

Standing Committee on Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund Act

Monday, October 4, 1982

Chairman: Dr. Reid

2:10 p.m.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. Perhaps the committee can come to order and we can get into this afternoon's business. First of all, if any members find typographical errors in the transposing of their proposed recommendations in the list distributed to you, it was probably because I had a fairly good attack of laryngitis and was that unusual entity, a speechless politician. It may return this afternoon. It may not be your remarks that render me speechless again.

Perhaps we can go into the recommendations. I took the liberty of classifying them as best I thought they fit into the various divisions of the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund. Then I went to some general recommendations which did not appear to require legislative change. There is then a sequence of recommendations that would require legislative changes if implemented. Because of the distribution by various members of the committee, to try to let everybody get fair representation in the time of the discussions, I've put the divisions first which have the most people putting in proposed recommendations. If we get to any recommendations where the member proposing them is not here, I think we should postpone those until tomorrow afternoon. That will at least let people speak to their own recommendations. I notice there is one by the Member for Calgary McCall, and he's not here this afternoon.

Perhaps we can start with page 1, subsection A, CAPITAL PROJECTS DIVISION. The first recommendation proposed is by the Member for Macleod. If he'd like to address anything to the proposal, perhaps he could go ahead.

MR. FJORDBOTTEN: Mr. Chairman, I'd like to read the recommendation into the record. It says:

Recommends that the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund provide funding for water management within the Province. Water management to include irrigation, drainage and the assurance of community domestic water supplies.

At the moment, the Heritage Savings Trust Fund is making a significant contribution to the expansion of irrigation in southern Alberta. The headworks program through the Department of the Environment is a vitally important part of that. The consideration of a dam on the Oldman River is important not only for irrigation but for communities along the river. They cannot look at real economic expansion in a number of areas without having an assured water supply. For example, downstream between Fort Macleod and Lethbridge, the flow at one time in the winter was as low as 32 cubic feet a second. The information I have received suggests that with one dam on the Oldman River, the minimum flow would never be below 137 cubic feet per second. That would be a significant increase in the year-round water supply available for communities.

In the recommendation, I mentioned assurance of community domestic water supplies because that has to be the most important area we look at. We have to manage our fresh water supplies properly. There are communities not only

on the major rivers but among smaller creeks. There has to be water management on those creeks, because they are presently using a number of creeks for irrigation, which cuts down on the amount of water available for communities. That is why we should look at small communities and their assured water supply when we look at spending Heritage Savings Trust Fund money on water management on river systems.

In addition to irrigation and those water supplies, many areas in the northern part of the province in particular have a drainage problem. I ask all members to support this resolution, which would see the emphasis remain on not only irrigation but drainage and the assurance of domestic water supply for communities.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Chairman, I propose to vote for the recommendation, but I want to make several comments in terms of its implications. First of all, while I support the recommendation, I would not want this support to be construed by some minister down the road as saying I endorse what may be a further definition of water management, which might include something called water diversion. There's a difference between water management and water diversion. Because we don't have water diversion included in the phrase before us, I certainly could support the proposal.

I want to make a couple of other comments about the recommendation. Because irrigation has been something in southern Alberta, we have tended to think of irrigation only in terms of southern Alberta. As a matter of fact, one of the interesting areas for irrigation potential is in northern Alberta. Considerable land could be irrigated in the Peace River valley. The northern region of the Department of Agriculture is quite excited about the potential for irrigation in the north. As we look at investment of the trust fund, it's not only proper consideration of irrigation in the south but we should be looking elsewhere as well.

The Member for Macleod is certainly correct in identifying drainage as a major problem. The long-standing formula on drainage in northern Alberta has been unsatisfactory. I'm sure most of the northern MLAs are well aware of the long list of projects that are waiting for funding because drainage costs are simply too high. Even with the change made from 50:50 to 75:25, too high a burden is thrust upon the local taxpayers.

Apart from making some observations about water diversion -- I don't want to rehash a debate which took some several weeks a year ago -- the only other caveat I would express is that I'm certainly not enthusiastic about the headworks on the Oldman. I think there are other options. But because we're not getting down to specifics, the basic concept of trust fund money being invested in irrigation, drainage, and community domestic water supplies is reasonable. With the caveats I've expressed, I support the recommendation.

MR. KNAAK: Mr. Chairman, I too support the intent of the resolution. The only question I have for my colleague is the magnitude of funding he envisages for this recommendation. I ask the question because the recommendations in total, if all funded, would well exceed the allocation for the capital projects division. So if possible, I would like him to give an absolute number.

In addition to that, whenever there is a competitive use for funds, some conception of the cost/benefit or benefit/cost ratio has to be kept in mind when viewing competing projects. I wonder if my colleague has some cost/benefit threshold that must be met before any project will proceed in this recommendation.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Do any other members wish to get in before the Member for Macleod responds to the question?

MR. PAHL: Mr. Chairman, I certainly support the general intent of this recommendation, and it's really not a new one in terms of our committee. In supporting it I would like to point out, just as a reminder, that the capital projects division already provides assistance for flood control, specifically the Lesser Slave Lake outlet project. I was also under the impression that there was a community water supply program in place under the Department of the Environment regular funding.

I guess my only caveat in terms of supporting it would be that we not rush in where there's no void, or that programs in place are already satisfying that need, although I appreciate that in southern Alberta the need to assure water supplies for communities tends to be larger scale than simply drilling water wells or running small pipelines. I just want to reinforce that we shouldn't forget a certain amount of capital projects funding is already going into water management in the sense of headworks control, drainage, flood control, and on our regular programming we have fresh, potable water programs for municipalities and individual citizens.

MR. FJORDBOTTEN: Mr. Chairman, the Member for Mill Woods raises a good point in that there are a number of other programs. For example, small communities. We have a very generous program of assistance for communities to put in reservoirs for water and that type of thing.

The member also mentioned a number of other programs in other parts of the province. They would only enhance what I'm talking about here. We have to look at trying to maintain the water flows we have instead of letting everything go in the spring and have it dwindle from there on down.

My colleague mentioned an absolute number. I don't have the kind of crystal ball on what absolute numbers might be. For example, in southern Alberta a river basin study is going on now. They're meeting with communities to look at what their projected water needs might be over the next 10 years or so, so that some planning could be taken on streams for their water supplies. Until that type of study is in, there is no way you can come up with an absolute number on what costs might be. In the recommendation I looked not at trying to replace a number of programs already in existence, but trying to enhance and protect our water supplies.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Any other remarks before we have a vote on this one?

Those members in favor of Recommendation 1? Those against? Carried.

Recommendation 2, the Member for St. Albert.

MRS. FYFE: Mr. Chairman, I bring forward this recommendation on the establishment of a foundation for nutritional research. In the past, the Alberta government has shown deep concern for the need for medical research. This was demonstrated by the introduction of the Alberta Heritage Foundation for Medical Research Bill, brought into this Assembly by the Premier, who took on this project and travelled extensively, looking at other models of research throughout the world and establishing a process whereby there would be evaluation of the foundation and the funding.

I bring this forward not as a duplicate of the medical research foundation but as a distinct and separate field. It's generally well accepted that nutrition plays an extremely important part in both prevention and treatment of disease, but at present very limited funding is available for nutritional research. There is some funding, but it is difficult to obtain, and there's also a lack of continuity and the assurance that the funding would continue. This recommendation, in my opinion, would facilitate interaction between nutritional and medical research. I would look for support from the members of this committee.

MR. PAHL: Mr. Chairman, I guess I have some questions about this proposal from a priority basis. When you think about the fact that although Albertans spend more on health care and by all indices are the healthiest people in the world, we tend to use our hospitals and medical facilities far more than any other group in Canada, perhaps there is some need to do some basic research. I would just ask the member whether there's really been a demonstration of the need for this relative to perhaps some others. I almost intuitively feel that we're really talking about research into life styles. It seems the Canada Food Guide tells you what you should eat, but in fact it's not all that certain that people eat what they should eat more than the diet as a subject of study in itself.

Maybe I'm missing the intent of this. I think any research we do is good, particularly as we're a food producer. But I wonder whether the need is really demonstrated in view of some competing priorities I've seen in recommendations this committee will have to face. Mr. Chairman, I think it's worth while for all of us to recognize that we've had some fundamental changes proposed for the Heritage Savings Trust Fund over the next two years, where the money going into the fund will decline. As a consequence, I think we can anticipate that our options for recommending expenditures will also decline. Perhaps I'm using a shotgun on a rather specific problem, but it might stimulate the debate that I think we as a committee should in some way address in considering these recommendations. Perhaps that might start it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Does any other member of the committee have anything to say? Apropos of the remarks by the Member for Mill Woods, of course he's getting at my other profession. I really don't see any reason why some of the nutritional research could not come under the aegis of the Heritage Medical Research Foundation. Some of it would be at a fairly basic level to do with the physiological results of malnutrition, which can include too much as well as too little, especially with some vitamins. But I think there is a place for looking at what the member referred to as life styles. Many people, in spite of the Canada Food Guide and many other advertising programs, are still very ignorant about what the basic nutritional requirements are. Part of that ignorance is based on the fact that, for instance, medical students get very little instruction on nutrition in medical school. Dieticians don't always fill the gaps that are left. I think you'll see that by the number of medical families who have obese children. They shouldn't have, but they do.

Are there any further remarks by members of the committee, or any closing remarks by the Member for St. Albert in answer to the Member for Mill Woods?

MRS. FYFE: Yes, thank you, Mr. Chairman. I can't present figures for a specific demonstrated need in a nice, neat little package, but like most preventive programs, it's maybe difficult to set out an actual definitive need, as you're not sure how much you're going to prevent by incorporating research, and research in general falls into this category. I would certainly be satisfied if the present Heritage Foundation for Medical Research included a segment of their funding for nutritional research. I believe there is a tendency to approve programs or projects that are medically oriented in a strict term, rather than having a nutritional emphasis. Because there's such an interrelationship between nutrition and disease, I'm trying to bring this forward as a principle that would be considered, either by that foundation or as a separate fund.

Just this last week I read an article on nutrition and cancer patients that determined that severe malnutrition often afflicts cancer patients simply because they lose their appetite. If they can find one area that may assist in stimulating appetite, this could contribute to the nutritional balance

within the patient and perhaps contribute to the whole treatment of the disease. That's just one example that was in the news within the last few days.

As I said, basically I would like to put forward the principle of the important nature of nutritional research in the whole area of our research concern.

MR. PAHL: May I ask a supplementary question in terms of the anticipated amount of this endowment?

MRS. FYFE: I hesitate to bring forward a specific figure. I would like to see the principle included and have this recommendation go to the Provincial Treasurer, who would, I hope, have more analysis on the number of applications that have come in related to this area of research so a figure could be incorporated into the capital projects division.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Those in favor of Recommendation 2, the proposed recommendation by the Member for St. Albert? Those against? I guess it loses.

Proposed Recommendation 3, the Member for Spirit River-Fairview.

MR. NOTLEY: This recommendation was presented to me a little over a year ago by the Alberta division of the Canadian Union of Public Employees at the hearings I held on the trust fund. Members may recall that several years ago there was a workers' inquiry into all nursing homes in this province: public, those that were private but sponsored by non-profit organizations, and profit-making nursing homes. The workers' inquiry conclusions were that while the standards in our non-profit nursing homes, both public and in several cases church sponsored, were quite high, the standards in not all but at least some of the private nursing homes were, to put it mildly, somewhat less than adequate. The inquiry documented a number of those concerns in a fairly specific way.

I guess the question that arises is whether the nursing home industry is a proper place for the profit motive. One can look at it first of all from a philosophical point of view. I guess it would be fair to say that I would probably differ with my legislative colleagues in this committee on that issue. It is not a place for private profit, I think. We should be providing the very best standards and service for our senior citizens who are ill, and just recognize that as a public responsibility which society in total must shoulder.

Setting aside that philosophical predisposition I have to the profit motive in the nursing home industry, I think we really have to ask ourselves whether -- particularly in difficult times where corners invariably have to be cut in order to maintain a profit -- it's acceptable for this kind of operation to continue in Alberta. The workers' inquiry documented many, many, many concerns. I think members, regardless of their philosophical orientation, would be concerned about the CUPE workers' inquiry.

It can be said that there are two ways to protect the patient in nursing homes. Through the Department of Hospitals and Medical Care, we have a group entrusted with the responsibility of periodically checking to make sure the standards are upheld. Unfortunately the workers' inquiry suggests that that defence doesn't work as well as it should or could. The other step we've set out in legislative form is the Health Facilities Review Committee. Without getting into a major political argument at this stage, I think it's fair to say that the consensus among employees in the nursing homes was that that committee wasn't as effective as it could have been in investigating some of the concerns about patient treatment in the nursing homes.

The bottom line of all this, Mr. Chairman, is that the Alberta division of CUPE, which represents the people who work in the industry, has unanimously recommended that Alberta move toward non-profit nursing home care. That is the reason they presented the recommendation to me. I think they have made a good case. I just want to make it clear that in presenting this recommendation to the committee, I'm presenting not only the views of the Alberta division of CUPE but views that I share and fully support in sponsoring the recommendation.

MR. ISLEY: Mr. Chairman, while I agree with the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview that we should be concerned about the level of care we're providing to senior citizens in nursing homes, I can't support his motion, and I take some objection to some of the wording. I don't think anyone is profiting from the misfortune or ill health of senior citizens. They may be profiting from providing service to senior citizens. If they can provide that service at an acceptable level in the mishmash of public and private nursing homes we have out there, that leaves me with little concern.

In my constituency, I have a privately operated nursing home that I've visited on a number of occasions. The seniors in there seem quite happy. They relate well with the staff. The service seems to be at a high level. I still view the best protection for the care of our senior citizens as being the extended family members who pay periodic visits and express concern for the older members of their family.

I will be voting in opposition to this motion, Mr. Chairman.

MRS. FYFE: Mr. Chairman, a report has just been completed on the review of nursing homes throughout our province. The committee that undertook this report visited every nursing home in the province of Alberta, and I think has brought forward one of the best reports I have read in a long time. It's easy to read. The recommendations are clear, concise, and directed at improving care for those in our province who require nursing home care. The recommendations do not include one such as (3), which we're considering this afternoon. I think we have to look at nursing homes in a much broader context than this recommendation. Private nursing home care does not necessarily mean there's going to be any hardship or cutting of corners. In fact, it can be an enhanced type of programming and care that certain seniors wish to pay for. One of the recommendations of the report I just referred to was that some senior citizens would rather pay a higher fee but have a higher level of care. Unfortunately, when government becomes involved in providing a level of service for all, there's usually a top limit because dollars are set in priorities of total government expenditure. Therefore it does not enhance or encourage nursing home care for those people who wish to have a different standard.

Some of the concerns I have on nursing homes are in the report, such as senior citizens often having to share accommodation when they're not used to sharing with a stranger. I think these are goals we should work for. If we're going to spend money on nursing homes, a lot of recommendations in that report would provide excellent care, in addition to what we have already in this province, rather than spending dollars purchasing nursing homes that are providing excellent care today. There's a private nursing home in the constituency I represent. It's operated by a religious order and has an excellent reputation in the community. It provides a level of care and community support that I'm sure is not equalled anywhere. I have visited the home many times, and I have never received a complaint from any of the residents in that facility.

I think we can move in a lot of areas in nursing homes, but in my opinion this one would not contribute to providing an upgraded level of care for

seniors in this province or for those who require nursing home care. It is certainly a very narrow interpretation, one I could not support.

MR. PAHL: Mr. Chairman, some of my comments were provided by two members who spoke earlier. As I read the recommendation as now presented, not only its philosophical underpinning, it's a pretty direct slap in the face to the non-profit organizations that own their facilities. That might have simply been an oversight rather than an intention, although I don't agree with the philosophical underpinning either. I hope the member wouldn't want to use a shotgun to kill a fly, if I can use that term. I wonder if the member might put a qualification on that one.

MR. MACK: Mr. Chairman, although I share the concerns expressed by the mover of the proposal insofar as profiteering, I would quickly point out the many benefits that private organizations provide in terms of quality care. To suggest that the proposal presented to the hon. member by an organized group, which basically may have had an experience in one or perhaps two isolated areas as opposed to the broad spectrum of the province, and the excellent service being provided to many hundreds of senior citizens and others -- they're not all seniors who require this type of extended care. To suggest there isn't quality because of the monetary aspect is totally incorrect. It is this area that I would like to address my remarks to. Many Albertans who require nursing home care, be they seniors or the profoundly handicapped, are certainly not in want and in places which lack quality care. There's more than just the cost of running a health care facility of this nature. It's the tender care which people provide. Much of this is provided by the volunteers and families. To suggest that it equates strictly to whether it's under government -- governments haven't totally demonstrated that they have, because they depend on people. Whether it's a government managed or a privately managed health care facility, it's the people who actually deliver the health care who provide either excellent quality care or minimal care. I think the vast majority of the privately managed facilities have demonstrated that they provide excellent care. Because of this, I can't support the proposed (3), that governments should purchase or take over all the health care facilities in the province.

MR. NOTLEY: I want to make one point in answer to the Member for Edmonton Mill Woods. I appreciate his raising that issue, because the wording should actually relate directly to profit-making nursing homes. I certainly acknowledge that some homes in this province administered in one way or another by religious orders have done an excellent job. I have a case in my own riding where an auxiliary hospital was transferred to our Fairview hospital several years ago. For many years it had been administered by a religious order. My own judgment of the work the order did was that they provided first-class service in this auxiliary hospital. There's a difference between non-profit private homes operated by a religious order, for example, and homes operated to make a dollar. You've totally different motives. The motives of a religious order are to provide a service, not to make money. The motive of any privately operated home in business is the same motive as in any other business. It must eventually make a dollar, otherwise the investor is not going to invest in that kind of operation. So there is a distinction between the private non-profit and the private profit.

The Member for Bonnyville raised the question about misfortune or ill health. No one should profit from misfortune or ill health. That's one of my concerns. Because the people the Member for Edmonton Belmont talks about, the tender, loving care of the people who work in the system -- their own inquiry documented many examples of misfortune in some of these homes. The Member for

St. Albert properly points out that there was another investigation, another committee. The nursing home committee concluded that if people want to pay for better service, let them do so. As I see it, unless the workers' inquiry report is totally wrong -- and I find that hard to believe -- the problem is not that these private nursing homes are providing Cadillac service that people pay more for, it is that too often the service has serious limitations in terms of the quality of care.

Mr. Chairman, I just have to say that notwithstanding the province's nursing home report, I think the argument still stands that this province would be better advised to acquire ownership of the private profit aspect of the industry, although I would agree with the Member for Edmonton Mill Woods that the wording should be specifically related to the province's profit-making nursing homes so it's clear that we're not going to be taking over nursing homes operated by religious orders. They may or may not eventually sell to the province or sell to someone. This of course is happening with many of our auxiliary hospitals and health facilities. At some point the order decides it can no longer continue to provide the service, as it did in my constituency. It then chose to turn it over to the local hospital authority. It's working very well, and it worked very well as a private order before.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Any further remarks? With the provision that it apply to the profit-making nursing homes, those in favor of . . . Sorry, the Member for Edmonton Mill Woods.

MR. PAHL: Mr. Chairman, if we're going to amend, we should amend them in a structured way or perhaps bring them back.

MR. NOTLEY: Perhaps with your permission, I would move:

Recommends that Heritage Savings Trust Fund monies be employed to acquire ownership of all the Province's profit-making nursing homes
. . .

MR. PAHL: I'm still going to vote against it, on philosophical grounds.

MR. NOTLEY: Fair enough. I'll just make the motion so we won't have to go through an amendment, and then that's clear. The members can vote either for or against, as they choose.

MR. PAHL: Mr. Chairman, that's fine. I just wonder as to the procedure. If we're going to go through a lot of them, there's going to be debate. Are we going to resolve each one? Or if it's found to be wanting in some sense and someone wants to come back with it, are we going to be allowed to come back tomorrow or are we going to work through each one? Mr. Chairman, I guess what I'm concerned with is *ad hoc* amendment as we go. I remember that last year it sort of tended to . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Perhaps that would be better. I think last year we got into some horrendous amendments, subamendments, and everything else on the floor. If it's acceptable to the Member for Spirit River-Fairview, he could reword it and bring it back tomorrow. Then we set the precedent that that's how we'll do it from now on. I think we have 115 altogether, haven't we?

MR. NOTLEY: Okay. We'll just hold it over.

MR. CHAIRMAN: We have 114. If we start getting into debates on the amendments on the floor . . .

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Chairman, if I just moved it with that addition. Then everyone is clear on it, and they can vote either yea or nay.

MR. PAHL: I agree with that specific, but I just wondered if we could set the rules.

MR. NOTLEY: Sure. Okay.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Proposed Recommendation No. 3 is held for amendment and will be resubmitted tomorrow by the member. Then we can vote on it as amended.

MR. KNAAK: Mr. Chairman, in the interests of saving time, why can't we deal with an amendment right now? It's simple enough, unless you want to rewrite the whole motion. But surely when there's just a simple amendment, as the Member for Spirit River-Fairview is proposing, he can formally amend his own motion, as we've done in the past. Or he could be permitted to withdraw it and reword it, then go on with it. It's going to take twice as much time doing it the other way.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The difficulty I'm referring to is the one last year, where for half an afternoon we debated amendments and subamendments to some proposed recommendations. There are some coming up later on that that may well apply to. But I'm open to the committee's suggestion as to whether we just take the relatively simple amendment to this one this afternoon.

MR. NOTLEY: The reason I moved it is that it hadn't actually been formally moved. I just moved it with the addition to clarify it, so we wouldn't get into the business of setting any precedent on amendments.

MR. KNAAK: Mr. Chairman, I guess if there's a complex matter that requires amendments and subamendments, the Chairman can use his discretion to ask a member to reword it and bring it back the next day. But on a simple one like this -- you know, the Chairman can use his discretion.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I detect a split anyway, so perhaps we can deal with this one this afternoon and be finished with it. Proposed Recommendation No. 3:

. . . that Heritage Savings Trust Fund monies be employed to acquire ownership of all the Province's profit-making nursing homes for the public sector, on the principle that . . .

There's no change subsequent to that.

Those in favor of proposed Recommendation No. 3? Those against? Proposed Recommendation No. 3, as worded, is lost.

Proposed Recommendation No. 5, the Member for Edmonton Mill Woods.

MR. PAHL: Mr. Chairman, just to place the recommendation on the record:

. . . an Endowment Fund for Tourism with the interest earned to be used to assist the private sector tourism industry to develop additional facilities for Tourism throughout Alberta.

Mr. Chairman, in the interests of tightening the words, perhaps I restricted it somewhat. It wouldn't necessarily be limited to additional facilities. In my view, this endowment would also be used to develop educational resources, provide a better integration of services to tourism, provide innovative financing packages or alternatives for seasonal businesses, and develop

methods for -- and I think this an issue we're going to have to address in Alberta, in terms of providing access to our non-renewable resource tourist attractions in, for want of a better term, an energy efficient and effective manner.

Mr. Chairman, the rationale behind the recommendation is that tourism is the third largest industry in Alberta. It is essentially based on a renewable resource. Given its place in Alberta's economy and the fact that it is a renewable resource rather than a non-renewable resource, I think we should be reinvesting in that industry. Certainly on the energy side, one of our base industries, heritage fund moneys have been used through the Alberta Oil Sands Technology and Research Authority. On the other base industry in Alberta, farming, we have Farming for the Future plus a variety of other reinvestments.

So I seek support for the endowment, which I would estimate at about \$20 million to start with, so it's relatively modest. As it would grow and become more utilized -- and as the heritage fund perhaps renews its former vigor in terms of growth -- more could be considered.

MR. CHAIRMAN: In view of the discussion we just had about minor amendments, can I ask the member if he was suggesting that it should say "to develop additional facilities and programs"? Or is "facilities" being used in the very broad term? Is that acceptable?

MR. PAHL: In view of my remarks, I'd rather stay with the words as written, but with that additional description or, at least, understanding.

MR. CHAIRMAN: It's in the record anyway. Any further remarks on the tourism endowment idea? In view of the location I represent, perhaps I'd better stay out of this discussion.

MR. MACK: Mr. Chairman, I wonder if I could ask my colleague if he would expand on how this endowment would be co-ordinated with the private sector, which in many instances is doing its own thing today. For example, in this major urban centre there is an authority that is promoting tourism, with the co-operation of the government, with grants and so on. I'm just lost in understanding or totally appreciating the major thrust of the proposal, as to how it would tie in these other groups that currently are receiving funding from various levels of government in promoting tourism. What are we going to be doing that is new in this proposal? I'd be interested if the hon. member could expand on that.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Could the Chair make a comment? Is the member referring to the assistance through TIAALTA?

MR. MACK: Right. There's so much being done now. What are we going to be doing that's effectively new with this type of foundation? How do we tie them all together?

MR. PAHL: Mr. Chairman, I would envisage the creation of a foundation. Obviously you would recruit members of the board from people within the industry -- I guess TIAALTA plus perhaps the hotel industry, the outfitters' industry. Certainly the government departments that have a role would be involved, and I'd hope the public at large would be involved.

In terms of relating it to existing expenditures, Mr. Chairman, I think it's fair to say that most of those expenditures are for advertising programs, more on an operational basis. I would like to see us take a longer term and perhaps more comprehensive view of the third largest industry in Alberta. I know there's been a wish for developing a hospitality university, if you will,

so the service sector of our province could be better trained, as is the case in Europe. Certainly all of us as tourists -- and you're defined as a tourist if you're more than 50 miles from home -- have experienced some of the deficiencies that the travelling public experiences.

I would not be so bold as to suggest what the answers are, but I certainly know that we all could envisage problems as to how we keep this industry healthy. I would be more inclined to think about longer term, almost institutionalized activities, rather than what I would call the straight operating or promotional types of expenditures engaged in now.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Any further members who want to speak on this one?

Those in favor of proposed Recommendation 5? Those against? It's carried.

Proposed Recommendation 6, the northern rail link, the Member for Spirit River-Fairview.

MR. NOTLEY: There is just one minor editorial change. It should be "links" rather than "link" because there are several options.

This is a recommendation which has come before the committee before and has been accepted on at least two or three occasions -- '77 and '78, I believe. But I would say to members of the committee that it's probably much more important that it be accepted today than three or four years ago. At this stage of the game we've got the Gilson report, which urban members may not be overly familiar with, but rural members know that over the next few years it will have some considerable impact on what the farmer has to pay. In northern Alberta, where we have not only a very large number of permit holders but the vast majority of the arable land that can be opened up, that means the actual distance to market becomes a major issue.

A few years ago the regional Department of Agriculture did some fairly good work, in my judgment, on quantifying the distances to ship grain from various shipping points in the Peace River country to Prince Rupert. If we take the NAR, which is now owned by the CN, and we use Hines Creek as an example, which is a reasonably large shipping point in the Peace River country, to go via Edmonton out to the CN main line to Prince Rupert is 491 miles further than going via either Fort St. John or Dawson Creek. That's about 1,000 miles there and back. So you've got a very significant turnaround time problem. But most important of all to the farmers now under this new Gilson proposal, should the federal government proceed with it or some variation of it over the next number of years, they're going to be paying a higher share of the freight. Obviously if that freight is over 500 miles further than it need be by having direct links, that is going to have a very significant economic impact not only on existing farmers in the entire Peace River block but on the areas that have potential for arable land.

I should point out as well that when Mr. Justice Hall looked into grain transportation in western Canada, one of his recommendations was with respect to northern rail links. He didn't specifically nail it down to the option of Fairview to Fort St. John or Spirit River to Dawson Creek -- one option would be from Manning, for example, to Fort St. John -- but did make the point, and properly so, that if we're going to streamline our grain transportation system, it just doesn't make sense to haul grain 500 miles further and to haul grain cars 1,000 miles further because of a system that was set up 50 years ago.

Admittedly we're dealing with another province, but ironically enough in the past the Crow rate -- while I very much defend the continuation of the Crow rate -- not applying to the BCR perhaps made it difficult to work out an agreement. I would say that the administrative obstacles now are not as significant as they were, for sure. The cost to the farmer will be much

greater as a result of the new formula unless we find some more convenient and expeditious way of getting grain out to the west coast.

I guess the argument could be presented that surely it is up to the railroads to make those investments. I think we have to be pretty naive if we think the CN is going to do that voluntarily. We'll wait a long, long time. We have to be even more naive if we think a federal government with a \$20 billion deficit is going to do it. The question is whether or not we are going to take the initiative in northwestern Alberta, working closely with northeastern B.C., and expedite grain movement, although other types of commodities will be able to access this railroad and be hauled more expeditiously to the west coast as well. But certainly the major beneficiary would be the grain industry in the Peace and agriculture in general in that part of the province.

So I suggest to members that the principle accepted in '77 and '78 is even more valid today. I hope we could have support for this particular proposition.

MR. ISLEY: Mr. Chairman, I tend to agree with the concept presented here by the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview. I'm also pleased to hear that he's prepared to accept changes to the Crow rate. I have a couple of questions, since he knows the geography of that part of the province much better than I do. What type of mileage are we looking at here, and do we have any handle on costs?

MR. FJORDBOTEN: Mr. Chairman, I'm pleased that he supports change in the Crow also, because that's one thing that I think is going to be vital to economic development in Alberta. One of the concerns we raised was opening up new lands and new areas in the northern part of the province and the impact the change would have on those new lands.

I have two questions. The first was the same as my colleague from Bonnyville as far as distance and costs are concerned. The other question, because he knows the geography far better, is the concern about the rail gauge of the BCR and if that would create a problem in trying to expand rail links.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Perhaps before the Member for Spirit River-Fairview gets back, I have a couple of remarks that have to do with the load on the track in the Edson constituency through Jasper. This would in actual fact by-pass that, which might well be to the benefit of that. Even twinned, that railroad's going to be very busy in the future with sulphur, coal, petrochemicals, potash, and everything else. That's another factor involved.

The Member for Spirit River-Fairview.

MR. NOTLEY: In terms of mileages, one could consider three routes. One is from Spirit River to Dawson Creek, about 55 miles. From Hines Creek, where the NAR, now the CNR, was finished, over to Fort St. John is approximately 100 miles. Manning straight through to Fort St. John would be approximately 130 miles. I'm sorry, I can't give the Member for Bonnyville any estimates as to what the costs would be.

On the question of the rail gauge: yes, there could be interchanges. The matter of whether or not the BCR would be able to take grain cars was raised several years ago as a result of our discussions in '78. You may recall that there have been certain problems on the BCR between Dawson Creek and Prince George. By the way, we were advised of this by the CN, who have just a little conflict of interest, I might say, on this issue. But in any event, I contacted the BCR people who advised me that (a) they could take the cars, (b) they have made the physical capital repair to the railroad, and (c) they'd welcome our traffic if they got it.

MR. PAHL: Mr. Chairman, I recall our discussion of previous years, where I think a recommendation was made that the possibility of a northwestern rail link be studied, and I was under the impression that that request or recommendation of the committee was rather well received by the Department of Economic Development, to be specific. Although I guess it reflects the fact that it's not an area of strong interest for me directly, I can't recall ever hearing anything more on that in terms of the results of the study. I suppose in that sense I'd be reluctant to support a motion that begs or suggests that we go ahead without receiving some clear indication of the results of our earlier recommendation. I had a clear feeling that something was being studied with respect to it, and perhaps the mover could enlighten me a little more on that.

MR. NOTLEY: Yes, there was a study. If members wish to hold it over, they could certainly do that and we could deal with it tomorrow. There have been a number of studies. I think perhaps the most comprehensive was the Hall commission, and they recommended that we do something. We have done a study under the Economic Development portfolio. There seemed to be some question not about the value to agriculture -- there's no question that that would be a boon to agriculture -- but about how valuable it would be to other types of industry. That is available, and as I recall, it was tabled a year or two back. I can't give you the bottom line of the recommendations, so if members wish to hold it they might well want to do that.

The other point is that while not being happy about the Crow rate changes -- and I want to make that clear; the fact of the matter is that we're dragged kicking and screaming -- there's absolutely no doubt that this federal Liberal government is going to bring in changes to the Crow, which means that the issue to northern farmers, and to Alberta, is just going to be an awful lot more important. Even the study the Department of Economic Development did would have been pre-Crow. I think that would be an enormous factor in any sort of cost/benefit now, because we're going to have to pick up a portion of that increase, and the people who are going to be picking it up are northern Alberta farmers.

But certainly, if the member wished to hold it over until tomorrow so he had an opportunity to review that document -- I believe it was tabled a year or so ago.

MR. CHAIRMAN: What's the wish of the committee, and the Member for Edmonton Mill Woods in particular?

MR. PAHL: Mr. Chairman, speaking only for myself, I would feel much better about voting on it if I had the results of our previous recommendation, or at least not so much the results but the sequel, or whatever. Is Mr. Notley undertaking to report that one-page conclusion or whatever in bringing it forward tomorrow, or do we do it ourselves?

MR. CHAIRMAN: What about the other members of the committee? Are they happy with that? So we hold it until tomorrow for the information.

Recommendation No. 7, proposed by the Member for Bonnyville.

MR. ISLEY: Mr. Chairman, Recommendation 7 is a very simple, double-barrelled recommendation. As members of the committee are aware, education is offered in this province using both French and Ukrainian as languages of instruction. The recommendation being put before you would be to translate the heritage learning resource materials into both French and Ukrainian and do the necessary printing to make them available for the classes using those two

languages as languages of instruction. The estimated cost of doing that over a five-year period would be slightly in excess of \$20 million.

I so move it, Mr. Chairman.

MR. D. ANDERSON: Mr. Chairman, could the Member for Bonnyville indicate how many people this would benefit, or has he any figures which would indicate what use there would be for these French and [Ukrainian] translations for the \$20 million investment?

MR. ISLEY: Mr. Chairman, without doing a little research, I couldn't give you the exact number of students involved. I know a number of communities across this province have schools that offer the so-called immersion courses in French and Ukrainian.

MRS. FYFE: I wonder if the member has any idea what use is made of the material that was translated. I was able to deliver at least one box of learning resource material in French to the nursing homes and senior citizens within the constituency I represent, and I wonder if he's been able to observe in the classroom how well this material has been used.

MR. ISLEY: Mr. Chairman, the feedback I received from teachers involved in both French and Ukrainian educational programs is a serious lack of materials -- I don't think that has changed significantly over the past two or three years either -- especially Canadian-developed, Alberta-based materials.

MRS. FYFE: Mr. Chairman, a further question. I wonder if a recommendation such as this has ever come through the ATA or the School Trustees' Association. This has not been brought to my attention before, and I have a number of French immersion programs within the constituency I represent.

MR. PAHL: Mr. Chairman, to the mover of this motion. I wonder if the member would indicate whether, in his view, this would represent a trend towards translating such documents into any other language, once there was a certain critical mass. I suppose that's really the basis of the question of the Member for Calgary Currie. There's a Chinese school in Edmonton. There's quite a number of people of diverse ethnic origins throughout our province, and I wonder whether this would be the start of a recommendation that would suggest that, once the numbers are to a certain level, there be an undertaking. I would like to have him explore the implications of the recommendation without any further comment.

MR. ISLEY: Mr. Chairman, the Member for Edmonton Mill Woods is touching on something the Curriculum Policies Board in this province has been grappling with for some time: developing curriculum in the various languages people desire to use in this province. The movements made at that level and through Alberta Education appear to be support where numbers warrant the multicultural, multilinguistic nature of the make-up of our province. I submit that the only reason the two languages are specified in the motion at this point is that those are the only two languages other than English that we currently use as languages of instruction. If we move in this direction, I fully expect that at some future time you have German, Chinese, or any other language used as a language of instruction. The expectation would certainly be there. Personally, I think it should be there.

In response to the hon. Member for St. Albert, I'm not aware of any formal resolutions passed by the ATA or the ASTA. I'm pretty sure some of the subcommittees of the ATA have been asking for this, but without research I

couldn't comment whether it has ever gone through their annual general meeting.

MR. D. ANDERSON: Mr. Chairman, I wonder if the Member for Bonnyville would consider holding it, as we agreed to do with (6), until there is some further information. I think the concept has merit. My concern is that first of all we haven't identified what learning materials outside the heritage learning resources have been translated. I'm not sure whether these resources, without other comparable ones, would be of great value and, secondly, how many students this would benefit. Not speaking just as a heritage fund committee member but as a government and as Legislature, I think we would want to have some overall consistent policy in this regard, so perhaps we could gather some more information and deal with this resolution at a later time.

MR. ISLEY: I'd be quite prepared to do that, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Is it agreeable to the committee that we put (7) on hold and that the Member for Bonnyville presents more information about it? That does not have to be done by tomorrow.

Proposed Recommendation No. 8, the Member for St. Albert.

MRS. FYFE: Mr. Chairman, I believe previously there were six urban parks approved in cities throughout the province. As there is a total of 11 cities in the province, a number of these municipalities still have not received the benefit of an urban park program. In order to provide long-term recreation benefits to the larger communities, which serve as trading areas and also as recreation areas for a geographic region, I move the recommendation that we expand the urban parks program to include the cities of more than 10,000 people, and that we proceed with the development of planning parks within these urban communities.

MR. MUSGREAVE: Mr. Chairman, I support the idea of more parks in cities. I don't think any one of us can quarrel with that, and I'll support the motion. What does concern me about this, though, is that the province should be providing the financial wherewithal so the cities can create their own parks. This is an ongoing concern I've had as a former chairman of a finance committee with the city of Calgary. The municipalities don't have the ability to raise these kinds of moneys. That's one problem.

The other problem is that this is a jurisdictional invasion, you might call it, by the province into an area that is primarily the function of the municipality, and that is to provide recreational and park areas for its citizens. I'm glad of the cases of Calgary and Edmonton, where multimillions of dollars were spent. As a result of that move, we then moved into the other areas, and that's why I support this one. But as representatives of the people of Alberta, I do think we should be concerned with the ongoing problem of the jurisdiction of financial responsibilities between the cities and the province.

MR. PAHL: Mr. Chairman, I support it and indicate to the member who proposed it that she would have my enthusiastic support if she extended that as well to subdivisions of more than 100,000.

MR. CHAIRMAN: She'd probably get the support of the Member for Edmonton Sherwood Park if she included hamlets.

MR. PAHL: We have some park problems in Mill Woods that I think would benefit from such a slight amendment, and I recommend it to her.

Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Any other members with remarks? The Member for St. Albert, any closing remarks?

MRS. FYFE: Yes. During the whole question of the Edmonton annexation, one of the suggestions I made to the member was that they perhaps secede and go for separate municipal status. I definitely would have supported him on that if he wished to look for additional recreation funding, but I don't think he followed my advice at the time.

I just want to correct a point I made. In total, seven cities have received urban park programs. The five smaller cities in addition to the two major cities are Grande Prairie, Lethbridge, Lloydminster, Medicine Hat, and Red Deer. That leaves an additional four cities that would qualify: Camrose, Fort McMurray, St. Albert, and Wetaskiwin, which would be close to the 10,000 point, assuming their population is growing. I just wanted to correct those figures.

As far as the suggestion made, I hope that at least we are able to treat all our cities fairly and provide some urban park program. Then perhaps subdivision programs could be included in a future expansion of the program.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Those in favor of proposed Recommendation No. 8? Is the back row awake and with us? Those against? It's carried.

I think we'll hold (9) until the Member for Spirit River-Fairview gets back. Proposed Recommendation No. 10, the Member for Bonnyville.

MR. ISLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Recommendation No. 10 proposes the funding of an institute for research into learning disabilities. It's aimed at the approximately 10 to 15 per cent of the school population that has some form of development delay, although possessing near-normal, normal, or above-normal intellectual potential. The target population which the work of this institute is designed to benefit is the developmentally disabled. This term was particularly chosen because of its breadth and because it suggests an interdisciplinary approach, which would be one of the underlying principles of the institute. Essentially, the definition of a developmental disability is a condition which has caused some delay, either temporary or permanent, in the normal development of an individual in one or more aspects of human functioning. While no specific age boundaries will be established, the institute would concentrate primarily on the young child aged 0 to 8 years.

As far as the functions of the institute are concerned, it's proposed that 30 per cent of the effort would go into basic research, attempting to determine the cause of developmental disabilities, particularly from a physical perspective; approximately 40 per cent of the effort would go into applied research; and approximately 30 per cent would go into in-service and continuing education or, if you wish, manpower development. The estimated budget or cost of funding such research would be approximately \$9 million over a three-year period.

I so move it, Mr. Chairman.

MR. MUSGREAVE: Mr. Chairman, I have a problem with this suggestion in that I think there is an institute of a somewhat similar nature, called the Vocational and Rehabilitation Research Institute in Calgary, which has been established to do the very thing the hon. member is suggesting. This has been going for approximately 15 years now, in conjunction with the University of Calgary, the city of Calgary, and the Department of Social Services and Community Health of this government. I would like to know how much money has been spent, the results of this institute's work to date, and whether or not

we should be setting up another institute if we already have one in the province that I think is aimed at the very suggestion the hon. member made.

MR. CHAIRMAN: What is the name of the Calgary institution?

MR. MUSGREAVE: It's called the Vocational and Rehabilitation Research Institute, VRRI for short.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Is that to do with children or those who have acquired disabilities?

MR. MUSGREAVE: It's designed for people who have learning disabilities and deals with all age groups.

MR. ISLEY: According to my information, Mr. Chairman -- and through you to the hon. Member for Calgary McKnight -- the Vocational and Rehabilitation Research Institute is primarily concerned with research into mental retardation, which is a much narrower scope than the 10 to 15 per cent of the student population we're defining, if you wish, as being developmentally disabled. So that's an entirely different target population than this thrust would be toward.

MR. CHAIRMAN: So the Member for Bonnyville is saying that he is targeting more for those of normal intellectual capability but with specific learning disabilities to do with the learning or transmission of words, that sort of thing.

MR. ISLEY: We're talking here of the students who are in our normal classrooms and are usually capable of functioning in the normal classroom but, for some reason, have certain delayed developments in one human aspect or another.

MR. D. ANDERSON: Mr. Chairman, I support the intent of this; I'm not sure about the specifics. I also support the analysis of the member proposing the motion, with respect to the VRRI. I'm somewhat familiar with that operation, and I don't think most of the operation of that institute would relate to the kind of learning disabilities the hon. member is talking about. In my opinion, there is a definite need for us to ascertain how we best deal with learning disabilities in the classroom at a much earlier age. I think a good number of our students are still in a situation where they do not gain the education they are indeed able to, and therefore make the contribution they can, because of early detection and dealing with that on an ongoing basis. If my understanding is correct, Alberta has a good record in that regard, but we still have a great deal to do.

I'd support the intent. I'm not sure about the specific dollars or the percentage breakdowns, but I assume passage of this particular motion would deal only with investigation of the intent, not with endorsement of the specifics.

MR. PAHL: Mr. Chairman, again I support the intent, but I would seriously question whether the opportunity for directing funds to learning disabilities -- I would hope we would do a little work on the other side of the coin, into learning abilities. We have to remember that sometimes we tend to focus our research attention on the aberrations rather than the norm. Certainly we could benefit from research into improving learning abilities within our system.

I wonder if the member proposing would be able to tell me whether something like this couldn't be funded under the early childhood services innovative programs fund, for example. Also, I note there's a training institute here in Edmonton that perhaps is a counterpart of the Calgary one, although it's

probably on more of an industrial basis. In summary, it concerns me that this may have the potential for some overlap of programs that already exist.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Do any other members have questions, before the Member for Bonnyville gets back in? The Member for Bonnyville.

MR. ISLEY: Mr. Chairman, in response to the hon. Member for Edmonton Mill Woods, I suppose it could be funded from other sources; however, it isn't. At this point in time, the sources of funding the hon. member refers to tend to be short term and for applied activity in classrooms and with children, as opposed to research.

I just close by saying two things. Number one, I think there are two groups of students in our education system that we've tended to ignore. I think we've come up with some tremendous programs for the handicapped. But the group we're talking of here, the developmentally disabled, or that lower 10 to 15 per cent of the classes, have tended to be ignored. On the other end of the spectrum, the gifted child has tended to be ignored. While I'm sympathetic to his plight, I think we'd have to address that issue separately.

My closing comment would be that we're talking here about the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund. Our greatest heritage is our children, so let's not hesitate to invest some of this to develop more productive future generations, as the hon. Member for Calgary Currie referred. With that I rest, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Those in favor of proposed Recommendation No. 10? Those against? Carried.

Proposed Recommendation No. 11, the Member for Edmonton Belmont.

MR. MACK: Mr. Chairman, the basic thrust of the proposal for the design of an Alberta institute on aging is that it would be an organization to advance knowledge about aging and the aged and, through the application of this knowledge, to improve the quality of life for older people. The numbers and percentages of the elderly are increasing and will continue to increase over the next 50 years, and lack of planning will increase costs. It is projected that the number in the 65 and over age group will almost double in Alberta by the year 2001. Those 65 and over, now approximately 9 per cent of the Canadian population, may comprise 20 per cent in the year 2031. As more people live longer, they will be needing and using increasing amounts of pension and income benefits, hospital and medical services, housing and social services, educational and recreational programs. If we continue to provide services in the present manner, we will be continuing to respond to problems on a crisis basis, with resulting prohibitive costs.

Because of these, Mr. Chairman, I move this proposal to establish an institute on aging and trust it will gain support.

MR. D. ANDERSON: Mr. Chairman, I very strongly support this particular resolution. It's not a new one before this committee, but I think one whose time is here. The Symposium on Aging did in fact deal with a number of the difficulties we're facing in the area of the increasing average age of the population in Alberta. Having had a chance to participate in that symposium, I think I gained a real understanding of what the member proposing the motion has said, which is that we will continue to deal with this phenomenon, for the first time in our history, of an increasing average age to the degree that it is, without proper planning, unless we establish some mechanism for doing that. While the details have much to be worked out, I strongly support this resolution.

MR. MUSGREAVE: Most of these issues we've dealt with are the kind that nobody is going to oppose, particularly if we think there's going to be an election within the next six months.

But, Mr. Chairman, I have some concern. If we look through items (2), (5), (10), and (11), behind all these we have an objective to take public money, money belonging to taxpayers, and put it aside into institutes or organizations over which we, as politicians elected to be stewards of the public money, will not necessarily have as much control as we would have if the money were spent within government departments and agencies through our universities, hospitals, or through our various government departments.

As chairman of the Research Council of Alberta, obviously I can't be against research; as chairman of the science policy of cabinet, I can't be against research. But I am concerned about setting up all these diverse agencies with government funds over which we will have minimum control. The objectives are beautiful, but let's not forget that we're supposed to be controlling the public purse strings.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Perhaps when these things come to legislation, it will be similar to the medical research foundation; there will be some measure of reporting back.

MR. MUSGREAVE: That's my concern, Mr. Chairman. On that particular institute, the reporting back is over a long period of time, more than the life of a normal parliament in this province.

MR. PAHL: Mr. Chairman, I think my colleague is onto a very good point. I would certainly like to support some commitment by the people of Alberta, the taxpayers, to learning more about the issues that are with us and, as our demographics point out, will be with us -- you wind up stating the obvious when you say as time goes on, but that's really what it's all about.

Rather than hive off and create an independent agency with perhaps insufficient reference to the other developing bodies of knowledge in institutions that are more formally responsible for this on an ongoing basis, such as the universities in this instance -- not the Research Council -- I'd very much like to have the member and the committee consider having the recommendation referred to the universities. If the inevitable result is that more funds are dedicated to the universities to respond to it, I think that's well and good, but I have to share the concern of my colleague from Calgary McKnight that if we only look at the cost of letterhead here, we're getting out of hand.

In fairness, number (10) would really fall into the same category. I suppose if we're supporting these things with some caveats on them that may mean they find themselves back into more traditional ways of funding them, fair enough. If we can support them here, and it tends to highlight the problems and to direct funding from somewhere else, fine. I find myself in difficulty wanting not to support (11) for the same reason that I shouldn't support (10), having already voted for (10). Perhaps we always have this problem.

But back to an earlier point I raised in Recommendation (2), I think we have a changed situation in Alberta. We've had a rapid economic downturn. The fund will not present to us the opportunities that it did in previous times, at least not in the short term, so I would urge members to really think about that in terms of what we present to the Legislature and the government with respect to recommendations. We are going to have to set some options.

On that basis, rather than pass it I'd refer it to the Department of Advanced Education and Manpower and perhaps Social Services and Community Health, with a recommendation that perhaps they develop something. Then we

could address the issue of where it should be funded from. I guess I don't feel sufficiently strong enough about it to set it along with funding without that reference from the departments and the universities.

MR. D. ANDERSON: Mr. Chairman, just a couple of comments with respect to those made by my colleague from Edmonton Mill Woods. I would very much disagree with referring it to a university setting for further discussion. I think one of the major benefits for setting it apart is that it doesn't only have that academic approach tied to it, that in fact such an institute would be tied into the reality of the problems we'll face as a result of the increasing average age of the population.

I might indicate, and I'm sure the hon. member is aware, that with respect to the economic downturn, we're seeing fewer people in the younger age brackets move into the province, which to some extent has buffered our rapid move toward this increasing average age. Now that that economic downturn is here, at least temporarily, we will speed up to some extent in that regard. So perhaps because of that economic downturn, this institute is even more necessary. But there is that kind of long-term planning required which I think has to involve all society, not just the academic element. I know a good deal of work has been done in this respect to date and support it in the manner it was presented. I would not support the referral to an academic institution or to the Department of Advanced Education and Manpower.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Calgary McKnight. And the Chair is also going to get into this philosophical discussion.

MR. MUSGREAVE: Mr. Chairman, I have a little difficulty. I thought the study of gerontology was another phrase for the study of aging. Is this correct? You, as a medical . . . ? Good.

I'd like to point out that a professor in Calgary by the name of David Schonfield is world famous in the study of gerontology. He has given lectures both behind the Iron Curtain and in all parts of Europe, has written many books on it, and is concerned with the development of the study of aging. I'm amazed that anyone would suggest our university. I thought they were supposed to be concerned with the whole aspect of the community, not just, as the member said, the fine, small part, the academic side of things. I would point out too that Mr. Schonfield is at that age where, if he isn't retired now, he soon will be. So he's part of the problem. I think he's well aware of the problem in the province of Alberta.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Bonnyville.

MR. ISLEY: I'll relax, Mr. Chairman, for the moment.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Edmonton Mill Woods.

MR. PAHL: If I can be allowed a supplementary comment. Having been taught a course by Professor Schonfield, I'm even more comfortable with the feeling that it should be referred to an academic institution. I'll even put aside my colloquial biases and let it go to the University of Calgary rather than the University of Alberta, if need be.

MRS. FYFE: I guess I have the same concern I had in the previous recommendation, that I really hesitate to support a proliferation of funds under the capital projects division that could not be funded elsewhere. The benefit of having a Heritage Savings Trust Fund is so that we can develop or fund projects that normally this province would not be able to afford. We

would not have those extra dollars available to us through taxation or traditional sources that governments have, and I think we have to be prudent in recommendations we make.

However, if we look upon classes of people, at other times we have discussed recommendations related to the family. We just passed recommendations related to learning disabilities, which I would include part of research related to children's education. We're discussing one on aging. We have a program in place related to workers' research and education of workers' health and safety. We've looked at medical research. We've had development in library funds and educational resources. I think we have to look at the classes of our society that may or may not be included within appropriate funding institutions. If there is appropriate and sufficient funding for a study on aging, for projects related to community work, related to community senior citizen's groups, then perhaps there's not necessarily a need to pass this recommendation.

In a nutshell, I'm saying that I don't feel we have enough information along with the recommendation. I don't feel I can vote against this recommendation, because in general I support comments that where the population within this province is growing older each year, as there are fewer young people and the average age of the population each year increases, we know that we're going to face crises that we haven't had in the past. On the other hand, is it appropriate to fund new institutes or new agencies for a purpose where really there is no specific definition?

I suppose I hesitate to ask for referral of yet another motion, because it's not that I think we're afraid to make a decision on it, but I think it may be appropriate to have further information as to the specific nature, the type of institute it would be. If it's one that already is funded through various government departments, through our yearly expenditures, then it's not necessary. If it's an area where we can do work that we wouldn't ordinarily be able to afford, then I would support it.

So I would ask that the Chair consider a deferral motion on this recommendation and that the mover consider bringing back a little bit broader recommendation as to intent and what we could expect this institute to accomplish.

MR. CHAIRMAN: What about the mover of the motion?

MR. MACK: Mr. Chairman, we could certainly provide some detail to the committee in broad and specific terms of what it will do. The Senior Citizens' Advisory Council was consulted, and they're supportive of the institute. I think our primary concern in presenting this proposal is the quality of life. Presently, in reality our policies force many older persons out of the sphere of normal adult life who should not and need not be forced out.

Basically, these are some of the concerns we're doing on a fragmented basis and not in a well-planned, well-defined manner. Knowing the large number of our population who will be reaching this age, the concept is that we do it on a more structured, well-defined, and well-planned basis. The proposal intends to ensure that in future the increasing numbers of older persons will not form a depressed segment of society but must be able to continue to participate and enjoy the resources this province has. Basically, that's the concept.

If there are concerns by the committee, and they feel it should be deferred, I really believe that if we refer it to the hon. Member for Edmonton Mill Woods, if we refer it to the postsecondary educational institutes, it means we have to provide funding. We are not suggesting that we should not utilize the postsecondary educational facilities we have in the province, but there has to be a means of co-ordinating that as a special funding process. Without it,

the universities establish the priorities and which programs will go on the major block funding they receive from the government. In order to have the specifics addressed, we have to address them. That's basically what we're attempting to do. We're not suggesting that we should take anything away; we should certainly utilize those resources which are there, but we have to establish a program, designate the program, and designate the funding for the program, otherwise the program is not going to be funded and it's not going to be adopted by our universities. That's just the long and short of it all.

MR. CHAIRMAN: What's the wish of the committee? Do they wish to have more information submitted to study before they decide? I get an impression of some uncertainty about which way certain members wish to vote, depending on the concept that's being put forward. I would love to get into the discussion, as well.

MR. D. ANDERSON: [Inaudible] recommendation, or was there a motion?

MR. CHAIRMAN: No, there wasn't. Okay. So there is a motion that we hold this until the Member for Edmonton Belmont submits more written information to the members for further discussion and a decision.

Perhaps we can now go back to Recommendation No. 9. The Member for Spirit River-Fairview.

MR. PAHL: Mr. Chairman, I wonder if other members would beg my indulgence -- I know there are a couple of other members with conflicts, and there he goes -- and support a 4 o'clock adjournment. I have some conflicts I'm not able to get out of and wouldn't want to miss the opportunity to get on the new frontiers and other . . .

MR. NOTLEY: I support this excellent recommendation.

MR. PAHL: Yes. That's right. [laughter]

If I could so move, Mr. Chairman, an adjournment at 4 today.

MR. CHAIRMAN: It's fair enough with me, because I know that members with commitments -- it's like tomorrow morning. If it's agreeable with members, we can adjourn until 2 o'clock tomorrow afternoon.

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Before members go, what about the time of adjournment tomorrow afternoon: 4 o'clock or 5 o'clock?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: 4 o'clock.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Sure enough.

MR. NOTLEY: Have we made any judgment on the 12th and 13th?

MR. CHAIRMAN: The difficulty with that is that Monday is Thanksgiving, and we have fairly well allocated Mondays and Tuesdays to our discussions. I didn't want to go to Tuesday and Wednesday because I know some members, including myself, have already made their arrangements for the Wednesday.

MR. NOTLEY: It's just as bad for me as well.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Can we then have a decision that the committee will meet on the 18th and 19th rather than the 12th, because only the one day would be involved?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Same times.

The meeting adjourned at 4 p.m.

The 19th Legislature was dissolved on October 5, 1982