

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ALBERTA

Committee of Supply

Subcommittee B

Tuesday, June 19, 1979

8 p.m.

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Department of Social Services and Community Health

Tuesday, June 19, 1979

Chairman: Mrs. Fyfe

8 p.m.

MR. FJORDBOTTEN: We'll call the meeting to order. I'd like to make you aware that I think we have to have one-third of the total committee here to have a quorum, and we are just making it. So I suggest that no one leave the room.

MR. NOTLEY: I'll stay.

MR. FJORDBOTTEN: Here's Catherine. Now we've got one plus, so somebody can go to the bathroom.

MME. CHAIRMAN: Now it's all right to leave.

All right, we're on Vote 5 -- I'm sorry, Vote 4.

MR. PAYNE: Nice try, Myrna.

MME. CHAIRMAN: Is everyone in agreement that we adjourn at 10, or do you wish to proceed any further?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MME. CHAIRMAN: Okay, Vote 4, Specialized Social Services, on page 291. Vote 4.1, Purchased Services and Agency Grants for Adults. Any comments?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MME. CHAIRMAN: Vote 4.2, Residential Accommodation in Institutions and Hostels for Adults.

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MME. CHAIRMAN: Vote 4.3, Development Projects for Metis. Yes, Mr. Notley.

MR. NOTLEY: Mme. Chairman -- is it Mme. Chairman or Mme. Chairperson?

MME. CHAIRMAN: Whatever. It doesn't matter; I'm not fussy.

MR. NOTLEY: Is the minister in a position to advise the committee whether he's had a chance to find out from his officials where things stand on the files? What is the assessment as to files that belong to the government and those that are going to be sent back to the settlements?

MR. BOGLE: When I returned to my office this afternoon following question period, approximately quarter to 4, I think, there was a note for me that the first -- you may recall that of the eight settlements, government files had been retrieved from six. The review that I had requested through the chief deputy minister yesterday had been completed on three of the six sets of files, and some material returned to each of those three settlements. The other three settlements' files were being reviewed at that time. I was assured that that review would be completed by late this afternoon, and the material forwarded to those settlements.

In speaking with the chief deputy minister and other officials in the department, I did ask a couple of questions. One was whether or not any information had been obtained that was not the property of the government of Alberta, and that was of a personal or confidential nature. The information provided was that there was not. I can recall very generally, with regard to one of the settlements, the kind of information which we did have and which was returned.

MME. CHAIRMAN: Excuse me. I don't think we need to go into that now. We're dealing with a particular budget item, so . . . Did you have a question relating to the budget itself, Mr. Notley?

MR. NOTLEY: Well, without getting into a quarrel with the Chair, when we're talking about the estimates, Mme. Chairman, we're talking about the operations of the department. Without being argumentative, I think to get into a strict discussion just of the budget estimate would be to get away from what the whole process of estimates is all about. As long as I've been a member of this Assembly, the estimates constitute the most wide-ranging opportunity to raise questions that relate to the operation of a department.

Now, I would hope that we would have an opportunity to put questions. This is a very sensitive issue, admittedly, but an issue that I think, in the public interest, should be fully discussed. It would be unfortunate if we were too restrictive in this discussion. It's going to take place someplace, either here or in the full Legislature.

MR. GOGO: Agreed.

MME. CHAIRMAN: Did you have a further question?

MR. NOTLEY: Yes, I do. If we could follow up, Mr. Minister. The material is being returned, and you've indicated that Mr. Mansbridge has informed you that there is no material that is actually owned by the settlements. Mr. Mansbridge, is it not the basic position of the government that virtually all files would in fact be government files when you come right down to the bottom line?

MR. BOGLE: Well, just for clarification, I did not indicate that all the files were ours. I indicated just the opposite: that in fact some of the files -- and not many if we're looking at the volume -- approximately 98 to 99 per cent of the files that were in government file cases were in fact government files. But some files were not; I was going to give as an example the Gift Lake settlement.

MR. NOTLEY: Could you do that?

MR. BOGLE: All right. There was some correspondence from the Voice of Alberta Native Women, a society registered under The Societies Act. There was a file for the Federation of Metis Settlements; that file was returned. And there were some pamphlets on the Alberta Native People's Credit Union, which is no longer in operation. So those three items from the Gift Lake settlement were with the government files. They have been packaged, sealed, and returned to Gift Lake.

MR. NOTLEY: If I can pursue that, and perhaps direct this to Mr. Mansbridge. There are obviously going to be some files that are clearly department files, and there's no problem deciding that. Some files are clearly going to be files of the settlement association; obviously correspondence between a particular settlement and the federation would fall into that category. But quite a number of files in fact are going to be subject to interpretation: the people from the settlements would say, those are our files, and the government would say, those are ours. Who makes that determination? How was it determined which files were sent back and which would be retained? Was that done by the chief deputy minister? What process was used in those shades of gray areas?

MME. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Bogle, would you like to respond to that?

MR. BOGLE: Yes. The criteria that are used -- and we should keep in mind that although we share office space with the various councils, at least one employee in each office works for the government of Alberta. I indicated in the House yesterday that one obvious way to check a file is if our letterhead or memohead has been used. What was requested through our department was that all the government files be returned to the central office. That's what we were attempting to do, Mme. Chairperson.

It's our intention -- I discussed this with the chief deputy minister -- that once that examination has been made to the satisfaction of our solicitors, the files which are government files but which may assist the Metis settlement council will be returned to the settlement office, where they may be used by our employee in consultation with the settlement council and its employees.

MME. CHAIRMAN: Are there any other questions on this particular item from any other member of the committee?

MR. BATIUK: I've already heard enough in the House.

MME. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Woo.

MR. WOO: I have a question for the minister, Mme. Chairman, that doesn't relate to the line of questioning of the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview. You know, traditionally this element has been part of Social Services and Community Health. Has any consideration been given to possibly transferring this element to the ministry of Native Affairs?

MME. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Bogle.

MR. BOGLE: That's a fascinating subject, considering my involvement for the last four years. I think one of the main considerations would have to be what kind of ministry is the Minister responsible for Native Affairs and the Native

Secretariat staff, keeping in mind that their function to date has not been in a program area. They do not deliver services as such; they act as a co-ordinator among departments of government, and with the native people and government itself.

So if a shift were made, there's a substantive policy issue which would have to be dealt with not only by cabinet but by government caucus. That certainly could be considered; to my knowledge it has not been. It wasn't considered during the last four years. To my knowledge it is not now under consideration.

MME. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Gogo.

MR. GOGO: Thanks, Myrna. Mr. Minister, I understand that the school lunch project, which is about \$1 million a year, is strictly for Metis settlement children. Is consideration being given to expanding that to other parts of the province, in view of the large number of youngsters of single parents around Alberta?

MR. BOGLE: Although the hot lunch program is administered under this vote, it is not exclusive to the Metis settlements. You'll find it in some of the isolated communities, and also serving some treaty Indian youngsters. So you have a combination of youngsters who benefit from the program. Some may be described as treaty Indians, some as Metis, some as non-native.

But the main criterion which has been followed to date -- and the chief deputy minister may wish to supplement this -- is that we go into areas of greatest need to do a couple of things: to increase the attendance at school, and that has happened, hopefully because a hot meal is provided for lunch. It's very important for any youngster to have a meal at lunch. In some cases this is the most important meal of the day for those kiddies. So it's been very beneficial, improving attendance and marks.

MME. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Notley, do you have another question?

MR. NOTLEY: Yes. Mr. Minister, if I could go back to the last question I raised: who makes the decision on these files that are not clear-cut? Now, it's obviously clear-cut if you look at the file and it says, Voice of Alberta Native Women. There's no ambiguity. And it's obviously clear-cut if we're dealing with possibly even the moose licences. But when it comes to those shades of gray areas, how do you determine what is and what isn't? What criteria have been used by the department in determining what are department files and what aren't?

MR. BOGLE: Well, Mme. Chairperson, I believe that is a hypothetical question, because we are dealing with government files. In the instance that non-government files are inadvertently in our file case, then as I've indicated, those have been and are being returned.

MR. NOTLEY: But what I'm saying is that there are going to be some files where there would be a difference of opinion, Mr. Minister. The question is, how do you make that determination? It just isn't that easy. I've been in the settlement offices, so I know it's just not that easy to determine what is and what isn't a government file. My question really is: how do you make that determination?

MR. BOGLE: Mme. Chairperson, I certainly hope the Member for Spirit River-Fairview is not suggesting that we should not be sharing office space with the Metis settlement councils. To suggest that there must be some gray areas is really in that line, because if that were the case, we'd have some real concerns about it. It's my understanding that is not the case. We're talking about files which, on one hand, are government files; government stationery is involved, either letterhead or memohead. On the other hand, I've used as an example some pamphlets for the Native People's Credit Union, which is no longer in operation. Those were clearly not, or should not have been part of the government files, and they have been returned.

MME. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Cook.

MR. COOK: Mme. Chairman, I wonder if I might ask the minister a question about student assistance. What kind of assistance are you referring to there? Would it be for students in secondary institutions, or would it go into assistance with postsecondary or vocational training? In particular, would this be the program you would work through for something like an Alsands project, assisting native and Metis people to take part in a venture like that?

MR. BOGLE: It's a good question, and the answer eludes me at the moment. Do you have anything?

MR. GOGO: Is that in 4.3?

MR. BOGLE: It's 4.3.

MR. MANSBRIDGE: Here's Mr. David Stolee, the Deputy Minister of Social Services. He could probably amplify.

MR. COOK: It's in Development Projects for Metis on page 290, a small note on the second line.

MR. STOLEE: I'm not overly confident of my answer, but we have traditionally provided some assistance for students for students in high school who have had to leave the area of their residence because high school was not conveniently available. It's not a significant item of assistance, and I can't speak to what's in this year's budget. But that's the type of assistance that has previously been available.

MME. CHAIRMAN: Mrs. Chichak.

MRS. CHICHAK: Thank you, Mme. Chairperson. My question is really for a little more clarification. I'm bringing back the subject that the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview initiated, this gray area that has been suggested. Perhaps for my own clarity if not for anyone else's, can I pose a couple of questions in this area? It's my understanding -- and here's where you will have to give us clarification -- that government staff is there to operate and maintain government communications with respect to the Metis people in the colonies. So those files would be kept in an area of filing cabinets which are clearly for government business. The office-sharing is correct, the fact that the office is being shared by the people who there on behalf of the Metis people in the colony. Although they share space, do they intermingle their

files with government files? If they don't, there can't be a gray area as to what file belongs to whom. Can we have some clarification on the office procedure?

MR. BOGLE: That's a very good question. I think the first thing we need to do is try to get an appreciation of the size of office we're discussing. These are small offices, serving relatively small populations. They're not large and sophisticated, with many different rooms. There may be two or three rooms, and there is a lot of intermingling and interaction between the people, whether employees of the settlement council or of the government. And we would encourage that; we want to see that happen.

It would certainly be my intent that the files should not be intermingled in the same sense, and that was my understanding. Mr. Chief Deputy Minister, is there anything you'd like to add to that?

MR. MANSBRIDGE: Only that we were surprised to find any papers, and only very few, that were not properly filed in the government files.

MME. CHAIRMAN: I'd like to wind this item up. Are there any more questions before I allow Mr. Notley another? Okay, we'll make this the last one.

MR. NOTLEY: Well, just a moment, Mme. Chairperson. Again, I think the estimates are such that we discuss these things fully, and not put on any arbitrary times. I don't say this in any threatening way, but they're questions that need to be answered, and if they're not answered here, we'll have to ask them in the House.

Mr. Minister, I too have been in four of the settlement offices, so I know the kinds of arrangements. Obviously you do have a situation where you have very, very small offices in at least several cases. That's why I raise the question of files. Obviously there has been some intermingling of files. You've already admitted that several files have been or will be sent back. So there has been some intermingling.

The question I raise really relates to the gray area, which I submit is almost inevitably going to exist. I know that the government would argue, these are our files. My point is that the settlement people would probably argue, too, that they are their files. The point and the question I want to make: you indicated that these files are going to be made available to the legal counsel of the government, if I'm not mistaken. What additional information was necessary from those files which the government did not already possess?

MR. BOGLE: Well, Mme. Chairperson, as I indicated in the House, it's quite probable that most, if not all, of the information that would be in files in the settlement offices and our government offices on the settlements would be duplicates of information we have here, or we would have duplicates of the information there. But in the request submitted to us by the legal counsel, they wanted to ensure that they had all the facts, all the information. Surely it's not difficult to understand; if any of us were to hire a solicitor to represent us in an important case, we would want to ensure that our solicitor would leave no stones unturned in presenting the facts for that case. That's the reason the files were called in: so they could be examined.

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As I've indicated, any files which inadvertently were placed in our filing system have been or are now being returned. I expect that once the other

government files have been examined and it's the opinion of our legal advisers that they can and should be returned to the settlements, they will be.

MR. NOTLEY: So at this stage, Mr. Minister, your legal advisers will be reviewing the files, and there may be some files which they feel are actually information that should be available to the settlements, it will be then be up to the lawyers -- who will actually be handling the Crown's case -- to determine basically what information will be sent back and what won't? As opposed to Mr. Mansbridge, for example.

MR. BOGLE: I would not want to imply that the solicitors will be going through the files. It's my understanding that they are looking for certain things, and those things may be gleaned from the files by our own employees. But as I've indicated, once that process is completed and our solicitors are satisfied, I understand the files will be returned. I've discussed that process with the chief deputy minister and a management committee, as of this afternoon, so our employees in the settlements can get on with their work, and so can the settlement councils' employees.

MME. CHAIRMAN: Mrs. Chichak, you had one more supplementary?

MRS. CHICHAK: Mme. Chairperson, arising from the question of the Member for Spirit River-Fairview, again for clarification. I'm wondering whether the implication is accurate or whether the action being taken is proper. Since the matter has been raised, that a few of the papers have been found in the government files, is it the department that's looking through quickly to determine if there's a file that was inadvertently in the government files and is being returned? Or are we having our legal counsel go to that point? I think this is an important distinction, that there not be an erosion into what can very quickly be ascertained as not being a government file, and that it be returned without further examination.

MR. BOGLE: When the question arose of the possibility that some files not the property of the government of Alberta might be mixed in with government files -- and it's questionable, you know. If a file is in a filing case, and the filing case is the government's: all kinds of points might be raised about that. But when that was raised yesterday, I gave immediate instructions to the department, through the chief deputy minister, that the quick examination of those files should be made by our officials, and if a file were discovered not to be a government file, it should be placed in a sealed container and returned immediately to the settlement.

MME. CHAIRMAN: Thank you. Are there any other questions on the particular item? I think if there are any other questions on the filing, you should bring them up in the House.

MR. NOTLEY: There are a couple of questions apart from that, but I have just one additional question on the filing itself. The minister indicated that he'd instructed the chief deputy minister to have officials of the department review the files. Which officials would those be, Mr. Minister? Would officials of the Metis development branch be reviewing the files? So the people who in fact retrieved the files will be reviewing them. Would that be a fair statement, Mr. Minister?



MR. BOGLE: Could you repeat the last part?

MR. NOTLEY: The people who retrieved the files will in fact be reviewing them?

MR. BOGLE: In most cases, yes.

MR. NOTLEY: In most or all cases?

MR. BOGLE: No, I said in most cases.

MR. NOTLEY: Would there be a reason for a different approach for different ones?

MR. BOGLE: Mme. Chairperson, let me answer the question this way. Is there anyone in the department other than someone employed in the Metis betterment branch who would be reviewing those files?

MR. MANSBRIDGE: No.

MR. BOGLE: Thank you.

MR. NOTLEY: I see. So it's the betterment branch that is doing it. I have just one other set of questions I'd like to ask, Mme. Chairperson, while the officials are here.

Could either the minister or the chief deputy minister outline for us the number of people employed by the government on the settlements, and the specific nature of their work?

MR. BOGLE: I'll ask the chief deputy minister to respond to that detail.

MR. MANSBRIDGE: It's a matter of detail that I don't have entirely. But I think on all eight settlements, we do have at least one clerical staff member employed and paid by the Metis development branch. We fund, through the Metis development trust, some staff who are working with the settlements. That's about as much detail as I have now.

MR. NOTLEY: So at this stage, as we review the estimates, we're looking at clerical staff. Would you consider the settlement managers who work with the settlement councils to be staff of the government? We're talking about clerical staff?

MR. BOGLE: Just to broaden on your question a bit if I may, through Mme. Chairperson. The total number of staff in the branch, as I understand it, both here in Edmonton and in the settlements, is 25.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Minister, getting back to the decision to retrieve these documents. In the case of the Gift . . .

MME. CHAIRMAN: As I said, I think you should ask those in the House. If there are any other questions on this particular budget item. Did you have another one, Mr. Hiebert?

MR. HIEBERT: I came in late, Mme. Chairperson, and I was wondering if I was at the proper meeting.

MR. FJORDBOTTEN: You are.

MR. HIEBERT: I just wonder what item you're on.

MME. CHAIRMAN: We are on 4.3, and we're going to move on to vote on the total. Can we have agreement on the total for Vote 4?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MME. CHAIRMAN: Okay, 5.1, Senior Citizens' Supplementary Benefits. Any comments? Do we have agreement on 5.1?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MME. CHAIRMAN: 5.2?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MME. CHAIRMAN: And the total to be voted on for Vote 5? Mr. Gogo.

MR. GOGO: I don't want to hold up the estimates. I just want to ask the minister or perhaps the deputy: I've had many constituents call -- and this is not necessarily within Alberta's jurisdiction -- who are caught in that gap, 60 to 65. They've been receiving spouse's allowance, then there's the death of the spouse who qualifies. At that time several things happen. One, the spouse's allowance ceases. Secondly, the extended health care benefits under Hospitals and Medical Care cease, and so on.

Mr. Minister, I wonder if you'd care to respond first about whether the department has asked Ottawa to review that policy, and whether there's any way the department in Alberta can play a role outside of social assistance in helping to resolve some of those so-called discrepancies.

MR. BOGLE: Yes, first just to remind the hon. member through you, Mme. Chairperson, that we did deal with public assistance for the aged back in Vote 2. That's primarily aimed at people between the ages of 60 and 65. I understand the import of your question, getting away from a social assistance approach.

MR. GOGO: It's the AIP then?

MR. BOGLE: Yes.

MR. MANSBRIDGE: The spouse's allowance program, as I'm sure you know, Mme. Chairman and Mr. Gogo, is a federal program which all provinces opposed in its original form, and have made repeated representations. The two changes, one made and one promised, we find very helpful. The federal government made one modification to the program earlier this year which allowed a spouse to continue to receive the allowance for six months beyond the death of the other spouse. The new government has stated that it intends to re-examine the spouse's allowance program, and we certainly hope that will be done in consultation with the provincial governments.

In the meantime, we have our social allowance program, which in a very significant way is directed to the needs of widowed spouses, or single women

for that matter, in particular between the ages of 60 and 65. It is a very real problem.

MR. GOGO: Thanks very much. One other question I have is: are Alberta senior citizens still the highest recipients of income in Canada, through government programs?

MR. BOGLE: No. If you're looking at provinces and territories, the Northwest Territories has greater support by \$3 to \$5.

MR. GOGO: Thanks very much.

MME. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Zaozirny.

MR. ZAOZIRNY: Well, my question related to that and the Alberta assured income plan. It's my understanding that the plan came into force in about 1976. Since that time, I believe \$54.03 is the maximum benefit to a single pensioner, and that level hasn't been increased. I wonder if the department is giving some consideration to increasing the maximum amount available, in light of the inflationary trend over the last number of years. What is the policy in that regard?

MR. BOGLE: Mme. Chairperson, just to ensure that we're dealing with the right figures, for a single person it's \$45.01 and for a couple it would be \$47.20. I think we have to keep in mind is that whatever we do, we must do it in relationship to the total programs for senior citizens that we offer as governments. In other words, we cannot design something here in isolation from what we're doing for senior citizens in other areas. We think back to the pioneer home improvement program recently announced, whereby we're providing up to \$2,000 for senior citizens to improve their own homes. That's just to mention one of many, many programs.

Obviously what you're raising, Mr. Zaozirny, is a policy question which would have to be dealt with in that sense. The department will take the direction from the cabinet and the government caucus on an item like that. If you're really asking the question whether or not we should go down the road of tying or indexing that, it's a question that would require further discussion.

MR. ZAOZIRNY: If I could pursue that just a little further. My concern arises from the fact that, while I think a lot of the programs that the government has in place for seniors are tremendous, you think about those seniors whose basic problem is that they just don't have enough disposable dollars to buy the groceries and take care of the necessities of life. So I gather what you're saying, Mr. Minister, is that the dollars put forward in the estimates reflect no increase in the maximum amount available to pensioners.

MR. BOGLE: No. But we should not lose sight of the recent guaranteed income supplement of the federal government, which increased by \$20 per person. That's part of what I meant by not doing something in isolation from other programs.

MME. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Batiuk.

MR. BATIUK: Mme. Chairperson, I had put my hand up before the deputy brought this up. But the spouse's allowance was a platform issue of the now

government, and they indicated quite strongly that they would be looking at its not being cut off totally for a spouse between the age of 60 and 65.

But I wonder, Mr. Minister, about Alberta assured income. How much more would it cost if every senior citizen received the full amount? Why I'm referring to it is that many times I get requests from senior citizens because they get a few dollars' cut in the federal pension, and the provincial assured income is taken off their tapes. The problem is that once there, the old age security finds that they readjust it, but there seems to be difficulty there for the . . .

MR. BOGLE: Mme. Chairperson, just for clarification. The situation outlined by the hon. Member for Vegreville was accurate some time ago. If the GIS were adjusted -- because this program is tied to that one -- then there might have been a reduction in our program. A policy change was made on that issue by my predecessor. At the moment, if there is a substantial increase in the federal support, there will not be a decrease. At worst, there will be a levelling off until it kicks in again. But there will not be a subsequent drop in the support from the province's program.

MME. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Notley, do you have a question?

MR. NOTLEY: Well, I have a follow-up question on two things, really. First, I was going to raise indexing, but it's been raised -- and I wish you well in caucus.

But the other question really deals with this whole question Mr. Batiuk raised: the problems of spouses between 60 and 65 -- usually the man dies and the woman is 63. I know that this really involves federal action, but where do things stand? Are we making any progress toward overcoming this? I don't suppose there's one area where you get as many complaints as this business of what happens to the spouse at age 63; husband dies; and all of a sudden the only thing you've got is public assistance.

MR. MANSBRIDGE: One of the problems, Mme. Chairperson, is that in concept it was unfair, because it ignored persons who were not married, who have equal needs and pressures through that age period. The only program designed to cover that is the social allowance program under the Canada assistance plan. A great deal of pressure has been brought upon the federal government. I know that the (former) minister, Mme. Begin, recognized publicly several times that the single greatest priority facing governments in the future would be the problem of an adequate income for the elderly short of the age of 65. It's almost, in relative terms, like a bonanza at that magical age. But there are great problems until that age.

Now, the advantage of the social allowance approach, which I don't think one should totally overlook, is that it is a way of looking at the total needs of a person. If it were a flat sum, its value across the board would be very mixed. The fact that under the social allowance program we can address the needs for shelter, food, clothing, and so on, does mean that one can shape an income for people in need in that age group that would relate to needs, rather than relying entirely, on a flat rate.

MR. NOTLEY: I have one supplementary question, Mme. Chairperson. You're dealing, both Mr. Minister and Mr. Deputy Minister, with people who have a great deal of pride at that age. There is nothing that they find more demeaning than the thought of going on "welfare". I've had so many ladies

come to me and say, isn't there a widow's pension? Because at one time there used to be. And isn't there a pension for the deaf, or a pension for this or for that?

I really would ask: instead of looking at social allowance *per se*, it would be the principle of social allowance, but have we given any thought to calling it something people can live with? So when that little old lady goes into the grocery, she's got a widow's pension. It's not that she's got social allowance; she's got a widow's pension.

MR. BOGLE: Well, it's the question which we as legislators have to wrestle with, trying to come up with a fair and equitable program, and trying to find a way to help people who need help, as the hon. Member for Vegreville mentioned earlier, and as the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview said, to do it with dignity. I'm certainly, and our government is certainly, open to suggestions on how we might do that, keeping in mind our concerns for what happens in other parts of Canada -- we're a part of one country -- and our federal government's responsibilities. But it's a very sensitive area, and one which certainly deserves a lot of our attention in trying to develop the kinds of programs outlined by the members to come up to the needs of those people.

MME. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Cook.

MR. COOK: Unfortunately, Grant stole my thunder.

MME. CHAIRMAN: Shall we look at the total?

MR. FJORBOTTEN: Just a minute, now. Mr. Zaozirny.

MR. ZAOZIRNY: One final kick at the cat. Mme. Chairperson, to the minister. I've heard from time to time the notion that in Alberta some 25,000 senior citizens are living under the so-called minimum living standard. I wonder if either the minister or a representative from that department could give us some advice on that. If there is some validity to that statement, could they advise us whether or not any cost analysis has been done as to what the cost would be to bring our seniors to the point where no seniors in Alberta are living beneath the so-called minimum standard.

MME. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Minister, do you wish to respond?

MR. BOGLE: I wish I could shed light on this very important subject. At the moment I can't. Are there any things you can think of, Mr. Chief Deputy Minister?

MR. MANSBRIDGE: The very structure of our senior citizens' programs, and the capability of social allowance to supplement those programs, I believe gives the guarantee that the hon. member is seeking: that nowhere in this province need there be senior citizens living below the established poverty lines, or established cost of living area -- certainly as far as senior citizens are prepared to seek supplements as needed from the social allowance program.

MME. CHAIRMAN: Dr. Carter.

DR. CARTER: Thank you. I'd like to make the general comment to the minister with regard, as you said, to the interrelationship among various federal and provincial programs -- also within our own provincial government, the interrelationship with senior citizen housing units -- that there are some agencies within the province, specifically the Calgary Housing Authority, that are overly zealous in their demands upon the senior citizens. Every time they have an increased revenue, they must quickly run over to them and have their cheques xeroxed. Then they have their rent correspondingly adjusted to 30 per cent of that income. That is very much a sore point, to pick up Mr. Notley's point: we're dealing with people who have pride. But in some instances -- and I stress "some" -- really treat them like little children who have yet to be weaned.

MR. BOGLE: The greatest difficulty in this area -- and I certainly don't wish to be defensive about it, because I've faced it as an MLA in my own constituency -- is that if the government is building subsidized housing units for senior citizens, we want to ensure that the first senior citizens to use those units are those in greatest need. That's the reasoning given me by the Minister of Housing and Public Works for the 30 per cent of income as the level. It can prove to be a real hardship on people.

Now, I was looking at it from the point of view of the senior citizen who has some substantial income because of hard work through life. I think you're looking at it from a slightly different point of view, the dignity of the person, and that the moment there's an increase in the support to the individual senior citizen, we're there to ensure that we get our share.

MME. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Wolstenholme.

MR. WOLSTENHOLME: Thank you. Getting back to this dignity part, evidently these cheques are marked "welfare", are they?

MR. BOGLE: No.

MR. WOLSTENHOLME: Well, where does the dignity part enter into it then? Where's the problem? Because I've had people tell me the same thing as Grant has -- the dignity part of taking their cheque to the grocery store. Is it not a cheque?

MR. BOGLE: Well, Mme. Chairperson, the criterion that used in the broadest sense of the word is that we have an income and asset test. You must demonstrate need before you're able to receive the assistance. That may be what some people are objecting to. But the cheque itself is issued, and there's no reference on it.

MR. MANSBRIDGE: Just like any other government cheque.

MR. WOLSTENHOLME: There's no reference on it?

MR. MANSBRIDGE: Not at all.

MR. WOLSTENHOLME: Well, I don't quite see the problem that some of them have been voicing.

MME. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Oman.

MR. OMAN: Would there not be some emergency situations where vouchers would still be issued?

MR. BOGLE: My understanding is that vouchers are used if there's been an abuse of the privilege. In the case where the landlord hasn't been paid his rent -- and it's happened on a number of occasions -- then we may go back to a voucher approach. Are there any others, Mr. Chief Deputy Minister?

MR. MANSBRIDGE: Well, to protect the family, if the money has not been spent on food. But these are exceptions.

MR. BOGLE: Yes, used as a last resort.

MR. OMAN: One more area I wanted to get into -- what's the provincial equivalent of the GIS?

MR. MANSBRIDGE: The Alberta assured income plan.

MR. OMAN: Yes. In the case that two have lived on it, and one dies, do we cut that by half? There's a greater reduction on the provincial scale than on the federal scale. Is that correct?

MR. MANSBRIDGE: There is a marginal difference, as the minister explained earlier, Mme. Chairperson. The rates are calculated relative to other programs. The marginal difference is that a single person receives \$45.01 and a married couple each receives \$47. Clearly, then, with the death of a spouse, there would be a marginal change to a single-person status.

MR. OMAN: So you're saying that for a married couple, each gets \$47, but when one dies one gets \$45? But surely two can live more cheaply than one.

MR. MANSBRIDGE: It's simply related to the other benefits that are paid to a single person relative to a married couple. The reason for the higher rate for the individual in a married couple is that in the other associated programs, the higher rate is for the single person.

MME. CHAIRMAN: All right. Can we get agreement on the total \$78,525,500?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MME. CHAIRMAN: Vote 6, Vocational Rehabilitation Services; 6.1, Program Support.

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. OMAN: Mme. Chairman, are you open for questions?

MME. CHAIRMAN: Do you have a question? Go ahead.

MR. OMAN: On the overall program of vocational rehabilitation, do you have any figures to indicate the success ratio of people you're putting into educational processes who are dropped from the rolls?

MR. BOGLE: Marcel?

MR. ARCAND: We don't have the specific information available, sir. But we do have a process whereby we follow up on all persons who are placed into employment or training through the employment opportunities program, for a period of 90 days thereafter, in order to ensure that they remain in that placement. If it doesn't work out, we take them back in and attempt to re-place them.

MR. OMAN: Are you persuaded that this program pays dividends?

MR. ARCAND: Without question, I think.

MR. BOGLE: Mme. Chairperson, I should have introduced Marcel Arcand, our assistant deputy minister of rehavilitative services.

MME. CHAIRMAN: Thank you. Any further questions? This was on the Program Support item.

MR. OMAN: Mme. Chairperson, they say they are persuaded "without question". But if you're following for only 90 days, how do you know?

MR. ARCAND: I think probably the ultimate would be the reflection of decreased costs in public assistance, which was dealt with earlier in another vote. I have figures available for the numbers of persons who have been placed into employment or training. I think they number over 5,000 in any one year, through the efforts of this particular program. We haven't recently conducted any long-term studies to determine what happens a year or two after. But I think we feel that if a person can keep their employment for three months, then the chances are they'll be keeping it for longer.

MME. CHAIRMAN: Mrs. Chichak.

MRS. CHICHAK: Mme. Chairperson, could the minister advise: in the support being provided to handicapped persons who are being trained for employment . .

MME. CHAIRMAN: Just one second. I think that one would come under 6.4, would it not, with the disadvantaged adults?

MRS. CHICHAK: No, it talks about the objective of the program, and I'm trying to get a clarification.

MME. CHAIRMAN: Just a second. Program Support is the administrative and other costs, and I think if we go through them vote by vote, we won't get too confused.

MRS. CHICHAK: Okay.

MME. CHAIRMAN: Okay, can we hold that until 6.4? Any problems? 6.2, Regional Delivery Services. If there's any problem, just check the description on the left-hand side, and we'll know exactly which question we're discussing. I allowed one question to go through there that I perhaps shouldn't have.

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.



MME. CHAIRMAN: 6.3, Agency Grants and Purchased Services.

MR. NOTLEY: Mme. Chairperson, this is probably the place to raise it, because we're dealing with volunteer organizations here. Is the minister or deputy minister in a position to advise why the voluntary services bureau in the department, or whatever it was called, was phased out? There was a department set up to encourage volunteerism, and that was phased out during this last budget year. What are the reasons for that?

MR. BOGLE: I'll ask the chief deputy minister to respond, as that action was taken prior to my assuming this responsibility.

MR. MANSBRIDGE: It is not correct to say it was phased out. What in fact happened was that we absorbed this program from another department, and it overlapped considerably with comparable work under the jurisdiction of the preventive social services program. What we did, in effect, was merge the two. In fact, we did make some savings: I think something like 25 per cent of the resources were saved as a result of the merger.

But in the sense of giving assistance to communities to develop volunteers, the program is continuing, but under the aegis of preventive social services.

MR. NOTLEY: So how is that handled now? For example, how does a community that isn't part of a PSS agreement have access to that kind of assistance?

MR. MANSBRIDGE: In such cases, which fortunately are growing ever fewer, they can deal directly with the preventive social services headquarters, and do so.

MR. NOTLEY: I see.

MR. BOGLE: Well, one more way, of course, would be through their MLA to my office.

MME. CHAIRMAN: Any further questions on 6.3?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MME. CHAIRMAN: 6.4. Mrs. Chichak.

MRS. CHICHAK: Thank you, Mme. Chairperson. My question relates to the assistance provided for handicapped adults who are under the vocational training program. Monetary assistance is being given to them until such time as they're able, perhaps, to become employed, or even during the term of employment if their employment level is not sufficient to give them the monetary support that they need. If such an adult is living in the home of their parents, is the department requiring that the parents contribute to that adult's maintenance and living support?

MR. BOGLE: The short answer is no. But I'll ask Marcel for a further explanation.

MR. ARCAND: Virtually all the handicapped persons attending vocational training centres are also in receipt of public assistance at this point. The policy of public assistance is that at age 18, the person can apply in his own right, and only his income and assets would be taken into account in

determining his eligibility. The income and resources of his parents would not be.

MRS. CHICHAK: Then perhaps the message should be filtered through all personnel in the department. I will communicate that later. The problem exists.

MR. BOGLE: If you do have a specific, I'd appreciate hearing from you directly.

MRS. CHICHAK: Yes.

MME. CHAIRMAN: Any further questions on Vote 6? The total is \$9,192,120.

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MME. CHAIRMAN: Vote 7, Services for the Handicapped. 7.1, Program Support. Any questions?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MME. CHAIRMAN: 7.2, Community Development and Referral.

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MME. CHAIRMAN: 7.3, Agency Grants and Purchased Services.

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MME. CHAIRMAN: 7.4, Residence and Treatment in Institutions.

MR. NOTLEY: Mme. Chairperson, to either the minister or the deputy. We're estimating an 8.5 per cent increase this year. I take it that would keep us almost in pace with the rate of inflation. Is it going to allow us, in any way, shape, or form, to expand these resident treatment institutions?

MR. BOGLE: Yes, an expansion is taking place at Michener Centre. It's the behavioral services for mentally retarded adults program. About two months ago I had an opportunity, along with the MLA for Red Deer, to visit the Michener Centre. We looked at that particular part of the facility. In addition, new positions in the dependent adult handicapped facilities area have been approved and will be coming on stream.

MME. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Payne.

MR. PAYNE: Thank you, Mme. Chairman. I had a question that I was not going to raise, until I discovered that Mr. Arcand is here. This relates to a question I had directed to the minister, and his office has been helpful during the campaign and since. I want to refer to the Parents for Progress group in Calgary, several of whom are quite active in my constituency and, not illogically, have supplied me with copies of their correspondence and so on. I've tried to listen to and understand their concerns, and I very deeply regretted not being able to take advantage of the minister's invitation to

tour Michener Centre. I still have an IOU that I want to redeem on that score, Mr. Minister.

MR. BOGLE: Good.

MR. PAYNE: But I wonder if I could direct a question to the minister or perhaps Mr. Arcand. I personally would be reassured if you could speak to their repeated concerns, generally about Michener Centre but specifically about Juniper Lodge. I realize this is a judgment call and, coming from a department official, it would be suspect. But I would welcome it, Mr. Arcand. Could you speak to their much-publicized reservations or concerns about Juniper Lodge?

MR. BOGLE: I'm going to do that first, because I haven't been in the department a long time, and one of the first things that happened was that I received a request, I believe through a resolution, that action be taken. In visiting the centre, I made a special point of looking at Juniper Lodge. I'd invite all members of the Assembly who have an interest to please make every effort to visit our facilities and institutions. I'd ask that you either go through my office or at least give advance warning to the executive director of the institution. Dr. Koegler at Michener Centre in Red Deer would be pleased to show through any members who have that desire and interest.

Specifically looking at Juniper, I think the best way to describe it is to recognize first that the building is one of the old air force huts that was moved to the site some years ago, I believe. So it wasn't built for the purpose that it's now used. Yes, there are some problems in Juniper, and we have some concerns. But I'm pleased to note and to report to this subcommittee the progress which is being made by our dedicated employees at Michener Centre, looking in particular at Juniper Lodge.

I recall some of the things we looked at that day. For instance, they've used a heavy inlaid linoleum throughout the floors. There were places where there were holes in the linoleum. As a layperson walking through, my first reaction was one of real horror. Why do we have linoleum like that? That's got to be an uncleanly situation and very damaging to the well-being of the folks who are there. One of the problems Dr. Koegler raised with me was that because the kind of furniture we've had in the villa to date has been movable, with the constant movement and rocking action the linoleum hasn't stood up. New linoleum was ordered and I believe is now in place. Am I right on that, Marcel?

MR. ARCAND: I can't confirm that, sir.

MR. BOGLE: I know that the new stationary furniture was certainly on order when we were there and would be put in place. The smoke detector system is in place now. It was in the planning stages at that time.

So if you're asking if we're perfectly satisfied with Juniper, the answer is no. I don't think we'll ever be perfectly satisfied with any of our institutions. Constant review and upgrading is taking place. I think we're really looking at success when we can get more of the folks who are in institutions like that back into the communities, in the community-oriented facilities. But recognize that some people will have to stay in facilities like that, and it's our job to make sure that the surroundings are as comfortable as possible and that there's an experience where they can develop to their full potentials.

MR. PAYNE: Just a supplementary, if I may, to the minister. I'm somewhat reassured by those comments. I realize there are different ways to quantify progress other than in a monetary sense, but a \$1 million advance on a \$25 million budget is a very modest increase of the approximate magnitude of 4 per cent. If some of the problems that you became acquainted with in recent months are in fact now being resolved within a 4 per cent budget increase and if there's no budgetary sleight of hand at work, how has this been accomplished? How have the improvements been effected with a retrograde [inaudible]?

MR. BOGLE: A very important factor which must be kept in mind, Mme. Chairperson, is the decrease in population. It isn't a case of the population remaining static; it's decreasing. Yet the dollar volume is increasing. So we have to take that into account in the total workdown on the costs at the centre.

MME. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Hiebert.

MR. HIEBERT: Mme. Chairperson, there's a great deal of discussion on education for the handicapped, and some metro boards are expressing concern as to taking on greater responsibility in this area. They're concerned about the grants and how they are going to be able to afford support services. Will there be any interfacing with the social services department in providing for support services such as nurses and people to assist people who might be turned over to the responsibility of the school systems?

MR. BOGLE: I'm going to ask either the chief deputy minister or Marcel to supplement what I'm about to say. As I'm sure you're aware from the discussion we've had in the Legislature and the discussions which have been carried by the media, this is an area of considerable interest across the province. Until very recently the Department of Social Services and Community Health, sometimes on its own and sometimes in consultation with other jurisdictions, carried that responsibility. The Department of Education is now deeply involved, particularly with those youngsters who are of school age, in the schooling activities. Those arrangement will be made directly between the Department of Education and the various school boards. The care of the youngsters in non-school time will remain a responsibility of this department.

MR. HIEBERT: A supplementary. Their concern is that if they're going to take them into the schools, they feel they will require support services from specialized people in the health field. They don't see it as being a good proposition in terms of the grants they are receiving. They're wondering at what place they will interface, if any, with the social services department to assist.

MR. BOGLE: Okay. Mr. C.D.M.

MR. MANSBRIDGE: Yes, as you would hope and expect, there is very intimate joint planning with the Department of Education. At the moment it's taking the form that we will have complete responsibility for the children outside school hours in group homes, for which there is a major provision in this particular section of the vote.

The problem of defining the kind of aid to a teacher that is needed in the case of these children is a process of negotiation and consultation now. We

have limited experience, and there are already some very excellent facilities. For example, the one at Capilano, under the Edmonton school board, is an excellent facility, showing this development and partnership. But a lot of work is still to be done, because essentially we're working in a new area of education.

MR. HIEBERT: But would it fall under this area?

MR. MANSBRIDGE: Under 7.4.

MME. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Carter.

DR. CARTER: Three quick questions to the minister. With regard to the facility in Calgary Bowness, the Baker facility, what is its present title? I don't think I have that right.

MR. MANSBRIDGE: Baker Centre.

DR. CARTER: When did the department first take over the facility, how many persons are in the facility at the moment, and what kind of dollars have we allocated for upgrading that place?

MR. BOGLE: Pardon me, Mme. Chairperson. The chief deputy minister is just reminding me of the Baker plan, which is out. I've had a chance to visit that facility, along with the MLA from Calgary North West. There is great concern about the present location, because it is on the flood plain. I was impressed with the structure of some of the buildings, in particular the old central building that we looked at. Is there anything you can add, those specific details as to the numbers of people?

MR. ARCAND: There are 192 mentally retarded persons in the Baker Centre at this time. I can't give you an exact year as to when the centre was officially opened, sir, because it's been there for many years. It was in use for mentally retarded persons as an extension of the Alberta School Hospital in Red Deer. In other words, admissions into Baker were controlled from Red Deer. I think probably the late '60s would be about the time mentally retarded persons began being admitted into that particular unit.

DR. CARTER: The last part of the question was: are we then not intending to put too many dollars into renovation, until such time as a decision is made on the Baker plan about relocating?

MR. ARCAND: That's correct.

DR. CARTER: How soon are we anticipating a decision?

MR. BOGLE: Soon. I can't tell you the number of months, David.

DR. CARTER: Before the end of this year?

MR. BOGLE: I'd hate to give a commitment that it would automatically be before the end of this calendar year; certainly before the end of the fiscal year.

MME. CHAIRMAN: Is there money in the budget then?

MR. BOGLE: No, the money in the budget now is for the current operations at the centre, I think about \$4,340,000.

MME. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Gogo.

MR. GOGO: Thanks, Myrna. Mr. Minister, a quick question. Relative to Michener Centre, a couple of years ago your predecessor went to a catering system. I recall the opposition at that time being the purveyors of gloom and doom, saying it would never work out and the patients would suffer. What has been the experience there?

MR. BOGLE: It's been very positive. The contract that we currently have with VS Services covers dietary, laundry, and housekeeping services. When I visited Michener Centre in Red Deer with the MLA from the area, I was anxious to see at first hand what kinds of services were being provided. Considering it was in an institution, I can honestly say that the meal provided was of extremely high quality. I was very satisfied with the meal. The next time I return, and the chief deputy minister and I have discussed this, we're not going to be announced. I want to see if the meal is of the same high quality, and I assume it will be.

MR. GOGO: The savings in the first year, as I recall, was \$1 million.

MR. BOGLE: I think just under \$1 million, about \$900,000 in the first year.

MR. GOGO: So it was a very wise decision.

MR. BOGLE: Yes.

MME. CHAIRMAN: Mrs. Embury.

MRS. EMBURY: Mme. Chairman, actually my question has been answered. But I feel I'd like to take this opportunity, because I think it relates to the estimates. We're always concerned about upgrading facilities and looking for new facilities, but I'd like to reassure my hon. colleague from Millican that there is an excellent example at Baker Centre of taking a very old facility and renovating it. I was so impressed with the marvelous job they have done -- the bright colors and design. I thought it was just excellent.

Secondly, I would like to comment on the staff at the Baker Centre. It was so heart-warming to see the genuine love, care, and concern that these people gave the residents. I couldn't believe that you would always feel that total concern. In fact, I asked somebody about how they kept the motivation up. So I just thought I'd like to mention that, because that's a real bouquet that should be thrown out.

MME. CHAIRMAN: Thank you. Mr. Notley.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Minister and Mr. Arcand, I'm referring to page 143, where the estimates for the various institutions are listed. The minister indicated there had been a decline in the number at Michener Centre and that that accounted for the ability to carry on the program with approximately a 4 per cent increase, as I believe the Member for Calgary Forest Lawn pointed out.

But I look at the other increases and, with the exception of dependent handicapped facilities in Edmonton where the bulk of the increase is taking

place, we're looking at increases of 3.5 to 4 per cent, and a drop of \$5,000 in the case of the Wetaskiwin Centre. Now, has there been a decline in the numbers in each of these institutions that would warrant that? How and where are we taking up the slack?

MR. BOGLE: Marcel.

MR. ARCAND: The only institutional program where there has been an actual decline in the numbers of staff and, correspondingly, in the budget, is the Michener Centre. That is accounted for by the fact that we have been Placing residents from Michener Centre back into the community. At the same time we've been redeploying the funds which had been assigned within the Michener budget back into community services.

MR. NOTLEY: Would that also apply to the Cormack Centre, where we have an increase of \$83,000 or about 4 per cent; the Wetaskiwin Centre, where we have a drop of \$5,000; the Hillside Apartments; and even the Baker Centre that the hon. member discussed -- quite movingly, I might add -- but still a very marginal increase? What I'm saying is: are we voting sufficient funds to maintain the program? Because if we can maintain the program in Michener because we have a moving out of people, are we able to do the same in the other areas? Or are we just stretching dollars further in the other areas?

MR. MANSBRIDGE: Mr. Minister, I might mention that when we redeploy to a community, through that reloyment we are making more money available to less costly community services than would be the cost in Michener, particularly for the residents we are redeploying. In other words, the savings from Michener are transferred totally to the community and allow program enrichment in the community as part of the process.

MR. NOTLEY: I understand that answer with respect to Michener, Mr. Mansbridge. What I don't understand is how there can be the same sort of increase in these other institutions if there isn't community deployment. If there's community deployment, I understand it. If there isn't, then I don't.

MR. MANSBRIDGE: Well I think the short answer for the Eric Cormack Centre is that we have made no program reductions. We have met the budgetary needs for maintaining the program.

MR. NOTLEY: Have we laid off some staff?

MR. ARCAND: Certainly not. We've provided for salary increases for staff, materials increase, contract services increases, and food increases.

MR. NOTLEY: With a 4 per cent increase in budget? You must have got a very generous arrangement from AUPE in the negotiations.

MR. ARCAND: I'm wondering if this is accounted for by the difference between the columns, which are estimates to forecasts and then back to estimates. I can simply indicate, sir, that we have not reduced our staff in any of the other institutions. In fact we're adding three staff to Baker and 20 staff to Michener Centre for the behavioral unit.

MR. NOTLEY: All I can say is that I'm sure other ministers will be very interested in how you achieved this kind of maintenance of staff . . .

MR. BOGLE: We have a talented department.

MR. NOTLEY: . . . keeping pace with the inflation rate with a 4 per cent increase in budget.

MR. MANSBRIDGE: We could obviously pursue the details for you through the minister, if you wish. But I think we also have to remember that sometimes there are specific expenditures within one year which are not repeated. I suspect this may well be the case with an institution like the Cormack.

MR. NOTLEY: In all of the cases?

MR. MANSBRIDGE: It doesn't apply in all of the cases.

MR. NOTLEY: No, but it does in most.

MME. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Batiuk, would you like to follow up?

MR. BATIUK: Mr. Minister, you mentioned before that VS Services are good, and I agree with that. Was the saving of \$1 million considered as a benefit to the Alberta coffers or was that used to upgrade services for the patients?

MR. MANSBRIDGE: No, in this particular case the government agreed with the proposal we made simultaneously with the contractual arrangement, that the economies be permitted to be used to enrich the program, particularly in those parts of the centre such as Juniper, to which we were referring earlier.

MME. CHAIRMAN: All right, do we have agreement on Vote 7, \$49,462,720?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MME. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Vote 8, item 8.1, Program Support.

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MME. CHAIRMAN: 8.2, Regional Diagnosis and Treatment.

MR. ANDERSON: Mme. Chairperson, my understanding is that certain institutions in the province are designated facilities and therefore can accommodate certain kinds of psychiatric patients, mostly those sent by the courts, whereas other . . .

MME. CHAIRMAN: Just a minute. We would to keep these per vote, if we could. This is related to program support. Could we hold that one until we come to . . .

MR. ANDERSON: I'm sorry, where are we? 8.2?

MME. CHAIRMAN: I'm sorry, this was related to regional support?

MR. ANDERSON: I understand that to be true, yes.



MME. CHAIRMAN: I'm sorry, my fault. Excuse me.

MR. ANDERSON: There has been some concern in Calgary in particular, with respect to designated facilities not being within the area and therefore the Ponoka institution being the designated facility which patients go to. Now I understand that was partially related to budgetary considerations and that the hospitals in the Calgary district were concerned about taking in any more patients of that sort, not with respect to their ability to handle those individuals. Has that situation been looked at and is that reflected in this budget?

MR. BOGLE: Let me comment very generally first. The original approach taken by governments in Alberta for many, many years was that there should be two institutions. The institution at Ponoka would service southern Alberta, and the institution at Oliver would serve northern Alberta. The decision was made as a result of some very great soul-searching by the community at large that that was not the approach and that we should be treating mental illness in our own communities wherever possible. Therefore there has been a thrust at developing such facilities in the metropolitan areas as well as the smaller cities and some of the major centres around the province. Can you respond more directly, John?

MR. FORSTER: In relation to the hospitals in Calgary, three of the general hospitals are currently designated as facilities under Section 24 of the Act. I'm sorry, not Section 24. It allows them to hold a patient for a 24-hour period for assessment. In addition, a portion of the Calgary General Hospital is designated as a facility for forensic services. Until this point, the three Calgary hospitals have been a bit reluctant to move into full designation as facilities unless they do it as a group. There were some concerns about the implications of The Mental Health Act as they apply to general hospitals. There is some concern about financing. These have been discussed with the representatives from Hospitals and Medical Care. If additional funding were required, it would flow through that department rather than this division.

MR. BOGLE: Pardon me, Mme. Chairperson. This is John Forster, assistant deputy minister of mental health for the department. I'm always one step behind in introducing our officials.

MME. CHAIRMAN: Fine, thank you.

MR. ANDERSON: Mme. Chairperson, just a supplementary to that. I'm not sure if I understand that. Is the assistant deputy minister indicating that there is no problem in the future with respect to patients being treated in the Calgary area? Those patients that fall into a designated category won't have to go to the Ponoka facility for treatment any longer?

MR. FORSTER: We would certainly hope so, and we would encourage the hospitals in Calgary to take that step.

MR. ANDERSON: The funding would be through the other department, not through your own?

MR. FORSTER: Yes, they are currently funded through Hospitals and Medical Care.

MR. BOGLE: Mme. Chairperson, I think it has to be recognized that what was proposed and what has evolved are extensions to the normal hospitals. It would be most inappropriate if another department got involved in a double financing kind of situation, that we as government co-ordinate our efforts through the Department of Hospitals and Medical Care.

MME. CHAIRMAN: All right. Any other questions? Agreement on 8.2?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MME. CHAIRMAN: 8.3, Purchased Services and Agency Grants. Mr. Anderson.

MR. ANDERSON: I have a number of questions in this area, and I hope not to hold up the proceedings on most others. Mme. Chairperson, to the minister. Could the minister indicate whether or not the 6.8 per cent with respect to Purchased Services and Agency Grants is an indication that the government is requiring less outside services and encouraging less contracting out in terms of both needs of the department and actual programs through private agencies.

MR. BOGLE: Actually, the major thrust has been to work through various agencies within the communities. The Canadian Mental Health Association and the Southern Alberta Self-Help Association in Lethbridge -- there's a whole list of them in centres from Grande Prairie to Lethbridge, including the metropolitan centres and Red Deer.

MR. ANDERSON: Mme. Chairman, do I understand that it is the department's policy that we encourage more program delivery through agencies than we have in the past? Or is there no policy direction in that regard?

MR. BOGLE: From 1972 on, there has been a general thrust throughout the department to contract out wherever possible, rather than to do things in-house within government. We've gone through that with a number of other votes. Another example is in services for the mentally ill, allowing the agencies that rely on many, many volunteers. I think of my own constituency, where people spend countless hours working for organizations like the Canadian Mental Health Association and are doing an excellent job of identifying the needs in our own communities; much better than we in government can do.

MR. ANDERSON: Thank you.

MME. CHAIRMAN: Agreement?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MME. CHAIRMAN: 8.4, Residence and Treatment in Institutions. Mr. Anderson.

MR. ANDERSON: Specifically related to the treatment of geriatric patients with psychiatric problems, I've received, and I'm sure others have, a number of complaints that these persons are situated in accommodations supplied by the government, which aren't necessarily conducive to that. In other words, those who aren't in the designated facilities but have gone through a half-way kind

of situation where they're re-entering society to some extent, are being placed in our senior citizens' lodges and so on. That's causing some difficulty with those individuals. Has that situation been investigated, and does this budget reflect a way of dealing with that?

MR. BOGLE: Well, the first part of the question as to the facilities we now have: in looking at the facility in Ponoka -- which I've had the opportunity to visit; I have not yet been to centres like Claresholm or Raymond -- I can assure you that I was really impressed. I went through the facility at Ponoka with the hon. member for that constituency. We've moved a long, long way from the old sterile institution where it was society's desire only to care for, clothe, and house the residents. We've moved a long way into the area of rehabilitation -- the bright colors. Some of what you see the folks achieving in their own settings is pretty exciting.

MR. ANDERSON: I'm sorry, Mme. Chairperson, but my question obviously wasn't clear. I have no difficulty with the Ponoka institution and agree with the hon. minister that indeed we've moved a long way in that area. My problem was with the individuals leaving that institution who are going into other facilities . . .

MR. BOGLE: Yes.

MR. ANDERSON: . . . senior citizens' lodges of the traditional sort, not designated for mental patients, and with difficulties those organizations are encountering with not having the facilities or the staff that are needed to help those individuals.

MR. BOGLE: Surely if someone is moving from a normal institution into a senior citizens' lodge in your community, for instance, that person is moving in in a normal sense. I'm not sure I understand. Mr. Chief Deputy Minister, can you add any further light to this subject?

MR. MANSBRIDGE: I think there was a connection with the previous element we were discussing. It had been a considerable concern that people who were discharged from the hospitals lacked some facility before they were available or ready or able to resume a normal life.

MR. BOGLE: Ah. Now that I understand the point, let me give a specific example that's just excellent. At the facility in Ponoka, one of the villas has been designated as an area where people can be retrained, if you like, in how to handle money, how to deal with all the normal problems people deal with in society. I was really excited and had a chance to speak with some of the staff members as well as some of the folks who are going through that facility in a readjustment to society, if you like, in a normal sense of the word. I was so pleased that our staff saved that for the last, because it was such a lift to see some progress in an area where we're helping people get back into society and live normal, productive lives. If you're asking if there's room to improve that approach, I'm sure there is.

MR. ANDERSON: I guess that's my next question, Mme. Chairperson. Do we have adequate half-way facilities for the patients of mental institutions, particularly the geriatric patients?

MR. MANSBRIDGE: We were fortunate in getting \$.75 million newly voted in the estimates, in order to make these contractual arrangements with organizations like CMHA and similar groups to develop. It has taken time. We were unable to spend the totality of funds made available in the fiscal year, because it has taken time to identify the needs, to identify the appropriate association, and to obtain premises and staff and so on. But that was the very direct purpose of that money.

MME. CHAIRMAN: Do we have agreement on Vote 8?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MME. CHAIRMAN: Vote 9, General Health Services. 9.1, Program Support.

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MME. CHAIRMAN: 9.2, Communicable Disease Control.

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MME. CHAIRMAN: 9.3, Residence and Treatment in Institutions for Tuberculosis Patients.

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MME. CHAIRMAN: 9.4, Agency Grants.

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MME. CHAIRMAN: 9.5, Public Health Laboratory Funding.

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MME. CHAIRMAN: 9.6, Vital Statistics.

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MME. CHAIRMAN: 9.7, Medical Services.

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MME. CHAIRMAN: 9.8, Licensing of Paramedical Personnel.

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MME. CHAIRMAN: The total for Vote 9.

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MME. CHAIRMAN: I think we've just made a record.

Vote 10, Financial Assistance for Community Preventive Services. 10.1, Financial Assistance to Municipalities for Preventive Social Services. Mr. Oman.

MR. OMAN: Mme. Chairman, this is PSS. How many funded community agencies were closed down this year, if any?

MR. BOGLE: I'm not aware of any. Mr. Chief Deputy Minister?

MR. MANSBRIDGE: The priorities for PSS funding are set locally. There are adjustments; they phase out some programs and begin new ones. Off the top of my head, I couldn't give you . . . Certainly none have been terminated or closed down by virtue of any funding decisions the provincial government has made, but programs may well have been phased out in favor of others at the community level where these basic decisions are made.

MR. OMAN: You don't know of any?

MR. MANSBRIDGE: I'm not aware of any, but that doesn't mean to say there aren't any.

MR. OMAN: I think there probably should have been.

MR. BOGLE: There's a very important principle at stake, though, and that's local autonomy.

MR. OMAN: I agree. I've been involved in that situation.

MR. BOGLE: All right, Mr. ex-Councillor, I appreciate that.

MR. OMAN: I recall one that I think we finally phased out in Calgary. But once they get funded, I suspect they tend to go on and on and sort of get eternal life. I think some of them have expired in usefulness.

MR. BOGLE: I think it really depends on the quality of your PSS board. If they're going to move ahead and be pretty courageous, then there are times when they'll bite the bullet. But that's a local decision.

MME. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Notley.

MR. NOTLEY: First of all with respect to the overall PSS program, what provision is there for expansion into those areas that are not now covered? I know that at least one area of my constituency wanted to get into PSS, but there was a line-up. What are we looking at in terms of a time frame to have complete coverage? Admittedly the municipalities have to decide to go in, but I gather there is a waiting list at this time.

MR. BOGLE: It's my understanding that during the last fiscal year we were able to accommodate those areas which were ready to in fact move in. What's happened across the province, I think, is that whereas some areas were a bit reticent to move into a PSS kind of approach originally, they see neighboring communities where it is working and they see the benefits, and they now want to get into it. I've met with one town council specifically on PSS, and they're looking at the possibility of expanding into a neighboring area. I guess it relates in part back to the dollars. We're cost sharing the program on an 80:20 basis. Eighty cents out of every dollar used in the program comes from the government. So we can't give a blanket yes to everything, but in the short time I've been in this position I'm not aware of any community which has

come forward and said, we're ready to go and have our act in place and now we're waiting on you.

MR. NOTLEY: Are there any agreements where there aren't full-time PSS coordinators?

MR. BOGLE: Gee, I couldn't comment to that, because that's obviously . . .

MR. NOTLEY: Is that considered really a mandatory provision?

MR. MANSBRIDGE: We regard that as an indispensable condition for establishing PSS. The first part of a PSS program is the establishment of the director.

MR. NOTLEY: It's not possible to vary that? Someone who is working in many of these communities who can look after . . . A half-time town secretary, for example, might be fully qualified to spend the other half-time as a PSS director. Has there been any consideration of that, or is there a feeling that there has to be a full-time PSS director?

MR. MANSBRIDGE: There have been requests, Mr. Minister. I should say that the whole PSS program is under review at present. We're into the eleventh year of the program. Independent evaluations and in-service, in-department evaluations are in progress now. This is certainly one of the questions that merits re-examination. But until now, we thought for very good reasons, we have tried to adhere to the principle that there must be a person who will examine, evaluate, and report to the board on all project proposals.

MR. NOTLEY: Just one follow-up question. It'll save my raising it under health units. The decision was made to put home care until the health units. Was there any consideration of making that PSS?

MR. BOGLE: Yes, although that decision was made before I assumed this responsibility, I well recall the discussions we had in cabinet and caucus and the deliberations led by my predecessor, the hon. Helen Hunley. It's one of those areas where it might have been placed under PSS. The decision was made to go through the health units. I'm sure you will recall that there's a considerable effort to involve other groups within the communities, from the medical profession on. One other thing that should be recognized is that PSS programs have the ability now to supplement the home care program operated by the health unit, whether it's Meals on Wheels or any number of ancillary programs. That is done in most areas where there are PSS programs.

MME. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Cook.

MR. COOK: Mme. Chairman, I wonder if I could refer to the Aid services program in the city of Edmonton. Would that come under this heading, Mr. Minister?

MR. BOGLE: Yes.

MR. COOK: We discussed that last evening, I think. You referred us to another section of your estimates.

MR. BOGLE: Yes, I think a week or so ago we approved a grant to Advice, Information, and . . . I knew I'd forget that last one. Direction. It's an

agency which again is providing services in a host of areas ranging from suicide to this.

MR. COOK: I'm familiar with that agency in a general way. I understand they've just had to go through a rather detailed review of their programming, in part because of the city administration. Is it normal procedure to require a volunteer organization to . . .

MR. MANSBRIDGE: Mme. Chairperson, I'm wondering whether we're talking about two separate things. Aid is a program operated under the funding of the PSS board of the city of Edmonton. Of course, we share the funding. I'm wondering whether you're talking to a program that is province-wide in scope, what we call ASRI -- I'm sometimes hopeless with these initials -- which has had a great deal of funding. Many of the users of the information they gathered on provincial programs have failed to continue to support them. For example, the United Ways of both major cities withdrew funding support. Before we were prepared to try to fill the gap, we had to take a very critical look at why this support had been withdrawn, what the difficulties were, the financial problems, and so on. But we believe that service is now on an even keel and will be beneficial in the future. I wonder if it's those two different . . . It's a similar purpose, Alberta-wide.

MR. COOK: I was asking not so much about that one program, but as a general question: what kind of review procedures does the department encourage municipalities to follow to monitor a volunteer agency's programming and its effectiveness? Secondly, what kind of support do you encourage municipalities in the agreements to . . .

MR. BOGLE: Strictly on PSS, the decision is a local one. Under the PSS program, it's cost-shared on an 80-20 basis.

MME. CHAIRMAN: There was a second part to the question, on the type of evaluation you do in the financial services.

MR. BOGLE: Yes, and the chief deputy minister might want to respond on the consultants the department has available to PSS to provide additional information.

MR. MANSBRIDGE: A small group of consultants associated with the function at head office are available to work with PSS boards and directors in the process of evaluating particular programs. It tends to be primarily on a non-request basis, for the same reasons emphasized earlier of respecting local autonomy to the greatest degree. But they are very active in that co-operative process.

MME. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Gogo.

MR. GOGO: Thanks, Myrna. Looking at Vote 10, Mr. Minister, I find it's particularly encouraging that you have a 30 per cent increase this year. As I understand it, the policy of the government is to continue to allow municipalities to set their own priorities in terms of the PSS programs. I think that's particularly encouraging. Certainly the preventive health thing is encouraging. Does Meals on Wheels come under 10.1? I don't see it here.

MR. MANSBRIDGE: Sometimes it's entirely independent in a community. But where it's enjoying public funds, it's enjoying them under the PSS board in the community.

MR. GOGO: We have Vote 10.1, senior citizens. Is that the one?

MR. BOGLE: 10.1.

MME. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Oman.

MR. OMAN: Mme. Chairman, going back to my first question. The deputy minister said the whole program was under review. I look at the figure for 1977-78, which was some \$36 million. This year it's \$66 million, which I suppose over the two-year period has increased somewhere between 85 and 90 per cent. One might say that's good, in the sense that [inaudible]. At the same time, if we're going to increase at that rate over the next two or three years, we're going to be up to \$200 million very quickly.

MR. BOGLE: Mme. Chairperson, what's happening is that we're into 10.2, where there is a substantial increase. That's home care, which is under the health units, not PSS.

MR. OMAN: Okay. That explains it.

MME. CHAIRMAN: If you check the supplementary information, you'll see the breakdown for each item to clarify. Vote 10.2, agreed?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MME. CHAIRMAN: Agreed for 10?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MME. CHAIRMAN: Vote 11, Alcoholism and Drug Abuse -- Treatment and Education.

MR. BOGLE: I'd like to ask Mr. Wilf Totten, chairman of the Alberta Alcoholism and Drug Abuse Commission, and officials from his commission to join us. Thank you, Mr. Mansbridge and officials from the department.

MME. CHAIRMAN: Yes, thank you very much, gentlemen, for your information and patience.

The first item is 11.1, Program Support.

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MME. CHAIRMAN: 11.2, Treatment and Rehabilitation Services.

MR. BOGLE: Mme. Chairperson, I wonder if you would like a very brief, two to three minute overview by the chairman on the activities of AADAC.

MME. CHAIRMAN: Certainly. That would be fine.

MR. BOGLE: Okay. Mr. Wilf Totten.



MR. TOTTON: Thank you, Mme. Chairperson, Mr. Minister, and ladies and gentlemen. AADAC operates under the mandate given to us by an act of the Legislature, which provides for a board of citizens to set policy and a staff to execute that policy. Our mandate covers treatment of dependent persons, prevention of the phenomenon, and research. Up to this point in time, the major emphasis has been on treatment, in terms of the commitment of resources. That probably will continue in the future, although it's our hope that we can increasingly put emphasis on prevention in order perhaps to get at some of the root causes of this phenomenon. We recognize that's a tall order, but we're going to try it.

In our service delivery philosophy, we take the position that if we're going to deal with this problem over both the mid and long term, we have to have lots of community involvement in the whole base of Alberta. One of the ways we're trying to get this involvement is to deliver the services through what we call funded agencies, as well as through an ordinary line operation. When you look at our budget, we are funding about 30 to 35 local communities to do programming in terms of how they define their problems and design responses to them. That particular aspect of service delivery runs around 28 to 30 per cent of our budget. That's up about 6 or 7 percentage points from, say, four years ago.

We are placing some emphasis on services for special groups in Alberta society, for example native programming. Something in the order of 70 per cent of our funded agency budget goes toward native programming. When I'm talking about native programming, I'm talking about programs that admit and deal with natives either primarily or exclusively.

An area we're addressing at the moment and trying to get a handle on to understand how we can respond a little better than we have in the past is the whole question of alcohol and drug abuse by women. We fund one or two agencies to deal exclusively in that area, for example Riverside Villa in Calgary and Kindred House and McDougall House in Edmonton.

Another special group we have developed some interest in trying to respond is young people. That's subject to some definition, but generally persons who are younger than I am are young people, I think.

Some of the current issues we are dealing with: one is heroin addiction and monitoring the situation in British Columbia, for example, with their health entry plan, and trying to determine what impact, if any, that will have on Alberta. At the present time it seems not to be great, but we're keeping our eyes on it. Another area we're trying to address in terms of immediate and mid-term problems is defining the types of problems that are going to be presented to AADAC as a result of rather dramatic resource development in some of the areas like Cold Lake, Syncrude, and this kind of thing. We have begun an impact study on the Cold Lake area to see if we can determine what kinds of services we're going to require from AADAC in both the construction and development phases as well as the stable portion that follows that. We're hoping to enhance our capacity to forward-plan. We've been working on that for three or four years. I think we have a good core, a good group built up in our provincial headquarters. Hopefully we can look forward into the '80s and get some feeling for where we want to go and how we want to deal with those problems.

Mme. Chairperson, that's a brief overview.

MME. CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much. I know it's not easy to captualize that size of program. We're on 11.2. Mr. Notley.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Totten, in your overview I noticed that you talked, correctly, about the treatment. The education part, though . . . I look in the budget and we're really talking about a very modest 3.8 per cent increase. I put to you: is that 3.8 per cent increase really being serious with this problem? I know what has happened to television commercials. Just before the election the television stations increased their rates. I don't blame them for doing that, with two elections coming. But they increased their rates, so the dollars don't go as far.

I look at the breakdown on page 149 and we have a modest increase in Edmonton of only \$2,000; a substantial increase in Red Deer, which I find a little hard to follow; then I notice the community education in Calgary is only one-third of the amount allocated for Edmonton. I raise this question, and in the context place two other questions. I don't want to put you at an unfair advantage, and the minister can answer this if it's difficult. It really seems to me that at some point we're going to have to take the bull by the horns. Surely the tremendous amount of life style advertising has to have a major impact on getting people to drink. Do we not at some point have to be tough enough to say, that kind of advertising is not in the public interest?

MR. BOGLE: Very generally speaking, and I'd like the chairman of AADAC to respond, I think it should be recognized that in an area as delicate as this, no matter what our estimates might be we could question whether we're doing enough. We might have a budget of \$20 million or \$50 million. We've grown pretty substantially. The information I have is that it's doubled in four years. If we compare what we're doing in Alberta with what other provinces are doing, we're far ahead on a per capita basis. We're not far behind Ontario on a volume basis, with a population that's so much smaller than that particular province. In the brief time I've been responsible for this very important area, I have asked that we ensure that the programs we're designing are adequate to meet the needs and [inaudible] our growth. I'd like the chairman to respond to the specific questions raised as to the education and information services by AADAC.

MR. TOTTEN: I would have to agree, Mme. Chairperson, that that is a rather small amount to be contributing toward education information. I guess the questions are: how much should it be and is education information the only instrument we can use as a prevention tool? I would draw your attention to a couple of the groups we are funding that I think have some prevention kind of implications. For example, we're using theatre as a means of getting the message across, both in the school system and for the public in general. That isn't reflected in those figures, so I'm suggesting to you that there's a good deal more being spent than is reflected in those figures, but it's a matter of how you account for it. It's still not enough.

I guess the real problem we think we face is: what can we say or do that's going to make a difference? I agree with you that life style advertising seems to be the thing we're fighting against. I'm not sure I can comment any further on that at the present time. As you know, AADAC has no regulatory powers in terms of advertising. But I think there is a feeling that that may in fact contribute. On the other hand, Saskatchewan has no advertising in the electronic media and yet has problems similar to ours. So it raises the question as to whether or not it has an effect. There aren't any simple answers to that.

With respect to Calgary and Red Deer, I might point out that somehow there was a printing error and those two figures got reversed.

MR. NOTLEY: Oh, I see.

MR. TOTTEN: That went through in spite of the fact that literally dozens of people proofread it.

MR. NOTLEY: I'm sure the people of Calgary would be very insulted if they thought their drinking habits were so small and warranted such a . . .

MME. CHAIRMAN: Either that or Red Deer. Mr. Cook.

MR. COOK: Mr. Minister or Mr. Totten, I wonder if you could indicate in a general way what the impact study on the Cold Lake development is going to show. Have you had any experience that leads you to suggest that the Syncrude situation, say, presents . . .

MR. TOTTEN: We try to recapitulate the events in Fort McMurray as a result of Syncrude, and to see to what extent we can apply that to what we think will happen in Cold Lake. That becomes a bit of a guessing game, because you're dealing with two different types of situations. As far as Syncrude is concerned, it appears that with respect to alcohol and drug abuse two distinct phases happened: one was the construction period, when you had a certain type of person there and the life style behavior with respect to alcohol was somewhat different than it was after the construction phase was over. At this point in time, from what we understand about our studies, it would appear that we're probably going to experience the same thing in Cold Lake. We hope we can respond in that same way. For example, in the construction period perhaps we're looking more at a facility that would deal with the phenomenon of detoxification, but another type of response after the construction period is over. That's only a guess at this time.

MR. COOK: A supplementary. Do you work closely with the ALCB, for example on the siting of liquor outlets? I'm thinking particularly of downtown.

MR. TOTTEN: When you say work closely . . .

MR. COOK: Do you consult with them at all?

MR. TOTTEN: We have good communication with them, but it hasn't been their practice to ask our opinion.

MR. COOK: The reason I ask is that there is an ALCB outlet just off 97 Street downtown. It seems to cater to the wine-in-a-brown-bag trade. It would be an excellent way to control.

If I could just ask one more question, Mme. Chairman, related to the drinking age of young people. We're finding a great deal of concern in high schools and junior high schools now, because 18-year-olds are able to supply alcohol to their peers. Is that an area your group has done any research on or is there any indication of the effect? I say that because when I was in high school the liquor age was 21 and alcohol was prevalent then as well.

MR. TOTTEN: Studies have been done in Alberta, first of all on what happened before and after the change of the age, as well as what the current situation is, particularly in rural schools. I think three studies were done at about two-year intervals to see if a trend could be established. It appears that

it's fairly stable, according to the surveys done. With respect to having lowered the drinking age, the research appears to indicate that in Alberta the trend toward young people drinking was already established, and lowering the drinking age didn't have any marked effect on it. The assumption is that it would have continued anyway, whether the drinking age was lowered or not. That's a subjective type of research. I think the reaction to the lowering of the drinking age in 1971 was probably different in different provinces, but that was the experience for Alberta.

MR. COOK: Could I ask one supplementary?

MME. CHAIRMAN: As long as it's a quick one.

MR. COOK: I'm just wondering if there are any indications as to what kind of program we can use to try to counter that. In my experience, 13- and 14-year-old kids are coming into junior high schools, and teachers find it difficult to even teach them. They're not there. Does your group do anything to counsel junior or senior high school students?

MR. TOTTEN: We haven't really got into counselling in the schools in a big way. We're working with the administrative and teaching staffs in the schools. Just over the last year, we've been working rather intensively with the trustees to encourage them to get involved. This theatre group we've been using for the last two years has been going into the schools, and we're having some very positive responses to that. For example, one school group in the minister's area is talking to us about getting the thing going within the school. Now that's a preventive thing, as opposed to a counselling thing.

MME. CHAIRMAN: It's now 10 o'clock. What is the wish of the committee? Do you wish to go through Vote 11 and finish it up this evening?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MME. CHAIRMAN: Mrs. Chichak, please.

MRS. CHICHAK: Mme. Chairperson, going back to the discussion with regard to industry, you covered the situation with Syncrude and what you're examining in the Cold Lake area. I'd like to ask a general question and perhaps two supplementaries based on the initial one: the kind of liaison the commission might have in place with industry generally, with respect to counselling and treatment for employees. Are there some specific programs generally with industry across the province? If so, how do you deal with confidentiality of such issues so it doesn't affect the employment of that individual? To what extent are the services needed or requested by industries across the province?

MME. CHAIRMAN: Go ahead, Mr. Totten.

MR. TOTTEN: Thank you. We work with industries, employers, in what we have called industrial alcoholism programs. The thrust there is to encourage industry first of all to establish a policy as to how they deal with this phenomenon of abuse of drinking by their employees and, if it's a unionized work force, to work with the union in establishing this policy and putting it into place. Basically it revolves around the assumption that alcohol is an illness and should be treated as a sickness, and that some attempt should be

made to rehabilitate people so they don't go down the drain. AADAC provides back-up in terms of our treatment centres like Henwood and our out-patient counselling services to that sort of activity. This is quite widespread in Alberta. I think we have pretty good success with the larger employers. It's more difficult to break through with the relatively small employers. That's probably where most of the work force is.

MRS. CHICHAK: May I continue with another question? Does AADAC send out information on services available to the smaller employers? How is communication that the service is available established?

MR. TOTTEN: Our staff members make contact with employers through our regional offices, and try to encourage them to adopt this kind of program with our help. It's a person to person type of contact. That's the primary contact.

MME. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Hiebert.

MR. HIEBERT: Mme. Chairperson, I have a number of questions. In view of the time, I think I will follow them up directly with the minister. I will show the example by abstaining.

MME. CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much. Mr. Anderson.

MR. ANDERSON: Let me first say that as one who has been fairly closely with the commission in past years, I'm very impressed with the job done with the budget allocated, particularly since the current chairman has been in office. However, I have a concern with our respect to our philosophy regarding the seven-day detoxification centres. As one who was formerly involved in counselling and running programs associated with drug abuse, I wonder how we can be effective at all with individuals in seven days. Therefore, my question is: how much are we spending on the seven-day detoxification centres, and is that a wise expenditure of funds?

MR. TOTTEN: With respect to the first part of your question, sir, I think I'd have to [inaudible] to break that down. I don't have that figure here. Is it a wise expenditure of funds? We think it is. Perhaps I might be permitted to take a minute to describe why we think this is so.

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We look upon the detoxification function as an entry point into treatment; it's not treatment itself. As such, it serves only that purpose for the acutely . . . They're the only facilities we run or fund that have the capacity to admit people in the state of acute detoxification. Its purpose is to admit people in that state and spin them off into some other type of treatment if they want to go. It's a voluntary thing. We think that is a useful part of the continuum of care. It's something that has evolved over many years, but we think is fulfilling an important role.

MR. ANDERSON: Mme. Chairperson, further to that, can the chairman indicate what percentage of the individuals taken in to seven-day detoxification centres are referred to other agencies or more long-term treatment programs?

MR. TOTTEN: The recidivism rate is very high. If you take it over a long period of time the percentage goes up a bit, because the more times we get a crack at them, the more likely we are successful. I haven't got an exact

percentage figure, but it would be maybe 20 per cent -- that's a guess -- over a long period of time. We have people coming into our detox centres who have been there 25 times. But the way we look at it is: its purpose is to deal with the recidivists.

MME. CHAIRMAN: Anything further? We have agreement on 11.2?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MME. CHAIRMAN: 11.3, Education and Information Services.

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MME. CHAIRMAN: 11.4, Direct Financial Assistance to Private Treatment Agencies.

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MME. CHAIRMAN: Agreement on the total of Vote 11?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MME. CHAIRMAN: Then we thank you very much..

We will adjourn the meeting until Thursday, when we will again be here for Workers' Compensation and whatever else is called.

*The meeting adjourned at 10:10 p.m.*