

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ALBERTA

Title: **Wednesday, May 16, 1984 2:30 p.m.**

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

PRAYERS

[Mr. Deputy Speaker in the Chair]

head: TABLING RETURNS AND REPORTS

MR. ADAIR: Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure today to file in the Legislative Assembly five copies of the Mount Allan Master Plan [interjections] and five copies of the information package that goes with that.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, this afternoon I would like to table a copy of a letter, along with a petition from nonstatus people of Little Buffalo Lake. You will recall that during the estimates of Executive Council, the Premier tabled a petition. This is a petition from nonstatus people in the Little Buffalo Lake area, urging the government to move ahead with a fair and equitable settlement for the Lubicon Band.

head: INTRODUCTION OF SPECIAL GUESTS

MR. ADAIR: Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure today to introduce to you, and through you to the Members of the Legislative Assembly, a group of students from Rocky Lane school in the constituency of Peace River. I have two figures: 32 or 50 children. I'm not sure exactly which one is right. Thirty-two? Got it right. They're accompanied by teachers Maureen MacKinnon and Mike Nugent, and by bus drivers Irene Batt and Elsie Trudeau. They're standing now. I would like you to welcome them in the usual manner of this Assembly.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure today to introduce to you and to members of this Assembly 30 grade 6 students from Spirit River elementary school. They're accompanied by their principal, Mr. Jim Brandon, and by teachers and supervisors from the Spirit River area. I ask that they stand and be recognized and welcomed by members of the Assembly.

MR. SCHMID: Mr. Speaker, it isn't very often we can recognize the fine work our cordial and outstanding young pages are doing here in our Assembly. But it so happens that one of their mothers is in the Speaker's gallery today. I would like to introduce to you the mother of Tanja Oswald, Mrs. Helga Oswald. I ask you to rise and be recognized by this Assembly as we show our appreciation.

head: ORAL QUESTION PERIOD**Mount Allan Olympic Ski Site**

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct the first question to the hon. Minister of Tourism and Small Business. It's with respect to the government's latest move into socializing more and more of Alberta. Given the government's commitment to proceed with this venture, I ask the minister what personal discussion he had with the Stoney Band and the chief of the Stoney Band concerning their proposal, which I gather was to

be held in abeyance until other private-sector proponents had their go at this project.

MR. ADAIR: Mr. Speaker, in response to the question relative to the Stoney, on September 27, 1983, I met with two of the three chiefs, plus a number of the staff they brought with them, to discuss a proposal that the media suggested was in their hands. They did not have a proposal, but they were interested in developing both Mount Allan and the alpine village. We indicated to them that we were already negotiating with the private sector, that there were two separate projects, and that if there was still an interest, would they send me the financial capacity and information that was requested of all the proponents bidding on the facilities at that time; and if they did that, we would keep their name on the list.

On October 5, 1983, I wrote to confirm the discussions we had at that meeting. That was followed by a request, again to seek the financial information and capacity of the Stoney Band. No response was received. On December 13, we wrote again, asking for a response to that particular one, and did not get any response. At that point we considered they were not interested.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, given the minister's answer, I gather the government was looking at other proponents. In the last few weeks between the minister's earlier answers in this House and the announcement today, was any consideration given to the government taking the initiative and reopening the discussions with the Stoney Band by contacting the chief?

MR. ADAIR: Mr. Speaker, the government took the initiative by setting up a meeting on September 27, following it up by a letter on October 5, and following it up by a letter on December 13 — no response. We began to run into the time constraints we had with the project.

The other information I had was that there was a possibility they were interested in a separate project, unrelated to both Mount Allan and the village.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, the minister talks about other information. However, just so we're clear, could the minister tell the House that despite the fact that a meeting took place last September and several letters went out, between the time this matter was raised in the House by various members and the government indicated they were still looking at private-sector proposals; was there any effort in the last two months to reinstate discussions with the Stoney Band concerning this proposal of last fall?

MR. ADAIR: No, Mr. Speaker, in light of no responses to the previous correspondence I mentioned.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the minister. What other private-sector negotiations occurred? Did negotiations take place with the Cascade Group companies, regarding the possibility of their preparing the Mount Allan site?

MR. ADAIR: Indirectly, yes, to the question relative to the Cascade Group. I said "indirectly" because they were a partner in a different company that we were negotiating with, and that was the only one.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the minister. Before launching the negotiations with the Cascade companies, was the government aware that the chairman of the

Alberta Racing Commission was a director of a number of the companies that are part of the Cascade Group?

MR. ADAIR: No, Mr. Speaker, I don't think I was. I can't recall any indication that the member you referred to was a member of any particular part of the company we were dealing with.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the minister. During the discussions with the Cascade Group, was there a proposal that before that group would proceed, they would require a guaranteed rate of return?

MR. ADAIR: I venture to say that was considered as one of the suggestions made by the proponents in our discussions.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question. The minister indicated he "ventures to say" it was one of the aspects. Could he be a little more specific? Did the decision of the Cascade Group not to proceed hinge on the question of a guaranteed rate of return for this project?

MR. ADAIR: Not to my knowledge, Mr. Speaker.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question. Given his announcement today, is the minister in a position to give the Assembly an estimate of the operating costs of the Mount Allan site and will the minister assure the Assembly that the government will not subsidize the private-sector operation, should they get someone to undertake it on a fee-for-service basis? Are we in fact going to be picking up the costs of this kind of project, as opposed to changing the mountain so that the private sector would be interested?

MR. ADAIR: Mr. Speaker, in light of the fact that my estimates are coming up later this afternoon, I'd be more than pleased to get into the detail of that particular question at that time and will make an effort to do it in my opening remarks, ahead of the questions I may have.

MR. NOTLEY: We'll certainly look forward to that discussion.

Agricultural Assistance

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct my second question to the hon. Minister of Agriculture, who I gather will have a visitation in the next little while from a number of the many farmers who are going bankrupt as a result of the agricultural policy of this government. [interjections] Could the minister advise the Assembly whether he's had an opportunity to apprise himself of the figures concerning farm-related bankruptcies in Alberta for the first quarter of 1984, which show a 130 percent increase over the first quarter of 1983, a rate almost three times the national average?

MR. FJORDBOTTEN: Mr. Speaker, in response to the first part of the question, as of last Friday I had my department, as well as members from Treasury and the Agricultural Development Corporation, meet with the group the hon. Leader of the Opposition referred to, to discuss their concerns.

With respect to bankruptcies in agriculture, with the input costs higher and the sale price of our commodities on the world market being down, certainly producers are finding themselves in a much more difficult position. However, I point out that the numbers I had until the end of February show that for the 14 months — two months past one year — there were 55 farm

bankruptcies in Alberta, which I think we have to balance and realize that in '83-'84 there were some 839 beginning farmers in Alberta, with a commitment of \$100 million. So I think we have to put things in balance.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, unfortunately that's true.

Could I put a supplementary question to the minister. Has the minister had an opportunity to apprise himself of the projected figures for farm net cash income, generated by the department for 1984, which predict a drop of 8.4 percent between last year and this year?

MR. FJORDBOTTEN: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I am aware of the numbers. I'm also aware that that is basically a figure for across Canada, as the major portion of the income from Alberta is sold on the world market through the Canadian Wheat Board.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the hon. minister. What consideration has the government given to a policy that at one time was adopted by the federal Conservative Party and has recently been reintroduced in the House of Commons in the form of Bill C-232 — not by that party, but introduced nonetheless — with respect to parity prices for farmers? What is the position of the government of Alberta in 1984 with respect to a position held in the '50s and '60s by the Diefenbaker Conservative Party?

MR. FJORDBOTTEN: Mr. Speaker, I understand that Bill was introduced by the federal NDP in the House of Commons in Ottawa. I just received a copy of it, and I am presently reading it.

MR. NOTLEY: It's very good reading, Mr. Minister. However, could I ask the government what the position of this provincial administration is with respect to the whole principle of a system of parity prices? At one time it was the federal position of the party. What is the position of the government of Alberta with respect to the principle of parity prices?

MR. FJORDBOTTEN: Mr. Speaker, as I have just received a copy of the Bill and haven't had an opportunity to review it, I can assure the hon. member that I will review the Bill and will respond to that question at the appropriate time.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question. The minister indicated that he has met, and I gather his officials have met, with Treasury officials. I'm not sure whether or not he mentioned ADC. Could the minister, given the increase in the number of bankruptcies and the concern which has led farmers to even consider coming to meet with the minister in his office and sit in his office for some time — in order that the minister can stay in his office and the farmers can get back to the land, what directives did the minister give his officials when he asked for this review?

MR. FJORDBOTTEN: Mr. Speaker, I don't like issuing directives. I suggested to my staff that they show them every consideration and listen closely to the concerns they might raise. In addition, I meet on a regular basis with commodity groups and farm organizations and have discussed this topic with them in depth. There is definitely a concern in the agricultural community. If there is some action that we could take and aren't, and that would be helpful, we will certainly look at it.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question. Could the minister tell the House what review was made of the Bill

presented to the recently prorogued session of the House of Commons? Bill C-653 is the Bill that would allow a renegotiation feature for farmers. Did the minister ask his department to assess that Bill, and is any consideration being given to encouraging the House to reconsider the principle contained in that Bill?

MR. FJORDBOTEN: Mr. Speaker, as with most Bills — I can't say all, but most — that impact agriculture that are introduced in the House of Commons, we certainly review them. With respect to any Bill that would preclude the short-term operating capital that's needed or do anything to prevent that operating capital being available to producers, that isn't something we would support. But I will be happy to check on the response I received on that specific Bill and report back.

Street Assistance Program

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, my question to the Minister of Transportation is with regard to the status of the applications under the new street assistance program for towns and villages. I wonder if the minister could indicate whether a number of those applications have been approved or if there are a number that have not been approved, and possibly the reasons they are being held at this time.

MR. M. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, I'd be pleased to do that. Applications in excess of the \$7.5 million that has been allocated in this year's budget have been received. We're going through those on the basis of seeing which ones can be approved, based on a number of factors. I have approved about eight different applications to this point in time.

There are a number of problems with others which have been submitted and not yet approved by my office. The major problem is associated with the fact that the applications were sent in by engineering firms, and I have no way of telling whether the town or village council supports the application, has discussed it, has considered the construction cost, and has negotiated the engineering fees.

As a result, I wrote to all those towns that had submitted applications without that information, through their engineers, and asked if they would send me a council resolution or motion indicating that the council indeed supports the proposed program, is willing to finance their 25 percent of it, has negotiated the engineering fees, and agrees with the construction costs. Those letters went out last Wednesday. I expect they've all been received by now, and this week councils will be considering how to respond to them. Mr. Speaker, I would guess that within a couple of weeks I will be in a position to approve still further applications, and probably by the end of June all the funds will be subscribed to by approvals we've made by that time.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question. Upon receipt of notification from the respective councils that they approve engineering and construction costs, other related costs, and accept paying 25 percent, can the minister indicate that he would give immediate approval at that time so those projects could proceed with haste?

MR. M. MOORE: Not necessarily immediate approval, I have a number of factors on which to base approval. Bearing in mind this is a five-year, \$50 million program, we can't accommodate everybody in year one. Consideration is given to the need in that particular community, and that relates to whether or not they have mostly paved streets already, or what exactly they

are doing. The second matter we consider is the time the application was received. We provide a greater degree of approval to those who submitted early. Obviously we can't consider those who haven't submitted an application.

The third thing that is important to consider is whether or not any other similar work is going on in the area, probably carried out by Alberta Transportation. For example, if a community wants to put in some pavement on a few blocks of their street in a small village and we have an overlay program or a paving program of some nature being carried out nearby this year, then it's more important that I approve that particular village's application rather than another one that may be forthcoming or may be in my office, when I know we're going to have a paving program in that area a year from now. Thus they would get a much better construction rate when we have a mixing plant and a paver in the area.

Those are just some of the things that go into the judgment my office has to give each individual application. But I can assure the hon. member that I will deal with them as expeditiously as possible, once [I receive] the information about whether or not the council supports them and whether the engineering fees have been negotiated and the construction costs are reasonable.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question in terms of the administrative procedure. If I have interpreted the minister's remarks correctly, the minister is reviewing each application. Why does the minister feel it necessary to become so involved in the minute details of not only setting priority but examining some of the submissions, in terms of engineering and construction costs, with this proposal?

MR. M. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, that's my job.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, former government programs have been administered by a number of the staff of the department, and the minister hasn't become that involved in the department to delay some of the applications. Could the minister indicate whether one of the reasons is to delay, so the expenditures of the department are not so high this year? Or isn't there a need for some construction work to proceed, based on local council decisions rather than the minister's?

MR. M. MOORE: I can elaborate on the reasons I personally review all those applications and the reasons they were sent back. I already indicated to the hon. member that it's not my intention to turn over to staff decisions that I think need to be made at the ministerial level. Secondly, with respect to engineering firms submitting applications on behalf of councils. I announced this program in this Assembly on April 2. I received from engineering firms more than a dozen applications, dated April 3, that I know very well were never discussed with their councils.

For us to simply accept those applications, with no indication whatever of whether or not the council agreed to them, would be improper. I reviewed them on the basis of that criterion, plus the engineering costs. I have a real concern that for the previous five-year program we had, too many dollars were spent on engineering costs. I will not accept engineering firms simply sending in applications on behalf of towns, saying that the engineering fees are 10 percent regardless of the degree of complexity of the work. That has to be considered.

Mr. Speaker, I don't mind at all saying that it's part of my responsibility to review those applications, and I will continue to do so. I hope most members of the Assembly expect me to do that.

Grain Transportation

MRS. CRIPPS: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Agriculture. Has the minister received information regarding the makeup of the Crow rate method of payment inquiry committee?

MR. FJORDBOTTEN: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I have. I am pleased that the federal minister has finally followed through on the commitment and announced the makeup of that commission. While I really can't personally comment on the members of the committee, the appointees, I'm sure they will make every effort to do a first-class job. But I am disappointed to the extent that there isn't someone representing agribusiness from the province of Alberta, even though I made representations to the federal minister, suggesting a number of names from Alberta that he might consider. But, Mr. Speaker, I am aware.

MRS. CRIPPS: Considering the importance of this review to agriculture, will the minister be making representation to the federal government, to ensure that the members of the review committee understand the effect of the method of payment to the various segments of agriculture and on the development of an effective and efficient transportation system?

MR. FJORDBOTTEN: As I stated before, Mr. Speaker, we will be active throughout the entire review process and will submit and make representations to the commission at the most appropriate time.

MRS. CRIPPS: A supplementary. What is Alberta's share of products shipped under the Crow rate?

MR. FJORDBOTTEN: Mr. Speaker, I don't have that number right at my fingertips, but I think over 30 percent of the grain shipped out of Canada is Alberta origin. I don't know what number would be under the Crow rate.

MRS. CRIPPS: If 30 percent of the produce shipped is of Alberta origin, what percentage of members does Alberta have on that inquiry committee?

MR. FJORDBOTTEN: As I stated, Mr. Speaker, we don't have a member who represents agribusiness from Alberta on the committee.

MRS. CRIPPS: What effect have the Crow rate changes had on grain shipping costs in the current year, and what will the effect be in the new crop year beginning August 1?

MR. FJORDBOTTEN: Mr. Speaker, the freight rate for shipping grain is going up on August 1, and the increase is more significant than what we thought it would be, especially considering that the federal government has a reduced commitment to rail upgrading in their capital expenditure. It's our strong representation that we feel if there's a reduction in the expenditure for upgrading the rail system, there should be an equal reduction in the freight rate to farmers.

Federal Sports Lottery

MR. SZWENDER: Mr. Speaker, my question to the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs is with respect to the federal government's sports betting pool. I am wondering whether the minister could indicate what steps her department has taken to determine whether the federal government's sports betting pool introduced last week is in violation of the 1980 agreement made with the provinces through the Interprovincial Lottery Corporation.

MRS. OSTERMAN: Mr. Speaker, the province of Alberta has joined the other nine provinces in asking that this situation be clarified by the courts.

MR. SZWENDER: A supplemental, Mr. Speaker. Has the minister's department made any assessment of the financial impact the sale of the federal sports tickets here in Alberta will have on revenues generated by provincial lottery ticket sales?

MRS. OSTERMAN: Mr. Speaker, my department has not done an assessment, but the Western Canada Lottery Foundation has. The sports pool as such would not have a major impact on the lottery profits available to the nonprofit organizations in Alberta. However, if the federal government were to run a side-by-side operation in line with the games presently run by the Western Canada Lottery Foundation, it is our technicians' belief that the impact would be something like 60 percent. In other words, there would be 60 percent less profit available to the nonprofit organizations.

MR. SZWENDER: A further supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Has the minister been advised by the federal government what revenues from federal lottery ticket sales, if any, will make their way back to this province to assist Alberta programs?

MRS. OSTERMAN: Mr. Speaker, the federal government not only has not spoken to the minister responsible in Alberta but has not spoken to the other ministers responsible across Canada. For instance, we are not aware of what the federal government has done with the revenues they received in lieu of their participation in lotteries since our federal/provincial agreement. I believe they've received around \$128 million.

The hon. member raised the question as to what will happen with revenues from the sports pool. I think that begs the question if there will be revenues from the sports pool. Mr. Speaker, our experts tell us there will be something like a \$24 million loss in the current year of running the sports pool, coupled with another \$35 million they would ordinarily have received from the provinces this year in lieu of federal participation. If they lose the court case, if the federal court agrees with the Quebec court, that would not be paid to the federal government. So in one year, \$59 million could be at stake. That's more than a quarter of the federal government's promise to the Olympics. Incidentally, that funding was promised and, if I understand the situation correctly, those moneys flow regardless of whether there are dollars from a sports pool or not.

MR. SZWENDER: A further supplementary. With respect to the retailers of the provincial lottery tickets, who are under contract with the Western Canada Lottery Foundation, could the minister indicate what policy proposals are in place to deal with contract violators who choose to sell these federal lottery tickets?

MRS. OSTERMAN: Basically, Mr. Speaker, the western Canada foundation has been notifying the retailers they become aware of who have also begun to sell the federal sports pool. There are some 2,717 retailers in Alberta; 91 of these are retailers who are operating on behalf of nonprofit groups, and 432 of the retailers have the 6/49 machines. The western Canada foundation has been alerting the retailers and reminding them to read the contract they entered into with the foundation. Because I think it would be useful to all members of the Assembly in case they get inquiries from retailers, I might just read the contract.

not to, without the prior written consent of the Foundation, in any way promote any other lottery games or engage in any activity in competition with the lottery games participated in by the Foundation;

Unfortunately for many of these retailers, they may not have read their contract carefully, though I think it's stated quite clearly.

The other problem arises because the federal people, who have been visiting retailers across the province, have said there is no problem for those retailers if they enter an agreement with the federal people.

So the retailers are receiving notification that they would indeed be in breach of the contract and would lose their ability to run the games run by the western Canada foundation.

MR. SZWENDER: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Could the minister elaborate what she means by "lose their ability"? Would that mean removal of lottery equipment or legal action?

MRS. OSTERMAN: Mr. Speaker, basically it would be a breach of the agreement the retailer had entered into. That agreement would just cease to exist, and equipment, tickets, or whatever would be removed.

MR. SZWENDER: A final supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Would the minister's department consider any additional communications with the public, in order to inform Albertans what benefits the provincial lotteries bring to the people of this province?

MRS. OSTERMAN: Mr. Speaker, it has not been a policy of our department to enter into communications on behalf of the Western Canada Lottery Foundation and indeed the Alberta division, which is responsible for doing the Alberta communication, if you will. There is advertising done, of course, in terms of promoting lotteries or at least making the public in the four western provinces aware of lotteries. That is done across western Canada by the western Canada division. There is individual advertising, if you will, done by each province. As I said, in Alberta it's done by the Alberta division of the Western Canada Lottery Foundation.

Until this point in time, I have not discussed advertising with the foundation. While the hon. member calls it communication, I think it may well be viewed as advertising. Any dollars expended would come out of the pockets of all the nonprofit organizations across Alberta who presently receive the profits that are available. I have undertaken a communication with the chairman of the group, letting that individual know that I will be interested in reviewing the Alberta division's activities here. The lottery business is now significantly larger than when the provinces first undertook to get into the business, and I think it's appropriate that a review be done on whether the organization as it's presently constituted is still appropriate in its function here in this province. One of the areas we could certainly discuss is that of communication or advertising.

MR. GOGO: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. I seem to recall the minister announcing to the House some time ago a new distribution system for lottery proceeds in this province, as a direct result of some 600 briefs or submissions to the minister. In view of the sports pool now being conducted by the federal authorities, has the minister considered the option of writing those 600 agencies or groups who wrote her, with a view to their pressuring the Members of Parliament for this province to get Ottawa to back off the sports pool concept, period?

MRS. OSTERMAN: No, Mr. Speaker. I haven't given consideration to doing that. I believed there was enough publicity associated with the federal people entering into the sports pool and the obvious futility of that pool in light of the historical data that can be presented in terms of what dollars could be raised. I think the hon. member indeed raised a legitimate concern, in that if the federal government uses this as an entrée into the full lottery business, these organizations will of course be at risk in their funding. After the court case has been heard, it may be appropriate to consider communication of the facts that are available to us.

MR. NELSON: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Considering there is now a fee for service charged by the lottery foundation, would it not be prudent for the minister to encourage the foundation to either stop their fee or allow the retailers to sell both if they wish to continue with the contractual obligation?

MRS. OSTERMAN: Mr. Speaker, I think we're speaking here of a contractual arrangement. Being in the business community, hopefully most of the retailers would have understood and undertaken to have a clear understanding of a contract they were entering. It wouldn't be my view at all that it would be appropriate to see that contract broken. Certainly it's very clearly stated in the terms of the contract that the retailers are not allowed to enter into another game that is in direct competition with the games run by the western Canada foundation. In terms of direction from this ministry, I would not propose nor would I believe that until this point in time the western Canada foundation would tell the retailers what they should do. But clearly there is a product being marketed. The retailers have the option of choosing what product to market.

MR. NELSON: A further supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Might this be the last supplementary on this question at this time.

MR. NELSON: Considering the answers of the minister, I'm wondering if it would be possible in Alberta to allow those people contracted to the foundation to be supplied with all the materials that are allowed by other provinces — in particular the instant scratch lottery, which I believe is unavailable in this province — that could be made available to the retailers, to assist them in their fight with the sports lotto?

MRS. OSTERMAN: Mr. Speaker, that raises a very basic question, which was addressed at length in looking at the whole host of schemes that is present in the province and that is utilized by nonprofit organizations when raising funds. If I recall the figures correctly, the Gaming Commission said in a report that in one year some \$40 million being raised under the auspices of the Gaming Commission related to nonprofit organizations utilizing that group to vet their activities, and subsequently getting a licence to operate different activities that didn't fit under the lottery scheme under the portfolio of Consumer and Corporate Affairs.

The hon. member is quite accurate when raising the aspect as to whether another game should be made available. There are other games being utilized under the auspices of the western Canada foundation in a number of other provinces. Those games have a specific purpose. In other words, the profits are not utilized across the province with respect to nonprofit organizations but have been targeted to a specific area.

Until now, it has been our view that to promote more games would eventually infringe on the area where, again, the non-

profit organizations and many others are seeking the expendable dollars that individuals and families have available to either wager or purchase, whatever, in this area. For the hon. member's information, this was looked at. The subject may be raised again, but it would have to be viewed in the context of how far we get into the lottery business at the expense of the other types of games that are being utilized across the province.

Telephone Toll Revenue Sharing

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct my question to the Minister of Utilities and Telecommunications. My question concerns the current cost of the program by ACT to have operators intercepting long distance calls. What cost-effective assessment has the minister made of their six-week expenditure of \$833,000 on this program? Specifically, does the minister consider this a worthwhile expenditure in this time of restraint?

MR. BOGLE: Yes, Mr. Speaker, when considering the alternatives.

MR. MARTIN: A supplementary question to the minister, Mr. Speaker. An estimated \$251,400 worth of calls were in dispute from customers in the Edmonton Telephones service area. Will any of this money be recovered by ACT?

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Speaker, once the current dispute between the two telephone companies has been resolved, then attempts will of course be made to collect whatever portions are still available for collection purposes. In addition, Alberta Government Telephones has an insurance policy, and they have now filed the appropriate information with the insurance company to make claims on that policy.

MR. MARTIN: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Is the minister in a position to indicate to the House if we are any closer to a settlement with the city of Edmonton? In other words, has any progress been made recently?

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member will recall, I have outlined that there are at least three ways the current dispute might be resolved. It could be resolved through legislation, through the courts, or through negotiations. Our clear preference is to find a negotiated settlement if at all possible. Meetings have occurred, and future meetings are planned.

I can only say to the hon. member that if the hon. Member for Edmonton Gold Bar, who is the chairman of the Edmonton caucus, and I did not feel that there were some prospects of resolving the issue through a negotiated settlement that would be fair and just to all Albertans, then clearly no future meetings would be planned.

MR. MARTIN: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. To help the negotiations along and in view of the tremendous cost to AGT of the operator-intercept program, would the minister consider terminating this program now?

MR. BOGLE: No, Mr. Speaker.

MR. MARTIN: A supplementary question. I guess we have lots of money to spend. Would the money presently being spent on this operator intercept program not be better utilized by this government in offering a settlement to Ed. Tel.?

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Speaker, I would be very interested in knowing the official position of the opposition with regard to

bringing this matter to a satisfactory, fair, and just conclusion. [interjections]

MR. MARTIN: A supplementary question. I think the Milvain commission would be reasonable. [interjections] My question to the minister is on the money. We are spending \$833,000 over six weeks. That's going to run into millions of dollars if this program is not terminated at some point. Would that money not be better used in trying to negotiate a settlement with the city of Edmonton?

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Speaker, did I hear the hon. member correctly? Was he suggesting that it is the position of the Official Opposition that they endorse the Milvain report and would like to see a settlement based on the Milvain report and recommendations?

MR. NOTLEY: That's not the question.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, the minister does not want to answer the question. [interjections] We were talking about the money, not about the Milvain commission. I know the minister wants to privatize AGT. We do not . . .

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Would the hon. member please proceed to the question.

MR. MARTIN: I'll ask my question clearly. Could the minister indicate if there are any plans by the government to introduce legislation in this spring session which would alter the substance or interpretation of the AGT-Edmonton Telephones Act?

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Speaker, prior to answering that, I'll only indicate to the hon. member that it was he who raised the Milvain report in question period today, not I.

Secondly, with regard to a settlement of the matter, I've answered that on occasions in the past. I will indicate again that at least one more meeting is planned in the future. As long as there is a possibility of settling this issue through a negotiated settlement that is fair and just to all Albertans, then that is the clear preference of this government.

MR. MARTIN: A supplementary question. The minister knows full well that Appendix B of the Milvain commission recommended \$18 million, and that's what we're talking about. My question to the minister is, how much of taxpayers' money is the government willing to spend to continue this dispute? What is the bottom line in terms of the amount of money we're willing to spend before we come to an agreement with the city of Edmonton?

MR. BOGLE: The bottom line, Mr. Speaker, is fairness and equity to all Albertans. We believe in principle, and that is a principle.

MR. MARTIN: A supplementary question.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Might this be the last supplementary question on this topic at this time.

MR. MARTIN: [Inaudible] we want to know how much money it's going to cost for the government to continue with those principles.

MR. BOGLE: Is the hon. member really suggesting that all issues can be settled solely on dollars, that principles mean

nothing, that fairness and equity cannot be considered? [interjections] It's very important. I'd like to know where the hon. member stands.

Highway Cleanup Campaign

MR. LYSONS: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct my question to the Minister of Transportation. It's with regard to the excellent highway cleanup program the 4-H clubs carried out. If he has these figures, how many miles were done, and at what cost? Were there any reported injuries, and does he anticipate carrying on with the program in future years?

MR. NOTLEY: Put it on the Order Paper.

MR. M. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, the program was once again very successful, and perhaps the most successful part of it was that drivers throughout this province everywhere drove with extra care and caution both last Saturday, when we finished, and the previous Saturday. The result was that there were no injuries, no accidents — not even any near misses as far as I've been made aware. First of all, we need to thank all the drivers that were on the highways on those two Saturdays.

Over 500 4-H clubs. Junior Forest Warden clubs, and other groups of young people participated — 513 clubs in fact. That's up about 50 from 1983. There were in excess of 8,000 children in those 513 clubs across the province. They cleaned 4,450 miles of primary highway and, during the course of that cleanup, collected some 54,000 black plastic garbage bags of litter. They actually cleaned about 200 more miles of highway than they did in 1983, and slightly less litter was collected. If there's a message there, it is that Alberta motorists are using a little more discretion with respect to what they throw out the window this year than they were previously, and that's good news.

The final cost to the department is something like \$115,000. My estimation is that it would cost well in excess of \$.5 million were we to try to do that work with departmental staff. So all of us owe a great debt of gratitude to the 4-H clubs, their leaders, and those who participated right across Alberta.

MR. LYSONS: Mr. Speaker, I really enjoyed that information. In the final part of my question I asked if the minister anticipates doing this in future years? It sounds like an excellent deal for us.

MR. M. MOORE: I don't anticipate doing it, because I don't belong to 4-H anymore. But I hope the hon. Member for Drayton Valley and others who've been involved with 4-H clubs will be out there.

Seriously, the only reason we would curtail the program would be because of the safety of the children. There isn't any doubt that as long as we can maintain the safety record we've set for ourselves, which was excellent this year, the program should continue for many years to come.

Automatic Dialing Devices

MR. LEE: Mr. Speaker, my question for the Minister of Utilities and Telecommunications concerns the growth of the use of automatic dialing devices. In view of the growing public concern about the perceived invasion of privacy and nuisance potential, is the minister contemplating any form of action similar to that of the recent hearings by the Canadian radio and telephone commission?

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Speaker, I'm aware that the matter was discussed during recent hearings by the federal body that regulates telephone services in British Columbia, Ontario, and Quebec. I'm not aware of the conclusions of those discussions, as it's my understanding that at present there is no known intercept equipment available that can identify a solicitation call and prevent that kind of call from coming through, yet allow access to other calls that would be received by the subscriber.

MR. LEE: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Is the minister specifically concerned about private, business, medical, and emergency telephone lines being tied up as a result of sequential dialing, thereby prohibiting the public from making emergency phone calls?

MR. BOGLE: Yes, Mr. Speaker, as well as the inconvenience caused to other subscribers or calls that are unsolicited and unwanted.

MR. LEE: A supplementary.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Could this be the final supplementary on this question.

MR. LEE: Is the minister considering guidelines that would restrict the hours of operation, for example? Or is the minister reviewing U.S. initiatives such as in Wisconsin, where it is prohibited unless customers consent beforehand, or in Florida, where customers have the option to electronically block calls or have a distinctive ring?

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Speaker, I'm aware that some states in the United States have taken steps to attempt to curb the actions in a legal way. The most recent information I have is that while those attempts are laudable, they have not had positive results. In other words, even though you can pass legislation and regulations to prevent the same, if an individual wishes to use an automatic device and does not obtain permission of the telephone company, it is very difficult for the device to be identified by the telephone company. But I'll certainly take as notice the examples of Michigan and Florida that the hon. member gave, and double-check to see whether or not the most recent information I've been given is in fact correct. I'll be pleased to report back to the hon. member.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The time for the question period has expired. Before we proceed to Orders of the Day, would the Assembly agree that the hon. Minister of International Trade might revert to Introduction of Special Guests?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

head: INTRODUCTION OF SPECIAL GUESTS

(reversion)

MR. SCHMID: Mr. Speaker, 22 students from Kenilworth school are paired with 21 students from Quebec who are visiting our province. I'm sure our students will do their best to have the hospitality the way Albertans would want to have it for them. I would also like to mention that they are accompanied by their teachers Roger Leblond, Normand Lapointe, and Richard St-Sauveur. I ask them to rise to be recognized by the Assembly. I would also like to express pour les étudiants de la province de Quebec, bienvenue a l'Alberta et bon plaisir.

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, I want to rise on a question of pragmatic privilege, if I may, sir. It's a seldom-used section of the parliamentary process. It has to do with the Leader of the Opposition's newfound interest in sports and athletics.

It's been drawn to my attention that the unanimous motion of this Assembly, moved by the Minister of Tourism and Small Business, in support of the Edmonton Oilers may in fact be under some serious question. I have before me a *Calgary Herald* article in which the Leader of the Opposition is in fact quoted as saying "I don't think the Oilers will win".

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Shame.

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, knowing that the Leader of the Opposition always wants us to have full information and full understanding of what position he has taken and, moreover, to be sure the supporters of the Edmonton Oilers here in the Edmonton area have a clear understanding of what his position is. I want to table with the Assembly a copy of the article from the *Calgary Herald* and provide the Leader of the Opposition with a chance to correct the record. [interjections]

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, on that question of pragmatic privilege or whatever the hon. minister raised it on, I would like to take this opportunity to say that while I had some concerns, I am heartened by the results last night. If I recollect the article, the hon. minister will note that it says "I hope" the Oilers will win. And hope springs eternal. One of course has to have hope when you live in a province with this kind of government, Mr. Speaker. [laughter]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: It's always good to know there's still hope.

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.

Department of Tourism and Small Business

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

MR. ADAIR: Mr. Chairman, I wonder if I might beg leave to request that I have the opportunity to make my presentation sitting down. I have a small problem with my leg.

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. ADAIR: Thank you. If I might, Mr. Chairman, I'd like to make some opening remarks relative to the Department of Tourism and Small Business. They relate to the small business division, the tourism division, and the northern Alberta development branch, which is the working body for the Northern Alberta Development Council.

We've had a very interesting past year, Mr. Chairman. Just to give you some statistics of some of the numbers that have been going on, in the small business division counselling area

we've had about 14,900 requests for assisting in the way of counselling new businesses, existing businesses, requests for information, or even regional businesses. That's a very important point to make. We've conducted 29 management assistance programs, and they've been run in 31 communities. They have directly or indirectly assisted some 687 businesses.

We've had a part to play with the Alberta Chamber of Commerce and the individual chambers of commerce around the province in the third annual provincial Small Business Week. We hope to continue that support to the Alberta chamber and the individual chambers for the work they are doing to assist in ensuring that the general public really understands the role of small business.

Of course we produce the Small Business Quarterly, and they have been in great demand. Some 55,000 were distributed just a year ago.

In the area of tourism — a very important area, particularly in these economic times, when you have an industry as labour intensive as tourism is — the revenues of last year were roughly \$2.7 million. That was made up of \$2 million direct, and \$.7 million indirect.

One of the areas we have been working on very hard and very closely with the division that covers conventions and congresses is to ensure that we do everything we can to assist the major convention centres in Edmonton and Calgary to attract these large congresses. We have some that I'd like to identify. In Calgary, in September 1984, the International Congress for Tropical Medicine and Malaria will be held in Alberta, and we'll have 2,500 delegates attending that.

Possibly without getting too much further into my opening remarks, I had the pleasure today in Calgary of releasing the master plan for the Mount Allan project for the 1988 Winter Olympics. As a result of that and the kinds of responses we got in Calgary and the interest of members of the Assembly, this morning we made that audiovisual presentation to the Calgary Olympic organization, the Canadian Ski Association, the citizens' advisory committee for Kananaskis Country, the Calgary Olympic Development Association, and all members of the media in the Calgary area that were in attendance. It was held this morning in the host city for the 1988 Winter Olympics. Calgary, was extremely well received, and we think provided valuable information on both the recreation day use and the Olympic characteristics of this magnificent provincial resource.

Because I'm certain members of this committee would find the presentation helpful in considering the estimates of the department, I propose to share this presentation with them. Mr. Chairman, my understanding of our procedures is that a stranger or strangers cannot be on the floor of the Assembly at any time, so I propose that the committee adjourn for one hour. During that time the equipment will be set up, and we can sit informally in our seats and view the presentation. Thereafter we can reassemble in committee for study of the estimates. Accordingly, I move that the Committee of Supply now adjourn for one hour.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Having heard the motion by the hon. minister, do you agree?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: No opposition to it? It is so ordered.

[The Committee of Supply recessed at 3:35 p.m. and reconvened at 4:20 p.m.]

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The Committee of Supply will reconvene. Are there any questions or comments to the minister? Has the minister any further comments?

MR. ADAIR: Mr. Chairman, I want to thank everybody for allowing us the opportunity to show that slide presentation. I think it answers in part a number of questions that relate to the vertical, whether there is in fact snow in the area, and the use of snowmaking to complement the natural snow capacity of that particular region. As well, you can see the comparison between what I think we all know a little bit about, Lake Louise, and the Mount Allan site. We're confident that the Mount Allan site, once developed, and once skied by the Fédération Internationale de Ski, will provide us with a men's downhill very, very close to Lake Louise and much, much better than Sarajevo or Lake Placid.

I think it's important that I reiterate or outline again some of the dates of the Mount Allan project, as a bit of refreshment for our minds. If you recall, in 1980 there was a request to the government of Alberta to build a day-use recreation ski site. That request came from the ski public at large. We looked at that and put out a request for a day-use proposal, advertised in the summer of 1981. That again was for a recreation day-use ski facility. At that time six developers were shortlisted.

In September 1981 the Canadian Olympic committee, the association called CODA, was awarded the XV Olympic Winter Games in Calgary. In August 1982 the government issued a proposal call to the six prequalified private-sector developers to submit detailed development proposals. On November 9 the Olympic committee, OCO '88, announced that Mount Allan had been chosen as the site to host the Olympic alpine events, and the government of Alberta subsequently supported that decision. Of the five proposals received from the private sector, three recommended Mount Allan. All proposals were evaluated in terms of their financial and management background, their ability and resources, the site suitability for the development plan, and the quality of the proposals. While the proposals met the criteria of some of the terms of reference, we were not able to come to a satisfactory term with any of the developers at that time to support a day-use recreation ski facility.

[Mr. Appleby in the Chair]

Therefore on April 29, 1983, I announced that the government would proceed with Mount Allan as a site for a day-use recreation ski area, that the government supported the OCO '88 decision to hold the alpine events on Mount Allan, and that we would be proceeding with the master planning process to meet the Olympic schedule. Detailed investigations of the Mount Allan site contained in the summary released today, and filed in this Assembly and presented to each of the members, was prepared by the Landplan Group, a variety of predominately Alberta-based firms comprised of Landplan Associates of Calgary, Ecosign Mountain Recreation Planners of Whistler, B.C., and Arcop Thom Architects in association with Peter Haley Architect of Calgary. In addition a skilled group of other Alberta and international specialists were subcontracted to provide a range of technical expertise.

You should also know that in order to ensure that the best facility would be developed to meet the long-term recreational ski needs and the short-term Olympic needs, the alpine ski development committee was formed and charged with ensuring that the broad interests of the project were met. The committee included OCO '88, Canadian Ski Association officials, representatives of key government departments and agencies, and a private-sector representative from Alberta's ski industry. A

separate environmental committee chaired by Tom Mill of the fish and wildlife division. Alberta Energy and Natural Resources, has worked closely with that ski development committee to co-ordinate the environmental protection aspects of the development. As a result, ongoing environmental factors are being addressed and special initiatives to mitigate any environmental impacts have been proposed.

Quite honestly, Mr. Chairman, Mount Allan promises to be a very exciting project. It allows us to effectively integrate recreational, training, and competitive ski requirements and uses on one site, and provides us with an opportunity to successfully host the Olympic alpine events in 1988. The ski area will be equipped with a snowmaking system that will provide a longer ski season and allow for improved snow conditions on heavy traffic areas. For example, commercial operators have indicated that during crucial Christmas ski seasons with any poor snow conditions, snowmaking capability can maximize revenues for the operator by up to 30 percent.

It's really important, Mr. Chairman, that we again recognize the three primary objectives we had in mind: one, to provide a day-use recreation ski area for Albertans and visitors to this province; two, to provide a suitable venue for alpine events for the 1988 Winter Olympics; and three, to provide a training legacy for competitive skiers in Alberta and Canada. These objectives will be met by the ski development proposal in the current master plan.

There are a few additional significant points that should be clearly made before we go into any discussion about it. We talked about the possibility that we have the technical approvals but before final approvals will be given, there could be some changes in the field layout stages or changes to site placements of buildings, lifts, utilities, trails, and the like. The estimated cost — and I know we're all interested in that — of the recreation ski area is approximately \$19.5 million. In addition to that, approximately \$5.5 million will be required to upgrade the proposed recreation ski area for hosting the Olympic alpine events. This brings the total provincial government estimate of capital costs to approximately \$25 million. If anyone is interested in looking at the actual master plan. I should point out that a figure in the master plan document is \$16 million, but that does not include off-site infrastructure and basically only represents the cost for the recreation day-use ski area.

Development work that will take place this year will include site preparation, primary infrastructure, and clearing of the runs. We have the documents in hand, and if I could suggest to each and every one of you that you read them. I think they're of interest to you and to your constituents and will assist you in answering any questions you may have. We also will be placing the actual master plan document in offices in Calgary and Edmonton. In the kit, there is a blue page that identifies where they are. We've done that with a summary document in news release form, so you can basically have some idea of what is going on there. If you want to get into exact or technical detail, it is there. It's a very large and technical document, and we didn't feel we wanted to provide one to each and every one who wanted it. There will be those who want to spend some time with it, and it will be made available to them.

Having said that, and although Mount Allan is certainly on our minds right now, there are a number of other areas in the Department of Tourism and Small Business that are also current. On Monday we introduced the Small Business Equity Corporations Act, to assist in the creation of pools of equity capital for reinvestment in Alberta. That's a very exciting program. I'd be more than pleased to answer questions on that.

With that, Mr. Chairman, I'll await questions.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Chairman, I would like to say that we had a very nice slide presentation. I would have been just a bit more impressed with the presentation had the minister been able to report that as a result of all the infectious enthusiasm that seems to come through as one listens to the presentation, we had managed to get somebody from the private sector to risk their money on this particular project. The only problem is that those people in the business community who look at ski operations as the way in which they wish to invest their money and make a return on their investment do not seem to have any great amount of enthusiasm for this site. They don't share the optimism of the minister or of those who prepared the slide presentation or of the Minister of Advanced Education. It may be that they are, knockers and anti-Albertan. It may be that it's all the fault of the national energy program. Who knows? Notwithstanding the best efforts of the government to present this proposal in a positive light, the business community seems to think this silk purse the minister is trying to present to us is essentially a sow's ear. At least that would appear to be their reaction to date.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to go over a number of observations with respect to Mount Allan. I want to make it very clear, so there is no misunderstanding, so the ministers of Advanced Education and Tourism and Small Business or any of the government members don't misunderstand me: I don't mind standing in my place and saying very bluntly that I don't believe it is wise to invest \$25 million in this project. If the Conservative candidate in my constituency in the next election wants to go up one road and down the next, past the "for sale" signs and the foreclosure documents in farmers' kitchens and say, I think we should spend \$25 million on Mount Allan and Grant Notley is opposed to it, I welcome him or her to do that. I think that's the sort of campaign that wouldn't worry me at all.

I don't want anyone to have the slightest doubt that I think, without any reservation at all, that this expenditure is something which clearly is, or should be, a private-sector commitment, not something that is in the public domain. It amazes me, Mr. Chairman, it just astounds me, that we have a government that is going to privatize the core of our medicare commission. Who knows? There's got to be some other reason for it. As I said outside the House, let me say inside the House: it's either to appease the right-wingers in the caucus or as a Trojan horse to privatize the whole system. We're going to privatize something that is so overwhelmingly public domain, and we're going to bring under public ownership something that so eminently is reasonably undertaken by the private sector. I find it rather interesting to see this conversion by my government friends in this committee to what I described in question period the other day as jet-set socialism.

At a time when we have to balance our budget, when we have the federal and provincial governments with serious deficits, when we've got the Premier telling us outside the House that all governments have to do everything they can to bring deficits under control, we are going to spend \$25 million on something that the private sector is obviously not interested in taking up. Otherwise we wouldn't have had to have the announcement we had today. We would have had the announcement that X, Y, or Z company was going to undertake this major project. But no, we are backing into a form of extended government intervention in the wrong area of the economy for the government to be involved in as far as I'm concerned.

With those sort of philosophical observations; always presented of course in a public-spirited, generous, happy, smiling way, trying to be positive and give the government the benefit of all doubt, I would like to go from the general to the specific.

The first thing that disturbed me — and I haven't had a chance to look over in detail the information that was tabled in the House but did it very briefly. Perhaps when the minister answers questions, either today if there is time — and I suspect there may not be, but if there is, all the better — or later when his estimates come back ... The first thing that troubles me is this question of the amount of snow. It troubles me because I don't think we want to be wrong on this. Not being as skilled a skier as the hon. Minister of Advanced Education, and novice though I may be, it always struck me that snow was a fairly basic part of skiing.

Keeping that in mind, as I look at the Canadian Forestry Service figures on the snowpack on Mount Allan for a number of years — 1968, '70, '77, '81, '82, '83, and '84 — I find that there is a significant disparity between the snowpack that the government is now telling us exists and the Canadian Forestry Service figures. I think we have to have an explanation or reconciliation of those differences. There are different sitings here in terms of calculating the depth. But in '68 the averages ranged from 22 centimetres to a high of 59; in '81, from a low of 14 to a high of 66; in '84, from a low of 19 to a high of 54.

Mr. Chairman, I have to tell the minister and government caucus members that it's not within the restricted budget the Members' Services Committee gave the opposition for me to hire a helicopter to go out and personally investigate Mount Allan. So I'm not able to tell the minister whether or not there were 54 centimetres on average in site 14. All I can go on is the basis of the figures on comparative snowpack depths that have been supplied by people who are knowledgeable in the field and have supplied us with information from the Canadian Forestry Service. Unless that's part of a dastardly federal plot, I think we'd better have some indication as to what information the government has, in this little packet of reading material and the show-and-tell presentation we saw earlier this afternoon, to give us much more optimistic estimates as to the snowpack.

The second thing I'd like to raise is the question of getting into the snowmaking business in a fairly big way. We were told of course that this is — I was going to say the wave of the future, but I'm not quite sure that's the right metaphor to use. Nevertheless, as I look at the Panorama prospectus, I discover something that troubles me just a bit. Panorama is apparently into this snowmaking business. I haven't been to Panorama, but I'm told they're in the snowmaking business. [interjection] Somebody back there indicates it's an obsolete system. Maybe he was talking to Mr. Farran, who I understand is fairly close to Panorama. Anyway, Mr. Chairman, Panorama is trying to get some more money. And the reason they're trying to get some more money, according to this prospectus, is that they have

limited working capital and limited capacities to raise further working capital to cover [these and other] operating losses which will occur [over the] next two to three years.

What are the operating losses? The operating losses, Mr. Chairman, seem to relate to making snow. If that is true — and all I know is what I'm reading here — I wonder to what extent we are not borrowing trouble.

Of course the minister across the way says: that's fine, there's no need to worry, everything is hunky-dory. I'm sure that if it isn't, we'll just get our Public Affairs Bureau to spend another \$10 million or \$15 million to present the government's case. And maybe he will be able to hoodwink the voters in Lethbridge East for another term. But as I look at this prospectus, it seems to me that there are some problems. I believe it's on page 4 of the report. There are some problems. I can

read it, and we'll have lots of time to discuss it later on. But I'd welcome either minister to respond on that particular item.

Mr. Chairman, I'd like to move from there and deal with the Stoney letter. Today we were told by the minister that the Stoney's had shown very little interest and that they had not responded to efforts of the government to solicit their interest. As I read Chief Snow's letter of September 2, I have to say I'm not overly surprised. Frankly I have some doubts as to whether the Stoney's would look at this project in any different way than any other private operator; that is, it is not exactly the kind of project on which one is going to develop a multinational corporation. It will not be the core of something vast, although a vast hole in the provincial budget. In terms of being the makings of a great international ski operation, somehow I doubt it. So I suspect that the Stoney's may have had second thoughts.

I want to respond to one observation the minister made today. I wouldn't want him to leave the impression with members of the committee that somehow the government was left high and dry and that there was any lack of courtesy on the part of the Stoney's. I suspect there was a change of interest. As I look at Chief Snow's letter of September 2, the observation is quite interesting:

In 1967, Chief John Snow approached the Alberta Government with a simple request: that the Stoney people be included in any present or future development plans for the Kananaskis Valley.

This request has, for sixteen years, gone unanswered.

We have watched with [great] interest and concern your government's plans for the development of the Kananaskis. After a great deal of deliberation and economic analysis, we have decided that we should submit a positive and sensible development proposal.

Then they go on to outline the proposal, which is a \$34 million proposal. But the point they make, Mr. Chairman, is that they have been left out of the planning of the Kananaskis area. It wouldn't surprise me a great deal if, as a consequence of being left out, they are looking at this in a somewhat less positive way than would otherwise be the case.

Mr. Chairman, I see my colleague is here, and he has to leave before the close of the afternoon sitting. So I'll deal with some of the questions in the Kananaskis study done by Ski Alberta a little later, after other members have had an opportunity to express their views — or if they don't, right away, as the case may be.

I'd like to say to both the minister officially responsible and the minister unofficially to blame [interjections] that this \$25 million is something we could shift over to these people in the private sector if the proposal had any merit at all. Mr. Chairman, I've listened all these years. I've had various government members get up and lecture me. As you know, I listen very carefully to government members. I reflect thoughtfully on their observations. And they've always told me: you socialists have to learn that the private sector knows best, that the private sector has an understanding of these economic issues, that government should keep its paws out of some of these questions, and that you let private enterprise show the way. I must confess that when I was a little younger, I would think: maybe that's not a good idea, because I'm a socialist; maybe government should run all these things. But as the years have gone by and I've mellowed and become a little older, I've come to realize that, by George, these government members have a point, that there is a place for the private sector, and that tourism is a great place for the private sector — not hospitals, not nursing homes, but ski operations strike me as being just a superb place for private-sector initiative.

And, Mr. Chairman, you know what? It strikes me that if the private sector isn't prepared to invest their money, even after seeing the minister's slide presentation, even after the Minister of Advanced Education tells them what a great proposition it is, and they're still not knocking at the door of this Assembly saying: here we are; we want to invest our money, take it off your hands and save \$25 million, help the Premier lower the provincial deficit, so we can go down and make the case to whoever the new Liberal Prime Minister will be — if they aren't prepared to do that, maybe we in this committee should listen to those recreational skiers who say that perhaps we should look at another option, one that will interest the private sector.

MR. NELSON: Gee, that was quick.

AN HON. MEMBER: Asleep at the switch.

MR. NELSON: Mr. Chairman, I would like to make a few comments. The other day I think we talked about commitments. I don't imagine socialists know what commitments are — don't seem to, anyway.

MR. MARTIN: Say it like it is.

MR. NELSON: I always do.

Mr. Chairman, we seem to have been focussing on the \$25 million expenditure by the public sector to develop a ski facility that may ultimately be operated by a private operator. Somewhere along the line, there may be a tremendous return on the investment to the taxpayer, but we don't know that yet. Certainly if we want to focus on Mount Allan — and I'm sure the member didn't fall asleep all the way through the presentation we had a few moments ago, if he was here; it was a little dark, and I didn't see. But I don't think we should be focussing totally on the expenditure of \$25 million.

At the same time, if we want to talk about it, let's talk about it in some positive respect. As I've said before, our socialist friends can be as negative as they wish all the time, and they usually are. But how many jobs are we going to create in the private sector in developing a legacy for all our people in Alberta and, for that matter, a legacy for our future Canadian Olympians?

We forget all too soon about the commitment made in Baden-Baden not too long ago to have an Olympic event in Calgary, Alberta, Canada. In so doing, three levels of government made a commitment to ensure and guarantee that the facilities would be available for this event. That's what I call a commitment. If somebody doesn't want to come out of the woodwork to develop those forests, I guess the hon. member across the way is suggesting that we should walk away from our commitment, not create a number of jobs for the Olympics, not create some legacy for current or future Albertans, young people. Maybe we should just go back to square one and encourage less tourism and fewer future sporting events in the province. I'm sure that would make the member extremely happy.

Mr. Chairman, developing a major event — as I'm sure the member has seen in Edmonton with the tremendous job that was done with the Commonwealth Games and Universiade — not only puts Alberta on the map in the eyes of the world but gives us some future income from people who want to come and have a look at the legacy that's been left. The Olympic Games in Calgary will provide a legacy that will be second to none anywhere in the world. They will generate other international events that will be second to none in the world.

We talk about snow. I suggest that the hon. member — I saw a very positive scene last night on a news broadcast, where workers up in the Mount Allan area are having difficulty working because the snow's so deep. It's up to their hips; they can't walk in it. That was yesterday. Just so the member doesn't get flipped out of shape, I might add that the news broadcast was just done in the last couple of days. So it wasn't as if it was done in February or last November. It was done just recently. Even with the snowmelt, they've still got three to five feet of snow at about the 1,800-foot level, as I remember.

Possibly our hon. friends across the way don't want to support the Olympics. Maybe they don't want to support the jobs created by developing a legacy for Albertans. Maybe in their own philosophical, socialist manner, they doesn't support Calgarians or even Albertans for that matter. It's too bad we didn't watch all the slides. We'd understand a little more about making snow. It's not only in this area of the world that snow has to be made. I think the comment was also made that some of our better skiers suggest that skiing on man-made snow is a little easier and possibly a little more consistent than skiing on the natural stuff. Also interesting: Ski Alberta, the people of Ski Canada, and the International Ski Federation, notwithstanding OCO, CODA, and many other people — possibly even Ski-Action will be on stream in the next few days too, after having participated in the venue this morning. They'll also come out with some positive things. So the member should be a little careful in where he jumps.

AN HON. MEMBER: He might be in snow up to his you-know-what.

MR. NELSON: It might not only be snow.

Mr. Chairman, in relation to the area that was under discussion initially, I suggest that we've got a very positive situation, not only for Calgarians but Albertans at large, for the future and the legacy the Olympic Games are going to provide. There is certainly a cost to those games. But at the same time, the short-term benefit of jobs for construction and the long-term benefit of jobs in a tourist industry have to be given some consideration. Certainly with those alone, the return on that investment has to be very large indeed.

I will get into other areas of the estimate at a future time, Mr. Chairman. But I thought it would be prudent to make some positive comments at this time, rather than consider the negative that some people always seem to enhance themselves with.

MR. MARTIN: I don't know if I can follow the eloquence of the previous member, Mr. Chairman, but I have a few minutes to make some comments. First of all, nobody is questioning the Olympics. All Albertans want these Olympics to go well, at the best possible cost to Albertans. Everybody's for the Olympics. That's not the issue we're debating here. If hon. members think otherwise, they just have to refer to statements that have been made. The Olympics are coming, and we want them to run well. We do not want a disaster in terms of taxpayers' money, as witnessed by the start with the Saddledome, which will make us look bad in the future. I'm sure the hon. minister doesn't want that either. That's what we're debating with the Mount Allan proposal.

I suppose we will know in time how expensive the mountain is going to be, whether that presentation is correct or what other people say is correct. We can talk about noted Albertans and being positive, but I say that perhaps the best-known skier that this province has ever produced. Ken Read, is one who is saying Mount Allan is not the proper place to have it. One of the people that have the most experience in international events is

saying there are problems. That's what we're picking up, and it's our job in this opposition to make sure these decisions are correct. It's not a matter of rhetoric about the Calgary Olympics. That's an irrelevant point. But then that's the type of dialogue I expect from the hon. member over there, who doesn't know what he's talking about most of the time.

The point we make — it's rather ironic that \$25 million now is just peanuts and this is positive. We can just spend this money and we shouldn't be concerned about it. When we get into other estimates in other departments, we're pinching pennies and have to be so cost conscious. The point we're trying to make about the whole Mount Allan area is simply that there has been controversy and there are two sides to this story, regardless of whether we've seen a presentation that anybody could have brought in. That's one opinion. There are a number of other opinions, as the minister is well aware.

I think the bottom line of what concerns me, for precisely the reasons this government talks about, is the private sector. I know enough about the private sector that I am sure that if they saw that it was a good project and there was a chance to make a buck and it was the right facilities, they would be interested. I know the hon. minister said he wanted the private sector involved. At this point it's clear that the private sector is not interested. That should cause all of us to be a little concerned, Mr. Chairman. Why are we into this site? If the private sector is not interested — and as my colleague says, it's quite an appropriate place for the private sector to be — it seems to us that there must be some reasons for the noninterest. That's why, rather than just jumping up and down and saying that Mount Allan is great and everything is great in wonderful old Alberta, this is the place where we should be taking a look at that.

When I look at the news release, it says that even though the government is going ahead with the building of it and putting up all the money,

the opportunity is still there, however, for private enterprise to consider a lease operator proposal, and we will be following up immediately with a call for proposals.

Mr. Chairman, it seems to me that when all the work is done and we as a government have taken all the risks, we'll hand it over to some private operator. That's really not private enterprise, because it will be a monopoly at that time. We've taken all the risks at that particular time. The taxpayers take all the risks, and some entrepreneur comes in and takes over.

I guess one of the questions I ask is — and I'm a realist; I recognize that we won't win any votes in this Legislature — were there any other proposals that other people advanced in terms of other locations? Does the minister feel that there would not have been any other private-sector people that would have been interested in some other developments in another park? I suppose that's hypothetical, because I don't think the government ever looked seriously at any other location. But it seems to me that we are taking a risk here.

I'm admittedly not as much of an expert as the minister from Lethbridge, but as I understand it, snowmaking equipment is going to be a very expensive proposition in the future. We will be picking up these costs over a long period of time, because no private entrepreneur is going to pick up those costs. We will be into a similar deal as we are in Kananaskis, where all the money has been put up and a person comes in and takes over. That's very good for them, but it's not particularly good for the taxpayers of Alberta.

As my colleague said, I don't have a great deal of time, and of course there are a lot of other issues in the minister's department besides Mount Allan. But I wanted to make those few remarks, because I think we should have some caution at

this particular time. I know that the minister, being a firm advocate of private enterprise, must have really beaten the bushes looking for, if you like, a private entrepreneur. I think the fact that the minister could not find a private-sector developer to do this should cause us all some concern about the project. I think that's a legitimate concern. If the hon. minister was sitting over here and I was sitting over there, I think he would be raising the same things. I'm almost positive of that.

With those few comments, Mr. Chairman, I would leave it with the minister.

[Mr. Purdy in the Chair]

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

MR. ADAIR: Mr. Chairman, I would very much like to respond. I think two things have to be identified. The hon. Leader of the Opposition talked about the government doing it and not the private sector. As I identified this morning, it should be noted for both hon. members that one of the constraints was the fact that the private sector — and I should qualify that by also stating that there were and still are quite a number of businesses and people in the private sector interested in the Mount Allan project. One of the major problems they have encountered is attempting to put their financial package together to meet the Olympic time frame. Of course, combined with the economic times that we have, it has posed some difficulties for them in the private sector.

The other thing is that I don't think that either of the hon. members can have it both ways. We hear about a great interest in jobs. We hear about a great interest in building. I think questions were raised about why we aren't building these things now, whatever that may be, whether it's a provincial building or the likes of that. [interjection] Just let me go on, if I can, Mr. Chairman. You can't really have it both ways, in the sense of walking down the fence. It's a very narrow fence, and when you slip, let me tell you, it has to hurt. There are a great number of jobs that will be available in this one, and obviously the end result of that is that the private sector will be the contractors, the constructors to actually build it. They also, hopefully, will be the lease operators. I say "hopefully" because we indicated this morning — as I did back in April 1983 and as far back as 1981 — that there may be an outside chance that we have to proceed with it to meet the commitment we gave to the Olympics. We are going to meet that commitment. At the same time, as I said this morning, we are also going to begin immediately to prepare a request for proposals for the private sector to be lease operators.

The question came up about whether there is a possibility that that could be purchased. We say we hope that is the case. But primarily what we're doing right now is going to the lease-operator role, so if we can put one in place as quickly as possible, they can be a part of the construction of that site so they know what is going on. We've had quite a number of people in the private sector indicate an interest in one, possibly doing it in that sense. As one stated to me, if the government front-ends it, that may solve some of our problems in giving us the time to put our financing together to in fact meet your requests. So that's one of the areas I think can be resolved.

In essence we now get into a question of who you want to believe relative to snow. You might take the time, and I would suggest that you do — the page numbers are 19 and 20 of the master plan itself, as it relates to snowpack. On the actual sites identified in the master plan that are within the actual area of

construction of the site itself, you will see that there is more than sufficient snow. Possibly I could just leave it at that.

What I might do is indicate that when you're talking about snow levels that are identified here from information obtained from the Canadian Forestry Service actually on that site. I guess it depends on which one you want to use. If you choose to use one over there on the far side where the sun can get on it, there can be a low. [interjection] Just let me go on. You're a good listener. If you look at the two sites called Twin 1 and Conn 5, which are located right in the area where this project is to go, there is sufficient snowfall — there isn't any question of that — and snowpack. What we have also tried to do is indicate a snow level by calling it annual snowfall or just fresh-fallen snow, so Joe Citizen understands what that is as well, not just the skier talking about snowpack and trying to figure out what that means. Because it is important to understand both sides of that.

For example, if the snowfalls range from 264 centimetres, or 104 inches in my time, to 238 inches or 605 centimetres, that compares very, very favourably with Banff, which is approximately 251 centimetres, Jasper townsite at 152 centimetres, or Lake Louise at 418 centimetres. I only mention those areas because the skiers can appreciate the snow levels in those particular places. Having said that, there are good comparisons there. There is good information prepared for us by the experts and the professional people who put together the master plan and who used information that was provided to us from the past 20 years.

One of the most difficult things we had to do, or I had to do, was to talk about Mount Allan when we first started talking about Mount Allan, in a year when there wasn't any snow. That's an unusual situation, but that prompts you to start talking about machine snowmaking and the advantage of that to complement the natural snowfall. Because at this point in time we haven't been able to enter into any consistent contract with the Good Lord above to ensure that we have the kind of snowfall in the Eastern Slopes, period — not just on Mount Allan or on that particular site but at Marmot, Lake Louise, Sunshine, Fortress, Castle Mountain, West Castle, those areas as well that are ski areas within the province of Alberta and, for that matter, in some of the areas in Colorado. One of the reasons that most of those facilities are now looking at snowmaking is the fact that we have had some inconsistencies over the last number of years. In order to maintain an assurance of return on their investment, they must have a consistent opening time. So if we put that snowmaking equipment in place to ensure that there is consistent opening times — late November, early December — and that it can complement the natural snowfall of the season, we can have what you might call the best of both worlds.

As one of the skiers, a member of the Canadian Ski Association, said this morning, natural snowfall complemented by machine-made snow gives you ideal snow skiing conditions. If you should run into what you might call a chinook, without snow conditions, you have nothing. If you've got snowmaking equipment, you've got adequate skiing conditions. So you then provide that degree of consistency and snow for the ski season, which obviously has a major bearing on the investment the private sector would have in any ski area. So that is in place and certainly there to meet the Olympic commitment as well. Conditions in that area, as well as in basically all of the Eastern Slopes, are ideal for snowmaking, so there isn't any question there.

One of the other ones we talked about the other day was wind conditions. You can take a helicopter and go right to the top of the mountain, and you can hit a day when the wind

conditions are extremely bad. There isn't any question about that. They may be short-lived, a couple of hours or whatever the case may be. I don't think anybody should suggest that there are not wind conditions on any mountain range or wherever you want to go, Sunshine or the likes of that.

But having said that, what you then do is find the average. We have the best possible information again in this master plan document — and I would suggest that you read it — that indicates there is very little if any weather-vaning from the tree line down, where the recreation skiing will take place. The portion where the platter pull for the men's downhill will go up above the tree line is actually in a protected bowl as well, so there is not the extreme possibility of high winds. There is the possibility of winds or high winds — we have to recognize that — and that's not unusual. A number of the events in Olympics, or the likes, have been postponed because of wind conditions, too much snow, or too little snow. We saw what happened in Sarajevo this past year with too much snow. If that should occur, we hope we would have all the members here packing snow for us as the volunteers did in Sarajevo.

I don't know that I can go much beyond that. With the information provided to us, we're confident that snowmaking can be done, that the water and power supplies are there, and that, properly handled, we can provide the ideal conditions for machine snowmaking to complement the natural snowfall.

Interestingly, Mr. Steve Jaksi, president of the Canadian Ski Association from Montreal, flew out this morning to be with us to show that they were solidly behind the proposal. Alf Fischer, president of the Canadian Ski Association — Alberta Division, was there as well, indicating that they initially had concerns with Mount Allan but they had reviewed. After having been involved in the planning process and working with the consultants, they're satisfied it provides the best ...

AN HON. MEMBER: It's an emotional issue.

MR. ADAIR: Somebody else is going to have to speak very shortly.

MR. MARTIN: He's getting all choked up over this.

MR. ADAIR: Mr. Chairman, you do get a little bit choked up when you listen to some of the comments being made. You do get choked up when you have to count 10 not to counter some of the remarks that on occasion border on the ridiculous. [interjections] And I said I was listening to them, so I wasn't saying that.

Having said that, I believe the other comment made by the hon. Leader of the Opposition was relative to the Stoneys. It's important that if I left any impression at all that there was a lack of courtesy on their part, that was not intended. Certainly that's a business decision they as a band or whoever would be involved would make. If they choose not to reply to a letter, we certainly would not take it in that manner.

I think it is important to reiterate that there was a fair amount of press at the time and an indication that there was in essence a factual proposal ready to be presented. We did get a letter that stated they had a proposal. We did meet with them on September 27 and asked them for the proposal, but they had not developed one as yet. They were interested, but they had not developed one. That's certainly not a fault of the band or whoever it may be. They declared an interest. We explained where we were, that we were negotiating with one group in the private sector and that if that should cease, we'd like to know what their financial capacity was — the same information we asked of everybody else — and that we needed that before

we could even include them on the list. They said they would go back and consider that. They went back and, to our knowledge, have not responded. We even suggested to other members of the private sector that they were possibly interested and that they may be able to work out a deal with them as a partner. To our knowledge that did not occur, but contact had been made with them by a number of the people in the private sector.

From the standpoint of development of Kananaskis itself, it certainly offers in my mind, and I say that in the sense of my mind only, an opportunity for the Stoneys to do some developments on their lands that border that Kananaskis area. As I said earlier, my understanding was that they were considering the possibility — and I can't verify that, because it hasn't been given directly to me by them — of a development at the corner of the highway turnoff to Kananaskis Country, which certainly could have some opportunities and give them some idea of some projects that could be.

Having said that, Mr. Chairman, I want to say that one of the points raised by the hon. Member for Edmonton Norwood, who is not in the House, was about Ken Read. Ken Read is certainly one of Canada's greatest skiers. My understanding is that Ken has asked for the documentation so he can review that now and possibly reconsider his position, taking into account the fact that Ken is under contract to Lake Louise and working there and also that his father had an interest in one of the projects proposed as a site for the Olympic alpine events. Again we should reiterate, number one, that the site of Mount Allan was first suggested by the private sector, selected by the Olympic committee in November 1982, and supported by the government of Alberta in April 1983.

There were other suggestions as to locations that might be considered. There was Sparrowhawk, one that's very, very much talked about, and the area called the battleship group, which is located in the provincial park in Kananaskis Country — those particular ones.

Let's talk about Sparrowhawk for a moment and what it would mean from the standpoint of a recreation ski opportunity, the interest we have within the department. It offers primarily expert or advanced ski runs. In essence, there is a very little percentage of intermediate and novice runs, some small space at the bottom for the lodge or base development, and some very interesting problems relative to road costs to get to that site — again, from the standpoint of the Olympics, over that one-hour limit they must meet in essence to keep down to one village. If they had chosen Sparrowhawk, it would probably have been used for the Olympics and would have very little use, other than possibly as a specific training site for the Olympic team. For the costs involved, we couldn't see our way through to go with that particular one and support it.

Of course when the Mount Allan site was chosen by the Olympics, it met in essence all the criteria we were looking for in a day-use recreation ski area. It met the percentage balances of beginner or novice, junior/intermediate, intermediate/advanced, and advanced and expert skiers. It basically had, and has, all the things going for it. Over the months, there has been a great deal of conversation about that from a very small group of people who have expressed some concerns. Thank God, in this good country we have, they can express those concerns.

But having said that, I would venture to say that once the majority of skiers in the province, in Canada, and internationally see what is in place on the Mount Allan master plan, what can be developed to be almost equivalent to the Lake Louise site for the racers, and the legacy that can leave for the recreation skiers not only in Alberta but from outside, I sense we would start to see a return to the province of Alberta by Alberta

skiers who for a number of years have gone to B.C. or down into Montana because of circumstances where we've not had good snow conditions. We could begin to draw back the skiers and the dollars to the province of Alberta — most important in my mind. Mr. Chairman, I think that covers the questions raised by the two members opposite.

The Member for Calgary McCall certainly indicated support for the project and the fact that it does provide the legacy, that there isn't any question about the snow, and that there are jobs involved. I can only reiterate that.

One of the concerns I have is that the hon. members can stand up one day and say: build everything, do it now, the time is here, spend the money, build this, build that, it provides jobs. But when we come up with a project to build jobs — don't spend the money. You can't have it both ways.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Chairman, perhaps I might begin for a moment or two by taking the minister up on the comment that you can't have it both ways. No one is suggesting that, Mr. Minister. It might be nice, for the sake of political argument, that you make that assertion. Perhaps you'll even be able to convince the Member for Calgary McCall. That's very nice. But you're not going to convince the majority of Albertans.

The question is not whether we are in favour or opposed. We've made it clear that at a time of recession, we think there is a role for public-sector investments. Mr. Chairman, there are a legion of public-sector investments where there would be consensus. I suggest to you, Mr. Minister, and to the members of the committee, that the items we see this government focussing on that we've debated this week — \$11 million and some to renovate a schoolhouse in Calgary for a new Premier's office, when we are closing down schools for the instruction of children; \$25 million for Mount Allan. As I said the other night, and I say this to the minister, if we were to go up one street and down the other in Calgary, Peace River, or Lethbridge and ask the people we came across, do you think we should spend this money in this particular way, I rather suspect that a surprising number of people would agree with the Ski-Action survey and say no.

Mr. Chairman, there are other options. Because a person is in favour of bridging the investment gap with public investment does not mean he is in favour of every public investment proposal that may come along. You have to make choices. That's why we are elected, to make choices in public policy. To simply say that because we have urged public-sector investment to stimulate employment we must therefore, by some rather strange twist of logic, come to the conclusion that we have to back the government on Mount Allan and McDougall school in Calgary — I want to tell you that the ministers may attempt to make that argument in the committee but I suspect without much success in Alberta as a whole.

I have a number of questions. Perhaps we can get down to brass tacks with this so-called free-enterprise government and find out, since the announcement was made — I believe if my memory serves me right, Mr. Minister, it was April 1983 or thereabouts that we chose Mount Allan.

MR. ADAIR: If I could just interject. It was in April 1983 that we supported the choice by the Olympic committee.

MR. NOTLEY: Okay, in April of 1983, Mount Allan was selected as the site in terms of the government's position. I'd like the minister to take a few minutes — and I may have the odd supplementary question — and tell us what took place in that intervening period of approximately a year. What meetings were set up? Who in fact was in charge of enlisting interest on the part of the private sector? We understand there was a meeting in September with the Stoneys. I'd like to know what occurred as far as the Cascade Group was concerned; what meetings occurred, what the final obstacle was with respect to that organization, and whether that was the organization the government was negotiating with when they received the first Stoney proposal. At least as one reads reports attributed in the press, if I recollect the discussion, it was that the government wished to pursue discussions with these other proponents first. It strikes me, Mr. Chairman, that if you take that approach, if you do not foreclose interest on the part of a group like the Stoneys, you certainly make it clear that in your planning process they are playing second fiddle.

Perhaps as a start, we could have the minister take us over that period of a year and advise what specific steps were taken to enlist the private sector, both inside the province and outside Alberta, in other parts of the country. There were other operations and other people in the ski business, especially in British Columbia. Were there any discussions with concerns in our neighbouring province as to whether or not they would be interested in proceeding? Or did we put all our eggs in the basket of the Cascade Group until it was too late to make any other decision, apart from government construction of this project?

MR. ADAIR: Mr. Chairman, if I might respond.

MR. KING: Excuse me, Mr. Chairman. I can appreciate the interest of the minister in responding to the questions. But given the hour, I would like to move that the committee rise, report progress, and beg 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: You've heard the report and the request for leave to sit again. Are all the members agreed?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. KING: Mr. Speaker, the House will sit tomorrow evening in Committee of Supply, at which time the estimates of the Department of Utilities and Telecommunications will be considered.

[At 5:28 p.m. pursuant to Standing Order 4, the House adjourned to Thursday at 2:30 p.m.]

