

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ALBERTA**Title: **Wednesday, April 21, 1982 2:30 p.m.**

[The House met at 2:30 p.m.]

**PRAYERS**

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

head: **PRESENTING REPORTS BY  
STANDING AND SELECT COMMITTEES**

MR. KNAAK: Mr. Speaker, in my capacity as chairman, I have the following report. The Private Bills Committee has had under consideration those petitions in respect of which the advertising was not completed by the deadline, and recommends that they be dealt with, providing all the advertising is completed, and that they not be dealt with until at least one month has elapsed since the first advertising.

They are as follows: the petition of the Holy Cross Hospital (Grey Nuns) of Calgary, for the Holy Cross Hospital (Grey Nuns) of Calgary Amendment Act, 1982; the petition of the Alberta Wheat Pool for the Alberta Wheat Pool Amendment Act, 1982; the petition of the Canadian Lutheran Bible Institute for the Canadian Lutheran Bible Institute Amendment Act, 1982; the petition of Brian Mann, D.G. Saylor, Robert Hladun, Kenneth Burton, and Robert Blakely for the Dunrich Trust Company Act; the petition of the Montreal Trust Company and the Montreal Trust Company of Canada for the Montreal Trust Company of Canada Act; the petition of Joseph Spier, Gertrude Cohos, Bruce Libin, Gordon Hofman, Norman Dvorkin, and Mark Shuler for the Calgary Jewish Centre Act; and the petition of Gerrard McGinley and Douglas Harding Mitchell for the Campbell McLaurin Foundation for Hearing Deficiencies Act.

That is my report, Mr. Speaker.

head: **INTRODUCTION OF BILLS**

**Bill 225**  
**An Act to Amend the**  
**Agricultural Development Act**

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce Bill No. 225, An Act to Amend the Agricultural Development Act.

The basic purpose of Bill No. 225 would be to expand the scope of the Agricultural Development Corporation, by removing the lender of last resort clause.

[Leave granted; Bill 225 read a first time]

**Bill 229**  
**An Act to Amend the**  
**Alberta Opportunity Fund Act**

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce Bill No. 229, An Act to Amend the Alberta Opportunity Fund Act.

Bill No. 229 is a companion piece of legislation to Bill

No. 225. It would apply to the Alberta Opportunity Fund the same condition as would Bill 225, with respect to the ADC.

[Leave granted; Bill 229 read a first time]

head: **TABLING RETURNS AND REPORTS**

MR. COOKSON: Mr. Speaker, I wish to file with the Assembly the Pollution Emergency Response Team Report for 1981. This particular document deals with reports during off hours throughout the year, and it indicates the good work the special team in Environment is doing with regard to problems with the environment.

head: **INTRODUCTION OF SPECIAL GUESTS**

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce to you, and through you to the other members of the Legislature, 44 students, the principal, teachers, custodian, and bus driver from the Blackie school in my constituency. These young people are very interested in the affairs of government. They certainly wanted to see where the Premier sat in the Legislature, so I'd appreciate it if the Premier would give them just a little wave so we can locate that position first of all.

They're very pleased to be here and to see the activities of the Legislature, and I'd like to introduce them. They are grade 6 students of the Blackie school, principal Mr. Turner, teachers Mrs. Lowrey and Mrs. Wilderman, custodian Mr. Harquail, and seven parents. I would like to ask that they all stand and be recognized.

MR. WOO: Mr. Speaker, on your behalf as the Member for Edmonton Meadowlark, I take great pleasure this afternoon in introducing, through you to members of this Assembly, 38 grade 6 students from Rio Terrace school in your constituency. Accompanied by their group leader Mrs. Million, by Mr. Les McElwain, and by Mrs. Chase, they are seated in the members gallery. I now ask that they rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of this House.

MR. STEWART: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Member for Edmonton Mill Woods, I would like to introduce a grade 6 class from Ekota school, accompanied by their teacher Miss Elaine Wronko. They are 40 in number: 20 in the members gallery and 20 in the public gallery. I ask that they rise and receive the welcome of the Assembly.

head: **MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS****Office of the Premier**

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Speaker, the government of Alberta wishes to announce a further measure as part of its economic resurgence plan.

Although Alberta farmers pay significantly lower energy costs than farmers in other parts of Canada, it is appreciated that overall input costs have increased. In 1974, the government of Alberta introduced a unique program, the farm fuel distribution allowance, to assist Alberta farmers in handling input costs. In 1981, it provided for a 12 cent a gallon allowance for all fuel used by Alberta farmers in their farming operations. Last year, it

is estimated that this program saved each Alberta farmer an average of approximately \$500. The program provides an important cash flow to the farmer, while keeping paperwork to a minimum. The benefits are made available for marked gasoline, marked diesel fuel, and marked heating heating oil for farm uses. The bulk dealer deducts the allowance from the purchase price to the farmer and is reimbursed by the program.

Mr. Speaker, in order to strengthen net farm income and to assist the basic industry, whose prices are mainly determined by international and climatic factors, the government has decided to increase substantially the farm fuel distribution allowance, effective midnight tomorrow, April 22, 1982, from 12 cents a gallon, or 2.6 cents a litre, to 32 cents a gallon, or 7 cents a litre. It is estimated that the program will provide Alberta farmers an annual average saving in input costs of approximately \$1,350. [applause]

MR. R. SPEAKER: As a farmer, Mr. Speaker, there is a time to be humble, and I guess this is one of those times.

I would make two comments. Firstly, in terms of principle, the announcement is acceptable. Leaving more money in the hands of the producer is good policy and very basic to the private sector economy and individual enterprise in this province. On that basis, I think the policy is certainly acceptable. Secondly, the announcement is certainly acceptable with regard to input costs and trying to lower the costs for farm production, in terms of what we call the cost/price squeeze for the farmer.

I know that farm persons across the province will welcome this announcement, and hopefully this will stabilize some of the farming concerns at the present time. The greatest examination and judgment comes from the farmers in Alberta, and I guess we will all await their reaction to this in the next week or so.

head: **PRESENTING REPORTS BY  
STANDING AND SELECT COMMITTEES**  
(*reversion*)

MR. KNAAK: Mr. Speaker, I failed to ask for the consent of the House in my report and recommendation from the Private Bills Committee. Just prior to Oral Question Period, may I please be permitted to have the support and consent of the House for the report?

MR. SPEAKER: The adoption or agreement with the report is debatable. I suppose if it were passed without any member wishing to debate but simply to vote on the motion, we could do that. If there were to be an intention to debate it, it probably would have to be put on notice, so that it might be debated at an appropriate time. But if the Assembly agrees, I propose to put the motion for adoption of or concurrence in the report.

[Motion carried]

head: **ORAL QUESTION PERIOD**

**Oil Sands Production**

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, my question was to the Minister of Municipal Affairs, but I can direct it to the Premier. It's with regard to a statement about the

Alsands project. At a meeting in Fort McMurray, the Minister of Municipal Affairs indicated that before Alsands goes down the tube, we will commit funds towards equity in the project. I raise the question today because there are only nine days left in this \$4 million month before we have to make another decision as to whether more funds are contributed to Alsands. Could the Premier indicate whether that statement is valid at this time, in terms of government policy? In order to save that project, will the government inject a large amount, a medium amount, or equity? And . . .

MR. LOUGHEED: The hon. leader has stopped as though he wanted a supplementary, which I'm sure he will have. I can't comment on a statement I haven't seen, because I don't know the context in which the hon. minister made the remark. But I believe the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, who is *en route* in terms of discussions relative to the Alsands project, on a number of occasions has said that that is an option we're considering.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question. I understand that the two ministers of energy are meeting this week. Could the Premier indicate whether Alberta is suggesting some new ground rules with regard to Alsands — I believe Alsands would be one of the major topics of discussion — for this meeting of the two ministers?

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Speaker, it's a perfectly fair question. But I don't believe it would be helpful at this stage to respond to it, in the sense of the interpretation of the response. Quite obviously, the Alberta government has a keen interest in the project. It is discussing it with not only the federal government but participating partners remaining in the Alsands consortium and other companies that may be considering participation.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question. Could the Premier indicate whether other items, such as the oil import compensation program, are on the agenda of discussion by the two ministers?

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Speaker, I can affirmatively answer that in addition to Alsands, one item on the agenda is the federal import compensation program, on which I was able to give the answer without adding any disturbing adjectives to it.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, could the Premier indicate whether there is hope — and I know this is making assumptions — with regard to the success of completing negotiations rather than maybe completing the timetable, in terms of a final decision on Alsands or with regard to the oil import compensation program? Is there a possibility that progress will be made, so we will have to compensate Alsands, say, for another month?

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure I fully caught the hon. leader's question, as to whether he added in his question a comment regarding the oil import compensation provisions. But I don't really believe there's any way I can give a forecast or useful response to the question on the Alsands negotiation.

MR. KESLER: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Could the hon. Premier indicate whether new proposals

are being presented to the federal minister, to encourage the private sector to get involved in the Alsands project?

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Speaker, in a slightly different way, I believe that was the very same question asked by the Leader of the Opposition. I had to respond there as I do now: there is nothing I can say that would be useful or meaningful to the House at this stage.

MR. R. SPEAKER: A supplementary question to the hon. Provincial Treasurer, with regard to the possibility of an equity position in Alsands. Last week there was an announcement which would create a large deficit of some \$400 million. The agricultural program announced today will only compound that potential deficit of the government. Could the hon. minister indicate what contingency plans are in place, in terms of an equity investment in Alsands in the near future?

MR. HYNDMAN: Mr. Speaker, we've been over this ground before. I don't think there's anything I could usefully add to the previous statements of the hon. Premier and the hon. Minister of Energy and Natural Resources.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, could the Provincial Treasurer then confirm that any further funds, or equity funds, for Alsands would come out of the Heritage Savings Trust Fund? Is that accurate?

MR. HYNDMAN: Not necessarily, Mr. Speaker.

MR. KESLER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the hon. Premier. In the new proposals that may be carried to Ottawa at this time by the hon. Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, is there any specific mention of retaliatory action by the government of this province, in regard to continued encroachment by the federal government upon the resource industry in this province?

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Speaker, we went over that ground at length last night, and I don't see how I can respond any further than I did. I would refer the hon. member to my answers in *Hansard* of last evening.

MR. KESLER: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Today is a new day, and the hon. Minister of Energy and Natural Resources has just left with new proposals to present to the government in Ottawa. I thought perhaps things had changed; that's why the question. I thought the hon. Premier could indicate if any new proposals are on their way to Ottawa.

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Speaker, I believe I answered the first question on the basis that I didn't want a misconstruction of the discussions by answering the question specifically. With regard to the preamble, I would have to say that although we continue to be flexible and have new initiatives, we do not change our position every day.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a final supplementary. Could the hon. Premier indicate whether there is any commitment of another \$4 million for the month of May, with regard to protracting the Alsands potential for development?

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Speaker, there is no such commitment at the present time.

#### Emission Standards

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, my second question is to the Minister of the Environment, with regard to Recommendation 21 of the acid rain subcommittee. The hon. minister indicated that the government accepted that recommendation, which indicates that the levels of sulphur and nitric dioxide will be maintained to the year 2000 and diminished thereafter. I wonder if the minister could reconfirm if that's still the government's position.

MR. COOKSON: Mr. Speaker, I don't think it's fair to say that it's the government position totally; it's a position I responded to not long ago at a conference in Grande Prairie.

In terms of the department's capability to handle SO<sub>2</sub> emissions, I felt we could maintain and possibly decrease the total emission by the year 2000. The response dealt specifically with SO<sub>2</sub> and was based on the fact that from 1974 to 1978, we were actually able to reduce the total emissions. However, economic factors have to be taken into consideration. That's basically along the lines of the ERCB comments.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question. My question relates to the ERCB recommendations that that position is impractical and unrealistic, as they point out in their report. They go on to point out a number of reasons. Could the hon. minister indicate whether the government is reviewing those reasons and the recommendation of the ERCB at this time? In light of those reasons, will the government's policy change?

MR. COOKSON: Again, Mr. Speaker, it is not a government position; it's a position I took, in terms of Environment.

Of course, we continue to review these issues. A lot of the final outcome will depend on the economic growth of the province. It will also depend a lot on the ability of the larger sour gas plants to maintain their emissions at 97 to 98 per cent. It will depend on the further expansion of the tar sands, and the best practical capability in terms of reductions for those new plants. It will also depend a lot on the power sources in the province, between now and the turn of the century. For example, if we are able to tap sources of hydropower — joint agreements with Manitoba, the Slave River development, and Dunvegan — then the emphasis on coal won't be as great. Those are unknown factors which we'll have to determine sometime between now and that time.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question for clarification. Is the hon. minister saying that the minister's position is committed to no increase in acid rain until the year 2000, but the government's position at the present time is in flux and may change?

MR. COOKSON: Mr. Speaker, I don't know whether I should respond to that. All departments have their own positions; however, on occasion they are subject to review. It may be that we can succeed in our objective, or it may not be possible. That's something that has to be determined.

### Nurses' Settlement

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct this question to the hon. Minister of Hospitals and Medical Care, with respect to the nursing manpower study now before the tribunal. Can the minister advise the Assembly whether he or officials of the department have held any discussions with the United Nurses of Alberta, to determine priorities among the recommendations and how costs relating to those recommendations might be financed?

MR. RUSSELL: Mr. Speaker, I think we should make it clear that there are two kinds of issues here. The one put forward by the union, representing the United Nurses of Alberta, and its employers is in the hands of the tribunal at the present time. In the longer term, insofar as they affect manpower and the future of the hospital system of Alberta, the issues are worked with through our implementation committee and its representation by way of the AARN, the professional wing of the body.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question. Is the minister in a position to advise the Assembly as to the position of the government on the last-dollar funding of any of the recommendations which might be made concerning the manpower study, pursuant to the tribunal report? Will there be an assurance that there will be total last-dollar funding for the entire award, which may include large portions of the nursing manpower study?

MR. RUSSELL: Mr. Speaker, in response to similar questions in previous years in this Assembly, I've had difficulty answering that specific question. It indicates a blank-cheque approval to whatever may flow as a result of a settlement.

I've tried to express our concern about the rapidly escalating costs of the hospital system, including the staffing thereof. I've also shown that to date we have been able to follow whatever awards have been brought about by way of negotiation or third-party arbitration. But it's obvious that the day is coming when reconsideration will perhaps have to be given to that policy.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the hon. Premier. I'm rather astonished by the minister's answer.

Is the Premier able to advise the Assembly whether the policy of this government is to follow in total and finance any obligations that may be the obligations of the province of Alberta, pursuant to a third-party tribunal decision concerning all aspects of the nurses' strike, which were referred, including the manpower nursing study, which was referred as a consequence of debate in this House?

MR. LOUGHEED: I'm sorry, Mr. Speaker, I missed the import of the question. Perhaps the hon. member could clarify that.

MR. NOTLEY: The question I would like clarification on is with respect to an answer I received from the Minister of Hospitals and Medical Care. Will the government finance, through last-dollar funding, whatever the third-party tribunal report is, as a consequence of Bill 11, concerning the nurses' strike? One of the specifically referred aspects was the nursing manpower study of the AHA, which may have significant financial implications

for this government. Will there be last-dollar funding of all aspects of the tribunal report?

MR. LOUGHEED: I'm still not clear as to why I'm asked. I thought the hon. minister answered that, in the sense that this is not something we're prepared to give an unequivocal response to.

MR. NOTLEY: My question to either hon. gentleman: in view of the fact that the nurses have to accept the award, by law, will the government of Alberta give the people of Alberta the assurance that whatever financial implications are required will in fact be met, pursuant to an award by a third-party tribunal set up as a result of a Bill passed by this Legislature?

MR. RUSSELL: Mr. Speaker, we're going over ground discussed several times in this Assembly. In the broader aspect, many times I've said that we're concerned about any provincial government's continuing ability to completely follow with 100 per cent funding of the hospital system. The Hospital Association knows we are looking for other sources of discretionary revenue.

To date, we have been able to follow with 100 per cent funding for any awards that have come about by way of agreement or arbitration. But at this time, I can't give a guarantee that that will always be the case. The day may be coming when we will have to find additional sources for discretionary funding for the hospital boards that employ the nurses.

MR. NOTLEY: A supplementary question. I want to phrase it with a bit of an explanation. Mr. Minister, in the question, I'm not talking about what may happen as a result of changes in the legislation; I'm talking about what will happen as a consequence of a tribunal established pursuant to Bill 11, passed by this Legislature. Will the government commit itself to financing in total whatever settlement comes down as a consequence of a third-party decision?

MR. RUSSELL: Mr. Speaker, it would certainly be my hope that the government will be able to do that. But the hon. member is asking me to predict the future, which I can't do. When I presented my departmental estimates to the Assembly this year, I made a point of mentioning that the proposed nurses' settlement was not included in the departmental budget. If additional funds are required, I will have to come back here with recommendations or with a request. Until the tribunal brings down its decision, I don't know the impact or import of what that request may be.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question. Is the minister of Labour in a position to advise the Assembly on the status of paraprofessionals and other groups having negotiations which are held in abeyance waiting for the tribunal report, in view of the fact that there has normally been a relationship between the salaries of nurses and other health care workers?

MR. YOUNG: Mr. Speaker, expressed in the question by the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview is a very basic assumption that because of the arbitration tribunal and the matter of the issue before it, other matters are being held in abeyance. I am unable to share the assumption, so I think that is then a problem with the whole question.

A variety of ongoing negotiations do interrelate with

the conclusions which might be available as a consequence of the decision of the arbitration tribunal. On the other hand, the relationship works in the opposite direction as well. Somebody must make a first decision. For that reason, I find it very difficult to say that the tie runs in one direction.

MR. NOTLEY: A supplementary question. Is the Minister of Labour in a position to assure the House that settlements relating to other health care workers are not being delayed as a result of one or both parties awaiting the results of the tribunal set up by this Legislature, pursuant to Bill 11?

MR. YOUNG: Mr. Speaker, the question is one of opinion. As I understand it, it's requesting my opinion as to the perceptions of other parties, in every instance, to other parties. Of course, I am unable to advance any opinion as to the motives of other parties, and what significance various factors have in the decisions are either taken or not taken by other parties.

Perhaps I can add this, if it's helpful: I have had advanced to me a number of reasons for either progress or lack of progress in a number of disputes. To my knowledge, this particular question of the decision of the arbitration tribunal with respect to the working conditions of nurses, which is awaited by all, has not been one of those factors.

#### Highway Twinning Project

MR. MANDEVILLE: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the hon. Minister of Transportation. Could the minister indicate what progress will be made in 1982 on twinning the Trans-Canada Highway?

MR. KROEGER: Mr. Speaker, I wouldn't be able to name project by project. The total estimate for 1982 would fall in the area of about \$20 million.

MR. MANDEVILLE: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Has the minister put out for bid more than the one contract, on the Strathmore development, for twinning the highway? Have other contracts been let for 1982?

MR. KROEGER: Mr. Speaker, we've been offering contracts all through the winter and spring. I'd be happy to identify those contracts that have actually been put out for bid, and get the information to the member.

MR. MANDEVILLE: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. For the tenders that have been put out and that have been received, could the minister indicate if the bids are coming in under the 1982 estimates for highway construction?

MR. KROEGER: Mr. Speaker, I haven't made the comparison this year. Last year — and I think this is pertinent — our estimate was a 13.5 per cent increase. They came in at an average of about 7 per cent, which is a substantial under-estimate figure. I have done some spot checking, and the estimates we had are again higher than the contracts coming in.

MR. MANDEVILLE: One final supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Could the minister indicate if there are sufficient materials and manpower for the road programs scheduled for 1982?

MR. KROEGER: Yes, Mr. Speaker. We don't anticipate any problem. Materialwise, as the member may know, we did a lot of winter work, getting gravel out in a number of areas. Because of the relatively slow pace out of province — keeping in mind that we have contractors in Alberta bidding in other provinces, and other provinces bidding in Alberta — there is no indication that there will be any shortage.

#### AADAC Treatment Centres

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the hon. member responsible for booze treatment, the MLA for Lethbridge West, chairman of AADAC. Can the member indicate to the Assembly what discussions took place between AADAC and the people of the Fishing Lake colony, as to why a treatment centre was not established in that colony?

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, AADAC presently funds some 39 private agencies throughout the province. Indeed, we encourage community groups in the province to submit proposals to AADAC. The Fishing Lake Metis colony referred to is presently being serviced out of the Bonnyville Indian Metis Association, I think about twice a week.

A proposal was made to AADAC, I believe last June or July, one of 30-odd. AADAC set its priorities. Wanting to respond, but bearing in mind the tremendous need in other parts of the province in terms of prioritization, it was not approved.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Chairman, a supplementary question. I don't know if the hon. member is aware that Bonnyville is 65 miles away. I was raised in that community. Mr. Chairman, in light of the fact that two people died as a result of alcohol poisoning, can the member indicate what reasons there are, other than financial, for not establishing a detoxification centre in that area?

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, it was a very tragic event. For the benefit of both the hon. member and members of the Assembly, I should point out that it was a series of toxic substances mixed together, as opposed to alcoholism. But that doesn't at all lessen the concern raised by the hon. member. I would simply point out that we fund some 39 agencies, at a cost of almost \$6 million. We try to do what we can throughout the province. As a result of this tragic incident, I have given instruction to review the proposal submitted. We will give every priority we can to helping resolve the problem at the Fishing Lake Metis settlement, which is approximately on the Saskatchewan border south of Bonnyville.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Chairman, a supplementary question to the member.

MR. SPEAKER: I can understand the hon. member addressing me as "Mr. Chairman" on three occasions, because we're doing the kind of questioning and answering which goes on in discussion of the estimates. On occasion when I have intervened in the case of those questions and answers, I've been told that perhaps it was necessary to get the information in advance, in order to take more effective part in the debates on the estimates. However, I hope that there would be some reasonable limit to this kind of advance questioning, and that it would be limited to the matters which members find it

really necessary to know ahead of time so that they can take more effective part in the debates of the estimates when they come.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, if you had that side of the House where it should be and I didn't have to look over my shoulder in trying to speak to the member, it would solve some of these problems. [interjections]

Mr. Speaker, my question to the hon. Member for Lethbridge West: is the member in a position to indicate if the government is looking at tying a certain percentage of booze profits to a percentage of treatment facilities? Is the government looking at tying a percentage to the amount of profit alcohol generates in this province?

MR. GOGO: First of all, Mr. Speaker, I should point out that the cost of alcoholism in this province probably approaches a quarter of a billion dollars, plus another billion in terms of lost incomes for many sectors.

The question as to whether profits from ALCB should be directed in other directions should be addressed to either the hon. Premier or the hon. minister responsible, the Solicitor General, and certainly not to the Alberta Alcoholism and Drug Abuse Commission, which receives its funds from general revenues.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, can the hon. member indicate if he has made a representation to Executive Council, that a certain percentage of liquor profits be tied to treatment facilities?

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, I've received advice from various sectors, one being that a dollar per 26-ounce bottle should be devoted to alcoholism treatment. Each year I appeal to the members of Executive Council to fund programs for treatment, rehabilitation, and prevention in this province. We're funded substantially better than anywhere else in Canada. The proposals that I submitted were listened to very carefully, and were funded extremely well. I really can't answer the hon. Member for Clover Bar in any better way.

DR. REID: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary for clarification. This comes from the questions asked by the Member for Clover Bar. Could the chairman of AADAC clarify whether the duties of the detoxification centres include treating people who are suffering from extremely severe methyl alcohol, methyl hydrate, methanol — the different names — poisoning?

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, in the detoxification centres, which are the preliminary part of the treatment process, we have about 400 beds in this province. Immediately upon admission to a detox centre, a medical assessment is made by competent people and, if necessary, a local physician. If medical treatment is indicated, they're dispatched immediately to emergency at a hospital. In no way do AADAC personnel, counsellors or otherwise, undertake any medical treatment. They receive emergency treatment, and an assessment is made at a hospital.

#### Alberta Economic Conditions

MR. KESLER: Mr. Speaker, as indicated by the ADC announcement, things do change on a day-to-day basis. That brings me to the question. Is the hon. Provincial Treasurer presently monitoring the bankruptcy rate in this province?

MR. HYNDMAN: Mr. Speaker, those are statistical matters which are available to members of the Assembly through various sources.

MR. KESLER: Mr. Speaker, due to the economic conditions the people in this province face at this time, I don't think the question is asking for statistics. The question is: is the hon. Provincial Treasurer monitoring the bankruptcy situation in the province at this time?

MR. HYNDMAN: Mr. Speaker, there are certain statistics kept by Statistics Canada and the Alberta Bureau of Statistics. Those are items which, in respect of the general economy of the province, we're always monitoring and which would be considered. As we indicated in the budget, the province is undergoing a more difficult situation economically this year than in previous years, but our economy will be the strongest in Canada this year as well.

MR. KESLER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question. In view of the fact that there were 653 bankruptcies in this province in the last three months, of which 138 were business bankruptcies, is the Provincial Treasurer undertaking a review of the government's overall economic strategy?

MR. HYNDMAN: Mr. Speaker, there's no need for a review. That strategy set forth very explicitly in the budget — and I think it has been very well supported — the recent announcement of the activity plan as a major element of the resurgence plan, and the subsequent announcement today, indicate the unfolding of the government's strategy, which we think is appropriate for the economy of Alberta at this time.

MR. KESLER: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. In light of the conditions we face today, is a new, overall program being considered that will ensure that Albertans do relatively well — the statement previously made by the hon. Provincial Treasurer — through the period of high interest rates and ruinous federal economic policies we face today?

MR. HYNDMAN: Not only will we do relatively well, Mr. Speaker, as I've indicated, every prediction indicates that we will have the strongest economy in Canada this year. We are not an island; we're part of a North American economy. We do have to face the very sad federal budget and its implications, and the interest rate situation, which is North American. But what we're doing is taking, in the appropriate flexible way, policies which will appropriately shield those Albertans who most need it from the worst effects and, at the same time, provide a stability and predictability for the private sector and entrepreneurs to move ahead, with innovative new programs such as the budget and the activity plan.

MR. KESLER: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker, in regard to innovative new programs. Would the government consider a program of low-interest loans to Albertans from the heritage trust fund now — right now — so they can survive today, in order to have a heritage in this province?

MR. HYNDMAN: Mr. Speaker, there are subsidies in terms of programs, which I gather are now endorsed by the hon. member, of some \$300 million worth of subsidies for home-owners, farmers — an example today in the

announcement — and small business men. For example, the heritage fund is providing over \$1.5 billion for affordable housing for Albertans. Many of those units will go at interest rates as low as 8, 9, or 10 per cent, by reason of subsidies. We think those programs have been valid; they will continue.

DR. BUCK: Separatists don't believe in subsidies.

MR. KESLER: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Would the hon. Provincial Treasurer review the program in place now, with respect to loans from the heritage trust fund, and broaden that base of low-interest loans to the people of this province?

MR. HYNDMAN: Mr. Speaker, as I indicated in the budget, during this uncertain and difficult year, we will be constantly monitoring the economy. As the Alberta economic resurgence plan unfolds, two elements of which we have now seen, we will be making appropriate changes and modifications, in order to listen and respond to Albertans wherever possible.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### head: COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

[Mr. Appleby in the Chair]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Would the Committee of Supply please come to order.

#### Department of Social Services and Community Health

MR. CHAIRMAN: Does the minister wish to make any opening remarks?

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Chairman, 1982-83 may be viewed as a year of consolidation for the Department of Social Services and Community Health. In my opening remarks, I'd like to go through a number of the various votes and highlight some of the aspects.

Under Vote 1, the primary emphasis is on continuing the policy adopted by the government and announced in the Speech from the Throne on April 2, 1981: to see the decentralization of decision-making achieved in the department. On February 1, 1982, the regional directors assumed full responsibility in the six regions of the province. The phase-over, from direct administration of various programs by the central office to the regional level, is occurring and will occur over the next number of months. In time, we anticipate seeing the transfer of a number of senior personnel in the department from Edmonton to the six regions of the province.

In Vote 2, I'd like to highlight two areas. The first is our concern with the downturn in the economy in this nation, and the effect that will have on the province of Alberta. We are looking primarily at the area of employables who require assistance from the government. Another area which receives ongoing consideration and attention is assistance to single-parent families. Although that remains our largest single aspect under Vote 2, I'm pleased to indicate that we have had a great degree of success in the retraining program, in the assistance given to single parents to further their educational opportuni-

ties so that they may remove themselves from the social assistance rolls.

Under Vote 3, child welfare services, the primary emphasis will be on maintaining existing programs. We are not affecting child welfare services with the decentralization. The reason is that we are awaiting the Cavanagh Board of Review report. As hon. members are aware, the Cavanagh Board of Review was given a mandate and asked to look very specifically at the Child Welfare Act and the Social Care Facilities Licensing Act. Therefore, we think it would be inappropriate for the government and the department to move in any decentralization of the child welfare services until we have had the opportunity to review the Cavanagh Board of Review report and see what recommendations are made therein.

In Vote 5, the primary emphasis is on the Alberta assured income plan. In the benefits provided to senior citizens who are entitled to the old age security and guaranteed income supplements, both federal plans, we will see the provincial top-up plan maximum benefits increase from \$85 to \$95 per individual per month. Also, the assured income for the severely handicapped and the day care subsidy programs, both programs intended to assist Albertans with minimal income, are being enriched.

Under Vote 6, the primary emphasis is on agency grants, primarily societies providing assistance through sheltered workshops. Over the past two years, we've seen a doubling of the kind of support the province is providing to those agencies.

Under Vote 7, services for the handicapped, the primary emphasis is on rural outreach, which is a preventive measure to assist families with youngsters who have a handicapping condition. As well, there will be new emphasis on residential services. The task force regarding services for the handicapped is also funded under this vote, and its activities are well under way.

Vote 8, which deals with mental health, sees increased emphasis on the regional mental health services through community clinics. The new forensic unit at the Alberta Hospital, Edmonton, will be opened this year. As hon. members are aware, the interim board for the Alberta Hospitals, Edmonton and Ponoka, was appointed very recently. Under the Provincial Mental Health Advisory Council, enrichments were made to their research grants. As well, a task force is reviewing the Mental Health Act and mental health services in Alberta, as a timely review to the Blair report of some 10 years ago.

Under Vote 10, the primary emphasis is on the family and community support service program, health unit funding, and day care. Vote 11 is under the able chairmanship of my colleague the hon. Member for Lethbridge West. Vote 12, which refers to the support provided to the professional and occupational groups, will be responded to by my colleague the hon. minister responsible for health and social service professions and occupations.

Mr. Chairman, I request unanimous leave of the committee to move directly to Vote 11 and allow my colleague the Member for Lethbridge West to deal with that vote at this time, then go back and deal with the other 11 votes in an orderly way, starting with Vote No. 1.

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. GOGO: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman and members of the committee. I would like to make some comments with regard to the Alcoholism and Drug

Abuse Commission, then answer any questions members may have. I'd simply draw your attention to page 325, which is Vote 11 in the big book, and page 157 in the element details, which spells out in some detail where the dollars go.

First of all, Mr. Chairman, I'd like to point out the media campaign authorized by this Assembly two years ago. That was really a program recognizing that although treatment was taking an ever increasing amount of money to rehabilitate — "cure" is a bad word; it's never used with regard to alcoholism — the feeling was that prevention should really be the key, and it should be directed at young people. As a result, a major new thrust for Canada was commenced here in the province of Alberta, through AADAC, with the media campaign.

Its primary objective would be to interrupt the development of harmful drinking patterns. To put it a better way, though, it would be to direct media messages to a target group aged, say, 12 to 17. Because it was necessary for me to approve the final production of messages, the rule of thumb I adopted at the time was that if parents thought it was good, then it was no good. It had to be something the young people could accept as being part of their way.

What are the results? Although it hasn't been very long, I would like to comment to the committee, Mr. Chairman. We've had no end of popular response from the public. I have the LDS church which, as many members know, is a highly respected church group in the province. The Leader of the Official Opposition, whom we've heard on past occasions being very supportive of our programs, has written me commending the program. Very interesting: a letter arrived just today from the constituency of Olds-Didsbury, commending AADAC for its self-development theme and what it's doing for young people.

Mr. Chairman, it's small comfort to members of the committee to see that that kind of money is being spent, without having some idea as to its effect. So as a result, we've developed an evaluation program, a system whereby we can find out whether it's being effective. That's presently being carried out. We are monitoring the effect with groups in other jurisdictions that are not exposed, against those here in the province. I think we'll know something definitive later in the spring. We do know that the level of awareness has reached very high proportions. The program will continue in the future. That alone may not be that significant, Mr. Chairman, because you can achieve the same same thing with soap commercials.

A very integral part of the program has been the options developed in communities in order to get the program into the school systems. There are a variety of programs right across the province, from Lethbridge all the way north, where local options have taken hold. Through the Minister of Education, I want to publicly commend the schoolteachers of Alberta for utilizing a teacher's kit developed so these programs can be expressed in the school.

The impaired drivers program, a very important program of AADAC, is unique. It was the second in North America and certainly the first in Canada. By law, government requires that someone who loses his licence for impaired driving must attend such a course to get his licence back. Due to its success, we've recently doubled that program. I say "success", but I suppose the Attorney General deserves that credit, because it's only as a result of convictions that that occurs. We've gone from 600 programs in 56 locations to almost 1,000 programs in 62 locations throughout the province. The impaired drivers

program has become very accessible to anybody who needs it.

In terms of institutional treatment programs, we're officially opening a new centre next month at Claresholm, the David Lander Centre, named after the well-known Dr. David Lander. Again, I think it's not only a commitment but a response by the government, through AADAC, to provide more treatment facilities. It's a 48-bed facility.

We've long recognized that problems have developed in other parts of the province, and naturally we're very pleased that the government saw fit to fund an office in Brooks, Alberta, a place where the incidence of alcohol abuse has been very high. But more important than that, Mr. Chairman, the community has been actively seeking some support. I would point out that the policy at AADAC is that alcohol and drug problems are really community problems, not government problems. The government responds when a community wants to do something. If they will form an organization, a non-profit society, and give us a proposal, then by all means we're prepared to do what we can to see it funded.

At the same time, I should point out that my hon. colleague from Grande Prairie, who is chairman of the Northern Alberta Development Council, has brought the needs of northern Alberta to our attention through the health needs study. A special joint committee has been formed. Working actively, they'll come forward with recommendations this June, which is not far off, which will give a firm assessment of facilities available in the north and further ones needed. He has my commitment, on behalf of the commission, that we'll respond as soon as we can with regard to those needs.

Further to that, Mr. Chairman, members of the Assembly were recently made aware that insurance brokers participated in our impaired drivers program. I believe I mentioned, by the copy of a letter to all members, how deeply indebted we had been to the insurance brokers. They participated in the programs regarding the auto insurance element; that is, penalties with regard to insurance incurred by those convicted. We paid some stipend or honorarium to them. However, I have to be fair to the committee and indicate that with the great growth — in effect doubling the programs in Alberta — it's been very difficult to try to work in various speakers in a seven-hour program. As a result, indications were that, one, we were going to a contract basis to put on the program and, secondly, it was felt that the insurance brokers couldn't necessarily be involved in all the programs. That prompted the letter members received. My staff has had discussions with the insurance brokers, and we're now developing what we hope is an alternative.

Further to that, Mr. Chairman, first of all, the question with regard to government waste raised by the Member for Olds-Didsbury last night during the Premier's estimates. I have a copy of the Blues here. This concerned AADAC wasting stationery, or to that effect. I would simply point out that when we adopted the new media campaign, we developed a new logo that would go with the stationery and be on all our material. This resulted in changing the color of our stationery. We ordered stationery. The printer supplied it, and it was wrong. Of course we simply sent it back at his expense. We had to call it back from the field. Someone interpreted that as being destroyed or wasted. I can assure members of the committee that I, as chairman of AADAC, have much in common with the Member for Edson. I'm not a Scot, but I certainly don't tolerate waste. I can assure the commit-

tee that no waste was involved.

Let me conclude on this note. Members of the Assembly, certainly members of Executive Council, are well aware that programs authorized by this Assembly can only be carried out with the dedication of staff. I think I'm indeed fortunate in having the type of staff we have at AADAC. We now have 400 people throughout the province, administering a budget of some \$21.5 million. It's grown by about \$10 million since 1980, and I think that's indicative of both the dedication displayed by the staff and, if I could submit, the results achieved. At this point I'd like to publicly thank Mr. Skirrow, our new executive director who's just come on stream this year, along with so many other people who have done so much in the past, and through their commitment, are continuing to support the goals of the commission in a very substantial way, trying to alleviate the very serious incidence of alcohol and drug abuse in some way.

With that, Mr. Chairman, I would certainly entertain any questions.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member for Stony Plain.

MR. PURDY: Mr. Chairman; my questions were actually on the Minister of Social Services and Community Health vote.

MR. CHAIRMAN: At the present time, we're dealing with comments or questions regarding Vote 11, so would the Member for Clover Bar wish to comment?

DR. BUCK: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. To the member responsible for booze, the chairman responsible for AADAC, I'm sure the hon. Member for Lethbridge West is well aware that alcoholism is becoming epidemic in our society. If we're going to be raking in astronomical sums of money from the profits the booze industry gives us as revenue in the province of Alberta, we have to start looking very, very seriously at spending more money on treatment, but most importantly on prevention. It's just not good enough to look at a budget of \$21 million and think we're going to help prevent or cure the problem. Basically what I'm doing is supporting the member responsible, the chairman of AADAC, by trying to indicate to the government that we had better start investing — I'm not saying spending, but investing — money in the prevention of alcoholism.

When young people ask me about the decriminalization of marijuana, I come back to them very, very quickly and say, look, we have a serious enough problem with one drug, alcohol, without imposing a second one. It's basically that simple. When you put it in that context, young people seem to understand.

Mr. Chairman, the reason I asked the questions in question period today on the events that took place at Fishing Lake is that I grew up with these two people. Fishing Lake is only about 15 miles from where I grew up as a young man. We knew many of these people. We played ball with them; we played hockey with them. Because of the frustration of their life style, I know that many of them turn to alcohol and many have serious problems, as the member is well aware. So if we're going to do something for our people who are having these difficult problems, we have to spend the dollars, not only through AADAC but through the department of social development, for life style counselling.

Mr. Chairman, those are the remarks I would like to make. I support the chairman of AADAC. He's doing a

good job, and I would like to support him in this committee when he goes for funds to dramatically increase the size of the budget. Money won't solve all the problems, but at least it will try. With those brief remarks, I certainly support Vote 11. But I would say that we're just scratching the surface, and we have to spend more dollars and get more people working in the field with these people.

MR. MAGEE: Mr. Chairman, through you to the member in charge of alcoholism and drug abuse, I would like to attest to how hard this gentleman works in his responsibilities. I share an office in this building just across the way from him, and if anybody among the MLAs works harder in his responsibilities on behalf of the citizens of this province, I wouldn't know who it is.

In looking at the figures here, Mr. Chairman, I would like to ask the member for a little bit of information that is of interest to me. I notice there are seven regional offices spread across the province. I also notice that in all cases the expenditure of funds for the operation of those various offices is larger than the money spent in the central regional office in Red Deer. I also notice that only two area offices are under the central regional area. Their expenditures are in the same area as other area offices around the country. In some cases there are as many as five or six area offices, and this is understandable because of probably greater distances in some of the areas served by the regional offices. On the face of it, it would seem to me — and I'd like a little explanation of something that might be intended for central Alberta that I'm not aware of, that maybe the member could elucidate for the benefit of myself as well as my colleagues.

I'd like to say that under community education, Red Deer certainly has a very active organization. A brand-new building was built by the Alberta Motor Association in our city. I attended the opening a few months ago, and was particularly impressed by the facilities for driver education purposes in that building: the film room, the surroundings, and the size of the operation from their former very crowded operation. I'm sure they're going to be able to do an even better job than they did in the past. While my community is anxious to proceed, to assist and help people who have these problems, I'm just a little curious as to what further plans the member might have in his responsibilities for this commission for the Red Deer and central Alberta area.

MR. BATIUK: Mr. Chairman, questions posed by the hon. Member for Clover Bar this afternoon prompted me to express a few of my own opinions. The hon. member questioned whether some of the profits from booze should not be used for prevention and so forth. I would say that probably the majority of the people feel that profits from the sale of alcohol in this province are great, and no doubt they are when you look at the financial statement of the Alberta Liquor Control Board.

But at the same time, I think the results of the consumption of liquor far outweigh profits from the sale of it. The Minister of Hospitals and Medical Care has exceeded a billion dollars in his budget, and we know that a large portion of that is because of the results of alcohol. The budget of the Minister of Social Services and Community Health has also exceeded a billion dollars, which is as much as the entire budget of the province 10 or 11 years ago. Again it is an indication that the consumption of alcohol causes many family breakdowns and so forth. I think the costs of the results of consump-

tion far outweigh profits brought by the sale. When there is over several hundred million dollars of property damage every year as a result of the consumption of alcohol, I do not believe we can weigh the two together, and that the profits are greater than the obligations or liabilities of the government. In no way do I want to object. I support the estimates of the hon. member, but I thought I would express my viewpoint.

MR. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, I too would like to express the appreciation of my constituents for the role the Member for Lethbridge West has played in putting AADAC as one of the high-profile committees in the province. I was very interested in the remarks of the Member for Clover Bar, concerning treatment and the sale of alcohol. Of course everyone here realizes that I represent the only dry constituency in Alberta, and there is another method of cutting back on these problems.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: If there are no further comments, would the member like to respond?

MR. GOGO: Mr. Chairman, on behalf of the commission, I want to thank members for their comments. I'd like to deal with a couple of them. First of all, the Member for Clover Bar, whom I've known for seven years, has been very concerned about social problems in the province. I'll take his words to heart. I should point out that prevention is indeed the thrust of the commission. I've indicated at other times that as a percentage of disposable income, booze is about half the price it was 10 years ago, and I think that's significant for the policymakers who determine what the price should be. However, that's not within the realm of the commission; that's up to other people.

After having been chairman this length of time, I would like to state that the role of Alcoholics Anonymous is important and significant to so many people. I recently attended a roundup of 1,100 members at Lethbridge. With the enthusiasm they display, I well understand those who urge abstinence, temperance, and so on. That's really what AA is all about. They help their fellow man. No question about it. But as a member of government, we are a government in a democracy where people make that choice. It's not the commission's role to play the abstinence or temperance role; it's one of education and prevention as well as treatment.

The Member for Red Deer pointed out that of the six regional offices in the province, only two of the area offices, of which we have 30, are located in the central region. One can look at that two ways: (a) the incidence of alcohol abuse is much lower in the area the hon. member represents. However, if one looks at the liquor sales, one comes to the conclusion that it's not quite true, assuming that those who drink liquor are the ones who end up with problems.

I would point out, though, that the Ponoka hospital has an alcoholic treatment centre, which is not within the alcohol and drug abuse commission but indeed comes under the Minister of Social Services and Community Health. It plays a very, very major role in treatment in the central region. Ric Durrant, who's the manager of the central region, has very close liaison with those people. So in addition to the two area offices, they have this Ponoka unit, which I think does a substantial job.

The Member for Vegreville pointed out something we've been saying all along; that is, you cannot look at

the ALCB profits and say, if we could only turn those profits the other way, we would resolve the problem. Dr. Gilbert at the Royal Alex in Edmonton did a study, and I'm sure members are aware that four of 10 beds in that hospital are occupied with life style problems, primarily alcohol, to the tune of about \$300,000 a month. As long as people drink and continue to abuse alcohol, the hon. Minister of Hospitals and Medical Care is going to have to find the money to pick up the hospital costs. The Minister of Social Services and Community Health budgets 120-odd million dollars for single-parent families, many of them as a result of alcohol problems.

I guess the point I want to make in response to the comments of the Member for Vegreville is that we all have a role to play, as indeed all departments do. Without the dedicated role of the social worker on one hand, the Solicitor General's Department on the other hand, Hospitals and Medical Care, the Minister of Transportation — it's a team effort. We're dealing with problems prevalent throughout the province, and only with active co-operation by all these people are we going to make any headway.

Finally, the Member for Cardston, who represents the only dry constituency in the province. That's not all he represents; he represents some well-established ranchers who have been there since before we had a province. I'm reminded of Salt Lake City. Of course, Utah is also dry, yet they're one of the convention centres of America. The consumption, which cannot be dealt through licensed premises, is the highest of anywhere in North America. That's interesting to point out. I advise members of the committee that this has happened since we've had the air-conditioned tractor, the microwave oven, the two-way radio, and the soap opera in the afternoon. This is not an urban problem. It's spread far and wide through the rural communities. When people find more comfort in the bottle than they find somewhere else, that begs all of us to sit up and pay a little attention to the quality of life, and listen to people sometimes, in particular our spouses.

Mr. Chairman, let me close on this note. I find it encouraging that beginning in September, the incidence of convictions for impaired driving in this province dropped a dramatic 50 per cent; in October, over 48 per cent; in November, over 40-odd per cent. December was in the high 40s. Why was that? There are two reasons: one, the economic downturn in the province had dramatic effects on licensed premises — perhaps expense account living. At the same time, ALCB liquor sales were up at \$50 million a month, which indicates that people are buying it and taking it home, as opposed to driving. So on one hand, although the incidence of convictions for impaired driving is down, the consumption of alcohol is at an all-time high. The challenge to all members of the committee, certainly to the commissioner of AADAC, is not to let up in any way with its education and prevention programs, not to mention the treatment programs.

Mr. Chairman, I sincerely ask for the concurrence of the committee for Vote 11, so we may continue to carry on the program related to alcohol and drug abuse. Thank you.

Agreed to:	
11.1 — Program Support	\$2,963,772
11.2 — Treatment and Rehabilitative Services	\$9,111,312
11.3 — Education and Information Services	\$4,004,204
11.4 — Direct Financial Assistance	

to Private Treatment Agencies	\$5,195,430
Total Vote 11 — Alcoholism and Drug Abuse — Treatment and Education	\$21,274,718

MR. CHAIRMAN: We'll now go to consideration of Vote 1.

### 1 — Departmental Support Services

MR. PURDY: Mr. Chairman, I'd like to say a few words on the department — an overview from last year — and congratulate the minister on how effective it is and how well it's being received in the community.

One of the reasons I'm speaking on it today is the recent move by the minister to decentralize a lot of the services, set up six regional areas in the province of Alberta, and have a director in charge of each of the six divisions. This happened in my constituency, where we have the area from Edmonton to — it encompasses Leduc, Fort Saskatchewan, and all the way to the Jasper park boundary. I think the move of 15 people to the community of Spruce Grove, to serve the needs of the citizens of the county of Parkland, was excellent. It went over very, very well. Within the Stony Plain constituency, people who are on social assistance or need to see a social worker have certainly welcomed this move. Now they don't have to drive to the Centennial mall in Edmonton. They have someone in their own community, within a few miles, to serve their needs.

I know of the case load there because of the economic times we're in and the downturn we're facing. The case load is probably higher than usual at present. I ask the minister if he is seriously considering another part-time person to assist in that particular area. There's an office in Spruce Grove, the area being served, and a second smaller office located in the town of Drayton Valley, with a number of workers there. I believe the office in Spruce Grove has approximately 15 people, with a manager, in place. The majority of the workers — secretaries and social workers — reside mainly in the constituency, which I think is excellent. I've had a couple of meetings with them and really look forward to having closer liaison with the people who have now moved into the constituency.

The other question I'd like to ask the minister is that I know a number of meetings have been held around the periphery of the city of Edmonton, for a further move from the ivory tower in Edmonton to various locations in the province of Alberta. Dr. Kinkaide, who is the regional director for the area I serve, met with a number of people on a very stormy night last Wednesday, put forward the mandate he has as regional director, and answered a number of very difficult questions. He answered them to my satisfaction, in a very professional manner. I think Dr. Kinkaide is going to do an excellent job in his role as regional director serving my area.

But what I'm primarily interested in is — and I'm making another pitch to the minister now. In the town of Spruce Grove, we have facilities available for an additional move there. I know the minister is seriously considering more decentralization for his department. I ask the minister that when he makes the decision, if he needs any more input from me, my door is certainly open. I had input to the move last fall, when the minister decided that some of that should go to the western area. So when the minister winds up and reviews various comments today, I ask that he give me an overview of where he now is with the department in the next decentralization move, how

many people we could anticipate in Spruce Grove, and so on.

Thank you.

MR. PAYNE: Mr. Chairman, while the committee is reviewing the estimates of the Department of Social Services and Community Health, I would like to make some comments with respect to two of the minister's program areas. I would certainly welcome the minister's response later when he re-enters the debate of his estimates.

Mr. Chairman, I understand that a subcommittee of the provincial advisory committee to the aids to daily living program is currently attempting to ascertain the proper role of the Alberta government in the development and use of myoelectric limbs. A number of my constituents have made some fairly persuasive arguments for the development of such a program within the province of Alberta, perhaps through the Calgary juvenile amputee clinic, if that's the proper name for that organization.

As the minister will be aware, young Albertan amputees must now travel all the way to the Ontario crippled children's hospital in Toronto for the fitting and repair of their myoelectric limbs, with all the attendant logistic and financial problems of the need to journey that distance for such sensitive work. Mr. Chairman, my view is that this type of rehabilitation program merits very serious consideration by the government. I would like to encourage the minister's support for the development of a myoelectric limb program in Alberta.

Mr. Chairman, on a second matter, I want to explore the minister's interest in a possible amendment to the Dependent Adults Act. At the risk of incurring the wrath of some of my friends in the legal fraternity who are in the House today, the amendment would obviate the present necessity of paying huge legal and related fees when renewing a guardianship or trusteeship order every two years on behalf of a dependent adult. As you know, Mr. Chairman, such guardianship and trusteeship orders must be reviewed by the courts every two years, and require a full statement, including a financial accounting, from the appointed guardian or trustee concerning actions taken, decisions made, and financial handlings undertaken on behalf of the dependent adult. Upon the decision by the courts that the guardian or trustee has acted in an ethical and responsible manner in this capacity, the order is then renewed for a further two years.

Obviously it's essential that the financial and emotional security of any dependent adult must be safeguarded to the full. I have no quarrel with that part of the procedure, Mr. Chairman. However, if my understanding is correct, at present one must use the services of a lawyer each time one applies for renewal of an order. These services incur expensive legal fees which not only can one ill afford to pay, but over the years must also diminish the very assets which, as guardian or trustee, one is sworn and duty-bound to protect.

Mr. Chairman, I wouldn't want to see a rubber-stamp procedure developed in the matter of guardianship or trusteeship orders. In cases where the dependent adult is expected to recover and take up a normal active life again, a one-time legal fee might not create any significant hardship. However, in cases where the dependent adult will never recover and is likely to require permanent guardianship or trusteeship for the remainder of his or her life, it's obvious that paying huge legal fees every two years would not only diminish the available assets, but in time might well create some financial hardship.

I'd also like to mention that in correspondence with the regional co-ordinator of the office of the Public Guardian in Calgary, I've learned that a proposed package is at some stage of development — and I'm not certain at which stage — to assist private individuals in gathering the information and putting it in an appropriate format to go before the courts, so that the involvement of a solicitor is lessened. While I'm discussing this area, Mr. Chairman, perhaps I could suggest, through you to the minister, that consideration be given to the development of a total package. Such a package could be made available in these circumstances, covering all aspects of such orders to enable private individuals to prepare their own documentation.

I think that's all I can usefully indicate to the committee at this time, Mr. Chairman. As I mentioned earlier, I would certainly welcome the minister's response when he re-enters the debate.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Chairman, I would like to make a few general comments and then perhaps have more specific questions later on. I don't think there's any question that the mandate of the department is an especially important one and, as a result of difficult economic circumstances, will probably become even more so in the next several years. When conditions deteriorate, I don't think there's much doubt that the impact on individuals as they try to cope with those conditions will lead to greater pressures on the Department of Social Services and Community Health. I think we'd be a bit naive if we assumed otherwise.

That being the case, the mandate of the department is probably going to be enlarged, not necessarily by the deliberate actions of the government or this committee, but as a result of conditions developing right across the continent. Alberta cannot be totally an island unto itself. I think some of the pressures of alcoholism, suicide, divorce, family breakdowns, and the problems these create in terms of child care and child welfare legislation, will become more acute in the months ahead.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to deal with three or four specific items. One is the general question of child welfare. Then I want to talk a little bit about home care and, thirdly, discuss decentralization. I was out for a few minutes when the minister made his initial comments. I understand from one of the other hon. members of the committee that the minister talked briefly about the Cavanagh Board of Review. I have to say that we should have a report from that board of review by now.

Members will recall well the events that took place in 1980, now more than two years ago, when the government decided to appoint a board of review. All of us realize that it is a tall order to fully evaluate legislation in this area. But at the same time, two years is a long time. The history of the world has changed rather dramatically in the last two years. As I recall the debates in this House in 1980, I don't think anyone at that time was under the impression that it would be such a long haul before we got the report.

Mr. Chairman, I raise that question because before the Legislature can properly evaluate changes, we have to have the report of the Cavanagh Board of Review. While some changes have been made, the fact of the matter is that in all likelihood no fundamental change will occur until we get the final report of the Cavanagh Board of Review. I would just say to the minister that when he responds, I'd like him to be very precise as to what date we are looking at in terms of this board of review

completing its work, and what agenda he foresees in terms of dealing with the recommendations of that board of review.

[Mr. Purdy in the Chair]

We should not kid ourselves that we're just within a few months or, at most, a year away from a general election. The normal procedure is for the Premier to put in a new minister. What are we going to do? Are we going to find the board of review reporting after the next election, in which case there will be another board of review to study the board of review? Mr. Chairman, I think Albertans have a right to a fairly clear explanation during this study of the estimates, of where that process stands at the moment and what we might expect in terms of a clear commitment from the government to move quickly on the recommendations of the Cavanagh Board when those recommendations are complete.

Mr. Chairman, I'd like to move from there, if I may, to talk for a few moments about home care in Alberta. I might start by telling the members of the committee that last night I had occasion to be present at a Northern Alberta Development Council meeting in Hines Creek. One of the better recommendations brought forward in that meeting was from a representative of the local Peace River health unit board, who argued very convincingly that the dollars we spend on home care are far better spent in the long run than many of the dollars in the active treatment hospital system. But as long as we have the medical requirement as opposed to the social requirement, there is a restriction on the use of home care.

I welcome the fact that in the case of the Grande Prairie health unit board, some additional funds have been made available. As a result, we're now going to see home care in Spirit River and Valleyview. I welcome that decision. However, I think the larger question is whether the concept of home care will be expanded to include a social entry as well the medical entry. As long as it's just a medical entry, we are restricting the utilization of what is basically a good program.

I should point out that at a meeting in Calgary about a month ago, I met with a number of senior citizens and, almost to a person, they made the point that it's time for the government to take a second look at this question of the test for entry, and that we could spend all we like on self-contained units, lodges, and nursing homes — while those were applauded by the people present, the argument was that the expanding test for home care would allow more people to stay in their own homes longer, to retain that sense of independence which is crucial to their well-being. As a consequence, Mr. Chairman, I would like to underscore the views that were brought to my attention, not only in my own riding and elsewhere in the Peace, but in other parts of the province, and particularly emphasize the need to expand that program.

Mr. Chairman, I'd like to move from the discussion of the home care issue to deal with the issue of decentralization. As I understand the Webster's dictionary definition, decentralization is a dispersment or distribution of functions and powers from a central authority to regional and local authorities. I don't think there's any doubt that most of the members of this committee are in favor of decentralization of social services in Alberta. As far as it goes, the question of the six regional offices is not, in my judgment, subject to debate anymore. I think members of the committee support that decentralization step. They may have some differences with the method of appointing

the administrators. I think I'd be a little less than honest if I didn't convey that to the minister. I conveyed that to the minister outside the House, and I'll convey that to the minister inside the House as well.

We also have problems finding accommodation in some of these communities, as I'm sure the minister knows. I know of a person who's been offered a job in McLennan for some time now, and simply can't take the job because there isn't an available place to stay. So that is a problem. But you don't throw away a concept because of some of the problems. You push ahead with the concept. I suggest to the minister that perhaps he might contact his colleague with respect to housing and public works, because you might have to get some beefing up of the housing and public works programs in those communities as a consequence of the decentralization decision.

Mr. Chairman, I don't want to leave the issue in such a rosy light, though, because it seems to me that decentralization is a good deal more than appointing six regional directors. Decentralization is more than putting administrators in place. Decentralization is much more than providing buildings, and perhaps even the additional accommodations required. It seems that the nub of the problem lies with the present provincial structure, not only in terms of social services, Mr. Minister, but of the total approach to the relationship between the province of Alberta and local government.

I know that some members may take exception to it; so be it. But basically what we have is a hodge-podge of differing programs that provide a bewildering array of formulas, conditions, and consequences, all of which lead to a good deal of confusion. For example, some of the programs the local governments have to deal with range all the way from the 80:20 for the family and community support services, which is administered by the minister's department, to the various formulas we have for the major recreation and community facilities, and then various other formulas.

What that raises in my mind, Mr. Chairman, is that there are a number of what one might classify as social responsibilities, where there isn't a consistent method of delivering those social responsibilities, either from the minister's department or other departments of government which also have obligations in human resource types of programs. Other departments have responsibilities in human resource programs as well as the minister's. So we have a situation where local priorities, instead of being developed at the local level, tend to be largely influenced, guided, and sometimes, depending on who you talk to at the local council level, pushed in the direction of which way the grants fall and are available, as opposed to being genuinely developed at the local level.

Mr. Chairman, it seems to me that that is not the objective of the family and community support services. I think the objective members of this House had when we dealt with that issue was to disperse power, to disperse decision-making, to involve local people in the process. But I suggest there's at least some evidence to indicate that that has not been the result. Let me give several examples, so that we can deal with specifics. I think one can talk in generalities, and if we have a philosophical discussion, that's not of much value to the minister, me, or the people of Alberta.

Let's take day care, for example. The government caucus decided that day care would become a provincial responsibility in 1980. That was a decision of the gov-

ernment caucus, without any major consultation, that I recall in any event, with local governments around the province. We have a portion of day care, the subsidized after-school care, which is then turned over to local governments. And the government says: you have responsibility for subsidized after-school day care; we'll make some money available to you, but this is your responsibility; you run with it — again, unless I'm being misled by municipal aldermen who have talked to me about it, without any real consultation with local government. A unilateral decision, if you like, by the Conservative caucus.

Or we have the decision with respect to the parent resource unit, a central support service which is providing municipal government employees who are dealing with those people who have problems at the local level. This support service provided information, back-up material — guidance if you like — and seemed to be well accepted by the local people in the province. As of April 30, it's being terminated. The minister will respond by saying: it's not really being terminated; part of it's going to be switched to one department, part of it to another. But it adds confusion. The point I want to leave with the minister is that here is a service that, as I read it from talking to people, was well accepted and is being terminated not as a result of discussions with the cities of Calgary and Edmonton and the other communities where it was providing a good service, but terminated by the government.

Mr. Chairman, that leaves in my mind some pretty large questions about how effective decentralization is. Because it seems to me that the whole emphasis of decentralization is that the people you're decentralizing to, have some real input in deciding what they're going to be doing. If the standards are set provincially, if the guidelines are set provincially, if the fiscal restrictions are set provincially, if all the qualifications, regulations, and rules are set provincially, then do you not have, vis-a-vis the local governments, exactly the same situation this government challenges Ottawa over: tied grants and priorities being determined by Mr. Trudeau and his colleagues rather than being developed in the provincial Legislature? Are we not doing to the municipalities exactly the same thing the federal government is doing to Alberta?

Mr. Chairman, I raise this because it seems to me that one of the alternatives we should be looking at is a system of block funding. Over the last while, I've looked at this. I think it has a good deal of merit, I think we could provide block grants annually on a per capita basis for all Alberta municipalities — cities, towns, villages, counties, MDs, IDs, Metis settlements. These grants could be flexible to permit increases in areas of greater need. But at the same time, the grants would be the same sort of concept we insist on in terms of federal fiscal arrangements, so that there would be limited control by the provincial government over the use of the funds. We'd have to make sure that there was adequate accounting of the money. But it seems to me that the point of block funding is that priorities may differ from community to community, and that you're going to have maximum valuable local input in decision-making if you have a system of block funding as opposed to the various programs that are now available.

I'm not just talking about the minister's department. I want to make it clear that we're looking at the larger issue of all social, human resource types of expenditures where there is cost sharing. A whole ream of different programs

are available. But the point I'd like to make and underline is that that would give your local levels of government much more opportunity to bring together the various programs, tailor them to their community, synchronize them, and orient them in a way that they could be very beneficial.

I might just say, Mr. Chairman, that as the M.L.A. for Spirit River-Fairview, I travel through British Columbia between the north part of my constituency and the south every month, and I have to go through the city of Dawson Creek. I was quite impressed with the way the community resource board concept was set up in that province. Sure, there was some controversy over the concept. But the whole philosophy behind it was to bring together under a community control umbrella all the social services so that you could have maximum local input. I think that was a very good idea.

It struck me that it was easier for the individual too, because you had one place to go. Right now you almost have to be a Philadelphia lawyer to figure out how in heaven's name . . . Of course I guess that gives M.L.A.s something to do, because we have to spend half the time chasing down grants of one kind or another. That's very nice. We now have constituency offices to help us do it, and all the rest of it. But I say to the minister that if we're really serious about decentralization, let's look at this block funding concept, and not just in terms of the one department. Let's see what the minister can do by drawing together some of these other programs.

I know that means we aren't going to make the big announcements in the Legislature and won't get all the political mileage out of some of these programs. We're going to be sharing that mileage with local people who could probably take as much advantage, if not a good deal more, than politicians in Edmonton. But the people of Alberta are going to be better served. I think that should be our objective.

So, Mr. Chairman, I leave those observations with the minister. I have a number of specific questions in terms of reconciliation between votes, that I think I'll leave for a little later in our discussion. I'll just make a general statement now, and then we'll come to the specific questions. There seems to be an increase in administration as I go through this budget. But to be fair to the minister, I'll give him chapter and verse and he can answer specifically. At this stage of the game, at least at this part of our debate, I think we're talking about policies as opposed to specific votes.

With that in mind, Mr. Chairman, I offer those comments and ask the minister to respond.

MRS. CHICHAK: Mr. Chairman, I want to raise with the hon. minister a few matters particularly relevant to the constituency of Edmonton Norwood, but not necessarily restricted to the constituency. I think questions of a similar nature are being asked throughout constituencies in the province. I would like to deal with day care, the after-school care program, communication support within the family and community support program, and home care.

Although we have moved a long way in attempting to improve the day care program and standards, there appears to be an area of concern expressed by the day care operators and employees; that is, the relationship that appears to be developing between the day care staff and operators and the staff of the hon. minister's department. I am receiving more and more complaints — and I have tried to follow through on some of them as to their

accuracy, or in fact whether there is a basis — about the inspection approach carried out within the day care centres.

When we brought in some new regulations, upgraded the standards that day care operators must meet, we set a time frame for those operators who had to make changes and improvements in the facilities. A time frame was given to each one, according to the kinds of changes that had to be made. The concern being expressed is that it's not the matter of having to upgrade, because the operators recognize that that is necessary over the period of time, to bring a standard of care that is requested and should be expected, whether the payment to them comes from the public purse through the social services support program or whether it's simply by parents who are able to meet the cost directly without any subsidization. The point being made is that the staff who carry out the inspections appear to have an insensitivity to the service being provided within the facilities.

The main concern is the measuring stick of square feet and walls and tables and whatever else, but not the nature of the program. It's the support the facility receives from the parents who have their children there, whether or not those parents are receiving subsidy. Probably even more relevant is that if the parents are not receiving a subsidy but are paying on their own and are substantially pleased, and from time to time are contributing through volunteer time to enhance the service provided within the day care, and then find someone from the department carrying out an inspection and looking at certain aspects of the facility as cold, absents the kind of care that's being provided, it has had its impact not only on the operators but on the parents as well. Complaints I have been receiving have not been isolated to operators, but have been coming from parents. I want to communicate this to the minister, because when parents feel the service meets their standard, their needs, and do not wish to have that service curtailed or interrupted, then we have to take notice of that kind of criticism.

I wonder if the minister would consider once again outlining in a fair degree of detail where the after-school program is. The reason I ask is this. Because no assurance was indicated by the city that funding would be available beyond April — I can't recall whether they used the date April 30 or March 31 — because of that uncertainty, there are communities within my constituency that didn't embark on a program in the current season. If there was that kind of uncertainty — and I don't believe there was; but it may have been an interpretation by the municipality — I think it's important to clarify the communication and arrangement with regard to funding between the city of Edmonton and the minister's office. What are the conditions?

Time and time again I have been asked: if the provincial government department provides a subsidy of X number of dollars on a per child basis for the after-school care program, what are the guidelines on what those dollars should cover in the way of service? If parents, the municipality, or organizational groups wish to enhance that program, they should meet those needs out of whatever sources they determine they can. The criticism has constantly been the absence of any kind of guideline insofar as the minimal or basic kind of expectation we as a government have of after-school care programs.

We need to recognize and state the family responsibility that must continue to exist in the care of children. If we totally turn [over] the responsibility of child upbringing and communication to the community, social work-

ers, and everyone else except the parents, we soon establish a very cold kind of relationship where the child really has little in the way of ties to its parents. We may not be recognizing that that is occurring, but I firmly believe that with the lesser degree of responsibility between the parent and child, as that child grows into adolescence and later years, the more detached it is from the parent. We now are seeing products of that in the kind of responsibility a lot of children have to parents who are in their senior years, at an age or in a state of health that they are in lodges, senior citizens' nursing homes, or auxiliary hospitals. I see the absence of any family communication on a daily basis, and I think that is the product of what we slowly have been moving to in the kind of relationship we have been offering.

Bearing that in mind, there are situations where there are social problems with single-parent families, where there are other kinds of emotional and social problems in the deterioration of the family. Is part of what we call the after-school care program intended or designed to provide some kind of service to children in those circumstances, or should it be something totally different, and not in any way attempt to provide a service for those situations? From time to time there has been a great deal of pressure from different quarters. I am being asked to consider that the after-school care program must deal with those children, although they are beyond the pre-school age level and normally would be expected to require less custodial care. Because of the emotional and social problems within those families, they need more than simply the provision of a place overseeing their safety until their parents come home. Again, the role or expectation under the after-school care program needs to be a very clearly stated. If other problems exist, how are they being dealt with? I think that needs enunciation.

With regard to the home care program, I have had many representations for consideration of the expansion of eligibility and entry criteria for the program; perhaps not open-ended, but a little broader than the very strict interpretation, I believe, being placed on that program at this time. If the program is being interpreted too narrowly, and if in fact there have been some expansions that have not been recognized by the various agencies that deal with delivery of the program, perhaps the minister might clarify that. Perhaps this is the time this should be done.

I want to bring another area to the minister's attention, and simply give notice at this time that, if not in the current budget, in the next, I will be coming to him for consideration of a communication support allowance, particularly in communities with problems, which in the past have been designated for neighborhood improvement programs; areas declared culturally disadvantaged or deprived, where additional support is needed. Out of that, we've had recognition by provincial, municipal, and federal levels, of the extensiveness of social problems in these areas and the revitalization needed, and neighborhood improvement programs were established. As a result of that kind of financial support provided to those communities, citizens of the communities have themselves developed relationship, activity, and programs to bring about a lot of services through volunteers. That ensured that the community not only received financial assistance for the redevelopment, upgrading, and revitalization of housing and streets, and the provision of community centres, but activity within those centres.

I'm really trying to communicate to the minister that through the medium of newspapers like *The Norwood*

*News* — a unique example, I think, of what the community has done through volunteer services to ensure viability, decrease social problems, and continue to improve social interaction well beyond the funding provided to improve streets, lighting, and buildings, so to speak, within the community — news of activities within the area is provided, advising families of activities available for their children, and how they can participate and contribute to the community. It's keeping the community alive; it's bringing people out of their shells, and their feelings of isolation and inability to interact and cope with the problems they have within their own residential environment.

The problem being faced by some of these communities is that a tremendous amount of volunteer work goes into bringing together all these resources, communicating them, and actually carrying on the activities. Costs are involved in requiring at least one or two full-time individuals to ensure that co-ordination and communication goes on, and the materials necessary to keep the program going. A fair amount of funding is raised through the medium of advertising, through contributions, and other ways, but that cannot meet the total cost. I'm just giving notice to the minister that I will be providing him with a budget showing the cost of providing such a service within those types of communities, how much that is decreased by volunteer and other means, and how much is just not possible to be raised within the community. If in his family and community support program he has any kind of funding that perhaps can somehow be specifically redirected or re-allocated where such a strong program is developed, some percentage might be directed towards that kind of support. I think that to leave with the municipal council the decision to reallocate will not meet with any success. I would like the minister to look at that program and see whether there can be some redirection.

Those are the comments I wanted to make for the minister's consideration. He may wish to respond to some of them at this time; others he may wish to take under consideration in his detailed examination of this program.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. HIEBERT: Mr. Chairman, while we're discussing the estimates, I have a few questions and observations I would like to make to the minister. One concern relates to the placement of severely handicapped youngsters. We have different types of institutions in which we place handicapped people. I realize that the number of spaces in small group homes is at a premium and, therefore, placement becomes a question of priority. What are the levels of assessment that gain entrance to the small group homes as opposed to other institutions? It involves the whole area of professional judgment and, last of all, the perception and opinion of the parents, who are often very emotionally involved with the particular individual suffering the handicap.

My question to the minister is: is there an avenue of appeal for parents when there is a question or difference of opinion with regard to the assessment? That often relates to the placement. As I said before, parents are usually emotionally involved and want the best for their youngster. Often they do not have a total overview of what is going on in the province, and I wonder if there is an appeal mechanism. We have this in insurance cases, where different medical judgments can be obtained, and this is done without creating an upheaval or a difference among professionals. I wonder if we could explore this

possibility.

I would like to look at some of the concerns expressed by people from the Alberta Association for the Mentally Retarded. They had a conference here last Saturday, and I happened to attend on that day. A concern was expressed about the general direction the department is taking with regard to institutions. I know the debate has gone on for quite some time. You look at large institutions such as Michener Centre, as opposed to the other side of the continuum, which deals with small group homes. Of course, in the middle we have mini-institutions such as proposed for Fort Macleod.

I'm wondering how extensive a discussion there has been on this particular issue with the different associations. I know the Association for the Mentally Retarded has gone on record as being opposed to institutions of any sort, but I'm wondering if it is economically realistic to move in that direction alone, or if there is a balance. How realistic is the association in its objectives? Can we draw upon any other models in the world to see what their experiences have been, before the pendulum swings from one side to the other?

The last matter I would like to raise is that we now have a committee — and for lack of a better term, let's call it the Klufas committee — which arose from the year of the disabled. One recommendation was that there ought to be a standing committee of some sort looking into the area of the disabled and the handicapped. I wonder if the minister could give us any indication of activities they have been involved in since they were formed. Are there any preliminary observations or conclusions arising out of their meetings?

I'd appreciate it if the minister could address himself to those three areas. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Would the minister like to respond to the various participants?

MR. BOGLE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'll attempt to respond in a general way, as many of the points raised by hon. members can be dealt with in detail when we come to the various votes.

First of all, Mr. Chairman, to you in your capacity as M.L.A. for Stony Plain, before you took the Chair today. I would like to acknowledge your comments on the decentralization process, and what that means for various communities across the province. Wherever possible and practical, we are determined to bring the services to people closer to their own homes. To meet that objective, we are establishing new district offices in smaller communities across the province. We want to bring the service to the people, rather than have people come to the major centres to receive the service. But implicit with that service, there must be the ability for decision-making through the six regions and the regional offices; decision-making not only in terms of programming but, to a great extent, in terms of budget priorities and personnel decisions. Those parts of the process are being worked on at the present time.

The hon. member went on to make a subtle pitch for some additional staff in his area, and I can assure him that as the economic conditions unfold over the next number of months, we will continue to monitor it very closely. If there's a particular need in any part of the province, special consideration will be given to that. I might add at this point — and also in response to the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview — that while on one hand, because of the economic downturn, we as a

society are facing a new kind of pressure, on the other hand there's a great burden that's not on our shoulders. When Alberta was going through the very dramatic growth in population we experienced over the last four to five years, there were tremendous pressures on this department that are not now being felt to the same degree, because we don't have the same influx of people into the province. It relates to the whole question of family support, community support, and a lot of things. So there are two sides to the coin.

With regard to comments on myoelectric limbs by the hon. Member for Calgary Fish Creek, I'll be pleased to respond to that in some detail in Vote 9, as that would come under the Alberta aids to daily living program. It is not now part of the program, as are other electronic devices which have been requested by a variety of groups.

The hon. member also raised a very important question regarding the role of the Public Guardian's office and the whole question of the dependent adults legislation. Approximately two weeks ago, I, along with several senior members of the department, I met with representatives of a number of provincial organizations to discuss the difficulties we face in this particular area. When hon. members look at the budget for the department, they'll see that the expenditures of the Public Guardian's office have risen from just over \$0.5 million to \$3.2 million in two short years. That kind of growth cannot be sustained. We must look at other ways of supporting those adults who are declared dependent by the courts, and will give very serious consideration, not only to the proposals coming from a variety of groups, but to the observations made by the hon. member to streamline the legal system so that, as renewals come up on a regular basis, families and, in most cases, the government, are not asked to bear those very expensive costs.

Along with his general comments on the economy and the special pressures that places on this department, the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview raised some concerns about the Cavanagh Board of Review. No one is more anxious than I to see the report by Mr. Justice Cavanagh, Dr. McCoy, and Mrs. Flora Allison received. As I indicated in my earlier comments, we are moving on our decentralization process. But out of respect for the committee — and it's the only right and natural thing to do — I've given instructions to the associate deputy minister of the department not to decentralize the child welfare activities in any way. At the same time, we are not looking at any innovative ways of dealing with those matters. We know we don't have the answers at the present time, and I'll be pleased to go into that in some detail in Vote 3. We know there has to be a better way to provide the service. On the other hand, we really cannot move in those directions; we cannot change the present situation until we've had a chance to receive and review the Cavanagh Board of Review report.

The hon. member asked when we expect the report. As I'm sure the hon. member will recall, I made it very clear in this Assembly that we would welcome either interim reports or a final report at the pleasure of the Cavanagh Board of Review. With all sincerity to the member, I ask him to consider making known to Mr. Justice Cavanagh the views he has today made known to me and members of this committee, as to the urgency of receiving the report, either in full or on an interim basis. As the hon. member pointed out, they've undertaken a very major task. Not only are they receiving input from a variety of groups around the province; they're also comparing the services offered in this province with how other provinces

respond because, clearly, something may be happening in Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, or Manitoba. They may have found a very innovative way to support the family unit itself, and not create an institutionalized kind of setting. If that's happening, we would like to know.

The matter of home care was also raised by the hon. Member for Edmonton Norwood. We have given consideration to the question of moving beyond the present medical entry point. As hon. members know, we are moving beyond the fourth year of the program. I'll be pleased to respond when we come to Vote 10, dealing with home care. We've added additional enrichment dollars this year, so that the program might be rounded out across the province. We want to be perfectly satisfied that before we move on to another phase of co-ordinated home care, all parts of the province are covered with the basic home care program.

As the hon. member is well aware — and I recall being in his constituency for the opening of the dental trailer — I was made aware at that time that some portions of that particular part of the province were not yet covered by a home care program. So we've added some enrichment dollars in this year's budget to ensure that, in fact, the program is spread across the province. Once that's been achieved, I think we'll be in a very logical and realistic position to look at an expansion of the program in terms of the entry point.

With regard to the question of decentralization, we as the government caucus knew full well when we made the decision to pick centres like McLennan and, to a lesser degree, Lac La Biche, Innisfail, and Coaldale, that we would have some difficulty with regard to accommodations. But it was part of our decision to assist, because the centres seemed right in terms of the geography of the regions. We felt very strongly that this kind of stimulus would also be well received within the communities. We are looking at ways we can assist, and I would say the primary way would be particularly for senior staff members, because a number of senior staff members will be located in these centres and will be earning good salaries. We will be looking for ways to encourage those individuals to buy or build their homes in the communities. In the interim, we know there are some concerns and we're continuing to address those, both with the regional directors and others. If we think other moves are necessary, consideration can be given to those in due course.

Although I don't want to dwell on the family and community support service program, I want to point out to the hon. member who raised the question that the entire emphasis changed from the old PSS program, where there were strings attached, where we did tell communities how to spend their money, and where we as a department had to approve each and every project. We did move substantially to block funding, so that on the 80:20 cost-sharing formula — and I recall the task force chaired by the hon. Member for Red Deer received over 160 briefs from the local level, the vast majority recommending continuation of the 80:20 cost sharing. But that formula stayed in place.

We've reduced our staff from some 31 to 11, because they no longer have the function to police the program, so to speak. With regard to programs like the parent resource unit, it's true that five staff were transferred to the Department of Education, and for a logical reason. Why were we, through Social Services and Community Health, providing support staff to early childhood education programs, clearly an educational function? Therefore the positions were transferred to Education, where the

same kind of support can be given to the communities. In terms of other support not related to early childhood education, the other consultants who remain as part of that total of 11 positions will continue to work with other groups in the community who require their assistance, in addition to the family and community support service areas.

The hon. member asked a question about guidelines, standards, funding: matters which might be set provincially. Mr. Chairman, I think he was really raising the concern about day care and after-school care. I think the answer lies therein. We as a government caucus made a decision to assume responsibilities in day care, because we saw the enormous costs involved, and did not feel it would be fair to the municipalities. As the hon. member knows, we've seen our budget grow to this year, where we're at some \$45 million for day care. Compare that with several short years ago, when we were less than \$10 million. Therefore, that was assumed to be a provincial program.

On the other hand, after-school care, a program to support school-aged children, which is clearly looked at as a preventive program, was deemed to be something that should be under the family and community support services program, and at the discretion of the municipalities. Whether the municipalities fund them through day care centres or through some other means like schools, is entirely up to the municipalities.

The hon. Member for Edmonton Norwood raised concerns about the inspection of day care centres. Again, this is the kind of issue that has two edges. On one hand, we are sometimes criticized for not being rigid enough with the 353 licensed day care centres in the province. I will certainly take note of the hon. member's concerns and raise those with our new executive director of the day care branch. I reiterate that after-school care is not a provincial program; it's not a program that we set any guidelines on. It's at the discretion of the municipalities. If the municipalities choose to fund it, they do so under the general guidelines of family and community support service.

The hon. member's questions relative to community support allowances for areas where programs like neighborhood improvement, a federal program, are initiated: these clearly fall within the broad definition of family and community support services, and would be at the discretion of the local municipality.

The hon. member for Edmonton Gold Bar raised some very good concerns about the placement of handicapped youngsters. He raised the question of professional judgment, available resources, and the very sensitive matter of the parents' own involvement with the ability of their children to be placed. It's a complex issue when you're talking about whether a youngster can best be served in a group home setting or an institutional setting. In no case — I want to reiterate — in no case, do we tell parents that their children should leave their home. In all cases, the department responds when parents cannot cope and feel that society has to assume the responsibility because, for a variety of reasons, the family is not able to. The hon. member asked me to give consideration to some appeal mechanism, and we will certainly be prepared to do that.

The Alberta Association for the Mentally Retarded has made known very clearly how it feels about institutions. That's laudable, in terms of a philosophy. We would like to see more individuals in group home settings, and we've asked the Alberta Association for the Mentally Retarded

and others to assist in that end, not by asking the government to build and operate the homes as part of government, but for the association and its members to go out and, with support from government — not guidance or direction — provide that service for their own children.

The task force reviewing services for the disabled — it's ironic; I met with the task force for an hour and a half on Friday and received a progress report. I was advised that to date they've received in excess of 150 briefs. They've had a lot of input and special requests from across this province. They are going into the High Level area, because people from that area said, very few groups come to visit us; we usually have to come out. In this case the committee felt they should go and see the community at first hand, see its resources, see some of its very special challenges, and go from there. I believe they've also looked at one or two other provinces. Their work is ongoing. They were given a time line of July 1. It's really too early to say whether they'll meet that, or whether they'll ask for and receive an extension of time.

MR. BATIUK: Mr. Chairman, I would just like to say that I really appreciate the program of de-institutionalizing the large accommodations. A few years ago, while a member of the Hospital Visitors Committee, I had the opportunity to go through the Deerhome Institution. I was quite impressed with the care the handicapped were receiving there, particularly under the conditions. Over 1,700 were there, so I thought they were getting reasonably good care. Now I see that there is a need for group homes. At that time, I was alerted that some in Deerhome had no contact with their parents. The parents or families were getting older. Maybe because of financial standards, they were not able to visit their families or closely related persons in Deerhome. I can see that institutionalizing has gone a far way. A year or more ago particularly, there was a lot of criticism about the care the handicapped were receiving.

I would like to bring to the minister's attention that we have an association for the mentally retarded in the town of Vegreville, and that is functioning very well. The association is comprised of fine, dedicated people who are going away out to bring the comforts of life a little better to these handicapped people.

I realize that about two years ago, the minister increased the support substantially. But I've noticed that over the last couple of years, the association in Vegreville had a considerable surplus that was turned back to the Treasury of the province. On my occasional visits I have found that the homes are very comfortable, and the food that is served is as good as the food I myself consume. I believe the dedication of many people of this province is providing for the success of these homes. Workshop 110 is another area where a number of handicapped are working. It's surprising how well they perform. They have annual sales of things they make. Above all, they are very proud of the work they are doing. So I think having these group homes was the right step. I know it's going to take a long time; this cannot be done overnight. But I think it's the right direction to go. Particularly, I think the concept of keeping the family closer together is going to be done that way. I hope the minister's direction will be to continue to expand into group homes, rather than the bigger institutions.

MR. KESLER: Mr. Chairman, just a few remarks to the hon. minister. As I glanced over some of the estimates,

one in particular brings a great deal of concern to mind. That's the one dealing with social allowances for single-parent families, where we have allocated some \$121 million. The minister has brought to our attention that day care has increased from \$10 million a few years ago, to the \$45 million we're looking at today.

My concern is that we're continually attacking the symptoms, and we fail to get to the problem. I certainly recognize that pressures of economic conditions make the department's job much tougher in these times. However, I think we all recognize that the family is the basic unit of society. When I see the drastic increase in single-parent allocations, it brings to mind that at this time, this province is experiencing the highest percentages of suicide and divorce in Canada. I appreciate that in bringing forth the decentralization program, the hon. minister has recognized that there is a problem, and that as we get farther away from that problem, it's much harder to deal with.

My concern is in relation to the percentage of dole — I guess that's the best way I can express it — or funding we allocate to these special areas. Again, I refer to the section where we have \$5.9 million for special groups, in relationship to 121,000. For the mentally handicapped, we have \$7.7 million. Those are the areas where I think we have a high degree of acceptability. Those are the areas where I think it's easy to justify those figures. Perhaps those figures could be higher; I don't know, because I'm not in the department.

I wonder how much emphasis is being put on programs of counselling; for instance, in this decentralized program, marriage counselling at the community level, and with family breakdowns specifically. As we go through these estimates, I think those are the areas where we have the highest percentage of spending.

I received a notice just the other day that a new program is being implemented through the department in some areas to try to get more community involvement. A certain amount of funding will be made available to the communities at that local level, to deal specifically with some of these problems. I wonder if the minister could indicate the degree of emphasis being placed on those particular programs today. As we face these economic conditions, and as people face harder times, I think we're going to be faced more and more with these social problems in society. These figures are going to have a tendency to escalate very rapidly. So I think that even if we have to go back and review, now is the time to ensure that we have some very significant programs in place to begin serious family counselling and serious marriage counselling at the community level, so that we can begin to overcome the drastic increases we face.

In past weeks, I've had an opportunity to discuss some matters with the hon. minister. I commend him for the stance he's taking on decentralization. I think it's certainly the right direction to be taking. I'm very curious and interested to watch the effect it will have in the province over the next year.

Basically those are my concerns: that we start attacking the problem, not the symptoms, and put more emphasis in that direction.

MR. MAGEE: Mr. Chairman, my remarks will be very brief. A subject very relevant to my constituency is the Michener Centre. As this minister, particularly, has developed the group home concept throughout the province, I know that a tremendous movement of people has taken place; the rehabilitation of many people once felt to be institutionalized for life, have now, through the efforts

of rehabilitation, been able to move to their own communities in the group home system.

Together with that, of course, comes the other situation. As our population grows, we automatically get a percentage of people who, due to the unfortunate vagaries of life, come to us or are born into our society, so greatly disadvantaged through types of incapacity that it's necessary to place them in an institution. As far as our lifetimes are concerned, Michener Centre will probably always be an institution for those very incapacitated people. Consequently, this creates a whole new dimension of care, because a greater number of these individuals within that institution will need more personalized care.

Last year, the minister made a great effort to improve the staff requirements in that institution, I think by some 243 persons. This was very greatly appreciated by parents who have moved to or live in the Red Deer area because of their children being in that institution, probably for the rest of their lives. Another initiative was \$1 million spent on just one building to adapt it for fewer people being put together for recreational purposes, or whatever, in day rooms. A great deal of effort was made in that direction.

I'd be very interested to know the ongoing plans. I notice there's been a considerable increase under Vote 7 in the estimates, regarding the Michener Centre. I know the citizens of Red Deer would be very interested to know what steps are still going on, and what the future holds for that institution.

I'd like to touch very briefly on one other subject. I'm delighted with the progress that has been made in the family and community support services program. Three other colleagues in this House and I were engaged in trying to assess preventive social services in the province. Again, I notice there has been a considerable increase in funding for that. I would like the minister to go maybe a little further than before. To what degree are the volunteer organizations in the community starting to react to this new program? The funding on the 80:20 basis, while under the guidance of the various boards and then, through the municipal councils to the minister's office in making requests for 80 per cent assistance to their 20 per cent funding — I'm curious to know if volunteer organizations are starting to come forward with dollars, and getting approval for preventive programs they might be interested in. Through channelling moneys through the board and through the municipal councils, are they in effect starting to react to the intent of the program, which of course was primarily to give autonomy to local communities to develop programs, and to stimulate volunteerism in the communities.

I think those are really the two main thrusts of the 11 suggestions that came forward from the MLA committee on this program. I'm curious to know how the program is progressing in that respect, and I'm sure other members are also.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Chairman, I'd like to cover one subject and save the others for the next day. The minister has touched on the concept of decentralization only on the basis that, as I understand, it is not quite implemented and not quite in place at this point in time. The concept was to hire the six regional directors. I'm concerned that if it's going to deliver services better to the various clients across the province, whoever they are, decentralization as such may have some merit.

This is only a minor observation at this time, but the one case I dealt with in my constituency, where normally I would deal directly between the social worker and the

constituent, we dealt through this new regional office. I felt, why was that happening? If all my constituent problems, on a very practical basis, were going to be funnelled through this regional director, we're creating another level of bureaucracy and intervention between the client to be served and the professional, the social worker. People at the regional office level are not professional in terms of social work. They're supposedly administrators. That was my only contact. I haven't had a significant number of those kinds of cases brought to me.

I must say that I haven't had a significant number of complaints relative to social allowance or family breakdowns in terms of dollars and cents, but I have in other areas of counselling. I'd appreciate very much if the minister would expand a little further on what has happened. First of all, I understand there was the training of the new personnel; secondly, they were placed in their offices as administrators. I'd be interested to know how many people are under their care, how far their jurisdiction goes, what their task is, if any, in terms of intervening between the professional and the user of the services. If it's just another layer of bureaucracy, nobody wants that. We don't need that today. There are enough people out there under economic pressure who need financial help that we could possibly funnel from the administrative staff to the people who really need it. I'd appreciate the minister going into more detail, so that we better understand that concept.

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Chairman, first to respond to the hon. Member for Vegreville regarding his own Vegreville Association for the Mentally Retarded and the support they're giving in the community. We will continue to give a high priority of support to locally based voluntary organizations providing much needed services for some of our citizens of this province who are disadvantaged in one way or another. I'm pleased to see the hon. member taking the active interest in the association that he obviously has over the years.

The Member for Olds-Didsbury has raised the classic problem we face. On one hand, we have to provide rehabilitative services to those people who in some way have become victims within our society, while at the same time our thrust must continue to be on the preventive side. We've got to do all we can as a society and as a government to put measures in place that will prevent people from failing, so we don't have to put the emphasis on the rehabilitative side. That's the thrust with the home care program on the health side, and with the family and community support service program. So, notwithstanding the large and substantial support we're giving to single parents and day care, there must be a continued emphasis. That's one of the reasons for the new development of family and community and support service, and the offer to municipalities across the province, so they can pick their priorities, not us; not civil servants who work for the department, but people out in the communities, the towns and cities across the province, can decide where their priorities are. That way we can actually put the emphasis on the preventive side.

I appreciate the comments of the hon. Member for Red Deer relative to Michener Centre. Over the past two years, I believe we have in fact increased some 227 staff positions at the institution. Our long-term goal is for a reduction of the population in Michener Centre. We're constantly looking for ways to achieve that end.

As to the family and community support service program and whether volunteers are responding to it the way

we hoped they would, the answer is: I think so. As the last fiscal year has just concluded, we have not yet had the audited statements from the municipalities, so we don't have the definitive answer to that yet.

The hon. Member for Little Bow raised a question relative to the role of the regional office and the interface between an MLA and a district office. I'm pleased I'm able to respond to it today. There is no way an MLA should be going through a regional office on a local matter. Many MLAs who have talked to me have established good working relationships with their district offices over the period of time. That's the relationship that should continue. The role of the regional director and the regional director's staff is to co-ordinate the activities within that region. It is not in any way to be a filter or barrier between an MLA and the district office. I'd appreciate more information on the specific matter the hon. member has raised.

When you talk about making a massive change in a department with over 9,000 employees, you can't do it in one fell swoop. I would only like to add, regarding the phases we're at, that we've tried to do this in a very orderly way. The first phase was to develop the regions, to develop the criteria, to look at the kinds of things that should be transferred. We created a total of 18 new positions province-wide; that's all. The other 300-plus are positions which will be transferred from central office to the various regions. That's going to happen over a period of months. We are assisting those staff members who are not anxious to transfer to find other positions, but the transfer will take place in an orderly way over a period of time. The intent is to ensure that the decision-making, from all aspects, as much as is humanly possible and practical, is in the local regions of the province, rather than at the central office level.

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Chairman, in light of the time, I move that the committee rise, report progress, and ask leave to sit again.

[Motion carried]

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

MR. PURDY: Mr. Speaker, the Committee of Supply has had under consideration certain resolutions, reports progress thereon, and requests leave to sit again.

MR. SPEAKER: Having heard the report and the request for leave to sit again, do you all agree?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, the House will sit in Committee of Supply again tomorrow evening — the estimates of the Department of Social Services and Community Health. If there is time after that, either Tourism and Small Business or Transportation might be called.

I might just mention that on Friday we want to proceed with some second readings rather than Committee of Supply, and give hon. members that much notice of an intention to change to consideration of second readings, mostly the ones on the Order Paper. A few might stand at second reading for a while without being moved. I'll try to give hon. members some indication of that. If there are Bills that hon. members particularly want to discuss, as to holding them at second reading, that could certainly be considered.

[At 5:31 p.m., pursuant to Standing Order 5, the House adjourned to Thursday at 2:30 p.m.]