

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ALBERTA

Title: **Wednesday, May 15, 1985 2:30 p.m.**

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

PRAYERS

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

head: INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

MR. TRYNCHY: Mr. Speaker, we have two visitors in your gallery. They're on an Alberta/Heilongjiang table tennis exchange program. The two visitors have been in Alberta since the beginning of March and have spent their first two months in Calgary and district, coaching Alberta table tennis members in schools and the district. Starting yesterday, the two coaches will be in Edmonton for the next two months and will be doing the same thing. From May 16 to 23 the two coaches will accompany the Alberta table tennis team to the Canadian closed championships in Toronto. My understanding from the two coaches, while having supper last night, is that we're pretty well assured of winning the championships. If we don't, they're going to come back and talk to me about it.

Mr. Speaker, our competitive level has increased greatly since we've had this exchange program with Heilongjiang, and I'd like to introduce to you Mrs. Li, Mr. Kong, Mr. Keith Wong, and Allan Zimmerman. Would they please stand, and let's give them a rousing welcome.

head: INTRODUCTION OF SPECIAL GUESTS

MRS. LeMESSURIER: Mr. Speaker, I'm very pleased to introduce to you, and through you to members of this Assembly, 34 students from the McDougall school in Edmonton Centre. They are studying English as a Second Language and are in grades 7 to 9. They are accompanied by their teachers and their leader Mrs. Maldonado and of course Mrs. Marianne Ritchie. They are seated in the members' gallery. I ask that they rise and receive the warm welcome of this Assembly.

MR. DIACHUK: Mr. Speaker, I wish to take this opportunity to introduce to you and to the members of the Assembly some 88 students from the Rundle elementary school in the constituency of Edmonton Beverly. They are accompanied by teachers Mrs. Anne McIntyre, Mr. Mark Edwards, and Mr. Taras Dwornyski. They're in the public gallery. I ask them to rise and receive the usual welcome of the Assembly.

head: MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS**Treasury Department**

MR. HYNDMAN: Mr. Speaker, on March 25 this year I presented to the Legislative Assembly the government's budget for the 1985-86 fiscal year. Since that time there have been several major developments which will affect our

expenditure plan. Accordingly, under Orders of the Day, I will today be tabling supplementary estimates reflecting four items of budgetary expenditure totalling \$49 million: firstly, the Department of Agriculture will require \$21.8 million in supplementary authorizations for the new farm fertilizer price protection plan; secondly, for temporary assistance to Alberta sugar beet producers, \$6 million will be recommended; thirdly, the Department of Tourism and Small Business will require an \$18 million increase in expenditure authority for the successful small business equity corporations program to further incentives for investment and jobs in Alberta; and fourthly, the new export services support program of the Department of Economic Development will require \$3.5 million to assist Alberta companies in preparing bids on export contracts.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to take this opportunity to update our 1985-86 revenue forecast. At the cutoff date for changes to the March 25 budget, our proposed sale of Alberta Energy Company shares had not yet been ruled on by the Alberta Securities Commission. Accordingly, it would not have been appropriate for me to have prejudged the commission's decision at that time and to have included the sale proceeds in revenue. However, as members know, that sale has now been approved, and the effect on our 1985-86 revenue forecast is to increase the estimated transfer of investment income from the heritage fund to the General Revenue Fund by \$104 million.

In summary, therefore, budgetary expenditure is estimated to increase by \$49 million to \$10.064 billion. Budgetary revenue is now forecast at \$9.869 billion, up \$104 million from the budget figure. The revised deficit estimate for 1985-86 is \$195 million.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, I certainly have no objection to the expenditures, but I would say in all honesty to the Treasurer that this is not a very good way to budget. It's ad hocery at its best. It seems to me that before this budget was prepared, we knew what was happening in agriculture and in rural Alberta. These programs should have been thought of ahead instead of done at the last minute in the Legislature. We knew, for example, that the Alberta sugar beet producers — this is an ongoing problem. Surely this could have been thought out ahead. We knew that in the Department of Tourism and Small Business the small business equity was going to come forward. This should have been done ahead. Surely we could have recognized that the new export services support program could have been brought in in the budget.

Mr. Speaker, as I said, I've supported these measures. But surely we have to look ahead in the budgeting process and not have the budget mean what it means at the time, and not come back later with millions more dollars in expenditures and revenues. Otherwise, what's the point of having the budget? The Treasurer may shake his head, but these programs should have been thought out. The only reason they did it at this particular time was for political reasons. They realized they were in some difficulty from the opposition, and they brought it in. I hope they will learn how to budget. If they want to steal some of our policies, do it ahead, in time for the budget. That would make much more sense.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, I would like to make a comment or two with regard to the presentation. First of all, I think the minister should be commended for taking the opportunity through the Ministerial Statements item on

our agenda to bring the House up to date on matters such as this. Doing that kind of thing is responsible government, and it should be done. In line with that, I want to say to the government that I can't recall a session when there have been more ministerial statements than this one. Whatever that change is, I compliment that, because it's appropriate that ministers report to this House any new initiatives, expenditures, changes in budgets, or changes in attitudes or opinions on various subjects.

My colleague and I have assessed that flurry of ministerial statements, and we must say that we have come to the conclusion that it is rather a softening-up process for Albertans, not only for us in this Legislature but a softening-up process where Albertans are being led to a stage where possibly the Premier can resign early this fall and we can go to a provincial election. Usually the Conservative Party is motivated by political reasons rather than rational reasons. [interjections] That's the other conclusion we come to. So we look at what may be happening behind the scenes in announcements such as this.

But I say to the Provincial Treasurer that the announcement is certainly proper. It will bring us up to date. We will have the opportunity to discuss each and every one of these items in the budgetary process, and I say to the minister: a good, responsible act.

In terms of a specific, I would say that the \$6 million to the Alberta sugar beet producers may be an item changed in the presentation by the minister, because the sugar factory in southern Alberta will be closed for 1985. That will also include the total fiscal year to March 31, 1986, so that expenditure isn't required at this point in time. I think the minister should reconsider that, looking at the net budgetary deficit as being not \$195 million but \$189 million instead.

Mr. Speaker, with those few comments, we'll wait for the second presentation.

head: ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

MLA Travel

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct the first set of questions to the hon. House leader, and it flows from yesterday. The hon. House leader proposed, and the Assembly agreed, that information on travel by ministers and MLAs within Alberta should not be included when the information requested by me yesterday is returned. On a point of clarification, is it now the general policy of the government that this Assembly should not be informed of the cost of specific trips at public expense as long as they are trips within the province?

MR. CRAWFORD: No, that wouldn't be the position, Mr. Speaker. Any question directed at a specific would certainly be taken under consideration for a response. I think the principles involved are really two in number. One is that I think the people of Alberta expect members of the Executive Council in particular and, to a certain extent, all hon. members, including members of the opposition but including government members in a principal way because of their accountability to the people of the province, to be in different parts of the province.

I can tell the hon. leader that I will be in Lethbridge next week. I think the people of Lethbridge are as entitled to hear directly from me in respect to matters of concern to them and concern to the government as the people of

Edmonton. I think all Albertans expect that sort of travel, and it should be anticipated.

The other matter involved — and if I failed to mention it yesterday in discussing the motion, I should have done so — was that in respect to government aircraft travel within the province, that information is provided in any event. Much of the concern the hon. leader expresses relative to travel within the province I don't think would be the airbus or motor cars or things like that. I think it would be the government aircraft, and my colleague does file the manifest showing every trip and passenger each year.

MR. MARTIN: A supplementary question to the government House leader. Nobody is questioning the need for people to travel, but he well knows that the issue is how we travel and how much it is. That's surely the prerogative here. The government House leader says that on special request, on specific travel, we can ask questions. My question to the House leader is: how would we know about these specific travels? Each cabinet minister surely doesn't let us know when they're going. Secondly, the government plane doesn't cover all of that, because there are other costs involved besides the plane. How do we go about finding that information?

MR. CRAWFORD: In respect to the area of government expenditures for hosting of delegations and so on, I think that is published in a fully adequate form in the *Alberta Gazette* or in the public accounts. Once again, I mention that particular aspect of expenditure that occurs within Alberta, because I think that is one of the areas in which the hon. leader, if he had concerns, would perhaps occasionally express them. Since that information is available in that form, it seems to us that to recreate, if not identical information, information that is so similar that it is in all respects adequate for the full accounting the hon. leader is entitled to — we should not be repeating returns in that way.

MR. MARTIN: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. The House leader refers to the *Gazette* or public accounts. Would the Government House Leader confirm that there is not a breakdown of items of expenditures in the *Gazette* or public accounts?

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. Whether or not there is a breakdown in a public document is a matter of public knowledge, and there's no purpose in asking questions relating to obtaining information that is already public. What the hon. leader is saying in effect is: "Well, I looked at those things. There are no particulars in them. Will you agree with me?" That's really not the kind of question we should be spending time on in the question period.

MR. MARTIN: I'll ask the question in a different way. As a result of not being able to get the itemized accounts in the *Gazette* or the public accounts as the House leader tells us, how would he suggest that any MLA get this type of information itemized?

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, now I'm wondering what type of information is really of interest to the hon. leader, and maybe that's an argument of its own in favour of his being more specific. As I recall the way in which the *Alberta Gazette* information is published, specific events as approved by Treasury Board, which are normally hosting

events where, in the judgment of the government, people who are travelling to Alberta for purposes of trade or for other purposes for which we should show them common courtesies, are all published, and the name of the event and the location is there.

I would not want to be mistaken in that. I should say that I am fully familiar with the way in which the expenses of that type are processed by the Treasury Board, because I see them in that form. I don't go further and look at them again in the *Gazette*. If some of that information which I believe is in the *Gazette* is not in fact there, then I would say to the hon. leader that the information that is there should be sufficient to provide him with the basis for any specific questions he would like to ask.

MR. MARTIN: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Let me give the Government House Leader a specific example, because he talked about the aircraft manifest. Yes, it is filed, but it doesn't include a listing of the costs of the flights. We get an overall cost, but how would the Government House Leader suggest we find the cost of a specific flight within Alberta? As he said, we could ask specifically, but how do we know this ahead of time? I come back to that question.

MR. CRAWFORD: I think the Minister of Public Works, Supply and Services may have dealt, in the course of his estimates, with the new way in which the accounting for the aircraft is being done relative to his estimates, where a gross figure is voted each year. I believe that has already been voted for this year. The result of that is that the hon. leader knows the cost of the government air service. If he wants to have a further calculation made in respect to specific trips, I think there is a way of doing that.

But one of the difficulties that arose when that was done before was that costs were grossly overstated, and that shouldn't be. If a cost is grossly overstated, that isn't a fair answer to the hon. leader. The reason for that was that it was an accepted accounting principle to do it in that way, similar to that used by corporations who have to depreciate the values of their aircraft over a certain period of time, and so on. So you had the situation where a trip to Calgary, which probably cost about \$160, was shown at \$1,000, because you had the cost of the pilots and their pension plans, the air in the tires, the fuel, and the depreciation on the aircraft all built into a per-hour rate. The Minister of Public Works, Supply and Services took that under consideration and thought that when that was done, it did not fairly represent the actual cost. That is why there is a different method now.

MR. MARTIN: A supplementary question to the Government House Leader. The question that I have is that if we cannot break this down specifically, is the only way we have of finding an itemized expense account of what happened on a specific trip in Alberta to put it as a motion for a return or under questions? Is that the only way we can do this?

MR. CRAWFORD: What the hon. leader is now raising is, what is left to him to ask, given the content of the motion for a return from yesterday as amended and the information that that will yield. I've tried to answer the hon. leader on the basis of the principle involved; that is, that surely if there are concerns in respect to travel, they would not in any usual way or normal sense relate to travel within Alberta, because all members are expected to do

that. I put it on that basis and ask the hon. leader to consider whether or not it is really in the interests of disclosure of travel costs to produce an accounting which could include every automobile and airbus trip and that sort of thing. Is there not a point at which the value of the information is outweighed by the cost of producing it?

MR. MARTIN: A supplementary question. That would certainly be a matter of opinion. All we are trying to do is be the guardian of the purse strings.

MR. SPEAKER: Might this be the final supplementary. I have a list, and I'm concerned about reaching all of the members.

MR. MARTIN: As the minister is well aware, we didn't ask for to and from the constituencies in the motion for a return. But just to generalize, if there's one more question, can the Attorney General advise if it is still the policy of this government that freedom of information legislation is somewhat of a fad — and I quote from the Attorney General before.

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, I welcome that question, however many times it's asked, because it gives me an opportunity to say once again that I did not say that the quest for freedom of information, of which we have a very great deal in this province, was a fad. I never made that statement. What I did say was that the Canadian Bar Association and some others were on a bandwagon which says that we should do what they do in Washington, D.C. I said that I could think of things where we didn't want to just up and do everything they do in Washington because they do it there, and that the current approach of saluting every time that type of so-called freedom of information legislation they have in the American system was something of a fad.

Prince Rupert Grain Terminal Opening

MR. MARTIN: We will continue this in a slightly different vein. I'd like to move over to the Provincial Treasurer. I know this government likes to explain extravagant travel and hospitality by cabinet ministers as investments in Alberta's future.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. MARTIN: I'll say it loud enough so the backbenchers can understand it. My question to the Treasurer is simply this: would he indicate whether the \$42,000 that we're spending tomorrow for wining and dining ministers, backbenchers, their aides and friends for the opening of the grain terminal constitutes some kind of investment in Alberta's future? If so, could he give us an estimate of how many jobs will be created as a result of this extravaganza?

MR. HYNDMAN: Mr. Speaker, I'm somewhat surprised at the hon. Leader of the Opposition, having indicated his alleged concern for activities which would encourage agriculture in this province and now bringing this up in this form. This will be debated at a further time. Here we have an investment of some quarter of a billion dollars with the Heritage Savings Trust Fund that is going to provide savings of up to 20 percent for agriculturalists in the province of Alberta. The opening of that major facility, which I think

is dramatic in every respect, is one that the hon. gentleman should be proud of. I think he's letting down farmers in Alberta by indicating that this project is not worthy of having a proper opening. He was invited; I'm surprised he didn't accept.

MR. MARTIN: A very interesting answer; I can't say it was surprising. My question to the Treasurer: if we did not spend this \$42,000 wining and dining 400 friends, would the terminal not open?

MR. HYNDMAN: Again, Mr. Speaker, I think the hon. gentleman fails to see the significance and importance of this major terminal. I know the hon. gentleman and his party have been against it right from the beginning. Alberta farmers know the value of this. They want to see a major opening where people of significance — the pools, who are partners in this; the Alberta Wheat Pool, members of the government of British Columbia, and members of farm organizations will be there. They feel it's important for it to be there and to attend the important opening of this important facility for western Canada. I'm surprised and disappointed the hon. member doesn't see that.

MR. MARTIN: My, my. Aren't they a little defensive about this, in a time of restraint. Wine and dine 'em Lou. [interjections]

MR. SPEAKER: Order please.

MR. MARTIN: Following up on this very important event that the Treasurer is talking about, could he outline why it is considered necessary that cabinet ministers be accompanied by their assistants and bureaucrats for this lavish, one-day affair?

MR. HYNDMAN: It's important that the appropriate people be there, Mr. Speaker. I just say to the hon. member, and I can see he's weakening, that there is still room on the plane; there is still a seat.

MR. MARTIN: These important people that are going to be there — why is it necessary for executive assistants and aides to be there? Are they more important than average Albertans to attend this important affair?

MR. HYNDMAN: They and senior members of the administration, together with members of the Wheat Pool and agricultural organizations will, in future weeks, want to spread the message around Alberta and western Canada as to the importance of this new facility, the fact that it's the most technologically advanced, the fact that it's 700 miles closer to the Pacific Rim than Vancouver, the fact that it provides an alternative port to Vancouver. To be there on site to see the heritage fund investment that will help farmers will be important in the communication of this important initiative to Albertans over the next year, two, five, or 10. [some applause]

MR. MARTIN: Look at them pound.

MR. SPEAKER: Might this be final supplementary on this topic.

MR. MARTIN: I'm sure the executive assistants will do a fine job spreading the message.

My last question. In the Budget Address, the Treasurer said:

I welcome constructive comments ... on ways in which we can continue to downsize government operations.

Following this suggestion, in the future would the government look at cutting back hospitality budgets and extravagant events like this particular event, in the name of downsizing?

MR. HYNDMAN: Mr. Speaker, there are no extravagant events which have been funded by the government, and I'm still waiting for constructive suggestions on downsizing from the hon. leader.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the minister.

MR. SPEAKER: I believe the hon. Member for Vegreville caught my eye first.

MR. BATIUK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A supplementary question. I wonder if the Treasurer could advise whether something has changed over the last while. My invitation stated that the Canadian Wheat Board is going to provide the reception, and in that I expect there will be wine and whatever appetizers.

MR. HYNDMAN: Yes, it's as much a Canadian event in which many other Canadians are proud as well. So the hon. Leader of the Opposition may be in the strict minority here.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker my question is to the Provincial Treasurer, and it's with regard to consistency in terms of government policy. In response to a question from me, the Premier indicated that expenditures in terms of receptions and travel would be directed towards promoting Alberta, selling Alberta, enhancing our job opportunities, and building Alberta in some way. In terms of the fact that as the Heritage Savings Trust Fund committee we approved the expenditures — and I support the project at Prince Rupert, always have for some 20 years; I'm not against the project — and the fact that the project is now completed, was a different attitude taken toward that policy in terms of restraint rather than an excess of expenditures in any way?

MR. HYNDMAN: No, this follows our consistent restraint approach, Mr. Speaker. It's appropriate in opening a quarter of a billion dollar facility that will be the pride of Alberta for 20 or 30 years.

MR. GURNETT: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker, to the Treasurer. I wonder what consideration was given to practising restraint by restricting the people who would fly at government expense to those ministers who are directly involved with the terminal itself.

MR. HYNDMAN: That is being followed, Mr. Speaker. As the minister responsible for the Heritage Savings Trust Fund, I'll be staying behind, in the interest of restraint.

DR. BUCK: Are you against farmers, Lou?

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, I will advise my farmers that the Provincial Treasurer didn't want to be there on their behalf I'll leave that subject as is.

Chartered Accountants Act

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the House leader, and it's with regard to Bill 71, the Chartered Accountants Act. I'd like to ask the House leader what the government's intention is with regard to that Act. Will royal assent take place in this current session, or will the Bill be held over till the fall?

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, I think the hon. member's question is one that might suitably be dealt with when the matter is under debate at second reading. I recognize it's an appropriate enough question to be directed to me, but the Bill is only at the first reading stage and is sponsored by another minister. I think he will be prepared to deal with any reservations the hon. member would have at that time.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question. Could the Solicitor General indicate whether holding that Bill until fall is under consideration? As well, could he indicate what type of representation or consultation took place between the Certified General Accountants' Association and the minister prior to the introduction of Bill 71 in the Legislative Assembly?

DR. REID: Mr. Speaker, it was my intention to make some remarks at second reading of the Bill regarding the process we went through in the development of this Bill, the Chartered Accountants Act, and the other two that are associated with it.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question. Could the hon. minister indicate whether full consultation occurred with the Certified General Accountants or whether it was a matter of one consultation the day before the Bill was to be introduced, and that was the only consultation that took place between the minister and the association?

DR. REID: Mr. Speaker, the minister who was responsible for professions and occupations prior to my taking it over on January 1 of this year had considerable consultation, and so did his staff. Since January 1 I have met with the Certified General Accountants executive, and my staff have had a series of meetings with them this spring.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question. Could the hon. minister indicate whether any amendments in terms of the audit function that is raised in Bill 71 will be brought forward in the Legislature, or will that matter stand as it is in the Bill at the present time?

DR. REID: If the hon. member wishes to introduce amendments, we'll be prepared to discuss them during committee stage.

Oil Companies' Head Offices

MR. LEE: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Provincial Treasurer in his capacity as Acting Premier. Earlier in the session the minister confirmed to this Assembly that Shell Canada was relocating its head office to Calgary and indicated that there might be some future moves. Could the minister advise if there have been any developments in this regard?

MR. HYNDMAN: Mr. Speaker, I'm told from reports from Toronto and Calgary that the major Canadian energy company, Norcen Energy Resources Limited, is moving its head office from Toronto to Calgary, following upon the move by Shell Canada in the same direction. That certainly has significant and positive long-term implications for the Alberta economy. There appears to be a growing realization that major decisions made by head offices — and I understand it is the head office of Norcen Energy Resources Limited which is moving — are best made on-site. I think that has good implications. It's good news for the province of Alberta and will continue to build confidence. It reflects the government's policy of setting forth a climate for head offices and industry moving to the province of Alberta.

MR. SPEAKER: I have some misgivings about that question, because the way it was put, it was clearly a question asking what the intent was or what the plans were of a private corporation. Certainly, it doesn't come within the duties of a minister to keep tab on the intentions of private corporations and report them to the Assembly. If there is special information that the minister acquires in the course of his duties which is not generally available then, of course, that's a different matter.

MR. LEE: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. In view of the direct, positive economic benefits for the taxpayers and the general revenues of the province of Alberta, does the minister anticipate any further announcements this session or in the near future?

MR. SPEAKER: Surely the future intentions of these corporations, as to whether there'll be a basis for further announcements by them, are not within the public duties and responsibilities of a minister.

MR. LEE: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. In view of the minister's responsibilities as Provincial Treasurer for attracting a wider tax base in this province, can he indicate whether there will be any further announcements this session?

MR. SPEAKER: Reminding the minister of things he may be concerned about doesn't change the nature of the question. I fail to see how the question relates to the public responsibility of the minister in a way which will call on him to provide information that's not generally available or available by reading the business sections of newspapers.

The hon. Member for Calgary McKnight, followed by the hon. Member for St. Albert.

MR. MUSGREAVE: Mr. Speaker, I think discretion is the better part of valour, and I'd like to withdraw my question.

MR. SPEAKER: I must be duly humble about having been the cause for raising a matter of valour in the House.

Genesee Project

MRS. FYFE: Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask a question of the Minister of Utilities and Telecommunications. Can he advise the Assembly when the Energy Resources Conservation Board report regarding the Genesee power application will be made public?

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Speaker, members of the Assembly will recall that on Monday evening of this week, during the

department's estimates, I indicated that we expected the report to be released by the chairman of the Energy Resources Conservation Board within the next few weeks. I'm now in a position to advise the Assembly that, in fact, the report will be made public by the board this Friday.

MRS. FYFE: A further question, Mr. Speaker. Can the minister outline to the Assembly the process that will be followed after the release of this report?

MR. BOGLE: Under the terms of the legislation governing the ERCB, Mr. Speaker, the board, in its decision-making ability, will make a recommendation to the Executive Council. It is within the prerogative of the Executive Council either to affirm that decision by the board or to alter or vary it in some way. So once the report is made public, it will be considered by the Executive Council and the government caucus, and a decision will be made by the government in due course.

School Bus Safety

MR. GURNETT: Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Transportation. I wonder if he could tell us whether he met today with the people from the Bus Us Safely group of citizens concerned about school bus safety. If so, could he indicate what plans he has to act on any recommendations those people presented to him?

MR. M. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, the answer to the first question is that I was not able to meet with that group this morning because I was in Lethbridge at other meetings. My understanding is that the hon. Solicitor General and perhaps the member of the Legislature representing that area of the province where that incident occurred met with the individual.

The second part of the question has to do with school bus safety. I'd be prepared to elaborate on what we plan in that area, if the hon. member wishes.

MR. GURNETT: A supplementary question. Yes, since it is a subject of some importance, there are a number of areas I'd be interested in knowing about. Specifically I wonder if the minister could indicate if he has any intentions to proceed more rapidly with the widening of the Yellowhead Highway, especially that area around Edson that, I understand, is referred to as a death zone, in order to cut down on the danger associated with that stretch of the highway.

MR. M. MOORE: First of all, Mr. Speaker, we've been making relatively good progress on the twinning of Highway 16 west of Edmonton through both the Edson and Hinton areas. In addition to that, we've been working on the development of improved two-lane sections of that highway in areas where it was very narrow and crooked. I should say that we are on schedule, as we announced previously, in completing the twinning of Highway 16 from the Saskatchewan border to the Jasper park boundary by 1992. That will entail significant work this year in the Hinton area and some in the Edson area, as well as a great deal of work east of Edmonton.

Leaving that question aside and going into the area of school bus safety, we've been involved in a number of things over the course of the last couple of years that we think will be extremely advantageous in terms of improving safety in school bus operations. Certainly, most of the

accidents involving loss of life in school bus operations occur during the loading and unloading process, and we've been concentrating on driver education in that area. The safety branch of the Department of Transportation has developed a very comprehensive training program for school bus drivers. I wrote to every school division in this province about a year ago and asked them if they would consider implementing, as a mandatory part of their operations, a requirement that every school bus driver take the program of instruction that we had outlined and that they continually upgrade, even for drivers who've been involved for many years, their education in terms of school bus operations.

In addition to that, we've taken a number of initiatives with regard to equipment. We'll be moving sometime this summer to fix a date when it will be mandatory for the eight-light system to be in operation; that is, in addition to the two flashing red lights, two flashing yellow lights on either end.

I can say specifically with respect to the accident that occurred earlier this year that very tragically took the life of a young boy, that we are going to pursue two specific initiatives arising from that event. Firstly, we will be directing a major portion of the Department of Transportation's advertising budget with respect to driver safety, toward school bus operations and trying to make the motorists aware of school bus operations, beginning in late August of this year and running through the fall season when school starts again. We are now preparing the kind of advertisements and driver education material we think will be very helpful in that regard.

Secondly, Alberta Transportation has for some years instructed drivers of school buses, when they are unloading children on highways in rural areas, to pull over to the shoulder of the road sufficiently close to the ditch to allow the child to get off on the surface of the road but not to stop in the full lane of traffic. In many areas bus drivers are instructed by their supervisors to stop in the regular traffic lane so as to discourage other vehicles from passing. The result can often be that a school bus is completely obscured by a larger vehicle that has pulled up behind it, and in terms of four-way flashing lights or something, another driver may think that vehicle is making a left-hand turn when in fact it has just stopped for a school bus.

So the proper method of unloading on any highway will be to pull over to the shoulder of the road, just leaving sufficient room for the child to get off. That situation will result in a case where drivers who may be following several vehicles queued behind the school bus will have an opportunity to see at least one side of the school bus which has pulled over to the side of the road or, in the event even that doesn't occur, if they were trying to pass on the left-hand side, would surely have to take the ditch and might avoid the children.

That's one safety aspect of driver operation we've been encouraging for some years, but I've asked staff in our department to contact all school division authorities and make absolutely certain that the training in that regard is reinforced this coming fall.

Mr. Speaker, over the course of the next month, probably before July 1 at least, I expect to be able to announce several other initiatives we'll be taking with respect to driver education. I've been working very closely with my colleague the hon. Solicitor General, who also has some responsibilities in the enforcement role and will be undertaking to bring forward certain measures there that we think will be effective in avoiding any further tragedies in school bus operations.

MR. GURNETT: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker, to the minister. In addition to the educational and the enforcement aspects, the facilities are also important. I wonder if any consideration has been given to this idea of special pads that are adjacent to but off the highway, as areas for school buses to stop and do pickups.

MR. M. MOORE: The hon. member raises a very good question, Mr. Speaker. Some authorities have requested us to develop a turnout adjacent to the highway system where school buses are stopping, so that the children can get off in more safety. The difficulty here is that we then have the question of whether or not the lights are activated to stop all traffic once a school bus is pulled off the road onto these loading and unloading ramps. There is some difficulty in activating the lights when you're off the highway and expecting people to stop, so the general opinion is that if you're unloading off highway on such a ramp, you should not activate the lights.

The question then has to be asked: what happens when children have to cross the highway after having been unloaded? Right now they are expected to cross the highway with the safety of the lamps being on. So it does pose some difficulty. Although it seems at first glance to be a rather good idea to pull off the road to unload, if you have to turn the flashing lights off and if the children then have to cross the highway, we may not have accomplished anything.

I conclude on that subject by saying that I still have that matter under review, as to what if anything can be done along those lines that might increase safety. Additionally, some people have asked if we would insist that school bus routes are designed in such a way that the children are always unloaded on the side of the road they are travelling home on on foot. I've reviewed that as well and believe it would be impossible in rural Alberta to insist that children always be unloaded on their side of the road, because we would obviously extend very greatly in many areas the cost of school bus operations and the length of time children are on the bus.

I think the important thing we have to remember here is that it is incumbent upon us to try to educate the drivers, the children themselves, and other users of the roadway, to allow school bus operations to occur with the utmost safety. We should teach children how to cross the road, how to look very carefully, because they'll have to do that over their entire lives. I think that's the better approach than trying to make sure that they aren't involved in crossing the highway, because surely they will be crossing streets and highways for many years to come.

MR. SPEAKER: Might this be the final supplementary on this topic. I realize the answers have been somewhat lengthy. It appears they have anticipated a number of supplementaries.

MR. GURNETT: Yes, Mr. Speaker. A supplementary to the minister. Is there any consideration being given to significantly increasing the penalties or fines for passing a school bus that has stopped? I believe the suggestion has been made of \$500 for a first offence and a prison sentence for the second offence of passing a stopped school bus with lights flashing.

MR. M. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, the answer to the question is that yes, consideration is being given to that. I would like to refer comments in that regard to the hon. Solicitor General, who has some thoughts with regard to demerit

points and other ways in which drivers might be encouraged to obey our laws with respect to school bus operations. Perhaps the Solicitor General would like to add to my comments.

DR. REID: Mr. Speaker, first of all, a supplementary to the first answer given by the Minister of Transportation. On March 4 in Edson I met with the school bus drivers association in that area. That was shortly after the incident that resulted in the tragic death. The incident did not actually happen in my constituency but in the constituency of the Minister of Recreation and Parks. That meeting went very well. There were some suggestions made by the drivers at that time.

Some months ago I asked my department to initiate some ideas on the demerit system and relate the demerits to the potential of the offence. In relation to that particular offence of going past on the right or left a school bus with its lights flashing, I am contemplating a considerable increase in the number of demerits for that.

Unfortunately I had a previous appointment at 10:30 this morning when the group had asked to meet with members. I did meet very briefly with the group, but two of my fellow members who have experience in the operation of school buses did meet for a longer period of time with the people from the Bus Us Safely group.

MR. PURDY: A supplementary to the Minister of Transportation. Regarding school bus safety in the urban areas, in view of the fact that the present legislation does not allow a school bus operator to place flashing lights on in an urban municipality, and there are a lot of urban municipalities where highways go through and school bus drivers are still doing that, which I think is the correct method, will the minister give serious consideration to amending the legislation to allow school bus operators to use their flashing lights in the urban areas?

MR. M. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, the short answer to the question is no, simply because it has been proven over and over again throughout every jurisdiction in North America that a mandatory requirement to operate flashing lights in an urban area results in far more accidents than following the regular procedure that we've used for years, where vehicles which are travelling under a certain speed limit are not required to utilize their lights, and the traffic can flow as normal. In a city like Edmonton there would be massive disruptions on certain routes if people were required at all times to stop behind school buses.

Perhaps the hon. member meant to ask if we were considering the matter of the speed limit under which school buses are not allowed to operate their flashing lights. There is quite some difference between saying that the law ought to provide that school buses would operate their flashing lights at all times and considering when that point might be reached. I have under consideration some proposals that have been made to me by the school bus drivers association that involve rural subdivisions where school buses are now not able to use their flashing lights because the speed limit is less than 50 kilometres per hour. We believe there may be some way to resolve that problem in terms of allowing the use of lights without making it mandatory with respect to every jurisdiction in the province.

MR. SPEAKER: I'm concerned about the lack of time we have. We're getting close to the end, and there are two

members who've not yet had an opportunity to ask their first questions.

MR. PURDY: Mr. Speaker, I was asking the hon. minister regarding small urban municipalities, not the large urban municipalities of Edmonton or Calgary.

MR. M. MOORE: That's good clarification. Mr. Speaker, I think that's what I was alluding to. There may be a way to resolve that problem.

Accountants Acts

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Solicitor General one or two questions on Bills 71, 72, and 76. The minister was not able to indicate to the Assembly when these Bills would receive royal assent. Has the minister had an opportunity since he last sat down to indicate if these three Bills will come in and receive royal assent simultaneously?

DR. REID: Mr. Speaker, in my initial remarks upon introduction of Bill 71 I did mention that in conjunction with the three Bills, we were going to review all the statutes of Alberta that mention the word "audit" or other financial requirements to make sure the definitions for audit and review that are included in these pieces of legislation will be used throughout the statutes. The reason for that is to avoid the present confusion in the use of those terms. To use the word "audit", as it will be defined in legislation, for some of the groups that currently in legislation are required to submit an audit, would be ridiculous.

The intention is to review the statutes and try to rationalize the requirement for financial statements by definitions of audit and review as defined in these statutes and also for asking for just a general statement of the financial standing without those functions being performed. Obviously, for small, volunteer organizations who are handling only a few hundred dollars that they have raised by bingos and things like that, it would be ridiculous to request an audit under those circumstances.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, in light of the fact there are about 2,700 Certified General Accountants in the province of Alberta, what studies has the minister's department done on what has happened in Ontario, where the monopoly has been given to Chartered Accountants — only they can do audits — and there has been a substantial increase in fees? In this province it seems like the big eight from Toronto would be providing most of the services. What studies have been done to indicate what this monopoly would do to the fee increase in the province of Alberta?

DR. REID: Mr. Speaker, there are several points in that question. First of all, my understanding is that the number of Certified General Accountants in the province is approximately 900, most of whom do not do audits even with the current definitions. With regard to the fee structure, that would be the responsibility of the professional association concerned, the respective three, and I would not anticipate that in view of the narrow definition of audit which is included in the legislation, that would be a significant part of the practice of many accountants — Chartered Accountants, Certified General Accountants, or Certified Management Accountants.

MR. SPEAKER: Might this be the final supplementary on this topic.

DR. BUCK: A supplementary to the hon. Solicitor General. Unless the Solicitor General is getting different information than the opposition members do, there seem to be 2,700 members in the Association of Certified General Accountants of Alberta.

Mr. Speaker, on the question of monopoly, can the minister indicate to the Assembly what we as businesspeople would be doing if we are forced to have just the services of Chartered Accountants when many businesses in this province have been having other people doing that and have been happy with the work and it has been done to a high standard? Will that mean that those businesses will have to switch to firms that are Chartered Accountants only?

DR. REID: Mr. Speaker, the confusion about numbers is apparently due to the fact that the hon. member is including a number of students. I understand that there are some 900 members of the Association of Certified General Accountants and that there is a large number of students who are also included in the number quoted by the hon. member.

If the member will read the three pieces of legislation, it will become fairly apparent from the definitions that it's only for the use of the audited statement in a narrow frame and for the use of review in a narrow frame where it is for the benefit of third parties or may reasonably be expected to be for the benefit of third parties that it will be necessary to use either the Chartered Accountant in the event of audit or one of the three groups in the event of review.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the minister.

MR. SPEAKER: I'm concerned that we've reached the end of the time. I wonder if we could come back to this, perhaps on Friday. The hon. Member for Vegreville is waiting to ask his first question.

Transportation Grants

MR. BATIUK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is directed to the Minister of Transportation. In reference to a letter he received, and I have a copy, from the county of Two Hills expressing concern with the regular road grant regulation where 50 percent of the grant must be expended on equipment and services from the private sector, would the minister consider relaxing these regulations? I am sure there are many counties throughout the province that have the same problem.

MR. M. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, I said to the Association of MDs and Counties a year ago that I wanted them, when they're utilizing grant funds from Alberta Transportation, to use private-sector equipment and construction workers to do that work. I thought it only fair that if we're going to privatize in Alberta Transportation, there ought to be some recognition of that with the public funds that flow from our budget in municipalities as well. They then said, "That will create some hardship on us." So we spent some months reviewing the whole matter. Finally, last fall I announced to them that after the review I believed that it would be appropriate if they did 50 percent of their work that was done with grant dollars from our department — that's tax dollars of their own they can do whatever they like with

— with private-sector equipment and the other 50 percent could be done with their own.

In addition, I said if that criterion results in a situation where you have to lay off your own workers or sell any of your own machines, for a period of three years we will undertake to work with you to ensure that you don't have to lay anybody off or sell any machines. That was made very clear to every municipality in this province. On that condition there can hardly be a case where anybody has to lay off any people.

MR. BATIUK: One supplementary if I may, Mr. Speaker. Could the minister advise whether he has already communicated with or may be considering communicating with the Roadbuilders Association, that when they need heavy equipment they would consider purchasing this equipment from counties and help alleviate the concerns that they have?

MR. M. MOORE: I haven't made those representations. Until very recently the road building industry has had more equipment available than they can use because of the downturn in the oil and gas industry, although that situation is changing very, very rapidly. I would think that the sale of heavy equipment in this province over the course of the next year or two is going to be pretty good, because there's not nearly as much idle equipment now as there was over the last couple of years. That's reflected largely by the very aggressive program of Alberta Transportation.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

MR. SPEAKER: May we revert briefly to Introduction of Special Guests?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

head: INTRODUCTION OF SPECIAL GUESTS (reversion)

DR. REID: Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure this afternoon to introduce to you and to fellow members of the Legislature a group of 35 students who have come 240 miles from Jasper National Park. They're in grade 6. They're accompanied by two teachers, Jill Fenton and Verna Arsenault, and by two parents, Mrs. Loretta Shredwick and Mr. John Shredwick. They're in the members' gallery, and I ask them to rise and receive the welcome of the Assembly.

MR. APPLEBY: Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure this afternoon to introduce to you and the other members of the Assembly a group of 22 grade 6 students from the Dapp elementary school in the Athabasca constituency. Accompanying them this afternoon are their teacher Mr. Bill Hula, parents Kathy Wolff and Gwen Booth, and their driver Mr. Hawrlyk. I believe they're in both galleries, Mr. Speaker, and I ask them to rise and be welcomed by the Assembly.

MR. HYNDMAN: Mr. Speaker, I have received certain messages from Her Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor, which I now transmit to you.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Order!

MR. SPEAKER: The Lieutenant Governor transmits an estimate of an additional sum not otherwise provided for required from the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund for the 12 months ending March 31, 1986, for the purpose of making an investment pursuant to section 6(1)(a) of the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund Act in a project which will provide long-term economic or social benefits to the people of Alberta but which may not necessarily, by its nature, yield a return to the trust fund, and recommends the same to the Legislative Assembly.

The Lieutenant Governor transmits an estimate of a certain sum required from the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund for the 12 months ending March 31, 1986, for the purpose of making investments pursuant to section 6(1)(a) of the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund Act in projects which will provide long-term economic or social benefits to the people of Alberta but which may not necessarily, by their nature, yield a return to the trust fund, and recommends the same to the Legislative Assembly.

The Lieutenant Governor transmits supplementary estimates of certain sums required for the service of the province for the 12 months ending March 31, 1986, and recommends the same to the Legislative Assembly.

Please be seated.

MR. ALGER: Mr. Speaker, I've been on my feet before in this Legislature to introduce several dignitaries from the Highwood constituency, but never in my tenure of office ...

MR. SPEAKER: Possibly we should ask for leave of the Assembly. Is there leave to revert to introduction?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

head: INTRODUCTION OF SPECIAL GUESTS (reversion)

MR. ALGER: I had that suggested here, Mr. Speaker, but I was coached by my cohorts to jump right at it.

Never before in my tenure of office have I been able to take up so much space in the galleries with people that I would like to describe as the cream of the nation's youth. I'm proud today to present to you, and through you to all members of the Assembly, 55 or 60 grade 9 junior high school students from the Senator Riley high school in High River. They are accompanied by their teachers Mr. Dee Goble, Mrs. Charest, I think Mrs. Cindy Malner is here, Mrs. Diane Emerson, Mr. Bill Young, as well as two lovely parents in the persons of Mrs. McCartney and Mrs. Cruickshank. They are seated in the public gallery, Mr. Speaker, and I ask them to please rise while we bring down the rafters in recognition of their presence today.

head: GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

17. Moved by Mr. Crawford:

Be it resolved that when the House rises at 5:30 p.m. on Wednesday, May 15, 1985, it shall stand adjourned until 10 a.m. on Friday, May 17, 1985.

[Motion carried]

12. Moved by Mr. Crawford:

Be it resolved that,

- (1) A special committee be appointed, consisting of the following members, namely:

D. J. Carter, Chairman

J. E. Miller, Vice-chairman

J. Thompson

A. Hiebert

J. Gurnett

for the purpose of inviting applications for the position of Auditor General and to recommend to the Assembly the applicant it considers most suitable for appointment to that position;

- (2) Members of the committee shall be paid in accordance with section 43(1) of the Legislative Assembly Act;
- (3) Reasonable disbursements by the committee for advertising, staff assistance, equipment and supplies, rent, travel, and other expenditures necessary for the effective conduct of its responsibilities shall be paid, subject to the approval of the chairman;
- (4) In carrying out its responsibilities, the committee may, with the concurrence of the head of the department, utilize the services of members of the public service employed in that department or of the staff employed by the Assembly;
- (5) The committee may, without leave of the Assembly, sit during a period when the Assembly is adjourned;
- (6) When its work has been completed, the committee shall report to the Assembly if it is then sitting. During a period when the Assembly is adjourned, the committee may release its report by depositing a copy with the Clerk and forwarding a copy to each member of the Assembly.

[Motion carried]

head: **COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY**

[Mr. Purdy in the Chair]

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

**Department of
Social Services and Community Health**

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I believe the minister has some comments to make from the previous time the estimates were before the committee.

DR. WEBBER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I welcome the opportunity to further discuss estimates of the Department of Social Services and Community Health, and I hope the hon. Leader of the Opposition is sharp this afternoon. I see he has his suit on today, so we look forward to a good afternoon.

Mr. Chairman, a number of questions were raised the last time we dealt with the estimates of the department, and I'd like to spend a little time responding to those questions. Following my comments the Member for Lethbridge West, the chairman of AADAC, would like to respond to some questions that were raised in his area of responsibility.

I believe I generally responded to the areas of food banks and social allowance and also the area of family violence and women's shelters. However, in reviewing *Hansard*, I would like to make a couple of comments. The Leader of the Opposition raised a question related to the clothing allowance for employables and why the workers didn't know about the change in policy. Mr. Chairman, I hope that if he has a specific example where someone was unaware of the policy, he would bring it to our attention, because I don't believe it's true in general at all. In order to implement the policy, all workers had to review the caseloads in order to determine the eligible cases. So I don't think there's any problem there at all. But rather than deal in generalities, if he has specific cases where he has a concern, I'd be happy to deal with them.

The Member for Spirit River-Fairview asked a couple of questions and raised a concern about the Single Men's Hostel in Edmonton with respect to some lineup difficulty and difficulty in accessing counsellors, and asked whether I was aware of those concerns. My response is yes, I certainly am aware of those concerns. Prior to his raising the matter in the Legislature, I had raised this with the Edmonton regional director. They are reviewing and trying to institute a better system of having social allowance recipients there have access to counsellors. So it is a valid concern and one we're following up on.

He also wanted to know whether or not I had had any contact there. Yes, a number of months ago I visited the Single Men's Hostel in Edmonton, as well as a number of other agencies in the inner city, to see how they were dealing with the caseloads they had. In terms of people staying there, the Single Men's Hostel had less business than during the so-called boom times, when there were a lot of transients coming through Alberta. However, because of the pressure on some of the offices dealing with social allowance, the Single Men's Hostel was a place where social allowance recipients — single employables, for example — could go and apply for social allowance and get benefits as a result of that.

I thought the Single Men's Hostel was a very clean place. The Social Care Facilities Review Committee, chaired by the hon. Member for Calgary Egmont, and, I believe, the Member for Cypress, who is a member of that committee, also visited the Single Men's Hostels in Edmonton and in Calgary. In fact, they have a new regional director in Calgary, and one of his first tasks as regional director was to make the mayor of Calgary more aware of what was happening at the Single Men's Hostel. He took him out for lunch one day at the Single Men's Hostel, to indicate to him the kinds of services being provided for some of the social allowance recipients there.

He also raised a question about job searches and whether or not we have some flexibility across the province in our expectations of how many searches social allowance recipients who are employable should complete within a month. There is a great deal of flexibility in this regard, and it is our expectation that if they are employable, they would be looking for work. The social workers expect them to search for work. So there is flexibility for social workers to deal with each case in terms of requesting recipients to demonstrate that they are in fact out there looking for work.

I think it's also important to note that in the social allowance benefits there is provision for telephone rental and transportation costs to assist the social allowance recipient who is employable to actually look for work. In the case of single parents, there are child care expenses that can be allotted as well.

The hon. Leader of the Opposition alleged that social allowance cheques related to the increases in December before Christmas didn't get to social allowance recipients until February. In checking this out, special cheques did go out to social allowance recipients. They were in the mail by January 15, and some 40,000 recipients received cheques. So I would be surprised if social allowance recipients didn't get their cheques until February.

A number of other questions were raised, Mr. Chairman, and I will respond to them in order. The Member for Calgary Egmont raised a question about the time lines for the Baker Centre development in Calgary. As hon. members know, a major construction project related to the services for the handicapped will be under way in Calgary, and there are three parts to that construction project. Five group homes of six beds each are being constructed in the community that is off site from the Baker site in Calgary. Construction should begin within the next month or so and be complete near the end of this year. Nine group homes housing 56 dependent handicapped will be built on the Baker site. Construction will begin next winter, with completion targeted for the spring of 1987. A 30-bed facility for medically dependent people will be in construction on the Baker site in the summer of 1986 and is scheduled for completion by the end of 1987. The Calgary regional managers met recently with the parents from Baker Centre to discuss with them the construction plans.

The Member for Little Bow raised several questions. One related to whether or not all sections of the new Child Welfare Act are in effect. In responding to that, the intention was not to proclaim the Child Welfare Act that we passed last year until July 1, 1985. However, there is a section we have had some concerns about, and that relates to the private adoption area. On Friday I will be bringing in a Bill. The net effect would be that we would not proclaim that section but would be dealing with the current Child Welfare Act as it relates to private adoptions until such a time as we feel we are prepared to move some aspects of private adoptions, the assessments, into agencies that would do that sort of thing.

If hon. members have questions related to why we are not wanting to proceed in the private adoption area, I would be happy to discuss it further. Generally it is that recent concerns have been raised, which is interesting, because when we went through the process of having input from across the province on the Child Welfare Act or the principles leading up to the legislation, I can't recall any concerns being raised about the changes we were proposing about private adoption. We passed the legislation, and then just a few months ago there were concerns raised, and it seems to have snowballed from there. They are quite valid concerns and ones we want to take a close look at.

The Member for Calgary Foothills asked a question about day care and why there was an increase in vote 10.6 — and whether it was due to increased demand, increase in the number of spaces available, or increased costs. The answer is yes, there certainly has been an increase in the demand on day care centres in the province. There has been a significant increase in the number of new day care centres that have opened up in the last several years, an increase in the number of children going into day care centres, and an increase in the number of families receiving subsidies to have their children placed in day care centres.

Going on, Mr. Chairman, the Member for Calgary Millican commented on the family and community support services program, the FCSS program, and some very val-

uable comments about the battered widows' program, which we don't have. It is a battered women's or battered spouses' program. We do have a widows' pension program, Mr. Chairman, but we haven't introduced a battered widows' program yet. I know the hon. member simply erred on that, and I'm playing it probably more than I should.

He was wanting a little bit of extra money for the FCSS in the coming year. However, as noted in the budget, we see what the funding levels are there. I would say, though, that in last year's budget, or maybe it was the year before, we had a significant surplus. In any case, we used those extra moneys to extend the services under the FCSS program to rural communities that previously had not received any of these preventative programs under the family and community support services umbrella.

Today, I believe approximately 89 percent of Albertans living in municipalities and on reserves have these programs available to them, and of course we would like to extend that further to other Albertans who do not have those services. So the request of some of the urban members about increasing funding is not the first priority at this time. The first priority is to extend the services to other Albertans who do not have access to them. It is an 80/20 cost-sharing arrangement, where 80 percent of the funding comes from the province and 20 percent comes from the local municipality, up to \$12 per capita in the rural areas and \$10 per capita in the urban areas. In some instances, the municipalities provide funding beyond that 20 percent, but it's their prerogative as to how much they want to provide in terms of preventative kinds of services. But we do 80/20 on the basis of up to \$10 per capita per year.

The Member for Edmonton Sherwood Park asked a question about palliative care and said he couldn't find it in the estimates. The palliative care funding is in the co-ordinated home care program. Out of the \$10 million increase that was announced in '84-85 for the expansion of the home care program, \$1 million was allocated to the palliative care area, with the caseload rising since then from 450 to more than 600 people.

The Member for Little Bow raised some questions about privatizing services, and I wish he were in the House at the present time to hear what I have to say. However, he can read *Hansard*. I was going to indicate that not only his comments about privatization but some of his other comments tended to be a little bit on the nasty side. That's why I was going to comment that with regard to the one issue he raised about political patronage with respect to some appointments as regional directors in our department, I think his comments were very unfair. If the hon. member would recall and stretch his memory, he would find that one of his former executive assistants had been a regional director and is now moved into head office and doing an excellent job. So I think any comments like that are uncalled for, and I don't appreciate them.

The privatization question is certainly a valid one. This government has indicated that one of its priorities is privatization. However, in this year's budget, some \$325 million has been allocated in the form of contracts and grants to community operations. I'm not sure privatization is the right word when we talk about moving services from Social Services and Community Health over to community agencies, because many of those agencies are nonprofit in nature and have a very significant volunteer component to them. However, there are also agencies out there, in the private day care centres, where individuals put up their own capital and operate a day care operation, and we do provide funding

in terms of subsidies to those operations and they are profit-motivated as well. So when we talk about privatization, we are using the term very generally in that we are including both those nonprofit agencies and those agencies that are operating to try to generate a profit, although some of them would argue that they are in a nonprofit operation.

There is no master plan with regard to privatizing services in Social Services and Community Health. We are looking at areas where we can transfer services to community agencies, but we have to weigh the pros and cons very carefully in each case before doing so. We do not want to have any less degree of quality, and we would like to see them more efficiently run if they are going to be transferred. So in looking at these on a case by case basis, we want to be assured that we will continue to have effective and efficient delivery of services.

The hon. Member for Little Bow — Bow. Time for a drink of water.

AN HON. MEMBER: You had it right the first time.

DR. WEBBER: The hon. Member for Little Bow asked about a number of positions which are being eliminated this year in our downsizing efforts. So far, 48 of the 135 positions committed have been identified. They are in the management, professional, and clerical areas. Most of those positions were in the central office area in Edmonton.

The Member for Drayton Valley asked a couple of questions related to concerns expressed to her by some of her constituents. It's difficult to respond to those concerns without knowing more about the details of each of those constituent complaints. I would answer simply by saying that if the hon. member could provide me with more details on each of those cases — and I believe she has on one — we will respond to her by memo.

The Member for Vegreville raised the question of handicapped people in group homes in his constituency. I want to comment, Mr. Chairman, by indicating that it is our plan and policy to try to move handicapped people from institutions into their communities wherever we can when the families would like to have them brought back into the community. It is our intention to move approximately 150 people — I believe most of these people would be in Michener Centre and some in the other institutions in the urban area of Edmonton as well — to the communities in the northeast and to move the dollars associated with keeping them in these institutions into the communities so we can provide services for them in the communities. The plan in place for the northeast region is such that we have asked for proposals from the community agencies to see what kinds of services they would be able to provide to the handicapped if they were moved back into the area. We've had an excellent response to that.

The Member for Cypress raised a question about group homes — where young people are involved in these group homes, whether they be emotionally disturbed teenagers or otherwise, and about the costs, very high costs in many instances, associated with keeping these young people in group homes. There again, it is our intention where possible to see if we can move these young people back to their own communities and have the dollars moved back to the community to try to work with them and keep them with their families, if that is a viable alternative.

Mr. Chairman, those are the responses I have to the questions that were raised the last time we dealt with the estimates. There were some other comments made by mem-

bers, but they really weren't in the form of questions, so I will leave it at that and ask the Member for Lethbridge West if he would respond to his questions.

MR. GOGO: Mr. Chairman, the last evening we dealt with this, various members posed questions regarding vote 11 in the estimates, applicable to AADAC, the Alcoholism and Drug Abuse Commission. I'd like to attempt to respond to them at this time. I'm very encouraged by the strong support of members of the committee with regard to the Alcoholism and Drug Abuse Commission in this province, which is asking for some \$26 million.

First of all, I'm grateful that the Leader of the Official Opposition, both through experience in his vocation prior to coming to this House and now as a member of the House and, indeed, Leader of the Official Opposition, has been so kind in his comments to AADAC and the role they are playing in our province, with particular emphasis on the young people, because that's what it's all about. We can treat people. We treated 17,000 last year, as I recall, at some \$12 million or \$13 million. But in the final analysis it's truly prevention that's going to have an impact, not only on the future lives of our young people but, indeed, on the economic health of this province.

Mr. Chairman, the Member for Stony Plain raised a point about his daughter Lisa. I was very encouraged by the fact that he raised it. I then purposely read the letter she had written. First of all, I'd like to comment that I was very impressed with her mature thinking in that letter. She raised the point: is the problem really with all our young people? Of course it's not. It just happens to be the focus of the program authorized by this Assembly in 1981 that we get actively involved with the 12- to 17-year-olds in attempting to inform them and letting them make their own decisions. The theme, of course, was: Make the most of a good thing; make the most of you. I'm grateful that the hon. Member for Stony Plain raised that point.

As members of the committee know — certainly rural members — there has long been criticism that government perhaps doesn't do enough to inform the rural areas. In our enthusiasm to see that the messages were out far and wide across this province, we specifically requested the advertising agency to see that adequate messages were placed in rural newspapers. I would tend to agree in a way that there's no need to have two big ads in one paper. Mr. Chairman, how can I best explain it? Fortunately it happened in the very proud riding of Stony Plain.

The Member for Edmonton Kingsway raised points regarding the treatment side, specifically impaired driving. Mr. Chairman, members of the committee may be aware that just last week, on the 9th, we announced a major step forward, as a thrust of an agency of government in dealing with this question of impaired driving, through the formation of the countermeasures co-ordinating committee, which is composed of not only Alberta Transportation, which has always borne a fundamental responsibility for traffic safety, but the law enforcers, the Solicitor General; the administration of justice, the Attorney General; the Alberta Motor Association, which probably, and rightly so, represents the majority of motorists in this province; People Against Impaired Drivers; and other organizations. The committee has a seven-year mandate to do something in terms of co-ordinating all the efforts related to impaired driving.

I think the Member for Edmonton Kingsway was on a particularly good point when he raised questions on the vote, and I presume we could deal with that vote now. He

raised questions under votes 11.2.9 and 11.4.3. Vote 11.4.3 indicates that there is a decrease in the impaired drivers' course of some 12 percent, about \$60,000. The reason is that some years ago the commission recognized that there are people in this province, although not better qualified, in many ways better able to deliver the impaired drivers' course — privatization even then. I might add that it was really started by AADAC. Several years ago we turned that over to the Alberta Motor Association under a contract arrangement. They've carried out that program extremely well with the 17,000 people who attended the courses in the past year. My information is that it's been very successful, albeit perhaps not as successful in terms of identifying problem drinkers as it was prior to that, when AADAC handled it. So the reduction in that is simply a reflection of good business by AADAC in placing this contract with the Alberta Motor Association and making streamlining efforts within AADAC to deal with impaired driving.

The other question by the Member for Edmonton Kingsway touched on treatment in vote 11.2.9. One has to read the entire vote to get an appreciation. It shows a decrease of some 7.7 percent with regard to the day counselling unit in Edmonton, but we have a 10.8 percent increase in the downtown treatment centre. We are really talking about a matter of two blocks away; we simply shifted one to the other. I can assure members of the committee, Mr. Chairman, that in no way has there been any reduction in either people services or prevention services under the AADAC mandate.

The Member for Edmonton Sherwood Park made representation, rightly so, that the world's largest hamlet, in the county of Strathcona, should have an AADAC office. I don't question that at all. We probably have eight or 10 communities around Alberta that should have those services. I simply point out to members of the committee that AADAC, like any other agency of government, must operate under a system of both budget control and priorities. We hope the decisions we've made are right for the occasion. Sherwood Park in the county of Strathcona certainly is not forgotten. It's simply going to have to wait its turn in terms of priorities.

The Member for Vegreville raised a concern about liquor outlets, somewhat in jest, I think. We can't have it both ways. We are in a democracy. The citizens of Alberta have their rights. The Solicitor General and Liquor Control Board through its wisdom attempt to provide those ...

MR. BATIUK: Incentives.

MR. GOGO: Not incentives; opportunities for those who wish to purchase beverage alcohol. I happen to think they're doing a super job — no need to privatize. The Member for Vegreville said, "How come you're pushing it on one hand and restricting it on the other?" Of course, that's not true at all. What we're doing, on the one hand, is providing a service for those Albertans who, perhaps through misuse or abuse, need treatment. On the other hand, we're providing a prevention service to let people be aware of what they're actually doing.

Frankly, if we could get that in the medical community for Valium and other tranquillizers, we'd go forward in quantum leaps. But I have no jurisdiction there. As we know, we tend not to criticize in this House those people who have the authority to write prescriptions for the so-called well-being of people's health.

Mr. Chairman, the Member for Drayton Valley has been a long-time strong supporter of strong action to deal with impaired driving. She related many instances where, perhaps, an injustice was done and something further should be done. As I mentioned, on May 9 initiative was taken through the announcement of the countermeasures co-ordinating committee, and hopefully in the not too distant future there may be even more positive announcements. We very much appreciate her commendation with regard to the prevention campaign.

The Member for Spirit River-Fairview mentioned several areas, and I'd like to take a moment to comment on them. AADAC through its mandate deals with substance abuse. He's quite right when he mentions the area of smoking. At AADAC we established a tobacco policy some time ago. I believe it was March '82. I hope, though, that members of this committee understand that to be effective and efficient, one should concentrate their resources in an area they believe — in this case the commission believes — to be of the utmost importance. That happens to be the area of alcohol abuse, even though tobacco is indeed a drug.

We have, though, carried out a fair number of activities; for example, the media campaign launched in September 1981, of which we have an evaluation in place. It continues to be monitored and has shown a decrease of some 7 percent in consumption of alcohol by teenagers. It also reports — and I think this is important to point out to the committee — that the number of Alberta teens reporting use of cigarettes and marijuana also decreased between 1981 and '83. The proportion using cigarettes decreased from 28 percent to 19 percent, a very substantial decrease, and for marijuana use, from 25 to 15 percent. I think that's truly remarkable, Mr. Chairman, when you look at the trends we saw not many years ago. So we are making progress in that area. As I say, we do have a policy on tobacco use; it's simply not one we happen to blow our horn about. I commend Dr. Hodgkinson for wanting to initiate something very serious in the area of smoking prevention. It's just that at AADAC it is not the top priority at this time.

Mr. Chairman, I've always noticed that those who are able to resist, cease, and desist in these areas of so-called sinful behaviour immediately upon their conversion become members of the cloth. They happen to expound in great fashion certain preaching attitudes that generally tend to reflect on others' conduct and behaviour, particularly with the use of tobacco.

The Member for Spirit River-Fairview also mentioned that he's been exposed to certain school plays. Very clearly, peer pressure is a significant factor in the behaviour of people. He also mentioned the local option program, which I'm sure members — if they've observed the safe grad program around the province, which was initiated by AADAC several years ago and is now turned over to the young people themselves — would agree is a great success.

I also note, Mr. Chairman, that the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview has been invited to be one of the speakers at the Fairview youth conference, which is not far off, May 25, being put on by the Peace River office of AADAC. He will have with him the Minister of Tourism and Small Business. I'm sure all members of the committee would agree that they will make a great pair together on the platform, because both have expressed their strong support of the AADAC goals dealing with young people.

The Member for Calgary Foothills asked a question about feedback in terms of the community. What do people think? It's nice to hear politicians espouse the positive

aspects of a program, particularly when they're responsible for the expenditure of dollars, but what does the public think? Very quickly, not long ago, in 1979, we did a survey. I became the chairman in '79, and I didn't know much about it. I wanted to know something about it, and I suggested we find out. In Calgary, which is a great heart of learning in this province, 7 percent knew what AADAC was; in Edmonton, 19 percent. Maybe that's because AADAC was in Edmonton. But today some 83 percent of Albertans are aware of AADAC. Some 65 percent of all parents in this province strongly support what AADAC is doing.

We have a magazine called *Zoot Capri* that goes free of charge to all school districts that allow it. For certain reasons some do not allow it to be sent to the children in their school systems, which, frankly, puzzles me. It puzzles me greatly, and it disturbs me greatly. It goes directly to the young people at the junior high school level in this province, because we have determined by talking to youngsters that they have a sense of propriety when something arrives with their name on it. If it arrives with their parents' name or the school board's name on it, forget it. That's been very successful.

We very much appreciate the support of the Member for Calgary Foothills. I can assure the hon. member that the public support of our programs is just terrific. I can't think of another program in this province that has support from parents and young people alike. That's very unusual, because traditionally where one supports, the other won't. It seems to me that we're finally able to bridge that communication gap between the parent and young person, and we're very proud to have been able to play a role in that.

Mr. Chairman, the final comment is on a question raised by the Member for Calgary Mountain View. It's interesting to look at Calgary Mountain View, because it has a certain history that's applicable to AADAC in many ways. Renfrew Recovery Centre, which is a 30-bed treatment centre in Calgary Mountain View, was a former Safeway store. I'll take a moment to explain that two distinguished members for Calgary Mountain View have done time in this House. One of them is now a provincial judge. The other, the hon. John Kushner, is a late member; he's no longer with us. He made a significant contribution to this House.

My records indicate that when citizens in the community of Calgary Mountain View wanted to establish the Renfrew Recovery Centre, both these people, one being an MLA at the time and the other being a city alderman, took strong objection to it. Rightly so — I suppose they were reflecting the views of those people who voted them in. They both made the statement that it would open only over their dead bodies. Well, it must have been very refreshing indeed to many people when it was officially opened just three years later. On that occasion the chairman had the pleasure of saying that he was very pleased to see that neither one of those people who were in attendance were indeed dead.

I'm pleased to report that the Renfrew Recovery Centre in the community of Calgary Mountain View is — well, you couldn't close it today if you tried. It's become a significant part of that community. This is important for those who get uptight about establishing group homes within the community. It has been not only well received but strongly supported by the citizens in that area.

Mr. Chairman, I hope that has answered all the questions of the members of the committee. I continue to look forward to August, when we have the world conference in Alberta — the first time it's ever been held in Canada and certainly

the first time in Alberta. With deference to the Edmonton members, what finer city to hold it in than the home of the Calgary Stampede, Calgary, Alberta. It tends to balance off the Edmontonians, who have the home of the great Wayne Gretzky here.

Thank you very much.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I understand the minister may have some further comments.

DR. WEBBER: Mr. Chairman, the member sitting in the Chair had asked last time, when he wasn't sitting in the Chair, about the Rehoboth and the funding of that agency, which provides group home services and other kinds of services for the physically handicapped. We were very happy to assess the proposal they sent to us with the strong support of the MLA and a number of other MLAs in the province who are aware of their operation. I know they are working hard to see if they can get more funds through their own organization in the future. The Edmonton regional manager will be working with them to see if we can continue with that fine operation.

I overlooked the question raised by the hon. Member for Little Bow with regard to funding for Unity House in Fort McMurray. He indicated that there hadn't been an increase in the past two years for that particular shelter for abused spouses. The northeast region has been meeting with the management of that facility and is looking at expanding the capacity from nine to 15 beds. We are certainly aware of the needs and are working with the community to see if we can't better meet those needs.

The Member for Lethbridge West commented on smoking. I believe he made some comments on that the last time we met here. I want to point out as well that on the health promotion side in the department we are spending funds on trying to convince people that they should stop smoking. Even though it's the only bad habit the hon. member maintains, maybe next year in nonsmoking month we will be able to convince him not to. The last time around we were able to convince a couple of members of our staff to quit smoking. I don't think they do any more, at least not around the office.

Mr. Chairman, those are the only comments I want to make.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Chairman, to come back on a couple of points, we've had this debate about food banks and other things many, many times. I guess the minister and I will never agree on these things. I base mine on studies, and he disagrees with the studies. I was looking through *Hansard* and the specific points. But before I come to that, dealing with the \$87,000, I quote from *Hansard* of May 9:

There was a question related to what happened to the \$87,000. We are attempting to audit the books of the group that was involved. However, the books are not available and the person who was responsible for the program is no longer in this province. We are following up as best we can as to how to deal with that. But I think one shouldn't put too much emphasis on the failure of a trial project, as that was.

He went on to say that the concept was good. Mr. Chairman, it may well have been. But obviously the problems were the follow-up and guidelines to how that money was to be spent. That's what the criticism was at the time. There didn't seem to be any guidelines. Here's \$87,000; do with it what you want. Now we have a problem. It does not

necessarily have to do with the concept. Maybe the person who was involved had some good ideas; I don't know. But surely there has to be some follow-up and guidelines and accountability. Now we have \$87,000, and the minister says we're attempting to audit the books. That seems to me to be a pretty sloppy way of giving out taxpayers' money. Now we don't know where it is. We don't even know where the person is. Yet he says the concept was good.

That's not the point. The point is that we have lost \$87,000. I would like the minister, rather than auditing the books, to tell us precisely what we are doing to get that \$87,000 back. I'm talking not about the concept but about how we handled that money. The \$87,000 surely could have been used for a concept where they actually had a shelter. That concept would have been good because it would have dealt with real people.

If we want to put up shelters and run studies and try different things, I'm not saying there isn't some merit to that. But we'd better know what we're paying for, and we'd better set guidelines. We can't just say, "Here's the money; we hope you have a nice concept." When I looked at the answer to that question, frankly, I was amazed. The minister's \$87,000 and "we're auditing it" and "we're not sure where the person is" and this and that — the minister is going to have to do better than that with the taxpayers' money.

The other area I want to come back to make a few comments on deals with the recommendations of the Edmonton Gleaners Association. The chairman went briefly through the six recommendations. Mr. Chairman, the one I'm talking about specifically regards single employables. The minister says that he doesn't agree with the Food Bank that they treat single employables differently from others. He said:

I think it's very defensible. Single people are much more flexible in their ability to move from one place to another.

Mr. Chairman, that may well be if you don't have a family. But that misses the reality of what is happening in the food banks. They say a huge percentage of the people who are going to the food banks are unemployed single people.

What do they do if there are no jobs? I remind the minister that the unemployment rate is high among this particular group. If the unemployment is 13.7 percent in the Edmonton area, that means the unemployment in that group between 18 and 25 is staggered probably up to 16, 17, or 18 percent. Also, the official rate doesn't include what we call the hidden unemployed. Those are people who no longer register with manpower. The bulk of those people are young. Some that I know personally have never had a job and are fast losing the ability to work.

So to say that somehow they can move around is missing the point. Maybe they move from one park bench to another, to the youth hostel for a while, and all the rest of it. I say that sincerely to the minister. It's missing the point, because that's the group that's affected the most. If you talk to church people and the rest who are in that business, it's the highest percentage of people looking for food. I ask the minister to reconsider that area. I say that sincerely and strongly, backing up what the Edmonton Gleaners Association is saying.

There are a number of other areas that I want to go into, Mr. Chairman, but for the sake of continuity, I would like to get an update at this particular time, if I may, on what is happening with the public health unit nurses' strike. It has been raised in question period but not for a while.

I have a number of specific questions to the minister following from that.

I take it the Member for Little Bow has to leave and he wants to get in. So I will sit down and let other members in and then come back on it.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Does the hon. Member for Little Bow want to get in now?

MR. R. SPEAKER: Yes, if I can, Mr. Chairman. One of the items I want to raise with the minister is partly with regard to the Child Welfare Act. The minister referred to it earlier. It relates to a case that happened on May 13 in Edmonton, where a 10-year-old boy stole an Edmonton Transit bus. There was damage to the bus, a car, and a power pole. The question is: how do we deal with that young person who doesn't come under the Young Offenders Act because he's under 12? There is no way of dealing with that young person, as I see it. In one of the newspaper reports the question of what could happen was raised with the minister of social services:

Social welfare authorities are no longer responsible for providing custody and care of problem children under 12, and Social Services Minister Neil Webber said the Child Welfare Act isn't designed to deal with these cases.

"I think it's a real dilemma, a real difficult situation, with the Young Offender's Act," Webber said.

The Child Welfare Act would come into play only if the youngster needed protection, he said.

Two circumstances can occur in situations such as this. First of all, the young person could have parents, and the parents could take disciplinary action. Maybe that's one of the situations to deal with it. Or because of neglect, through a court of law the parents could have been made to pay for the damage created by their youngster who was not properly supervised. But there are situations such as this where the child may be a foster child or just on the loose without any formal relationship to anyone. What happens in those circumstances? I know the minister has raised it in terms of the legislation. I'd appreciate it if the minister would review that again and possibly indicate what the department is looking at and what may be happening.

Are there some thoughts about changes being required in the Child Welfare Act? Are changes needed in the Young Offenders Act to deal with problems such as this? I'm sure the Solicitor General has had the question raised in his responsibilities, and he is most likely looking at it. But since we're on the estimates of the minister of social services, I want to raise the matter with him to see just exactly what is being done.

That is the main item I want to raise at this time, Mr. Chairman. I believe the minister responded to some of the areas I raised the other evening. I understand that I was being picked on. That's fine. That's fair enough. I'm sorry I wasn't here at that moment. As I look at *Hansard*, possibly I can respond to those comments in a few moments.

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

DR. WEBBER: First of all, Mr. Chairman, in responding to the Member for Little Bow, I did make some comments that he won't find in *Hansard*, because I made them this afternoon. There's no point in repeating them here. He can read *Hansard* tomorrow.

However, as to what the situation is with regard to a 10-year-old who doesn't come under the jurisdiction of the Young Offenders Act, I can't respond other than to speculate, because I don't know the details of the case. But if, in fact, the child were a ward of the government, we'd have the responsibility a parent would in dealing with that child. The member is accurate. If the child has parents and he's living with his parents, then the parents should have some responsibility in dealing with him as well.

It is a concern that's been expressed across the country. I was recently in Ottawa, where a couple of youngsters under the age of 12 set fire to an old packing plant. But those situations in which we as the Department of Social Services and Community Health would be involved are very clear in the Child Welfare Act. It is an area I will give some thought to in discussion with some of the officials to see if there are some services we can provide, maybe counselling the family in a preventative way. So that's about all I can say there. There's no intention of amending legislation this spring with respect to that. That was Young Offenders Act legislation, and we don't have any intentions this spring of amending the Child Welfare Act to deal with the concern raised on that particular point.

Again, the Leader of the Opposition raised the food bank situation in Edmonton. Possibly "situation" is not the right word. I continue to be amazed, as he might be amazed, at how he keeps coming back to a situation in Edmonton. We have food banks across the province. The people operating those food banks accept the philosophy of volunteerism and local people helping citizens who are having difficulties. I made comments last time about how we are responding to the recommendations of the Edmonton Gleaners Association and trying to work with them in terms of improving any inefficiencies we might have in our system. At the same time, we're trying to get better information to the people who come to the food bank outlets. I won't comment any further on that.

On social allowance and the single employables, we have single employables getting long-term benefits. They are getting benefits which are the highest in the country. Single employables are flexible in moving around to attempt to find jobs and are in a different situation from people who have families. From the point of view of getting long-term benefits, in essence, they are treated the same as other people, although the benefits may be less. I don't know what else one can say on that, other than that we have services in this province and our department that relate to those who are in need. I think we're being very fair in the treatment of all social allowance recipients, including the single employables.

I find that his comments about the \$87,000 in the north have great wisdom in hindsight. He talked about the criticism at the time. I didn't hear him criticizing anything at the time the announcement was made. I heard nothing but positive comments about how important it was to get out there and attempt through trials and tests to address the problem of family violence. Here we have pilot projects, and the guy stands in the Legislature and mumbles and grumbles about a failure in a particular case. Unbelievable.

Certainly, we think we should have accountability for moneys spent. He talked about guidelines. If you have the wisdom of Solomon, maybe you can provide guidelines for a pilot project before you start. But the purpose of pilot projects is to test and to learn from that test what kind of guidelines and standards you want to put in place for future programs. He said he wants to have guidelines in advance.

The concept of that project was good. My comments on the last day still stand. As I said, it's great to have the hindsight, but that's not going to stop us from trying to improve the system by having pilot projects across this province. If the hon. member wants us to study things to death, develop guidelines, develop standards, and then cautiously move into certain areas, then maybe when he gets the opportunity he can try that. But that's not the way we approach things.

[Mr. Appleby in the Chair]

MR. MARTIN: Let me just come back to the hon. minister. I've never heard such mumbo jumbo about losing \$87,000 in my life. This is the government that talks about restraint. And you have one minister going out and saying: "Here's \$87,000; we hope you do something with it. Now we're not sure where it is. It's not odd that we don't know where the person is." Somehow he's trying to justify this as being a good concept. If that's a good concept, then why don't we go out and buy London Bridge? I'm sure the minister would do that very well.

When I talk about guidelines, surely — and the Treasurer had better take you aside — you want to know what's to be expected on that, where that money is going. Do we just hand out money and say: "Here's a new concept. Gee, we like this." The next person comes along, and here's \$87,000; another person comes along, another \$87,000. I don't care how good the concept is. In every pilot project I've ever been involved in, there was a set of goals and you had some accountability. Now the minister can't even find out where the \$87,000 is. He can try to justify that. He can really try to justify that. I'm sure that the taxpayers of Alberta appreciate that sort of approach to government. It's very novel, I will admit. But I certainly hope this minister isn't responsible for many other pilot projects, because we'll break the Treasury otherwise, Mr. Chairman.

The other thing he came back to is the food banks. You know, he goes on about volunteers and the food banks.

DR. WEBBER: Are you opposed to volunteers?

MR. MARTIN: Am I opposed to volunteers? If the minister would listen — of course I'm not opposed to volunteers. But the volunteers are doing the job this government should be doing, and they're not happy about it. If he looks in any of the reports, they say to us that they're doing it not because they want to but because they see no choice, because the government has abandoned the hungry. If he wants to go out and talk to churches and all the rest of it, that's what they're saying. So to throw it off on volunteerism is nonsense, and I'm sure the minister realizes it's nonsense. It's about as much nonsense as handing out \$87,000 and not knowing where it is. But that's the reality of what's happening in the minister's department. He can be as smart alecky as he wants, but that's the reality of what's happening.

There are a lot of areas to cover here, Mr. Chairman. I was going to come to one area that I wanted some information and updating on. I already asked a number of questions dealing with the public health nurses' strike, but just to enlarge on it, I'd like an update of where the minister feels this particular strike is and what's happening there. Is there any news about a possible settlement? Then I have some specific questions flowing from there, Mr. Chairman. For example, has the minister any estimates of how many home care patients are now in active care hospitals as a

result of the strike? I point out that if there are a number of them, if he has some estimates, that's very expensive. I wonder if the minister has met with the hospitals minister to determine the additional cost to hospitals of admitting patients who normally would be home care patients under the care of public health nurses. Do we have an estimate of that, Mr. Chairman?

The strike has been going on for quite a length of time now. I wonder if the minister is planning to meet with the health unit boards to determine if it would be more cost-efficient for them to pay their nurses the same rate hospital nurses are paid. In other words, are they able to do this? The minister said in question period that it's up to them to do that, but I think there has to be a little more direction. Is it our assessment that these people aren't worth what other nurses are in hospitals?

The final question flowing from that is: has the minister any study under way which would show that it would be less costly to Alberta taxpayers to pay health unit nurses the same than it is to have home care patients in the hospitals? I'm suggesting, Mr. Chairman, that these expenses are mounting on the medicare bill right now. Is there any study to indicate that this money could have been saved and that this long strike might perhaps be unnecessary? I recognize that it's not all under the minister, that there's negotiation on both sides. But I also say to the minister that the government controls the purse strings, and that has a great deal to do with the negotiations.

Because my colleague wants in, I will wait for those answers, and I'm sure I will have a lot of other questions for the minister.

MR. GURNETT: Mr. Chairman, I'd appreciate the minister giving some response to just a few areas when he comes back. One very specific item — and I know the minister has been contacted regarding it — is that the Peace River health unit is apparently very concerned about whether or not they're going to have funding to do something to provide better services in the Red Earth-Loon Lake area, in view of the population that's moved into that area and its remoteness from Peace River and Slave Lake. I wonder whether the minister is able to indicate a positive response to the health unit yet, that they'll be able to have funding that will recognize the need in that area and let them do something to provide health nursing services and public health inspection services without having to cut back in other areas.

I was also contacted by a foster parent association, Mr. Chairman. They had some concerns. When the minister is responding, maybe he could indicate whether their concerns are accurately based or not. They understand that Social Services is no longer going to be responsible for placements or home approvals or evaluations of special-needs children. I wonder whether that, in fact, is something that will happen under the new Child Welfare Act, and if not, what the status will be for children with special needs under the new Act. I know that these people were concerned that these areas will in fact be eliminated for these children. I'd appreciate knowing what's happening there.

That leads to another question related to communication between the department and the various other organizations and groups that work with those people that are in some way supported or regulated by the Department of Social Services and Community Health. I wonder what initiatives the minister might be considering or what review might be taking place to see whether or not these various organizations and community groups that are affected by change — through

the Child Welfare Act as one major example right now — are thoroughly informed and briefed on the meaning of all these changes when they come along. What ways are they kept up to date so that there can't be these kinds of misunderstandings, if this is a misunderstanding? What procedures are in place to make sure they really know, for their particular case, the effect of any new legislation or regulations?

I have a number of concerns related to the whole area of foster care, Mr. Chairman, and will pose a few questions that I hope the minister will be able to respond to to help me better understand what happens in that area. First of all, because there have been some cases where tragic things have taken place, what mechanisms are in place to monitor foster care cases? Where does accountability lie with that kind of thing? When a foster care case is before the courts, what is the balance between factual evidence that's considered and opinions that might be offered by social workers, foster parents, or other parties? How does the minister suggest or direct that cases be dealt with as far as considering those different areas of input? I would also appreciate any update the minister could give about statistics with regard to accidents or other kinds of tragedies that relate to children in foster care.

Most particularly, Mr. Chairman, I wonder if the minister would take some time to respond to at least some aspects of the report that R.J. Thomlison delivered last fall. I know there are a lot of recommendations, and I'd appreciate a chance to spend time with the minister and hear about every one of the recommendations for my own interest. But certainly some of them are far more important and far-reaching in their consequences. I'm sure we all remember that the report concluded that the department had failed to carry out its responsibilities with regard to Richard Cardinal in some areas, and the recommendations basically followed from that.

I ask particularly if the minister could respond with regard to what's happening with recommendation 3, which asked for the establishment of a ward review procedure so that permanent wards are evaluated yearly. Also, recommendation 4 asks for particular funding support for adolescents who are about to become independent adults, people who are going to turn 18 and no longer be under the jurisdiction of the department as permanent wards. What attention is being given to new programs and new initiatives in that area? Recommendation 6 called for some alternatives to be developed beyond just reliance on foster home placement, particularly for those people between 16 and 18 who are wards. Recommendation 8 dealt with how cases would be transferred from worker to worker, the method that would ensure that information wasn't lost, so that there wasn't an inconsistency in what happened in transfer.

As I said, I'd like to know lots about most of these recommendations, but recommendation 16 is another I wondered about particularly: "that foster parents and the Department enter into a system of formalized service contracting." Are we looking at all at the idea of formalizing that any more? Recommendation 18, the upgrading of the liaison with school programs in which wards are enrolled: what's happening to make sure that that could be more beneficial to the child on both the school side and the department side?

Finally, Mr. Chairman, I think the last recommendation, 27, has particular importance to those of us in the north: that some really serious work be done on the fact that a large number of the wards are Metis or native children and

what kinds of alternatives should be in place for them. The Thomlison inquiry indicated that this was an area where there was just not enough being done to take special consideration of the special needs of those children. So I wonder what's being done in that area as well.

I'm sorry to rush through these so quickly for the minister, Mr. Chairman, but I want to leave him with time to respond on a number of these things. Let me finish by referring to one other area. I asked some questions of the minister recently about the whole issue of regulations and control related to summer camps. Clearly, we had some difference of opinion about the importance of regulations in that area. I want to repeat for the minister's consideration that I'm certainly not suggesting that there be hundreds of inspectors sent into every closet and cupboard of every summer camp in the province. But I raise the questions with the minister quite seriously, out of a concern that it seems like this is an area where thousands and thousands of children in this province are left in the care of substitute parents, if you like, for extended periods of time. Granted, it's not like day care or a school year. Is there some recognition of, at least some attention to, what happens in this particular area?

I'm not saying we need extensive involvement, but I wonder how the minister can justify there being no particular care for what qualifications staff might have, what organizations might be sponsoring camps, and what kinds of programs might be offered in these camps. As a parent as well, I am happy to accept a great deal of responsibility for the kinds of programs that might be happening in a camp I'd want to send my children to. But I think we also have to recognize that there are a lot of parents who may not have the information or the skills to make accurate judgments in this area. They may want the best for their own children but still end up making mistakes and sending their children to places that aren't the best or aren't what they were really looking for. So I wonder if the minister is willing to give some reconsideration to this as an area where there's a place for some attention at least.

I certainly know there are a lot of good camps operating right now that offer excellent programs and have the very finest of staff even though there is no regulation and no involvement by the government. My concern, though, is with the potential for some camps to create a bad name for other camps and for the whole idea of camps if we continue to say: "Well, good luck to the parents. We hope the camp they choose is the best, but we really don't see any purpose in having anything to do with this whole area."

Although there are several other things, I'll stop with that and leave other members a chance. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. COOK: Mr. Chairman, I'll be very brief. I'd like to focus on one item the minister touched on earlier, the family and community support services. There have been some suggestions from the city of Edmonton that the funding formula used is not adequate, that urban areas have a much higher caseload because of single parents and native families coming into Edmonton from rural areas and putting an extra load on the service system here. In fact, the city of Edmonton, probably the city of Calgary, and perhaps Red Deer and communities of a similar size are picking up a great deal of the caseload from the rural areas around them. Mr. Chairman, I'd like the minister to explain to the committee why the formula exists for this funding whereby urban areas get \$10 per capita and rural areas get \$12 per

capita, when the caseload is extraordinarily high in relation to the rural areas.

DR. WEBBER: Mr. Chairman, a number of questions have been raised. Starting with the public health nurses' strike, I get weekly updates on what is happening in the respective health units. The update as of today indicates that about a quarter of the nurses who had gone on strike originally are back at work. Some nurses have resigned.

In the eight different health units we have about 50 home care patients who are in the hospital because there seemed to be a need to have them there if the home care services could not be provided. The situation varies depending on which health unit you're talking about and what type of service they're providing. For example, as I mentioned, some home care is still being provided in the different health units by either family, supervisors in the health units, or nurses who are back to work. Certainly, they have an increased caseload, but the system is coping.

In the immunization area, some people are going to other health units or to doctors. I'm not hearing that there are major concerns in these health units. There are increased caseloads for the staff who are there, and they are trying to meet the needs as best they can. We will continue to monitor the situation.

Of course, in a time of negotiations I'm not going to comment on any questions related to whether or not the nurses should have the same salaries as nurses in hospitals. I'm not going to be involved in the negotiation process. There is a system in place for negotiations, and that is ongoing.

One more comment on the northeast family violence project. To alleviate any concerns anyone might have with regard to funding of agencies, we do indicate that they should be accountable for that particular funding, and that was the case here. However, when funding is provided for a trial project, we expect to get reports back. I had been in contact with the MLA from that region throughout the whole process, and he brought concerns to my attention as the trial was in place. We are making attempts to see if we can find out where some of that funding went. Certainly, much of that money was spent on the trial itself, but it may not have been spent appropriately. So we are looking at that.

Going from there back to the food bank situation, I guess we'll just continue to disagree on the basic philosophy of government, community, family, and volunteers working together to provide services to those who are in need. There is no point in arguing about it when the hon. Leader of the Opposition appears to have a philosophy that the government is at fault for everything and that government is not doing everything it should. So there's no point in commenting any further or debating that point with him.

The question regarding the Peace River health unit was raised by the Member for Spirit River-Fairview. We are looking at any proposals that come out of the health units with regard to any special concerns they may have. In this particular case, I can't say at the present time what we will be doing. All I know is that they want an additional inspector and public health nurse, and the indications are that the population is growing in that area. So we will look at it carefully to see if there is anything we can possibly do. The budgets have been set for the year, but we will try to address these concerns as best we can throughout the year.

A number of questions were asked on child welfare and the recommendations of the Thomlison report. The answers to some of the questions are available by looking at the Child Welfare Act legislation, particularly in the handicapped children's services area, and also at our response to the case management review by Dr. Thomlison. Before the spring session of this Legislature is over, it is our intention to table in the House an update on all aspects of the progress we've made with respect to the recommendations from Thomlison and the Cavanagh Board of Review.

In the area of special-needs children, the question was raised about whether or not we were still going to be responsible for assessment and placement. It is news to me that there is any consideration of that. We are going to continue to provide services through the department for those who are involved in assessment and provision of care. In the future, with the development of child welfare policy, we will be looking at alternatives to the different ways in which we can provide child welfare services, but currently there is no intention to change that aspect of it when the Act comes into place on July 1.

On communication between Social Services and Community Health and the agencies, one of the reasons for decentralization in the first place was to have management in the department located in communities, closer to where the services would be provided, and also to enhance the communication between the community agencies and the department. I think the decentralization process, which started a number of years ago, is demonstrating that there is better communication between agencies and our department.

Relative to the Child Welfare Act, we will be working with the local municipalities and the family and community support services umbrella organization in the province to see how these agencies can be more involved in a preventative way in dealing with concerns that relate to the Act. We are going through an extensive training program at the present time in the department in preparation for the proclamation of the Act on July 1. The departmental staff will be moving into the agency area to hold training sessions with the agencies to make them more aware of the Act, the regulations, and departmental policy.

Mr. Chairman, the Member for Spirit River-Fairview went through a multitude of recommendations of the Thomlison report. I suggest that the tabling of our response to that particular report and to other recommendations made to the government will give him a better idea of the progress we've made in the child welfare area and where we're going. One specific question he asked was on information about child welfare cases. On July 1 we are implementing a computerized information system so that any child welfare worker in any office in the province will have the complete case history on any child welfare case that they have any concerns about, including information about the court decisions on young offenders who are in the system.

I can't respond to school programs at this time. He referred to recommendation 18 of Thomlison, and there is ongoing work between our department and the Department of Education on that.

On the 16- to 18-year-old child who has been in a foster home or is in our system, one of the difficulties is that a number of these young people do not want to stay in foster homes and would prefer to be out on their own. There is provision in the new Child Welfare Act for contracts to be made with 16- or 17-year-olds who are wards of the government to live on their own and integrate into the community. However, I should comment on one of the

policies we instituted a couple of years ago that related to 16- and 17-year-olds. We took them off social allowance for extended periods of time and allowed only one month of social allowance so that they either returned to their families or had the option of guardianship or coming into the child welfare system.

The Member for Edmonton Glengarry raised the question of funding for FCSS. I don't have statistics that show there is an inordinate caseload in the city compared to the rural areas, that there is a movement of cases from the rural areas to the cities. The reason behind the \$10 allocation for urban areas and \$12 for rural areas is economies of scale. It would cost more to deal with a particular case in the rural areas because of distances travelled by the volunteer sectors of the agencies providing these services. When the old preventative social services program was studied and thoroughly reviewed and then became the family and community support services program, one of the strong recommendations was that there be a difference in funding because of the economies of scale that exist in the urban areas. That's why we have a \$10 per capita rate in the city and \$12 in the rural areas. We will continue to assess the needs in next year's budget. However, for the current year the moneys are as indicated in the budget, at \$10 and \$12 per capita.

The Member for Spirit River-Fairview also made reference to the courts and involvement of foster parents in that process. He would see on examination of the new Child Welfare Act that there will be a significantly increased role for foster parents in dealing with foster children when the new Act comes into place. Foster parents will be given notice of court proceedings and will have the opportunity to appear in court. The family court will deal with these cases, except for the area dealing with private adoptions, which we will not be proclaiming on July 1. They will continue in the Court of Queen's Bench.

Mr. Chairman, those are some responses to the questions that were raised. Without going into detail on each of the recommendations of Thomlison, as I mentioned, we will file with the Legislature a progress report on child welfare.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Chairman, I'll go into some new areas. I agree with the minister that we will agree to disagree about food banks. My last comment is only that it's not the Leader of the Opposition that's talking about this. It's Hunger in Our City, the food banks themselves, and the people we talk to who are making the comments. I'd refer to other people who were discussing it at a conference that the minister wasn't aware of. So to say that it's somehow only my attitude, that everybody else is going along swimmingly and they think food banks are what they should be in and it's only me who disagrees with that — I think the minister would have to agree that there are many other people who feel the same way. We will agree to disagree; that's probably as close as we can get on that.

Mr. Chairman, something that has hit the news again — I'm not sure where I heard it — has to deal with vote 8 in the minister's department, the treatment of mental illness. I believe it was a Calgary psychiatrist — I could be corrected on this, but I'm sure the minister is aware of the story — who said the jails are full of people who should not be there. A figure of something like 25 percent of the people should be getting help mentally rather than being in jail. As I recall, there was a follow-up by the executive director of the Mental Health Association here in Alberta, who agreed with that particular comment. I'm asking the

minister if he has had any follow-up on this. The drift of it was that we just don't have the facilities, so these people get shuffled off into jails, for one thing, and other institutions where they shouldn't be. Obviously, besides being very expensive, that's not going to help them very much. If you are in jail and have some mental problems, I think it would make them worse. I'd like the minister to comment on that.

I believe it was two years ago, in 1983, when the report of the Boyle Street-McCauley people — which the minister was aware of, because I believe I raised it with him in question period — indicated that they felt that people who weren't prepared to cope with certain things were being dumped into the Boyle Street area and that the problem had been that the government went on with deinstitutionalization. That in itself wasn't bad; I don't disagree with that. In that report, if the minister recalls, deinstitutionalization meant that all we did was take them out of mental hospitals but there was no follow-up service. They said that as a result, these people were predominantly in that area of Edmonton. They were saying this in 1983. Now in 1985 we have people who are involved in that area saying that some of these people are ending up in jails, which is inappropriate. I'd like the minister to comment on that. As I said, it's in regard to vote 8 in his department, treatment of mental illness.

A couple of quick questions in other areas, if I may, Mr. Chairman, because we are running out of time. I'm not always supportive of the minister's department, but I think the aids to daily living generally has been done relatively well. Recently the minister and I traded letters dealing with facilities for the blind. I recognize that they're very expensive, but I wonder if there has been any follow-up. Surely we want our handicapped people to function as fully and as normally as they can in our society. I wonder if there has been any thought to some of the highly technical equipment. I recognize that it's expensive, but it seems to me that for expense in this area of human life, perhaps we can take money from other sources. I might mention a few. Has there been any thought there?

The other thing I'm curious about — and I'm sure there's a logical answer if I look through the votes, Mr. Chairman. In vote 1, support services, I notice that overall there's a 6.3 percent increase. A couple are quite fascinating. As I said, I'm sure it's totally logical. I know the minister is well prepared to answer these, but I'll ask them anyhow. In vote 1, the deputy minister of social services, why do we have an increase from \$294,000 to over \$601,000, an increase of 104 percent? Flowing from that, the associate deputy minister of service delivery increased from over \$638,000 to over \$823,000, an increase of 28.9 percent. I guess those are the major reasons that we might have 6.3 percent. I see other big ones — assistant deputy minister, 118.9 percent. Maybe the minister could comment on those rather startling increases. I'm not necessarily criticizing them. There may be a logical reason, but when we see figures like that, I think it's our job to check them.

We're running out of time. I have some other areas I want to cover, but maybe I'll give the minister time to respond to those areas.

DR. WEBBER: First of all, Mr. Chairman, dealing with the last question, the hon. Leader of the Opposition indicated that there was a 6.3 percent increase in departmental support services. I think he erred in making that comment, because there has been a 6.3 percent decrease. I want to correct that for *Hansard*. There's been a 6.3 percent decrease

because we recognized the importance of trying to save dollars and dealing with restraint. We looked at those areas where we thought we could and ended up with that kind of saving.

When you look at vote 1 and pick out some of the areas where there are, as the hon. leader said, some startling increases, there are also some startling decreases. Those startling increases and decreases, as he refers to them, can be accounted for by the fact that there has been a reorganization in the department and a transfer of operations from one deputy or associate deputy to another. They can all be accounted for by the reorganization that occurred and is now in place. There were no significant increases in any area that would account for those kinds of increases, other than just a reorganization.

We're very proud of the aids to daily living and extended health benefits program. I believe it's one of the best programs we have, unique in Canada in many ways. The point about adding benefits to the list — certainly, we hear from our constituents that it would be better if we could add this and that particular piece of equipment to the list. Aids to daily living and extended health benefits is a program that has grown very rapidly costwise in the last several years. We have now been able to keep the increases relatively low by improving the system.

The hon. Leader of the Opposition is correct when he says that a lot of modern technological equipment is very, very expensive. It is. We will be addressing the requests we've had from different groups of people about the addition of equipment. As time goes on, we will be adding and deleting pieces of equipment as the technology changes. He commented that we can surely get money from other sources. My experience is that we have been moving money from one area to another in our department, reallocating moneys, and spending moneys more efficiently. We think the funding we have in place for aids to daily living and extended health benefits is very significant in providing excellent service to Albertans.

Comments about mental illness — our department and the Department of Hospitals and Medical Care share jurisdiction there, as the hon. member knows. My priority in the mental health services area at this particular time is, first of all, to develop a plan for children's mental health services and have that plan implemented. We are involving the child welfare people and mental health people in our department in that process of developing a plan. They'll be working with agencies such as the Canadian Mental Health Association to see if we can't come up with a comprehensive plan. Again, it follows up from the recommendations of a number of reports dealing with child welfare matters. We hope to have the plan in place by the end of 1985 and implemented before the end of 1986.

We have the Claresholm, Raymond, and Camrose facilities in our department. I just visited the Claresholm facilities three weeks ago. I'm very pleased to see that the Canadian Mental Health Association is involved in working with our department to have patients moved from the facility into group homes in the community. These patients are able to use the assured income for the severely handicapped to pay for their food and shelter, the rent the CMHA charges. Four people living together in a group home really feel good about being outside the institution and more involved in the community.

Across the province, more so in the urban areas, we have home placements and day programs for people who come out of mental institutions. If we had a bottomless

well of money, we might be able to meet all the needs in a number of areas in our department. However, I will remind the hon. member that just two or three years ago the Canadian Mental Health Association presented the Premier with an award recognizing that Alberta has the best mental health system in the country and is a model for the rest of Canada.

However, having said that, there's always room for improvement. One of the real difficulties for patients coming out of mental hospitals is that while they're in the hospitals, they're on medication and get better. But if they become more independent in the community, a good many of them tend not to take their medication and thus deteriorate. We have mental health clinics in place, and workers there try to work with these people to have them take their medication and thus not regress.

Those are the comments on the questions the hon. member raised.

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

[Motion carried]

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

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

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

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, on Friday the Assembly will be in Committee of Supply. The departments to be called are Advanced Education and, if there's time after that, Manpower and perhaps the Legislative Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, I move that the Assembly now adjourn until Friday morning at 10 o'clock, in accordance with Motion 17 passed earlier today.

MR. SPEAKER: Does the Assembly agree?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

[At 5:29 p.m. the House adjourned to Friday at 10 a.m.]

