

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ALBERTA****Title: Monday, May 14, 1984 2:30 p.m.**

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

**PRAYERS**

[Mr. Deputy Speaker in the Chair]

**head: INTRODUCTION OF BILLS****Bill 51****Small Business Equity Corporations Act**

MR. ADAIR: Mr. Speaker, I request leave to introduce Bill No. 51, Small Business Equity Corporations Act. This being a money Bill, His Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor, having been informed of the contents of this Bill, recommends the same to this Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, the principle of the Bill is to create the opportunity to stimulate the formation of pools of equity capital by relatively small investors throughout the province of Alberta. Once formed, the private-sector equity capital pools would provide small businesses with access to equity capital, which has been difficult to obtain through current programs and practices. These pools of equity would also provide a means whereby Alberta small businesses are able to replace debt with equity, thus resulting in a better financial structure.

[Leave granted; Bill 51 read a first time]

**Bill 42****Alberta Corporate Income Tax  
Amendment Act, 1984**

MR. HYNDMAN: Mr. Speaker, I request leave to introduce Bill No. 42, the Alberta Corporate Income Tax Amendment Act, 1984. This being a money Bill, His Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor, having been informed of the contents of the Bill, recommends the same to the Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, the purpose of the Bill is firstly to parallel the Bill just introduced by my colleague the Minister of Tourism and Small Business; then to enable the Alberta corporate tax system to deliver the small business equity corporation benefits to businesses in Alberta. Secondly, there are proposals for modification of the rules for calculating interest on excess refunds. There are provisions to enable the transition between the provincial and federal corporate tax legislation with respect to lost carrybacks, and there's clarification of exceptions with respect to communication of information under the Act, as well as some largely technical amendments in the Bill.

[Leave granted; Bill 42 read a first time]

**Bill 13****Planning Amendment Act, 1984**

MR. KOZIAK: Mr. Speaker, I request leave to introduce Bill No. 13, the Planning Amendment Act, 1984.

The principles contained in Bill 13 are those that were approved by this Assembly last fall in Bill 102, also an Act to amend the Planning Act, with certain refinements in areas of the Bill as a result of discussions that have taken place subsequent to the fall session with associations representing local government in the province.

[Leave granted; Bill 13 read a first time]

**Bill 53****Rural Electrification Statutes  
Amendment Act, 1984**

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Speaker, I request leave to introduce Bill No. 53, Rural Electrification Statutes Amendment Act, 1984. This being a money Bill, His Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor, having been informed of the contents of this Bill, recommends the same to the Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, this Bill will amend three Acts. The Co-operative Associations Act, 1984: amendments to this Act require the sale of a rural electrification association to be approved by a two-thirds majority vote of members of the REA present at a general meeting. The Rural Electrification Revolving Fund Act, 1984, and the Rural Electrification Long Term Financing Act, 1984: amendments to these Acts provide direct loans to farmers where no rural electrification association exists. In the administration of these Acts, loans will be made available for large single-phase and three-phase power services, and the upper limit of loans to all farm customers will be increased from the current \$20,000 to the new figure of \$25,000 for individual services.

[Leave granted; Bill 53 read a first time]

**Bill 48****Cultural Foundations Amendment Act, 1984**

DR. CARTER: Mr. Speaker, I request leave to introduce Bill 48, Cultural Foundations Amendment Act, 1984.

The purpose of the Bill is to allow for the creation of a corporation to be known as the Alberta foundation for the literary arts. It is hoped thereby to continue to promote the literary arts in the province by providing persons, organizations, publishers, and those involved in marketing literary works in the province considerable assistance in this area, also support with respect to library services: in all, to support and contribute to the development of the literary arts in Alberta.

[Leave granted; Bill 48 read a first time]

**Bill 47****Alberta Art Foundation  
Amendment Act, 1984**

MR. McPHERSON: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce Bill 47, the Alberta Art Foundation Amendment Act, 1984.

There are four principles in this Bill: to enable the Alberta Art Foundation to make direct grants; secondly, to eliminate the requirement in the existing legislation for the province to make an annual grant of \$50,000 to the foundation — it's considered this is redundant in light of the increased funding through the proceeds of lotteries; thirdly, to enable the foundation to encourage public art galleries in Alberta in their work, as one of their stated objectives; and fourthly, to generalize ministerial direction to the foundation under section 8(3)(a).

[Leave granted; Bill 47 read a first time]

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, I move that Bills 47 and 48 be placed on the Order Paper under Government Bills and Orders.

[Motion carried]

head: **TABLING RETURNS AND REPORTS**

DR. WEBBER: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to file the response to Question No. 205.

MR. WEISS: Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to file five copies of the final report pertaining to the development of new agricultural land in northwestern Alberta. The report was prepared for the Northern Alberta Development Council by Woods, Gordon.

head: **INTRODUCTION OF SPECIAL GUESTS**

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, it's my privilege this afternoon to introduce to you, and through you to members of the Assembly, 15 grades 5 and 6 students from the Ministik school in the Clover Bar constituency. They are accompanied by their teacher Mrs. Proctor, and by parents Mrs. Dylke, Mrs. Loch, Mrs. Stannard, Mrs. Kurylo, and Mrs. Fokema. They are in the public gallery, and I'd like them to rise and be welcomed by the Assembly.

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Speaker, this morning I, along with members of both the utilities and the agriculture caucus committees, had the privilege of meeting with delegates from the rural electrification associations from across the province. There were 123 associations represented. In addition, there were delegates from the provincial union of REAs, as well as the three-phase power committee and the utility companies themselves. I see that we have some of those who were with us this morning in our gallery for this afternoon's House duties. I ask Dr. Alf McGhan, the president of the Alberta Union of REAs, his good wife, other members of the executive, and those who were at the meeting this morning, to rise and be acknowledged by the Assembly.

MR. McPHERSON: Mr. Speaker, today it's a pleasure for me to introduce to you and to other Members of the Legislative Assembly 34 grade 8 students from Central junior high in the constituency of Red Deer. Our students are accompanied by teachers Mr. Phil Jensen and Mrs. Judy Noble. They are seated in the public gallery, and I ask that they rise and be recognized by the House.

head: **MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS**

**Department of  
Utilities and Telecommunications**

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to announce today significant changes to the Alberta government's rural electrification program, including changes to policy and legislation.

These changes come following an extensive review of the current program and after thorough consultation with the rural electrification associations, the investor-owned utility companies, and interested individuals. Government MLAs are responding to the changing needs of Albertans in terms of rural electrification, and these changes being introduced by the government will adhere to the following principles: first, that farmers who belong to rural electrification associations should be allowed to continue that participation at their own discretion and that the government supports the improved viability of REAs; secondly, that farmers who are served directly by the investor-owned utility companies should be afforded the same

opportunities as the farmers who belong to REAs, by making direct financial assistance available for new power installations.

The government supports, in principle, significant changes to the master agreements between the investor-owned utility companies and the REAs. We fully recognize the dialogue which has been taking place between both parties regarding possible changes to the agreement. As such, we are encouraging the companies and the REAs to consider incorporating the following principles, as approved by this government, in the new master agreements: (a) that a uniform contract be used by the REAs and the companies and that where special circumstances warrant addenda to that contract, this would be encouraged; (b) that REAs have the option to provide all farm services, including single-phase and three-phase customers; (c) that the deposit reserve funds can be administered by the REAs; and finally, that REAs be given the right to hire their own contractors for original and reconstruction of their own distribution systems.

As well, Mr. Speaker, in the legislation introduced today I have outlined the specific changes to be incorporated in that aspect under both the Rural Electrification Revolving Fund Act and the Co-operative Associations Act. By these changes we are able to provide direct loans to farmers where no REA exists; to increase the upper limit of the loans to all farm customers from the current \$20,000 to \$25,000 for individual services; loans would be available for a three-phase power installation; and to restructure Part I and Part II loans for new services. Under the Co-operative Associations Act, the amendments require the approval of at least two-thirds of the members present to sell the assets of an REA to a utility company.

It is also government's intention, pursuant to the Electric Energy Marketing Act and through amendments to regulations, that the sale of power to REAs be at a common, pooled rate, delivered to the distribution system of all REAs in the province.

As a follow-up, over the next four months I will be meeting with the presidents of the utility companies, the president of the Alberta Union of Rural Electrification Associations and, I might add, the chairmen of both the agriculture and the utilities caucus committees. The meeting is intended to assess progress in achieving the goals set out, particularly with regard to the master agreements and the Electric Energy Marketing Act.

In conclusion, I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge all those individuals and groups who have worked so long and hard to bring these changes to fruition.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, in responding to the ministerial announcement, I certainly would like to extend congratulations to those volunteers, both in the union of REAs as well as the three-phase power committee, I believe, and the Region 6 Action Committee in the Peace River country, who have put in a good deal of time — at their own expense, I might add — in working closely with the government in developing a new policy.

A change of this nature requires a good deal of in-depth review. Looking briefly at the ministerial statement, it seems to me there are at least three important steps that my colleague and I can support: number one, that the deposit reserve should be administered by the REAs; number two, that REAs would be able to hire their own contractors for rebuilding the line, brushing, or that sort of thing; and number three, that with respect to sale of an REA, there must be a two-thirds majority. I think those are all important steps in the right direction.

Mr. Speaker, one area that doesn't seem to be covered in the ministerial announcement is the question of membership. It's obvious that membership is still restricted to farm operators. In expressing the view of my colleague and me, I underline

that there is intrinsic value in the operation of REAs in terms of protecting the consumer in the rural areas of this province, whether that consumer is a bona fide farmer or an acreage holder, and that in fact we would be strengthening the REAs if we allowed the REA to make the decision on who belongs to it. I say that from the vantage point of holding the view my party has held for a long time: we should move toward public ownership of power production. But in terms of protecting the consumer, even with public power I think there is an important role for the rural electrification associations.

I conclude my remarks, Mr. Speaker, by saying to members of the House that it is a pity there was not a freeze in place during the time this deliberation took place, because a number of REAs have been purchased. I hope this ministerial statement will be communicated to all the REA members in the province. I say that expressing the concern that many REAs were sold to the power companies, thereby depriving consumers of at least some influence in dealing with the large power companies. I for one think that the maintenance of the REAs is important, regardless of the final disposition of the production of power in the future, whether it be public or private.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Before we proceed to the next order, would the Assembly agree that the hon. Member for Red Deer might revert to Introduction of Special Guests?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

#### head: **INTRODUCTION OF SPECIAL GUESTS** (reversion)

MR. McPHERSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure for me today to introduce to you and to hon. members of the Legislature a former colleague of ours, the former Member of the Legislative Assembly for the constituency of Red Deer and former Attorney General of the province of Alberta, Mr. Jim Foster. Mr. Foster is seated in the members gallery, and I ask that he rise and be recognized by the Legislative Assembly.

#### head: **ORAL QUESTION PERIOD**

##### **Health Care Insurance Plan Administration**

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct the first question to the hon. Minister of Hospitals and Medical Care. It concerns certain reports over the weekend that the government has engaged Price Waterhouse to study the feasibility of farming out the administration of the health care insurance commission to private enterprise. Is the minister in a position to confirm whether or not such a contract was issued?

MR. RUSSELL: Yes it has been, Mr. Speaker, and I appreciate the opportunity of explaining it to members of the House. For several months we have been examining the desirability or possibility of having the administrative functions of the Alberta health care insurance plan done by the private sector, by contract to the government. I stress that we're looking at the administrative functions and not the insurance coverage program part of the health plan.

The first step in doing this is establishment of a request for a proposal, and that is the contract the hon. member is referring to. It's gone to a gentleman with the firm of Price Waterhouse, who will develop terms of reference for a request for a proposal that we'll put out and that I suspect will be examined by inter-

ested parties for several months prior to our deciding whether or not it would be advantageous to proceed any further.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question. Given the government's commitment to privatization, as expressed in the Speech from the Throne, and given the fact that the minister has had an opportunity to present his estimates — not passed, but presented — could the minister advise the Assembly why he did not give the House the courtesy of either supplying a ministerial announcement or at least making reference to this contract when he asked for his estimates to be passed by the House?

MR. RUSSELL: I think we're jumping the gun here a bit, Mr. Speaker. The contract that has been let is for the sum of \$7,500. So in the sort of overall measuring stick of government activities, it's not a very big contract.

All this gentleman is going to do is develop terms of reference to put in a request for a proposal. The approval for the contract was only issued at the beginning of this month, so it will be some time before that step is taken. Certainly members of the House would have been advised at an appropriate time.

MR. NOTLEY: Well, unless the minister wanted to pay for the contract himself, he should have brought it to the Committee of Supply. [interjection] It'll come, Mr. Minister.

MR. MARTIN: Don't get excited, Dick. You might get a question yet.

MR. NOTLEY: Don't worry about it, Dick.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask a supplementary question of the minister, notwithstanding the interjections of the hon. Minister of — what is it? — oh yes, Advanced Education. We hear him so little that we forget what his department responsibilities are. [interjections]

Before letting this contract, could the minister tell the House whether there was any assessment, from a legal point of view, with respect to section 8 of the Canada Health Act, which states that the provincial health insurance plans must be administered and operated on a nonprofit basis by a public authority. As I understand the contract, it is to look at the possibility of farming out the administration to private enterprise. Given that demand of section 8, what legal assessment, if any, was made?

MR. RUSSELL: Mr. Speaker, many times in this House I've said that the government will comply with the legal requirements of the new Canada Health Act. I've also said many times that we support, probably more strongly than any other province, the principles of medicare as espoused in that Act. So we're not really very concerned about the nonprofit or public administration part of the health care insurance plan. There's no question that those terms will be met. The government will still be administering the Alberta health care insurance plan. The only questions we're looking at are: is it going to be more effective, will it be cost saving, and will it give better service to the citizens if we hire somebody to do it on our behalf rather than do it ourselves?

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, what assessment did the minister make of the impact of this option on the morale of the commission staff?

MR. RUSSELL: Again, Mr. Speaker, I think the hon. member is getting a little ahead of himself. We haven't even got the terms of reference for the request for a proposal written yet,

and that is what the study the member is referring to is all about. At such time, in a few months, when we see the pros and cons of whether or not to proceed any further, that will certainly be one of the matters addressed. But I think I'd be shirking my duty if I weren't continually looking for ways to deliver services in a more effective way.

In fact, that's the exact method by which the two new urban hospitals are being built. The department is building them, but we're certainly not hiring all the people in-house to do all the work for us. It's being contracted out through a manager and through the outside private sector, and that's what we believe in. [some applause]

MR. NOTLEY: I wonder if they'll be applauding just before the next election. [interjections] They'll be backing off this, especially in Lethbridge East.

In any event, Mr. Speaker, since the government apparently has spent some time reviewing this option of undertaking this study, could I ask the minister whether or not he has received any representation from, or discussed any proposals with, anyone from the private sector regarding the private administration of the health insurance commission?

MR. RUSSELL: No, Mr. Speaker. As hon. members are aware, from time to time, either directly to me or through the media, various management firms have expressed interest in administering one or more hospitals. But to my knowledge nobody has had any discussions with respect to this proposal. Frankly I think it's quite an exciting one, and we're anxious to pursue the pros and cons and examine the potential advantages.

MR. NOTLEY: We'll welcome the debate over how exciting it is when we get into the estimates.

Mr. Speaker, could the minister tell the House whether or not the Price Waterhouse study is going to deal specifically with page 43 of the Hall commission report — the report made to the Joe Clark government, not the Pearson government — which indicates that private administration would add 10 per cent or more a year to the cost of the medicare system?

MR. RUSSELL: I suppose it will be looking at those things in an indirect way, Mr. Speaker. I said that the whole purpose of this was to see if we can give better service to the citizens of Alberta and the professions that deliver the health care services and to see if there is a potential cost saving. That really is the objective of the whole exercise, and I can't imagine why anybody in this House would object to that.

MR. NOTLEY: Again, Mr. Speaker, we'll debate that.

Could the minister give the House some indication as to the time frame for this little exercise? Unannounced to the House, the contract was apparently let in early May. When did the government agree in terms of letting the contract with the proponent? When will that contract be complete? When will the government be in a position to develop terms of reference for the privatization of the health care commission?

MR. RUSSELL: Mr. Speaker, I think the hon. member is doing a disservice to the citizens by trying to promote the idea that the health care insurance plan is being privatized. That is not what is happening. In his usual skillful way, he's trying to distort things and create worry where there ought to be none.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Shame.

MR. RUSSELL: Mr. Speaker, I'm told that the consultant hired at the beginning of this month to develop the terms of reference needs approximately one month to do that. When those are received and have been assessed by the department and me, we'll see in what form the request for a proposal should go out. I imagine the request for a proposal will go out during the summer. Because of the complexity of the matter, I understand it will be several months before interested companies would be in a position to respond. So if the fall session goes late, hopefully I will have something to report to members by the end of the fall session.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, the more the minister answers, the more reason for concern there is.

Could the minister tell the House whether, in his discussion with the Price Waterhouse people undertaking this study, any major views were expressed by the minister on behalf of the government with respect to the request for a proposal? On what areas did the government specifically ask Price Waterhouse to advise the government?

MR. RUSSELL: Mr. Speaker, the health care insurance plan has two main functions, and we should be careful to distinguish those from the purpose of the health plan. The purpose of the health plan is to provide universal health care insurance to the citizens of Alberta. The functions in carrying that out are primarily twofold: on one hand is the collection of premiums, and on the other hand is the payment of claims for services rendered by the medical professions. We're interested in seeing if any or all those functions, as distinguished from the purpose, can be carried out more efficiently and better by the private sector on behalf of the plan.

### Hospital Management

MR. R. SPEAKER: A supplementary question to the minister, and it's with regard to the RFP. After 13 years, it's nice to see it brought back on the table again.

My question to the minister is with regard to the administration of the two new hospitals. Did the minister say that the RFP technique would be used in setting up the private administration for these two new hospitals, as indicated earlier?

MR. RUSSELL: No, Mr. Speaker, I used the two new urban hospitals as an example of a department of government having work done very effectively by the private sector on its behalf, as opposed to doing it by itself with in-house staff.

MR. MARTIN: One supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Could the minister indicate which hospital is being considered for private management, Calgary or Edmonton?

MR. RUSSELL: Mr. Speaker, I think it's fair to say that any hospital in Alberta could be considered for private management. On several occasions earlier in the House, I said that if a board of a hospital in Alberta is willing to go along with the idea and the opportunity is appropriate, it would be an excellent thing to try to see if there is a more efficient way of running a hospital.

There's a great deal of interest in seeing if that would work with one of the boards that would be administering the two new urban hospitals. Here's a unique situation in Canada: two identical hospitals, exactly the same age, serving almost identical demographic groups. I think we'd be doing the whole Canadian hospital service a great favour if we could set up a test pilot study, having one of those hospitals run in the traditional board manner and the other run by a private manage-

ment firm on behalf of the board responsible for it. The idea is out there, and I know there's a great deal of interest in it throughout Alberta. But we have three years to make up our minds before those hospitals are finished.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question on the subject being discussed. Could the minister advise the Assembly whether, in the planning going on at the present time, any consideration is being given to having an organization such as, say, Extendicare managing a number of hospitals in, say, southern Alberta or a number of the health organizations in southern Alberta? Is that one of the proposals the minister has been considering?

MR. RUSSELL: No, Mr. Speaker, we haven't specifically considered that idea. The name Extendicare has been mentioned. They presently run several private nursing homes. But that's outside the hospital system, except for *per diem* funding.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, we'll leave this question of the government's latest attempt to repeal the 20th century, and move on to the second question.

#### **Bond Street International Securities Ltd.**

MR. NOTLEY: With respect to Bond Street International Securities Ltd. and the administration of justice, could the hon. Attorney General advise the Assembly which officials were involved in the decision to review the committal to proceed with trial on Bond Street?

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, I take it the question is which officials were responsible for the decision in respect of a stay. I can answer the hon. member in greater detail today than I was able to the other day.

Out of interest, Mr. Speaker, the circumstances giving rise to the charge occurred some seven and a half years ago, I believe. After the matter had been in progress for about four years, the decision to take the stay was taken in 1982. Since last Friday I have refreshed my memory from files in connection with the matter. At the time, I indicated to the hon. leader that I had some recollection of having been briefed on the matter about two years ago.

in answer to his question today, there's no doubt that I myself confirmed the decision taken, and indeed recommended to me, by the senior officials in the department. At the time, that decision to enter the stay was recommended to me by the then Deputy Attorney General, on advice of counsel in the special prosecutions branch.

Mr. Speaker, I don't think I want to embark upon a custom, in the Assembly or elsewhere, of beginning to discuss the authors of individual opinions throughout the department.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, notwithstanding the minister's feeling, I'd like to be a little more specific and ask the minister whether or not provincial agent Ben Casson initiated the decision to stay the prosecution?

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, I think I've already answered that question.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question. Perhaps I could be a little more specific and ask whether or not there was any relationship between the decision to stay on March 22, 1982, and the subsequent demotion of Mr. Casson?

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, if the hon. leader wishes to pursue the sort of anxieties that may occur in the minds of counsel in the Attorney General's department that would cause them to make such a suggestion to him, he won't find that I'm able to confirm either anxieties or suspicions here.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, we'll leave that issue. Since the minister doesn't appear to want to answer in Oral Question Period, we may follow it through when he wants to get his money.

Could I ask a supplementary of the hon. Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs. Is the minister in a position to advise the House whether the Vancouver Stock Exchange, which eventually suspended Bond Street International, triggered the RCMP investigation by warning the Alberta Securities Commission that Bond Street had moved into Alberta, and warned it about the danger of that firm playing around and manipulating the market?

MRS. OSTERMAN: Mr. Speaker, that's a question I'll have to take as notice.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, aren't we just full of information today.

If the hon. minister is not able to answer that question, could she tell the House whether the Alberta Securities Commission conducted its own separate investigation of Bond Street International, and did it ever issue a cease-trading order against the company in Alberta?

MRS. OSTERMAN: Mr. Speaker, since it relates to a case that's obviously some seven years old, I'll also take that question as notice.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question. Could the minister tell the House whether there has been any review by her department or by the government, concerning some concern expressed by legal counsel over the lack of case law covering the manner in which broker/dealer firms cause the trading of their shares?

MRS. OSTERMAN: Mr. Speaker, I'm not aware — and in fact I have some difficulty comprehending the hon. member's question, with respect to what legal counsel he's referring to.

MR. NOTLEY: I'm not talking about government legal counsel. I'm talking about lawyers generally, who expressed concern about the lack of case law in view of the government's decision to stay the Bond Street question and not allow the thing to go to trial after going through the committal stage. As a consequence of this, has there been any review by the government of possible changes in legislation?

MRS. OSTERMAN: Mr. Speaker, I wouldn't be aware of a review that might have taken place some seven years ago. I'm sure the hon. Leader of the Opposition is aware that a new Securities Act came into force some two years ago, and indeed it may address some of the questions that have been raised.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question. Could the minister tell the House what steps, if any, she as Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs has taken with respect to the implications of the stay in 1982 on the adequacy of legislation? The minister indicated that new legislation has come in . . .

MR. COOK: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. I wonder if the question is in order, given the restraint on question period that questions seek information and be timely. This is almost a game of Trivial Pursuit on the part of the hon. leader. [interjections]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order please. I must confess I had some difficulty following the line of questioning. When a question is posed to a certain minister and the minister indicates they do not have the information at hand and would have to investigate and bring the information back, it always seems to me that it would be more productive for the member wishing to ask supplementary questions to hold those questions until the minister has the information available. Perhaps we could continue on that basis.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, just on the point of order. Since the minister has taken the issue under notice and will report back, I would certainly be quite happy to do that. I will pursue the questions tomorrow or the next day.

On the point the Member for Edmonton Glengarry was attempting to make, the fact of the matter is that questions that relate to the public well-being can appropriately be raised in the Assembly regardless of when they surface.

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, if I might intrude and perhaps seek the wishes of the Leader of the Opposition and you at this point. Because of the question to me on Friday, I'm prepared to respond further to the question in respect of Bond Street that the hon. leader asked at that time. Not to unnecessarily use up time, normally I would just indicate at the end of the question period that I was prepared to provide that answer. I wonder if, for the purposes of the continuity of the *Hansard* record and perhaps supplementaries by the hon. leader, he might want me to make some of those references now.

MR. NOTLEY: If the minister would like to do so now or in conjunction with his colleague tomorrow, that's fine.

MR. CRAWFORD: In particular, Mr. Speaker, I want to direct my mind to the portion of the question last Friday when he asked me if I was able to explain the department's position in entering a stay after having gained a committal at the preliminary inquiry level. That is an important question, Mr. Speaker, because I acknowledge that once a committal for trial has been obtained, the matter normally proceeds to trial.

The conclusion of the law officers who examined the evidence, including that given in the preliminary inquiry, was that since the charge was one of intention to defraud, the evidence would not be sufficient to gain a conviction, despite the committal. Based on some of the statements made by at least one witness during the course of the preliminary inquiry, the Crown counsel were led to the conclusion that the proof of the intent would be beyond the capacity of the evidence they had to present. For that reason, rather than undertake a lengthy and expensive trial, the decision was made to enter a stay.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, just a supplementary on that. Was that decision made on the basis of one individual Crown counsel's opinion, was it the collective judgment of the director — in this case Mr. Casson — the Deputy Attorney General, and the Attorney General after reviewing all the evidence, or was it based on the strength of a recommendation by the Crown counsel involved?

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, my review of memoranda from 1982 doesn't enable me to answer that question precisely.

But I can say to the hon. leader that maybe I can answer more precisely during my estimates. From what I've been able to review over the weekend, my impression is that that was the view of two senior counsel, concurred in by the Deputy Attorney General in addition to them, and ratified when they presented it to me.

#### University Graduates — Employment

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, my question to the Minister of Advanced Education is a follow-up to a question I asked last Thursday. It's with regard to the liaison between the department and a number of the graduates of various professional faculties at the University of Alberta specifically, but other universities as well. Is there some deliberate liaison going on that will enable these graduates to get employment and fulfill some of their articling responsibilities this summer?

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, I'm a bit lost as to the responsibility for employment coming to me. But I can simply indicate that we don't monitor the unemployment figures in the sense of the distribution of unemployment among various categories. However, we do work with the Department of Manpower, wherein we receive information as to what kinds of skills and trades may be required in the future. It's this kind of dynamic process which in fact allows institutions to adapt their curricula to be more in line with the changing situations before us. It's not for us to monitor, nor is it for us to guarantee that a simple period at a university or college is a guarantee of a job.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, the other question I raised the other day was with regard to the student assistance program. The Minister of Education indicated that employment of any kind triggers repayment of the loans. I direct my question to the Minister of Advanced Education. What happens in cases where the student does not obtain employment?

MR. JOHNSTON: Once again, Mr. Speaker, I'm in the fortunate position of being the one who gives out the money; the collection, unfortunately or fortunately, is left to the Provincial Treasurer.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, then I direct my question to the Provincial Treasurer.

MR. HYNDMAN: Maybe the hon. member could repeat the question in terms of the Provincial Treasurer's obligations.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, my question to the Provincial Treasurer is with regard to the case that arises when various students graduate from university and are unable to gain full employment for an extended period of time. They owe their loan, and they're going to default on it. What kinds of arrangements can be made for those students so their credit ratings are not affected?

MR. HYNDMAN: Mr. Speaker, it's difficult to deal with that in a general way. There are so many hundreds, perhaps thousands, of different situations with respect to various lending institutions, and the government as a guarantor of the moneys loaned to a student by a lending institution. Indeed there are also different situations with respect to each student. Recognizing that we have here a contract, a promise by the student to pay moneys back, in most cases I think efforts are made by the lending institution to try to be sensitive to and reflect difficult

temporary circumstances a student may find himself or herself in.

#### **Police Act Review**

MR. HYLAND: Mr. Speaker, my question to the Solicitor General is related to the Police Act. I've had discussions with councils in my area about how the Police Act affects them. Is a review of the Police Act under way by some sort of committee?

DR. REID: Yes, Mr. Speaker. In fact, a document has been distributed and is currently being reviewed by certain bodies in the province. We are awaiting responses to that document. The document includes a discussion paper and a potential draft new Police Act.

MR. HYLAND: Mr. Speaker, the Solicitor General named certain people the document was circulated to. Who are those people, and will all MLAs receive a copy of that document so that they can review it as well?

DR. REID: Mr. Speaker, perhaps I'd better explain some more. So far the document has been distributed to police commissions, chiefs of police of municipal police forces, and the commanding officer of K Division, Assistant Commissioner Whyte. It has also gone to the Law Enforcement Appeal Board, the bylaw enforcement officers association, and the association of police associations. At the moment it has also been distributed to the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association and some other bodies.

We felt that the document would be discussed between police commissions and municipal councils. We now understand that municipal councils or the mayors would like to have copies. There's a second printing under way, which will be distributed to mayors of towns, cities, and villages. I believe copies have already gone to municipal districts and counties. Out of that second printing, perhaps we'll have enough so that I can quite easily make them available to members.

The original intention was to give these various authorities time to discuss and submit recommendations or comments without the glare of the public eye on them. Perhaps we can distribute it to members in the meantime.

MR. HYLAND: A further supplementary, Mr. Speaker, again to the Solicitor General. What sort of time limit will these groups have to reply to this document? If it's a typical government document, it could be quite thick and quite lengthy.

DR. REID: Mr. Speaker, it is fairly lengthy. We originally felt there would be ample time to get the responses back by May 7. We have extended that to the end of the month, and we're anticipating the responses by that time.

MR. HYLAND: A final supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Will any recommendations have to come from the police commissions in these various towns, or will town councils be allowed to send their representations directly to you or the department? There is some conflict in some areas on certain [inaudible].

DR. REID: Mr. Speaker, we will accept responses from any of the bodies I mentioned. The responses should be back at the end of the month. At that time, if the House is still sitting, it's my intention to table the document in the Assembly and make it a public document. We'll accept responses from anybody,

or indeed from any individual citizen of Alberta, since policing is a relatively important matter to most individuals.

MR. McPHERSON: Mr. Speaker, a supplemental on the previous question. Can the Solicitor General confirm if the discussion paper that has been circulated suggests that unless counties, municipal districts, improvement districts, and cities, which now pay a portion of RCMP services, move to a municipal form of policing, they will have to pay all the services now partially paid by the province?

DR. REID: Mr. Speaker, I think we could get into a long discussion on the details included in the proposal. At the moment, those areas of the province that are not covered by a municipal contract are essentially covered by the provincial contract with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. One proposal in the document is that for those areas which now essentially receive policing completely paid by the province, there will be a per capita charge for the provision of those policing activities under the provincial contract. That would apply to communities that are too small to justify their own municipal contract with either their own municipal police force or the RCMP under a municipal contract, and would essentially help equalize payment across the province for normal police functions.

#### **Unapproved Private Schools**

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct my first question to the Minister of Education. In May 1981, did the minister make representation on behalf of Tofteld Christian Academy to the Attorney General or anyone in the Attorney General's department, seeking a stay in the proceedings launched against that school under the School Act?

MR. KING: Absolutely not, Mr. Speaker.

MR. MARTIN: A supplementary question. Is the minister saying no discussion was held with the Attorney General's department with regard to that particular case?

MR. KING: That is correct, Mr. Speaker.

MR. MARTIN: A supplementary question. Can the minister advise how many schools are currently operating illegally in Alberta? By that I mean how many have not been approved by the Department of Education.

MR. KING: If the hon. gentleman would give me the balance of question period, I'll be able to provide him with that information at the end of question period.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: It would appear that type of question should be on the Order Paper.

MR. MARTIN: A supplementary question. I'll come to another part of it. I believe the minister has said that officials of his department are now contacting operators of unapproved schools, directing that they apply for approval and giving them 90 days to do so, I believe. My question to the minister is: how many of these schools are being contacted, and what steps has the minister resolved upon to deal with schools that remain unapproved at the end of the 90-day notice period? Specifically, is prosecution under the School Act being contemplated?

MR. KING: Mr. Speaker, I am able to count more quickly than I am reputed to be able to read. We have sent 26 letters

to 26 operations throughout the province which, in our view, are schools unapproved by the Department of Education Act and therefore possibly in contravention of the Department of Education Act. I am not in a position to comment to the hon. member about what course will be pursued by the government or the department in the event that the operators of these institutions choose not to seek approval by the Department of Education. I am of course hopeful that they will.

MR. MARTIN: A supplementary question to the minister, Mr. Speaker. For the purpose of considering applications for approval from schools contacted, is any consideration being given to easing or in any way changing the qualifications under which currently approved private schools now operate?

MR. KING: No, Mr. Speaker.

MR. MARTIN: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. What steps will the minister take to ensure swift compliance by those unapproved private schools discovered by his officials with the provisions of the Fire Prevention Act regulations specifically applicable to schools? Will inspections of unapproved private schools by provincial fire inspectors be ordered as the existence of those schools is made known?

MR. KING: Mr. Speaker, I don't believe the Minister of Education has jurisdiction to order the inspection of any facility in the province by inspectors who are employed by another ministry of the Crown, or who operate subject to the legislation of another department. It would certainly be our intention, in the event that such situations became known to us, to communicate our knowledge to the Department of Labour, and in that case I expect that the facilities would be inspected by the appropriate authorities.

MR. MARTIN: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Given that most major children's immunization programs undertaken by public health officials are co-ordinated through public schools, what steps have been taken to ensure that the children enrolled in unapproved private schools, especially in urban areas, are covered by these otherwise virtually automatic immunization programs? What guarantee is there?

MR. KING: I think the hon. member's question turns on the phrase "co-ordinated through" the schools. They are not co-ordinated by the schools; they are co-ordinated by the local boards of health.

MR. MARTIN: A supplementary question to the minister. Is the ministry of education not doing anything to make sure these children are covered, or has it not had any contact with any other departments about it?

MR. KING: Mr. Speaker, immunization programs are not the responsibility of the Department of Education or of the local school board. It is a fact that immunization often occurs through the public schools as a matter of convenience and subject to an arrangement that is made locally between the board of health and the local school board. Immunization is the responsibility of the local board of health, not the department and not the school board.

MR. MARTIN: A supplementary question. Agreed, but it is the Department of Education that is responsible for the approval ...

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Would the hon. member proceed to the question. It has already been indicated twice that the questions are not specifically intended for the Minister of Education. One question should probably have been addressed to the Minister of Social Services and Community Health, and one might have been addressed to the Minister of Labour. Maybe the hon. member could be more specific. If they relate to education, they could be addressed there.

MR. MARTIN: A point of order, Mr. Speaker. It is the Department of Education that approves the schools. These other departments would not know about them unless the Department of Education tells them. That was the point I was trying to find out, if there has been this ongoing communication, because they do not know about them otherwise.

MR. KING: Mr. Speaker, the problem is that it is in the very nature of an unapproved private school that the Department of Education itself may not be aware of its operation.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I believe the hon. Minister of Social Services and Community Health wishes to respond to a previous question.

#### **University Graduates — Employment** (continued)

DR. WEBBER: Yes, Mr. Speaker. It relates to a question raised last Friday by the hon. Member for Little Bow. He raised a series of questions about studies of stress as they relate to unemployment.

The studies of mental health issues are prioritized and funded through the Provincial Mental Health Advisory Council. These are prioritized and funded after proposals are submitted to that council. No such studies were commissioned in that regard in the past year. I would indicate to the hon. member that the Canadian Mental Health Association has a study prepared, entitled *Unemployment: its impact on body and soul*. That study is available through the Canadian Mental Health Association for \$10.

#### **ORDERS OF THE DAY**

##### **head: COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY**

[Mr. Purdy in the Chair]

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The Committee of Supply will please come to order. May we have some order please.

##### **Department of Social Services and Community Health**

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Has the minister any opening comments?

DR. WEBBER: Yes, Mr. Chairman. I'd like to make a few comments with respect to the estimates for 1984-85. As Vote 11 relates to the hon. Member for [Lethbridge] West, the chairman of the Alberta Alcoholism and Drug Abuse Commission, he may want to follow up with some comments as well.

Overall, Mr. Chairman, the estimates reflect the objectives of the government and our department with respect to three areas, one being sound financial management, and secondly,

maintaining quality health and social services at the same time, and thirdly, reducing the size of the public service and in particular the number of employees in the Department of Social Services and Community Health.

On examining the estimates, members would find that the budget is essentially the same size as last year—about 1 percent increase in total. We have had an increase in the manpower cost because of the settlements of last year. We also have had a reduction because of abolishment of a number of positions. The total increase in the manpower area is some \$26.2 million, even though there has been approximately \$6.3 million savings with abolished positions. We have had a total reduction of 162 permanent full-time positions and 163.5 man-years. This follows last year, when we had a reduction of 155 permanent full-time positions.

In indicating there is this reduction in manpower, I'd like to stress that a small percentage of the positions were actually occupied. Of those that were, a number of those employees have been transferred into other positions or are in a retraining process. In fact there are only 21 employees at the present time that are left in the position of being placed into another position or are in the process of retraining.

The most significant element of the budget, Mr. Chairman, relates to social allowance. Members will note that this year there's a reduction in the overall size of the social allowance budget, \$436 million as opposed to \$472 million in last year's estimates. The reason for the decrease relates to the decreased number of people on social allowance from what we had forecast for last year. We had forecast a caseload of some 56,000 clients or cases, and it actually turned out to be about 45,000. This year we are forecasting a caseload of approximately 48,000, which is down considerably from our forecast for last year. There are a number of reasons for this decreased caseload, but the primary reason is the number of social allowance recipients that actually left the province during the course of the past year. There were other reasons, but that was the most significant factor.

Also in the area of the social allowance vote, we made some changes last year, if hon. members recall, where we increased the amount of money social allowance recipients could earn without any reductions in their social allowance, and made other changes including a reduction in the shelter ceilings. Those changes have gone very well in regard to social allowance recipients who may have run into some difficulties being able to have their cases considered either through the regional directors or through the appeal committees.

Another important aspect of the overall budget is the \$139 million for child welfare services. We have made a commitment to provide services as close to the people in the community as possible. We have a decrease in the total staff in the central office and an increase in staff in the delivery system in the regions. Members might also be interested to know that there's been a decrease from some 18,500 to some 16,000 in the number of children on the child welfare caseload.

Day care is another area I want to comment briefly on, indicating that we have had considerable pressures in the day care budget, primarily because of an increase in the number of children being placed in day care centres. As well, we've had a significant increase in the number of day care centres in Alberta in the last year. The number of day care centres has increased, the number of children going into day care centres has increased, but the vacancy rate has stayed about the same provincewide, being in the 20 to 25 percent range. So the increase in the number of day care centres has increased the demands with respect to operating budgets, and the increased

number of children in the day care centres has increased the demands relative to the subsidy that follows the child.

We've made significant changes to the aids to daily living and extended health benefits programs in the past year as well. We are very encouraged with the way these changes are initially appearing to help us in bringing the whole program into better financial perspective. However, we do see in the budget this year some 50 percent increase in the amount of money made available for those two programs. One significant feature of the extended health benefits and aids to daily living programs is the involvement of the health units in terms of assisting the department in approving the benefits under those two programs.

Home care is an area where I'm very, very pleased that we have increased the budget significantly. The total budget last year was about \$18 million, and we've added another \$10 million in that area, for a 55 percent increase. The primary component of that relates to a change in the entry to the program. As hon. members may know, in the past a medical entry requirement was there. A person had to have a medical condition that required either nursing or rehabilitative services. If they qualified for that, then they would qualify for other services such as homemaking. Meals on Wheels, and those kinds of services. We've expanded the program to the frail elderly and the handicapped who may not have a medical condition that requires treatment, but they do require homemaking kinds of services. With this particular change, we anticipate we'll be able to provide services to a significant number of Albertans who otherwise would not receive the benefits of the program.

Another important component of the home care program is in the area of palliative care. We had a debate in this House last week with respect to palliative care. Of a \$10 million increase in home care, \$1 million relates to home care for those people requiring palliative care services. There was a component of the home care budget in the past that related to palliative care, but we have now identified this as a major component and increased the amount of money there by another \$1 million.

Mr. Chairman, I want to comment on a couple of other areas. One is with respect to Baker Centre in Calgary, where we've been able to establish about \$21 million through this year's budget for construction of that very important facility to Alberta. The facility will be built on the current Baker site, replacing the current buildings — one major medical centre on that particular site with a series of group homes surrounding it and, in addition, a number of group homes in the communities throughout Calgary: in total, some 11 group homes in addition to the medical facility right at the Baker site.

Another point I want to raise, Mr. Chairman, relates to the announcement some weeks ago about the medical diagnostic review in the southwestern portion of the province, where for a number of years people in several communities have been concerned about possible health effects related to the nearby sour gas plants. After many years of many studies, we have announced that we will be proceeding with a very thorough medical diagnostic review, which has two very important components. The first component is the involvement of the people in the communities that were announced, those communities being Twin Butte, Hill Spring, Mountain View, and Glenwood. For any kind of study to be successful, it not only has to be acceptable to the people in the area, it also has to be acceptable to the scientific community. In this respect, we have a scientific advisory committee that will be meeting with the people in those communities to establish the terms of reference for a medical diagnostic review. Once that's established, the review will proceed. Mr. Chairman, I welcome any questions or comments related to that particular review.

In closing, Mr. Chairman, I'd like to indicate that in the past year there have been some departmental changes with respect to responsibilities. We will be announcing in the not too distant future the person to go into the deputy minister position for social services. I look forward to that. But I regret the fact that we will be losing the Deputy Minister of Community Health, Dr. Sheila Durkin, who will be retiring very shortly and is leaving July 1. I have enjoyed working with her and want to publicly indicate that I've really enjoyed our relationship since I've been minister, and wish her and her husband all the best in their retirement.

With those comments, Mr. Chairman, I look forward to any questions.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Has the Member for Lethbridge West any comments?

MR. GOGO. Yes, thank you, Mr. Chairman. First of all, the amount requested from the Legislature this year by the government is indicated in Vote 11 of the departmental budget. The amount of \$25.7 million is, I believe, an indication of the confidence the government has with regard to the Alcoholism and Drug Abuse Commission doing a good job. It represents an increase of almost 10 percent, which is quite substantial. AADAC operates in three primary areas: treatment and rehabilitation, education, and direct assistance to agencies throughout the province. I think it should be noted that there has been great progress in the past year. In no small way, the government has recognized this in the budget now before the Legislature.

I'd like to indicate that we're all aware that the economic downturn has caused a fair dislocation in terms of many people's lives. The number of people coming for treatment at AADAC is increasing. Some 16,000 were treated last year, and that will be far surpassed this year. Uniquely, among them are many young people.

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, I guess the major claim to fame is not just the way AADAC responds to the needs of Albertans. For example, the budget is at least double and perhaps five times larger than any other jurisdiction in Canada. It gives me as chairman a great deal of satisfaction that Albertans generally are strongly supportive of the programs conducted at AADAC. The one serving greatest interest obviously is that involving young people. We now have some pretty definitive information that teenage drinking is down substantially in this province compared to at least one other province that we monitor. I think that is a direct result of many people, not just dollars but the involvement of school trustees, school teachers, and many citizens in Alberta who finally have accepted that alcohol and drug problems are community problems. They're not government problems, they're not agency problems, but indeed they are community problems.

I welcome any questions members have, Mr. Chairman, when we get to Vote 11 or at any time. I would like to close by simply saying to members of the committee that AADAC is well served by the 11 citizens appointed by government to achieve the goals of the commission. We have some 36 agencies around Alberta, nonprofit societies, where many, many volunteers give of their time. The commission and certainly the government are very thankful for that.

As we come into the fiscal year, although we're well into the year in actual practice, we at AADAC look forward — and I'm speaking now on behalf of the commission and the executive director, Mr. Skirrow — to being able to respond in a very substantial way to an ever-increasing problem, namely alcoholism and drug abuse.

Thank you.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Chairman, a few general comments with some general questions, and then we will get into the specifics. Going through vote by vote, we'll get into things in a little more detail.

First of all, Mr. Chairman, to the Member for Lethbridge West. I don't know if I've done this before, but I've mentioned privately to the member that in my previous job, before I was in this wonderful institution here, I had occasion from time to time as a high school counsellor to utilize the services of AADAC here in Edmonton. I can suggest that I was extremely pleased by the reaction, in terms of having had some parents and some students go for help in learning how to deal with the situation. I was extremely impressed with the staff, and I was very pleased with what happened there. I was also very pleased — I guess I might as well be positive about things. I believe the advertising, especially for young people, has been good. It's well done; it's not the preachy type of advertising that can turn young people off. You can turn them off rather quickly if you overexaggerate the case or say don't do it for some moralistic reasons. I think it put the case well and was good advertising.

I was interested in the Member for Lethbridge West's comment that in monitoring, somehow teenage drinking has actually gone down per capita in Alberta. I'd like him to comment some more when we come back. That's interesting because I understand that overall, the other part of the population seems to be going in the other direction. Maybe he can enlarge on it. If I'm reading press reports correctly, we have the highest per capita. It was in the news perhaps a couple of weeks ago. But I'd be interested in terms of those comments.

All in all, Mr. Chairman, I would say that AADAC does an excellent job. I as one member am very pleased to support the work they're doing.

To tie into my usual theme to the minister, I think it's important to look at what is going on overall. I know that from time to time we've talked to the Minister of Manpower about the unemployment rate. I think it's a serious problem and, I suggest, an ongoing problem. As the minister is well aware, it very directly affects his department. I'm not going to talk today about the economics of it. I'm sure the minister is well aware of the recent figures. It is especially hard in our two major cities. I believe Calgary now has 13.1 percent officially unemployed, and we don't know what the so-called hidden unemployed is. Edmonton, my city, is at 14.3 percent.

The point we try to make is that over the years, as we consistently have a high unemployment rate month after month, especially among young people, it's certainly going to put some controls or pressure on that particular department in social services, perhaps more than any other department. I know the minister has said from time to time that he's not sure about the social breakdown of society. If I'm quoting him properly, and I wouldn't want not to do that, he indicated that certain people said that in boom times there were pressures and in recession there are problems of social breakdown. Probably both cases are true. That's the reality of it. In boom times a lot of people move into a province. They do not have the support services of their families and other areas. As we saw in the '70s, often they came here unqualified for the types of jobs that were here. So it did put problems at that time. But in a recession it's a different sort of problem, perhaps even more severe.

I've mentioned this to the minister. I take it he has had a chance to look at the book called *Unemployment: its impact on body and soul*, that was released about a month and a half ago by the Canadian Mental Health Association. If we want to go through the studies, I think they're probably correct. I suppose you could have a sociologist go through and question the

studies, but I refer the minister to some of the things. These reflect directly on what's going to happen here, because we're just into the start of huge unemployment in this province. As I mentioned before, but I think it's important to say it to this minister, it deals with police studies in Toronto in 1980. It showed that of 100 wife beaters, 80 percent were unemployed. That's the type of pressure that would be on the equivalent department in Ontario. In the U.S. in 1980, unemployed people had a divorce rate seven times higher than employed people. With a high divorce rate, the possibility is there for pressure on the minister's department. In Windsor in 1980 — and this is directly what happened there when unemployment soared to 20 percent — there was an increase of from 25 to 377 percent in the caseloads of local service agencies. According to David Randall, the chairperson of the Canadian Mental Health Association, the single best indicator of child abuse is having an unemployed father in the home.

We can go on and on and on. There are the other studies in U.S. research I've mentioned before, but I think it's appropriate because it falls very much in this minister's department, that indicate that for every 1 percent rise in unemployment something like 4.3 percent more men and 2.3 percent more women are admitted to state mental hospitals for the first time. I'm sure the minister's aware of a recent article in the paper, particularly about the suicide rate in the city of Edmonton at this particular time. We find that that would follow because, according to this research, 4.1 percent more people commit suicide. It goes on and on: 4 percent more people in prison, more people are murdered, and so forth.

The point I'm trying to make, Mr. Chairman, is that it's all right to say that we're going to try to cut back as much as we can and be as lean as we can. But I suggest to the minister that the longer we have a high unemployment rate, the longer it goes on year after year after year, the more pressure there is going to be on those services. Maybe a person can last on UIC for a while. If you're unemployed for only two, three, four, five, or six months, certainly you're on UIC. But the other factor is that at that stage you're still hopeful that you're going to get a job, retain your dignity, and be back working and productive. It's after a period of time when a person is unemployed that the pressures start to build in terms of what the hon. Member for Lethbridge West was talking about, an increase in the services there in terms of alcoholism and in terms of the other social breakdown. It's after a period of time.

I suggest to the minister that the huge unemployed we have in this province is a fairly recent phenomenon, and that unless the unemployment rate miraculously comes down in the next little while — the Provincial Treasurer says don't expect it, it's going to be at least at the national average; that's the route I would like to go, but it's not in this minister's domain to put people back to work — over the next year or two or three, you're going to see an increase in the types of services that are needed. We can go one or two ways, Mr. Chairman. We can say, well, too bad; we're not going to provide those services; we're going to be lean and clean and mean and all the things that privatization does and that's talked about. But I suggest to the hon. minister that prevention and backup is going to be needed, because over the long haul not only do we pay the social costs there but I believe it costs more money. We can build more jails and have more welfare and all the rest of it. So whatever we can do in terms of preventive social services is extremely important at this point.

My point in going through unemployment again, Mr. Chairman, is just to point out to the minister that while he indicated there was some decline in the number of social welfare recipients in the province and that some of the people had moved

back, and I expect that's true, I think the people we now have here intend to stay in Alberta or they would have gone by now, and the pressures will increase there.

Mr. Chairman, I just mention this quickly, because it will be coming up in terms of the Child Welfare Act. I've indicated that I believe this is a good Act, but I don't believe there's going to be enough money in the budget to do that adequately.

I just say to the minister that I hope he is monitoring what is going out there. Mr. Minister, you talk in the House and say certain things, and we as lay people, legislators, hear different things when we talk, as I do, to other people, people who are out in the field. I'm sure the minister is aware. So we get conflicting ideas. We're told by the minister that the demands are down and everything is generally going along fairly smoothly. When we talk to people who are actually in the field we get a different perspective, that there are some real hardships out there. The minister and I have disagreed on this philosophically. I don't think the food banks are necessarily the way to go. I've talked to them recently, and the food banks are facing a lot of pressure now. The food banks may be useful right now because they're a necessity, but over the long haul I believe that's still not the way to deal with serious problems of poverty, if you like, in this particular province.

So my general comments to the minister are that I do not think there is enough support staff to do the job and save money over the future. I have some general comments there. In the past year, I believe the department eliminated 155 full-time positions. Now we're told in these estimates that another 162 positions will be eliminated. That varies across, but what concerns me — and this is a general question to the minister. I think where we have to cut as much as possible — and I've said this to other departments — is in the support services to the minister's own office, if you like, the deputy ministers' offices and these types of people. But if I'm correct about this, there's very little change there. While departmental support services account for 17 percent of the budget staff, only 2 percent of those positions will be lost at that level. On the other hand, services for the handicapped — there are 99 positions, and that is 61 percent of the staff cutbacks despite the fact that it has less than a third of the staff of the department. I would ask the minister to perhaps fill us in why that is the case. It seems to me that if we want to cut and be lean, do it out of support services. But I think we need an increase in the frontline workers because of what I've tried to explain about the serious recession we're in, and I believe it's going to put a lot of pressure on our services in the future.

I want to get into a couple of other areas generally, Mr. Chairman. I believe the minister is well aware of a study that dealt with mental health. Actually there are three reports that I'm aware of: *Chronic Mental Disorders in Canada: A Needs Assessment Project*, the *Southern Alberta Study of Psychiatric Needs and Provisions* and, more recently, I believe last summer, since we haven't had a chance to go into the estimates, *Backwards from Back-wards* by Jon Murphy for the Boyle Street Community Services Co-op. It's the one I'd like to talk to specifically and see if anything's been updated there since then.

I'm sure the minister is well aware that the Boyle Street Co-op study is particularly disturbing. It shows that institutionalization has proceeded quickly in Alberta over the last decade but has not been accompanied by adequate follow-up service or after-school care for patients. I believe that back in the late 1960s, there was a study which indicated moving away from institutions and having the community more involved. I do not disagree with that as a proposition. It makes good sense. But as Boyle Street indicated, and they have follow-up studies

that I'm sure the minister is aware of, you can't just say, okay, we're not going to have institutions. We've cut back the Alberta Hospital. I believe it's reduced in size by more than half as part of this effort, but still two-thirds of the budget is devoted to institutions. It seems to me that if we want to move in that direction, and again I don't quarrel with that direction, you have to provide the backup services. What the Boyle Street Co-op study was saying, Mr. Chairman, is that people were just being dumped, mainly into the inner city, with no follow-up services. They were being released from Alberta Hospital and yet there was not the proper backup in terms of housing and the necessary counselling services.

Maybe the minister disagrees with the study, although the minister is aware that they document case by case. I think they've done a pretty thorough job with it. But recognizing that it was last summer, perhaps since then there's been some work done to see what could be done there. I haven't heard of any, Mr. Chairman, but if there are some studies or there is some move by the department and the government to do something, I'd be interested in that. I'd like the minister's comments, because it is a very scary situation.

If I recall, what the Boyle Street Co-op asked for — and I don't think it was unreasonable at the time — was that there be a wide-ranging commission of inquiry into the community mental health care and that the government should "halt immediately" the practice of denying treatment to uncertified patients who decline medication and should begin a "crash program" for provision of "civilized" housing for the mentally ill who find themselves without support or resources in the inner-city. I guess those are three things that would be a start, if you like, in solving a very serious problem. Living close to the inner city as I do, and knowing some of the concerns of the people, it is something they are extremely concerned about. When this issue was raised, we had a number of calls about it. I'd ask the minister to comment on that study and what the government is doing about it.

The other area I would like to briefly mention — we've had discussions, not so much in this session but in the other session, about day care regulations. We will probably disagree philosophically about the need for day care. I see it as an important preventative social service, but of course I believe that it's not an appropriate place to necessarily make a buck. I know the minister disagrees with that. What concerns me even more, whether it's private or public day care, is the regulations. When I go through, Mr. Chairman, I'm told by day care people that we have the lowest regulations in the country in terms of qualifications for teachers. We've seen studies where they go right across the country. It's my understanding that all you basically need is to be 18 years of age and have at least one person with first aid. I hope the minister would look at this area, because to me early childhood education is just as important as when we get into public school. Surely we would not say a person with those qualifications could teach grade 1. The minister is well aware that we wouldn't. It seems scandalous to me that these regulations are that low.

I guess this is the question I come to, Mr. Chairman. If I recall correctly, the minister's predecessor had been talking about a trained staff registry, which would at least be a step in the right direction. We would have a registry of trained professionals that day care people, whether private or public, could look to and know that these people are qualified. That was apparently a commitment made at one time by the previous minister. I would ask this minister where that sits now. Maybe you can't move everything overnight, but it seems to me that's a reasonable first step in terms of day care people at least knowing the type of people they're getting in and if they are

really qualified. I'd say to the minister that that's another very important area I'd like him to comment on.

The last area — and I'm not sure; I may have missed it. It's my understanding that in terms of the administration of the minister's department, no decision has yet been made in terms of a deputy minister. I know there is an acting deputy minister. As I recall when the announcement was made, there would be a process to have a deputy minister. I guess I'm just asking specifically where that sits and what time frame we're looking at as to when an announcement might be made in that regard.

I will make those general comments in a number of areas and leave them with the minister, and then wait to ask some specific questions about some of the areas as we go through the votes.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. ALEXANDER: Mr. Chairman, I'm sure the minister would be unable to continue in his duties without my observations on the state of the welfare state, so I want to make that contribution yet one more time simply because I think it's probably one of the most crucial things facing all those members who sit in this House.

I begin from a convenient springboard, Mr. Chairman. We were offered the comment earlier in the House today, albeit on television, that because we as a government are attempting to find a more cost-effective way to do one of our functions, this government would repeal the 20th century. The Leader of the Opposition of course is fond of such clichés, and I for one would respond by saying that there are some elements of the 20th century I'd love to repeal.

MR. MARTIN: Most of it.

MR. ALEXANDER: While I haven't been so forward as to bring this to members' attention before, I wonder if I might point out that the membership of the party of the hon. leader and his health critic from the constituency of Edmonton Norwood was recently treated to a rather demoralizing review of the party's economic policy positions. In an internal document written by a Mr. Laxer, now resigned but who was then the party's research director, the

party faithful were told that a rapidly changing world has left the NDP behind, mired as it is with . . . [an] economic system that might have had some relevance 20 or 30 years ago.

Mr. Laxer proceeded to say just where the party notion of economic recovery would lead if it were actually implemented.

MR. MARTIN: He said you're a hundred years behind.

MR. ALEXANDER: It was:

" . . . a skyrocketing deficit in manufactured products trade, to a disastrous balance of payments situation, to a falling dollar, to higher interest rates. Leaving the structure of the Canadian economy the way it is and stimulating consumption . . . result in a huge leakage of dollars out of Canada as Canadians purchased imported products."  
" . . . economic analysis of little value and an economic program that is a hodge-podge of contradictions and dead-end solutions."

I guess that speaks for itself since I didn't write any of that. The former federal director of the national socialist party did. I trust that's a sufficient commentary on such comments as "repealing the 20th century".

[Mr. Appleby in the Chair]

The point is, however, that one needs to constantly review and overview social programs to be sure they are not inadequate, and have not in fact proceeded beyond the point of adequacy and become self-destructive. Thus a brief overview is of some value, and I asked the department recently to give me some comparable figures to show us what has happened to the budget of the department over the last four decades. In 1951 and 1952 the budget for the then public health department combined with the welfare department was some \$17.4 million spread over a population of 972,000 people. It meant at that time that our per person allocation for this particular budget was \$17.93 apiece. In 1961, 10 years later, the same figure had risen to a per capita number of \$59.64. By 1971-72 our population was up to 1.65 million, and our budget was up to \$85 million, which is \$196 per person. In 1981-82, with a population of 2.3 million people and a budget of \$825 million, we were spending \$358 per capita on Social Services and Community Health.

The question begs to be answered: what have we gotten for this exponential increase in spending power to those who have needed the help of the social safety net? We then have to look for definitions of social health. Mr. Chairman, I refer to a quote by Martin Luther King, who said in 1965 that prevailing levels of such things as divorce, illegitimacy, female-headed families, suicide, and all the other negatives we all abhor, found in the black ghettos in the U.S. were "a social catastrophe".

Eighteen years later, the frequency of these social pathologies has increased by a factor of three. What do we label "a social catastrophe" multiplied by three?

What we label it is less the point than what we do about it. What have state-provided day care, feeding, education, hospitalization, and all the elements we have provided in our literally hundreds of federal and provincial programs to support the unfortunate people in our society actually done for those unfortunate people? Have we in fact reached the point at which the system itself is exacerbating the breakdown? I suggest so.

The hon. Member for Edmonton Norwood just spoke of government support of day care or day care regulations. Let me refer to the very broadest principle of fundamental Marxism which speaks to the elements I'm addressing.

With the transfer of the means of production into common ownership, the single family ceases to be the economic unit of society.

Here's what we're worrying about. What is the economic unit of society?

Private housekeeping is transformed into a social industry. The care and education of the children becomes a public affair; society looks after all children alike, whether they are legitimate or not ... [W]ill not that suffice to bring about the gradual growth of unrestrained sexual [activity] ...?

That's unfortunate, but it's also a quote. [interjections] I recognize certain members don't like where the quotes come from and laugh nervously in this House in an attempt to offset the impact of those things. But the difficulty with it is that we are left with the debris whether we like its source, the quotes, the numbers, or whatever else.

How then shall we pick up the debris? European economies have recently suffered through this problem, and some of the numbers that are coming from European economies give us an insight into the dimensions of the problem. Some European economies — the Netherlands, for example, has now gotten to the point where its social programs consume 30 percent of its gross domestic product. Its economists have arrived at the point where they recognize that unless the economy grows at an average rate of 2 percent — real, in excess of inflation — this

proportion cannot be sustained. If the national economy produces declining revenue, it is in trouble. And in fact it is in trouble the world over.

I was amused by a quotation from Domenico Mirone of Italy's institute of social affairs. His comment was that the welfare state is like

a building in a state of collapse which cannot be demolished because millions of people are clinging to the walls.

That's true. I feel we're caught in a kind of three-way cross fire. We are faced with the cost of support programs, which is an increasing amount and unsustainable proportion of national budgets throughout the world. Yet the programs are broadly supported by the people at large. Opinion polls recently indicated that

80% of the British population wishes to maintain the current level of social benefits.

President Mitterand of France struggles with similar problems. When his socialists formed the government three years ago, they quickly increased social benefit payments. But it soon became obvious that France could not afford such increases in times of zero economic growth. The government is now drastically reducing welfare provisions. Taxes have been increased, benefits have been cut back. But the chorus of those grumbling about unfulfilled election promises swells all the time. Also in France 75% [of the] population wants to maintain the level of social security.

So there's no doubt that there's broad support for the level of social support programs.

The difficulty is that

many politicians and economists believe that the system is [now] so cumbersome and unwieldy and so prone to abuse that only a complete restructuring can provide a way out. Like [Margaret] Thatcher [of Great Britain], they question the basic premises of the providing state.

Few people are willing to answer the question that is clear to everyone. European countries, and now Canada, provide a cradle-to-grave state as a natural right and, because it has long since been with us, we are all reluctant to give it up.

Making people relinquish rights to which they have grown accustomed is [very] difficult, as all governments are finding out. Yet, [we] will have to come to grips with the costs and the consequences of the all-providing state. [So] there is growing evidence that the easy and heavy reliance on state support retards personal responsibility and initiative and that that is perhaps the biggest problem of all.

I'd like the minister to contemplate this quote which came from a Dutch trade union leader. His comment was:

The welfare state was designed to be a safety net, not a hammock.

That's another part of the cross fire. We have the cost of the programs; we have the very high level of built-in public support. Three generations have lived through these programs and don't know anything else, so there's a high level of public support. Governments are faced with the problem of that support and paying for it. Yet we aren't coming to grips with the really crucial question, which is the deleterious effect on the recipient — not on the person who is paying, not on the politician who has to balance those other elements, but on the recipient.

What is that deleterious effect? Elaborate work has been done on it, particularly by some black economists in the U.S., where the problem is more clearly focussed in the black ghettos and so on. I recommend Walter Williams and Thomas Sowell, for example, who in my view have clearly established that it is the war on poverty, the just society programs, and other things which we have tried to emulate, which in fact have

exacerbated the problems of the people they were trying to help.

This raises the other question. Where do we look for help, if anywhere? I found some help in the recent comments of Peter Berger, who raised the question in what he has called the "new poverty". Why have the past increases in purchasing power added up to such disappointing results in terms of the enhancement of life? Why is there so much unhappiness, so much unrest, and so much violence in the midst of so much material abundance? Why the low morale? Why the lack of social cohesion? Why the sense that things have gone wrong? Why do governments growing ever larger and more intrusive seem less capable of meeting the demands? All these phenomena are related in one way or another to a single underlying condition, the loss of what he calls the invisible means of support, the inner resources that in earlier generations lent purpose to people's lives, connected them to the social order, restrained their conduct, and helped sustain them in adversity. Unfortunately for both governors and governed, the great postwar rise in standards of consumption has been accompanied by a deep erosion of religious faith, traditional values, standards of craftsmanship, the ideal of service, and the sense of membership in a social order, among other things. In every up-to-date western nation the processes of erosion have created a large class of what historian John Lukacs has called the "new poor", men, women, and children whose poverty is not material but social, psychic, and spiritual.

That's a heavy trip to lay on one minister. But it's my view that in facing those kinds of questions this minister has without doubt the world's most difficult job, and I commend the way he has handled it so far. I sympathize with the problems he faces, with some of the comments he has to listen to and live through, and I will offer whatever support whenever and wherever I can.

In that regard, I would like to advise the minister, and perhaps invite him to comment, that I have offered support to the food banks by writing them a letter contributing and saying that I in fact commend the concept of food banks and hope they never ask for government help, because the food bank as it presently operates is a symbol of caring. If you don't have caring you don't have very much in the social fabric I've recently spoken about. I think the food bank is doing the kind of service that ought to be expanded greatly, not because government programs are deficient or because the system is falling apart and governments ought to come and do something to glue it back together but because food banks, United Ways, Salvation Armies, and a hundred other agencies are the way in which the social glue puts a community back together again in a way no government department could ever hope to.

There are just one or two other items I want to mention before I sit down. I have also been part of a committee which has been seeking to cope with the problem of family violence. I've been on a committee that is seeking to network the agencies available in the community to cope with the problem of family violence as it has been well defined by volunteer groups as well as professional social scientists and the minister's department. It seems like breaking the cycle is a very difficult thing. One of the difficulties we've encountered in our committee's efforts so far has been that responsibilities for so many different segments of this particular problem of family violence are the well-defined and carefully protected territory of various agencies and bureaucracies. In those carefully protected territories, some professionals and volunteers are very reluctant to give up their perceived jurisdictions, perhaps too reluctant to give up those jurisdictions even to contribute to a solution as important to the community as family violence. So I commend to the min-

ister's attention the attempt to network those services in such a way that that chain can be broken. It seems to me an important element — the possibility in fact of an important breakthrough in the whole matter of restoring the integrity of the family as the basic building block in a successful, free society.

Finally, as a matter of interest, I ask the minister if he can bring us up to date on what in fact happened as a result of the moves he made last year in terms of reduction of some of the allowances to social welfare recipients, namely the rental accommodation allowance, and whether there is any evidence that all the trumpeting, all the headlines, and all the attempts to find difficulties — the blaring headlines and the young pundits who went chasing through society looking for victims of the minister's callous move to reduce those allowances — can be correlated in any way with what actually happened. It seems to me that one of the things that has to be done — and I think the minister is headed in the right direction — is to turn over some of these functions to a caring society comprised of individuals, families, churches, community associations, and private volunteer agencies so we can get this sense of social cohesion I've spoken of. Has his attempt to do those kinds of things, combined with his attempt to reduce the overall amount of money being devoted to these things to possibly increase its cost effectiveness, had any measurable effect so far?

It's encouraging to me; it is the direction in which we must head because we have no choice. The alternatives are too gruesome to contemplate as far as I'm concerned. We've seen ample evidence of them through history and in other societies. I commend the minister for moving in those directions and sincerely hope he can continue to move in the same direction. He has my full support at least, for whatever that's worth, in doing so.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. McPHERSON: Mr. Chairman, as I take to my feet this afternoon to participate with a few words in the estimates of the Department of Social Services and Community Health, I'm somewhat overcome by a feeling of *Déjà vu*. At this time last year in the minister's estimates, I recall listening carefully and earnestly to comments from the Member for Edmonton Norwood, followed immediately by comments from the Member for Edmonton Whitemud, which left me making some comments of my own on the subject of welfare and the circumstances we find ourselves in with respect to this very important department.

To refresh members' memories, in looking at last year's debate and listening to the comments by both members just referred to, it was rather interesting that after some considerable discussion by the Member for Edmonton Norwood on the social problems we face in our society, he made a comment that to some degree people in Alberta were having their dignity stripped away. I found it interesting to hear the retort which, by memory, was that one cannot strip away one's dignity. You either have it or you don't; dependency on social programs will not strip away one's dignity.

Following a comment that I found interesting a year ago was this;

Bloated beyond its architect's intent, welfarism is threatening bankruptcy in [many] countries. Attempts to curb its excesses are beginning to cause political disruption and social unrest.

The case was made that perhaps in reshuffling our economies, further consideration should and could be given to providing more funds for investment and, while perhaps not less, certainly a redirection of funds for investment as opposed to public consumption; that's the bottom line.

Where does that leave us? A year ago, Mr. Chairman, it left me making a number of comments that have been a concern of mine for a goodly number of years. While I can stand in my place and discuss with any hon. member that I have a great concern for the individual circumstances that befall many people in our constituencies, in my view we as policymakers must be cognizant that once past a certain threshold, social safety nets, welfarism, can in fact threaten to promote continued employment.

Giving consideration to that, I embarked on a rather massive questionnaire in my constituency this year. I asked a simple question. This questionnaire went to 22,000 homes in the constituency of Red Deer, a large constituency. It begged this question and asked for a response:

The Alberta Government is currently evaluating government programs and services in terms of costs and benefits. To establish a goal of balanced provincial revenues and expenditures it will be necessary to either increase revenues through taxation or to decrease expenditures through a reduction in services. Which do you favor?

I left ample room for commentary and received a great deal. For the record, Mr. Chairman, I would like to put the percentages on those questions before the members of the committee today: 23.7 percent of the respondents agreed that taxes should be increased, 63.9 percent of the respondents agreed that there should be some reduction in service, and 14.4 percent submitted that they weren't sure.

I have an abiding belief that the people of Alberta are in a position where they want leadership in the area of restricting government deficits. Certainly they want services to be efficient, and perhaps there could be movement in that regard. Based on one questionnaire, the people in my constituency are clearly in a position to say: we expect leadership from government, and we expect government not to mortgage our children's futures. I have a strong belief that people in Alberta are becoming more cognizant of the devastating results of a federal Liberal government which sees fit to increase deficits at the rate of some \$2.4 billion a month.

Mr. Chairman, I felt invited to make those comments. They weren't the reason I took to my feet today. I thought I would seize this opportunity, in the estimates of the Department of Social Services and Community Health, to discuss a few points about the Michener Centre in Red Deer. I think it's an appropriate time to do that in light of the fact that in October, Michener Centre celebrated its 60th year of operation. Perhaps anniversaries provide us with an excellent opportunity to look back, reflect, determine the kinds of programs that have evolved over the years, trace developments, evaluate progress, and perhaps ask one crucial question of the minister at the end of my remarks.

Mr. Chairman, with the indulgence of the committee, I would like to take us through a brief history of Michener Centre, which many members will recognize as an important facility in the social fabric and well-being of the mentally handicapped in the province and of course in Red Deer. Over the past number of years, Michener Centre has changed considerably in terms of size, activities, and scope of operations. When the facility first began to care for the mentally handicapped in 1923, it had 108 residents. At that time Red Deer was a community of 2,300, located in the river valley below the centre. Living in Red Deer in my youth, I recall that Michener Centre sat on top of the southeast hill, and virtually all of the city of Red Deer lay below it. Today Michener Centre is a 66-building complex located on some 360 acres. Almost 2,000 staff are employed

at Michener Centre, providing services and programs for just under 1,500 residents.

As I mentioned, Mr. Chairman, once separated from Red Deer by open fields and fences, the centre is now more physically and functionally integrated into the city of Red Deer, with a population of some 50,000 people. It has come a long way from its beginnings in 1923, when the government of the day moved its progressive school, designed exclusively for the residential care and training of the mentally handicapped, as apart from the mentally ill, from the city of Edmonton to Red Deer. The Provincial Training School was opened in the old Alberta Ladies College, which stood on the crest of a hill overlooking the community.

In its first year of operation, the school admitted 108 patients. For many years it was the only major facility in the province offering residential care and training for mentally handicapped Albertans. Waiting lists for entry were long, thus significant pressure for expansion was exerted practically from the start. As a result, additions were periodically made at the facility, such as the construction in 1939 of a two-storey residence building to house 70 — incidentally, that residence facility is now considered an historic resource — and the purchase of the adjoining Gaetz farm, a well-known Red Deer pioneer family.

[Mr. Purdy in the Chair]

It was not until the postwar period of the Second World War that the really remarkable physical expansion took place. Population growth through the '50s necessitated a series of changes at the Provincial Training School. A number of additions were made, which included a new ward for girls, three new children's villas, a powerhouse, a larger laundry, a new infirmary, a clinical building, and a superintendent's home. At the same time, a number of improvements in the programs offered at the school were initiated, with a new emphasis placed on academic development.

Overshadowing the expansion taking place at PTS, however, was the construction of Deerhome, an institution for mentally handicapped adults. The need for this type of facility was evident in the large numbers of mentally incapacitated adults who lived in institutions and training schools intended at that time for children. There was no facility to provide long-term training for mentally handicapped adults. Thus construction for Deerhome began in [1955], and the doors were officially opened in 1957.

While Deerhome was beginning operation to the north of the training school, PTS administrators were considering new directions. More attention was beginning to be given to the theory of community integration for mentally handicapped people. Accordingly, in the late '50s, the school placed ever-growing emphasis on community relations, both reintroducing the trainee to community life and introducing the public to the Provincial Training School. The '50s brought a series of important changes and developments to the Red Deer complex. As it turned out, these changes were just a prelude to the growth that occurred during the 1960s.

The '60s saw changes in treatment practices at two centres, tremendous population increases, particularly at Deerhome, a change of name from the Provincial Training School to the Alberta School Hospital, and the opening of Linden House, a pilot program at the school for the treatment of emotionally disturbed and developmentally handicapped children. Changes in attitudes toward the mentally handicapped were beginning to crystallize during the 1960s. Mr. Chairman, for much of that period before this decade, there existed the belief that mentally handicapped people were only marginally trainable

and that the best form of treatment for them would be to put them in their own environment, surrounded by their own kind.

During the 1960s, the realization began to take root that many mentally handicapped people could function extremely well within the community setting. Major changes were in the offing that would make this a reality. The impetus for the radical transformation in the treatment of the mentally handicapped in Alberta was brought about as a result of the recommendations of the Alberta mental health study, or the Blair report, which was released by the government in 1969. In response to those recommendations, the government initiated broad changes in mental health policies and programs. A new priority was placed on creating more normal living environments for mentally handicapped people. This led to the creation of many community-based homes and services for the handicapped, providing alternatives to the institution at Red Deer.

Many changes also took place within the Alberta School Hospital and Deerhome. After peaking in 1969, the combined populations of the institutions declined steadily throughout the 1970s. The Blair report found that the resident population at the facilities in Red Deer was simply too large to be provided the care and training it required. In addition to this, the two facilities were amalgamated under one administration in 1973, and in 1977 the complex was renamed Michener Centre.

In the '70s, the provincial government recognized Alberta's mental health problems, services, and administration. For the first time, services for the handicapped were administratively separated from mental health services. The new services for the handicapped branch was instrumental in placing a new emphasis on treatment, care, and training of mentally handicapped people in their own homes and communities rather than in larger institutions. Clearly, Mr. Chairman, that was an impetus of this government and continues to be so.

As proof of the provincial commitment to that concept of community services, in 1972 the Alberta government introduced a new program of financial assistance for sheltered workshops, with grants totalling some \$286,000. The workshops provided training opportunities for 348 mentally retarded adults. Community residences and extended care programs also began to receive substantial grants. Major government funds were committed to the centre during the 1970s. A major renovation and refurbishing program was undertaken. Twenty-one group homes were constructed on-site, and a new multi-use recreation complex for the use of not only residents of the Michener Centre but the general public. I can assure you that that facility is well used by the general public.

Changes during the 1970s followed the dictum that the mentally retarded should have as many opportunities as possible to participate in community life. This had a profound and long-lasting impact on Michener Centre. At one time, Michener Centre was virtually the only residence for mentally handicapped Albertans who were unable to care for themselves and whose families were unable to meet their needs. Throughout the '70s, many higher functioning residents were transferred to less restrictive settings in their home communities, as group homes were developed across the province. At the same time, community support programs and the integration of handicapped children into normal schools enabled most families to raise handicapped children at home. In previous years many of these children would have ended up in Michener Centre simply due to a lack of community programs.

Michener Centre has become a more specialized facility, rather than the all-inclusive and virtually all-encompassing residence it once was. Its population is now largely made up of severely and profoundly handicapped adults, many with multiple handicaps. A significant number of Michener's residents

are senior citizens who typically have spent most of their adult lives in the institution and have more difficulty developing the skills and requirements needed for more independent living in the community. Michener has come to provide specialized programs for mentally retarded people with behaviour problems who are difficult to accommodate in less restrictive settings. Michener Centre is still the only provincial institution for the mentally retarded. It is an interesting facility, Mr. Chairman. It offers, I think, 1,480 residents from all over the province a full continuum of residential, vocational, academic, recreational, and professional services.

Mr. Chairman, one area that perhaps shouldn't be overlooked is the contribution to the local community of Red Deer by virtue of Michener Centre. The annual budget of Michener Centre is now almost \$55 million, of which approximately \$43 million is spent on staff salaries. Naturally most of those staff salaries are circulated, saved or spent, within the constituency of Red Deer.

So, Mr. Chairman, although the trend of late has clearly — and rightly, in my view — been away from institutionalization in many areas, I'm sure all would agree that there are some important aspects of Michener Centre in caring for the mentally handicapped. Michener Centre's role is changing; it's developing and emerging. It will continue to have a place in our province for important services to the mentally handicapped.

I suppose I would like to conclude my brief remarks on the subject of Michener Centre by directing one simple but crucial question to the minister. In light of the trend toward deinstitutionalization, I ask if he might offer some comment as to what goals and directions we might anticipate for Michener Centre in Red Deer.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Chairman, I certainly look forward to offering a few comments. I listened with a good deal of enjoyment to the hon. Member for Edmonton Whitemud. He's the only person I know who could make William F. Buckley Jr. seem like a communist. However, it's certainly nice to see that we have every possible right-wing viewpoint expressed within the government caucus. I simply say that I look forward to sending out quite a number of Hansards containing the views of the hon. Member for Edmonton Whitemud. We'd be interested to know whether or not the philosophical views expressed very eloquently by the hon. Member for Edmonton Whitemud are shared explicitly by the minister. When we get into the question and answer phase, we will give him an opportunity to tell us exactly whether or not he does. If in fact that's the position of the government, I can say that I look forward to hearing that news.

Mr. Chairman, I want to deal with four subjects quite briefly, because my colleague will have a few more general comments later on during our discussions. First of all, with respect to the aids to daily living — an excellent program, but I'm glad we've finally made some modifications in the program. I say finally, because it took the government a long time to do it. I think we set up a program that was more costly than it needed to be, not because of the requirements of the people who need appliances and who are clients of aids to daily living but because, it seems to me, of pressures from some people in the commercial sector.

Mr. Minister, I recall discussing the difference between the Saskatchewan plan and the Alberta plan with the former premier of Saskatchewan, who, because he had a special interest in this particular program in Saskatchewan, detailed the initiation of the Saskatchewan program where they placed a good deal of emphasis on cost saving through recycling appliances. It seems

to me, Mr. Chairman, that had we begun with that kind of approach, it would have been the sort of cost-saving measure when we initiated the program.

I realize the minister made a ministerial announcement last fall, I believe, and we seem to have learned a little bit. But the fact of the matter is that this government, that continually talks about cost cutting, might look at some of the leaner and trimmer programs operated by other governments in this country. That doesn't mean you have anything less in terms of service, but you in fact make do with a more cost-efficient program.

Mr. Chairman, I'd like to deal with three other issues. In question period today, my colleague raised questions about the operation of unapproved schools with respect to health standards and fire standards, questions which the Speaker, perhaps correctly so, suggested should have been directed to the appropriate minister. Without getting into a point of order, I want to directly point at this minister and say: what are we doing from the standpoint of the Department of Social Services and Community Health, other than fobbing this off on the local health unit boards? What are we doing to ensure that there are adequate health standards in these unapproved schools? The fact of the matter is that we had the Minister of Education saying one of the problems is that he doesn't know how many schools there are. Mr. Ghitter says 60; the minister sent out 26. I know of a particular school that is carrying on in a garage.

What is the point of having all these regulations — fire regulations, health regulations, and everything else; quite properly so — and then turning around and having young people educated in an environment where these regulations aren't enforced? The reason they aren't being enforced is that the public health authorities don't know where these schools are. I suspect the Minister of Labour doesn't know where these schools are, so he's not in a position to enforce the fire regulations — because the Minister of Education doesn't know where they are. What kind of government is that? You have these little offshoot schools starting up; nobody seems to have a handle on it. Mr. Minister, quite apart from the philosophy of private schools or public schools — set that issue aside. I'm talking about the question of safety as it applies to fire regulations and the Department of Labour. I'm talking about the question of public health as it applies to the Minister of Social Services and Community Health.

I think we have to have some satisfaction in this debate that this minister knows what is going on in those schools. What steps have you taken? Do you have a number in your department? Do you know the number of unapproved schools? Have there been investigations, Mr. Minister, through the health unit aegis, of every one of them to satisfy you that public health standards are being followed? To what extent are immunization programs, which are normally co-ordinated through the school system, co-ordinated through those schools? When we're dealing with literally hundreds of young Albertans, we can't simply slough that off and say: shucks, we don't know how many schools there are; someday when we get around to it, we'll think about doing something, but in the meantime this is a matter of freedom of religion.

No one is more committed than I am to the preservation of certain basic freedoms. One of the most important is freedom of religion, the right to worship. But in a modern society, there are also certain obligations that undeniably go along with rights; there are responsibilities as well as rights. Those rights, Mr. Minister, are counterbalanced by the responsibility of those parents who send their children to an unapproved school to make sure those children are in a safe environment. That's the responsibility not just of the parents; it is the responsibility of

the minister when it comes to public health regulations and of the Minister of Labour when it comes to fire regulations. What I saw today in question period, Mr. Chairman, was what I thought was a double shuffle from minister to minister, nobody really having a handle on the situation.

We could discuss the whole philosophy of these unapproved schools at a different time. We'll get back to the Minister of Education; we'll do that. But what I'm concerned about is what the minister is doing to ensure that public health standards are met. I would welcome a fairly comprehensive report from him on just what he's doing, because it may be that we'll take a few minutes with follow-up questions on that particular score.

Mr. Chairman, I'd like to comment briefly on the cutback in shelter allowances. I have received representation from a number of my constituents. The people that concern me most — the person who is really hit by this, Mr. Minister, is not the person who sits on the front porch with a beer bottle in his hand and is too lazy to get off his backside and work. There are very, very few cases of that nature. I'm not saying there aren't some, but very few cases of that nature. People come to my constituency office and are concerned about the cutback in the shelter allowance. In one case, a widow about 64 years of age, her husband had passed away and the shelter allowance didn't quite make the difference. Pardon me, she was just under 60, because she didn't qualify for that widow's supplement. In any event, the point I want to leave with you, Mr. Minister, is that because of the cutback in the shelter allowance, she as an individual Albertan was facing some very serious problems.

Other cases that have come to me as well have been people who I think are not able to defend themselves as far as the cutback in the shelter allowance goes. We can talk about saving money, and that's very nice. But when it comes to saving money at the expense of forcing a young mother, a single parent, with two or three children to move to poorer accommodation, when it comes to an older person forced to move to less adequate accommodation, I really wonder whether that kind of saving is justifiable. I suppose in our sort of right-wing reaction to things we could say, well, are there no workhouses for these people? The fact of the matter is that most Albertans, if not all the members of this Legislature, are in the 20th century. That being the case, I for one think the cutback in the shelter allowance program has been cruel and unfair.

We talk about the market situation and rents. Mr. Chairman, in some places rents have gone down but not uniformly across the board and not by the amount of the cutback in the shelter allowance. As I look over whatever statistics we have available, it leads me to the conclusion that there are still a number of clients who have to take money from other things, such as food or clothing or the little incidentals that make life worth living, in order to pay a shelter allowance which doesn't quite cover the actual cost of shelter. I think that's completely wrong.

Mr. Chairman, I'd like to make one other comment in this general discussion. We all know that Bill 25, the new Public Health Act, is before the Assembly. It has not received second reading. I'd like the minister to perhaps bring us up to date. I understand that a few days ago he went to Jasper and met with officials of the Public Health Association in the province who had concerns about Bill 25. I think we should assess a number of these concerns as we look at the estimates, rather than waiting until perhaps we get second reading this spring or perhaps it's delayed until the fall, letting the government caucus play cat and mouse with the entire Legislature. We want to know where the government stands on this particular Bill.

As I understand it, there are five resolutions that have been passed by the Public Health Association in this province. The first resolution is that Bill 25 be deferred until such time as

there can be more input. The second observation is that there should be a statement of purpose contained in the Public Health Act. The third is that there is some concern over the implications of Bill 25 as it relates to local autonomy.

Mr. Chairman, I'd like to know from the minister just what assessment has been made of the three I've identified, plus the other two resolutions that have been passed by the Public Health Association. What follow-up meetings have taken place? For example, I gather there is a meeting of the association in Calgary on Wednesday of this week. They're going to be reviewing the Act. Is it the minister's intention to go to that meeting?

I'd like to know whether it is still the government's intention to proceed with second reading, committee stage, third reading, and Royal Assent during the spring session, or whether the process of review will mean a delay until the fall session. I think it is important, Mr. Chairman, that the minister take some time to bring us up to date on just what the tactics are at this juncture with respect to the Public Health Act. I know we could perhaps wait until we get second reading, but that isn't good enough. Whether the government decides to proceed with this matter is not just the purview of the government caucus; it's a public issue. We've all received representation. Over the weekend I received representation from the Grande Prairie health unit and the Peace River health unit, expressing concerns they've asked me to raise, and I think we need to know just what the government strategy is. I gather that there are still a few people whose noses are out of joint because of reaction a few months ago when this matter surfaced before. I'd like to know whether or not we are going to have a more conciliatory approach at the present time and that we will bring in an Act which has the concurrence of all the public health units in the province.

Mr. Chairman, there is one other aspect of this Bill 25 matter that I'd like properly evaluated. Since we're apparently prepared to spend all kinds of money investigating private enterprise in Ontario hospitals, when the minister responds I'd like to know whether or not we're prepared to properly review the Ontario legislation which deals with this sensitive matter of the right of search and seizure and certain restrictions on individual liberties where communicable diseases are concerned but does so in a much tighter fashion than the proposed Bill 25. I'd like to know what consultation has taken place with the government of Ontario and officials in that province with respect to this important area.

Mr. Chairman, those are some of the general comments I'd like to make. I'm sure my colleague has some additional observations he wishes to add. I'd just like to conclude by saying that I'm a little worried in noticing that we once again have a reduction in full-time positions, and that comes after a reduction in full-time positions a year ago. I say that, Mr. Minister, because with the best will in the world it seems to me that at a time when recession is so profound, there are going to be more pressures on your department. I think you are sitting on a keg of dynamite, that the difference between you and Bob Bogle is just good luck, not good management. The more we cut back on some of the key people in the department, the more we are inviting trouble. I want to say that as sincerely as I can.

As a result of this current recession, there will be greater pressure on the Department of Social Services and Community Health than on any other department of government. You can slide by in the Department of Transportation, in the Department of Public Works, Supply and Services, and in Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs, and maybe the Provincial Treasurer's going to have a rosier picture at the end of the year. But the person who, more than anyone else in this government, is

going to be on the firing line if things go wrong is the Minister of Social Services and Community Health.

As you know, Mr. Minister, my colleague and I are of course always desirous of helping you, encouraging you, and giving you a bit of assistance. It seems to me that what is happening is that the caucus is imposing a set of guidelines here that is just setting you up to be the fall guy and inviting an awful lot of trouble down the road. I would say, Mr. Chairman, that while there is a slight increase in the budget this year, I really wonder whether we are budgeting for the fallout, if you like, of an economy in trouble, with the desperation people face in their own personal lives, or whether we are just hoping against hope that by passing the buck and not recognizing some of these difficulties, we can slide by.

I hope, Mr. Chairman, that we don't get into a situation where it takes another set of front page headlines in every newspaper across this country to force this government to find its social conscience once again. It seems to me that now is the time for us to have some kind of clear commitment that we're going to properly fund this department. Frankly, as I look over the estimates, while there are a lot of good programs and many absolutely first-class people in this department, in talking to social workers the word I get is that they're under enormous pressure, that they're worried about caseloads, about falling behind because of the pressures of increased caseloads. I think that's backed up by the objective evidence we've seen in such things as the Cavanagh Board of Review. I'm just saying that I think these figures hide the fact that we don't have an adequate commitment to a department which must be first on the firing line when people face trouble.

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

DR. WEBBER: Yes, I sure would, Mr. Chairman, to a number of issues. First of all, I would like to thank hon. members for making their comments on various parts of the estimates. I think I will begin by going in order of the questions and issues that were raised. I may at times wander away from that.

First of all, the comments by the hon. Member for Edmonton Norwood regarding unemployment, the effects that unemployment has on people, and his reference to a document I referred to earlier today in question period. There's no doubt that individuals who are out of work for any extended period of time get depressed and find life more difficult to carry on. However, I think the hon. members are painting a much bleaker picture of the situation than we really have. In our department alone, we have a group referred to as employment opportunities program. They spend a great deal of time trying to get social allowance recipients either into job training positions or into situations where they can find work. It's a job placement, job training program, and we are working very closely with the Minister of Manpower in terms of how we can help in that respect so social allowance recipients do not spend an inordinate amount of time on social allowance and can find their way back into the work force.

In terms of looking at the different social factors the hon. member indicates may be a result of the recessionary times we've gone through, we have discussed this before, as he said, in that during the boom times we had social problems and now in recessionary times we have social problems. In trying to identify whether things are worse or better now in terms of these social problems, it is a very difficult process to get a handle on. We talk about family violence, child abuse, and the suicide rates. In some respects, particularly in the area of family

violence and child abuse, I think we are also seeing an increase in the reporting of some of these problems.

Family violence is certainly not a problem of the recessionary times that we're in now. Family violence has been with us for hundreds of years, since the beginning of man. However, I think that in the last few years there's been a greater recognition of some of the problems associated with family violence in society. In these areas we are trying to work with volunteer agencies and groups to address the problems associated with family violence, child abuse, and the suicide rate. Built into the Child Welfare Act is the principle of trying to work with families to help them stay together, emphasizing the importance of the family in our society today.

In terms of the suicide rates, I was looking at some figures earlier today. It's difficult to say whether or not there's been any significant change over the last few years. For example, in 1980 the suicide rate in Alberta was 18.1 per 100,000 population. In 1981 it dipped to 15.9. In 1982 it was 16.2, and in 1983, 17.7. There's some fluctuation in that regard. However, I would like to indicate that in terms of suicide work I think we are leaders in the country. We are the only province in the country that has a full-time suicidologist. This particular position, which had been left unfilled for a while, has now been filled by a gentleman with the name of Dr. Ron Dyck. We fund the Suicide Prevention Provincial Advisory Committee to the tune of some \$800,000 for a variety of suicide-prevention programs. No other province in the country provides funds to that level for programs specifically designed for suicide prevention. This money goes toward crisis lines, bereavement programs, referral and follow-up services, and interagency programs. The important aspect of these programs, Mr. Chairman, is the volunteer component that is involved from the community. I referred earlier to \$500,000 to fund mental health research projects.

So in terms of government response, working with communities, I don't think we have anything at all to be ashamed of in regard to trying to meet the social problems out there. The mistake many governments make is trying to believe they can solve all the social problems in our society. I don't think we can. I think we have to try to work the best we can with those agencies and groups that are out there.

The hon. Member for Edmonton Norwood talked about the food banks. There are those that say the food banks are the result of government not spending enough money for social allowance recipients. I'd just like to draw members' attention to the fact that people with families, earning minimum wages or receiving unemployment insurance benefits, typically receive less than they would be entitled to on social allowance. At maximum shelter allowance, a sole-support parent with two children, earning minimum wages, would receive 15 percent more income if receiving social allowance benefits.

Mr. Chairman, I believe we are very adequately meeting the basic needs of those who qualify for social allowance. In terms of the social allowance changes we made a year ago, particularly in the area of shelter, we see an increase in the vacancy rate so people can, if they wish, move to accommodation they can afford. There are many instances where people may be using some of their food allowance money for shelter and going to the food banks for some additional help. But the choice is theirs. They can move. There are places in this city and across the province where they can move into accommodation within the shelter ceilings.

Mr. Chairman, in terms of the positions in the department that have been deleted — reference to 155 full-time positions last year and 162 full-time positions this year — and the insinuation by some members in the opposition that these cutbacks

could affect service, one of the things we've been watching very carefully is that we want to make sure the quality of service is not affected by the decrease or decline in the number of full-time positions. I can give the hon. Member for Edmonton Norwood information with respect to regional service delivery. We transferred some 134 positions into the regions, so there's been a decline. We're trying to emphasize that we need a decline in the central office area and that the assistance and work needs to be there with the front-line workers to provide the services required.

We had a decrease of 124 in financial services in central office, and these services are now being provided throughout the regions. We've abolished some 23 positions in administrative services and some 10 positions in management and operational audit in central office. In terms of Vote 7, the hon. member referred to the 59 positions at Michener Centre. This afternoon the hon. Member for Red Deer indicated a decline in the number of clients in that institution. Other positions that were abolished were almost totally vacant positions. Some of these positions have been reallocated to areas where we can provide community support for individuals who need it. In the area of mental health services, there is an overall 8.4 percent increase in the budget. This year we have funding to assist in the project in Calgary in southern Alberta, the Baker Centre, and the group homes I referred to earlier.

The hon. member made reference to basing his remarks on mental health services in Alberta on the Boyle Street Co-op study. I just can't believe the hon. member would take a document like that and base his comments on that kind of research. In this particular study, the sample consisted of some 101 clients drawn from the Boyle Street area. On the basis of the data obtained from that group of 101 clients, they condemn the delivery of community mental services throughout the province. This is obviously a biased sample, not representative of the total number of chronically mentally ill clients even in the Edmonton region. In general, the difficult patient tends to congregate in certain areas and utilizes services like the Boyle Street Co-op. These ex-patients are the ones in the system who, because of the severity of their illness, are the least motivated and least amenable to standard case management techniques and the most likely to ignore their medication regimes. The study does not indicate if all the sample are truly from the chronic group. Inclusion in the samples was not based on an assessment, but rather on the fact that they were at one time in their lives hospitalized in Alberta Hospital, Edmonton, or Alberta Hospital, Ponoka. Mr. Chairman, if the hon. member is going to base his comments in this Legislature on those kinds of studies, I think he needs to reassess his process and decide whether or not he needs to do more research.

MR. MARTIN: Let them eat cake, right?

DR. WEBBER: We've been working very closely with the Canadian Mental Health Association in terms of meeting the needs of social allowance clients. I tabled a letter in this Legislature some weeks ago where the Canadian Mental Health Association indicated they could not find one case with our social allowance changes where we did not adequately meet the needs of an individual. We've also proceeded with research in the mental health area.

I think we've accomplished a great deal. In fact several years ago the Canadian Mental Health Association made an award to the Premier with respect to the provision of the best mental health services in Canada in this particular province. You can always point to examples where you need to provide

more services. Overall, I think we are meeting the needs of our society.

Mr. Chairman, in view of the time and the many more remarks I'd like to make, I'll close on that.

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

[Motion carried]

[Mr. Deputy 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. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Having heard the report and the request for leave to sit again, are you all agreed?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, the House will be in Committee of Supply this evening to consider the estimates of the Department of Public Works, Supply and Services. Therefore I move that when the Assembly reconvenes at 8 o'clock, it be in Committee of Supply, and that the Assembly now adjourn until the committee rises and reports.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: You've heard the motion by the hon. Government House Leader. Are you all agreed?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

[The House recessed at 5:29 p.m.]

[The Committee of Supply met at 8 p.m.]

head: **COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY**  
(continued)

[Mr. Purdy in the Chair]

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The Committee of Supply will please come to order for consideration of estimates.

**Department of  
Public Works, Supply and Services**

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Has the minister any opening comments?

MR. CHAMBERS: Mr. Chairman, I would like to make a few brief remarks to highlight some of the features of my budget and to share with members my department's objectives for the coming year.

This budget contains a cash-flow requirement totalling \$231.7 million for the coming year to initiate new projects and continue or complete existing construction projects, which is an increase of \$8.2 million over last year. The estimated total requirement for completion of all new and ongoing projects recommended in this budget is approximately \$700 million. About 60 percent of this represents projects which are outside

the Edmonton and Calgary areas, which I think is consistent with the government's ongoing commitment to a policy of decentralization.

Alberta's capital budget continues to be one of the highest in all Canada on a per capita basis. In fact in terms of all construction, Alberta has the highest in terms of dollars in engineering construction and the highest per capita in total construction in the country.

For some time the government has been contracting with private-sector companies for the provision of custodial services in government-owned buildings throughout the province. We now have about 30 percent of our noninstitutional buildings under private-sector contracts. Early in 1983 we decided to contract for total property management. As a pilot project we entered into contracts for the management of three different buildings. I'm satisfied with the results of this experiment and will be authorizing my department to enter into contracts for total property management of another 22 buildings in this fiscal year. These 22 buildings represent 157,000 square metres of space. I'd like to point out that this will be accomplished without the necessity of laying off employees.

Mr. Chairman, the budget and policies of the Department of Public Works, Supply and Services reflect this government's firm conviction that it is only through a healthy private-sector business community that Alberta will reach full economic recovery. For many years we've employed the private sector on construction of government projects, from the design phase through completion. We're now extending that involvement beyond completion into property management, and we'll continue to seek ways in which the private-sector expertise which has developed in Alberta can be utilized for the benefit of all taxpayers in the province.

Mr. Chairman, that concludes my opening remarks. I'll be pleased, of course, to try to answer any questions which any member might have.

MR. MARTIN: We have a few remarks. I was interested in the hon. minister's comments about the private sector, which brings me to some recent information having to do with the city of St. Albert. I guess I want to know what the strategy is. Across the province right now we have a lot of vacant space, certainly in the Calgary and Edmonton areas, but we still seem to be building buildings. The one case we're referring to is the provincial building in St. Albert. At the same time, a building by the private sector was going out of business. They are indicating that of course that's one of the reasons. They are suggesting that for the time being, in a time of restraint, if there were space needed one of the things we should have done at this particular time is look at filling up those vacant spaces. We can talk about the private sector, but it's clear that that would have helped the private sector. It would have stopped one area from going bankrupt, but here we are building a government building in a time of restraint. That's one example; there are probably many other examples.

The other point we would make, and the obvious one, as we've talked about, is why have the building in Calgary, Government House South, when I understand the vacancy rate in Calgary is horrendous right now. Even if there were a need for this type of facility — and we could debate that; that's questionable in itself. But for argument's sake, let's say there was a need. Why not use some of the vacant space in the private sector in Calgary? You're going to get it very cheap at this time. If we need these buildings, then wait until we get through the time of restraint.

It seems to me that we have rhetoric on one hand about the private sector, but we're putting up buildings that are forcing

some of the private-sector people out of business, as happened in one case. At least that's the impression they left. I'd like the hon. minister to comment on that.

The other area I'd like to know is that I now understand that the building we asked questions about, the old highways building, is to be torn down. It was indicated by the minister that it was built as a temporary structure in the 1950s and that we don't need it any more. Of course certain people have questioned that. They're saying that this was not a temporary structure, that this building is good and will last for a number of years. It seems to me we'll be tearing down a building and then will be looking at building other buildings around the province — perfectly good buildings. It seems to me we're beginning to have a bit of an edifice complex. We can talk all we want about the private sector, but these are precisely the things that the private sector wouldn't do. I'd like the hon. minister to comment on that.

Before we have some specific questions, the other area I would talk a bit about in a general sense and get some feedback from the minister about is the tendering system done by Public Works. The hon. minister is well aware, I am sure, that there has been some criticism of the tendering system. It's not always the lowest bidder that seems to get the contract. I would like to know if that's the case, and if it's not the lowest bidder, how in fact the government is using their tendering process. What is the process by which bids come to fruition with the government these days?

With those few initial remarks, Mr. Chairman, I will wait for the minister's comments in those areas.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Are there any other members who want to participate?

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Chairman, I'm amazed at all the back-benchers sitting quietly on their hands or whatever tonight, not taking part in this discussion. [interjection] Someone says, no press up there. The public business goes on whether there's any press up there or not.

MR. MARTIN: Earn your pay.

MR. NOTLEY: People are here to do a job, and some of us attempt to do that job regardless of the antics across the way.

MR. MARTIN: Stop reading comic books and get involved in the debate.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Chairman, I'd like to begin by saying to the minister that, quite frankly, I'm a little surprised to learn about the old highways building. As my colleague pointed out, we're told this was a temporary structure. That's not the way the former deputy premier of the province saw it. Why is it that it was a permanent structure when the former government built it, and suddenly it's no longer adequate to be a permanent structure? What's the reason for that sudden change? I think we need to explore that tonight. My colleague and I will take whatever time is required tonight to explore it in some detail. He also mentioned the renovation of the so-called agriculture building, now the Legislature Annex. I think we'd like to know a little more about that.

This evening, Mr. Chairman, I'd like to deal with what I think is a completely outrageous example of fuzzy government priorities. I challenge the minister and the government back-benchers to defend the whole process in Calgary that involved the selection of McDougall school and the decision to spend not only the \$20 million that was required to buy McDougall

school — by special warrant, I might point out, not as a result of a government with the forthrightness to come to the Legislature and say, we want to spend \$20 million on purchasing a school from the Calgary school board; but we spend \$20 million by special warrant. The former leader of the opposition quite appropriately raised concern at the time.

Now we have the rather ridiculous spectacle, in a time of restraint, when we have government members poor-mouthing it, when we have a Minister of Social Services and Community Health, who seems to be smiling now that his estimates aren't before the committee, cutting back on shelter allowances for single mothers with children, because we've got \$11 million we want to spend on renovating McDougall school. [interjections]

Mr. Chairman, the Member for Calgary Glenmore, the Minister of Economic Development, can heckle all he likes. The fact of the matter is that I'd be prepared to debate with him in his constituency, and I'm sure other members of the opposition would as well, over whether we should be spending that kind of money at this time — anywhere — to renovate McDougall school, when we've got to tighten our belt. If there is any argument at all in the proposition that we should be setting an example, then surely we have to draw back from ridiculous examples of excess.

MR. PLANCHE: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. May I ask the hon. member — do I take it from his remarks that he's against the jobs that are created in the renovation of McDougall school?

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Chairman, I can understand that the hon. minister is a little touchy, and we'll get to that. He will have his chance to participate in the debate, and I welcome that opportunity.

MR. PLANCHE: Just answer the question.

MRS. CRIPPS: Yes or no.

MR. MARTIN: He must have hit a sore point.

MR. NOTLEY: Obviously we did. [interjections] Let me tell you, Mr. Minister, there are many, many more jobs that would be created if we got on with heavy oil development, and people in the construction trades know that too.

MR. PLANCHE: On a point of order. Is the hon. Leader of the Opposition for or against that initiative in terms of the jobs created? [interjections]

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Chairman, I am for jobs being created, but I'm against McDougall school renovation; make no mistake about that. Let me also say that I know of no one, as a matter of fact, that I've talked to in the construction trades who feels that we should go ahead with the renovation of McDougall school; no question about that.

MR. PLANCHE: Are you for or against it?

MR. NOTLEY: I've already made the point clear, Mr. Minister. You will have the chance to debate. Take your turn when it comes along. Don't get excited. You'll have lots of opportunity, because there just may be a formal opportunity in a few minutes' time for you take an official part in this debate, so everybody will know in a standing vote where you stand. Every-

body will know where the opposition stands. [interjections] Just calm down there, Mr. Minister.

Let me go on and simply say to the members of this committee. Mr. Chairman . . .

MR. PLANCHE: Yes or no.

MR. NOTLEY: . . . that despite the efforts across the way to heckle [interjection]. . . A little more rambunctious than usual. Well they might be, Mr. Chairman, because here you have this ridiculous situation. At a time when we're cutting back, we are proposing to spend more than \$11 million to renovate a building for a Premier's office, a Lieutenant Governor's office, and apparently an office for a few MLAs in Calgary, when we have vacant office space all over the city of Calgary.

I don't pretend to be any great expert in the business field, but when I go down to Calgary and have a chance from time to time to meet with some of the minister's friends — as a matter of fact, I met with the Canadian Manufacturers' Association. One of the things they said was: one of our major problems in Calgary is not in manufacturing, it is vacant office space all over the place; why is this government spending all this money renovating McDougall school? Here are a bunch of free-enterprisers, Mr. Chairman, not socialists; one could never accuse the Calgary chapter of the Canadian Manufacturers' Association of being a group of socialists. But what do they say to me? They say, why are we spending money on this form of public works socialism so they have a fancy office for the Premier, a fancy office for the Lieutenant Governor, a fancy office for the minister when he's in Calgary, when we've got office space all over Calgary?

Mr. Chairman, I can't understand that sort of reasoning.

MR. SZWENDER: Agreed.

MR. NOTLEY: Someone over there says "agreed". Small wonder. It's the Member for Edmonton Belmont, a backbencher now and a backbencher 10 years from now. With that kind of reasoning, a backbencher 30 years from now, if he's still elected. [interjections]

Mr. Chairman, some of these people have no understanding about the value of a dollar. Isn't it interesting? We have this government, which likes to parade its concern about proper administration of public funds and then gets involved in an expenditure which makes no sense at all, Mr. Minister, notwithstanding the efforts of a few of your colleagues to run interference for you.

Mr. Chairman, I have no hesitation in standing in my place and saying to the members of this committee and, through the members of this committee, to whoever — because *Hansard* will no doubt be sent all over the place, to my friends in the construction trades, to people in Calgary, wherever — that I am 100 percent opposed to spending that \$11 million renovating McDougall school in this time of recession. There is absolutely no mistake about that. It's a completely ridiculous expenditure of public funds.

Mr. Chairman, we have yet to have any rational explanation from any of the government members as to why we have to proceed with McDougall school, why the government, at a time when we have 150,000 people out of work — we're not going to put all 150,000 back to work with the renovation of McDougall school. The number of jobs created in that renovation will be very, very small. At a time when we're cutting back in social services, when we're bringing in user fees, when we're going to farm out part of our medicare system to private enterprise, all these other things coming in — we have the

Minister of Transportation having to cut back on road programs this year in certain of the MDs and IDs because we haven't got the money, says the government. But we have the money for \$11 million of renovation of McDougall school for office space when we've got office space coming out of our ears in Calgary.

If the government wants to stimulate the private sector, the options in downtown Calgary to stimulate the private sector by renting out office space are legion. You walk in downtown Calgary, and office building after office building after office building: for rent, for rent, for rent. All kinds of lease space is available at very competitive prices. But at a time when we've got a competitive market, when we've got a renters' market, our clever Tory caucus decides that now is the time for us to get into a little bit of socialism. We're going to have our own fancy office building, an old schoolhouse. We're going to spend \$11 million to renovate it for an office that is going to be only marginally used; I'm not suggesting it won't be used at all, but only marginally used. I've used the services in the Premier's office south. Fine; no question. But is it worth the transfer from the present site to McDougall school and \$20 million to buy a schoolhouse and another \$11 million?

If our little friend here from Edmonton Glengarry, who is such an expert in polls, were to run up one street and down the next in the city of Calgary and say, do you support spending \$32 million on the purchase and renovation of McDougall school, I rather doubt that many people would say yes. I have a sneaking suspicion that if you took a secret poll among Tory delegates at the recent convention in Calgary and said, do you think we should spend \$32 million on the purchase and renovation of McDougall school, most of those delegates, if they'd had a secret vote and the minister wasn't watching and the Premier looking down at the august assembly — it would have been a resounding "no". Yet we've got this caucus, at a time when they're poor-mouthing it all over the province, saying no, it doesn't make any difference about those other programs; we're going to proceed with this project come hell or high water. I for one think that is a completely ridiculous expenditure, and that's the only term I can use to describe it.

I'm sure other members will want to participate in the debate. A little later on, we'll offer members in this committee the opportunity to tell us where they stand, to stand up on this particular issue. Not yet, because every particular issue has its moment. We want to have a full discussion first. It may be that some hon. members will have some brilliant new insight that has not been exposed to public scrutiny at the moment. But a little later on, Mr. Chairman, we will offer members of this committee an opportunity to vote yea or nay. At a time when we are asked to set an example, to tighten our belts, when we're saying to local government, school boards, and hospital boards, watch very carefully what you spend; when we continually prattle, as members did today, about the federal deficit — we have a provincial deficit too — when we've got the deficit we face in this particular budget, whether or not it makes any sense to add the money we are going to spend on renovating that schoolhouse . . .

Mr. Chairman, I think there is a lot in symbolism. If this government is going to be taken seriously by working people when it says tighten your belt, they've got to set some examples. They've got to set examples which show that we're prepared to set aside some of the expenditures that can wait. It may well be that there is some historic significance in McDougall school. Fine; it can wait. It can wait before it's renovated into a luxurious government office for the high rollers of Calgary to have tea and crumpets with the Premier. It can wait. There are other projects in this province that have equal historical significance,

which the Department of Culture is quite rightly saying can wait because we haven't got the money at the moment.

Mr. Chairman, we haven't got the money for McDougall school at the moment either. I for one say to members of the committee that we should set aside that portion of the budget. Maybe we could shift it over to some of the people programs that need it, or maybe we could further reduce the Provincial Treasurer's deficit. But what we in this committee should be saying, Mr. Minister, is that while a few people might find it desirable in an abstract sense in the future — fair enough; nothing wrong with that — this is one kind of expenditure which can wait.

I would invite participation so that members not only know what the vote was and, through this House, the people not only know what the vote was, but they know where the members sit on this particular issue.

MR. GOGO: Mr. Chairman, I have several questions I want to pose to the minister. First of all we spent some time a year ago and the year before dealing with conservation in government owned buildings. The minister had some exciting ideas. He put in some programs. I do know that in the riding I represent, they've reduced utility costs very substantially, some \$3,000 or \$4,000 a month. Would the minister give us an update on where that is, with particular reference to when government leases office space? Does government as a matter of course, either in the design stage or before occupancy, have some say so they don't end up with a triple net rent? I'd be interested in the comments of the minister as to government policy in that regard, because operating costs are obviously one of the largest single factors in government space.

Mr. Chairman, another question. I do believe the throne speech indicated some preference for the private sector, and I can't think of a better one than security of government buildings. Could the minister advise what steps have been taken with regard to tendering out security services as opposed to in-house staff?

I notice in the budget that metric conversion is now decreased 100 percent. Is the minister telling us in this budget that (a) it's complete for government services, or (b) we've eliminated it? I'd be interested in which direction we're going. Maybe it's complete.

With regard to the courier service, I think it's an excellent service we've had for years. I'd be curious if the minister's estimates make provision. As an MLA with a constituency office, I value this very highly. It's a very important tool for me to do my job. Could the minister advise the committee if he has sufficient funds for this current fiscal year to maintain the high standards of service or if indeed the shift to two-day service is something that's going to continue? We've had one-day service to date.

The final question is with regard to vacant government space. As the minister knows, many community groups are now getting involved in attempts to resolve community problems and, because they operate on shoestrings, with this go requests to use vacant government space that is otherwise not being utilized by government. I know the minister has been accommodating in the past, and I'm grateful. But could the minister advise the committee if it's a matter of policy that the Alberta government would provide to volunteer groups within communities, getting people involved in work and community projects — if the policy is to allow that space to be used because it's otherwise vacant? I'm not saying forevermore; perhaps for a three-month period, for a specific time.

With that, Mr. Chairman, I think one of the areas that has functioned reasonably well in the past year is Public Works,

Supply and Services, and I want to commend the minister. Thank you.

MRS. EMBURY: Mr. Chairman, I suppose the Leader of the Opposition will look across and think of me as a little fish in a big pond, because in getting up to speak I certainly have risen to his bait. However, I planned on doing it long before he uttered quite a few words, and the prime one that came through time after time was "ridiculous". Some of the remarks he made were rather ridiculous, but I suppose I should be grateful that he was concerned enough to want to speak on behalf of many of the residents of Calgary. I suppose they'd be grateful. I imagine he was even speaking for one, two, 10, 50, a couple hundred or more constituents in my riding; however, I feel I can certainly speak on behalf of the rest of them.

Since I've been elected to this Legislature, I must admit that I'm quite comfortable and pleased to see that this one particular project at McDougall school is progressing. There has obviously been a lot of thought and planning go into that decision as to when it would be timely to start spending some money on that project. I know that back in 1979 and 1980, Calgary MLAs were really quite concerned about what facilities were available in Calgary. There was obviously a terrific demand, growing all the time, for people in Calgary to have the opportunity to meet not only the cabinet ministers and the Premier but other representative groups in our province. As an MLA, I certainly know we identified a lot of concerns in Calgary. It probably seems very hard for people to understand that in some ways Calgarians are relatively isolated in regard to dealing with government or knowing how to communicate with government. I think they'll really appreciate the fact that there will be more of a presence of people down there.

The Leader of the Opposition said it was a ridiculous spectacle in a time of restraint. He brought out some good points about the large amount of office space available in Calgary, but frankly I just can't see the use of a group of elected people trotting all over the city of Calgary, meeting people here, there, and everywhere. I'm quite sure he would have disagreed if it had been any time. The restraint doesn't really have that much to do with it.

It would have been interesting to know the type of debate that might have gone on when this building was being planned back in the early 1900s. I don't know if they had socialists in those days or not, or if they would have wanted to enter into the debate, but it would have been interesting, wouldn't it? Every time I walk into this building, look around, and really admire it, I look at the foresight of the people who did that years ago. Of course we went through the same type of debate with the beautification and the restoration that occurred over the last few years. Yes, a lot of money was spent, but it's been a job well done.

I don't who they're talking to now, but anybody I've talked to — people who have lived in Edmonton and moved out to different parts of the province, people who have lived in other parts of the province and have come into Edmonton — have really enjoyed seeing what has been preserved. Thank goodness somebody had the foresight to do it in a time when there was some money. I think it's been a worthwhile project, and I see that this is just a further step in taking the government and the elected members to the people.

I noticed another thing that the hon. Leader of the Opposition said, that he was speaking for the working people. Well, I don't know who he thinks we represent if we don't represent the working people. Tragically enough today, I'm not very proud to say that I represent quite a few constituents in Calgary North West that aren't working. I'm not very proud of that fact. But

let's face it; that's such a weak argument. Most of the people I know that live in Calgary North West are the hardworking people in this province, and I know perfectly well they would support this. Obviously at this time this is one step in a long procedure, but you can certainly bet your bottom dollar — when you drive in downtown Calgary or talk to anybody in the know down there — that they're quite pleased to see something being done to that historic building. There's a time and place when something has to be done so those buildings don't totally fall into wrack and ruin.

The other point that I think this particular project shows is the co-operation of the province of Alberta with the city of Calgary. I understand the parking lot being developed is primarily being done by the city of Calgary. This has been well thought out and anticipated, and will certainly be well used. I would certainly like to commend the minister, and I know I speak on behalf of many Calgarians.

MR. ZIP: Mr. Chairman, I wish to make a few observations on the Public Works, Supply and Service Department expenditures on McDougall school in downtown Calgary. I know the Member for Calgary North West made a few observations; I'd like to make a few more. In the first place McDougall school, when renovated, is going to be Government House South rather than just another office building. This is going to provide Calgary with a little bit of the government image that Edmonton has enjoyed and used to its advantage for a long, long time.

We forget that back in the early days of this province Calgary lost to Edmonton the enormous benefit, first of all, of the location of the provincial capital, followed quickly by the loss of the University of Alberta to this city. The original survey maps of Calgary show Westgate as the proposed site for the Legislature and government buildings if Calgary had been chosen as the capital of this province. It is time this situation be redressed to the benefit of 630,000 Calgarians, who have waited a long, long time to get that image and class and enormous benefit that Government House represents to the people of Edmonton. I personally didn't realize this benefit until, upon my election, I saw it for myself.

On the matter of vacant office space, this is a total red herring. Office space vacancies in Calgary have been improving steadily and diminishing. It is in no way as bad as hon. members of the opposition describe it. In any case, Government House South will not be a source of competition to the building space that is still vacant.

In conclusion, I commend the minister for going ahead with the McDougall school renovation and providing us with Government House South for Calgary and a place for image for our gracious city.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. NOTLEY: So there. We've been told.

DR. BUCK: Man, I'll tell you. One thing about those Calgarians, Mr. Chairman, they certainly have been smarting a long time from the fact that they lost the Legislature to Edmonton. I'd like to tell the hon. member who just spoke that they're not going to move the Legislature to Calgary, maybe to Barrhead but not to Calgary. [interjections]

Mr. Chairman, I would like to say to the hon. minister that there are areas in the estimates that concern me. We will be looking at some of these line by line. The \$11 million to the '88 Olympics: I have said, and I would like to say to the Minister of Recreation and Parks, that we'd better have some watchdogs in place, because if the Saddledome is an example of how we're monitoring costs ... [interjection] That's right, and you

tell your people that, hon. member. If there's going to be the same kind of cost accounting in monitoring the expenditure of Olympic funds as there was for the Saddledome, we're all going to get it in the ear, all the taxpayers of this province. [interjections] That's right. It'll make Jean Drapeau look like an amateur.

Mr. Chairman, we are looking at Kananaskis Country — well over \$200 million now. We're going to make snow on snowless Mount Allan. What are the spending priorities of this government? No government is all good or all bad, but this government is very, very consistent in its Cadillac approach to every project. No one in this province will say that we didn't need some renovations in front of the Legislature, but nobody thought we needed \$60 million worth. Nobody thought this little provincial park of Kananaskis was going to end up \$200 million-plus.

MR. SZWENDER: It is well worth it.

DR. BUCK: Well worth it; fine. But what are you doing for the people of northern Alberta, hon. member from Belmont? Are we going to have a Kananaskis north, or is Kananaskis going to be a little playground for Calgarians, with its snowless mountains and artificial snowmakers? I am standing in my place in this Legislature tonight and saying that there are going to be millions and millions of dollars wasted in Kananaskis Country if we're going to have the Olympics there on a snowless mountain. You can't have ski events when there isn't any snow. Man-made snow — when you've got small gales blowing natural snow off the mountains, how are you going to keep the artificial snow there?

This government had better have a look at what it's doing, because in a time of so-called restraint ... Very great; we froze our salaries. Big deal. That's not even a scratch in the provincial budget. It was tokenism, and I appreciate symbolism and tokenism. How about the millions and millions of dollars that this government wastes? That's what the people out there are talking about. The boys in the Fort Saskatchewan bar can understand that kind of language. White, snow-coloured sand in the sand traps — half a million dollars worth. The working man can understand that. He can understand that \$10 million worth of golf course in Kananaskis would have built five \$2 million golf courses throughout this province. Where are the spending priorities of this government?

The little rug that the hon. Mr. Yurko, at that time, put in Government House — just a little \$90,000 rug, I believe it was, a little bit of support of local industry. It was an awful lot of money. How about the renovations of the J.J. Bowlen Building in Calgary? This was supposed to be Legislature south, but maybe we're trying to keep up with the Nixons and the Reagans, and have Capitol west and Capitol south.

MR. NOTLEY: Even the White House doesn't cost as much.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Chairman, this government has to have a look at what it's doing, because when we have 14 percent unemployment in the capital city of Edmonton, people are now conscious of how this government is blowing money. When we start riding on the backs of little people, when we start cutting their shelter allowances ...

MR. NOTLEY: And increasing income tax.

DR. BUCK: Income tax — it's the God-given right of the people of Alberta to pay taxes. Right, Lou? Certainly it is. They love it. Of course you know that technically we didn't

raise taxes. We had the big l-i-e, as the hon. Member for Little Bow said, the big lie that we didn't raise taxes — maybe 24 hours, but what does 24 hours matter?

My colleague the hon. Member for Little Bow has Bill 225 on the Order Paper, using McDougall house as a female and child abuse centre. At least we would be serving the people. We've got the J.J. Bowlen Building. The hon. Member for Calgary North West said we have to have some place where people can come and see us. I'd like to tell the hon. member something. The way it works is that you go out to the people; you don't have the people come to you. If you want to stick around, hon. member, that's the way you do it. You take government to the people, not have them come on bended knee and kiss the gilded hand. That's just not the way you practise politics.

MR. KOZIAK: That's the way it was before 1971.

DR. BUCK: Hey, hon. Minister of Municipal Affairs, there are a few people after your hide too, because you sit there and are not concerned about these people who have been annexed, that their taxes have gone up a thousandfold. Where have you been when you've been doing your job? You haven't been showing any concern for these poor little people, these small-business people. That is a broken promise also, because when the annexation order went through, those people were promised that there would not be any marked change; there would just be a small amount. When these people have had their taxes increased by gigantic amounts and their services have not increased ...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Order please. I wonder if we can get back to the department at hand.

DR. BUCK: We'll get back to McDougall house, Mr. Chairman. Don't be twitchy.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Order please.

DR. BUCK: Don't be twitchy anyway, Mr. Chairman. I'm not finished yet.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I asked for order.

DR. BUCK: You've got order. I'm not heckling anybody. I'm not abusing anybody. [interjections] Mr. Chairman, if the hon. members want to listen, they can listen.

What I'm trying to say, Mr. Chairman, is that this government is blowing millions of dollars. If the members of the committee don't like that, or you don't like that, Mr. Chairman, that's tough bananas. But the people out there don't like that, and that's what's important.

MR. NOTLEY: They sure don't.

DR. BUCK: The people out there don't like that.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to say to the hon. minister that there are two things that gravely concern me. Number one is that this department is not looking at saving the taxpayers' money. Number two, to the Minister of Recreation and Parks, or whoever it is who is going to be looking after the allocation of Olympic funds on behalf of the provincial government — they had better have about three chartered accountants sitting at their elbows. Let's not have another Syncrude, another Sadledome, another big "O" like they had in Montreal.

Mr. Chairman, with those few words, I would like to say that there are areas of concern. This McDougall house is just a symptom of a disease this government has. They have no respect for the taxpayers' money. We'll be watching with great interest to see how the minister defends this expenditure of money. When it was raised in question period last year, the minister had a little trouble. I'm sure he's going to have a lot more trouble trying to justify to this committee and to the taxpayers of this province spending an additional \$11 million on top of the \$20 million they've already squandered.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Chairman, I've certainly had a lot of concern with regard to McDougall school and its eventual use. It's been echoed in this Legislature over the past two years, and I'd certainly like to endorse the comments of the opposition colleagues on this side of the House very, very much.

I was going to say I hadn't seen any other expenditure so needless and useless at this time as that one, but I have seen others in this government. They've been well enumerated and well said by my colleagues in the opposition, and so they should be. I think it's rather foolish that we rushed into buying McDougall house in the first place — a special warrant of \$20 million, unnecessary. By the manipulations of the Attorney General in this House, we lost the court case. In all innocence and sincerity we trusted the government that by passing the estimates in this House, it would not affect the deliberations of the court case. It did. What did the judge say? He said that because the Legislature, a higher court, has passed it, we honour that expenditure; there's no way you can stop it, emergency or not. In five minutes we were out of court, and that was it — even at that time, when the Attorney General indicated by word in this House that the case would be fairly heard in the courts. It wasn't. I remember that sincerity with regard to the argument at that time, knowing well what the results of the case were going to be, and it happened.

Now we have \$11 million more going into a building. First of all, it wasn't necessary in the capital assets of this government, and secondly, \$11 million going into a totally unnecessary expenditure. We have people like various members that have rumbled in the back benches here about the needs of Calgary house. The hon. member Mr. Oman, talking about the expenditure, couldn't care less; it's just part of frivolous spending by government, and it doesn't matter to him. We saw him on TV over there, trying to get the Olympics. Why was he over there? Why is he part of the committee? What does he contribute back to this House as part of that committee?

We have other Calgary members that are going to have offices there. The rest of us in southern Alberta can't use it. The hon. member from Lethbridge can't use it; the hon. Member for Cypress can't use it; the hon. member from Brooks can't use Calgary House South. I have no use for it; my constituents aren't there. The only people that will use it will be Calgary MLAs, the ministers of this government when they decide they're going to visit Calgary, and the Premier, so he can invite his friends into royal rooms, all in velvet, red, or whatever colours ...

MR. NOTLEY: Might as well be red.

MR. R. SPEAKER: ... so they can bow in and he can entertain them once in a while. When he wants them in his audience, he will ask them to come in. And here we as taxpayers in Alberta have spent \$11 million to renovate that place so it looks good for the Premier, suits his ego, while the rest of us as Albertans, in many instances, suffer because of that.

It's \$11 million, not too much out of \$10 billion in the total budget. Let's talk about — the hon. member, the former city councilman, sits there shaking his head and approves this kind of thing. Sure: he will have a nice office and be able to invite some of his Conservative associates from Calgary and say, look, this is the royalty you can be blessed with; this is the beautiful room for you. But what are they really doing for the people? Not too much.

Let's take one of the school divisions in southern Alberta. The Taber school division has had to work hard on their school budget and cut it by \$150,000 — a sacrifice this year, a major sacrifice by one of our school divisions. What did they have to cut out of their program? Special education programs. Kids with hearing disabilities have not continued access to the programs.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Shame, shame.

MR. R. SPEAKER: We have special teachers that can't be on full time. In the current fiscal year, they're there; next year, they won't be there. Renovations to some of the schools will most likely be cut back. But to them, \$150,000 is a major sacrifice.

If we took that \$11 million and distributed it across this province, there are minor programs — minor to these people, these Calgary MLAs who, along with their Premier, their great leader, want these royal offices, but forgetting the people in the province that really need the service. I think of the young fellow that has the hearing disability. I gave the Hon. Dave King full marks three years ago when we came to him as a group of constituents and said, here happens to be one student in the school at Vauxhall, in my constituency, who hasn't any hearing at all; he communicates totally with sign language; he needs a special teacher. The only option, if we can't keep him in that school, is to take him to Lethbridge or Calgary. I give the hon. Mr. King full marks for this. He said, we're not going to do that; we're going to keep that student in that school and find funds to support him there. And he did. I give him full marks for that, and I've said that three times. A major priority, because he showed compassion for the needs of a young student in school.

But what's happening today? Because of other kinds of priorities in this government, because of pressure on the cost of education — the needs of some of us here in this Legislature who think it's more important for us to have a grand environment — there are instances like that, where people are being neglected. It's not necessary. I could go through this budget in a number of other areas where we do not have to spend money at the present time.

Let's look at this present Public Works budget. I notice a major expenditure in the area of rehabilitating some of our older buildings in terms of Culture. Fine; I don't argue with that completely. Maybe it's nice when we have the extra funds, and we did two years ago. But we're in a time when priorities must be set. Maybe it's time to say that that isn't one of the expenditures that needs a lot of money.

We could look at these other priorities, consideration of the needs of school boards in special areas. But this government has forgotten that, forgotten the basic one, the individual out in this society that needs special help. Sure, people will get up in this House and talk about special help that's been given in the past. But let's talk about the next fiscal year that school boards in this province are facing: hospital boards that are going to be under a lot of duress and pressure in the coming year. But no, that's not where our emphasis is.

We focus on this \$11 million because, as my hon. colleague from Clover Bar has said, people understand when \$11 million is expended unnecessarily on the site of a building. They understand that. That's a symbol of the way this government sets its priorities. So that's the way it is. If this government wants to continue that way, it's our job in the opposition to expose that to the general public, and we will. We'll continue to do that.

As the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview said this evening, there are many offices for rent in Calgary. You can walk up and down the street, pick your avenue, pick your street, and you can rent an office building. You can have it 20 floors up or two floors down if you want. It's there. But what do we do? We go out and seek this school that somebody's got their sights on. We made a bad decision in the first place by bringing forward a special warrant of \$20 million; now, to fix up the first bad decision, we're making a second bad decision. I think the government should think about that. If it has to take a caucus decision, hold this vote, take it back — I think one of the best things that could happen is if the caucus said, we're not expending that \$11 million, and brought it back in here and terminated that particular expenditure. Maybe that's enough on that at the present time.

I'd like to raise one other issue with the Minister of Public Works, Supply and Services, and indicate some of the kinds of things that go on in the department. This is one of those kinds of letters that slips over to the opposition. It's with regard to an Alberta Liquor Control Board store at Spruce Grove, another building that was necessary. I often raise this: why can't we go out and rent some space in buildings that are vacant at the present time, rather than building more stores? Maybe the decision to build it was made a year or two ago, but for some reason or other the government is proceeding. Not only that, let's look at what is happening. Somebody discovered that there was one artesian well on the property, and it was sealed. But after they got building, what do they find? A second artesian well. My question would be whether the minister has really discovered that as yet.

I see this memo that has been rushing around the department of public works. I would like to say that this is a March 26, 1984, memo, not a memo of some time ago. This is a current situation. I find that the final recommendation is: "I suggest that you inform the Structural Consultant of the Geotechnical Consultant's concern". This is right in the middle of the progress of developing this building. With all the people Public Works have who could test soil. I think that should have been done before the project started. That's part of it. The second artesian well was discovered.

DR. BUCK: Watered down whiskey.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Not only that. As I read through the memo, they're going to proceed with backfilling around the project. The recommendation is that they "avoid using heavy machines for fill placement and mechanical compaction" in the area. If at some time there is to be heavy traffic or the area is to be paved, further consideration should be made; it should be filled in a different way. They aren't going to do that till later. I'd certainly like to see the minister explain how they remedy that kind of situation. It's just that kind of thing that happens in the department.

Mr. Chairman, I'm sure we could go on and find a lot of other things like that going on at the present time. But I would think that this government, that's starting to talk about privatization and the private sector, using private buildings — maybe it's time we quit building all these and use some of the present facilities that are available, make that kind of policy decision

rather than just putting on blinders and pretending everything's great, everything's good, and there's lots of money to spend. The government here may think that way, but let's talk about local government. They don't see it that way. I think it's time to voice some concern about it, as we've done, and that this government start considering their priorities and how they expend money in this current fiscal year. Hopefully it's better in the next one.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Chairman, I would like to indicate to hon. members of the committee that when we to get vote to Vote 4, we'll have an opportunity to register a yea or nay on McDougall school. But since we seem to have got into the philosophical aspect of that debate on the first vote — and that's appropriate — rather than moving to reduce the minister's salary to one dollar, which is normally the opposition's approach when we're not satisfied with a department, I would . . . [interjection] You'll have a chance in a moment, hon. member. Keep your shirt on, or whatever the case may be.

I simply say that because it's obvious that some of these ludicrous priorities are the collective decision of the entire government caucus, in my view the appropriate course is to put to people the vote on McDougall school itself. So when we get to Vote 4, we'll have a little amendment which I think would be useful, and perhaps even a standing vote — who knows? — if we get to that point tonight.

But I simply say to members of the committee that, as the Member for Clover Bar and the Member for Little Bow have pointed out, at a time when we have to make decisions about priorities, there are very few people I know, even people who consider themselves hard-core Tories, who would argue that at this juncture we should spend \$6,300,000 of the 1984-85 budget to renovate McDougall school.

I would hazard a guess that just as the federal Tories head for the hills every time medicare is mentioned and want to distance themselves from this government, if the question of McDougall school comes up in Calgary during the next two or three months, I'd be very surprised if any of the federal Conservative candidates want to endorse the position taken by this government, by the Member for Calgary North West, or the "comer" in the Calgary caucus, the Member for Calgary Mountain View, who is the sort of philosophical conscience of the Calgary Tories. I don't think that too many federal Tories are going to want to jump on this particular bandwagon, because they will suspect that it is a bit of a political hearse. Most Calgarians, most Albertans, regardless of where they live, think it is misplaced priorities. I think there are many other needed public works that we could agree on.

[Mr. Appleby in the Chair]

We have a government which says they cannot justify building a children's hospital in northern Alberta. Despite overwhelming support for the proposal of a children's hospital, we've got a government that can spend \$31 million on a sort of Windsor Castle version of Buckingham Palace in Calgary for the Premier. Mr. Chairman, that's just absolute nonsense, and nobody supports it. Whether you're the left or the right, whether you're a western separatist, Liberal, New Democrat, or Tory, people don't support that kind of nonsense. I suspect that the only people who support that kind of ludicrous expenditure are the Tory members in this House. I suspect that if we go back to the constituency presidents, secretaries, and vice-presidents of the various Tory associations — I can tell you that if you were to take to the local Tory association in the

Spirit River-Fairview constituency "Do you think we should spend \$31 million renovating McDougall school in Calgary; should this be given high priority?", I have a sneaking suspicion that the Spirit River-Fairview Tories would say "You've got to be kidding".

The fact of the matter is that nobody supports this project at this time except the Tory caucus. I don't know why they support it. I wonder. The hon. Member for Clover Bar made a very good point when he talked about the renovation of Government House in Edmonton. We spent all kinds of money, including, as he quite correctly pointed out, the rug. Somebody from New York saw us coming. This government had straw in their teeth. They went down, and somebody from New York saw them coming and unloaded a rug. Very shrewd, Mr. Chairman, but hardly the kind of thing that was prudent expenditure of public money.

I have no quarrel with these projects if we had the money, if we had all kinds of funds so that we could properly ensure that our road program proceeds as it should and so we could look at some of the infrastructure we need. We have a tough time moving grain. We have no money for infrastructure moving grain; we want to fob that off on the federal government. But we've got \$31 million to purchase and renovate McDougall school in Calgary. I really wonder at the priorities of a government which seems so intent on doing something that flies in the face of prevailing public opinion.

So I would invite the minister, either now or at the point when we get to Vote 4, when I will formally move a motion that the appropriation be amended to strike this expenditure, to stand in his place and justify this expenditure — not this expenditure 10 years from now, not this expenditure in some sort of overall master plan for developing government projects, but this expenditure now when we have to make hard decisions about priorities.

To date, Mr. Chairman, we've heard no plausible arguments in its favour. We've heard the Member for Calgary North West suggest it was a nice idea. We've heard the Member for Calgary Mountain View say that Calgary wanted to be the capital of Alberta. No one argues with that. North Battleford once wanted to be the capital of all the west. Batoche might have been the capital of all the west if Riel had won in 1885. But the government of Saskatchewan is not going to spend \$32 million building a Government House North in Batoche. And wisely so. Why are we spending that kind of money in Calgary? If it had any logical reason . . .

Who is going to be going into Government House South? Is it going to be the plumbers, the electricians, the people from the unemployed action committee? Is it going to be the people from that growth industry, the food banks in Calgary? No, it's not going to be them. It's going to be the select. Mr. Chairman, the select can wait. The minister can wait for this particular project, because we're asking a lot of people in this province to wait.

When the Member for Little Bow talks about education programs in his constituency, I know what he means. I just talked to the superintendent of our school board yesterday, and I know the kinds of programs that have been cut in the Fairview School Division because of funding. The special ed. program was the first to go, and I have to be able to justify to parents in my constituency why that special ed. program can't be funded anymore. It's not the fault of the school division. We haven't got the money, but we've got the money for this kind of ridiculous exercise in Calgary.

Mr. Chairman, that won't wash. I cannot stand in my place with any sense of integrity at all and say, oh well, it's all right

to go ahead with this project, because it's an investment in whatever, in keeping up with the Joneses.

DR. BUCK: Jobs, Planche says.

MR. NOTLEY: Or jobs. Nonsense. That's right. The number of jobs created — if you talk to the construction trades people and say, give us a list of projects, you would find McDougall school so far down on the list that it wouldn't even rank. This is a priority set not by people in the industry but by this caucus. That's where it's set. It's \$31 million, including the purchase, set by this caucus — their decision. They have to take responsibility for it. They have to take the flak for it. Let's not try to shift the issue by suggesting that somehow the unemployed are calling for it. I haven't received a single call or letter from one tradesman in Calgary saying, get on with the renovation of McDougall school. I know where the labour council sits on McDougall school. I know where most tradesmen I've talked to stand on the renovation of McDougall school. They think it's a boondoggle.

DR. BUCK: But Rollie Cook says, you should see the fights we have in caucus.

MR. NOTLEY: The only people that tell me the unemployed want the renovation of McDougall school are the Tory members of this House, without any evidence to back it up. [interjection] Somebody says, 20 million Canadians. Mr. Chairman, it'll be a long time before 600,000 people in Calgary, let alone 20 million Canadians, ever get an engraved invitation to come to Government House South, get an audience in Calgary House South.

No, Mr. Chairman. It is, by any other name, a project that can wait until we have the money. Mr. Minister, I invite you to give us your response. But if you wish to wait, we'll have a formal vote because I for one am not prepared to see these estimates go by the board without a vote on what I consider to be a shining example of misplaced priorities on the part of this government.

MR. NELSON: Mr. Chairman, I have just a couple of comments. At least I know I can stand in my place with some integrity, unlike some others who suggest they can't.

Mr. Chairman, there is something here called obligation, which some people don't really recognize and probably don't really care too much about. There is an obligation from this government to both the city of Calgary and the Calgary Board of Education, and in fact there's also an obligation on the part of the city of Calgary with regard to McDougall school.

It's too bad some members who wish to speak aren't a little more associated with the city of Calgary and the historical events that have taken place over the last four or five years with regard to this site. It's just amazing to me that someone would suggest we don't hold up our end of the bargain and our obligation to those two junior levels of government, if I may. It just so happens that I was a participant on the city of Calgary council when the negotiations were taking place for this particular site. At that time, if the school board had wished, they probably could have sold the site for \$80 million to \$100 million. That's totally conjecture to some degree, although knowing the land values in downtown Calgary, it was possible. The government in its wisdom put \$20 million into another public body, the Calgary Board of Education, which funds were then placed into the system to be used for furthering the educational needs of the citizens of Calgary. In essence then, we were able to assist both the school board and the city of Calgary and its

residents in seeing to additional needs of education. Now, isn't that amazing? We created a few jobs, we provided funding for some additional educational needs, and some people don't like that. Just tremendous.

As I recall, Mr. Chairman, the negotiations were started when there was no available space in Calgary, when space was \$20, \$24, \$18, \$30 a square foot in some of the new developments. I didn't see some of these people coming out and offering space at a reduced rate at that time. Certainly that's not to suggest that some of these people that have vacant spaces in the city and all over the province don't need some sympathy, but they built it — in a boom time. However, I do agree there are certain instances that we should examine space needs. If at this time we need additional space, certainly it should be looked at from the private sector, and I'm sure it is.

Similarly with the Transportation Building, I agree that that should go. It's costing us money just to keep it there. Tearing it down will probably save us a bunch in the long run. I'm sure the minister can address that better than I at this time.

Mr. Chairman, we have a number of people that like to see heritage sites saved. I know many of our socialist friends really hang up on this historical area. I'm not really big on it. But in the case of McDougall school, it has some historical value and should be resurrected and saved. What do we do? Keep the place empty and let it run down? No, it needs to be renovated, at a certain cost, if it has a useful purpose.

It's interesting to note that our northern members have a nice facility here, a nice office. They can get their constituents in when they come to the city. They have them visit and do business. Our southern members, as they have to come to the city themselves from time to time, the members in Calgary who have people come in from outside the province or outside the city — they may have their constituency office, but it makes it a little easier to do different types of business here. Of course the ministers travel, the Premier travels, the Lieutenant Governor of the province travels. They need some spots to visit people that are something of an integral part of the government.

Additionally, in the negotiations a deal was struck with the city of Calgary. They were having difficulties with downtown parking, so they decided they'd build a parking lot in conjunction with this. Of course, part of the deal was that the province would obtain parking space for various users of the government structure. More important, we are developing a much needed piece of open space in the city of Calgary's downtown heart. I know that people who live in some spots of the province don't recognize the fact that in a city that has buildings and more buildings, there's not a lot of open space. We keep suggesting that people live downtown and around, so let's continually try to develop some environmental niceties for these folks. We're going to have a nice large park on top of a parking structure and around a government facility that has some of the niceties that the one in the north has.

It's amazing to listen to some of the financial rhetoric that comes out of some of the opposing members' dissertations, or whatever you want to call it. It's amazing that even an ex-NDP member — I assume he's an ex-member — suggests their policies are all out to lunch, at least their financial policies are out to lunch. I suggest that it's very easy to sit down and criticize and criticize, but I'd sure like to see the total financial package in a nice big book. With some of that large amount of money they're getting over there, they could put something together and let us have a look at it. We haven't seen anything on paper.

We don't talk about the \$3 billion that has been allocated to both Crown corporations and government expenditures for construction this year to create some additional 60,000 man-years of jobs in the province over the next year or so. Amazing.

Maybe we ought to talk to the council of the city of Calgary, the school board, and some of the people who are looking after that city, to determine whether they feel that McDougall school is a reasonable deal for the citizens of Calgary. Maybe we ought to talk to the school board to see if that \$20 million will assist them in the education of our young people. Yet the members opposite read a headline in the paper: we want to come out and support financing the West Edmonton Mall expansion. Shame, shame — something we would not derive any direct benefit from. We might possibly get a few tourists in the province, but I'll let the Minister of Tourism and Small Business address that issue, as he's more familiar with it than I.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to conclude by saying that when you get a joint effort by the citizens of Calgary, through their elected city council and the elected trustees of a school board, the largest school jurisdiction in the province, and the province of Alberta — surely to goodness an obligation, and a deal is a deal. Obligation is what it's all about. I'm sure the minister can stand in his place, as I'm sure every member here, especially those from Calgary, can stand in their places and say that the government met its obligation with its two junior-level partners.

Thank you.

MR. COOK: Mr. Chairman, the reason I want to participate in this debate is the remarks from the Member for Little Bow. I guess I'm not so much angry as I am disappointed.

MR. NOTLEY: Tiny Perfect Tory.

MR. BRADLEY: That's David Crombie.

MR. MARTIN: This one is taller.

MR. COOK: I think disappointment is a stronger emotion, because you expect much more from an individual who is the dean of the Legislature. When you see that he is acting exactly the opposite, the antithesis, of what a person expecting the very best might expect, it's very disappointing.

Mr. Chairman, the provincial Legislature Building and McDougall school were built by a famous architect by the name of Jeffers. For both the province and the citizens of the city of Calgary, if you cast your mind back to the early days of the province, I think these buildings bear witness to the acts of faith our forefathers had for the province and their city. They had a belief in the future and the greatness of the province and in its potential. Think back to the early 1900s. When this province gained its provincehood, it had a population of about 125,000 people. The city of Calgary had a population much, much less. But our grandfathers thought to themselves that they needed monuments as a sense of purpose, that would bear witness to them and their children and their children's children that this province had a wonderful future and they believed in it. So they built those buildings.

Mr. Chairman, I was told by an architect a while ago that if this Legislature Building were to be built today, in 1984 dollars, it would be worth well in excess of \$100 million. The detail work, the limestone, the quarrying, the fine craftsmanship are priceless. We have a building designed by the same architect and built in the same tradition in the heart of the city of Calgary, and it was slated for demolition because of small-minded individuals who had no respect for the past or for the charge their parents had given them to guard their dreams and aspirations.

MR. NOTLEY: Get out the violins.

MR. COOK: In my first term of office, the Member for Little Bow spoke in this Legislature about little Albertans and big Albertans. He tried to cast himself in the role of a big Albertan. I think the dreams, hopes, and aspirations of his father and grandfather, building monuments in those small towns — the courthouse, the school, the main centres of commerce — those kinds of monuments bear testimony to the dreams of the big Albertans he was trying to refer to. It's the small Albertans who would have those buildings torn down — small Albertans like the member from "Little Bow", not "Big Bow".

Mr. Chairman, I was thinking about a speech I studied at university, a speech given by Pericles in the year 430 AD. He was speaking about the genius and greatness that was Athens to parents of young men who had just died on the field. He was trying to ask himself, and Athenians as well, to think about the hopes and ideals that that city-state had. If you have visited it, Athens is probably most prominent in the history of western man for the genius that was embodied in the acropolis, in the Parthenon. Those buildings, those monuments, were built by Pericles in his term of office. He said in that speech that Athens was the school of Greece. It embodied everything that anybody would want to aspire to. It was the hope and the dream for the whole of Greece to try to live up to those ideals. They had to be expressed tangibly, and they were. They built monuments that have stood the test of time. They are eternal monuments, valuable not only to the people that built them but also to us as citizens of the western world.

Mr. Chairman, I think Alberta, in a very real sense, has achieved that greatness in Confederation. If you believe in Alberta, I think we are the school of Canada. I argue that because of our particular flavour of cultural and constitutional development, embodied, for example, in the constitutional fight a couple of years ago. We have a spirit of independence, of initiative, of free enterprise, that I think our grandfathers and fathers must have had when they built those buildings and this building — a belief in the future and in themselves.

The small-minded Albertans who dwell in the opposition — and who are going to dwell there for a long, long time because they lack a sense of vision, a sense of purpose, and they don't understand the genius of this province — are the types of individuals who would condemn the heritage of our grandfathers, our forefathers, who built those monuments. They would condemn them to destruction. They would do that not out of any sense of noble purpose to reassign those dollars but because they don't understand the real function of those monuments, which is to believe that there is something greater than yourself in the community. That is why man has built temples like churches, or large buildings like schools: to say to ourselves as individuals, I'm part of something much greater than myself, a province embodied in the Legislature Building.

We have groups of students coming to this building to see this monument of our grandfathers and fathers who built this in testimony of the future of the province. That school, one of the first schools in the city of Calgary, is in a very real sense the parallel in the city of Calgary. It was built by the same architect, by the citizens of Calgary at the same time. I think it represents the ideals of that community in education: the belief that people could be much bigger than themselves because of that kind of society.

For that reason, I'm sad to hear the remarks of the Member for Little Bow. He quite clearly lacks a sense of purpose or vision for the province. That lack of purpose is embodied in the kind of expression this evening that would condemn a beautiful, wonderful old building like that to destruction. He may do that for temporary political gain, but the province and the people of Alberta would be the sorrier and the worse for

it. They would be impoverished not by those dollars alone, although certainly those dollars would be important, but by the loss of something very important to our culture.

I'm disappointed in the hon. Member for Little Bow, and I'm pleased to be part of a government that has vision and purpose, a respect for the past and a belief in the future.

MR. MARTIN: Don't be sad, Rollie.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Chairman, I certainly hate to see the hon. member grieving. It's very, very unfortunate, and I hate to bring that grief upon the young member of this Legislature. But there are times when we have to debate the specific issue that is before us. The specific issue that is before us is an expenditure of funds that doesn't seem to fit what I would call the more important, broader priorities that should be in this Legislature — health care, education, protection of the environment, protection of our people in Alberta, transportation: four basic priorities that should receive number one consideration by this Legislature. When we have diversions such as McDougall house, which does not fit into those priorities, then it's our responsibility on this side of the House to challenge the government on that expenditure, and that's what we're doing.

The hon. member looked at some historical events in terms of recognizing buildings that are monuments to our past, and certainly he can do that. But when I think of certain monuments of the past — my son has just returned from London and visiting Windsor Castle and [Buckingham Palace]. We were talking about it last night, and he was describing why Windsor Castle was built. The reason was because the king, when he left [Buckingham Palace] and went down to Windsor Castle, where he did his hunting and partying and having a great time, hated to go back home. He built it so he could keep his friends and all his associates there, to have a good time away from the main legislature building or his home. That's where he went; he was away from the centre of Parliament. What we find, as history goes on, is that every king or queen after that period of time added a little more to Windsor Castle. So we have all kinds of extra rooms, I understand, from a note on one of the postcards sent home by my son. All these various rooms were added on to Windsor Castle so that that king or that queen or their guests could have a special room.

Here again we have history, in 1984. We have the capital in Edmonton. I wouldn't really want to say the king would want to go to Calgary to associate with his friends and have nice gay parties [interjections] — I'll withdraw that — parties with his associates or get rather carried away, or have all the Calgary city people in. We wouldn't want that kind of thing to happen. Now he doesn't want to return to Edmonton, because PWA doesn't work too well. We have history again. So when the hon. Leader of the Opposition becomes Premier, we're going to see an addition onto McDougall house. Later on, we'll see another addition. So here we have monuments to great Albertans, because they want to go to Calgary to have their fun house. Maybe that argument is a little frivolous ...

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. R. SPEAKER: ... when I talk about monuments in history, but it is a parallel. This is what we're trying to do, build monuments to people. I think it's about time we learned to spend the taxpayers' money on necessary services.

I would say, and my hon. colleague from Clover Bar agrees, that there are four priorities. I have enumerated them. If this government starts expending money foolishly outside those

priorities, we don't agree with them. We think it's time to pull up the socks of government and do better. There are a lot of things that may be nice, and we've said that earlier in this Legislature. They may be nice, but under the restraints we have today, they're not necessary. The McDougall house renovation is one of them.

I'd like to add to one of the earlier arguments made in this Legislature. The commitment of government was to expend \$20 million to buy the property and the building. They did that. I don't think the commitment to local government was to spend another \$11 million to renovate, when the province was going to use it for its own purposes. Local government could care less about the renovations. That building could have sat there and bided its time until we had another boom in the economy, when all the office space in Calgary was filled. We could do something then, but it certainly isn't necessary at this point in time.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member for Calgary Egmont.

MR. NOTLEY: Oh!

DR. CARTER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It's interesting to hear that comment, after the Leader of the Opposition has so kindly shared the working drawings with me.

My comments are with regard to the McDougall site and to the old courthouse in Calgary. To enter into the debate on the side of the government with respect to the renovations to the McDougall site, I would like to refer to having spent about 10 or 11 years in the downtown core of Calgary and having been involved with respect to the preservation of another historic site, known as the Anglican Cathedral. It's very important to preserve some of the heritage of the province, especially in Calgary where so much of it was being torn down and dismantled in such a terrible hurry. I'm pleased that McDougall school is one of the sites to survive the development pressure within the city of Calgary.

In conversation with various members of the cabinet, I know that after 1979 there was real concern that one couldn't go ahead in preserving or redoing the site because of an overheated economy. So here we are, forced onto the horns of a dilemma. Do you develop the site in an overheated economy, or do you develop the site when things are in a downturn? I agree with the present minister that now is the time to proceed with respect to the site.

So there are a number of things to be considered — one, the preservation of a historic site; secondly, the matter of dealing with the issue that there should indeed be a Government House South. There is no intent whatsoever to try to shift the seat of government from Edmonton Norwood south to Calgary Buffalo. The whole matter of having adequate office space down there is one that is commendable. Obviously the offices are going to be made available for all political parties, even those who may not survive the next election. There's the whole matter of access.

MR. R. SPEAKER: As long as you don't gerrymander.

DR. CARTER: How can we gerrymander when we have some people representing yourselves on that committee, so we can have the benefit of their wisdom?

The previous speaker, the Member for Little Bow, said something about letting the facility bide its time. If you know anything about architecture and buildings, obviously you can't let a facility like that, as old as it is, simply bide its time. There

has to be at least some kind of preventative maintenance, even before you get around to the business of trying to switch it over.

AN HON. MEMBER: Knock it down.

DR. CARTER: I hear one of the members of the opposition saying, as an aside, knock it down. Do away with an historic site.

MR. MARTIN: We wouldn't say that, Dave.

DR. CARTER: You just said it.

MR. MARTIN: You misheard us.

DR. CARTER: The facility is one of merit. I know that in the last number of months some very constructive things have taken place, in terms of knocking down some of the later additions that have been made to it architecturally, which really did not enhance the site. It is obvious from answers given in previous question periods that indeed it has meant some other construction jobs, in large measure to date funded by the city of Calgary with respect to the parkade. The park area is going to come later this year, and that will make the site even more attractive. Above all, in terms of having a Government House — Government House South, McDougall site, whatever it's going to be called — a place which has more adequate parking will only help make the matter of government much more available to people in the southern part of the province.

[Mr. Purdy in the Chair]

Mr. Chairman, I hope the minister will be good enough to offer some comments with respect to time line and the usage with regard to the old courthouse in Calgary. Here again I know that in spite of the pressures that have been there, the need for more adequate court space in terms of the backing up of the legal process, there is indeed need for the old courthouse to be renovated. I hope the minister will give us some positive comments with respect to the time line on that renovation. Also, with regard to the expenditure of those funds, for the enlightenment of all of us in the House would he perhaps give us some information as to the additional man-hours of labour which would be engendered by that process.

MR. MUSGREAVE: Mr. Chairman, I did not intend to get into this debate, but I couldn't miss the opportunity to do some sparring with the hon. Member for Little Bow. He had the misfortune to have been a minister when I was an alderman in the city of Calgary, so our relationship goes back some time. This particular instance doesn't concern him, though, but it does concern the former leader of his former party. That was the chap who was the mayor of Calgary at the time. I remember the Devonian Foundation, along with the Oxford people from Edmonton, came to the city of Calgary and suggested they'd like to build a beautiful park in downtown Calgary. I don't know whether Mayor Sykes was unhappy because of the architect the Oxford people had chosen or what his particular hang-up was, but for reasons known only to him, he decided to oppose it. We had suggested that it would be a good idea to have a park in downtown Calgary where the people were, but he couldn't see it that way. However, we in council were fortunate to be able to get the park by a slim vote of 7 to 6. I think it is a real asset to our city.

If anyone would choose to walk around our streets, one of the difficulties we have in Calgary is that it was laid out by the CPR. Being very conscious of the bottom line in everything, they had narrow streets. If you have narrow streets you get more blocks, and if you have more blocks you get more lots. So why waste money on wide streets? Let's have narrow streets. But that gives you a constricted city, and we don't have the gracious avenues you are fortunate enough to have here. As a result, we don't have the open space we should have. Added to the problem is the fact that we put the LRT above ground. Being penny-wise and pound-foolish, they decided they couldn't build the LRT underground like they did in the city of Edmonton.

Frankly, I can support this proposal for many reasons. First of all, I'm not hung up like some of my colleagues are on preserving old buildings. I don't think you should preserve old buildings because they're old buildings. You should preserve them for one of two reasons. One, it's either an architectural gem or something significant happened there. The Burns Building in the city of Calgary, which I think is a classic disaster . . .

MR. NELSON: Amen.

MR. MUSGREAVE: I don't know what happened there, other than the fact that a meat packer decided to build an office building, stayed in it a few years, realized how bad it was, and moved out. But our past city council decided in their wisdom to refurbish it. In effect what they're doing is making sure that for many years to come, we're going to have a disagreeable, disgraceful looking building beside one of the best art centres in the western world.

MR. NELSON: That wasn't wisdom.

MR. MUSGREAVE: Getting back to the Member for Little Bow, he mentioned the artesian well. I said to my colleague, they probably capped it. I didn't realize they found another one. I recall — and I hate to do this, but it's kind of interesting — that during the reign of the Social Credit government, the provincial government of Alberta built an auto test centre in south Calgary. It was built on a garbage dump and unfortunately the building decided to collapse into the dump, and they had to close it. I just want to point out that past governments have had the ability to make mistakes the same as we have.

I'd like to briefly touch on what the hon. Member for Edmonton Glengarry said. About 80 percent to 90 percent — maybe not quite that high — of the people in the world today live in dictatorships. Anytime we can emphasize to the people of our province the fact that we live in a free society, we should have some symbol of that government in our midst. In the case of the city of Calgary, obviously if you took a look at the McDougall site, you'd know that (a) we have to get rid of the things that the school board tacked onto it right after the war to make it more viable, and (b) it is a unique building, as has been pointed out by the members.

I would like to mention that I can walk to this building from my home. I live about 20 minutes away. But I can assure hon. members that I'm not going to walk over there to use those offices. I have more and better things to do with my time. I can meet my constituents in my constituency. But I think it is important that we in Calgary, which is one of the largest computer centres in the world — we represent a lot of the agriculture industry in our community, and that includes all the constituencies in southern Alberta. We have one of the main business centres in our province. We have an international airport and people coming from all over the world. If they want to meet

with government people when they get here, they then have to climb on an airbus and come to Edmonton, and waste more time and money. I think the opportunity for them to come and meet with our cabinet ministers in Calgary or business people involved with trade delegations and things of this nature is most important. The amount of money — we have an \$8 billion to \$10 billion budget, and here's what the opposition zeroes in on. I'm rather shocked that with the kind of research moneys they have available, they'd pick on this one item. I can assure you I could find lots of other things that would be far more damaging to the government, if I set my mind to it.

Finally, I'd like to say that I think it's rather sad that the opposition would suggest that we as a government should not honour our commitments. I think we paid too much for the land. I've said so in caucus; I've said so publicly. But that \$20 million went into our school system. It's not, as has been suggested, money on the waves. It went into our school system, and the balance of it is to take an eyesore out of the city of Calgary.

I don't know what construction people the hon. Member for Edmonton [Norwood] speaks to, but I can assure you that many of my constituents who are unemployed are happy that that project is going ahead, because at least some of the people in the industry are working. I should point out to you that a large percentage of the people in Calgary that are unemployed — and there's close to 50,000 — are from the construction industry. For you to suggest they're not in favour of this is a little hard to accept.

Mr. Chairman, I'm sure the minister will be able to add more to this, but in my opinion it's an excellent project. More important, it's an honouring of our commitments to the city. For anyone to suggest that it's the kind of thing we shouldn't be doing in times of restraint is rather hard to accept.

Thank you.

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

MR. CHAMBERS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. With regard to the question raised by the Member for Edmonton Norwood on the St. Albert building, I would point out that that building is a long-standing commitment to the community. It's supported — and I checked this again before proceeding — totally by the city of St. Albert and by the MLA for the area and, I think, generally by the people of St. Albert. It's a focal point in their community, and they've been counting on it. So in lieu of the commitment, we decided after careful evaluation to proceed.

With regard to McDougall school, I guess I commented fairly extensively in the question period earlier in the session. I don't want to repeat everything I said there, and I think my colleagues have certainly covered the subject well. However, I would point out, and it has been mentioned by my colleagues, that McDougall school is a classic building of its kind. I encourage any member who hasn't seen it to look at it. The workmanship, the plasterwork, the woodwork, are of a similar standard to this building and, as was pointed out by the Member for Edmonton Glengarry, designed by Mr. Jeffers, the architect who designed this building.

The building is in excellent shape, although buildings are living things and, if not utilized, will deteriorate rapidly. I think it was nearly four years ago that the school board of Calgary came to me. At that time, of course, Calgary land prices were very high. There were essentially no vacancies in downtown office space, and those that were available were very, very expensive. They said to me, we think we can get a very high price for this land. We assessed it and were sure that they

could, if they would remove the building and allow redevelopment of the total site. I don't think the \$80 million or so was out of line. But they said, recognizing the historic nature of this building and the contribution of the McDougall family to our society in the past, we think this building is deserving to be kept for the benefit of future Albertans, and we're reluctant to maximize our cost advantage and knock it down and sell this property. So they said, we'll take \$20 million for it; we need the money to develop schools in the suburbs. We thought that was a very solid gesture.

The city of Calgary was also willing to participate. They're presently well advanced on a 600-car parkade, much needed in the downtown core of Calgary, a \$9 million project which will be completed this fall — again, all part of a total commitment and agreement between the board, the city of Calgary, and the government of Alberta. Probably the city fathers down there and the citizens of the city of Calgary will find the views of the opposition rather interesting when they learn that the opposition would wish to renege on that agreement and not proceed.

Furthermore, early in the session, before the Leader of the Opposition — I believe it was — raised the question, I recollect his being quoted as saying that we should have more public works to create more jobs. Here we have a building which is creating a significant amount of employment over the next couple of years, and now he's saying he doesn't want it. I really do try to please the opposition, but I find that quite inconsistent. [interjections]

Of course that building will be used. The main floor will be occupied by three departments that have a large street traffic and the need for a downtown, centralized street traffic: Vital Statistics, Public Affairs, and Travel Alberta. Being in that position, they will be able to serve the citizens of Calgary well. On the floor above, we'll have offices of our Lieutenant Governor, for our Premier, for visiting ministers. It will be well utilized space. The space that will be vacated in the Bowlen Building is required for our family court system. The gathering of these various groups I mentioned earlier into the main floor of the building will serve the citizens of Calgary well. When the parkade is completed this fall, as part of that agreement a park will be built over it. A park around that historic building will surely provide a much-needed green area for the people working in the core of downtown Calgary.

The old highways building: I suppose it's always a matter of opinion whether or not anything is considered a temporary structure or a permanent structure. I suggest to you that that building was, in our view, a temporary structure. It has lasted quite a number of years. It has fulfilled its life cycle, and our evaluation shows that it is just not economic to renovate that building. It is not cost-effective in terms of energy efficiency, and the cost of renovating it and bringing it up to a modern building state would be outweighed by — it would be more economic to construct a new building. Because the space isn't needed, we chose the most economic, practical route, to remove that building.

The questions with regard to tendering policy: our basic policy of course is open and competitive bidding. It goes to the lowest tenderer who meets specifications. All bids are opened in public. I would say that the department handles large volumes of transactions with, I think, very few complaints. In fact, in the past year I can recollect only two complaints that were forwarded to the Ombudsman. In both cases, the Ombudsman found that the complaints were without foundation. So I think our tendering policy is indeed open and competitive, and works very well.

The question with regard to the Legislature Annex: if I understood it correctly, the only upgrading we're doing at this

time is that required to bring the temporary access to the building up to a standard required by the building codes.

To the Member for Lethbridge West, with regard to conservation in public buildings: yes, certainly any government buildings are built to a high energy standard, the so-called red book. Our leasing people certainly take into consideration the energy efficiency of any building we lease. As the Member for Lethbridge West pointed out, that's quite properly a part of the cost of operating that building. Therefore, that is carefully evaluated and a definite factor.

Metric conversion: yes, the metric branch was disbanded in April, and we felt that metrication was essentially complete. Any further work or requirements in that area, if you like, will be met by the individual departments, and the metric branch *per se* is no longer required.

The courier service: yes, we plan to continue to operate the courier service on a one-day service basis. I point out that through tendering intercity service this year, we've achieved enough in the way of savings to be able to permit maintenance of the one-day service, in accordance with our budget.

The policy with regard to the use of vacant space by volunteer groups: yes, if a group is supported by the relevant department and if we have vacant space, we will endeavour to make that space available to that group.

With regard to Mount Allan, the item in the budget is there on the contingency that if a private-sector arrangement could not be reached by the Minister of Tourism and Small Business, we would have money in the budget this year to commence construction. As regards snow, I've been over that mountain myself this winter, and there is all kinds of snow on it. Granted, the pictures one has seen in the media are of the south face, not of the northeast face where the ski hill will be constructed, and granted, the one edge of the mountain facing south has very little snow. But from almost the top right to the bottom, I saw all kinds of snow when I was there, and it lasted well into the spring.

The Member for Little Bow mentioned the liquor store at Spruce Grove and the artesian well. One artesian well had been identified early on and was plugged. The second one, because of the difficulty in testing, being in a heavily-wooded area, was not identified at the time. But in that area the high water table is prevalent throughout, and one expects to encounter water problems. I believe the cost of dealing with that water problem will be in the order of \$35,000. What it requires is technology, which of course is available and applied in those situations. In an area where you have a high water table, you take that into account and adjust your foundation work accordingly.

The Member for Calgary Egmont asked me a question with regard to the Court of Appeal. That's the old courthouse, and it will be used as a Court of Appeal. We have \$3.245 million in this year's budget to plan and commence construction of that renovation.

Mr. Chairman, looking at my notes, I think I have responded to all the questions. If I've missed any, I'd be pleased to try to rectify that and respond further.

Agreed to:

1.01 — Minister's Office	\$ 219,600
1.02 — Deputy Minister's Office	\$ 298,800
1.03 — Assistant Deputy Minister's Office	\$ 176,200
1.04 — Finance Division	\$ 2,736,200
1.05 — Management Services	\$ 2,209,300
1.06 — Personnel	\$ 1,682,800
1.07 — Metric Conversion	—

1.08 — Internal Audit	—
Total Vote 1 — Departmental Support Services	\$ 7,322,900
2.1 — Information Services	\$ 1,157,700
2.2 — Telecommunication Services	\$ 41,100,400
Total Vote 2 — Information and Telecommunication Services	\$ 42,258,100
3.1 — Administrative Support	\$ 188,500
3.2 — Property Planning	\$ 12,887,000
3.3 — Realty	\$116,470,000
3.4 — Building Sciences	\$ 2,065,500
3.5 — Property Management	\$111,009,200
Total Vote 3 — Management of Properties	\$242,620,200

#### 4 — Planning and Implementation of Construction Projects

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Chairman, I'd like to move that the motion for approval of Vote 4 in the estimates for the Department of Public Works, Supply and Services be amended as follows:

by reducing the amount to be voted by an amount equivalent to the projected costs of renovating McDougall school in Calgary.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Do you have any questions on the amendment to Vote 4? Are you ready for the question?

[Mr. Deputy Chairman declared the motion on the amendment lost. Several members rose calling for a division. The division bell was rung]

[Eight minutes having elapsed, the House divided]

For the motion:

Buck Martin	Notley	Speaker, R.
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Against the motion:

Alexander	Harle	Musgreave
Alger	Hiebert	Nelson
Bradley	Hyland	Oman
Carter	Hyndman	Paproski
Chambers	Jonson	Planche
Cook	King	Shaben
Crawford	Koper	Szwender
Cripps	Kowalski	Thompson
Drobot	Koziak	Trynchy
Elliott	McPherson	Webber
Embury	Miller	Weiss
Gogo	Moore, R.	Zip

Totals:	Ayes -- 4	Noes -- 36
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MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The motion is defeated.

Agreed to:

4.1 — Administrative Support	\$ 12,099,300
4.2 — Advanced Education	\$ 11,810,000
4.3 — Agriculture	\$ 2,295,000
4.4 — Attorney General	\$ 16,975,000
4.5 — Culture	\$ 29,325,000
4.6 — Education	\$ 1,150,000
4.7 — Energy and Natural Resources	\$ 9,975,000
4.8 — Environment	\$ 2,150,000

4.9 — Executive Council	\$ 28,225,000
4.10 — Hospitals and Medical Care	\$ 8,570,000
4.11 — Labour	—
4.12 — Manpower	\$ 90,000
4.13 — Public Works, Supply and Services	\$ 51,695,000
4.14 — Recreation and Parks	\$ 540,000
4.15 — Social Services and Community Health	\$ 7,315,000
4.16 — Solicitor General	\$ 30,300,000
4.17 — Tourism and Small Business	\$ 1,000,000
4.18 — Transportation	\$ 2,205,000
4.19 — XV Olympic Winter Games — 1988	\$ 11,015,000
4.20 — Multidepartmental Services	\$ 5,000,000
Total Vote 4 — Planning and Implementation of Construction Projects	\$231,734,300
5.1 — Administrative Support	\$ 126,900
5.2 — Procurement	\$ 3,109,500
5.3 — Operational Support Services	\$ 569,600
5.4 — Supply Operations	\$ 1,811,600
5.5 — Government Transportation	\$ 6,620,100
Total Vote 5 — Central Services and Acquisition of Supplies	\$ 12,237,700
6.1 — Administrative Support	\$ 1,409,500
6.2 — Environment	\$ 2,092,000
6.3 — Municipal Affairs	—
6.4 — Culture	\$ 1,140,000
6.5 — Recreation and Parks	\$ 72,000
6.6 — Energy and Natural Resources	\$ 1,813,000
6.7 — Utilities and Telecommunications	\$ 346,000
6.8 — Transferable Amount	\$ 500,000
Total Vote 6 — Land Assembly	\$ 7,372,500
Total Vote 7 — Financial Assistance to the Calgary Olympic Coliseum	—
Department Total	\$543,545,700

MR. CHAMBERS: Mr. Chairman, I move that the votes be reported.

[Motion carried]

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

[Motion carried]

[Mr. Deputy Speaker in the Chair]

MR. PURDY: Mr. Speaker, the Committee of Supply has had under consideration the following resolution, reports as follows, and requests leave to sit again:

Resolved that sums not exceeding the following be granted to Her Majesty for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1985, for the Department of Public Works, Supply and Services: \$7,322,900 for departmental support services, \$42,258,100 for information and telecommunication services, \$242,620,200 for management of properties, \$231,734,300 for planning and implementation of construction projects, \$12,237,700 for central services and acquisition of supplies, \$7,372,500 for land assembly.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Having heard the report and the request for leave to sit again, are you all agreed?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, the Assembly will sit tomorrow evening in Committee of Supply for consideration of the estimates of the Department of the Attorney General and after that, if there's time tomorrow evening, the Department of Hospitals and Medical Care.

[At 10:22 p.m., on motion, the House adjourned to Tuesday at 2:30 p.m.]