportunities to do some other designations. None of that is being contemplated at this time.

There are a lot of management plans that are underway, probably a couple of dozen that are at one stage or another. Some of them will be completed this year, I hope, and some of them will be

completed very shortly thereafter. There are very great complexities with all of these management plans, as you obviously are aware.

That leads me into the Castle wilderness. Now, I don't have any huge amount of notes with me tonight on the Castle wilderness, hon. member, but I am aware that some individuals want that area protected. It is indeed a very large area. It's sort of technically referred to as the Castle forest land-use zone, and it's actually administered by Sustainable Resource Development. Again, I will undertake to try and get you an answer to that. I know it's a sensitive area, but it's not one that we're responsible for. We did establish the Castle wetland ecological reserve under the special places program, so we're involved in that general area, but the specific point that the hon. member is asking is really better directed to Sustainable Resource Development.

Now, in the couple of minutes I have left, I'll just go quickly to PDD because we haven't touched on that, and if there's time, I'll come back to avalanche funding and the economic benefits of the arts. On the PDD survey that the hon. member mentioned and the satisfaction rate dropping, I can share this with the House, Mr. Chair. We do a lot in the PDD area, and obviously we need to do more.

I'm sorry. I hear that the bell has gone, so I'll have to answer that another time.

The Chair: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Centre.

Ms Blakeman: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Just a couple of clarifications. When I asked about whether there was centennial money specific to the arts, he quoted me the \$500,000 that's been set aside for the Alberta Scene and noted that there were 600 groups that were expected to travel to Ottawa for that. Quick math: with \$500,000 for 600 groups or artists there's less than \$1,000 each. That barely would pay the high-season airplane fare to get there. So is that \$500,000 the extent of the centennial projects allocation for the arts?

The \$100,000 for the institutional galleries was cut this year. The question that I'm asking and that the other artist-run galleries are asking is: what's happening to that money? Has it been allocated out of the visual arts sector? If it was a grant program that was going to those galleries, it's no longer going to those galleries. Where's the money? Is it staying in there to be reallocated to other visual arts entities, or is it being moved to a different sector under the government, or has it been cut entirely to somewhere else? It was there. Now it's not. Where's the money?

9:40

Finally, the issue of the one grant had fairly serious repercussions across the province, and I'll give you a simple example. In Fort Macleod in southern Alberta, in the Livingstone-Macleod constituency, they had a very active theatre. They had a season from September to May of touring artists that came in, and they were able to get community series grants to help offset the costs of paying for those artists to come in as part of a touring house. Over the summer they had an operating grant for their theatre. When they were told that they could only get one grant, the municipality, which was in charge of the theatre and owned it, had to make the choice: community series or summer operating. They had to make the choice. They couldn't get both grants, so they dropped their summer program.

Now, that summer program hired a lot of local people. It was developing a skill level with young artists because they ran a young company. They were starting to specialize in producing their own stories from that local area, and they had tremendous support from the local community. So that's what I mean when you talk about going down to the one grant. There was a huge ripple effect from that, simply beyond what the minister was referring to.

Since the minister has a much larger research budget than I do, perhaps he could back up his claim that if you add in the money that arts groups get from CFEP or CIP or the centennial grants, that would bring them to one of the best funded in Canada. I'll let him do the research on that and let me know.

Okay. Continuing on with questions on PDD, again this is continuing with the Alberta persons with developmental disabilities 2003 consumer and family/guardian satisfaction survey, which I gather is a government-initiated survey that was in fact done by the Vocational and Rehabilitation Research Institute. The survey found that on most indicators the Calgary region rated lowest: lowest in overall satisfaction among consumers, lowest in family/guardian satisfaction, lowest in satisfaction getting services, lowest in satisfaction with planning and reviewing services, lowest with service provider staff, with PDD staff, and with satisfaction with boards. Can the minister explain the poor rating for services in Calgary, and what has the minister done to rectify this situation? Has the minister identified problems with the board or board governance specifically in Calgary? Has the minister considered an independent review of the Calgary PDD board to explain these survey results?

I'm going to skip to community capacity initiatives: approximately \$3 million to \$4 million province-wide with Edmonton and Calgary both receiving approximately a million each in additional monies. The money is going out on a regional basis and to specific initiatives. Can the minister tell us how this money provided through the community capacity initiatives will be handled at the regional level? How will the minister ensure that there is accountability and that this money goes to support individuals who need it most? Will there be any review process or internal audits performed to ensure that money is being appropriately spent? What checks and balances exist in the system?

The Michener Centre. In 2002 the governance of Michener's services was transferred from the Michener facility board to the PDD Central Alberta Community Board, and the Michener board was wound down. Can the minister update us on what difference this transition has made on the residents of Michener Centre? Can the minister tell me whether there are any plans to close the facility?

The Protection for Persons in Care Act review. This review was begun in 2002 with the Legislative Review Committee. It submitted its report to the minister. Comments and recommendations were invited in the fall of 2003, and these are now being reviewed, analyzed, and summarized. Can the minister tell us whether there is any legislation or amendments coming forward during the current legislative session or expected in the fall session around changes to the Protection for Persons in Care Act?

Has the minister considered increasing the role that police and the justice system play in reviewing allegations of abuse? For example, as it stands now, cases are not reported to the police as a first line of defence where that would be commonplace in other jurisdictions like Massachusetts.

The question on DATS. I'm wondering if the minister can clarify for me. DATS clients are having to reapply for DATS. Now, is that funding flowing? I thought that was municipal funding, but it's turning up in my notes that there's some sort of government involvement here. Perhaps the minister could clarify that. So DATS clients are being asked to reapply. "It will take up to three years to re-certify all DATS clients. Once re-certified, changes to their eligibility will be made effective immediately": this is coming out of a newsletter specific to DATS clients.

An Hon. Member: Most of them are PDD.

Ms Blakeman: Most of the users of the DATS system are PDD. That's the connection. Okay.

So my question around DATS then is: what support is available to those individuals who would be PDD clients who are currently using DATS who are deemed not to need it any longer? Is the ministry considering any additional support for them? Or is that it; they're on their own?

How does this decision fit in with the results of the PDD consumer and family/guardian satisfaction survey that found that comments provided around transportation were almost entirely negative? There's certainly an issue there around transportation for PDD clients. It doesn't seem to be a good situation. What is the ministry doing in this budget year to address those issues?

I have just enough time to turn it back over to the minister one more time. Thank you very much for the opportunity to question the minister during the estimates on Community Development for the 2004-2005 budget year.

The Chair: The hon. Member for Lac La Biche-St. Paul.

Mr. Danyluk: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First, I would like to lend support to the minister and his department for the initiative of putting money into the infrastructure of parks, also supporting the water for life strategy.

I feel that the wellness part of the Ministry of Health and Wellness is absolutely essential because it is one opportunity we may have at being proactive and to help support activity and good health, therefore reducing health costs. Mr. Chairman, I would like to further see Community Development help promote activity and wellness. Could we support putting money into the budget to enhance activity?

9:50

Mr. Chairman, I want to stress the equity of access. I want to particularly talk about trail use. Trails should be encouraged to be used and not charged for. I realize that when the minister made statements about the charging for trails, groomed trails are the only ones that are going to be charged for. I would not like to see limitations of usage due to affordability. That's one of the points that I would like to bring forward. I would not like to see a trend start in charging for usage. I suppose that the question that I do have for the minister is: does he feel that the cost of administration to collect these fees is going to offset the revenues?

Thank you.

The Chair: The hon. minister.

Mr. Zwodzesky: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Given that there was one new speaker here, let me address his questions first. The issue of the water strategy that we have, which is primarily led by the Department of Environment and one which I commented on in my opening statements, is indeed one we are very pleased to be affiliated with, so to speak, through our parks and protected areas systems. We know how important it is to have good clean water in these parks for the obvious health reasons but also for the impact that it has on wildlife who come into contact with that water and, secondly, also as a tourism draw for our province.

We're very pleased to be allocating \$21 million over three years. It's the first significant increase to the parks and protected areas in several years. Ten? Twenty? Whatever it is, I know the staff are pretty happy about it, and so am I. When the Premier announced it on his televised address in February, we were all very excited by it.

The issue of promoting activities that lead to better health and

wellness habits and what have you is something that we are also very pleased to be a part of. We have a lot that we're doing in this area already. Other programs that we're doing cross-ministry with Health are also part of the equation. We have the Healthy U campaign, Ever Active, and two or three others that just escape me in terms of their real titles. Most of those are focused at youth in our province and trying to instill good habits that if properly ingrained at a younger age will hopefully stay with people for the rest of their lives and lead to exactly what the hon. Member for Lac La Biche-St. Paul is alluding to.

We also have a lot of programs that occur specifically in the schools themselves to ensure that that focus is there. Typically, we like to involve some of our professional athletes when we launch those programs because it tends to encourage and enthuse and motivate young kids to become involved.

We know that there are severe problems of obesity and inactivity. I have to say that at the national level, at the federal/provincial/territorial level I'm very pleased that we are able to address that through our sport plans. One objective that we just met last year was increasing physical activity amongst Canadians by 10 per cent. We've set a similar objective for the current year, and I think we're on track to do that. In fact, Alberta is reasonably far out in front on most of those issues, and we're very proud of that.

The final point on that issue is with respect to our own Alberta sport plan. This was an initiative put together by the Alberta Sport, Recreation, Parks & Wildlife Foundation in conjunction with numerous partners. It's a very good document, and it provides a lot of strategies, some of which flow out of what the hon. Member for Lac La Biche-St. Paul was alluding to and others of which address capacity building and infrastructure and funding needed in other areas where we're not providing funding at all right now. I know that the hon. Member for Little Bow has contributed a great deal to that particular foundation. We chat frequently about what needs to be done, and I'm grateful for that. I just want to say thank you to him for his advice and leadership in that regard.

The Alberta sport plan, to conclude, Mr. Chairman, is one that we are considering right now. There's sort of a good and a bad to it. It's got a lot of great ideas, so many, in fact, that the price tag associated with them is far beyond our capacity at this time, but I am looking at which parts of it we might be able to have an impact on. In any event, I will be responding formally on behalf of government as soon as we are able to.

The other quick point the hon. member raised was with regard to user fees, and I share his comment that we don't want to see a user-fee trend starting to develop in every sector because that would perhaps lead to some complications. I want to say that in terms of the user fees that we've introduced and/or augmented in the parks area, and specifically in Kananaskis with respect to groomed cross-country trails, the amount of money that we will receive in return from the revenues of those fees will indeed help us to provide ongoing first-class maintenance and upkeep of those trails. Every cent that comes in from those revenue fees will go back toward the improvements for those programs or at least maintaining them to the best of our abilities.

Now, the groomed trails that we have in the area of Kananaskis Country, as I recall, cost us approximately \$400,000 a year to maintain. Under a previous scenario we had the benefit of having the minimum security camp residents help us as volunteers in the basic maintenance and upkeep and grooming of the trails, but when that minimum security camp was closed a couple years back, it put a lot of pressure on us, and we suddenly had to come up with \$400,000. We came up with \$300,000, and the other hundred thousand we're hoping to raise through these, I think, relatively small user fees for some areas.

As I indicated in my opening comments, hon. member, a large number of other trails and other services in our parks will remain free of charge. But the specific groomed cross-country ski trails that we're referring to in Kananaskis Country, Mr. Chair, will attract probably 60,000 or more ski visits, and therefore we've brought in an idea called a seasonal pass, which will make it quite affordable for seniors, for example, who are frequent users and frequently write to us. Again, the response to the surveys that we received from Albertans and from visitors to our province was well past the 50 per cent mark, that individuals wouldn't mind sharing some of the burden of the cost through a user fee provided that those monies went right back into the programs, and that's precisely what we're going to do.

Now, very quickly – I see that the clock tells me I have one minute left – I just want to get back to the hon. Member for Edmonton-Centre. She indicated that I was having trouble hearing her. It wasn't that I was having trouble hearing her, Mr. Chair; just that I couldn't write fast enough to keep up with her. She was throwing questions at me a mile a minute, and I did the best I could, but I'll have to review *Hansard* and get back to her with some of the specifics.

The first comment she made regarding Alberta Scene I've already covered. I just want to clarify for the record that we're talking about 600 artists, not 600 arts groups. For example, if the Edmonton Symphony or the Calgary Philharmonic were to go, that in itself would be anywhere from probably 56 to 70 players, not including technical people, and in fact we will have some of those larger groups going. Anyone who is interested in applying should look up www.albertascene.ca – I think I got it right – and there'll be a lot more information on the Internet.

The PDD survey. I guess the time has elapsed. I'll have to get back to you, hon. member, in writing on that as I will try and find out some information for you for the dance program. To my knowledge that may be part of an unconditional grant received from Municipal Affairs. But whoever it is that has the answers to your question, I'll do my best to try and get them for you as I will also on the PPIC Act review.

10:00

With that, I guess it's past the magic hour of 10 o'clock, so I will take my seat and just undertake to provide whatever I can in writing. I hear the bells going. So thank you, everyone, for your support and for participating in this discussion about one of the most important ministries in all of government, Alberta Community Development. Thank you.

The Chair: Pursuant to Standing Order 58(4), which provides for

not less than two hours of consideration for a department's proposed estimates, and after considering the business plan and the proposed estimates for the Department of Community Development for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2005, I must now put the question.

Agreed to:

Operating Expense and	
Equipment/Inventory Purchases	\$676,942,000
Capital Investment	\$6,562,000

The Chair: Shall the vote be reported? Are you agreed?

Hon. Members: Agreed.

The Chair: Opposed? Carried.

Mr. Stevens: Mr. Chairman, I'm happy to move that we rise and report the estimates of Community Development.

[Motion carried]

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

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, 2005, for the following department.

Community Development: operating expense and equipment/inventory purchases, \$676,942,000; capital investment, \$6,562,000.

The Deputy Speaker: Does the Assembly concur in this report?

Hon. Members: Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: Opposed? So ordered.
The hon. Deputy Government House Leader.

Mr. Stevens: Thanks, Mr. Speaker. I move that we adjourn until 1:30 tomorrow afternoon.

[Motion carried; at 10:04 p.m. the Assembly adjourned to Wednesday at 1:30 p.m.]

