

[Chairman: Mr. Oldring]

[2:18 p.m.]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Welcome, everyone, to part two of this afternoon's Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund meeting. I want to officially welcome you, Mr. Minister. We're delighted that you could be with us this afternoon. I also want to compliment you and the department on an excellent audiovisual presentation. It was very informative and helped to tell part of the success that lies behind those slides, but I would certainly encourage all the members to get out and have a look at the urban parks and see firsthand just how well they are being utilized. I know that in my own city Waskasoo Park has become the pride and joy of Red Deer, and we're always very anxious to show our out-of-town guests our urban park. So we're delighted to have that overview.

We look forward to some opening comments from you this afternoon, and that will be followed, as is tradition, by some questions from some of the members on this side of the House with their hands up in the air. On that note, Mr. Minister, I'll turn it over to you for some opening remarks. Perhaps you'd be kind enough to introduce the departmental people that are with you.

MR. WEISS: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, and to members of your committee. I welcome that opportunity and would like to introduce, going from my right through to the left, in no order of priority but of importance to all and of importance to our department, Margaret Qually, the first person, who is the director of public affairs, Kananaskis Country management; immediately to my right, Ed Marshall, managing director, Kananaskis Country; to my immediate left, Dr. Barry Mitchelson, the deputy minister of the department; to his left, John Weins, manager, financial planning and management, of our finance and administrative division. Next to John is Doug Balsden, who is the section head of the outdoor recreation facilities of our recreation development division and whom you heard from earlier in the slide presentation. Next, over on the other side, would be Kyle Clifford, who is the supervisor, facilities operation maintenance, from the recreation development division. Sitting next to Kyle is Judy Davies, the secretary from my office.

So with that introduction, Mr. Chairman, I would like to go through a few minutes of some opening remarks and would like to indicate that through my travels, in particular, throughout the province I'm continually impressed by the enthusiasm of Albertans and MLAs, particularly, toward the many leisure park developments in our urban cities and our rural communities, many of which have been made possible through the support of the Heritage Savings Trust Fund.

Our showing of the slides and audiovisual, Mr. Chairman, to members of your committee was just a short introductory way of trying to let you see what we're doing with your dollars and to give you an insight and a personal view of, sometimes, the facilities you're unable to see. I welcomed your comments, Mr. Chairman, to members of your committee that you encourage them to try and see them through visitations. In addition, I'm proud that the government of Alberta has been able to provide this unique form of assistance which will ensure a legacy of natural landscapes which will be protected for our future generations. I think that's a very significant point that too many of us overlook sometimes when we're developing parks and recreation facilities.

I'm pleased to have the opportunity to be here today. I be-

lieve it should be a command performance to justify what is being done and to be accounted and held accountable for it. We certainly look forward to any questions that you or your members may have later as well. It gives us an opportunity to present some of the highlights, as I've said, of the very exciting programs which have been administered by Alberta Recreation and Parks.

There are three major program areas that I'd like to address today, which are linked by the broad objective of building a heritage resource for Albertans. These programs, of course, have been outlined earlier: the municipal recreation/tourism areas program; secondly, the urban parks program; and third, the Kananaskis Country recreation development program.

Literally millions of people are taking advantage of the leisure opportunities afforded by the Heritage Savings Trust Fund. Now, I'd like to deal with some numbers a little later to the members of your committee, Mr. Chairman, and I do mean millions. Statistics alone do not convey the full appreciation which is expressed by Albertans every day through the letters and phone calls to the Department of Recreation and Parks as well as to local elected members of government and, I'm sure, which many of you have received as well, not only in areas of criticism but constructive criticism and complimentary letters as well.

In my opinion, we have enjoyed the greatest extent of progress during this past year with the MRT area program. I'd like to refer to it as MRTA and not use the full name of municipal recreation/tourism areas program. This program focuses the province's support on the activities of dozens of rural communities by providing development and operational funding for projects which will ultimately help to diversify and improve local attractions for residents and visitors alike.

The same need for recreational opportunities in our cities resulted in the provision of support through the urban parks program over the past five years. Through this program we have helped the participating communities by providing their respective constituents with new recreational opportunities and an ability to develop greater environmental and life-style awareness. At the same time, the five cities which so enthusiastically participated in this program with the government of Alberta have benefited greatly through the establishment of a resource which has generated a renewed sense of community pride and will serve as an added valuable attraction for visitors to these centres for many, many years to come, for your children and my children and others to enjoy. Again I repeat, the reviews from program participants and public users have been overwhelmingly supportive.

You're undoubtedly aware of the fine amenities in Kananaskis Country. This is one of the immensely successful projects of the Heritage Savings Trust Fund and is a shining example of the way proper planning and management can enable us to share the recreation potential of Alberta's great outdoors while at the same time protecting the natural heritage of the vast wilderness in our Rocky Mountains.

At this point, I would like to spend a few moments providing you with a brief clarification of the programs. I'll begin with an overview of the municipal recreation areas program, the MRTA program. The purpose of the MRTA program is to provide funds for capital development of basic outdoor recreation facilities. The program is also intended to support initiative by municipalities and nonprofit groups in the provision of services and facilities that will not only provide local recreation services but also attract visitors to various locales. It is recognized that the benefits of increased tourism lie mainly in the areas of in-

creased revenues to local businesses and municipal jurisdictions and increased employment opportunities as well.

These benefits could be summarized briefly as an increase in the number of visitors, and tourist expenditures directly benefit tourism through the businesses as well. These businesses purchase services and goods from local suppliers, creating important redistributions of local and regional income. The program assists in the strengthening of local economies through diversification. Employment opportunities are created within local markets, and this reduces social assistance loads. The municipal or MRT area provides seed money -- and I say seed money -- which is often supplemented by municipalities and service clubs, thus facilitating development which will have long-term returns on a low initial investment from the province.

I think if you were to refer back to some of the slides, Mr. Chairman, you would note -- and to members of the committee -- that for each \$100,000 project that you assisted through your program, there will be a multiplier effect of at least three to four times that. So often, I believe, Mr. Balsden referred to the fact that there was \$300,000 or \$400,000 or \$500,000 injected into that specific project. That was through the communities in goods in lieu of services, and other services directly as they were funded through service clubs in the communities themselves. So it certainly has been a real catalyst, and our \$100,000 only played a small role or small part in the overall development of these facilities.

Tourism expenditures and benefits are spread throughout the province, not just concentrated in cities or national parks. I think that, too, is a benefit. Communities that pull together and develop their own municipal recreation/tourism areas can witness the positive results and develop a sense of pride among their citizens. The project becomes a source of motivation for all community groups, particularly in the fact that they're the ones who operate and are so directly involved in the projects from the day they start to the day they're finished. Our department acts as a catalyst in providing not only the seed money through your program but in administering, in guidelines, in standards, in drawings and engineering, and others where we can; so we try and work with them very closely.

Albertans across the province recognize that this government's commitment to small community recreation development, tourism, and economic diversification is not limited to major centres or resort recreation areas. This program demonstrates the government's commitment to ensuring that all Albertans benefit from the expanding tourism industry and demonstrates the government's responsiveness to the needs expressed by small communities. I believe we can meet a tourism goal of some \$10 billion in years to come if we concentrate on working in all areas and not one specific site.

The maximum amount of funding under the capital phase of the program is \$100,000 per site, which was indicated before. Capital grants are available to upgrade recreation facilities such as campsites, picnic areas, boat launches, docks, beaches, park development, golf courses, ski hills, and other recreation facilities, including the support services such as drinking water, supplies, roads, parking lots, irrigation, and whatever may be required. Municipalities or community groups which are located in provincial electoral constituencies with substantial rural areas are eligible to apply. All facilities which receive funding under the capital phase of the municipal program are eligible to apply for operational grants. Now, funding for the operational phase of the program is provided from the General Revenue Fund, and I would emphasize that to all members. Funding is

provided from the GRF, and the operational grant is available for a 25-year period and amounts to up to \$20,000 per year. It's intended to maintain those facilities constructed under the capital phase of the program in a safe and usable state, and I think that a most important facet of the program is that the continuity of the program will be there for many years to come.

In the '86-87 fiscal year 24 projects were funded, as was indicated, under the MRT area, representing \$2.075 million. An additional 23 projects, representing \$1.4 million, were funded under the old MRA program, bringing the program to a close. This brings the total number of projects to receive funding, as we heard earlier, to some 47, representing funding of \$3.475 million. The current fiscal year saw an additional 28 sites representing some \$2 million worth of funding under the MRT area program in some 25 constituencies. You saw a sample of those constituencies from the north to the south, and we'll try and do that on a balanced program in years to come as well.

As I mentioned earlier, the MRTA program, in my opinion, is most worthy of your attention today. However, I do not wish to diminish the value of our success with the urban parks program or the Kananaskis programs as well. Five urban municipalities participated in the urban parks programs. As was noted, it included Medicine Hat, Lethbridge, Red Deer, Lloydminster, and Grande Prairie. A total of some \$82 million-plus was invested from the heritage fund, and this support will continue to reap benefits as our parks move toward the 1990s. Funds granted to the five urban parks have all been expended as of December 31, 1987. There are no further funds available for that program; they've all been committed. As the parks become operational, public response to the new facilities has been tremendously supportive. There is no question that the goal of the urban parks program has been successfully achieved in these cities. And, Mr. Chairman, if I were to have an opportunity for a plug, it would be now. I would encourage all members of your committee to certainly support, and hopefully some day would have the opportunity to recommend reimplementation of, the urban parks program so that it can perhaps encompass another half dozen or so municipalities if that funding could be made available.

The heritage fund investment in Kananaskis Country is playing an important role in encouraging Albertans to spend more of their holiday and leisure time in Alberta. I note some smiles, and I certainly hope to be able to address that, because we certainly believe that we can verify it by facts. It is noticed in the '86-87 annual report of the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund that due to popular demand in the past year the William Watson Lodge was expanded for the benefit of even more senior citizens and the disabled. Also during the past year construction was completed, as was noted in the audiovisual, at the three Kananaskis Village hotels. The heritage fund investment in Kananaskis Country since 1977, at the time of the overall announcement, now stands at approximately \$221 million. As you all know, in just one month the world will be welcomed to Calgary for the XV Olympic Winter Games, and we look forward to this opportunity to showcase the benefits of our Kananaskis project to the tens of thousands of visitors who will be arriving from the United States and other international origins. I am sure many people realize the value of returning to Alberta for leisure and business gatherings.

I appreciate that you have an interest in all of the development of Kananaskis Country up to the present time, but I shall try and restrict my words to the year ended March 31, 1987, as this is the portion of the time frame that we're here to review

today. This was a relatively light expenditure year for Kananaskis Country, with a budget of approximately \$12 million and expenditures totaling approximately \$9 million. The funds were expended in various categories, such as the Calgary office, some \$387,000; major buildings and facilities and utilities of \$6.7 million-plus; the campgrounds and day use at some \$438,000, the roads internally, some \$1.5 million; trail systems, \$79,300; fish and wildlife enhancement for \$265,000-plus; for a total, if you're rounding off, of all of them at \$9,446,500. Including these expenditures, the total invested since 1977, as I've said earlier, is actually \$221,237,800, as was indicated.

When I reported to you on the year 1985-86, I advised you that Kananaskis Country had received some 2.3 million visitations. Mr. Chairman, you and your members may be interested to know that annual visitations in Kananaskis Country have grown from approximately 250,000 in 1979 to almost 3.5 million in the year under review. During the same period, camper-nights have grown from some 75,000 to over 400,000. By the end of 1987 some 256,000 rounds of golf were played at the Kananaskis Country Golf Course by Albertans and their friends.

The video for this year's presentation has been taken throughout the year as part of other film projects. I point that out in particular, Mr. Chairman, because I believe it is and still is a very effective means of communication at minimal cost. A lot of the items were taken and spliced and put together from visitations by myself and others in field trips into the area. The cost of this year's video presentation is under \$2,000, and it will be used many times over selling the Heritage Savings Trust Fund and the overall park as well.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, the contributions from the heritage fund benefit Albertans in a number of ways. In particular, each of the programs I've discussed today serves to instill a sense of community participation in the enhancement and protection of our natural environment as well as to emphasize the importance of a healthy life-style and one which I'm sure we'll hear more of as years go on, into leisure and healthy life-styles. I believe these projects of the heritage fund provide opportunities for each and every Albertan to celebrate and use the endless potential of our great outdoors.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman, for your attention and the committee's, and I would like at this time to welcome any questions, as I've said earlier, that you or any member of the committee may have. We'll certainly try and address them. For those those that we don't have the answers for, we'll undertake and commit to bringing them back to you.

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** Good. Thank you very much, Mr. Minister, for that overview.

The Chair would now recognize the Member for Calgary-McCall, followed by the Member for Athabasca-Lac La Biche.

**MR. NELSON:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Well, once again, Mr. Minister and everybody, I thank you for the presentation. Certainly it was very fruitful. I have two or three little areas that I'd like to talk about and maybe ask a couple of questions.

Certainly the program that was outlined upstairs with regards to the parks development and the two programs that we discussed are commendable. It's interesting also, considering that I often say that maybe we should be looking after the government members a little more and the other members maybe not so much, considering that, you know, we're doing our thing and they're not doing theirs so well, maybe. But I would like to commend the minister on spreading the activity around the

province and showing some balance throughout all the communities. Maybe I'd like to ask the minister to comment on how he gets those moneys and spreads them around so evenly, and maybe to the detriment of some of us who think we should get a little more in our own constituencies.

**MR. WEISS:** Well, Mr. Chairman, I welcome the remarks from the Member for Calgary-McCall, and I guess I could best say that we try and operate on a fair and equitable basis, and we don't know that parks have any boundaries when it relates to political boundaries. We've said that before in this Assembly, and it certainly is that we would try and use a balanced method. I personally meet with the members of our executive and management team to review these on a needs basis, and we'll continue to operate in that manner. If any constituency because of a political difference is not going to receive approval in future years -- Mr. Chairman, it's not political; it's because of having to treat them all on what we say is a fair and equitable basis. Just to let your committee know, we have some 60 requests for this year's projects, and of course it will be just like Olympic tickets: you'll only be able to accommodate so many in the arena. We'll have to do the same thing too, so we won't be the subject of congratulations from perhaps 40 other constituencies as well.

Thank you for the remarks just the same.

**MR. NELSON:** Mr. Chairman, it seems that each year I have to bring up the area of the Powderface Trail in Kananaskis Country. We are always discussing opportunities of growth in tourism, growth of potential for people to recreate and what have you in Alberta. As we know -- and we've heard the numbers again today -- there were 3.5 million visitors in this subject year that we're discussing, and there's some 400,000 days of people staying at the sites that are allocated, and we know they're filled up. We also know that probably two more recreational vehicle sites or overnight sites could be developed off the Powderface Trail. I'd like to ask the minister: how long does it take to get this Powderface Trail on a priority list for development so we may enhance again the development of Kananaskis Country and also enhance the ability for additional Albertans to enjoy the grandeur of the development and the great moneys that have been put in Kananaskis Country, to give them the same opportunities as others that may enjoy it in the smaller locations that are available?

**MR. WEISS:** Mr. Chairman, through to the Member for Calgary-McCall, I certainly accept his representation and have personally viewed the area with the managing director, Mr. Ed Marshall, and would ask Mr. Marshall to comment as to the direct question of the priorities as to our discussion, both as it relates to the department and to the urgency or the need as it pertains to tourism. It's a tough one to address as far as timing, but I'd ask Mr. Marshall to comment directly, please.

**MR. MARSHALL:** Mr. Chairman and Mr. Minister, thank you. Mr. Nelson is well acquainted with the Powderface Trail. For those of you who may not be, it's a road now -- using the word rather loosely -- from the westerly end of Highway 66, which is west of Bragg Creek, running north to a place which we call Sibbald Flat, which is just at a turn on Highway 68 south of the Trans-Canada Highway. It's a road which you can navigate in the summertime with some difficulty and sometimes with courage. It would make a magnificent loop drive from Calgary,

Bragg Creek and north and out to the Trans-Canada Highway, if it were ever finished. There's some delightful countryside in there which certainly lends itself to campground development.

We have in fact had this on our priority lists from time to time, Mr. Chairman. If there was some way this committee could persuade others that they would like this development to proceed at once, it would find its way to number one on our list. We'd be happy to proceed with it; it would make a nice addition to Kananaskis Country.

MR. CHAIRMAN: A final supplementary.

MR. NELSON: Thank you very much. Back to the minister. I guess we'll try and pursue Powderface Trail one way or another within the committee, but would the minister have it in his ability to also prioritize the Powderface Trail to further enhance the development of Kananaskis Country? As you know, it's \$221 million invested so far, and certainly I know the Powderface Trail will take a considerable amount of money to develop, along with the campsites. Could the minister possibly consider giving this a higher priority on his agenda to allow for the development of this, even if it takes over a two- or three-year period to enhance this already grand park that we have in Alberta for all Albertans?

MR. WEISS: Well, Mr. Chairman, through to the member, I wish I could undertake to give him that commitment. Regrettably, I'm unable to do so, because I have to assess priority on an ongoing basis as well — priorities, as they refer to development, in ongoing upkeep, maintenance, areas of responsibility within the Kananaskis, and working with the managing director. There are certain areas that we feel at this time have to be dealt with, and if there were extra supplementary funding that may be available, as Mr. Marshall has indicated, we'd certainly love to move it or escalate the time frame. As it is, with the dollars that we have and our limited funding, we aren't able to do so at this time, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you. Member for Calgary-Mountain View.

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As well, I'd like to welcome the minister and his staff with him to the committee this afternoon and to express my appreciation for the overview we received both downstairs and here in this committee meeting this afternoon. I also appreciate the minister's indicating how much the video presentation cost this year, as he knows that was a question I asked him a year ago. So I appreciate the information he's provided.

I'd like to ask the minister a couple of questions here about the Kananaskis Country expenditures and, in particular, the minister's being a party to a number of agreements for the operation of facilities in Kananaskis. One in particular I'd like to ask him about this afternoon is the one he's entered into with the Ribbon Creek resort association; I believe it's now been changed to the Kananaskis Village Resort Association. Under that agreement the province is committed to paying something like 75 percent of the operating expenses of that resort association, and then it drops by 5 percent starting, I believe, this year. I'd like to ask the minister, given that last year the provincial government gave an operating grant to the Ribbon Creek resort association of about \$170,000 — I understand that this was given late in the fiscal year. If my figure's not correct, the minister may wish to

confirm the exact date that the money was advanced to the association, but I understand it was a week or two prior to the end of the fiscal year. Given that the bylaws of the association require the association to return any surplus provincial funds which were advanced but not utilized at the end of the fiscal year of the association, would the minister tell us whether the province has requested any surplus funds from that association at the end of last fiscal year?

MR. WEISS: Well, Mr. Chairman, perhaps I could respond this way. First of all, might I say that the sound appears to be very muffled, and I don't know if it's an attempt to muffle the question. But I say that in seriousness to the gentleman that's operating the system, because maybe there is something wrong. It comes very, very unclear over here. We listen carefully for your question, of course; I wouldn't miss it. But it is very muffled, and I know you don't want that to come through that way.

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Mr. Minister, you've sat on the opposition benches now for 10 minutes, and maybe now you can appreciate our perspective sometimes.

MR. WEISS: Consider the source that it was asked from, Mr. Chairman; maybe it would be the best.

It's not in any attempt, Mr. Chairman, for me to avoid the question, but I'd like some clarity then and direction from the Chair. First of all, we're dealing with an item that I've dealt with previously in the Assembly under my estimates, and of course it was clarified at that time about the percentage and the reduction in the overall funding to the village and how it would diminish over a period of years. But in particular, I guess one of the major things is that it's not really funded through this department. It's funded through general revenue funds, and I think that's the most important aspect of it, Mr. Chairman, so I really look to you for direction. It should be best dealt with, perhaps, either through Public Accounts where it was raised previously as well — and I wouldn't want it to ever be in the record that it's an attempt by us to not come forth with any answers, because we're certainly very open, very public on it. I just don't think it would be appropriate to take the committee's time.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much, Mr. Minister. It's a point well taken.

I would remind the members that we're dealing with the items on page 21 of the '86-87 annual report. It's capital funding, and perhaps if we could address our questions to the items on that page and save some of those other questions for either Public Accounts or estimates.

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Well, Mr. Chairman, again I'm referring to public funds of \$221 million. The minister has referred to it. It appears in the Heritage Savings Trust Fund Committee that the village infrastructure is completed and so on. Given this public commitment from the trust fund into these capital expenditures, these capital investments at Kananaskis, I'm wanting to know how the arrangement is working out between the province and the people who have entered into agreements to operate these facilities built by the trust fund. I think it's quite in order with the requirements of this committee to review the spending and the management of assets built with Heritage Savings Trust Fund dollars. Are you ruling my question out of order?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes.

MR. HAWKESWORTH: It's not the first time that we can't get any answers in this committee.

MR. WEISS: Could I be permitted to respond to that?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Minister.

MR. WEISS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, because I think the words are best used by the member from Calgary-Mountain View himself, who did specifically relate to the infrastructure of the \$221 million, and then referred to the operating. Well, Mr. Chairman, as I once again clarify, the operating funds are from general revenue funds. That is where the dollars for the village are being used, not through the Heritage Savings Trust Fund.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Chair has already ruled, and I'd appreciate it if the member would get on to his supplementary, if he has any.

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Sure. Talking about capital building and expenditure at Kananaskis Village, I'd like to ask about the expenditure for staff housing, which again, if you're going to rule me out of order, I'm still going to put the question. If that's your decision, then that's fine. I'd like to at least get the question, ask the minister. If he wishes not to deal with it and you don't allow it, then that's again your decision.

Given that in July of 1987 a budget of over \$600,000 was approved by the association for staff housing, I'd like to ask the minister if he would inform the committee how many members of the board, if any, were in favour of this expenditure. If so, how many?

MR. WEISS: Well, Mr. Chairman, it's certainly a very fair question, and it relates to the overall infrastructure, the development costs. Staff housing is a very, very important program. I'd like to ask Mr. Marshall to respond directly to the Member for Calgary-Mountain View, and once again indicate to all members of your committee, Mr. Chairman, that there is no attempt at any time not to divulge information or questions as it relates to the specific funding of the Heritage Savings Trust Fund Committee.

MR. MARSHALL: Mr. Chairman, Mr. Minister, and members, the Heritage Savings Trust Fund expenditure into staff housing at the village has altogether been related to the provision of infrastructure for that housing. The roads, the sewer, the water, and so on, were provided, along with some site planning and so on for the staff housing area in the same way that it was done for the hotels themselves. You saw something similar to that today on the video presentation, where expenditures had been made for roads and the like in an area close to the golf course. I think that's probably the question. No?

MR. HAWKESWORTH: No. Mr. Chairman, I specifically referred to a budget of \$600,000-some which was approved by the resort association in July of 1987. I would like a specific answer to that question. Were members of the resort association board opposed to this expenditure? If any members of the board were opposed to this expenditure, how many?

MR. MARSHALL: Mr. Chairman, I'm obliged to defer to my minister. We're talking about General Revenue funding if we're

talking about the resort association. I can't do anything else except do what my minister wants me to do.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Again the Chair would remind members that we are here to deal with a specific number of programs as they relate to capital expenditures, and there is a time and place for everything. The Chair would point out that there are seven other members waiting to ask questions as they relate to the trust fund, and if we're going to allow ourselves to go all over the map on this thing, once again we're going to have members that aren't going to be able to ask the appropriate questions that we should be dealing with in this particular meeting. There's ample opportunity to deal with those specifics in the General Revenue Fund at Public Accounts. So let's not duplicate ourselves and let's not waste members' time when it comes to dealing with the Heritage Savings Trust Fund.

I recognize the Member for Calgary-Mountain View: final supplementary.

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Well, Mr. Chairman, we've put \$221 million of the trust fund into this program, and I think it's quite within order. But I guess if it's convenient at certain times to rule some questions out of order, that's your prerogative.

In the back of the public accounts book -- supplementary information, details of expenditure, section 9, page 9.1 through to page 10.1 -- there is an itemized list of details of capital projects division expenditure by payee and reimbursement of expenditure by third parties under the capital projects division of the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund. Given this is expenditures from the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund, I'd like to ask the minister -- in the other sections of public accounts when individuals or companies are named, usually the department for which the expenditure was made is listed, but in this section of our public accounts, no such indication is made, and so it's very difficult to know which of these expenditures were made on behalf of projects falling under the purview of the Department of Recreation and Parks.

So I'd like to ask the minister or any of his staff that are present here if that information can be or will be provided to members of this committee.

MR. WEISS: Well, Mr. Chairman, first of all, when the member referred to the staff housing, I should go back and indicate that while there are various breakdowns as it relates to the infrastructure and capital investment portion -- specifically a breakdown as to utilities, the sludge disposal system, staff housing at the golf course, William Watson Lodge expansion, the Mount Kidd RV Park, the Kananaskis Village infrastructure, emergency services building -- they are all components, and broken down individually. We are certainly prepared to discuss and provide that information, but as it relates to funds that are directly involved within the General Revenue Fund, it's not my prerogative to be able to discuss that in an open manner for reasons that you have indicated previously. Perhaps Mr. Marshall would wish to supplement that as it relates to the breakdowns, as the hon. member refers to.

MR. MARSHALL: Mr. Chairman, Mr. Minister, we, of course, have the numbers of the individual projects, and we would be pleased to provide to the committee any numbers that our minister wanted us to assemble for the purpose of distribution to yourself, sir, or to whomever.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

MR. HAWKESWORTH: [Inaudible] Has that been done or not?

MR. WEISS: Mr. Chairman, if the hon. member so requires a certain specific breakdown of something that's within those confines, we'd be pleased to . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you. Member for Lethbridge-West.

MR. GOGO: Mr. Chairman, thank you very much. Mr. Minister, I too very much enjoyed the presentation of the urban parks program, in particular the MRTA. I'd like to ask the first question either to Margaret Qually or Mr. Marshall, because I think they would know. I believe you mentioned a figure -- did you mention a figure? -- of the number of visitors to Kananaskis. I think you said 3 million, but that must be . . .

MR. WEISS: Three and a half.

MR. GOGO: Then I'm further wrong than I thought I was wrong. That's more than the population of Alberta. Could either Mr. Marshall or Margaret Qually indicate which of those, perhaps, could have been out-of-province visitors or out-of-country visitors; in other words, non-Albertans?

MR. WEISS: We certainly would welcome to give it to you in a variance by percentage. Not in anticipation of the question, but it was raised, I believe, in previous committee meetings as well, so we've undertaken to try and provide that information on an ongoing basis. I would ask either Mr. Marshall or Mrs. Qually to respond directly to that.

MR. MARSHALL: If you're looking for a breakdown, Mr. Chairman, I confess the only ones I brought with me today were rounds on the golf course and where our golfers came from. I'm sorry I didn't bring with me more detailed information with respect to total visitations. In any event, as I'm sure you know, it is somewhat of a forced figure, because we don't have people register coming into Kananaskis Country. We can only pick up the information when people sign guest books and that kind of thing. If the committee would like that information, Mr. Chairman, we'd be glad to provide it, but you'd need to understand that that is the basis upon which we gather that information. I do have it for the golf course, if you'd like it. It's very interesting. When people book a golf time we do ask them where they've come from, so this information is really quite accurate.

In 1987, 49 percent of the golfers came from Calgary, 23 percent from Edmonton, 12 percent from other Alberta locations, and 16 percent were from outside of Alberta altogether. Comparing that to 1986, if I may, Mr. Chairman, the change is interesting: the Calgary figure was 56 percent, Edmonton was 21, elsewhere in the province 13, and out of province was 10. I can give you these for more years, but I think that's enough to answer Mr. Gogo's question, at least in part.

MR. WEISS: May I supplement, Mr. Chairman. Just adding, though, to the 3.5 million visitors, which is more than the approximately 2.4 million Albertans as indicated on previous occasions in the Assembly, there'd be multiple visits by individual campers or others. As well, previously advertising was done primarily exclusively in Alberta. With the introduction and the

completion of the three new hotels in the Kananaskis area, CP Hotels being a major operator of two of the facilities, their brochures are going out worldwide. So there isn't the exclusivity to be able to confine or say it is for Albertans and Albertans only to enjoy. At one time, this could be said. But I think as years go on and others, through such uses as the Olympics, find the facilities for the first time and come back, we'll find that it will become a world-known, first-class facility for users throughout the world.

MR. GOGO: A supplementary, Mr. Chairman. I believe Mr. Marshall talked about the number of rounds on the golf course. I think he said last year or the year before that there was an average of four golf balls lost per round. One should be talking to Mr. Shaben about opening a golf ball manufacturing plant, probably, in this province.

Mr. Minister, urban parks has concluded a very innovative and creative program for cities, other than the Capital City and Fish Creek. Now that it's concluded, however, I would be interested, in terms of the maintenance of the program, because that was an integral part of the urban parks program at the beginning -- my recollection tells me that there was about a five-year maintenance agreement with the urban park recipients. Could you confirm as to what that agreement is in terms of dollars that will continue to flow to municipalities so that they're not overloaded -- for example, like they perhaps were with the MCR program?

MR. WEISS: Well, a very important question, Mr. Chairman. Similar to the MRTA program, operational budgets and ongoing commitments mean an awful lot to the life and to the life-style that citizens who use the park can enjoy for many years to come. I'll ask Mr. Balsden to respond directly. Pardon me; I'll go directly to Kyle Clifford, who has been involved recently in the program, but you'll find that it is a 25-year program, not a five-year. And to the exact specifics, Kyle, would you mind responding directly to Mr. Gogo?

MR. CLIFFORD: Yes. The operating grant this year paid out \$4.3 million to the five urban park cities. The agreement that was signed last year is to go to the year 2011, I believe, and provides 5 percent of their initial capital construction on an annual basis.

MR. GOGO: A final question. The minister referred, Mr. Chairman -- and I believe it's a policy. It really comes out of when Mr. Lougheed opened Kananaskis Country. It was designed for Albertans and their visitors, and it had been a policy for some years, hopefully remaining, that we would not advertise outside of Canada, that Kananaskis was for Albertans and their visitors. The minister indicated that CP Hotels -- and I guess that's their prerogative -- had put on their brochures the highlights of their establishment. I stayed there a couple of months ago, and it's certainly well worth staying at in terms of the lodge.

Mr. Minister, is it still the policy of this government, including the Department of Tourism, that we will not be advertising outside of Canada ways and means for people to visit Kananaskis Country?

MR. WEISS: Well, Mr. Chairman, the question is worded very carefully, and I wish to respond this way: it is still not the government's policy to be advertising Kananaskis outside of the



country. But keep in mind that many requests initiate internationally, requesting information as to the availability of such facilities. The Department of Tourism -- and I can't speak for them, other than knowing that this may happen, and through the Department of Recreation and Parks which we're responsible for -- if it were requested, would provide that information on a request basis only. But it is not the intent to advertise internationally or to go out and solicit for the park.

MR. GOGO: Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Member for Lloydminster.

MR. CHERRY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I guess my first question to the minister is the urban parks. I think if there's a bouquet that was ever thrown out, it should be to the urban parks. I look at my own constituency with the Bud Miller urban park, which is just such a tremendous value to that area there, and how very, very well it is used and will be used in the future. For some members, it of course sits on the west side of the city of Lloydminster, and we do get many, many visitors from our neighbours the Saskatchewan people, who use it very extensively, as well as we do. I think it's a wonderful park.

My question on that would be: have you any thoughts, Mr. Minister, on developing more urban parks in the province? Just what are your thoughts on it?

MR. WEISS: I was waiting, Mr. Chairman, for the Chair to intercede, but seeing that they haven't, I'd gladly respond that we would love to see the reimplementation of the urban parks program, as indicated earlier, and would encourage all hon. members to support the program. We have many communities that would be eligible, and I certainly think it is one of distinct benefit to all Albertans, such as is being enjoyed by the five communities now that are receiving the urban parks program funding.

As to timing, I have to recognize as well, as a department, the overall restraint and the decline in revenues, so would not be proceeding with a request at this particular stage but would hope that the committee, under your chairmanship, sir, would perhaps make such a recommendation and that it would be followed up on. We'd certainly be pleased to support it and work with you in that regard.

MR. CHERRY: I guess, if I may, I'd like to switch to Kananaskis Country now. After visiting the William Watson Lodge and seeing what a facility it is and, I'm sure, how well used it is, again I ask you the question: is there a need for enlarging the lodge area? Because I've heard so many great and good comments about it, and I again commend the department for the job they've done on it.

MR. WEISS: Mr. Chairman, it's very interesting. If anything could be termed unique and a model, the William Watson Lodge is certainly that: unique that it's been recognized the world over as the first and only type of such a facility. I realize we're dealing with the budget year '86-87 and specifically would relate to that, but because some of the approvals and expenditures were related to the expansion, it certainly is factual in the discussion that we have expanded the facilities from some 40-plus to double the capacity. We're booked to capacity at all times. Rates have not changed. It's to try and accommodate those in need, the families alike.

To those that have not visited personally William Watson Lodge, as you've done -- to the hon. Member for Lloydminster -- I would encourage them to do so. It'll be used by the disabled skiers, Mr. Chairman, and to all members, for the Olympics this particular period of February 13 to February 28. We would like to see it further expanded but not take away any of the unique qualities that it has to offer. But we're unable to accommodate larger groups or the increased needs that are being put on the facilities.

I would perhaps ask Mr. Marshall to comment, if there is anything further he wishes to add to that.

MR. MARSHALL: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Chairman, when William Watson Lodge was designed, it contemplated eight cottages on the site, and those eight cottages have been built. The configuration of cottages between the first four and the last four in a design sense changed as a consequence of experience, because as far as we know, this was the first facility of its kind that had been built anywhere in the world. It's working well at that number. It's in balance as far as the main building facilities are concerned, and it's now in balance with respect to its infrastructure. It's working well. Certainly if it could accommodate twice as many people again, well, of course, I'm sure the people would come to it. But as far as Kananaskis Country's role in serving handicapped and disabled people through William Watson Lodge, I think we're pretty close to an optimum number where we are.

MR. CHERRY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I recognize the Member for Athabasca-Lac La Biche.

MR. PIQUETTE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd also like to compliment the minister on the excellent visual presentation.

As an MLA representing a northeastern Alberta riding, I'm appalled that we have members from southern Alberta that are not yet satisfied with the Alberta Heritage Trust Fund spending of \$221 million in Kananaskis Country, \$45 million in Fish Creek Provincial Park near Calgary, \$42 million in Capital City Recreation Park, and \$87 million spent in urban parks in Alberta. We in northern Alberta in the Lakeland region of Athabasca-Lac La Biche-Bonnyville strongly feel that if any additional funds are to be spent through the Alberta heritage trust fund, they should be prioritized in the development of northern parks in order to diversify and expand our tourism industry. We have very much a captive market here in the Edmonton area.

Will the minister re-emphasize again today his commitment to undertake during his term of office additional thematic, interpretive park development in the Lakeland region of Athabasca-Lac La Biche-Bonnyville?

MR. WEISS: Well, Mr. Chairman, very well read, to the hon. Member for Athabasca-Lac La Biche; I would suggest that it was prepared in advance.

The hon. Member for Athabasca-Lac La Biche pointed out, Mr. Chairman, various dollar levels of spending. In particular, he did include one program, the urban parks program: some \$80 million and some. I think if the hon. member were to review it, he'd find that the Grande Prairie, Lloydminster areas would really be comprised in the northeastern part or the half of the province that could be termed the north. Certainly I'm not

being defensive of those expenditures; I'm just saying that I have to try and represent on an unbiased basis the overall expenditures as they relate to development of recreation and park facilities and amenities. But, Mr. Chairman, I too have a personal view, and I share that personal view with the hon. member.

I will also refer back to the hon. Member for Athabasca-Lac La Biche that many of the expenditures were committed and took place prior to his or my election or being installed as members of this Assembly, and many members present as well. So if there is an imbalance, an unfairness, or an inequity, then I believe it's up to the hon. member and members such as myself and your committee members to rebalance and offset that particular inequity.

My personal commitment is to see -- for better words -- a country-north concept. I publicly have spoken out on this many times, and it can be reviewed through media sources and public discussions in such places as in the member's home constituency, where I had the opportunity to review what my personal goals and ambitions would be. So all I'm saying, Mr. Chairman -- and I appreciate your flexibility and latitude in allowing the discussion to be more on a philosophical view rather than as it related to the direct expenditures in '86-87. But my overall commitments and ambition within my duration and tenure, with the support of this committee, would be to be able to see an overall advanced northern package to perhaps give that more balanced approach.

MR. PIQUETTE: Thank you, Mr. Minister. I'm very pleased to hear that.

Now, last year there were some particular areas in the MRTA program that you felt you were reluctant to approve, based on whether somebody wants to go ahead and build another golf course, where I don't feel that would enhance or attract or accommodate all Albertans. I recall the minister speaking to me personally that MRTA would be probably not a good place to invest money in more golf courses, and I actively discouraged in my own constituency those kinds of proposals, because I felt you did not see that as a good investment.

Now, I notice in the 1987 expenditures that we have approved golf courses; I recall one in the presentation in Bonnyville. What has changed the minister's mind, after the minister seeking that money not be spent in those areas in 1987? There's been a reversal in that decision without, I feel, probably publicity to all MLAs in Alberta. I know that I could have brought a proposal from my riding last year, based on that golf course expansion, but I agreed with your proposal. Can you answer that question, please?

MR. WEISS: Well, certainly, Mr. Chairman. I welcome the opportunity to clear any misunderstanding the hon. member may have, and I appreciate the hon. member's frankness in stating that he's had the opportunity to discuss it with me, because I believe that's the open communication that we can maintain and have established. But in particular, this ministry and all ministries follow the direction and guidelines that have been laid out through caucus input and caucus discussions. The guidelines for the MRTA program initially prohibited and restricted golf course, ski-hill type facility developments. There was a press release, a public announcement, in view of a caucus decision that would then allow the enhancement of such facilities and amenities. I'm sorry, Mr. Chairman, I can't recall the exact date, but I believe it would have been approximately September 1987 that that change...

MR. PIQUETTE: After the fact.

MR. WEISS: As the hon. Member for Athabasca-Lac La Biche indicated, that's after the fact. I can't take the responsibility for applications that were in and approved in the member's constituency and well on to development. I don't think it would be fair to go back to the hon. member and say, "Well now, you withdraw those; take away those funds from those people that you've committed to and have been working with, because I want to go here with somebody else." What we've had to do is live with what we had in the way of overall requests and then treat on an ongoing basis any future request with meeting the new conditions, that were changed at that particular time.

All MLAs -- all MLAs, Mr. Chairman -- were advised of that change in the press release, and that was made public through media sources as well.

MR. PIQUETTE: Still, I think it was after the fact, because submissions for '87 had to be submitted by April of '87. So, you know, this is where the discrepancy lies.

MR. WEISS: Mr. Chairman, I have to correct that remark, because some constituencies did not receive early approvals and withheld any such developments till later stages and then were able to benefit. If the hon. member came forth with his request and was one of those constituencies which was approved in early stages and the developments proceeded, it would be impossible to go back and change. I hope that corrects the "why after the fact?" if those are the words the hon. member wishes to use.

MR. PIQUETTE: Okay. All indications are that people will not be able to drive to Nakiska, Mount Allan, for the Olympics. Indeed, a major parking lot has been established at the corner of the Trans-Canada Highway, the highway south to Mount Allan. People will be transferred there to the venues via buses, from what I understand. If this is the case, then why is Highway 40 being kept open for people to drive to Mount Allan, if there's not going to be any parking for them when they get there? This is something which I just found out here recently.

MR. WEISS: I'm sorry, Mr. Chairman, that I interject a sense of laughter to a degree, because I would have thought the hon. member would have done his homework in a much better and a more appropriate manner.

Yes, there will be increased parking facilities required for all Olympic venues, we hope. Some 1.5 million tickets have been sold, which will see an influx of visitors from all over the world to many, many sites and to all the venues. But if the hon. member would look at Highway 40, where it goes and where it comes from, he would find that the communities in those areas have certainly requested that the highway be there to accommodate the influx of traffic that will be both incoming and outgoing, and in particular as a security measure for any outgoing needs if there were any blocked traffic arteries or areas, such as the hon. member referred to earlier. He has already indicated that if you have all these parking sites and areas and they're all full and you do have a major traffic tie-up, what will happen and where will the people go? Thank goodness Highway 40 is there to provide that alternate means of accessibility, ingress and egress -- outgoing as well.

So I'm sorry, hon. member, I can't accept your rationale, if there is a rationale or any hidden parts to the question, because it



certainly is much needed for safety aspects of the Olympics in 1988, which is not what we're dealing with today. But I certainly wouldn't allow it to go unanswered.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Edmonton-Kingsway, followed by Cypress-Redcliff.

MR. McEACHERN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm becoming a little bit alarmed on this committee by the degree to which you use the idea that something is out of order when it's convenient. The minister himself referred to the problem that heritage trust fund expenditures sometimes end up causing General Revenue Fund expenditures. We recognized that in this committee last year a lot and to some extent this year as well. I've often sort of tried to analyze the whole delivery of services in an area and have spent a fair amount of time looking at that and saying, well, are these heritage... If we are to advise the cabinet, for example, on expenditures from heritage trust fund money, we have to be cognizant, particularly in these tight budget times, that those expenditures may very well cause general revenue expenditures. We cannot totally divorce those kinds of expenditures in this committee from general revenue expenditures. In fact, I had intended to ask the minister that, and I notice that he even mentioned these \$20,000, one-year per-year grants for 25 years to help keep these projects going once we built the base.

So I would say that ruling my colleague's first question out of order was rather unfair, and I'm saying that because somebody made a screwup, because somebody...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order for a moment, please. We had an opportunity to debate the question raised by your colleague. It was debated, the Chair has made a decision, and now we're getting on with the meeting. The Chair has now extended an opportunity for you to ask a question and would be happy to hear it.

MR. McEACHERN: I've got several questions. My first one is: if there was a screwup there, why did the minister and why did you hide behind some rule that says we can't ask that question, instead of explaining it? If there's a good explanation, let's have it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Again, I think the Chair has already indicated that there's every opportunity to ask that question at an appropriate time.

MR. McEACHERN: When?

MR. CHAIRMAN: I think it was an excellent question, and when we go to Public Accounts, you should bring it up, or perhaps when we're dealing with the budget in the Legislative Assembly, he should bring it up. But now is not the time. We're dealing with page 21 of the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund, and again I would encourage the member to please get on with his questions.

MR. McEACHERN: How come several other questions weren't ruled out of order today, then? If you stick strictly to that definition of what's in order and what's out of order, we wouldn't get anywhere with this committee and we'd have no decent advice to give to the cabinet, the investment committee. I say that you and the minister are just hiding behind that rule because it's inconvenient...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Again, if you'd like to ask a question, I'll recognize you. If you don't want to ask a question, I'll move on to the Member for Cypress-Redcliff.

MR. McEACHERN: I will ask a question.

MR. NELSON: On a point of order, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Point of order, Member for Calgary-McCall.

MR. NELSON: Mr. Chairman, I'm getting sick and tired of listening to this person with his innuendos. If he can't deal with the issues at hand that we're dealing with in the capital expenditures of the Heritage Savings Trust Fund, maybe he'd be better off leaving the committee and asking his appropriate questions by letter to the minister or in the Legislature in Public Accounts, where it's the appropriate place to do so. I would suggest that possibly you, Mr. Chairman, should get a little tougher and pull us all up, because you have been so lenient in allowing questions that do not relate to the issue of the Heritage Savings Trust Fund over the last two weeks. The Member for Edmonton-Kingsway down here knows full well what I'm talking about. I would suggest that if he can't play the game by the rules, don't play at all and get out of here. [interjection]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order please. Again, the Chair would hope that...

MR. HERON: Mr. Chairman, on a procedural matter and a point of order here. Just the other day you reminded me that you didn't need a timekeeper. Well, again I'm going to point out that Mr. Hawkesworth took the total time from 20 to 3 till 3 o'clock. I think the Chair has been extremely lenient in allocating time to members of the opposition. If you prorate that time to the total amount of questions, almost every day there's a large number that fall off the list. I think that for the Member for Edmonton-Kingsway to take up four or five valuable minutes with this type of procedure only delays the purpose of this committee.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Again, the Chair would encourage all members to please get back to the matter in front of us. We have a minister with a considerable delegation from his department with us this afternoon. We're here to address some very specific matters, and I would encourage us to please get on with the questioning.

Member for Edmonton-Kingsway.

MR. McEACHERN: It would seem to me, Mr. Chairman, that I should have a right to reply when a point of order is raised, and I will make a brief comment, if I might. Members of the committee on the government side have had just as long preambles and have rambled all over the map just as much as anybody on our side of the House. If we don't take time to consider seriously the full amount of expenditures and if we don't get through all of the questions today, the minister should be made available again another day. This is not something that needs to be hurried, so I make no apology for points made or statements made by my colleague or myself.

The question I would like to ask the minister -- and it's because Recreation and Parks is very closely associated with tourism, and in fact the title of one of your programs would indi-

cate that very clearly. I wonder, in the building of facilities -- I'm thinking particularly of throughout the north, but I think the same thing could be done in central Alberta as well. I know there's been a preponderance of dollars in tourism also put to the south as well as parks and rec. Has the minister considered rather than what I hear of, sort of cutting back and moving out of future programs or stopping future development in some of these programs -- I know it isn't totally his decision, but I would like to see him get more involved and do more and co-operate with the tourist department. I trust they have been to some extent, but perhaps increase that co-operation and think in terms of setting up sort of circle routes or regional recreation areas that would encourage people to come. For instance, it would be hard to get someone to come up just to one site, say, in Peace River -- it's a long way away -- or just one site in Lac La Biche. If we develop a whole region, a number of sites through Tourism and parks and rec, we might have a better chance of getting people to travel into those areas for recreation. I wonder if he could comment on that kind of thing.

MR. WEISS: Well, Mr. Chairman, I certainly welcome it, and I once again would not wish to debate or argue the point, but there is no intent ever for this minister or this department or their officials to hide or withhold any information. It was an opportunity with a minimum amount of time to point out some operational fund's worth in a particular program. The other specific that was related would require a great deal of detail and time, which I didn't feel should be taken up at this committee.

I share with the hon. member his views, in particular as they relate to the tourism aspect and to the overall correlation. Keep in mind there are the two component sides of tourism: Recreation and Parks, through our amateur development programs and our leisure life-style programs, and then the parks side of it. Of course, there is a variance to what we do and how we do and to our design or implementation and finance divisions and others. But I believe it is our responsibility as a department to try and recognize the needs, develop the infrastructure as it relates to the parks side, put these tools in place, and the Tourism department can then market it. They become the marketers; they have the expertise in promotions development.

But the hon. member, Mr. Chairman, has just hit on what I believe is so close to an idea that we're working with. We share interdepartmental committee meetings with Tourism. We hope to develop and introduce such a program. Last year we would have been able to had we had the dollars to do so. We were unable to, but it ties in with exactly what you're referring to. When I say "you," I refer to the hon. Member for Edmonton-Kingsway. I'd love the opportunity to sit and discuss it with him, because I think that he and I and others in the Assembly will share those views very closely. I believe there can be a balance between this north and south issue that we talk about.

Tourism is not just limited to south or north, and we've got an awful lot to sell. I don't want to be biased and show my bias, as I relate to a northern constituency, but living in the north, I believe that while it represents 50 percent of the geographic area with some 10, 12 percent of the population, we have a lot of amenities that we can build and develop on those one-, two- or three-day packages that the member refers to.

So I look forward to working with the opposition and the government in developing those particular proposals and programs so that they will benefit all Albertans. I recognize the sensitivity, and I appreciate the hon. member raising it, Mr. Chairman.

MR. McEACHERN: The second question would then be related along the line of: as we seem to be cutting back in the parks and rec budget, both through the heritage trust fund and just generally, that's going to have a rather deadening effect on that sort of ideal direction that we would like to go. How would the minister see that developing in terms of budget priorities over the next couple of years?

MR. WEISS: Well, Mr. Chairman, I'm sure that if each of the department managers and the management staff would have an opportunity, in their individual departments and responsibilities, they'd love to address it. I believe that as the stewards of the resource we have a responsibility to manage that resource to the best of our ability, given the dollars in order to do so. Yes, it is difficult. Yes, it is tough. But I believe we can do it, and I believe, too, that we have to look at more efficient manners of doing so in the privatization area, in the area of looking at the overall management of our time and our resources. In our park uses and others we're going to have to work closely with the municipalities and recreation groups and service clubs in administering and managing some of these areas. I believe we can do those things.

Yes, it is tough to have to come back with less dollars and say to our staff that you're going to do with less, but I also accept the fact that we're not immune to the overall financial restraint we're exercising and going through. But I believe we can maintain that level of service that's so important to give us world-class facilities in the way of parks and recreation development and facilities to increase that tourism potential that the hon. member referred to and that he would expect us to be doing.

So I've answered the hon. Member for Edmonton-Kingsway once again in general terms, Mr. Chairman, but I hope that would let him know some of our views and some of our department rationale and thinking. We sit very seriously, not just for a few minutes in a day but on many, many occasions, to address such things as we're doing here today. How can our dollars best be utilized? Where can they best be spent that we can get the biggest bang for the buck? That's why we felt it was very important that you and your members would take time to see both our filmstrips, our slides, and our audiovisual: to show where your dollars are going and how they're being spent and what we believe we can do with overall standards and implementation of some of the designs so that we just don't go helter-skelter and have one park built in one area or one region that is not being cost-effective, so that we can guide those people who are out there with these MRT areas, as the hon. member referred to, saying, "How can you then get the best bang for your buck?" By using some of our programs that we know work in others -- some of our signage programs, some of the overall design, some of the overall administration -- so that we can play a part in and be a catalyst to work with them.

Mr. Chairman, it's a challenging one, but I think, as all members of the Assembly, that we can meet that challenge and hopefully see that reversal trend come within the next year to two years, where there'll be increased dollars and revenue so that we can go out and reimplement such programs as the hon. members refer to with regard to urban park programs and others. So I look forward to working with the hon. member in that regard.

MR. McEACHERN: Final question, then, that I would get into.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That was the final question. Oh, sorry, the

final question coming up. That's right too.

MR. McEACHERN: The William Watson Lodge was mentioned, and I understand it's a wonderful facility. It was built in a day when we had a lot of money and I guess maybe finished at a time when things were tighter than people recognized. Once having started it, you kind of had to finish it. I think that same kind of thing has happened with the whole Kananaskis park, for example.

I know that myself, talking to handicapped people in other areas -- I'm thinking of Grande Prairie and even in Edmonton. You know, I mentioned what a wonderful facility this was down there, and people have said, "Yeah, well, that's all fine in Kananaskis, but here we're faced with ordinary dollars." I guess your role as the new minister is one of looking at what we've got and perhaps building on the strengths of some of those better facilities that we already have at whatever cost and looking around and seeing where the weaknesses are.

I'm wondering if in your MRTA program you've really looked at the whole province, and when you built in a particular city, it was because a number of people for quite a large area would be able to use that and then another city farther away where again the same thing could happen, or another town. I guess I'd be interested if you could provide us with a fairly detailed map of the locations of some of those programs and that sort of thing, some kind of an annual statement where we could, you know, look at how they're positioned and where they're positioned on a map of Alberta.

MR. WEISS: Well, a very fair question, Mr. Chairman, and in our annual report we do include that information, but we'll specifically make it available to the hon. member so that geographically he can see that we've tried to attain that level of balance and to meet all geographic areas and regions of the province. Keep in mind that where there is some urban overlap in particular areas, it might see the approval of a rural application being held -- and I say "held"; not rejected but held -- until there would be such an appropriate time to proceed. The reason it is being held, of course, is because maybe -- for example, let's use the Capital City Park program within the city of Edmonton or Calgary Fish Creek park area, where within 10 miles of developing in the area there'd be many areas that could be developed, municipal recreation tourism areas. But I believe those citizens at this time have the opportunity to share in those two major park facilities in those two larger urban communities. So until we have what I feel are more sufficient areas in those rural areas, I'm reluctant to further approve more urban-type developments. If I've committed an error in judgment in that, I welcome to hear from the hon. member, but I believe it's one where sometimes you're darned if you do and darned if you don't.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Member for Cypress-Redcliff.

MR. HYLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. To the minister: I wonder how many of the parks under the MRTA program were projects that were in more than one location rather than just having the money spent on one project? How many were spread out throughout a constituency or area?

MR. WEISS: Well, Mr. Chairman, that's very interesting because that's one part of the overall query that hasn't been addressed, because in particular some of the funds were split. When I say split: where the maximum eligible funding was

\$100,000, certain constituencies -- and I'll refer to the hon. Member for Athabasca-Lac La Biche. He recognized, in my joint consultation with him, having been the former MLA for the area, the need to split the program to \$50,000 for two areas, which had just as much impact in working with those community groups as it would be to have selected one \$100,000 site. But I think in fairness to the hon. Member for Cypress-Redcliff, he should have perhaps a little more accurate ... Rather than my reviewing it, I'm sure Mr. Balsden has the information available as to how many received less than the \$100,000. Mr. Balsden, would you mind commenting?

MR. BALSDEN: I'm not sure I understand the question completely, Mr. Minister.

MR. WEISS: Well, all municipal recreation tourism areas were eligible for \$100,000 funding. Of the number of sites that were approved, how many were less than the \$100,000?

MR. BALSDEN: There were a fair number of sites that were less than the \$100,000, where the sites were requested to be funded by the MLAs at less than the maximum amount, for whatever the reason may be. The minister has pointed out one example, and there are others. I would have to go back, Mr. Chairman, and give a highly accurate answer for the past fiscal year as to which constituencies did do that splitting of funding.

MR. CHAIRMAN: A supplementary.

MR. HYLAND: Thank you. That would be appreciated if you can give that later. The minister, you know, said that the \$50,000 in his area provided a pretty good park. Well, that's pretty easy for somebody like you to say, who has water. The Member for Athabasca-Lac La Biche has a lot of lakes, but where I come from, it takes you the \$100,000 because there aren't that many lakes around. So you have to at least get some ...

AN HON. MEMBER: To water the lawn.

MR. HYLAND: You've got to have a lake at least to water the lawn, as my friend says. So in different areas, when you don't have trees and you've got to plant trees, it does take a little more money to provide the same park.

The second question is: can we have a figure on how many areas that were requested under the old recreation areas program were left over and are attempted to be fulfilled with this new program throughout the province?

MR. WEISS: First of all, to the hon. member, going back to his earlier question, Mr. Chairman, I've just done a quick review, and it's approximately half of those numbers that were approved in the '86-87 fiscal year that received less than the full \$100,000 funding. But we'll certainly provide that list to the member as well.

In the hon. member's remarks he indicated the cost factor, in particular due to lack of water. I would like to recall the member to the slide presentation where it showed, I believe, the two areas in particular. Bow Valley and Enchant were two areas specifically that had used a large portion of their funds to put in irrigation equipment. Keep in mind, hon. member, that the money, as I indicated earlier, was not the end-all but was only a catalyst in some cases to allow the projects to proceed. I used

the factor of a three to four multiplier, three or four times. As I've indicated, many of the communities exceeded the funding level by three or four times with their own dollars. So that level of funding was and is there to be used for purposes as he would indicate.

I'm sorry; I believe the hon. member had a third portion of that question.

MR. HYLAND: The other portion was: how many sites are left over from the previous recreation area sites?

MR. WEISS: I'd ask Mr. Balsden to reconfirm, but to the best of my knowledge I believe there were none. That was in the overall \$1.4 million commitment that was completed in that fiscal period. There are none to my knowledge, but I'd ask for a reaffirmation of that by Mr. Balsden.

MR. BALSDEN: That's correct. The municipal recreation areas program is now terminated. The last 23 sites were funded in the past fiscal year for \$1.4 million.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Any further supplementaries? Member for Little Bow?

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Chairman, to the minister and his staff: thank you for the presentation. Well done. We appreciate it as a committee.

My questions are in two parts. One was with regard to the MRTA grant, and it was relative to the golf course. I noticed in the presentation that you did mention the golf course again, and I do recall that memo of September. I only want to make a comment rather than a question now. You've answered the question of the Member for Athabasca-Lac La Biche. I would have to say that in the establishment or implementation of this program, I was very supportive of your earlier remarks, just after becoming the minister, where the object would be to provide the program for the broadest number of citizens, whether they're tourists in an area or local people as such that would utilize the facility. I've felt for a long time, since your predecessor in the last Legislature was minister and provided money for golf courses, that that wasn't a good expenditure of our funds, that it allotted funds to a rather narrow group of citizens in a community to the neglect of some others. I was a golfer at one time and spent a lot of time on the golf course and haven't done that for the last four, five, six, seven years, so I would have the opportunity of golfing if I wanted to. But many people can't do that, and I see the idea of parks with camp kitchens, access to the lake, access to fishing, or access to ball diamonds providing broader recreation and tourist opportunities. So I make that, I guess, as a representation more than anything, Mr. Minister. I know your caucus has for some reason or other turned around the earlier objective that you had as a new minister. I think it should be one that should continually be reconsidered as we proceed with this program.

My other question was with regard specifically to Kananaskis Country. The first one is a general question. In terms of the facilities being completed for the Olympics of February 13, has there been any portion of the capital projects that had to be put on fast track that would have, you know, increased the cost of the facility in order to complete it for February 13, or was everything able to go in a normal manner?

MR. WEISS: Well, Mr. Chairman, I welcome both. When I

say "both": the overall remarks as they relate to golf courses, and the question. Perhaps I could just have a few minutes to respond to it because I appreciate the representation by the Member for Little Bow. After listening to the representation made by several MLAs, recognizing that golf courses could play a very essential role as it related to tourism in some areas -- and I say some areas more than others in that it did, I felt too, apply to a limited group. Keeping in mind that it was the MLA and the municipalities themselves that would approve these recommendations initially, it was felt that they should be the ones who best know what their needs are. So keeping that as part of the consideration, that's when the change was made.

I recognize that golf courses are limited to some. I'm not a golfer, so I would put that out to state that it's not one that's been made because I believe golf courses are the end-all and should be for tourists. But I recognize that some golf courses, due to their areas, their grounds, where they've had joint camping facilities and developed these together with barbecues and other things, can play an overall bit of a balanced role similar to what may be the case in Mount Kidd RV Park. Does everybody that goes there just camp, or do a large portion of people that go there and utilize go golfing as well? So there is that kind of a balance there. I'm not saying that I'm for it one way or another, but I certainly appreciate the member's representation.

As it relates to Kananaskis Country, I'm going to ask Mr. Marshall and Mrs. Qually if they have any further remarks to add as well. John Wiens, as our financial representative here, might wish to throw in some others. But I would make the broad statement that I'm not aware of any fast-tracking or extra incremental costs that were created other than what were planned expenditures approved by the Assembly, that through our public accounts and through our estimates weren't covered in detail. We have each of those broken down in the overall \$129 million, I believe is the figure, Mr. Chairman, as the province's overall expenditure for the Olympics and our contribution on a three-way agreement between the federal, municipal, and our levels of government. They are all within budget, in particular the two last major projects totaling some \$25 million, being Nakiska at Mount Allan and the Canmore Nordic Centre, both coming in under budget actually by a few thousand dollars.

I'd like all three, if they wish, to add or supplement any of those, because I think it's very important at this time that somebody doesn't just come up and misunderstand where the money went or how it was spent.

MR. MARSHALL: Mr. Chairman, thank you. It's a very fair observation, I might say, because of the busyness out there, that things are being fast-tracked. But the busyness and the fast-tracking generally speaking are associated with projects that are being done by OCO themselves. They really don't even involve Public Works, Supply and Services. Public Works, Supply and Services built both the Canmore Nordic Centre and Nakiska at Mount Allan, neither of them being Heritage Savings Trust Fund projects.

So if there is a single answer to your question, it's no, nothing of the kind.

MR. R. SPEAKER: What triggered the question, Mr. Chairman, to keep it in terms of the heritage fund budget we're talking about, was that in the presentation you mentioned that some of the residences for staff had not been completed. I think I heard that phrase in there somewhere. It was early in the film where you did a shot of the residences' not being completed. So

that's what triggered the question. I thought that maybe there were some of those facilities not completed. So I relate it to that film. I believe the residences related to Kananaskis Village, did they not?

MR. MARSHALL: Mr. Chairman, if I may. We have established two areas in Kananaskis Country, outside of the village, where people may live, people who have to live in the area: one is for houses to be built for the people who have to live in them, and the other is a mobile home park. The one for houses is adjacent to the golf course, and that is what you saw today on the video presentation. The government's role in that is to put in the infrastructure. Those houses are to be built by the likes of golf course operators, ski operators, the RCMP are building two of them, hotel management, and that kind of thing. They really are not related in any way to the Olympic Winter Games. They'd be built with or without the Olympics.

MR. R. SPEAKER: The only commitment we had as the Heritage Savings Trust Fund was in the infrastructure; that was it? Then the buildings that are going there are not a cost to the budget we're talking about here.

MR. MARSHALL: That's correct.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Minister, on behalf of the committee, I want to . . .

MR. WEISS: Mr. Chairman, may I supplement an earlier answer. I believe I have the information for the hon. Member for Cypress-Redcliff.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please do.

MR. WEISS: Thank you, sir. We have just done a quick calculation that there were seven sites that received less than \$100,000 funding for the municipal recreation/tourism area, totaling \$375,000, which represented four constituencies. So that's the actual information the hon. member was requesting.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thanks very much, Mr. Minister.

Again, on behalf of the committee we thank you for the information that you shared with us this afternoon. The audiovisual was excellent, some good discussion and good responses. So thank you to you and to the departmental people that are with you. We appreciate all the good work that you're doing, and we're all looking forward to hopefully getting out and seeing Kananaskis Country next year, for those of us that didn't make the tour last year. Again, I would encourage all the members to have a look at some of the urban parks as well.

MR. WEISS: February 13 to February 28 is an ideal time to go

and see.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you again.

Very quickly before we adjourn -- Mr. Minister, feel free to leave -- we're just going to discuss a couple of bookkeeping matters. If I can, I'm trying to make provisions: one, to bring back some of the ministers that have been suggested and, two, to schedule some additional meetings that I'm sure we're going to need. I would like, while I have the committee members here, to suggest some possible dates, and you could advise my office as quickly as possible whether they will suit your schedules or not.

To start with, on January 19 we have a morning and an afternoon meeting scheduled at this time. The morning schedule we are going to cancel in light of a Members' Services Committee meeting, so we're meeting in the afternoon only on the 19th. But I would also propose that we meet the morning and afternoon of the 20th, the 21st, and the morning of the 22nd. I'm not setting those dates at this point; I'm only asking for your feedback to find out if we're going to be able to have a quorum or not.

MR. McEACHERN: I believe we're talking here -- the 19th is a Tuesday, right?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Right.

MR. NELSON: Did you say anything about the 18th?

MR. CHAIRMAN: No. [interjections] If you can just take those dates and let me know.

MR. McEACHERN: The 21st was just a.m.?

MR. CHAIRMAN: The 21st was a.m. and p.m., and the 22nd was just a.m.

Now, in terms of ministers that we want to see if we can't schedule back for short appearances, I have the Minister of the Environment, the Minister of Agriculture, and the Associate Minister of Agriculture, and the Alberta heritage medical foundation. Those are the three?

MR. McEACHERN: I think you indicated the 27th would have to be canceled.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The 27th has been canceled, and I haven't rescheduled that at this point.

On that note we stand adjourned till tomorrow at 10 a.m. Thank you.

[The committee adjourned at 3:58 p.m.]

