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Committee of Supply -- Subcommittee B

Department of Social Services and Community Health

Thursday, June 14, 1979

Chairman: Mrs. Fyfe

3 p.m.

MME. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Bogle, would you like to introduce the staff members you have with you?

MR. BOGLE: Thank you, Mme. Chairperson. I'd like to introduce those officials with me at the table, and, as we go through the votes, other officials will be asked to come forward one at a time. As we get into their specific areas, they might be introduced at that time.

At my immediate left is the chief deputy minister, Mr. Stan Mansbridge; to the far right, the assistant deputy minister of finance, Don Strang, and at my immediate right my executive assistant, Gordon Thomas.

Mme. Chairperson, there are 10 votes in the department, and an eleventh, which deals with the Alberta Alcoholism and Drug Abuse Commission. If we do get to that point, several officials for the commission are standing by and could be called, if necessary.

MME. CHAIRMAN: Okay, let's start with Vote 1 and get into it.

MR. FJORBOTTEN: When you're ready to speak, if you'll hold up your hand, I'll announce you.

MME. CHAIRMAN: Go ahead, Mr. Bogle.

MR. BOGLE: Has everyone found the first vote? It's in the large book, page 283.

MME. CHAIRMAN: Any questions on the items? The minister's office is the first item.

DR. PAPROSKI: Mme. Chairperson, I wonder if the minister would give us an overview with respect to a plan he may have in mind to better co-ordinate the many, various programs already in place at the community level, so that the individual families receiving these particular programs might be able to receive them in a more efficient and co-ordinated manner. To put it simpler, is there a plan to co-ordinate all these programs?

MR. BOGLE: That might really be dealt with under research and planning, which is the third item in this vote. It's your pleasure, Mme. Chairperson, as to how you wish to go through it. Do you want to go through it item by item, or are you happy to move throughout the vote?

DR. PAPROSKI: Mme. Chairperson, I thought there might be some overview of the department prior to getting into the various votes. If you desire to go the other way, it doesn't matter.

MR. BOGLE: I thought I'd do that in the House.

MME. CHAIRMAN: Okay, are you satisfied with that?

DR. PAPROSKI: Just so long as we cover it.

MME. CHAIRMAN: Do you want to go through each of these, 1.1.1, 1.1.2, or are you satisfied to go through Vote 1 and ask any general questions? Whatever the committee wishes to do. I'm a novice at this, so whatever you think is the most expeditious way to handle this.

MR. BATIUK: If I may, Mme. Chairman, I was going to mention the same thing as Ken, but if the minister says he's going to be giving an overview in the House, there's no use repeating it. I think it has been customary to go vote by vote, and if anyone wants to stop, we can stop it right there.

MME. CHAIRMAN: Okay. 1.1.1, 1.1.2.

MR. WOO: To the minister, back to 1.1.1. I note that the minister's office, in terms of personnel, has listed two executive assistants as new support staff. Is this direction going to be maintained, in terms of having more than one EA in support services?

MR. BOGLE: I can't speak for other departments of government. During conversations I had with the Premier, I outlined the needs I felt I would have as the minister in this department. As most of you know, Gordon Thomas was my executive assistant while I was in Native Affairs, and he provided excellent support for me in that capacity. Catharine Arthur had served with Helen Hunley, I believe for her full four years, and has an immense knowledge of the department and its workings. I felt that if I would be given the opportunity to retain Catharine and her services and also to bring Gordon, I would be very fortunate. I made my case to the Premier, and he agreed with me. I'm extremely pleased with the way it's working, after some eight to 10 weeks into that process.

MME. CHAIRMAN: Any other questions up to 1.1.2? 1.1.3, Departmental Financial Services; 1.1.4, Research and Planning.

MR. PAYNE: Mme. Chairperson, I wonder if I'm reading the estimates correctly -- and I must confess, I'm as much a novice as anyone else in the room. The '79-'80 estimates for 1.1.4, Research and Planning, represents an 81 per cent increase over the previous year's forecast, which I presume is fairly close to the previous year's actual. Could you just make a comment on that apparent near doubling of the research and planning function? I'm sure it's justified, but I'd be interested in the justification.

MR. BOGLE: It's a very fair question. First, this is a new element to the department. It was initiated I believe last year, and did not become fully operational during the fiscal year. That's one of the factors. Another is that several new positions have been added to that division. In part, we can

look at the work we're doing in the Bonnyville-Cold Lake area, and some in Fort McMurray. Is there anything you'd like to add?

MR. MANSBRIDGE: I think the biggest single thing we have to do is completely recast the information system, both for the social allowance program, which you would know is the highest cost program, where we have in the order of \$200 million with a case load of about 35,000. In addition, the child welfare program, with a case load of some 10,000. We've had a computerized system for the social allowance case load, but a system which has, in the last two years, been inadequate to give us the kind of detailed analysis needed to get as much effective control of that program as possible.

So we have an enormous task of developing a revised, revamped computerized information system for social allowances and a new information system for child welfare cases. This constitutes the biggest single element in the increase. It's a long-term task. Anyone familiar with computer systems would know that this is a very intricate and difficult process.

As the minister has said, the other significant increase has been to permit us to do some anticipatory planning in both the foreseen major development areas, the Cold Lake and Fort McMurray areas, given the possibility of either another project in Fort McMurray or the Alsands project north. We've recognized over the last several months that it was necessary to do much more extensive planning, based on the earlier experience gained in Fort McMurray, in order to prepare for these new developments, for which the social impact is very, very dramatic.

MR. PAYNE: Just a supplementary, then. That's very helpful. But I guess I'm led to ask an additional question. I understand the need to add research planning staff because of these new burdens being placed on that part of the department. Is that going to be a continuing, never-ending requirement, or is there a time quantification to it, after which there would be a reduction either of staff or the funds required for the research and planning function?

MR. BOGLE: I would not expect that the percentage of growth, which is 81 per cent recommended in this fiscal year, would remain at that level, no. I think the explanation for that has already been given. I certainly would hope that we would maintain a research and planning division within the department. I think it's essential, when you're working in a department as people-oriented as ours, that you constantly be looking for new and innovative ways of meeting the needs of people and ensuring that your programs aren't dampening local initiative; in particular, when we look at the many volunteer groups we contract with, to ensure that we're not in some way smothering them. So I would hope, in short, that we would continue with the process, but not at this level of growth.

MR. PAYNE: That's reassuring.

MME. CHAIRMAN: Rollie.

MR. COOK: I was wondering if you could indicate in a general way what your concern is about Cold Lake and Fort McMurray. What would you expect the costs, for example, to be to meet the burden of those social programs?

MR. BOGLE: I think the key thing to remember in areas like Cold Lake and Bonnyville is there is a great deal of anxiety. The hon. member for that area

has talked to me about some of the social concerns he has. We want to ensure that if the developments do take place, we as a department of government will not be caught unprepared. You know, it's a difficult dilemma, because when you're not sure if a project is going ahead or not you can't go ahead and build in a massive infrastructure on the hope it will. On the other hand, some planning has to be done, in the event the project does move, because if it does, the events are going to move very quickly, and we want to be in a position to ensure that the people in that part of the province are not shortchanged.

MR. COOK: A supplementary if I could. What kinds of concerns are you looking to meet? For example you have a lot of transients, if those projects are approved.

MR. MANSBRIDGE: We commissioned a study by Co-West Associates some 18 months ago, which, incidentally, was published when the report came down. The one unique thing about that kind of development is an excessively high turnover of workers in the community through the building stage. Even during the settling down phase, say in the last year or so in Fort McMurray, a remaining very high mobility turnover of population. For example, even in a school class it's strikingly high, compared to any other school in the province.

Similarly, the kinds of people seeking short-term public assistance, child welfare, or child protection casework -- the variety of programs we have. The numbers are considerably larger than the population, or than the population would normally reflect. I suppose these are the most important lessons we've learned: the mobility and the very high rate of turnover. There seems something inevitable about this. It isn't unique to the Alberta developments. Wherever these boom-town phenomena have been, this particular process takes place. It creates a demand for services that is disproportionate, during a period of time, to the actual population, because the population is changing so rapidly. This is the essential problem.

Of course, you get a higher concentration of human problems, or child neglect, particularly, say, where the father is working 12 or 14 hours a day, as was common in the development phase. The young wives are concentrated in a trailer town, for example, which is typical of a boom. There are many residual problems, mental health, child care problems, and so on, which somehow or other we never seem to be on top of. At least this time we hope to have them well identified and maybe try to get the resources there to cope with them with a little less strain.

MR. COOK: So you've had one report already from Co-West (inaudible). Are you doing interdepartmental work, too?

MR. BOGLE: Very much so. It's being co-ordinated by Mr. A. L. Craig.

MME. CHAIRMAN: John.

MR. GOGO: Thanks, Mme. Chairman. Mr. Minister, I'm . . .

MME. CHAIRMAN: Excuse me. Henry, did you have a supplementary, or was yours another question?

MR. WOO: No. It relates to research and planning, too, but it can follow.

MME. CHAIRMAN: Sorry, John.

MR. GOGO: Thank you. Mr. Minister, I'm extremely encouraged to see the 80 per cent increase in what I perceive in the last four years to be an area where -- I'm not being critical of the government I'm a member of. I've been critical in that I've always felt that it's so much more difficult to have to react to a situation rather than plan for it.

When I see it's less than one half of 1 per cent of your budget -- the number of dollars really don't concern me; I would really like to see it even more. However, we're coming 75 years old in Alberta, and certainly many of the social problems we're facing, although unique, they've been through many times before. The only question I have to ask is: is your department making use of information found in other jurisdictions, such as Ontario or the maritime provinces, in the planning and research for the department?

MR. BOGLE: Very much so. I use as an example something I've been fairly familiar with, the assured income for the handicapped, a program we've been working on. I know from the many questions I've asked the chief deputy minister and officials in the department that we've been trying to learn both from the things other provinces have done well and things they haven't done so well. I think specifically of British Columbia and Ontario in that instance. Many examples have been used.

I think we have to keep our finger on the pulse of what's happening in other provinces. It's really an important point.

MME. CHAIRMAN: Henry.

MR. WOO: My question was partly answered, but I do have two other points I want to raise in terms of the research and planning process, particularly in relation to the Cold Lake-Lloydminster area. Will there be allowances for public input? And secondly, in terms of the estimates here, is any portion of those funds to be contracted out, or is this strictly internal?

MR. MANSBRIDGE: The answers to both are quite positive. We do contract all that research work that we can see of a short-term nature, as opposed to a continuing nature. Indeed, at the moment, we are contracting out the computer planning for the information system under research and planning as well.

There is, as the minister indicated, a major interdepartmental group working on the Cold Lake-Fort McMurray development problems. We also have a network of district offices, representing all our programs in Fort McMurray, for example. Our co-ordinator works with that group. Fortunately, our co-ordinator in that area is the former district officer of the social services program for Fort McMurray. So he already has an excellent base of contacts in the Fort McMurray region.

So I think it's fair to say we are positive on both those.

MME. CHAIRMAN: Do you have a further question, Henry? John?

MR. BATIUK: I would like to ask, Mr. Minister, looking at the increase in population and the buoyancy of the province, what direction are your social costs going? Proportionately? Are they going much higher?

MR. BOGLE: I wonder if we might hold that until we get into it in the vote. I'd be pleased to respond to it at that time, Mme. Chairperson.

DR. PAPROSKI: What vote were you referring to at that point?

MME. CHAIRMAN: We're still on 1.1.4.

MR. BOGLE: We're on 1.1.4 now, but rather than getting into the specifics on the natural population increase in the province and the rate of social assistance, I'd rather we deal with that when we get to Vote 2.

DR. PAPROSKI: What about my question? Do you want to deal with it here or someplace else?

MR. BOGLE: No, right here, Research and Planning.

DR. PAPROSKI: All right. Would you mind commenting on the particular question I asked, whether there is an overall plan to co-ordinate the variety of positive services we've brought in over the years and are continuing to bring in at a rapidly increasing -- quantitatively and qualitatively. Is there an attempt in the planning to co-ordinate this so that the community will better understand and better be able to utilize those services? Secondly, will there be a formal way the community can participate in the formulation of those services?

MR. BOGLE: It's a very good question, Mme. Chairperson. Although I think we've dealt with it in a broad kind of way, it's good to come to the specific issue. I guess two things quickly come to mind. One is the co-ordination that takes place within the department itself. One of the things that excited me after taking over from the hon. Helen Hunley -- and I'm not sure if that was the case in Neil Crawford's or Ray Speaker's time or other people's -- the management committee of the department. It's such a broad department. You have the social services division and the community health division and a broad, broad range of activities. I'm still learning things about our fascinating department.

I've had an opportunity to meet with the management committee. That gives the senior officials an opportunity to sit down like department heads. In a sense, if you were to use the analogy of a cabinet and different ministers who head different government departments -- on a much smaller scale and in a specific departmental sense. It's that kind of process. So there is interaction.

It's very important that when a new program is developed -- as an example, we'll again use the assured income for the handicapped -- that we not do that in isolation of programs now in operation serving the people of the province and anything else that might be in the planning stage. It has to be co-ordinated and planned in a joint way. That, in turn, helps the officials keep me, the minister, better informed, and I, in turn, will attempt to keep my colleagues in the House abreast of what is happening. So there is that dialogue in that sense, yes.

DR. PAPROSKI: A supplementary, if I may. I'm pleased to hear that it's happening at the administrative level. The question I'm really zeroing in on is at the community level, where the individual family lives. As you know, we've heard, and continue to hear -- less than when I first took office in

1971, but still existing -- that hey, there are a lot of services out there, but I just don't know how to find them.

MR. BOGLE: Very good, I think our department would have as many advisory committees as any in government. I use as an example, the senior citizens' advisory committee, chaired by Duncan Rogers. They're doing an excellent job in a very sensitive area. The council on aging, headed by Mr. Grimley; the provincial mental health council, and all the regional mental health councils are just a few of the many bodies that do report directly back to the minister.

I think the thing we have to balance on is that every time you appoint another advisory committee, there's one more bit of weight on the minister's shoulders. But if we want to ensure that we have a maximum of input from the citizenry at large, both through the elected MLAs from across the province, as well as from the special, unique groups themselves, then I think that's a very important function in our process. It's a very fascinating part of the overall approach, I assure you.

DR. PAPROSKI: One more supplementary, Mme. Chairperson. We're getting close. It seems that we've now established the administrative level and that there are many community organizations out there representing senior citizens, handicapped, and so forth, which is complementary, and I mean that in a most sincere way.

I'm really zeroing in at the most local level, the neighborhood, the community level, and I'm asking whether there is a plan to zero in on that particular item. Let me take Edmonton as an example. The multitude of services provided in Edmonton -- I'm sure the minister knows a citizen should be able to find any one of the needed things he may require. They're all over, yet there's still confusion, unfortunately.

I'm wondering whether the planning department is zeroing in at the neighborhood level to have something like one centre in one part of the city, another in another part of the city, and so forth so that citizens understand and can relate to, like a school or a church, and either get the variety of services there or be advised where to get them, be referred and have the opportunity to have an input into the services.

MR. BOGLE: I'm going to ask the chief deputy minister to respond, but before I do, I want to reemphasize one very important role that all of us have as elected officials, as MLAs. Surely that's part of our responsibilities. We learn over a period of time the various services that different departments of government have to offer, and we build up a list of those in our own memory bank, so that we in turn can advise the people in our communities, who we know so well. That's one way.

DR. PAPROSKI: Agreed.

MR. BOGLE: From the department's point of view, I'll ask the chief deputy minister to respond.

MR. MANSBRIDGE: Mme. Chairperson, I'd have to admit that if we had the answer to this problem, the world would be on our doorstep. Achieving effective co-ordination and information at the local level is the greatest single worry I have as an administrator.

We have a number of experiments. We have a number of examples of fairly good cooperation at the local level involving the department. For example, in Community Health, we have a health board in every community, and in the preventive social services we have a PSS board in every subscribing community. In the direct service area, we have been encouraging interprogram comparison and cooperation at the local level, and increasing use of local groups representative of the particular program. For example, with mental health, an intimate relationship with the native mental health association in its chapters. What we lack, and what no one has succeeded yet in providing, is the kind of drop-in centre in the community, where, regardless of the problem, some sort of diagnostician, if you like, could identify the problem and steer the individual.

There have been experiments in the Medicine Hat region with a community resource centre, the high-level board. They haven't produced the entire answers. I'd like to assure you through the minister, that this is our single greatest organizational, management, administrative problem. In fact, we now have one senior staff officer working exclusively at this time on problems of co-ordination. Integration is a dangerous thing, but co-ordination and cooperation are practical and possible at the local level.

DR. PAPROSKI: I'm very pleased to hear that. Thank you.

MME. CHAIRMAN: Research and Planning. Are there any other comments before we move on? Okay.

1.1.5 Senior Citizens' Bureau.

MR. COOK: Could you tell us what a senior citizens' bureau is?

MR. BOGLE: I'm not sure if the member has yet had a chance to meet Mary Engelmann, who is our co-ordinator, a key person over there. I'd like you to supplement this, Mr. chief deputy minister, because I'm sure I won't get it complete. I'm still learning.

There are a variety of programs which are offered to senior citizens and a variety of groups. I mentioned the senior citizens' advisory council as well as the council on aging, which we work closely with. Mary Engelmann tries to be an information co-ordinator, among other things. They've also worked very hard on the proposed institute on gerontology, and a lay committee has worked on that proposal and Mary has provided input.

I've found, in the brief time I've been here -- and I've met her once or twice now -- that she's been able to be very helpful, in terms of seeing that that information.##. It really comes back to the point raised earlier by the hon. Member for Edmonton Kingsway about trying to get information down to people who need it, so they know what services are available and what help can be given.

Is there anything you'd like to add to that?

MR. MANSBRIDGE: It's a very small bureau, with three primary functions. One is to gather and distribute information. Anyone who has seen, for example, the brochure issued on programs for senior citizens in Alberta will realize what a valuable document that would be in every senior citizen's home, centre, and so on. It's a gathering together of information all across government, and indeed outside government, about services directed at senior citizens.

The function of gathering and distributing information on a government-wide basis is the primary function. The second function is to seek to achieve as

much co-ordination as possible among government departments. There is a committee of officials, representing 12 departments, which again exchanges information and makes each other aware of program initiatives and so on. The third function, as the minister has said, is to provide the secretariat to the provincial senior citizens' advisory council, and to do the great bulk of the support work for this special study of the institute of gerontology.

MME. CHAIRMAN: Any further questions? John.

MR. GOGO: I just wanted to make one comment on that, because I think it's just so important. A senior citizens' drop-in centre in Lethbridge, the Golden Mile drop-in centre, with a membership of about 400 or 500, is a very closely-knit organization. Periodically, one will lose a loved one, and it's a very traumatic time. I just wanted to relate one incident. Ursula Kasting, the general manager, told me about this. The department -- I don't know who does it, but they come out with this material, concerning how to handle estates when a death occurs in the family. It's about a 5 or 6 page document. They've virtually documented the stages one should go through.

The manager of that Golden Mile centre pointed out just how important and valuable that was to many of the members, in what they can do to come together and help each other out when someone dies. The only alternative to that would have to be in a legal beagle's office. I'm not saying we should undercut the lawyers, by any means.

I don't know who just spoke of the senior citizens' area, but just that one area alone I think is a very popular area for the department to continue to pursue. That's the response I've had, and I think that's really what the department should exist for, to relate to people and help solve their problems. That's not a question. I just thought I'd make a statement.

MME. CHAIRMAN: That's a good comment. Any other comments on the Senior Citizens' Bureau?

MR. WOO: One question Mme. Chairman. Will there be an estension of this bureau, in terms of a regional office, and so on, so that they can offer more access to more areas in the province, or is it just centralized in Edmonton?

MR. BOGLE: It's so small . Quite frankly, I'd much rather continue to expand the approach of the senior citizens' advisory council. If there's an untapped area, it's with our senior citizens. I think we have ample talent that's not being used today. Rather than doing it through the public service, by adding on regional offices, in thiscase I'd much rather go the route of advisory bodies, if you like, made up of senior citizens themselves.

MR. WOO: I would not deny the ability of the advisory groups to make an input, my concern would be in terms of the responsibility of the bureau, for information to flow back the other way.

MR. BOGLE: Let me give as an example, what I mean, Henry. The president of the senior citizens' advisory council is Duncan Rogers, a former deputy minister of this government. I've only met the gentleman once, but I'll assure you I'm looking forward to our next meeting. He has a wealth of knowledge, and he understands government and knows how it works, because he was here for a good number of years. He has the time and the interest. I'm really challenged by that kind of approach.

MME. CHAIRMAN: We're trying to get ventilation by opening the doors. If anyone's bothered by it, they can complain to the management.

Any other comments on senior citizens?

1.1.6, Personnel and Staff Development. That seems to be a reasonable increase.

MR. COOK: I'm looking ahead. What do you mean by staff development? Conferences, for example?

MR. MANSBRIDGE: Training, development, internal, external programs.

MR. BOGLE: Just for an example, we have one position we're phasing in, a safety administrator for a safety program, and it's primarily in the area of regulations and health safety standards in institutions and facilities. There is an ever-growing responsibility that we have to ensure that not only our own institutions, but facilities operated by others, are maintained at the proper standard. This is an internal approach to assist groups.

MR. COOK: The Member for Lethbridge West .#.#.

MR. FJORBOTTEN: Just a minute, Rollie. Is that a supplementary?

MR. COOK: Just a supplementary, if I could, Mme. Chairman.

MR. FJORBOTTEN: Go ahead.

MR. COOK: The Member for Lethbridge West asked whether or not you co-ordinate your programs with other provinces and jurisdictions. Would this be, in part, one of the ways you do that, by sending people out to other jurisdictions? Where would your travel budget for a staff member come in the estimates, for example? Would this be part of it?

MR. MANSBRIDGE: Yes, Mme. Chairperson, the programs are very extensive. We could spend a great deal of time reciting the scale of programs. We have a staff of over 7,000, and therefore a very large staff development responsibility, not only in terms of merely meeting the department's needs, but in terms of recognizing development needs of individuals who show promise.

A lot of our programs are so contrived as to bring together very deliberately in training opportunities specialists from different parts of the department, which is a part of the process -- meeting an even earlier question -- of ensuring greater co-operation among the officials.

We do have a number of programs -- for example, there are certain areas where we are simply unable to recruit the skills we need. There aren't adequate skills on the market, so we have fairly extensive bursary programs, educational programs in educational institutions, both at the institute level and the university level. Then there are a number of programs in which we've become interested that are national in scope, launched in favor of all governments by the developmental priorities of the federal government. So there's a great variety, a great host of development opportunities. Indeed, we publish a book, a brochure for staff development opportunities in the department.

MME. CHAIRMAN: Gordon.

MR. STROMBERG: Mme. Chairperson, to the minister. What is the turnover of social workers? I understand it's fairly high. They seem to burn themselves out fairly fast. What percentage of turnover?

MR. MANSBRIDGE: It was high, two years ago as high as 12 or 14 per cent, which was excessive. For a variety of reasons, I think a lowering of the opportunities outside the public service, to some extent. The percentage is now what we would regard as normal, in the area of 7 to 8 per cent.

MME. CHAIRMAN: Public Communications. Does this cover advertising, brochures, and . . .

MR. BOGLE: Yes, the positions are seconded, I believe, but it covers the supplies and materials and the like. One reason it's a modest increase over last year is that there's a decrease in a grant due to withdrawal of support for a project in Edmonton called AID; it's advice, information and direction. That project is being funded from another unit in the department.

MME. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Any other questions? Rollie.

MR. COOK: Forgive me if I ask a stupid question in my first session here. Would that be the sum total of the department's communications with the public for the year?

MR. MANSBRIDGE: As the minister pointed out we do not pay the salaries of the staff of the public communication bureau, because they are seconded from a centrally directed group in Alberta Government Services. These are the costs peculiar to the department, in terms of supplies and services, to sustain that group. Don, can you remember? I think we have seven or eight staff seconded, whose salaries are carried on a different department's vote.

MME. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Anything further?

1.1.8, Departmental Administrative Services. The percentage increase is quite low. Would you want to make any comment on maintaining it at that level?

MR. BOGLE: Anything you'd like to boast about Mr. C.D.M.?

MME. CHAIRMAN: This is your cue.

MR. MANSBRIDGE: I would boast only to the degree that we were able to entice, from the General Hospital a very experienced director of administration to take over this division. He has been very successful in increasing mechanization to where it would be profitable, in tightening up some of our contracting of supply services and so on. We're very happy with this development.

MME. CHAIRMAN: I think we're happy with that, too.

1.1.9, Management Audit. Do you want to comment on this one? This is a sizeable increase.

MR. BOGLE: Yes. First there was an underutilization of the budget funds during the last fiscal year, due to the fact that again, this was one of the new branches, if you like, of the department. The primary purpose of the

management audit is really reflected in the title. There are two basic skills, management evaluation and audit ability. That's what we do within our department, and it's also a service which we have available for groups and bodies that receive their funding from the department.

MME. CHAIRMAN: Any questions?

1.1.10, Public Guardian's Office. Would you like to comment on this one also?

MR. BOGLE: Again, the public guardian's office was established last year, and the program had a very late beginning. I'm not sure if there are any general discussions beyond that. Does everyone appreciate what we have in this particular part of the vote, the public guardian's office? Under the Dependent Adults Act, a person above the age of 18 who is deemed to be totally dependent -- this act is to protect that person. In other words, there must be demonstrated need. It must be demonstrated that the person is actually dependent and requires someone else to be his guardian. This person is charged with the responsibility. The legislation was introduced in response to some concerns, looking at human rights, to ensure that there's not an abuse of those in any way.

MME. CHAIRMAN: So this is just wages and salaries to administer that program. Is that correct?

MR. MANSBRIDGE: The statute was proclaimed on December 1, and that was anticipated. We began about August to recruit to carry out that function, and were ready. This is a decentralized operation. We have even the head office in Red Deer, because Red Deer represented a location where there would clearly be a concentration of dependent adults. We have some offices at other locations in the province. It's been a process that has built up, literally in the last few months of last fiscal year. I think the expenditure will reflect the full vote only in the fiscal year beginning April 1.

MME. CHAIRMAN: Just one more question. How many positions does this entail for the new program?

MR. MANSBRIDGE: It isn't shown here. I think about 17. We're guessing, but it's between 10 and 20.

MME. CHAIRMAN: Gordon.

MR. STROMBERG: My question has been answered.

MME. CHAIRMAN: Henry, did you have a question?

MR. WOO: No. I just wanted to make a comment with respect to the public guardian's office. I had an opportunity to have the -- I don't know what to call him -- the head man, anyway, to address a group of people at Robin Hood school in Sherwood Park. I think this office has been long required, and I can't speak too highly of it.

MME. CHAIRMAN: Any other general questions before we leave Central Support Services?

1.2.1, Regional Delivery of Social Services , Social Service District Offices. Any questions?

1.2.2, Maintenance and Recovery. Gordon.

MR. STROMBERG: How much money are we actually recovering?

MR. MANSBRIDGE: Just over \$3 million in the last complete year.

MR. STROMBERG: How does that compare with other years?

MR. MANSBRIDGE: It is increasing each year, and with the proclamation of the new subrogation Act, we're hopeful to see a further significant increase in the future. In the past, action, if you'll forgive the term, to get after a nonpaying spouse has been at the initiative of the aggrieved spouse. If that spouse was on social allowance, there was precious little incentive to get that action through the courts.

Under the new subrogation Act, a person entering into a social allowance arrangement with the department subrogates that responsibility to the department, and henceforth, effective June 1, we will be doing the chasing through the courts. We expect that will show a benefit, not only to the morale of the individuals who were in this invidious position in the past, but also to the exchequer.

MR. STROMBERG: A supplementary question, Mme. Chairperson. What percentage of people on social allowance that you're trying to recover from are you actually successful with? Are we recovering from 5 per cent, 50 per cent? I'm speaking now of the putative fathers , I believe that's the word they use.

MR. MANSBRIDGE: Could I introduce Mr. Rene Morrisette, who may have this information at his fingertips.

MR. MORRISSETTE: I'm not the director of M & R. He's not here. I'm director of public assistance, and I don't have those figures all that clear in my mind. We are involved with 12,000 cases in collections, and that involves 4,492 cases of deserted wives, 2,590 children of unmarried parents, 516 who are parents of wards, and another about 5,000 cases that are related to agreements we have signed for maintenance.

MR. BOGLE: Just to supplement that, Mme. Chairman, I have the breakdown on the dollars for those categories Mr. Morrisette just gave. Between February 1, 1978, and January 31, 1979, it actually works out to just under \$3.5 million for deserted wives and children, \$700,000 for children of unmarried parents, \$102,000 from parents whose children are wards of the department.

MR. STROMBERG: Mme. Chairman, it's indicated that 12,000 cases are being worked on. What is the total of that number that would fall into this area that maybe you could recover from?

MR. MANSBRIDGE: We're successful in the order of 50 per cent to 60 per cent of the cases. One of our greatest single problems is locating the individual. He can leave the province. It's obviously increasingly difficult. Although we do have interprovincial arrangements, even in this area.

Another great problem, of course, is when you do locate and find that the individual is so impoverished, often under a new family arrangement, that there is no possibility of recovering moneys.

MR. BOGLE: I intend to be pretty firm in that area.

MME. CHAIRMAN: So this figure of \$363,000 covers staff costs, legal fees. Would there be a person in each regional office who would have this responsibility?

MR. MANSBRIDGE: Yes. There is full-time staff in the cities and part-time staff in the smaller offices.

MME. CHAIRMAN: Any further questions?

MR. MANSBRIDGE: I misled you earlier, Mme. Chairperson. I was recalling an earlier figure when I said of the order of \$3 million. We collected just over \$4.5 million in the last complete year, which was a \$.5 million increase over the previous year. I should mention that, with the government's blessing, two years ago we had a fairly significant staff increase to press this investigation, and we're collecting something of the order of \$5 to each \$1 of overhead. So it's a profitable thing, although our major purpose is to try to encourage people to meet their obligations.

MME. CHAIRMAN: Any further questions?

DR. PAPROSKI: Since we're on that topic, how does this collection percentage of all the cases compare to last year or the year before? Do you have those statistics?

MR. MANSBRIDGE: As I mentioned, we went up from \$4.3 million to \$4.8 million in 12 months. That would be an increase of about 12.5 per cent in that year.

DR. PAPROSKI: Is that the percentage of the total you could have collected? Has that increased?

MR. MANSBRIDGE: It depends how you define collectable. We could get that information for you, if you'd like a more complete statement. We could get that and present a statement to the committee.

DR. PAPROSKI: Privately is fine.

MME. CHAIRMAN: Any further questions? Okay.
Administration of District Offices. Any questions?

MR. COOK: Are these the offices you were talking .#.#.

MME. CHAIRMAN: Just a minute, Rollie. John.

MR. BATIUK: Mr. Minister, is the administration of these offices totally autonomous?

MR. BOGLE: No. They're responsible to the chief deputy minister, who is in turn responsible to me.

MME. CHAIRMAN: Rollie.

MR. COOK: It's gone out of my head.

MME. CHAIRMAN: Any further questions?

In the summary of the departmental support services, would you like to ask any general questions before we move on to the next vote?

Vote 2, Social Allowance. 2.1, Program Support. There's a significant increase in this area. Would you like to comment on where the increase stems from?

MR. BOGLE: One of the major factors in the increase in costs in the vote is the increase in data processing costs through Alberta Government Services.

MME. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Any further questions?

2.2, Public Assistance for the Aged.

MR. STROMBERG: Thank you. For the senior citizen who is just drawing the old age security cheque, plus the supplement -- I believe that's getting up about \$300. Then, finding that the rent of the apartment -- in a decent apartment now, you're looking at about \$275 on down. They're finding themselves forced into basement suites.

Does your department have a policy that it's just tough luck on the rent? I understand you've increased it slightly, but you have an allowance in Camrose that you'll only pay a maximum rent, and I believe it's \$175. In this day and age, \$175 for our pioneers isn't very good accomodation.

MR. MANSBRIDGE: I should mention, just to begin, Mme. Chairperson, that a significant number of senior citizens are unable to manage on the income derived from old age security guaranteed income supplement, Alberta assured income plan, given certain circumstances, as you've mentioned. They are eligible for, and many receive, social allowance as a supplement to that income.

I know that your specific question is addressed to rents. There has been an attempt to place some control on the rents authorized. It varies district by district. It is based on the prevailing rents in a district and is adjusted each year. More specifically, Mr. Morrissette could supplement that.

MR. STROMBERG: Well, the adjustment is certainly out of line in Camrose. Is there anything in your budget here for realignment of that for this coming year?

MR. MORRISSETTE: The rent ceilings were introduced last April at \$190 for a single person, and we discovered by October that that was a little low. We adjusted them to \$210 for a single person, about the beginning of this year and made another adjustment on April 1. Normally these things go up on April 1, and they have just been adjusted. There is provision in the budget to pay for that increase. It's now at \$235 for rent and utilities for a single person. I believe it's \$340 for two people.

MR. STROMBERG: But you mentioned there was a variation between districts. If you're in Edmonton, in high rent country, yes, but if you're down in the smaller, rural area the rent is lower.

MR. MORRISSETTE: In fact, we pay the actual amount of rent and utilities. In April 1978 we introduced a ceiling on rent and utilities. After a lot of work by our research and planning department, we discovered we could introduce one rate that was standard for the whole province. We looked not only at rents and mortgages but utilities. We discovered that where homes were more expensive, utilities tend to be less; in the cities, for example. In the country, where the houses tend to be much cheaper to rent or buy, the utilities were much higher. The two balanced off quite well.

The figure we started off with in April 1978 was what we called the eightieth percentile. In other words, the ceilings introduced were high enough to cover 80 per cent of the people, but we grandfathered in 100, so no one would be hurt immediately. As new cases came on, we expected they would try to find something below those ceilings, and most were able to. Some had some difficulty, perhaps because they were handicapped. In those cases, we were able to make some special rule for them. Sometimes some of them didn't agree with the department's decision and appealed, and the appeal committee might have ruled in their favor and given them the full rent, even though it was above the ceiling.

I might mention that the rent ceiling, even though it is \$235, for example for a single person, it does have provision for paying half of the difference above that.

MR. MANSBRIDGE: If I could just supplement that with two very brief observations: one, that it became essential that we introduce some control here. Having a system where we would pay the rent the individual was required to pay, in fact meant that we had to pay any rent the individual obtained. So we needed a control. As Mr. Morrisette explained at the outset, it was possibly undervalued, and we did make two adjustments in 12 months.

MR. FJORBOTTEN: One more supplementary.

MR. STROMBERG: My last supplementary. You put a base rate across the province, but in realizing that in one area of the province you have boom times in a smaller town, and in another town 30 miles down the road there's nothing doing and you have cheap rent. Is consideration being given to basing the rent on what is available in that community, Mr. Minister? That's where we're getting hurt.

MR. BOGLE: One thing I might suggest is that if an MLA is aware of a situation in the constituency, please feel free to come in and see me. Our system isn't perfect and never will be. There's always room for improvement. If there is a situation that has developed in Camrose, and we're not fully aware of that as a department, that's one more function the MLA may perform.

I should have mentioned just one other thing; I thought it was a given. In the whole area of social assistance, we have the appeal committee process. If the applicant is not satisfied with the finding of the director, on behalf of the department, there is a committee of lay people who review that decision and have the right to increase and the right to decrease, although they very rarely do.

MR. STROMBERG: We went that route, and our appeals committee said, sorry, central office has laid down how much rent we pay; our hands are tied.

MR. MANSBRIDGE: The appeals committee does have the right to direct us to pay a higher rent, and indeed, appeal committees throughout the province have made handsome use of that opportunity in the last 12 months.

MR. STROMBERG: I'm glad to hear that.

MME. CHAIRMAN: John.

MME. CHAIRMAN: Okay. John?

MR. BATIUK: Mr. Minister, I guess you know very well that I support financial assistance where it's necessary, and strongly oppose abuse. This is a supplementary to Gordon's question about senior citizens. Their assured income is somewhere just under \$370. If the person's health is reasonably good, we have gone far in providing senior citizens' lodges, self-contained units, where they are protected for the maximum they pay. Financially, I think those are dandy. For those for whom you have to provide extra funds, I just wonder whether some could be placed in lodges or self-contained units. Or is it just their choice to have something more elaborate?

MR. BOGLE: Surely. My colleague is not suggesting that we should direct people to senior citizens' lodges. That should be their choice.

MR. BATIUK: No, what I'm saying is -- Gordon mentioned these senior citizens have to rent a basement suite because anything better is too expensive. I think a self-contained unit or a senior citizens' lodge is better than a basement suite.

MR. BOGLE: If that facility exists in the community. I think the key is that we have a province-wide program, but that there is the flexibility, both through the MLA and through the appeal committee, to meet the extraordinary needs and situations in various parts of the province.

MME. CHAIRMAN: Okay, 2.3, Public Assistance for Single-Parent Families.

MR. FJORDBOTEN: There's one more supplementary.

MME. CHAIRMAN: I'm sorry. Rollie?

MR. COOK: If I could jump in just one more time. Mr. Minister, with regard to widows' benefits. I had a particular case a while ago, and your executive assistant Catherine Arthur.

MME. CHAIRMAN: Just a minute, Rollie. We can't quite hear you.

MR. COOK: I'd just background it by saying that with widows' benefits, there isn't a program specifically for widows who are -- often if the husband is a senior citizen receiving benefits, the couple receives a fairly good benefit. But when the older partner dies, often the widow is cut off almost all pensions or benefits. Has this department given any consideration either to relabelling some programs and calling them widows' benefits? That was one suggestion I've heard. They're probably going to receive social assistance in any event because they've been cut off financially, and they have no means of support. Has any thought been given to that?

MR. BOGLE: Well, in the next part of the vote, where we deal with public assistance for the aged, there is a program for those over 60. I wonder if we might address it at that point. But if you're asking if we're thinking of a widows' pension, at one time there was a widows' allowance, which I believe was a federal program. But's that's no longer in existence.

MR. MANSBRIDGE: I think the real problem is that people's needs vary so much that if you think you can meet them with a flat payment, no matter what we call it, an awful lot of persons would not find that adequate. The social allowance program is indeed based on ascertaining the needs of an individual, and then meeting them. Experience has shown that although there is unfortunately still some kind of stigma attached to it, and there are individuals who would rather have a flat rate, if we are really concerned to meet their true needs, the social allowance program is geared to that and is indeed superior.

MR. COOK: Mme. Chairman, just to follow up your point about the stigma, is there any way you could call those kinds of benefits under the social assistance program a widows' allowance, to remove that stigma, but still maintain flexibility? Just call it something else?

MR. BOGLE: We can take it as advisement and look at it. But I can't think of anything offhand, and I wouldn't want to leave a lot of hope for it. But let us look at it, Rollie.

MME. CHAIRMAN: Any further comments? Al Hiebert.

MR. HIEBERT: Mme. Chairperson, to the minister. I know there is a goal on the part of many senior citizens to stay in their own homes. But they are looking for services such as help with the walks, the lawns, and so on. Does that apply to 2.2?

MR. BOGLE: I wonder if you're not drifting into the home care program, which is part of Vote 10.

MR. HIEBERT: I'll leave it till then, thanks.

MME. CHAIRMAN: Vote 2.3, Public Assistance for Single-Parent Families. Sheila.

MRS. EMBURY: Mme. Chairman, I'd like to ask the minister, about the 18.6 per cent increase, just to get an idea of what that means. Can you kindly indicate to me over a period of, say, the last five years, approximately what the curve is doing? How much has that increased?

MR. MANSBRIDGE: Mme. Chairperson, it has been the fastest growing population in the public assistance area for the last several years, and indeed has reached in excess of 40 per cent of the total case load. In this last 12 months, for the first time we've seen a reversal, or at least a freezing of the gross due to a number of policy changes that took effect April 1 last year. I think the most important one was the increased emphasis on training programs for single parents in order to facilitate their re-entry into the labor market. Also the policy of encouraging the entry into the employment forces. Incidentally, we have not had one single case of an appeal against

that policy, but a great deal of tribute from single parents who have been helped.

But for the first time, and because of those changes, the rising curve has altered.

MR. BOGLE: I should just add to that, if I may. The policy, as you know, Sheila, is to encourage single mothers back into the work force. If a mother chooses to stay in her own home, if she can bring in a couple of other children and babysit she can earn enough money to do that. Then again, for those who feel they have an extraordinary need, there's the appeal route, through the appeal committee. But as the chief deputy minister has indicated, to date there have been no appeals through that route.

MRS. EMBURY: A supplementary, Mme. Chairman. I guess I must have missed something. I know that's a very fast-growing program, but I also find it interesting that the program for the aged is around 10 per cent, because we know what's happening to our aged population: it's also on the increase. But what I'm trying to figure out is how rapidly? I heard you say, sir, that it's growing rapidly. What took it to 18 per cent? I find that high. I'm wondering if I'll sit here next year and it will be another 18 per cent.

MR. MANSBRIDGE: Well, if the cost of living remains as it is, Mme. Chairperson, the answer is probably yes. You see, the amount we pay in social allowance is not a flat rate. It's calculated taking into account the components. How is food rising? Last year food costs rose 15 per cent. Shelter costs rose about 12 per cent in 12 months. Clothing, fortunately less; but of the order of 7 per cent. So the components of the program account for that degree of increase.

With the senior citizens, there is a declining population, and it arises for a very interesting reason. As the Canada Pension Plan reaches greater maturity, that amount of income available is greater to an aged person, and the need for the supplement decreases.

MRS. EMBURY: So you're saying the amount of money -- it's the product, not the numbers?

MR. BOGLE: No, in fact the numbers have decreased from approximately 16,000 to 14,300. But the support for single mothers has increased due to the increased costs of shelter, fuel, utilities, clothing, and so on. So it's a cost increase, but a case load decrease.

MRS. EMBURY: I'll learn to word my questions better.

MR. BOGLE: No, we just didn't understand you.

MRS. EMBURY: That's what I wanted. Thank you.

MME. CHAIRMAN: Andy.

MR. LITTLE: Mme. Chairperson, my question was almost the same as Sheila's. I want to know what percentage of the total social assistance package is made up by the single-parent families. Last year we were given a figure of 41 per cent. I would like to know this year's, and maybe let's go back a couple of years.

MR. MANSBRIDGE: It's 42.4 per cent this year.

MR. LITTLE: And is my figure accurate for last year, 41 per cent?

MR. MANSBRIDGE: Yes. Now, you want to remember it's relative to the changing components. This is a percentage. I mentioned that the case load numbers for unemployed employables went down. The case load for the aged and the handicapped went down because they had other income sources.

MR. LITTLE: And these total numbers -- 16,000 a year ago, 14,300. What are those?

MR. BOGLE: Case loads.

MR. LITTLE: That's 16,000 families?

MR. BOGLE: Yes.

MR. LITTLE: As opposed to 14,300 families?

MR. BOGLE: I'm talking about mothers with a child or children.

MR. LITTLE: That's what I mean by the family, rather than the individual. Not 16,000 individuals.

MR. BOGLE: They're described as case loads.

MR. LITTLE: Thanks very much.

MR. FJORDBOTTEN: If it's okay, we have a supplementary.

MR. PAYNE: Thanks. To the minister: these 14,000 "cases". In very round numbers, what proportion would be young mothers with babies born out of wedlock, which would be middle-aged mothers whose husbands had deserted them, and how many would be young or middle-aged widows?

MR. BOGLE: Rene, have you got that information?

MR. MORRISSETTE: Just happen to have it here. One child per family, 41.2 per cent; two children, 32.3.

MR. PAYNE: That's not my question. My question is: how many are young gals who have an illegitimate child? How many are young or middle-aged mothers who have been deserted? And how many are widows? Where's the problem?

MR. MORRISSETTE: Okay. Never married, 21.4 per cent; separated, 57.8 per cent; divorced, 15.8 per cent; widowed, 5 per cent.

MR. PAYNE: So broken homes are two-thirds of our problem.

MME. CHAIRMAN: Rollie.

MR. COOK: I wonder, Mr. Minister, if you could suggest how our situation compares to another province like Ontario, say. We often talk about the

pressures or strains brought on by rapid development. Is this comparable, high, or low?

MR. BOGLE: You'll have to ask the chief deputy to give the comparison with other provinces.

MR. COOK: Just ballpark.

MR. MANSBRIDGE: We're directly comparable with other provinces in single parents. The advantage we have over other provinces is in unemployed employables. Our proportion of those is the smallest in the country.

But the phenomenon of the single-parent family is Canada-wide, and we would compare very directly with the other provinces which with we make comparisons: Ontario, British Columbia.

MR. COOK: Could I ask a supplementary. What percentage of family groups in the province would single-parent families represent?

MR. BOGLE: You're not talking about people receiving social assistance? You're talking about a province-wide figure?

MR. COOK: No, I'm thinking in terms of the number of family units in the province. What percentage of that, roughly, would be single-parent families?

MR. MANSBRIDGE: We'd only be able to express the proportion of those on social allowance. The data are available.

MME. CHAIRMAN: Gordon.

MR. STROMBERG: Yes, I have two questions. With the new policy of putting mothers back to work, how many mothers have gone back to the work force who were on social assistance?

MR. BOGLE: While Rene is looking for that, keep in mind the figures that I gave you: where there were 16,000, we're now down to 14,300. There are some new recipients of assistance, and others are going out of the system on the other end. So it's a cycle.

MR. STROMBERG: I just wonder how tight that program has got, or how successful it is. You must have figures on how many are actually off the rolls.

MR. BOGLE: Yes, we do.

MR. MANSBRIDGE: It's difficult in the short run, because this is a relatively new emphasis to be too confident of the data. For example, when we put a person into a training situation and pay a training allowance, for that period of time they're not on social allowance. We're successful if, when the training is completed, they go into employment and stay there. We simply haven't had enough time yet to be confident of the data.

The preliminary data are very encouraging: 30 per cent of those who are trained get employment and are so far, in this short run, holding employment.

MR. STROMBERG: You mentioned that no one had appealed this -- single mothers who didn't want to go back but wanted to stay in their homes?

MR. MANSBRIDGE: I should emphasize that the minister's policy has been that we encourage; we do not force a single mother back into employment. And certain things must obtain. She must be healthy, and the child must be healthy. There must be an adequate day care facility in the neighborhood. And of course there must be employment. When these things pertain, the encouragement is successful. The person either gets employment or goes into training.

Now, that affects their entitlement to social allowance. That is what could be appealed, and there hasn't yet been one single appeal through our appeal committees against a discontinuance or reduction in social allowance caused by this policy.

MR. STROMBERG: Mme. Chairwoman, I just want to point out that I certainly agree with the program. I think we should maybe review the program when one reaches the age of 58 and is still expected to go out and work. Some of these ladies at 58 have been on social assistance for the last 30 years. But realize that they all survived the '30s and in a sense are fast becoming our pioneers. In the Camrose office, they have to go through the family life skills program. Then they are told, well, if there's no job we'll find you a job dishwashing. They have appealed some. It's very difficult for some of these people, who really have had no education and have been out of the work force for 20 or 30 years, then to be expected to wash dishes. At the end of the month there's no social assistance cheque, so about a week later they phone the MLA and he gets down there and gets them funded one month at a time. Have you reviewed that upper limit policy, the 58 group?

MR. BOGLE: Well, Mme. Chairperson, the key is whether or not the person is judged to be employable. If they're not, they're not encouraged to find a job. But if they're judged to be employable, then we want to make sure we help them make every effort to find a job, and become a productive part of society again.

MR. STROMBERG: Just as long as we don't get too tough when they're older.

MR. BOGLE: I'm sure the MLA for Camrose will keep us mindful.

MME. CHAIRMAN: Maybe this is one you could discuss with Bob individually, eh? Henry.

MR. WOO: Just a quick question for further clarification. It relates to an earlier response the chief deputy minister gave relative to employment retraining. Am I given to understand that a portion of these funds is to go for retraining these single parents?

MR. MANSBRIDGE: No, that's under a separate vote. I think it's Vote 6, Vocational Rehabilitation Services.

MR. WOO: It is included in your department, then? Is there any reason it should not be borne by the Department of Advanced Education and Manpower, for example?

MR. MANSBRIDGE: Well, we have co-operative programs with the Department of Advanced Education and Manpower, and recognition of an area where we provide it.

MR. BOGLE: Just one other quick supplement. Of the case load of 14,300 right now, 20 per cent are earning some money, out working. But they're being supplemented by assistance because they're not earning enough.

MME. CHAIRMAN: Frank.

MR. APPLEBY: Thanks, Mme. Chairperson. Some interesting figures here, this 2.3. I notice that the actual percentage in '78 was around \$80 million. We decided to jump that 25% to \$100 million. Actually, though, the forecast is that we only spent about \$90 million, but we're still going to go up another 18% this year. What is the trend that causes this to come about?

MR. MANSBRIDGE: Well, as I was explaining earlier, Mme. Chairperson, this is an increase in dollars which is required in order to meet the 15% increase in the 12-month period in food costs, just over 12% in shelter costs and other component elements. It is not a reflection of case load increase, because in fact the case load in total has decreased in the 12-month period.

MR. PAYNE: Mme. Chairperson. I certainly don't want to bog down in Vote 2, with eight votes to go. But let's face it, it looks like a pretty big're loss leader for us.

MR. BOGLE: Well, it's important.

MR. PAYNE: First, an observation to the minister; then two questions on Vote 2.3. The observation: roughly two-thirds of these recipient families, I'm advised, are the result of desertions or separations, marriage breakdown if you like is one of the causes. And it's costing us roughly \$50 million to \$60 million a year -- in very round numbers, it's costing \$1 million a week because of these marriage failures. That's the observation.

Two questions: you indicated that the number of cases had been 16,000 a year ago and now it's 14,000. Do your research and planning officials anticipate that that declining trend will continue? Question No. two: in view of the fact that it is a very significant drain on our resources -- \$1 million a week -- is there any front end loaded effort to try to resolve it? By that I mean, is there any kind of marriage counselling, before-the-problem counselling as opposed to after-the-problem bandaids?

MR. BOGLE: Well, to go to your first question first, and they're both very good. The program is very new. It was implemented a year ago. So we've only got the one year's statistics to use as a guideline. So it's difficult to say what will happen from here on. The policy is in place; we're trying to fine tune it somewhat. But we think it's a good policy and the right way to go. We hope we can encourage and help more young women to get back into the work force. As I indicated, if a woman feels very strongly that she should be in the home with her baby or children, then, if she can bring in a couple of other youngsters to babysit, she can make enough money to be helping herself as well. So we're very concerned about the cost to society and the integrity of that individual person.

In your second question you ask about what we are doing on the other end. That obviously is something we wouldn't be dealing with in this part of the vote. But we try to work with our colleagues in cabinet and government in looking at some of the problems in a society like ours today. And I'm sure we'll get into other areas tonight, areas where, although we have a very

exciting and challenging society, we have problems. We're dealing with some of the social problems of that society -- a very fast pace. You mentioned earlier the divorces in the province, some of the other social concerns we have. I'm a firm believer in the preventative approach, to find a way to prevent something from happening. We find one of the real problems is measuring it. I understand, in talking to other people that's one of the real difficulties in all kinds of things. I use Rosecrest as an example, a facility in Edmonton. I had a chance to visit it about two months ago. I was really horrified at some of the youngsters there. Some are there because the mother may have had an overdose of pills at a very critical time in her pregnancy; therefore the child was born deformed or abnormal. It may be a case of alcohol or other problems. It's really sad to see that, and I thought we have to do more in the area of prevention. If we can only save one of these kiddies of getting to this stage, so they're given the opportunity to have a normal life. It's part of our overall challenge, and we can't do it alone in our department. Government can't do it alone. It really goes out to our society as a whole, our churches, our whole moral, ethical code. There's no simple answer for it, as you know.

MR. MANSBRIDGE: Mme. Chairperson, it is the case that this vote is the vote that deals with the casualties in society, if you like. Later, when we look at the preventative health and social services vote, you will see the money voted in the preventive area to try to prevent some of these social tragedies. One of the tragedies of that very process itself is that if you prevent something, how do you know? It's very hard to spend money to try to prevent something happening successfully, because then it hasn't happened and it isn't there as a casualty.

MR. COOK: This is my last question on this topic. I had a couple of constituents come to me and complain that there is a policy in effect, I understand, dealing with out-of-wedlock mothers; that is they have one child they are encouraged to go back to work within six months.

MR. MANSBRIDGE: Four months.

MR. COOK: Four months. But is they have a second and succeeding children, they are maintained. If that is the case -- and that is second-hand information. I understand there are a fairly large number of young girls who would rather not have to support themselves and regularly, every year, produce a baby and stay on social assistance. As I said, I'm getting this second-hand. I just wonder, is this a problem?

MR. MANSBRIDGE: No. It's a story, but no evidence.

MME. CHAIRMAN: Vote 2.4, Public Assistance for Physically Handicapped. Any questions? This didn't go down with the new program.

MR. BOGLE: No. We anticipate that there is going to be an additional cost because, although the new proposed program, assured income for the severely handicapped, will provide assistance, there are additional costs. We do have people who receive social assistance now -- well, some cases have been cited to me where their costs are nearly \$2,000 per month. That's where home care and other such things are required. Some of those costs will still be in place. But the amount will go down, we anticipate, but it won't disappear.

MME. CHAIRMAN: So you say it would have been higher if it hadn't been for the new program.

MR. PAYNE: Mr. Minister, is the aids to daily living program provided for in this code?

MR. BOGLE: No. It's Vote 5.

MME. CHAIRMAN: Anything further? All right, 2.5, Public Assistance for Mentally Handicapped; 2.6, Ray.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Minister, are there any new components to this program, 2.6?

MR. BOGLE: We have a decrease in our case load.

MR. R. SPEAKER: What are the numbers?

MR. BOGLE: From approximately 7,500 to 5,400, or 28 per cent. We have an increase in our costs again. Throughout this vote you'll see the same increase reflected for shelter, food, etc.

MR. R. SPEAKER: I kind of question that statement in light of what you've just said, and I'd like to have it explained. The numbers are 28 per cent down, the food is increased 15 per cent, shelter 13 per cent, clothing 7 per cent. On an average, over a year, people will consume the same amount of food per day. So your base would maintain consistency. But you've increased the cost by 21.9 per cent. There's just something wrong with the calculation you're presenting to me, as I see it. In no way can I see how you can go up 21 and go down with a 28 per cent case load, and those figures are no where near 21 per cent.

MR. MANSBRIDGE: Mr. Minister, the variables in this particular element of the several elements of the vote are greater than in any other. There are far more persons receiving social assistance under that category in a year than are represented by the numbers on any annual basis, and for very good reason. The opportunities for work in Alberta are so high that we have a lot of transients coming in who are soon into the labor market. They may be receiving benefits for one, two, three months and then into the labor market. Now, their needs are very high, because they will have to pay the highest rents. You see, they have no established homes, so they are paying the prevailing rates. In many of these other categories, this long-term assistance, particularly in categories like 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, the persons have established home or have been living in properties for a great period of time. Someone arriving in Edmonton, having spent all their wealth to get here, say from Nova Scotia, with a family, are very high cost but for a very short time. This reflects that kind of variable in the program.

MR. BOGLE: I should clarify one other thing, and I did make a mistake. The decrease I mentioned was for the '78-79 year. I was looking at the wrong sheet. There is actually anticipated an increase of about 6 per cent this year, again due to in-migration.

MR. R. SPEAKER: That partly answers the question, if there's a 6 per cent increase.

MR. BOGLE: The roughly 28 per cent decrease was last year.

MR. R. SPEAKER: I disagree with the analysis given by the deputy minister on the basis of a decrease in population. Persons receiving assistance in 1978 have all those high variables the same as the people in 1979. So really that accounting for something significantly in 1979-80 just doesn't add up, with 1978-79, because the variables were there. They were the high-cost people in '78-79. So I couldn't really agree with you that that's the number causing the increase of 21.9 per cent. But maybe the 6 per cent increase in case loads, with the percentage costs of food, shelter, and clothing -- then I can understand. That Mme. Chairperson, has answered the question as I see it.

One other thing I'd like to ask, though: in light of the new statistic of employable case load going up 6 per cent, it is difficult for me to understand. Is it because the department is relaxing the ground rules, are they promoting a policy of in-migration to Alberta without job opportunities being here? It alarms me when I read the budget speech. It talks about 4.7 per cent unemployment and it says the 1979 rate is not expected to change significantly and should remain the lowest in any province in Canada. And you're going up to 21.9 per cent. You're talking about a 6 per cent case load increase. You know, there's something you're doing wrong.

MR. BOGLE: Let's not mix apples and oranges. First of all, we're talking about employable people coming to Alberta seeking work. They are people with skills, and they are in to receive assistance for a period of time -- and out. We're not talking about long-term social assistance people or people who are drifting in with no hope of finding employment.

MR. R. SPEAKER: You did that in '78-79 as well. What's new?

MR. BOGLE: To talk about a 4 per cent unemployment really has nothing to do with statistics here.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Definitely. It's going to affect the group that's here.

MR. BOGLE: But as I said, if this were 6 per cent on an annual basis, yes -- the same 6 per cent. But we're talking about people who come into Alberta, may be out of work for several weeks or a little longer, then they're into the force.

MR. R. SPEAKER: But they did that in '78-79.

MR. BOGLE: What would you suggest we do?

MR. R. SPEAKER: I'm not the minister. You've put the 6 per increase in, I didn't.

MR. BOGLE: But I don't see that there's anything wrong with it. We're Canadians, and although we try very hard to ensure that other parts of the country realize that this isn't a land of milk and honey and there aren't automatically jobs for everyone, when people come and they need help, we give

it to them, as we expect help to be given in other provinces to Albertans if they happen to be in that kind of situation.

MR. R. SPEAKER: But is the number coming into Alberta, you know, are you having a look at them to see if they're coming in without job opportunity. Are you encouraging or discouraging that kind of thing at the present time?

MR. BOGLE: I think you've heard the many comments made by the Premier, the Minister of Labour, the Minister of Advanced Education and Manpower, trying to caution people in other parts of Canada. But we've got a social, moral responsibility. If someone winds up here from Newfoundland or Ontario and they don't yet have a job and don't have any money, we help.

MME. CHAIRMAN: Is there any residency qualification?

MR. BOGLE: No.

MR. MANSBRIDGE: I think I should add, Mr. Minister, that we have a legal obligation too. We are subscribing to the Canada assistance plan and cannot refuse social allowance to any person who presents and can demonstrate eligibility.

But there is one other element in this increase that represents 10 per cent in money terms that is unique. The federal government's changes to the unemployment insurance regulations has had the effect of transferring beneficiaries of unemployment insurance into social allowance. Now we're extremely fortunate having a low unemployment rate in having less impact than, say, in Ontario which I think is facing an extra cost of I think \$80 million in one year as a result of that policy. But in our case it's added \$.5 million to our vote under that particular item.

MME. CHAIRMAN: Do you have another question, Ray?

MR. R. SPEAKER: No, that's fine.

MME. CHAIRMAN: John?

MR. BATIUK: Mme. Chairperson, that was the question I brought up earlier that the minister said he would get into. I'm quite happy to hear there is a reduction, because I was wondering how the statistics stand on that.

Mr. Minister, could you or your staff tell me: a few years when Neil Crawford was the minister of health and social development, there was an incentive program brought in to encourage people to get off social assistance. I know it has worked, because I know individuals who were totally on that and have gone. I just wonder if you could tell us how effective that program is. Do you have any records of it?

MR. MANSBRIDGE: There have been four major studies across the country on work incentives for people on social allowance, and there hasn't been a single demonstrated significant statistical case for the success of the program, which is very, very sad. Our incentive program, which is permitted under the Canada assistance plan and to which the minister made a reference earlier, does allow the first \$50 earned in income to have no effect on the social allowance. On the second \$50, 50 per cent is allowed as exempt income. On

the second \$100, 25 per cent. So there is an incentive program. We think it has a marginal impact.

MR. BATIUK: Well I know this incentive program; I'm well aware of it. All I wanted to know was whether it has any impact. That helps me, to know that it's working to some extent.

MME. CHAIRMAN: Gordon.

MR. STROMBERG: I'm not sure whether this comes in under this grant, but back a few years ago the department was funding a group in Calgary, people on social assistance for human rights, or something. We were funding that group. The group has formed of people who were on social assistance and they organized to lobby government. We're not into that funding now, are we?

MR. BOGLE: No, we're not funding it.

MME. CHAIRMAN: John Gogo.

MR. GOGO: Thanks. Mr. Minister, just so I'm clear in my mind, I seem to recall we have about 78,000 or 80,000 people on assistance in Alberta, in total. As I recall, about 6 per cent of those receiving assistance were termed unemployed employables. I would assume that figure is relatively constant, ignoring migration from other provinces. I also see where our population increased about 15,000 the first three months of this year, and about 10,000 were from migration, the others from births. I can understand, of the 10,000 coming in, particularly from other parts of Canada, that they arrive here -- they come here for a reason. They come here because they're out of work. Surely we're not about to build fences around the province. So I can understand that. That's short term, temporary.

The concern I have is: those women under 65, 55 to 65, are a very significant number who don't qualify for the old age pension or the spouse's pension for a variety of reasons. Would a substantial number of assistance for unemployables be within that category, that 55 to 63 (sic) year old woman? I simply say that because if that's the general reason for a fair amount of the increase, it's more than justified; as well as the 10,000 who migrate into the province.

MR. MANSBRIDGE: There is a point when we recognize that a person is unsuitable for employment, for reasons of age, health, and so on. They are moved out of that category, public assistance for employables, into one or other of the other categories. You're quite right in assuming that the percentage in this particular category remains in the 6 to 7 per cent area, as you are also right that the kind of people who are coming in -- and incidentally, Alberta's population is increasing at a rate 50 per cent higher than Canada's. So that's a measure of in-migration.

But they are people who are really looking for work, and if they don't find it they go. They don't stay. And there is a very high turnover of people in that category on public assistance. The average length of time in that category on public assistance is three months, which is not a long time.

MR. GOGO: Just two other points then. One is: I know from first-hand experience a number of people who qualify for UIC who can't get it because the bank account is empty end up at our offices across Alberta. We give them

assistance. Supposedly we have people who sign an agreement to repay that. In other words, when they receive the UIC benefit, they sign an agreement to pay it back.

MR. MANSBRIDGE: Mme. Chairperson, we do have an arrangement with the unemployment insurance commission for the recovery.

MR. GOGO: The final point: it seems to me that if the unemployed employables range about 6 per cent and they are really people who are capable of work, but we would have to hire so many supervisory personnel probably to track them down and keep them employed that it would hardly be worth the effort. Would that be a fair assumption.?

MR. MANSBRIDGE: It is a fair assumption, Mme. Chairperson, that there are some people who we are never going to be able to get into the labor market and keep them in the labor market. Fortunately it's an extremely small number, and I think we just simply have to recognize legally as well as morally that we'll just simply have to carry that very small element of the population.

MR. GOGO: Thanks very much.

MME. CHAIRMAN: 2.7, Public Assistance for Special Groups. Any questions?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. FJORDBOTEN: Mr. Payne has some comments at the end, on Vote 2.

MME. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Any general comments on Vote 2?

MR. PAYNE: Just as we leave Vote 2, I wonder if I could confirm that the department has considered the implications of providing for Alberta's deaf mute community telephone/teletypes, and has arrived at a negative conclusions as a result of that evaluation. Is that correct?

MR. BOGLE: I think you referring to the proposed aids to daily living program which was announced by my predecessor in February. At that time the announcement suggested that we would be looking at things like wheel chairs -- a variety of services and equipment. It excluded what we might generally call electronic equipment. There has been some correspondence with my office suggesting we should look at that. MLAs have raised it as well. I guess the key we're looking at in developing the program we have now is that we have a lot on our plate and to do a good job in that area. That's in no way to suggest that there phases which have been approved, because that's not the case. The approval for the program extends to, well, wheel chairs, crutches, ostomy supplies -- something like 20 pages of items.

MR. PAYNE: May I add my name to the list of those, both within caucus and elsewhere, who endorse the concept. Since 1961 or 1962 I have had an association with Alberta's deaf community and have seen first-hand the hour to hour panic they live under, knowing they can't call a fireman if there's a fire, can't call a policeman if there's a burglar, can't call a doctor if there's an illness, can't call an ambulance. It's hour to hour panic, and I'd like to use this public forum, if I may, to dramatize that need and to add to the list of those who endorse the concept. I would further ask for an

opportunity to discuss in more detail the rationale behind this recommendation.

MR. BOGLE: The rationale I've tried to give is that basically we're moving a long way. We're going into an area we haven't been in before. To quote my predecessor, a good program poorly administered is worse than no program at all. I'd much rather ensure that we meet the needs of those many Albertans who my predecessor intended to respond to in her announcement of, I think, February 12, and do that job well. There's going to be ample opportunity for you and other MLAs to make very valid points, I'm sure. For the next short while I intend to be learning more about some of the special needs of people who will not be covered by the program. That's a fair observation.

MME. CHAIRMAN: Any further comments on Vote 2? Vote 3, Child Welfare Services; 3.1, Program Support. Comments?

MR. STROMBERG: Could you just outline what that means?

MME. CHAIRMAN: On the left side are administrative and other costs which cannot be identified with individual sub-programs. 3.2, Community and Family Services.

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MME. CHAIRMAN: 3.3, Contracted Residences.

MR. GOGO: Is that the foster parent . . .

MR. BOGLE: Yes, and group homes.

MR. GOGO: But not mentally retarded.

MR. MANSBRIDGE: No, ordinary child welfare.

MR. GOGO: So it would be those under contract with the individual foster parents and the group homes of foster parents?

MR. MANSBRIDGE: And homes that are run under private contract.

MR. GOGO: Which is Westtown?

MR. MANSBRIDGE: No, Westville would come under 3.4.

MME. CHAIRMAN: Any other comments on 3.3? 3.4, Residence and Treatment in Institutions. This is up significantly. Would you like to comment on this?

MR. BOGLE: That's the provision for four new youth assessment centres in Lac La Biche, Medicine Hat, High Prairie, and Fort McMurray. That's the primary reason for that increase in cost.

MR. STROMBERG: The Child Welfare Act, does this budget cover costs where we're supporting wards of state through court order? In what vote is that?

MR. MANSBRIDGE: As you know, we have custody by agreement, temporary wards, permanent wards. Indeed in dealing with those children, they would be spread through any one of these four elements of Vote 3.

MR. STROMBERG: How many children now are wards of the province, placed there by court?

MR. MANSBRIDGE: Could I ask Mr. Maxwell to give you the very latest information, as of May 1979?

MR. MAXWELL: I'll break the figures down by the various groups of children in care as of May 1979. There were 3,407 temporary wards in care, 2,208 permanent wards in care, for a total of 5,615. There were an additional 2,807 cases under active investigation prior to any court proceeding. That was the number of children of families who were being investigated.

MR. STROMBERG: So we have, then, approximately 5,000 to 6,000 children who have been removed from their homes for their own protection? We can't just put a price tag on that. That would mean 5,000 to 6,000 court cases then heard, is that right?

MR. MAXWELL: Of those two, temporary wards are children who have appeared, or the case has appeared in court and temporary awardship has been granted to the department, with a view to returning those children to the care and custody of the parents. So that's 3,400 of that figure. The other 2,200 are permanent wards, where they have been made permanent charges of the department. In both those categories they would have appeared once or a number of times in court.

MR. STROMBERG: My last question would be on policy, if I may. Our family courts are held in camera. There is sometimes considerable question by lawyers as to what is entered as evidence. Some of the people engaged in that profession have been critical of the evidence presented, the lack of cross-examination. Some of the press, especially the Calgary Herald, have been quite critical of family courts. Could we not bring in a policy similar where the press would be allowed into family court as the press now is allowed into rape trials, but with a code of ethics as to what they report. There's a lot going on behind those closed doors that -- you know, somebody has to be a watch dog in there. I know the appeal route, but for a family to go to the Supreme Court for \$1,200 is-- that's the minimum.

MR. BOGLE: Well, I would ask the chief deputy minister to elaborate, but I do understand that we've received some support from the Attorney General's department, in the legal aid area, so we can try to do a better job.

MR. MANSBRIDGE: I've attended some of these cases myself, simply to get a greater familiarity. There is a very deliberate attempt in the court to be very informal and to give particular emphasis to what is the social background of the problem, instead of it remaining a purely legalistic matter. But we have worried for a long time -- although judges vary enormously in their opinions. Some judges prefer not to have lawyers involved and would prefer to address the social problems and evaluate them. Other judges have been very concerned at the lack of continuity, because we've tended to use legal agents predominately in the past. The Attorney General, in co-operation with us, has recognized that we need, particularly in the major cities, much greater

continuity and expertness in the legal side of this responsibility. We have had assigned to us in the last year four additional lawyers, two of which are working in each city. That will give us much greater continuity I think. But, it's an extraordinarily difficult problem, as is the whole problem where children are involved of who should represent the point of view of the child.

MME. CHAIRMAN: Any other general comments on Vote 3?

DR. PAPROSKI: I don't if this is exactly the same problem, but it's regarding the child placed in a home, whatever home. The question is whether that child has an opportunity to get assistance, or seek advice from someone outside of department officials within that home or jurisdiction. Is there an opportunity for that child to get that assistance?

MR. MANSBRIDGE: A social worker, totally independent of the home or institution, has a continuing responsibility for that child and maintains a continuing involvement with the child, checking with the work of the home, whether it's a contracted home or an institution directed by us.

DR. PAPROSKI: I appreciate that, Mme. Chairman. And I appreciate that point that in the vast majority of the cases it's probably proper and good and satisfactory. But if there is a conflict and that child senses that somebody else may be able to assist him or her, is there an opportunity for him to get away from that and ask somebody else for assistance? How would he go about doing that?

MR. MAXWELL: I would suspect you're referring to an older child, say a teenager.

DR. PAPROSKI: Yes, a child 10, 12, 13 years old who, frankly, doesn't get along with the social worker. Is he given direction that if he's not happy with us that he can do something else?

MR. MAXWELL: I think we would go out of our way to explain to each and every child that if they should seek out separate counsel that clearly if they want to speak to the foster parent or other individuals in the institution, if they request a meeting with clergy -- clearly we do not lock them up, sort of thing, or have no legal right to prevent them from seeking contact with outside individuals. So their chance of seeking recourse to another individual, seeking an informal appeal, you might say, is there. If it gets to be a severe situation we do each year change a number of case workers. Percentagewise, this would be small, but if there is an apparent conflict where a case worker is improperly dealing with a case, a basic personality conflict, another case worker is assigned to the situation.

DR. PAPROSKI: Mme. Chairperson, I want to follow that one more step and see if I can visualize the situation. The child is in a home, for a given period of time, and indefinite period of time. Is there any automatic review after one, two, three, or four months, to see if the situation has changed and something maybe could be rectified. Or is it: the child is there with the case worker and just carries on until something apparently happens out there? Or is somebody else reviewing it independent of the social worker and the child?

MR. MAXWELL: Depending on the status of the case, if it is a temporary ward case then there is a maximum of one year review, where it has to be brought back into court. All developments and changes relative to that case have to be presented to the court. Again the court makes a judgment on the future of that child, whether it should remain in care, be returned to the parents, whatever. If the child becomes a permanent ward and depending on how they are progressing, in policy there is a minimum of a monthly contact where there's any type of need, problems, that sort of thing. If the child is well established, well settled in the home, has been there for two or three or half a dozen years, then we go up to four months.

But there is a responsibility to see and talk with the child, separate and apart from the foster parent, just to ensure that everything is going well. That's part of the accountability that legally rests with the director but is delegated to the field staff.

MR. BATIUK: Mme. Chairperson, something we omitted at the beginning of the meeting is what time we are going to adjourn. Are we going to carry on until we finish the estimate, or midnight, or what?

MME. CHAIRMAN: I was just going to ask. It's 10 o'clock, and we have three who wish to speak on this vote. Would you like to finish this vote and adjourn, or go on to midnight?

MR. WOO: Finish the vote.

MME. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Is everybody agreed? John Batiuk.

MR. BATIUK: That's my question.

MME. CHAIRMAN: That was an easy one. John Gogo.

MR. GOGO: I want to ask the deputy about our youth assessment centres. I understand they're essentially for youngsters in conflict with the law. In Vote 3.4 I don't see a youth assessment centre for Lethbridge. Is that part of Sifton Children's Centre in Lethbridge?

MR. MANSBRIDGE: Yes.

MR. GOGO: Two questions. I understand that if a youngster is in conflict with the law, someone from the department gets involved. Their recommendation is that they go to the YAC. They're there for a time, sometimes three to four weeks, as I understand. Do they receive elementary education while they're there, if they're a grade 8 student, for example? Is that done on a daily basis?

MR. MANSBRIDGE: We have arrangements with local school boards in every case. In fact, it's almost luxurious education, almost a tutorial system under these circumstances, because of the small numbers and the range of the children's needs.

MR. GOGO: So they don't suffer in terms of education?

MR. MANSBRIDGE: Not at all.

MR. GOGO: The other question then, Mr. Deputy, is that we recently changed the age of majority for females for criminal prosecutions from 18 to 16, I understand, to conform across Canada. Presumably, then, you no longer have females aged 17 and 11 months at Sifton children's house. Has that presented any unusual problems to the centre?

MR. MANSBRIDGE: No, Mme. Chairperson. There were pretty small numbers involved. I think we have a very successful relationship with the Solicitor General that where it would make sense, regardless of the legal age, for us to continue to look after a child who is our responsibility, it is recognized that we would continue to do so, even if it might stretch to 18 years. In other words, there's been a great deal of flexibility. The legal age, from a criminal point of view, is changed. But the care of the child is a matter of co-operation between the two agencies, particularly when the care is of the compulsory variety. In theory, the person should then be reassessed and put in jail, if you like. But that's not the way it's been handled.

MR. GOGO: Thanks.

MME. CHAIRMAN: Gordon, you had one question you wanted to clarify.

MR. STROMBERG: Yes. My question wasn't answered: if the news media can attend a rape trial, why can't they attend a family court trial?

MR. MANSBRIDGE: That may be a good question for the Attorney General.

MR. STROMBERG: It's a good safety valve. What goes on behind that closed door? The general public doesn't know what's happening. They're hearing one side of the story. I think it would be very beneficial if there were a code of ethics, the same as for a rape trial. I'd feel more comfortable.

MME. CHAIRMAN: Anything further?

MR. GOGO: I move we adjourn.

Motion carried

The meeting adjourned at 10:07 p.m.