

[Chairman: Mr. Martin]

[10:02 a.m.]

MR. CHAIRMAN: We'll call the meeting to order. Just before we turn it over to our guests, I believe you have minutes of the last meeting, May 15, that were circulated. Would somebody like to move adoption? Any errors or omissions? Seeing none, all those in favour of adopting the minutes of May 15?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Opposed? Carried.

I would like to welcome Mr. Trynchy and members of his department. Hopefully we will have an interesting discussion. Mr. Trynchy, if you have some initial remarks that you would like to make, please feel free to do so, plus, if you wouldn't mind, introduce the people who are with you to the members of the Public Accounts.

MR. TRYNCHY: Yes, Mr. Chairman. I would like to introduce the people here. On the far left we'll start with Sherri Thorsen. She's the Olympic development co-ordinator. Next is Rick Curtis. He's the director of the planning secretariat. Donn Cline is assistant deputy minister responsible for design and implementation. Dave Kalinovich is assistant deputy minister of operations and maintenance. Ed Marshall is managing director of Kananaskis Country. Dave Rehill is executive director of finance administration. On my right is Julian Nowicki, assistant deputy minister of the recreation development division.

Mr. Chairman, my opening comments will be brief, because I know you have a lot of questions. Recreation and Parks is an exciting department. As you're aware, we are involved in a number of things: the Olympics, municipal rec areas, urban parks, and provincial parks. Of course, within recreation we have the Sport Council, all the funding under our community recreation/cultural grant program, and also funding to sporting associations across the province. I don't know how far you want to go back with this or what years we will cover, but I invite the members of the committee to ask any and all questions, whether or not they're relevant to the year of the estimates.

With that, Mr. Chairman, I invite any questions from the panel.

MR. JONSON: As I understand it, Mr. Chairman, this year indicates perhaps not the first year but a year in which there was a shift to the contracting out to the private sector of the maintenance of parks across the province. I wonder if the minister has an assessment as to whether this in fact brought about a cost saving in terms of the operation of parks. Were there any difficulties encountered? What was the overall response to this initiative in this area?

MR. TRYNCHY: Mr. Jonson, we have just started privatizing provincial parks in the province, and we only have one so far, Whitney-Ross, that is under private tender. It was tendered last year and was operated by the private sector for one year. The contractor who operated it last year is now released from his five-year commitment, and we're tendering it again. We don't have a very good feel yet with regard to how it should or will be run. In effect, we don't know if the private sector is doing as good a job as we expected would be done when we did the tender. That's why we released the contract we have now. We weren't satisfied with some of the work.

With regard to cost saving: yes, the only reason we'd go to the private sector is if it would cost us less than doing it ourselves. If the tenders were to come in higher than what we could do it for ourselves, I think it would be wrong for us to go with the private sector. If there isn't a cost saving, then what is it you're after? It's mainly jobs and cost saving.

I want to ask David Kalinovich, the assistant deputy minister, to make some more comments with regard to the other things you asked about. I might mention that we also have the Mount Kidd recreation vehicle park in Kananaskis, which is with the private sector. Maybe Ed Marshall can tell us how that was run last year.

MR. KALINOVICH: With regard to park operations and maintenance, we estimate we will have about \$1 million in operation and maintenance contracting. In terms of cost savings, the minister has responded that yes, we will only contract or have contracted where there are tangible and visible cost savings.

With regard to difficulties encountered: yes, we have had some difficulty in certain portions of the province, particularly where oil and gas

activity is fairly intensive. We've had difficulty inviting or getting people interested in some of the work we're doing. Senior citizen clubs and service clubs have been fairly good with regard to bidding on some of the projects we have, particularly maintenance of small, wayside campsites, cleanup, and those kinds of things.

In terms of impact, we're finding that in some areas of the province, there are people who have not been in private enterprise before coming to the fore in terms of forming companies and bidding on some of these jobs on a longer term basis. They are in fact getting into the private sector.

MR. JONSON: A supplementary, Mr. Chairman, dealing with the issue of private business as well. What policies or guidelines does the department have in place with respect to the facilities they put into their parks as it impacts on the surrounding private sector? I'm referring to one example of a golf course being established in conjunction with a provincial park where it is felt that there are privately operated golf courses in the immediate area which are impacted by this change. I could anticipate that there might be other concession-type operations and so on that could be impacted by decisions of the department. What guidelines does the department follow in this regard to ensure that this doesn't happen to too great a degree?

MR. TRYNCHY: I'm unaware of our developing a golf course in a provincial park. Maybe the member could tell me what area he's talking about and the location.

MR. JONSON: I was referring to the Red Deer park development. I could see that same issue coming up with respect to your activities.

MR. TRYNCHY: Within the urban parks policy you have to remember that all we do is grant the funds to the local government. In the case of Red Deer they had 50,000 flyers sent out with requests from the public in regard to what they would like to see happen within the urban park. My understanding is that that is the only public golf course in Red Deer. The rest are private. My understanding also is that the response was quite heavy in favour of developing a public golf course within the urban park. That decision they made on their own and

was part of their own policy. We were not involved in regard to telling them what they could or couldn't do within the urban parks policy.

In regard to provincial parks we're very careful that we don't go in conflict with the private sector. We've had a number of requests for concession stands in provincial parks which are adjacent to a community, where the community can handle that facility. We've stayed away from going in there with our own sort of development and left it to the private sector. But in the Red Deer case that was a policy of their own. It fits in nicely with our overall general policies of urban parks. They make their application. I understand that in Lethbridge they're doing the same thing — putting in a golf course within their urban park. That's happening, but so far not in provincial parks, except, I might mention, that we are taking some land out of a provincial park at Lesser Slave Lake and allowing the golf course in that community to develop a new golf course within the provincial park. I think that's a positive move.

MR. SZWENDER: Mr. Chairman, I'd like to begin by commending the minister and his department for the excellent job they're doing. The public response, from information I get, is usually very, very positive. Certainly, his department is responding very adequately to the needs of the public. By the way, I can see now why the minister is always prepared to answer all questions. With the backup troop he has here, it's hard to find an area he wouldn't be knowledgeable in, with that information available to him.

My first question is actually a supplementary to Mr. Jonson's, and that's regarding the costs of operating provincial parks in Alberta. I believe the nightly or daily charges to people coming to these parks cover only about 5 or 6 percent of the actual operating costs of the parks. With respect to privatization can the minister give us a breakdown? Is there any proposal to increase the daily charges or overnight camping charges, to cover a greater percentage of these costs? Is there any other proposal to meet a higher percentage of these costs?

MR. TRYNCHY: Mr. Chairman, it's difficult to try to arrive at a consensus of where we should

be in regard to user fees. Our fees in provincial parks are now \$3, \$4, and \$5 — certainly the lowest by far of any provincial government in Canada. I gave notice last fall that I would increase them this year, and we didn't. But I think we have to look forward to a dramatic increase, probably a doubling of the rates, in the next year. You're right in assuming that we collect about 5 point some percent of the operating costs of parks from user fees. Even if we went to \$5, \$7, and \$9, we would be collecting less than 10 percent of the total operating cost. I think we have to have a look at it. I guess it's a toss-up whether you want to provide government service to the people at a lower price or whether you want to collect something back for the service you're providing, whether you want to raise the fees or not. We want the people of Alberta to travel the province, and with the economic times the way they are, we thought that this year we'd leave them at the normal rate for one more year. But in the future, yes, we'd be looking at increasing them, probably from \$3 to \$5 and from \$4 to \$7 and from \$5 to \$9.

MR. SZWENDER: That's very helpful. The question really was connected to the whole idea of privatization and also private parks. Are they able to compete when the government really subsidizes such a high percentage of the cost? It's quite a bit different, let's say, in the United States.

MR. TRYNCHY: Could I comment on that, Mr. Chairman? I apologize for omitting it. Yes, we are getting some feedback from the private sector. They're not very happy with our low fees, because they can't stay in business. They have to charge \$9 or \$10 or somewhat more. So we have to take that into consideration when we move next year. They're right on. The private sector is upset with us, and so they should be, because our rates are considerably lower than they should be.

MR. SZWENDER: My second question is with regard to the William Watson Lodge. Everyone in the province, I think, should be aware that it's a fantastic facility serving the handicapped and senior citizens, but of course the facility has outlived its size. I believe construction is either under way or will be shortly. I know that the planning has commenced. I was hoping the

minister could shed some light on how that project, the expansion of the William Watson Lodge, is moving along and projected costs and the completion date on that.

MR. TRYNCHY: Mr. Chairman, in 1977 when the Kananaskis concept was presented to the people of Alberta, the plans called for eight cottage units in Kananaskis Country for the handicapped and the seniors. At that time the decision was — and I'm sure it was the right decision — not to build all eight and just build four, to see how they'd operate and get a better feel for what kinds of facilities we should have.

I must say that the four lodges we have there, that handle approximately 40 people on a given night, have been a tremendous success. They're overbooked all summer long. The utilization factor is about a hundred percent and a number of people on the waiting list. So I'll be coming forward with supplementary estimates in a day or two, or whenever the Treasurer brings them forward, asking for enough funds to develop four more cottage-type facilities within Kananaskis Country for the handicapped and the seniors. I think we've learned quite a bit from the last four cottages in regard to how better we can handle, say, handicapped people that want to come in groups, in more than one to a family. We will be designing something different — a lot better.

You asked about the costs. The costs for the cottages before was about \$110,000 each for the two eight-person cottages and about \$150,000 for the 12-person cottages. I understand the prices should be pretty reasonable again this year. Ed, did you want to comment on that? Of course, you might add that you are quite familiar with it, Mr. Szwender, because your brother is one of the top people in Kananaskis, in William Watson Lodge — and, I might say, is doing a good job.

MR. MARSHALL: Mr. Chairman and Mr. Minister, I think the question was asked: what stage are we at with respect to the extension? The program has been written, for all purposes, as to what is to be drawn. An architect has been engaged. The Department of Public Works, Supply and Services has made the undertaking to, for all purposes, complete the extension during the current construction season. There may be some odds and ends with respect to landscaping that you may not get

done at the tail end of the year, just because you could get caught with weather. But that aside, we're looking for substantial completion during the current year.

MR. SZWENDER: A quick supplementary. What date could occupancy be expected, Mr. Marshall?

MR. MARSHALL: The current year won't really end until the end of next March. Certainly, if they are substantially completed and you can have access to them for at least some of your guests, you may very well be using them some time early in 1986.

MR. R. MOORE: I have a comment and one question, Mr. Chairman. The comment is to back up what my colleague mentioned about the department. Across my constituency there is a very favourable impression of your department. I want to say to you and your staff that we appreciate that. We hear nothing but positive from that. The fact that your personnel, in working with citizens, have that good public relations image out there is a credit to your staff.

The question I have is: how did you do it? When, in the year under review, you did it with \$25 million less than the year before, how do you still maintain an image such as that?

MR. TRYNCHY: Thank you for the kind comments. We are a department that provides people services. As a matter of fact, I've learned a lot from my department in public relations, so they've actually been my teachers, and it's been just great.

With regard to the comment on how we did it for \$25 million less, it is probably in this way: in some years the MCR, the major cultural/recreation facilities program, had a bigger call for dollars than the last year, and I guess that's how it is. Some years we had \$60 million and we had to go for a special warrant in MCR funding, and some years we had only \$20 million. We try to budget somewhere in between. I don't see how we could have done it any other way. We've done the best we could with the dollars we've had.

MR. R. MOORE: You did a good job.

MR. LEE: Mr. Chairman, Mr. Minister, the

multicultural/recreation program has been an outstanding success in every corner of this province, perhaps an example to all of Canada. It has unfortunately been plagued with many difficulties that became particularly evident in 1981-82, left over '83, of cost overruns, underbudgeting, unestimated expenditures, significant inflation. As a result, we have in the city of Calgary four or five multicultural complexes that, even with additional financial assistance, are on the ropes -- not from the lack of dedicated, volunteer labour and time and support. As a member of city council in Calgary I saw the projects approved. I thought we had some of the best minds in the parks department. Certainly, one of your current staff was involved in the leadership role there, reviewing these. Despite everybody's good intentions, we were plagued with these problems. We're all excited about the new program. The question is: what have we learned that we can apply, without a loss of local autonomy, to ensure we don't run into the same difficulties.

MR. TRYNCHY: Mr. Chairman, I'll start on this and will ask Julian to supplement. The major cultural/recreation facilities program, MCR, was very positive across the province. About the only place we have some difficulty that I'm aware of at this time is in the city of Calgary, with some overruns. I guess if you had to do it over again, the city council would probably be more cautious with regard to making sure that the people who were building the community clubs were firm in their estimates and all those kinds of things. I guess when you made application -- and we've allowed it to be very flexible, and also local autonomy controls it -- we didn't get involved in saying: are those figures right? We left it up to the city councils, because they're the ones who have to sign the dissolution agreement, which in fact states that if any community clubs cannot make it, the city, whichever city or council has signed that, would then be obligated to take over that facility. So we have that in it.

With regard to what we've done with the new one and what we've learned, I guess we've learned that if we have a project that's over \$500,000, we would do a feasibility study and be a little more sure that what we're doing will in fact be done with the dollars estimated. We've also allowed now for the new program to be

involved with debt retirement. We've allowed the communities to be their own judge of what they want to do, whether they want to build new facilities or put the dollars into debt retirement. Up to 75 percent of the \$20 per capita yearly can be used for debt retirement, matched fifty-fifty. So we hope the community clubs that are in difficulty will find a way to come out of it with the help of the city council and with the parks and recreation people. That shouldn't happen in the future.

I guess one thing that took place in Calgary that didn't in other centres was that they asked us to change our regulations so they could take all their funds in a given year, the same as smaller communities, whereas in the past they could take only 10 percent of the funds each year for 10 years. We allowed that to happen. With the city growth in the boom times being three or four percent, they were expecting the city to grow, and at the end of 10 years you would then apply for the growth of the city. The growth didn't come. So they allocated all the funds, and they were short of funds before the program ran out. I guess that's one of the difficulties we had in the city of Calgary. We've learned from that that maybe we should have stayed with a yearly application such as we have now in the new program.

Julian, can you add anything to that?

MR. NOWICKI: The only other comment I would make, Mr. Minister and Mr. Chairman, is that the existing CRC program allows a lot of flexibility. We have deregulated the MCR program by combining the operating and capital programs together under one. We've combined operational assistance, project co-operation, and MCR under that community recreation/cultural grant program. It gives a broad general umbrella of a deregulated program to the municipalities who, in turn -- for example, as in Calgary's case, if they want to impose some additional guidelines in their particular municipality to guard against any such future situations as happened in the early '80s, they can do so, whereas other municipalities where they have no problems can operate the program under a very general kind of regulation that we have structured this grant program under. So the ability exists for Calgary to ask for more detailed studies, for more detailed auditing procedures, and so on, in order to prevent the kinds of situations that

occurred there in the early '80s.

MR. LEE: A supplementary, Mr. Chairman. I guess one of the questions that comes to mind is that when we look back at these programs, we've had tremendous initiative on the part of local communities who were most enthusiastic about their ability to raise their matching funds. Therein was one of the major problems: the financial capacity of the participants to raise those funds didn't materialize. I'll ask two questions. Number one: have you given any thought to that particular end of the equation, that private groups were simply not able to match the funds that they committed to? On the other hand, we don't want to have a program that says you've got to show that you've got the cash first before we'll let you participate.

The second part of the question is: nowhere have we ever said, what are your real needs versus your wants? It really strikes me that the projects we built in Calgary were a reflection of wants. As a result, everything got put in, figured out a price tag, did some imaginative thinking about how they could raise their half, and went to the city. Nobody ever said, "Do you really need that much?" Have you given any consideration to that in the new programs?

MR. TRYNCHY: Mr. Chairman, I guess that's what could be the biggest problem of a program such as this, which is so flexible and leaves local autonomy at the forefront. We've developed a program that allows the community, the local governments, to make their own decisions. As I travel the province, that's the kind of message I keep getting. How do you get a community to commit themselves to 50 percent of the funding? It's a tough one, because in 99.9 percent of our projects, that indeed took place. It's only a very small portion we've been having some difficulties with. So I guess it's up to the local government, when they sign the application, to make darned sure that that 50 percent is in cash, volunteer labour, materials, or what have you. If they follow that route, there shouldn't be any difficulty. I hope I'm not hearing the hon. member say that we as government should be involved in making sure that happens. If we do that, we really don't need city council to sign the application; let's do it ourselves. I don't think that's what I'm hearing.

With regard to needs against wants, yes, that's been a difficult one. I was at some of those leisure pools, and I asked myself that question: is that the need or is that the want of the community? Of course, you have to go away saying to yourself that that's their decision; it's local autonomy; they say they can do it. In 99 percent of the cases they've done it. So I couldn't recommend bringing in guidelines that would make it tougher now. In our new program, the community recreation/cultural grant program, we've left it as flexible as we can with the hope and, I'm sure, with the understanding that the local communities, local governments, will make sure that what has happened in the past won't happen again.

MRS. KOPER: Mr. Chairman, may I ask two questions?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes. You have one question and two supplementaries.

MRS. KOPER: One question, two supplementaries. In that case, my question is regarding Kananaskis Country, Mr. Minister. First, I'd like to compliment you and your department for the many, many programs that are offered. As you go around Alberta, I think this department contributes a great deal to the quality of life of Albertans. Everywhere you go you see evidence of the kind of flexibility you were talking about in meeting local needs.

With regard to Kananaskis Country, many new ventures have been tried here. The year we are discussing, the '83-84 budget year, is possibly the first year of wide-open operation. A new area was opened in the park. I wonder, Mr. Minister, if you have any statistics that relate the usage of the park to the operational costs and the kind of awareness Albertans have of this park -- is it growing? -- an evaluation, I guess, of our efforts as a province on this.

MR. TRYNCHY: We keep some figures, and I'll have Ed comment too. I understand that we had approximately two million visitors to Kananaskis Country last year. We have close to 3,000 camping sites in Kananaskis Country. Of course, we have the golf course, which had about 55,000 rounds of golf played on it last year. With good weather and a good start, we could go as high as 80,000 rounds of golf this

summer. We've done all this without too much advertising abroad. I guess what I'm now getting from some people is that we should advertise it more. Yet when you phone for a booking on the golf course, you can't get in because it's already booked all summer except for the walk-on traffic, which I understand is available every hour daily. And you might be able to get on on 24-hours' notice.

Kananaskis Country is a tremendously used facility, and I think anybody who's been there -- and I've had some people say to me, before they knew the concept, what a dumb thing we were doing. They've gone there, and phone me or come and visit me and say: "Look, what we said was wrong. It's the greatest thing you've done for the people of Alberta." I still insist that we have to keep it for Albertans first, and if we don't have to advertise it across the world, that's fine. They'll come on their own. But it is being used.

Ed, do you have any figures you want to relay to them?

MR. MARSHALL: Mrs. Koper, the figures have just been going up like this: 1.4, 1.7 -- these are rounded -- 2 million. I don't know how many we're going to have this year. It's not quite as easy as you might think to keep track of all of them in Kananaskis Country, because we have nine ways in and nine ways out. It's not quite like Banff National Park, where you have two or three ways in and out. But by a combination of traffic counts and surveys and keeping track of people through their campground registrations and so on, we're producing these figures.

We appreciate that you could have more people come to Kananaskis Country than you would want to have. It has to be what it is for those who want to come, not a place where you just see lots of people. The country is large enough that, so far, it has been able to absorb all the visitors without any thought of having to consider rationing of the facilities, if you like. Sometimes this happens. If you want a backcountry trail experience, you don't want to see everybody you know on the backcountry trail. Nothing like that has happened yet.

To ensure that Albertans know about it, the thrust of our advertising has been simply to tell Albertans what is out there and ready for them. We have done no more than that. Albertans from all over Alberta are finding it and certainly to their satisfaction. We were

absolutely jammed this last weekend. I've been waiting for the phone to ring for somebody to complain about something. It hasn't happened yet. I was very pleased, I must say. It will probably happen, but it hasn't happened yet.

I think that's the best I can give you on numbers for the moment. We don't know what the top will be, but we don't want it to be overcrowded for those who are there.

MRS. KOPER: A supplementary. Maybe it's more a comment than a question, but perhaps it would be useful to find out where the people come from. I don't know if you have any way of doing that because, as you say, it's so difficult to control people coming in. Often it's been described as a playground for southern Alberta and Calgary particularly. It would be very interesting to find out if other Albertans are enjoying this as well. That's just a comment.

Mr. Chairman, my supplementary deals with winter use. Is there any evidence that this is increasing? Are efforts being made to ensure that this use grows, other than of course the obvious Mount Allan?

MR. TRYNCHY: I think Ed has an answer to your first question, because we do have percentages of visitors from the province and where they come from across the country.

With regard to winter usage, we have cross-country skiing. That's quite popular. It operates out of the — we don't call it the clubhouse; it's the family centre?

MR. MARSHALL: It depends who you're talking to, Mr. Minister. Most people are calling it the clubhouse.

MR. TRYNCHY: They operate out of the clubhouse or the family centre at Ribbon Creek. It's very popular. Now with Nakiska on Mount Allan, that too will be tied in. Again, with the three alpine villages going ahead this year, I can see nothing but great use year-round. It's a four seasons park: spring, summer, fall, and winter. Equestrian trails, hiking trails — all those kinds of things will be there for people on a year-round basis.

Ed, do you have any percentage figures of where they come from?

MR. MARSHALL: Mr. Chairman, I think there are two questions there. With respect to where

they come from, Mrs. Koper, we ask people to register at the Travel Alberta travel information centres and at the park visitors centre. We know where the people who register came from. That isn't everybody by any means; nevertheless it's not a bad sample. They come from all over Alberta, and of course people are coming from all over the world. Certainly the preponderance of people is from southern Alberta, just because we're so close.

With respect to your winter use question, winter use of Kananaskis Country is growing by leaps and bounds. Primarily it's cross-country skiing, but there are other activities out there, snowshoeing being one of them, snowmobiling, and people just plain going for a drive. It's a nice place to go in the wintertime, and it's not too far away. There was a time when people used to get excited about the possibility of perhaps 3,000 people appearing for, say, the men's downhill at the Olympic winter games in 1988. It's nothing for us, on a nice winter weekend, just by counting cars and people, to have as many as 12,000 people in Kananaskis Provincial Park, which is just one of our ski area trailheads. So numbers like 30,000 and 40,000 don't make us nervous; we can handle them.

MR. DROBOT: My question refers to the municipal recreation parks program. I understand that municipal people and the general public find the program very beneficial and very popular. In fact, in the county of Two Hills and the county of St. Paul, one provided the lake, which the other county didn't have, and the other one provided the funding. So it's a great thing in co-operation. I'm wondering how many of these parks, recreation areas, have been established since the program was set up. Would you have an approximate figure?

MR. TRYNCHY: Yes, we have that, Mr. Chairman. As you will recall, four years ago we developed a program where we provided up to \$100,000 in capital and up to \$20,000 a year for operating for the next 25 years. We provided 10 each year during the last four years. We have 40 such recreation areas either opened or that will be opened this year and completed. This year we've expanded the program and will be searching — we won't be searching, because we have 100 and some requests. We'll be looking across the province to develop 30 more.

We've changed the program this year in regard to the way we fund it. In the past we provided \$100,000 in the given year for the development. This year we've changed it to providing half the funds this year and half the funds next year. So if a recreation area were approved for \$100,000, it would receive \$50,000 during the course of 1985-86 and then next April 1, 1986-87, it would receive the other \$50,000. We found that it takes about two years to develop such a thing.

Mr. Chairman and members, as I travel the province -- and I was at official openings last year of 14 or 15 of these -- there's nowhere in the world where you can get a local community municipal rec area for \$100,000 whose value is around \$1 million by the way people get involved. It is just tremendous. I've seen some tremendous efforts by local communities. They're very positive.

We're going to continue this year, as I said, with 30. We have some 40-odd rural constituencies, and what we're trying to do is provide two for each constituency. I'd like to point out to the members who are requesting these that they shouldn't be located in a village or a town or a city; we're looking for a rural setting. A number of them -- the hon. Member for Camrose. Some are on bodies of water outside towns and villages, because that's what they're all about.

MR. DROBOT: A supplementary question following that up and in regard to your last comment. Would the program be extended to Indian reserves and Metis settlements if they agree to make the recreation area public? With four reserves and one Metis settlement in our constituency, you can see my concern. They're all located on beautiful lakes; for instance, Saddle Lake, Frog Lake, Goodfish Lake, Onion Lake, and Fishing Lake. The reserves are even named after the lakes. They're beginning to realize the value of tourist potential. Has any thought been given along those lines?

MR. TRYNCHY: Mr. Chairman, we haven't given that any thought. Possibly that's my fault. I think it's a great idea. All we ask is that the land be municipally owned or open to the public. It must be a public facility. I suppose if the native people would like to make a request through their MLA, or the MLA would make a request -- I don't know if there's

something we'd have to change to do it; I'm not sure. But I would certainly like to have a look at it. They're Albertans. We provided them with MCR funds. We are providing them with the community recreation/cultural grant programs. Why not this? But we might have to make some regulation changes. I just got a note from my acting deputy minister. He says, "No problem." Let's have the requests come in -- as long as it's open to the public.

The only difficulty we'd have is if they let the place be run down or forgot to run it, who would take it over? The municipality has no jurisdiction, whereas in other cases -- if the community club at Cold Lake puts one in and can't run it, the municipality signs on their behalf and they would take it over and give it to somebody else. Within an Indian reserve we wouldn't have those options. That's the only difficulty I would see. If after three or four years, and we'd spent public funds, they said, "The heck with it," then what? That's the only concern I would raise with you members in regard to whether we do it or don't on native lands.

MR. NELSON: Chairman, I must say it's nice to see you all again. Dave Kalinovich has lost weight. I hardly recognized you there, David. [interjection] I was just going to say, you probably got the whip out on the poor guy.

I just have a couple of questions; actually they're going to flip-flop around a little bit. I'm looking at the public accounts for 1983-84, the year we're dealing with. I usually have some concerns relevant to expenditures of public moneys -- usually a lot of concerns. I know that it has been commented on that for the year, your expenditures were under the estimates, and so on and so forth.

I am just curious more than anything and wondering -- in the top area, departmental support services, there are three areas where there seem to be some over-runs in administrative expenditures. Yet down below, where you start looking at many of the community programs and many of the programs that are more people-related than administrative, there seems to be underexpenditure. Possibly you could help me in determining why we seem to get some overexpenditures in the administrative wing, where the public really doesn't appear to get a lot of benefit from it, and we have



underexpenditure as to the estimate in those areas where the public does get some benefit. Could we maybe address this in the future, wherein the moneys expended on the public behalf and the public good, where they're going to see the benefit, could be examined in a different light and maybe re-examine the administrative costs of doing business and in fact maybe even reduce that?

MR. TRYNCHY: I'll have Dave comment on this. But before we do that I've got to point out that our manpower has decreased considerably in the last two or three years, so our salaries would not be a factor. Supplies and services -- you've got to remember that that's under departmental support -- has increased because we have more facilities to look after. So we have some expansion there. But in regard to manpower, I thought we in the department were about as lean and hungry as you can get. I'll have Dave Rehill answer that question or add to it.

MR. REHILL: Yes, sir. I'll have to ask you specifically what you're referring to. Departmental support services shows an underexpenditure of \$169,000.

MR. NELSON: I'm looking in the area of administrative support. We're up \$25,000 there by the looks of it. Financial administration: we're up \$40,000. Personnel services: we're up \$37,000. Certainly there are other areas that are under, but those are the specific areas. For running lean and hungry, as the minister has indicated, I think those areas should be a little leaner and hungrier too.

MR. REHILL: Again, sir, I'm looking at the estimates and I'm looking at the expenditures relative to the estimates.

MR. NELSON: I'm looking on page 19.4 of volume II of Public Accounts for 1983-84; it's the third, fourth, and fifth items in particular.

MR. TRYNCHY: In regard to recreation development, I don't see how you could suggest there's less, because we have a set figure now for our new community recreation/cultural grant program which provides \$20 per capita. In the past, it was either higher or lower, whatever the calls on the funds were. That's

going to be fixed now, and I believe that's around \$49 million for this year.

Which item are you on, Mr. Nelson?

MR. NELSON: It's page 19.4, volume II of the Public Accounts of 1983-84, personnel services.

MR. REHILL: The differences relate primarily to the fact that the dollars related to manpower expenses that are covered through contingency draw at year-end are not included in the estimates. So there is no overexpenditure relative to the program as defined. It's those dollars supplemented by the funds that are moved in through contingency moves at year-end.

MR. NELSON: Mr. Chairman, I don't know if I should elaborate too much at this point other than the fact -- and I know the program itself is underexpended. However, maybe I will pursue it just lightly.

When you talk about contingency funds moved around, I guess my concern goes back to the circumstance. Here we have an additional expense in an administrative function in these three particular areas even though part of that program relates to systems development, which has been less, public communications, which is \$41,000 less, and the planning secretary, which is \$5,000 less. The bulk of the moneys that are less are in those couple of areas, excluding the minister's office, which looks like he's outperformed everybody. However, the point I'm making is: how have we put additional moneys into those three particular administrative cost areas whereas they're taken away from other areas which may or may not be more important, especially public communications.

The problem I have in every program at any level of government is the area of putting people into administrative or bureaucratic positions rather than out in the field and developing and continuing with good programs that the public physically can see. They don't see anybody sitting behind a desk. I'm just wondering why we've transferred money into those particular areas, for what I call desk jobs, rather than putting them into the community and to functions I would see as a citizen.

MR. TRYNCHY: Mr. Chairman, let me assure the hon. member that we have not reduced field

staff to put them into bureaucratic positions. We haven't done it, and we won't be doing it. Our field staff, our people-service people, are number one. Those people out there are there, and we haven't reduced them. If it takes five people to run a park, there are still five people there. We have not added anybody to so-called bureaucratic positions, to my knowledge.

MR. REHILL: Mr. Chairman, obviously any organization requires some degree of administrative overhead, and certainly from my perspective, our department is fairly lean in this regard. The two areas you are speaking to are areas that are manpower-intensive. Most of the costs associated with those particular elements relate to manpower costs. As you're probably aware, the budgeting method used within the Alberta government does not provide all the funds related to manpower expenditure at year beginning. They're not all included in the estimates, and they're recovered through a contingency draw program near year-end. All the adjustments to the estimates relative to the actual expenditures relate to the transfer of \$81,600 into those particular elements to cover manpower costs.

MR. NOWICKI: [Inaudible] administrative support services division has been flat-lined in terms of manpower since about 1976. So in terms of your concern about a substantial increase in manpower, that has not occurred. There has been a deliberate attempt within the department to keep our administrative support staff at a minimum level.

MR. NELSON: Chairman, just one further question on this go-round. I have a couple of others. The question I think I alluded to at some previous time was with regard to Kananaskis, where there is an increase and, of course, substantial positive feedback with regard to equestrian trails and riding in the park. However, during the season that hunters are allowed in the same area, I'm just wondering what the minister has been able to define or if there has been any change in policy relevant to both the equestrians and the hunters being allowed to use the same area during the hunting season. Are we able to do something to either move the hunters out of a specific area where equestrians are taking place or move the equestrians out during a certain time of the

year, or are we going to wait for an accident to occur before something is done?

MR. TRYNCHY: That matter has been raised with us. I believe we have that matter under consideration at this time, and I'll have Ed comment.

MR. MARSHALL: Mr. Chairman, to Mr. Nelson. What you have raised is a very real problem as far as we are concerned, because we are talking about activities which are legitimate in the area, whether it's hunting or hiking. So often the equestrian people are also hunters, so there could be equestrian hunters and non-equestrian hunters. I am not personally familiar with any conflict between people who are hunting with horses and people who are simply riding. If there's been anything like that, it has never come to me. There has been the odd situation whereby people who were hiking were somewhat offended by hunters in the vicinity and, I might say, vice versa.

It's our plan for the year ahead, now that I think we have a better understanding of the problem, to advise people when they are entering Kananaskis Country and areas where there is liable to be hunting that the game season is open and to suggest that they check into travel information centres. If they wish to go hiking, the people in the travel information centres will direct them to those areas where they can hike without running into hunters or vice versa. Hunters want to know that hikers are in the area, and certainly some hikers would prefer to avoid the areas altogether if there are hunters in them.

There is no movement on our part to suggest that hunting is less than a legitimate recreational activity in Kananaskis Country, because it's one of the old, old uses. To disrupt that, I think, would probably be unfair in the circumstances. But there are people who are afraid of other people with weapons, and so we are trying to get them to do their thing in the part of the countryside which is not open for hunting, and that is principally the park areas. That's the way we plan to attack the program for the year ahead.

MR. NELSON: Mr. Chairman, the question in regard to the equestrian people hasn't been addressed totally I don't think — other than the hunting.

MR. MARSHALL: Mr. Chairman, I apologize. Maybe I didn't understand the question. Is this equestrians who are not hunting?

MR. NELSON: Right. I wouldn't ride my horse out there in the hunting season; somebody might shoot it from under me.

MR. MARSHALL: Mr. Chairman, I tried to say that if there has been a conflict between equestrians who are hunting and equestrians who are not, I'm not aware of it. It's never been told to me. I don't think I have had a letter on it or a call or anything like that. Maybe I've overlooked something, but I don't think so.

MR. STROMBERG: There's an old saying around this building that behind every successful minister stands an equally successful crew, and I'm quite impressed with your success and with your crew.

On the weekend, it would appear that every provincial park in east-central Alberta was full. The no vacancy signs were up as early as Thursday, especially at that very popular park, Miquelon Lake. Would you have any stats, or is it too early yet, as to the occupancy rate on this long weekend? Was every provincial park in Alberta full, or were there a few where you could still find room?

MR. KALINOVICH: Mr. Chairman, generally speaking, the southern, central and, to some extent, most of the northern or east-central parks were literally all full. In fact, we had overflow situations in many of the more popular spots — Carson-Pegasus, as an example. Some of the parks in the Peace River country were not completely full for the full three days of the weekend. Parks further north, like Notikewin, were not at all full. It varied from location to location, but overall, my best guess would be that we were at least in the 90 percent occupancy range for the full provincial parks system.

MR. STROMBERG: A supplementary. Does the department still advertise by radio as to what campsites still have room? They used to; I recall hearing it. But I haven't heard it this year.

MR. TRYNCHY: Yes, Mr. Chairman. As a matter of fact, if the hon. member would turn

on his own radio, CFCW — on the way home the other day I listened to a number of comments on the station in regard to parks, which ones were full and which ones weren't. One of the things that has worked well that we've looked at and maybe should look at again is a reservation system. It gives Albertans an opportunity to reserve a campsite at their favourite park earlier on, so when they get there on a Thursday or Friday, it's available to them. In the past we've found that if the reservation system wasn't in place, the park was utilized by other people and the local people didn't have a chance. So that has worked well in our favour. We are advertising on the air as much as we can. As a matter of fact, I've heard it twice on the way home on CFCW in regard to which parks are filling up or that aren't quite full, where people should be going.

MR. STROMBERG: A supplementary. I should be listening to my own radio station more, but I've been listening to Mayerthorpe lately. In Ontario, I believe, they operate a reservation system; there is a quota on that park. Would that work in Alberta, that people can reserve their spot in a park on a given day or weekend, or would it be just a nightmare?

MR. TRYNCHY: We have that in effect now; we've had it in effect for a number of years. We don't have it in every provincial park yet, but we will wherever we have people that can answer the phone. We'll have it in place probably next year. We now have 38 provincial parks with a reservation system in place, where you can just pick up the phone, dial the number, say you want to reserve, and it's held until about 8 o'clock at night. If you don't show up, then it's given up. But we have that in place.

MR. STROMBERG: Mr. Chairman, am I allowed another question on a different matter, or do I come in later?

MR. CHAIRMAN: You've had three.

MR. STROMBERG: Three questions? Good.

MR. CHAIRMAN: We'll let you have one more, if it's quick.

MR. STROMBERG: When are the Winter Games coming to the city of Camrose?

MR. TRYNCHY: Whenever they make application and are successful in their application.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That was quick.

MR. McPHERSON: Mr. Chairman, the Member for Ponoka raised the question about golf courses in provincial parks. When pressed by the minister, he alluded specifically to the golf course in Waskasoo Park in Red Deer, which invited me to get in, perhaps to offer some comments and, I hope, elucidate on some of the ramifications and implications of that park.

I can't help but think of the comment made last year, I think, by our hon. chairman or his former colleague, the hon. Grant Notley, which was a very interesting catch phrase: socialized golf courses throughout the province. It made me think a little bit about it. I tried to cut through the political connotations of that and consider the practical implications of where golf courses are going in this province. I've come up with the conclusion that there are really only two ways that golf courses can be built in this province because of the high cost of land. They are either public golf courses or in conjunction with land development. Other than those two areas, unless there's a major land development where lots are sold off surrounding a golf course, which usually makes it a very exclusive golf course, or there's a public golf course, it seems to me there aren't going to be a lot of new golf courses in this province, with the possible exception of the Wolf Creek golf course by Millet, which is a links golf course. I wish them very well; I understand they're doing well. Other than that, I can't think of a lot of other golf courses that are being built.

If that's the case, I come back to some of the minister's comments. He's quite correct in saying that there was a major effort by the city of Red Deer in the planning stages of the golf course in Waskasoo Park to develop public input as to whether or not that would be one of the beneficial and highly accepted uses of funds within the park. It was determined by a wide majority that many, many people in Red Deer and the surrounding area did indeed want to see a public golf course.

At the time that that . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: There is a question?

MR. McPHERSON: There is a question. At the time that that public input was received, there were very, very few of the existing golf courses in the area that raised any objections whatsoever. As the hon. chairman might know, I was concerned with regard to public golf courses competing in the private sector. So I went around to a number of the golf courses and talked to them, and I arrived at an interesting conclusion. I think many people in the golf business strongly hold the view that good golf courses in fact attract new golfers to the game, and . . .

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. McPHERSON: I'm going to get to my point, Mr. Chairman, but we are on the record, and I do want to get this out. I don't know that there's a time limit on our preamble to a question; it's never been stated to me before. It's doubly difficult when I'm competing not only with the chairman but with all other members.

Good golf courses do attract new golfers to the game, and I think there will be beneficial implications to this new golf course for most of the golf courses in the central Alberta region. But that's only a very small part of the urban park in Red Deer. It really is a magnificent area, and it is one that the Member for Calgary Foothills mentioned. It's astronomical to see on a weekend like last weekend how many people are using the Waskasoo Park within Red Deer. I guess I refer to families. It's unbelievable how the community spirit has developed around that program and how it's developing a spirit of community and also a place for families to be.

Here is my question, and would you believe it's almost unrelated? The concern I have at the moment, and I'd be appreciative of the minister's comment, is whether he anticipates any increase in rowdiness within our provincial parks as a result of Bill 54, which is now before the Legislature and which contemplates that there will be designated areas for the consumption of liquor within our provincial parks. I'd appreciate a comment on that.

MR. TRYNCHY: Mr. Chairman, when the Bill was introduced, I was asked what we would be doing with regard to relaxing the liquor laws in provincial parks. My comment was that we would be approaching it very carefully and slowly, and if we didn't do it soon, the world

wouldn't fall apart. I still hold to the view that there is a place where the relaxation of liquor laws under strict hours and control probably would be beneficial.

We're reviewing at this time what can be done in provincial parks and if it should be done. We don't anticipate moving too quickly with the relaxation of our liquor laws in provincial parks. I don't even know if we'll have any done this summer, but we are concerned about rowdiness. So far our record has been pretty darned good. If we had a day use or group area where you could designate liquor hours -- say, have the hours start at noon and close at 9 or 10 o'clock at night, so your mealtime is over -- you might be able to handle it really well within provincial parks.

We want to see what's happening in other places, and we'll move very slowly on this. If it can be proven that it can work, we'll do it. If it can't work, we can always try it and then change it and not do it. So we have that option available to us. The owners of the parks can bring in the law and then, of course, take it back out if it doesn't work. Right now, that's where we're at unless there's something I don't know, David. No. I understand that's where we're at. We're going to have a good look at it, but we have no commitments to make at this time about whether or not we're going ahead.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I still have five people on the list, so we'll judge the time accordingly.

MR. ALGER: Mr. Chairman, I'll chide you a little bit about my position in this lineup. I had my hand up before the hon. Member for Red Deer even got here. Had I known I was going through all that, I'd have gone out for a light lunch.

In any event, Mr. Chairman, I'd like to congratulate the minister and certainly his staff. He's got a delightful and popular portfolio. I think they're doing a remarkable job. I would like to particularly comment on the Kananaskis Citizens' Advisory Committee, who have been a very helpful group to the minister. I'm sure they've discussed and worked on a million problems while the Kananaskis program was going through its building era.

I want to indicate to the minister that though he's had two million visitors and 55,000 rounds of golf, I don't know how I can increase on this except that while there are nine ways in and

out, Mr. Chairman, there is one way in particular that they block off pretty consistently from December 1 to June 15. I don't know; there's a wrinkle that irritates the constituents in my area and further south in the Crowsnest and certainly in Cardston and all those areas -- Macleod and places like that that can't come up on what I would call the short way. The Minister of Transportation has worked resolutely hard to rebuild Highway 541 to secondary provincial standards. It travels to Longview. Just this morning we were discussing rebuilding Highway 22 all the way to Lundbreck -- things like that allow that traffic in from the south.

The reason I've been given for this, Mr. Chairman, is the proliferation of the elk herds and things like that, which I don't thoroughly agree with for the simple reason that they're all over my constituency in the wintertime. So I don't think we're bothering their breeding process much by closing that road. What I'm getting at is that with golf, hiking, camping, equestrian, and all those nice things you can do, and cross-country skiing in the winter, when do we anticipate the opening and the keeping open year-round of that road 540 or 40 or the Bighorn highway, as it's known?

MR. TRYNCHY: Mr. Chairman, this has come to me a number of times, and we've reviewed it in our cabinet committee for Kananaskis, of which the member asking the question is also a member. The citizens' advisory committee have had this under consideration. They've made some recommendations. I am now in the process of asking the Minister of Transportation for a cost estimate for wintertime. I understand it's quite high because of the snowfall. I'm also asking the Minister responsible for Public Lands and Wildlife to give us their report on what would happen with regard to the wildlife problems if the road were open, whether or not it would affect the wildlife.

At the outset, my understanding was that the Highwood Pass was not being kept open because of two things: the tremendous cost of keeping it open because of the snowfall, and secondly, the wildlife problems -- or probably the wildlife problems firstly, and secondly, the cost of keeping it open. We're doing a review of it, and I expect it to come back to our cabinet committee within the next meeting or so. I

know there are a number of people from that area writing letters suggesting that we keep it open. There's some talk that we might want to keep it open for the Olympics and have a roundabout traffic route. We're looking at all those things, but I can't give the hon. member a definite answer as to when it will be open, if it will be open. But we're looking at it.

MR. ALGER: A supplementary, Mr. Chairman. Would the minister indicate to me why we have to have it closed for so long in the summer? In short, the winter is relatively over with in, say, April, and we're still held up on that road until June 15. I can't really understand the reasoning for that.

MR. TRYNCHY: The reasoning for that is the young offspring of the wildlife. They're trying to protect the grounds where the wildlife have their young, and those kinds of things. That's why they picked June. I guess if we get the report back from Wildlife saying that we could open it sooner when the snow goes, say, May 1 or something like that, we'd have to consider it. But that's my understanding of it. Ed, do you have any comments?

MR. MARSHALL: I couldn't add anything to what you've said, Mr. Minister. That's substantially the story.

MR. ALGER: A supplementary, Mr. Chairman. Naturally, the wildlife are a critical thing in our country, but in all our other parks, particularly the national parks, we can travel from Calgary to Radium and see countless numbers of sheep, elk, deer, and everything else that don't seem to be hindered by the traffic. I can't understand why there's a differentiation in this particular area. I'd like to see it resolved as soon as possible.

MR. TRYNCHY: I might mention to the member, Mr. Chairman, that when Kananaskis was first announced or the concept was drawn up, the concern by a number of people was with regard to wildlife. It was agreed to then. I guess they must have done a study, because it was substantiated that we should not keep that area open during certain periods of time because of the wildlife. I guess that still holds today. There are some circumstances which have changed. I'm sure we'll have a look at it

and try to work within those guidelines.

MR. ALGER: I appreciate that, Mr. Minister.

MR. SHRAKE: Mr. Chairman, I'd also like to extend my congratulations to the minister on the programs they've had, especially the MCR grant program. We've probably got some of the best community facilities in North America. We've got community halls where you get Cubs, Scouts, Beavers, Guides, Brownies, hockey, soccer, ball, et cetera. We've even got some communities in the city of Calgary who have built their own twin ice arenas, and it's worked well. There's one of the twin ice arenas on the east side of the city of Calgary where a lot of the families are lower income, and they own a twin ice arena which is paid for. It's been a successful program.

Also, our cultural groups have put in some facilities that are excellent. Many years from now we'll look back with pride on these, I'm sure. But these groups, especially the groups that built between 1980 and 1982, do have financial problems. I'm just wondering if the municipalities and the cities with their parks and recreation boards, city council and so on -- if in their wisdom they choose to take a small portion of the MCR grant funding and use it for debt reduction, which would allow the groups to retire these debts to get them out of this problem. They built during this period of inflation, when the price was high; the cost increased 1, 1.5, 2 percent every month during the period of construction, and then when they got to the peak, it crashed. I don't think we should blame the communities or the groups by saying they're irresponsible or they were not trying, because during the same period we had banks and developers and everybody else that ran into the same problem. They got into financial trouble too; banks and mortgage companies, you name it. So I'm just wondering if the minister has any objection if the municipalities in their autonomy choose to go this way or if you'll encourage them.

MR. TRYNCHY: Mr. Chairman, I don't know if the hon. member was in here when I answered the very same question from the Member for Calgary Buffalo, but he's quite correct in suggesting that under the MCR in the city of Calgary there are some communities with a debt load. The new program, the community

recreation/cultural grant program, has flexibility in that you can use up to 75 percent of the total funding for capital construction or debt retirement, based on the community and the municipality's own request. Those dollars, of course, have to be matched fifty-fifty. I would not encourage it or otherwise, because there are other communities that have spent their funds well, have built their facilities, and have no debts. So if you take all the funds and put them in a debt retirement, you're giving them a double shot. What about the communities that have done so well and say, "Look, we want to expand our programs or expand our facilities, and if we put it all into debt retirement we don't have that option." So we're going to leave that with the local municipality, the local recreation boards, local councils, to make that decision. As I mentioned before, the cities, the municipalities, the governments, are obligated by signing a dissolution agreement that they will be involved if the community club fails. I hope that they would read that again and take it from there. But I will not encourage them or discourage them, because I think that's a local decision. That's the way it has been up to now. It's been successful, and I hope it will continue to be successful in the years ahead.

MR. SHRAKE: Mr. Chairman, I did phrase my question: if the municipalities in their wisdom wanted to go this route. My supplementary question on this would be: are we going to encourage the municipalities within their own scope of autonomy and so on not to — we were going to give them \$10 per capita, we raised it to \$15 per capita, and then we finally went, I would say, to a very generous program of \$25 per capita — pull this all out and fund programs which they would normally take out of their normal tax revenue. In short, say the city of Calgary has a tough year — they should be getting close to \$13 million — and rip half of it off for their own programs, there's nothing left for what we call the MCR grant program.

MR. TRYNCHY: Mr. Chairman, it's not MCR anymore. That program has expired. It's not \$25 per capita yearly; it's \$20 per capita. You've got to remember that the total dollars flowing to any municipality is based on 50 percent going to community clubs and organizations and 50 percent to municipally run

projects. So 50 percent of the total funds flowing to the city of Calgary must be directed to community clubs, volunteer groups, and such. With the other 50 percent they can do what they want. Of course, I'm sure they'll do justice to it. Those funds are matched fifty-fifty for debt retirement and capital construction. They can use up to 60 percent of it for operating, which is only matched by 30 percent. So there are a number of options available to them. But as I said before, I can't encourage them to or discourage them from using it all for debt retirement. I want to leave that up to them. They're elected people, they represent the same people we represent, and I'm sure they'll do the right thing for their communities.

MR. SHRAKE: Mr. Chairman, I would like to clarify. I haven't asked the minister if he would encourage them to use it all for debt retirement; I'm just saying a portion.

My final question is: if they choose to get into this operating, will they be allowed to — if in their wisdom they choose to grant some funding to the cultural groups and the community groups for their actual operating costs, such as paying the lights, gas, and this type of thing, would this be acceptable? The reason I ask is that many of the organizations depended heavily upon bingo for a source of revenue. We've now allowed a new type of bingo in the city of Calgary, so many of the traditional community bingos are not financially successful anymore.

MR. TRYNCHY: Mr. Chairman, a minimum of 25 percent of the total funds must be used for cultural purposes. For operating funds, of course, it is up to them. They can use up to 60 percent of the total funds for operating, which they must match by 30 percent. So if they were to, say, take \$10 for operating, they'd have to come up with \$3. That's available to them. During the recreation master plan deliberations, which are ongoing right now, according to my information from the city, they should shortly be making their application for their total grant. Within that master plan, it will be their own decision on how they want to expend the funds, a combination of three: debt retirement, capital construction, and operating funds. That's available to them.

MR. SHRAKE: Do you know when the application forms will be available?

MR. TRYNCHY: They all have them. They've had them for some time now.

MR. CHAIRMAN: We have only four or five minutes, and I still have three people on the list.

MR. SZWENDER: Mr. Chairman, I just have a preliminary comment following up on Mr. Alger's point about route 540. I've raised this with the minister in Committee of Supply, and that's the entrance into Kananaskis park. I still think it is very poorly designed. It is deceptive for first-time travellers there. The 90-degree turn into the park isn't clearly marked. Many people still go straight onto the gravel road; I believe that's an extension of 540 going to Coleman, if you go right through there. I'm hoping that will be looked at and the entrance will be marked more clearly for visitors.

My question, and I hope there is a question, is with respect to housing of staff or administration in the various provincial parks. Is that in the estimates of the minister's budget, or is that a part of supply and services? I'm not able to determine that by just looking at the estimates.

MR. TRYNCHY: Our housing supply is in our estimates. It's built by Public Works, Supply and Services, but we have them in our estimates.

MR. SZWENDER: Very good. I believe that that housing is rented to staff members who have to live in the various parks, obviously at some distance from populated areas. My understanding was that there was a phase-in period where the rents for the housing were going to be introduced over a period of time until they reached a certain percentage of local market value. At what stage is that, and what is the percentage that was the objective or goal?

MR. KALINOVICH: Mr. Chairman, the 1985 rates are 70 percent of the provincial average, which is the average determined by the Alberta Housing Corporation. The 1986 target is 80 percent of the provincial average. That's the ceiling: 1986 will be the ceiling year at 80

percent of the provincial average.

MR. SZWENDER: Thank you. That's what I was looking for.

My first supplementary is regarding housing in Kananaskis park. I believe 18 homes were built there and distributed to staff members. Maybe Mr. Marshall or the minister could elaborate: on what basis were those homes distributed? It's my understanding that those homes were for families, but indeed a large number are occupied by single individuals, largely men, whether wardens or something like that. Does the minister or Mr. Marshall feel that that is a justified cost where one individual has a whole home to himself. Would it not be more cost-efficient if two or three single men shared a home?

MR. TRYNCHY: Just one comment before I have Ed respond. If you rent a house to a person for a rental fee of so many dollars a month, surely we're not going to suggest that you have to have more than one person living there if he or she is paying the rent. [interjection] I see your point. Ed?

MR. MARSHALL: Mr. Chairman, the situation that was described by Mr. Szwender does in fact exist. Occasionally you have a single person who has a house. The purpose of that is not to be discriminatory against somebody who may be single. If they have the position in a particular area and the job they're doing is of a certain level of importance, that is what qualifies them for the housing. In other words, it's determined to be housing for essential staff. In some cases somebody fitting that category may not necessarily be married. It would be considered discriminatory if that person were ineligible for a house for that reason. That's not the army approach to it; you get so many points for being married and so many points for children and so on. We're quite acquainted with that. But this is one whereby if somebody has the level of service and has the time in, they're eligible for a house whether they're male or female or single or married or whatever. Somebody else who may be married and have two or three kids with a lower level job and not that number of years of service or whatever may think that's a terrible situation, but that is the situation nonetheless.

At the same time, we have what we call



seasonal staff housing, where there is a single bedroom in a building that holds eight people, for people who want that kind of accommodation. But if they don't want it and they qualify for a house, it's pretty hard to say: "No, you have to get married before you're going to get it." We don't do that.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You notice the time; it's 11:31. I'm at the pleasure of people here. I still have two people on the list, Mr. Paproski and Mr. Harle. I take it you had another question you wanted to ask, Mr. Szwender? Yes, if you want. That's the situation. I don't know what your time is like.

MR. TRYNCHY: We'll answer the other two questions. I think it's important, don't you?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Go ahead.

MR. SZWENDER: I just had a second and final supplementary. Thank you for that clarification. I realize it's a balance you have to strike. With limited housing, obviously there are those who feel they are unjustly done by, by others who may be getting too extravagant accommodation, but you've explained it. That was why I asked the original question about the target ceiling, which is 80 percent.

My second question is: if certain staff members are receiving public housing, I guess we could call it, at a reduced rate, is there any policy of the department in operating a business out of that home? The lower rent would give them an advantage, not only using it for accommodation but operating a business as well out of a park home. Is there any policy regarding that, restricting or limiting the use of a home that is provided to staff?

MR. TRYNCHY: I don't think we'd approve of somebody running a business out of a park home. I've never heard of it. If you have something you can be specific on, we'd like to have a look at it. I'm not aware of any policy, but I think it's just common knowledge that you don't operate a business out of a park home.

MR. SZWENDER: It would give them an unfair advantage over a private-sector individual who has to pay full value.

MR. MARSHALL: Mr. Chairman, Mr. Minister,

I don't know of any policy against it specifically. At the same time, I think that there couldn't be any real objection to somebody who, for whatever reason, liked to do art work or something like that in their own home. I don't think that's a particularly big deal. But if he started tacking up signs, "submarine sandwiches," on a government house, I'm sure they'd get a knock on the door. I'm not trying to discriminate and say one business is okay and one isn't, but there are certain -- almost at a level below a cottage industry. If somebody had a particular thing they wanted to do in their basement -- maybe they make mobiles or something like that. I don't think that's a big deal. But certainly the idea of advertising or drawing people to your place of business or something like that would not be acceptable in any of the staff houses in Kananaskis Country.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I'm going to ask to go along quickly if we can, because people still want to ask questions. Mr. Paproski.

MR. PAPROSKI: Mr. Chairman, first of all, I want to thank the committee for extending the hour so I can ask a quick question. I want to commend the minister and his department officials for offering just super programs to Albertans, from children all the way to senior citizens.

I want to ask a specific question about the seniors population in our province. I know your department, Mr. Minister, offers tremendous services and programs such as the Seniors Games, free camping privileges, numerous grants to seniors' groups, et cetera. My question stems from the fact that our aged population in Alberta is increasing by leaps and bounds and, indeed, will be increasing by a great percentage over the next 10 to 15 years. First of all, I wonder whether you've designated one individual or a group of individuals in your department to deal specifically with seniors' requests? Secondly, have you undertaken any type of study to look at the impact of our growing population in this age area, the impact it will have on your programs -- whether you've reviewed this at all and whether you have a plan of attack to deal with the issue of growing numbers of the aging population in our province and what it will do with respect to your department's programs?

MR. TRYNCHY: Mr. Chairman, in many cases in my constituency and, I'm sure, across the province, the seniors' population is nearing 20 percent of the total population. We have communities that have 20 percent seniors. In that case we try to work with them in a number of areas. We've provided walking trails in provincial parks for them. We're developing some right now. As you've mentioned, we've provided the Seniors Games and things like that.

The seniors I've talked to, and I've talk to quite a few, really want to be left alone. They're pretty proud. The ones who can get around pretty good aren't looking for anything. They want to help. We have a number of seniors who have now come forward and taken over some of our highway campsites and are running them. They're pretty proud of what they're doing.

Once they become older and can't get around, of course, they go to social services for granting programs. But we don't have anything specific for seniors. The programs we have are available for all Albertans, be they young people or seniors.

I'm not sure whether we have a contact person for seniors in our department, but it's a good thought that we could consider if requests were there for something we're not providing. At this time, with our cultural funding and our art programs, the seniors are involved in drop-in centres, and we have just thousands of them across the province. We do what we can for them with regard to funding through the CRC, and in the past, the MCR. But if there is a specific case where you'd like to see us be involved, I'd be interested in hearing from the hon. member. Maybe there's something we're overlooking.

MR. PAPROSKI: I don't believe the department is overlooking anything. I think you hit the nail on the head, though, when you said that one-fifth of our population is now or will be over 55 or perhaps 65 years old by the year 2000. I think you've said it. The fact that it's such a large population, I believe one should look at that and definitely consider a special group of individuals or an individual in your department.

Thank you.

MR. HARLE: Mr. Chairman, I too would like to express my appreciation to the committee for extending the time a little bit so I could ask a

question.

My question relates to Kananaskis and snowmobiles. I keep hearing rumblings that there are still problems involving snowmobilers in the area, and I'm just wondering what the present status is with regard to snowmobilers and their activities in the general area of Kananaskis Country particularly.

MR. TRYNCHY: We have set aside areas within Kananaskis Country — the Cataract area, McLean Creek, Sibbald Flat, and Ghost-Waiparous. In some years we've had very little snow. The areas we've designated for snowmobilers just had no snow, and they'd like to get deeper into Kananaskis Country and into the wildlife areas and things like that. So far, we've had pretty good luck in regard to keeping them happy. There's been some talk they would like to expand their territory, and I understand we have a proposal coming forward from Public Lands and Wildlife in regard to maybe looping a trail in some cases. I don't know of any really difficult problems from where they're at now except when there's no snowfall.

Ed, do you have any comments?

MR. MARSHALL: Mr. Chairman, there's no doubt that the snowmobilers' activities have been contained in certain areas of Kananaskis Country. Until this year, we were unfortunately somewhat short of snow in the period before Christmas. This year was a good snow year, particularly early on, and we had many fewer complaints about it. But it is disappointing for a family if they get a new snowmobile for Christmas and, so to speak, have almost nowhere to go in Kananaskis Country. As long as we get the snow, the present areas seem fine. I hope we'll be able to accommodate their wishes for a slightly extended loop from the McLean Creek campground. Outside of that, I think we've gone about as far as we can go, because it's one of the user conflicts we just have to face. They have been given many square miles, in fact, for snowmobiling. Hopefully, what we've offered in Kananaskis Country and what's available to snowmobilers both below our southern border and above our northern border will take care of most of the needs.

MR. TRYNCHY: Just one more comment in regard to the Member for Edmonton Kingsway.

We do have people who talk to seniors. We have consultants that are in our department. Julian, I think we should touch on that before we leave.

MR. NOWICKI: Mr. Chairman, just a comment. We have staff that provides consulting services to the provincial senior citizens' association, for example, an association that we provide administrative funding to, as well as funding for leadership and participant programs. We also have a consultant on staff who prepares a lot of resource material for seniors in terms of fitness and recreation and leisure life-style, et cetera. Also, every four years we do a survey of the youth recreation patterns of Albertans, and we certainly look at the use the seniors make and use that data in terms of developing these programs.

MR. PAPROSKI: For the record, is there a possibility we could have the name of that consultant?

MR. NOWICKI: The consultant primarily involved with seniors is Marion Maccallum.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you. At this point I'd like to thank Mr. Trynchy for being very patient. You now have the record, I think, in public accounts -- the longest we've ever got, at least since I've been chairman. Again, we do appreciate you and members of your department taking time out from your busy schedule and appearing here before us. Thank you very much.

I remind members that next week at this same time we have the Minister of Municipal Affairs, Mr. Koziak. Would somebody like to move adjournment?

MR. HARLE: I move we adjourn.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I guess we're all in favour of that at this time.

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

[The committee adjourned at 11:43 a.m.]

