

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ALBERTA

Title: **Tuesday, July 15, 1986 2:30 p.m.**

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

PRAYERS

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

head: INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, seated in your gallery today is a truly outstanding Albertan. This person is Mr. A. C. Anderson, the mayor of Lethbridge. The Member for Lethbridge East and myself have had the honour of serving with the mayor since 1975. I would like to very briefly — because the mayor has announced he will not be seeking re-election this year — outline to the members of the House and to yourself a comment or two about the mayor's background.

Mayor Anderson was elected to the school board in Lethbridge 36 years ago, was elected to city council in 1964, and became the mayor of Alberta's largest city after Calgary and Edmonton in 1968. He served in that office for the past 18 years, being re-elected four times, twice by acclamation. Mr. Speaker, he's an honorary colonel. He's a Paul Harris Fellow. He was citizen of the year in 1985 and received the Queen's medal. This past year he received the Order of Canada and was a recipient of a Doctor of Laws at the University of Lethbridge. I think I can say that Mayor A. C. Anderson is truly an outstanding Albertan.

I would like to have the members of this House join me, along with yourself, Mr. Speaker, in congratulating the mayor for his accomplishments and wishing him a very happy future. Thank you.

head: INTRODUCTION OF SPECIAL GUESTS

MR. SIGURDSON: Mr. Speaker, in the public gallery today are two people that are very dear to a number of us on this side of the House, the 16 of us. They are Marion and Graeme Thomlinson. They have served our movement for a long period of time. In fact, they've served it since 1933 when the party was formed. I would ask that they rise and receive the traditional welcome of the Assembly.

head: ORAL QUESTION PERIOD**Government Purchasing Policies**

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct my question to the minister of public works. I have information which indicates that a tender call was issued in March at the Walter C. Mackenzie Health Sciences Centre for parking control equipment which was specifically limited to a particular line of equipment only made in the United States, even though an equivalent type of Canadian equipment is available and can be supplied locally at a price of \$25,000

less than the U.S. product. My question to the minister: could the minister indicate why government projects would encourage using a United States firm rather than a Canadian firm which presented a lower bid?

MR. ISLEY: Mr. Speaker, all I can say at the moment is that it's normal within our procurement policies to buy Alberta as much as possible. We have approximately 350 projects under way. The details of this particular tender I am not familiar with, but I will certainly look into it and respond further.

MR. MARTIN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I'd be glad to give the minister the information on this particular tender. But to follow up on the policy, in answering questions in this general area on Friday, the economic development minister indicated that the policy — I understand that as long as all other factors are equal, the province leans toward Alberta suppliers. I think I'm generally quoting the minister right on that. My question to the minister: is there any similar procurement policy which states that we should at least use Canadian rather than American products, especially if Canadian ones are cheaper?

MR. ISLEY: I think, Mr. Speaker, it would be safe to say that the general policy is that all other things being equal, we would prefer to buy Albertan; secondly, all other things being equal, we would prefer to buy Canadian. I underline "all other things being equal."

MR. MARTIN: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker, flowing from that. Has the minister, since taking on his new portfolio, given any specific instructions to his department regarding the use of Albertan and Canadian products?

MR. ISLEY: Mr. Speaker, I think if you check the purchasing records of Public Works, Supply and Services, the percentage of dollars going to Alberta manufacturers and Alberta suppliers over recent years has increased substantially. I've investigated the purchasing procedure since becoming the minister of the department; I have found that the track record is quite good.

MR. MARTIN: I guess that's a matter of opinion, Mr. Speaker. My question was whether he had issued any instructions regarding this matter. By the nonanswer I'll take "no." I come specifically back to this and ask: will the minister as a matter of policy undertake that he will direct that this sort of thing should not happen again, that for Crown and government projects we buy Alberta and we buy Canada ahead of American companies, especially where all other things are equal? Will he issue it as a statement?

MR. ISLEY: I think I answered that one earlier, Mr. Speaker, but I don't think the hon. leader listened too closely to my last answer. I look at the growth of purchasing in the last three years. We have moved from buying 57.8 percent of our products from Alberta manufacturers up to 65.8, a total of \$198 million out of approximately \$300 million spent in these types of purchases, and we're purchasing another 25.6 percent or \$77 million from Alberta distributors. So I'm not going to start hammering a department that appears to — by my investigations they have a very good track record for buying Alberta where it's possible to buy Alberta.

MR. TAYLOR: As a supplementary and along the same question, Mr. Speaker, but it's to the minister of economic development. Could he tell the House what he is doing to help co-ordinate the Alberta government's buying power as a proactive means of developing Alberta industry in areas of diversification?

MR. SHABEN: We've been very active in terms of encouraging the optimum maximizing of Alberta content in our industrial development permits. All of the permits require that the developers, those who receive the industrial development permits, maximize Alberta goods and services.

Another area we've been working actively in, Mr. Speaker, is with respect to specifying on various projects that the consultants who work very closely with developers, whether it's a Crown agency or otherwise, in undertaking the specifications ensure that the specs are designed in such a way that Alberta companies who are in the business are able to respond to those tenders. In the case of hospitals, the hospital boards are responsible for issuing the tenders, and the bulletin that requires a maximizing of Alberta content has been circulated to all the hospital boards.

Fort McMurray Refinery Project

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct the second question to the Premier. It flows from some of the Premier's intriguing remarks during his estimates last Thursday night. On page 483 of *Hansard* the Premier said that the government is looking at the establishment of a huge utility-type refinery near Fort McMurray which would deal with bitumen from smaller mining operations. My question is to the Premier, because I was not aware of this. To follow up on this idea, does the Premier have a ballpark figure of the cost of such a facility in current dollars? Are we looking at \$2 billion or \$3 billion? Could he give us a rough estimate?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, I don't have that figure in my head currently, but it would be easy to obtain it and provide it to the Leader of the Opposition.

MR. MARTIN: Flowing from that, Mr. Speaker, to take a look at the planning stage: at what stage is the government in the planning for this facility? The funding — are we, for example, looking at provincial financial support for it?

MR. GETTY: We're not planning it, nor are we thinking of funding it at this stage, Mr. Speaker. We are investigating the feasibility of it.

MR. MARTIN: A supplementary question. Mr. Speaker, I might bring the investigation we're looking at back to some reality. I noticed today the spot prices for Brent oil are now in the range of \$8.75 or below \$9. Appallingly low, I think we'd all agree. My question is: in his investigations does the Premier have information he could share on how any new tar sands ventures are feasible without some sort of guaranteed minimum price for the product?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, I should point out to the hon. member that there is a variety of prices for crude these days on the international market. West Texas crude, for instance, is selling above \$11. While there may be the odd sale of Brent crude at a lower price, I think we have to consider all of the various selling prices. When you go into a venture like a major oil sands plant, you're not talking

about the current price, you're talking about the price of oil in the year 1990-1991, when these projects would come on stream. Our estimates — Mr. Speaker, we believe they would not only be very economic in those years but they would be needed badly by the people of Canada.

MR. MARTIN: A supplementary question to the Premier. Recognizing that we are looking ahead in terms of the price, is the government looking at a minimum price when they investigate this project or any other project? Are they looking at the fact that over the life of that project there would have to be some sort of minimum price?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, over the years and, yes, since November 1 when I was sworn in as Premier, at least one organization talked to me about the potential for the federal and provincial governments' sharing the risk of future prices with that company in order that they might proceed with a potential oil sands plant. At the time, though, the discussion didn't go very far. I think sharing the risk, which is not necessarily a minimum price but can fit a variety of options, is not something to be discarded easily and is something that would be worth taking a good look at.

MR. TAYLOR: A supplementary to the Premier, Mr. Speaker. Is federal input anticipated in this dream of the Premier's, or is he going to carry on with his past threats to do it himself, go it alone?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, it hasn't progressed to the point of involving other governments. But it might well be that if the province of Alberta is the only one that feels the need of Alberta and Canada for this type or project, should it turn out to be something that should be done, we would certainly take a look at its being done with Alberta alone. I believe, though, knowing the interests of the federal government in this regard, that should the project look feasible, they would be willing to participate.

Government Expenditures

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, this is also to the Premier. During this period of economic downturn of \$8 or \$9 oil and even cheaper wheat, it is critical that the government provide leadership for Albertans by implementing cost-cutting initiatives. Will the Premier and his government demonstrate his commitment to cost cutting by setting up a task force similar to the Nielsen Task Force — I know it's a very familiar name — to identify areas where costs could be cut?

MR. GETTY: It's an interesting proposal, Mr. Speaker. I'd certainly think about it. I should point out that the Treasury Board, in reviewing budgets, is alert to the matters of cost cutting at all times, balancing it off, of course, as I said earlier, with the need to provide the services to the people of Alberta which they require and ask for and also with the need to provide a certain amount of economic stimulus during a period when some of our industries are facing tough times. So it's all a balance. Nevertheless, I would not discard out of hand the hon. member's suggestion.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, to the Premier. I'll continue to be positive. Is the government in the near future going to be encouraging creative attrition such as re-education,

early retirement, or job sharing initiatives as a means to compassionate cutting of government staff?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member might know that the number of government employees has been reduced for several years. It's either three or four years that there has been a constant reduction. That reduction is accomplished in each case with, I believe, compassionate and thoughtful sensitivity to the people who are being reduced. I think that's a responsibility of any enlightened employer.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, to the Premier. He's a whiz in math. He's cutting staff, but the cost has been going up every year. Somebody is pocketing some money. Has a cost/benefit study, for example, been conducted? What indicators are used by the government to measure the return on taxpayers' dollars spent in international offices such as Houston, Los Angeles, New York, London, Hong Kong? Need I go on?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, those are matters of judgment. We're always assessing the investment of dollars in such things as increasing trade and increasing industrial development in this province. We can't just talk about diversifying our economy and then when we make moves that assist in that regard start to worry or complain about those expenditures. We will always try and use the best judgment possible, in that our dollars that are being invested are in the best interests of all Albertans.

MR. TAYLOR: A final supplementary, Mr. Speaker, to the Premier. How can the government claim to be fiscally responsible when Albertans hear about first-class travel for cabinet ministers, limousines, clothing allowances and, finally, representatives at Expo living in the style of a Middle East caliph?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, I would suggest that if the hon. member has some specific cases he feels are misuses of government funds in some regard, he draw them to the attention of the government, and we will pursue each one.

MR. TAYLOR: It's not misuse; it's excessive use.

MR. MARTIN: A supplementary question. If I may be specific, one area that keeps going up significantly is travel and hospitality costs. Would the Premier at least consider cutting that this year? At least it would send a symbolic message to ordinary Albertans.

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, if there are wasteful hospitality and travel costs, definitely they would be considered for cutting. But I have to say that when we are facing problems — we've had members opposite who say that diversification is important, support for our industrial development is important, all of these matters tied together — I think you have to be looking for trade arrangements with other nations. You have to be looking for industrial development opportunities. You have to be attracting investors to this province. All of it is a package. But again, if there are wasteful hospitality and travel matters, they would certainly be cut.

Agricultural Trade

DR. WEST: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to address this question to the Minister of Agriculture. In the recent continuing trade wars between the United States and the European Economic Community, Canada recently lost a traditional large sale of

barley it has had with Saudi Arabia. The European market took it at \$65 a metric ton. To the minister: what effect does this loss have on the Alberta producers at the present time?

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, in responding to the hon. Member for Vermilion-Viking, I've had the opportunity on a number of occasions in the Chamber to indicate our concern as it relates to the ongoing dispute between the European Economic Community and the United States and our hope that something will be resolved in the very near future. What we can do is continue to make representations to our federal counterparts, as the hon. minister responsible for the Wheat Board has done in bringing together the major grain producers, with the hope that it will be resolved.

DR. WEST: A supplementary. In view of that, is there any indication of an end to these senseless trade wars? Has there been any input, and what influence does this government intend to add in helping to stop them at the present time?

MR. ELZINGA: Again, Mr. Speaker, as I indicated, the minister at the federal level has gathered together the major grain producers of the world to try to reach some consensus as to how best a resolution to this problem can be achieved. I should share with the hon. member also that this government, as was indicated when the western Premiers gathered, has suggested to the federal government and has pushed in a strenuous way the proposal whereby a deficiency payment would be paid to our grain producers to offset some of the detrimental impact of it.

DR. WEST: A supplementary. In view of this stress being put on our producers economically, in discussions the minister has had with his federal counterparts, has he had any representation made to him to participate in the federal farm debt review boards at this time?

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, I think it was some weeks ago that we received a letter from the federal Minister of Agriculture asking if we would collaborate with him in the establishment of the farm debt review boards. As I indicated to this House some time ago, we are more than happy to participate in any area that is beneficial to the agricultural sector. I threw back the suggestion to the federal minister that we thought it would be much more helpful in the event that they reduced interest rates from the Farm Credit Corporation to 9 percent, much like we are doing with the farm credit stability program.

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, as a supplement to the hon. Minister of Agriculture's reply, I have had discussions on this matter of the trade war between the United States and the European Economic Community with the Prime Minister, who has been working very hard. As you know, he raised this matter in the meetings in Japan, and he's raised it again. We've discussed it on several occasions recently with Prime Minister Thatcher, because she will be the incoming chairman of the European Economic Community and will therefore be in a position to try and influence a turning down of the trade war between the United States and the European community. We're looking forward to the efforts the Prime Minister is making in that regard, and we are pleased that he is working in this way.

MR. TAYLOR: A supplementary to the Minister of Agriculture. I note the recent report by the federal government

that they are pushing for a base price of \$10 per bushel for domestic wheat. Does the hon. minister have a stand on whether he supports that recommendation or not?

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, quite some time ago when hearings were being held, we submitted a paper to the federal government endorsing that position for the domestic wheat price to be set at \$10.

Free Trade

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask some questions of the Premier on the matter of bilateral free trade. They flow from comments he made in his estimates last Thursday evening. On page 485 of *Hansard* the Premier indicated: "This Legislature would have to agree to this province entering into any agreement." I'd like to ask the Premier whether he was saying that this Legislature has the right to opt out of any free-trade deal proposed by the federal government.

MR. GETTY: I don't think using the term "opt out" is necessarily the correct one, because we have not yet fully determined what the ratification process might be of any free-trade arrangement. But it would be my desire, Mr. Speaker, to bring to the House for debate and for approval any agreement we would be entering into in the free-trade area.

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary. If it's simply a matter of opting in or opting out of an entire agreement, that's one possibility. Would the Premier consider a process whereby we could opt out of certain provisions of such an agreement and accept the rest of the agreement?

MR. GETTY: As I said, it isn't a matter of opting in and opting out. Since we haven't determined the ratification process yet, the idea of taking just part of an agreement is not one we've considered, and I just won't discard it lightly. As most members know, when entering into an agreement, you enter into the agreement, not just one part of it. Normally, it would not be possible, but I say again that I wouldn't discard it lightly.

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary. I take it this is a way of protecting provincial rights in Alberta. I'm wondering if this is a personal policy only of the government of Alberta, or is it also the policy of the other 10 provinces, such that all provincial Legislatures in the country would have the same opportunity to ratify a free-trade agreement.

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, those provinces' provincial governments would have to speak for themselves on that matter.

MR. HAWKESWORTH: A final supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Given the importance of protecting provincial rights through a ratification process, why is it the Premiers lightly gave up their insistence on having an observer's seat at the talks? After all, an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member quoted from the *Hansard* of my estimates remarks the other night, that very matter I referred to and answered in those same remarks. Basically, it was — and I'll repeat for him now,

although he can check it against the written word — the fact that the 10 Premiers and the Prime Minister discussed that matter. Some of the provinces felt that with federal initiatives and trade matters they didn't want to in any way be part of those negotiations. As a matter of fact, if there was a provincial representative there, they did not want to in any way endorse free trade negotiations even starting. Obviously, I can't get into all the arguments because amongst all the provinces and Premiers there were a variety of views held on the matter.

In order to allow the federal government to start their negotiations with all of the provinces supporting them, we said that for a trial period we would work with the proposal of having constant weekly meetings at the officials' level, monthly meetings at the ministerial level, and meetings every three months at the First Ministers' level. For some three months we are going to follow that process and judge whether or not we are receiving the information we require. It is something the jury is still out on, and we will be watching it carefully.

We do have, as an Alberta Member of Parliament who is also a member of the federal cabinet, the senior minister involved in these matters. We have a very close relationship with the Hon. Joe Clark, and it may well be that we feel a greater sense of trust in that regard. Nevertheless, we shall watch it carefully.

MR. TAYLOR: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Has the Premier considered what his statements or views or plans on going it alone on upgrader plants and tar sand plants will do to the free-trade talks?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, the ability of the province of Alberta to determine the development of its resources is not a matter for any free-trade talks.

Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs

MR. MITCHELL: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Premier. There are clear problems with our federal/provincial relations. We have lost \$600 million in the established program funding; we have lost the funding associated with the Husky Oil upgrader; we have not lost the PGRT. Why has the Department of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs been downgraded in its priority by combining it with the Attorney General's department under a single minister?

MR. GETTY: First of all, Mr. Speaker, we have not lost the Husky funding. As a matter of fact, we have had additional Husky funding, and the project is proceeding. We have not lost \$600 million in transfer grants. As I pointed out in the House before, the grants are increasing, albeit under the current proposal at a slightly lower rate. We will receive hundreds of millions of dollars, increasing annually. Also, because of our share of federal taxation caused by the federal government's reducing their indexing, we will probably be receiving almost as much by increased tax points. So the hon. member has his information wrong. We have been successful in reducing dramatically the PGRT, and we have been successful in eliminating entirely all other parts of the national energy program.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, in those areas he raised and in many others, I feel a very high level of confidence in our Department of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs. The fact that one minister has a responsibility for both

Attorney General and Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs reflects to some degree my desires to have a downsized cabinet, but also reflects to a great degree the high level of confidence I and the members of our government and caucus place in the Hon. Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs/Attorney General.

MR. MITCHELL: Mr. Speaker, to the deputy House leader, the Attorney General, the MLA for Medicine Hat, and also the Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs: could he please tell us what portion of his time he will allocate to the development of a sophisticated federal/provincial relations strategy consistent with today's demands in that area?

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, that would take me far too long to answer in the question period. Suffice it to say that the estimates of my department will eventually reach the floor of the Assembly. Those would be appropriate times to discuss those issues with the hon. member and others.

However, I have been the Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs since November 1982 and in that respect have a fair degree of experience relative to the issues which are facing the department. Those consist of amongst other things the constitutional negotiations which will be facing us. As hon. members are aware, constitutional issues were not settled. We have the issue of Quebec and the Constitution; we have aboriginal rights; we have the subject of possible amendments to the Constitution relating to the role of that august body, occupied by so many friends of the Liberal caucus, called the Senate and its major reform facing us. The hon. Leader of the Opposition and I agree as to what should be done with those people. Those are just a few items that face the department. I could go on and on, but Mr. Speaker has risen, so I shall sit.

MR. MITCHELL: I wish you had placed on your list a priority on energy and agriculture, neither of which were listed by the minister.

Could the Premier please tell us whether the minister really has the time to co-ordinate complex areas of negotiation with the federal government — for example, energy negotiations — because it's very clear they're not working.

MR. GETTY: On the contrary, Mr. Speaker, I believe they are working. My judgment is that the minister does have the time. It will always be something that's reviewed, but what I've observed up to now is that he is not only providing the time but is doing an excellent job in both responsibilities.

MR. MITCHELL: A final supplementary to the Premier. Since federal/provincial relations over the past decade were given such an important priority by having that department report to a single senior minister, is the Premier telling us that today's concerns in the federal/provincial relations arena — energy, agriculture, free trade, established program funding; I could go on and on — are less critical and are not deserving of a full-time minister's attention?

MR. GETTY: No, I'm not saying that, Mr. Speaker.

Health Care for Refugees

REV. ROBERTS: Mr. Speaker, many churches throughout the United States and Canada and particularly here in Alberta have taken the lead in providing sanctuary for numbers of refugees who have come to our lands from other oppressive

countries. Since these refugees are often in need of medical attention, why does the Minister of Hospitals and Medical Care continue to turn his back on these refugees by refusing them access to health care in this province?

MR. M. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure I understand at all the import of the hon. member's question. As far as I'm aware, we are probably providing within this province a substantially better medical care than might exist in the countries those people came from. But I'd be pleased, if the hon. member has instances where people came here from other countries and are suffering a great deal through the lack of a health care program, to take it under consideration to see what can be done.

REV. ROBERTS: Yes, Mr. Speaker, letters I have from the St. Barnabas society and others in Edmonton suggest that refugees who are claiming for status in Canada are not eligible for health care in this province, are not eligible to the Alberta health care insurance plan. They have written the minister and others on this matter and have been told that such refugees are not eligible for assistance.

MR. SPEAKER: There was no question, hon. member.

REV. ROBERTS: The question is: with that kind of information why does the minister continue to refuse to grant them eligibility?

MR. M. MOORE: I haven't noticed that the minister has refused to do anything. If the hon. member has a concern with respect to the health care of one of his constituents or others, if he would bring it directly to my attention with some details, I will look into it. I frankly don't understand, Mr. Speaker, the approach during question period. I'd be pleased to look into it if the member will give me some information, but surely I can't look into an individual problem with a broadly based question like the member provided.

REV. ROBERTS: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Is the Minister of Manpower following up in any way the departmental recommendations in his department to negotiate an arrangement with the Canada Employment and Immigration Commission so that special documentation confirming residency is provided to refugees, as is done in many other provinces in Canada?

MR. ORMAN: In response to the hon. member, Mr. Speaker, we are in touch on an ongoing basis with the federal Department of Immigration. I have just traded correspondence with the new minister. We have talked about a number of issues that involve immigration. Certainly, the point the hon. member makes will be subject to further discussion.

REV. ROBERTS: A final supplementary to the Minister of Hospitals and Medical Care. Is he saying on record, therefore, that refugees in Alberta are eligible for the health care insurance plan in the province?

MR. M. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, the Alberta health care insurance plan does pay benefits to people who have landed immigrant status in Alberta. It's not possible nor would I want to suggest that the Alberta health care insurance plan, which the people of this province pay for, is going to cover

every single person who might arrive on a doctor's doorstep in Alberta. Obviously, there are illegal immigrants in every country, all kinds of people who may want medical care who are not recognized as either citizens, landed immigrants, or residents of a particular jurisdiction. What we do in Alberta in this regard is no different than they would do in any other province in Canada, I believe, and probably no different from anyplace else in the world where they have a medical insurance program.

If the hon. member has a specific instance or case of individual people who are lacking in medical attention in this province, I'd be pleased to look into the details as to why and whether or not there is any way we can expand our system to help them.

MR. SPEAKER: Member for Bow Valley.

REV. ROBERTS: A supplementary to the ...

MR. SPEAKER: One brief supplementary. There is confusion in the House because of a very long statement earlier, so a brief supplementary, please, Member for Edmonton Centre.

REV. ROBERTS: Since Ontario, Quebec, and Manitoba all provide full health care protection to refugees, is there something unique about this province which precludes change to our residency requirements for refugees who, as I am aware, are still not able to have eligibility under the plan?

MR. M. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, there is nothing particularly unique about Alberta. As I said earlier, I'd be pleased to look into any cases where people are not receiving medical attention who do need it. The question of whether or not people who are illegally in your province or country should be provided with medical care is not one I'm prepared to give an answer to by simply saying, yes, they can be. In my view that would significantly alter the concept of medical insurance coverage as we now know it in this province.

MR. CHUMIR: A supplementary to the minister of hospitals, Mr. Speaker. I was wondering whether or not the minister is prepared to take steps to make it easier for immigrants to Canada who have medical training to obtain internships in order to be able to practise in Alberta so they can treat other immigrants, who may have language problems, in their own languages.

MR. M. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, that's a very important question. Yesterday I had a meeting with the registrar of the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Alberta, Dr. Leroy le Riche. He and I did discuss that very matter. His concern that there are not enough internship places in Alberta and Canada for doctors who come here from other countries has been expressed publicly.

On the other hand, there are a number of opinions which suggest that simply because you arrived here by way of travelling with a spouse and have a medical degree from some other country shouldn't entitle you to a place ahead of, for instance, some native-born Albertan who is looking for the same spot in an internship program.

So the issue has two sides to it, Mr. Speaker, both of which can be argued quite successfully by individuals, depending on what their concerns are. I conclude by saying that yes, it is a concern. I personally would like to see us have an opportunity to provide opportunities for more of

these people to get their licence to practise medicine in Alberta, because we often find they are the ones who will serve smaller communities where medical doctors are often-times in short supply.

European Beef Imports

MR. MUSGROVE: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the hon. Minister of Agriculture, and it's regarding imports from the European Economic Community. There have been some hearings going on regarding the countervail on European beef into Canada. Are these hearings completed, and if so, what is the result?

MR. ELZINGA: To my knowledge, Mr. Speaker, and in response to the hon. member, it is our understanding that the Canadian Import Tribunal is going to report by July 25 as to whether there is any material damage to our Canadian cattle production by the European subsidized beef. We look forward to the results of that hearing by the Canadian Import Tribunal. I underscore: hopefully they are to report by July 25.

MR. MUSGROVE: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Are we still importing European beef into Canada?

MR. ELZINGA: Yes, Mr. Speaker. As the hon. member is also aware, though, when the Canadian Import Tribunal reported in mid-June, they indicated that Canadian cattlemen did have an alleged concern related to subsidized European beef. Because of that the Department of National Revenue imposed a tax on beef coming into Canada to somewhat offset this detrimental situation as it relates to our Canadian cattlemen.

North West Trust

MR. McEACHERN: Mr. Speaker, my questions are to the Provincial Treasurer. The minister refused again yesterday to answer my questions about the extent of the Treasury Branch involvement with North West Trust and its associated companies. Was the Treasurer saying that he doesn't know the extent of that involvement?

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, I have already answered this question, I guess, on three different occasions, indicating quite clearly that when it comes to commercial confidentiality, I must maintain the confidence which the Treasury Branch has with this client and with all clients. To do anything else would be an affront not just to the citizens of Alberta who deal with the Treasury Branch but to the Treasury Branch itself.

While I am on this point, Mr. Speaker, it is regretful that the sudden position taken by this member with respect to the viability of the Treasury Branch is now causing some concerns to the system. I hope he would think carefully about his choice of words with respect to the future of the Treasury Branch in this province.

MR. McEACHERN: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. The question was: is the minister on top of it, and does he know how much the loans and debentures are to North West Trust?

MR. JOHNSTON: Again, Mr. Speaker, that question of course has been answered. For me to give any different

answer or to vary my position would of course be difficult for both the Treasury Branch and the clients of the Treasury Branch.

MR. McEACHERN: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. The Treasurer said the other day that the Treasury Branch alone makes decisions upon the merits of investment. Does the Treasurer mean by that that he does not believe it is his responsibility at the very least to know the extent of the Treasury Branch risk or the nature of its loan portfolio? Is he willing to reveal this to the Assembly?

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, with respect to my . . .

MR. SPEAKER: I'm sorry, hon. minister. I believe the order of questioning is truly out of order. The matter was raised yesterday. The minister's answers have been consistent with regard to the relationship between his office and the said institutions. Therefore, the Chair recognizes the Member for Calgary Millican.

MR. MARTIN: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: We are almost at the end of question period, so I'll take the point of order.

MR. MARTIN: On the point of order. He can refuse to answer; I'm well aware of that. But that doesn't mean we can't keep asking the questions until we get the answers. There is public involvement here, and it could affect back in terms of the budget in this Assembly.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, hon. member. As long as the hon. Member for Edmonton Kingsway is prepared to accept the fact, it's well within the purview of the minister to keep answering in a similar way and saying no. A supplementary.

MR. McEACHERN: One final supplementary, Mr. Speaker. I have here a statement of the Treasury Branch, and they indicate:

On behalf of the Management and staff, I would like to extend an expression of gratitude to our Minister, the Honourable Lou Hyndman, Provincial Treasurer [it's now a new minister] and to his Advisor on Treasury Branches, Mr. A. F. Collins . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Question, please. This is a supplemental.

MR. McEACHERN: The point is that it shows that the Treasurer is responsible to the Treasury Branches and should know what is going on. So why does the Treasurer have a policy of not providing vital information about public dollars to this Legislature?

MR. JOHNSTON: I'm pleased, Mr. Speaker, that the member raises the question of responsibility. First of all, there's no doubt that the members on this side recognize fully their responsibility to manage the resources of this province and to accept the responsibility given to us by the legislation under which we operate. I hope this member recognizes his responsibility to the citizens of Alberta with respect to negative comments with respect to the Treasury Branch, which I think is irresponsible.

MR. SPEAKER: The time for question period has expired. The Minister of Public Works, Supply and Services wishes

to give supplementary information to an answer earlier in the question period today. Is that agreed?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed?

MR. TAYLOR: Yes. No.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, if the House would indulge me, I thought I would advise members of the House that I took the liberty of representing their views today in a way that normally would have involved my checking with them first. However, travel and phone connections and time differences with Europe made that difficult, so I have personally conveyed on their behalf by telephone the best wishes of the government of Alberta, this Legislature, and the people of Alberta to Miss Gail Greenough on her tremendous victory in the world horse jumping championships in Europe. She made a remarkable achievement as both the first Canadian and the first woman to accomplish this feat. I also invited her, on behalf of the House, to visit the Legislature when she returns to Canada and receive the reception of the House in person.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, it's nice when the Premier and I can agree totally, as we did yesterday with PGRT, on matters in the Assembly, and I, representing the Official Opposition, would like to also extend with the Premier our congratulations. It's always great to see Albertans achieving worldwide excellence; it gives us all hope. I would second what the Premier said.

MR. SPEAKER: For purposes of the *Hansard* record the Chair notes that we have unanimous concurrence with respect to this issue.

head: WRITTEN QUESTIONS

149. Mr. Wright asked the government the following question: What considerations of policy and what other considerations led to the decision to demolish the former premises of the University of Alberta Hospital?

MR. M. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, we would accept the question, and I would like to provide the answer. The decisions with respect to the demolition of buildings on the University Hospital site were recommended by the board to the Minister of Hospitals and Medical Care. Approval of the board's recommendation was based on age and condition of the buildings, cost efficiency and utilization of older buildings, and space requirements for new construction. I'll provide written copies of that.

head: MOTIONS OTHER THAN GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

208. Moved by Mr. Fischer:
Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly urge the government to request the government of Canada to hold a national plebiscite on capital punishment.

MR. FISCHER: Mr. Speaker, I have sponsored Motion 208 to debate today because I believe Albertans deserve a chance to have their views heard. They deserve to have a say in the protection of their own lives.

In 1976 the House of Commons in Ottawa held a free vote and by a narrow 130 to 124 margin decided to abolish capital punishment in Canada. This decision really just confirmed what was already being practised, since all death sentences since 1962 had been commuted anyway. Every poll and survey since that last execution in 1962 clearly show that Canadians favour the return of the death penalty. The June '86 Gallup poll was 56 percent for capital punishment over 33 percent in favour of life without parole; some polls were as high as 75 percent. But despite public opinion and rising murder rates, federal governments have refused to seriously deal with this issue. During the 1984 federal election, Prime Minister Brian Mulroney promised that the issue of capital punishment would be debated in Parliament during his term of office.

Mr. Speaker, Motion 208 serves as a reminder to the federal government of this election commitment and to encourage a national plebiscite on the issue. I know this issue's importance to my constituents, to Albertans, and to all Canadians, and it deserves to be raised in a national plebiscite. The current situation is unacceptable. It seems that every couple of weeks we are reminded of the inability of our legal system to adequately address violent crimes.

I noticed in last weekend's paper that a Spruce Grove man, who cruelly shot his wife in the back six times, was given an eight-year sentence and a lecture from the judge:

You shot your wife ... you will eventually be released from prison, and you will have a second chance to put your life together. Your wife will never have that chance because of your despicable ... act.

Mr. Speaker, this man will be eligible for parole in two and a half to three years.

When we were youngsters we were taught that life was one of our most precious possessions; respect and protect it with utmost care. In my lifetime I have watched the value and the respect of a human life slowly diminish to the point that it is now worth two or three years in jail. Mr. Speaker, is your life or my life or that woman's life only worth three years in jail? I hate to think of what is in store for the future if this trend continues. What are we telling our children? That we place the value of life as worth three years? Surely we must place more value on the taking of an innocent human life. Your life or my life or any Canadian's life must be given more respect. Many other countries treat innocent lives as expendable, but is that what we want here in Canada? Our heritage is one of placing a high value on life and security, but now our laws do not reflect this heritage.

If laws continue to be perceived as too relaxed and inadequate in protection, people will increasingly take measures to protect themselves. It is not just in the New York subways; there is fear here in Alberta. I do not agree with the vigilantes who take the law into their own hands, but I can understand their frustration with the current legal system and their fear. In a number of provinces we have policemen taking out their guns each time they stop a car, to protect themselves. They know that their life is only worth a couple of years in jail. This is an extremely dangerous situation for the public as well. Can you blame a policeman for being nervous? I wonder how much this reduces the effectiveness of our police force.

The entire legal system is under considerable strain. When average citizens begin to have sincere doubts about its effectiveness in serving justice, we have lost that respect. We have the sickening spectacle of Clifford Olson, an unrepentant serial killer who will kill again if he ever escapes, receiving money for giving information about his own crimes. If this is the value we place on 11 young lives, no wonder homicide offences have increased by 14 percent since 1976, when capital punishment was abolished. During 1984 there were 699 homicide offences.

Mr. Speaker, it is time for all politicians to take a stand, let their constituents know their views, and equally important, let's listen to their views. Let the public decide how to reinstate faith in our legal system. A national plebiscite should be held on this issue.

My views are strongly in favour of capital punishment for premeditated murder. There are many opinions on whether capital punishment is a deterrent. It would obviously be a deterrent to Clifford Olson, because he would never be able to kill again. A number of statistics we hear about deterrents show mixed results. The proof would have to be in the long term, when the attitude of society would slowly change — not one year, three years, or 10 years but a whole generation.

I would only support capital punishment if I believed, as I do, that it would truly benefit society. Capital punishment is necessary to restore balance in our courtrooms and to stop serial repeat offenders. Although only a very few people seriously contemplate murder, I believe capital punishment is a deterrence to a small but potentially violent minority in our society.

I would like to relate to you a little personal experience, Mr. Speaker, that has convinced me of the effectiveness of capital punishment as a deterrent. In my high school drama days, if we can go back that far, we put on a short play one year that involved a prisoner on death row. I don't remember the name of the play, but the setting was a jail with a prisoner in ball and chains, two prison guards, the padre, an administrator, and the prisoner's lawyers. The prisoner had admitted he was guilty of a cold-blooded murder. He was to hang at midnight, and everyone anxiously watched the clock and waited for a reprieve from the governor. The phone would ring at different times but always for someone else. The clock finally struck 12, and the two guards took the prisoner off to be executed. The reprieve never came.

You will never guess, but I was the prisoner. It may have just been a high school play, but every time we practised, I felt uncomfortable and I was sure that I didn't ever want to get into that fellow's predicament. My neighbours came to that play with their six-year-old boy. Ten years later that boy came and talked to me in detail about that play and how badly he felt for me that night. He said he would never forget it. As I am not Laurence Olivier, it is obvious that the power of capital punishment had a strong influence on that boy.

This is the kind of deterrent we need entrenched in our society. The death penalty is shocking and should be discussed with reverence, but I believe it is also necessary to protect life. I can assure the Assembly that I find no joy in a wasted life. My sole concern is to reduce the number of wasted lives.

I don't think capital punishment is a cure-all for all of society's troubles. Overcrowded courts, inconsistent bail and parole policies, and the huge overall public expense of the justice system: these and other problems will remain. But

society is clearly asking for more protection, and I support their concerns.

Mr. Speaker, Parliament must pay attention to Canadians' views. Decade after decade polls have proven that Canadians favour the death penalty under certain circumstances. But we must begin to protect victims' rights every bit as much as we are currently protecting criminals' rights. Our laws must reflect our moral order. Our society continues to hold the crime of premeditated murder as deserving of the penalty of death. Poll after poll show this to be true. My constituents have made it plain and clear: they want protection and they want revision.

We all want more security and fairness within our legal system. What is the role of government if we are not adequately protecting the lives of Albertans on the street? Canadians have made it clear how they feel. We are not responding. As public representatives we owe it to the public to make and enforce laws that ensure peace and security. By supporting this motion, we can send a clear message to Ottawa, whether personally for or against capital punishment. Let Canadians hold a national referendum on this issue that is important to all Canadians. As Alberta MLAs let us represent Albertans' concerns and make sure their voice is heard.

I urge members to support Motion 208. I look forward to hearing other members' views on this important issue, and I hope members will pass this resolution so we can hear views of our Members of Parliament on this issue. We owe it to all Canadians.

Thank you.

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Speaker, I would like to move an amendment to Motion 208 by striking out "to hold a national plebiscite on capital punishment" and substituting:

to introduce a Bill in the Parliament of Canada that would reinstate capital punishment and permit a free vote on the Bill, enabling Members of Parliament to vote on the issue independently of party position.

Mr. Speaker, this amendment was circulated on Friday. I believe all members of the Assembly have received the same. The amendment is straightforward and self-explanatory. It would be my recommendation to members of the Assembly that we pass the amendment so that the debate may then focus on the amended motion.

AN HON. MEMBER: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: There is a call for the question on the amendment. All those in favour of the amendment ... The Member for Edmonton Strathcona.

MR. WRIGHT: Mr. Speaker, the idea is that we will substitute for a national plebiscite a free vote request to the Members of Parliament. I think it's cheeky, for want of a better word, of us to suggest what Members of Parliament should be debating. Alberta is in the strongest possible position to make representations to Parliament, because all the federal Members of Parliament for Alberta are members of the same party and that party is the same party as the government of this province. Why members of this Assembly should be required to debate a motion such as this, over which we have no jurisdiction at all, substantively, when there are so many other things in this province that deserve debate at this time, is beyond my comprehension.

I understand the motivation, but surely that is something the hon. members interested in this motion and the results

of it can take up with our Members of Parliament or indeed their caucus can take up with the caucus in Ottawa. I understand they're going to have a meeting very, very soon on this, caucus to caucus. Surely this is something they can put on the agenda without trespassing on our time for a matter not substantively in our jurisdiction. They must know that there are substantial numbers of Members of Parliament who are committed to the point of view represented in the motion and that they themselves must have been investigating the ground, Mr. Speaker, for a free vote in Parliament and for furthering their own ideas on this matter.

It seems to me that to have this Legislative Assembly give its opinion, which in the nature of things would not be a unanimous opinion, I'm sure, on what they should do is quite unnecessary and beside the point. It's not as if the matter hasn't been debated and ruled on before in the House of Commons. Of course it has, and invariably it is the case that once the members are confronted with the actual evidence which shows that the death penalty is not in fact a deterrent to murder, the case crumbles because it is surely based on that simple idea which, reasonable as it may seem on the face of it, is not borne out by the evidence.

In order for us to sensibly pass a motion such as this, Mr. Speaker, we would have to go into that evidence; otherwise, we would be making fools of ourselves. We would be spending an enormous amount of time on a matter which I say again is not substantively within our jurisdiction, and there are better things to discuss which are. I'm not for a moment saying it is not an important issue, but it's an important issue for another place, Mr. Speaker. So I urge hon. members not to vote for this motion.

MR. SPEAKER: The amendment to the motion?

MR. WRIGHT: Well, for the motion to amend is what I'm talking about and, indeed, for the motion itself when we come to speak about that, if this amendment is passed. The whole argument that the motion substantively seeks to put, and which I submit is no more likely to commend itself by way of a free vote as by way of a plebiscite, is one which the evidence does not support and for which the arguments are simplistic.

Mr. Speaker, I recognize that the deeply felt feelings of those who propose this motion to argue in the manner that is necessary to show that the feelings, however well-intentioned, are misplaced in the remedy they seek is not something we should be talking about in this Assembly. It is for another place, and yet we cannot urge that other place to talk about it without going into matters which are not within our jurisdiction. I urge hon. members not to pass the amendment and, in due course, the motion, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Speaking to the amendment, the Member for Stony Plain.

MR. HERON: It's with some interest that I note the hon. Member for Edmonton Strathcona's remarks, for when I look at the Order Paper, and in particular Motion 216 by the hon. Member [for Edmonton Avonmore], I note in the same context that they are urging

the Government of Alberta to encourage the Government of Canada ... to advance forcefully and consistently an international policy in favour of ... peace ...

Again, there is the same argument under Motion 218; there we're talking about Chernobyl. So in the context of this motion I really question the hon. member's right to infer that we do not have the right to draw matters to the federal government's attention.

I would like to go on record as being in support of capital punishment and the death penalty for premeditated murder. I represent a constituency where in excess of eight out of 10 favour capital punishment. I take this opportunity to speak to, and in favour of, the amendment. In doing so, I represent my constituents and the strong view shared by them and members of my family who have worn or presently wear Her Majesty's uniform.

Canadians have consistently polled over 50 percent in favour of the death penalty. The 1953 figure, which is now over 30 years old, showed that 71 percent of Canadians favour the death penalty. That hasn't changed very much, for today it stands at 75 percent. I note that even in the extreme points of view represented in society, by far the majority favour capital punishment. I'm speaking now of the New Democratic Party; when they're consistently polled, the majority represented are in favour of capital punishment.

When we speak to this motion, consider the mass murderer who has nothing but time on his hands to break out. We have examples of that in our society. Take the case that the hon. Member for Wainwright brought up or the case of Harvey Andres, who escaped the penitentiaries for a siege of shooting and robbing before he was captured again. I think the peaceful citizens of society have a right to be protected from mass murderers the likes of Olson, Bundy, and Lucas, who have engaged their severe personality disorders in the killing of numerous people. Can anyone argue that these men should not be allowed the remotest chance of escape?

I add that five out of six, or approximately 85 percent, of Canadians favour that a referendum be held at the time of the next federal election. Ten percent are opposed and 5 percent cannot say. To me this is pretty conclusive evidence that Canadians want a free national vote.

This topic has been under review since 1914. I think this is healthy and that it should be reviewed again nationally in light of the horrendous acts of terrorism, piracy, and mass murder and an increase in psychotic behavior. Even in our own community we're reminded of the increase in homicides by the headlines in the papers in the last few days.

I emphasize that our citizens have rights. Often the argument takes the perverse opposite direction, sacrificing the citizen's rights in favour of the criminal. This amendment only asks for a display of the collective wisdom of our Members of Parliament so that we can democratically exercise our point of view from time to time by asking for support on this matter.

Mr. Speaker, I have contained my remarks to the need for review and the holding of a vote on the issue. I have not elaborated on the strong pro arguments such as the deterrent effect and others. I trust that my colleagues in this Assembly will present these other facts. I have not gone into specific cases of abuse where respect for human life is dismissed through ridiculous judicial decisions which give illogical rights to the criminal or the murderer. I have simply presented a case where by far the majority of Canadians favour the death penalty. I feel it is the responsibility of my colleagues in this Assembly to represent their views to the Members of Parliament.

Thank you very much.

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Mr. Speaker, in addressing the amendment to the motion, I understand that what is under consideration is whether to request either a free vote of the Members of the House of Commons or whether to call on the government to have a national plebiscite in order to determine what ought to be done in the area of capital punishment. I'd like to address my comments this afternoon simply to the amendment that is on the floor.

I think there are a couple of trade-offs by going one route or another. First of all, if the decision on capital punishment is to be made by way of a free vote of the Members of the House of Commons, that can work both ways, Mr. Speaker. Those people in the House of Commons, by voting with their conscience, can determine that capital punishment would be reinstituted in this country. That also allows the issue to keep being brought back at other times in the future. Those who are not happy with whatever decision might be made by the House of Commons on capital punishment can always press to have that vote overturned. Regardless of what that vote is, those who disagree with it can keep pressing to have it brought back.

In some regards that is healthy, Mr. Speaker, and that is the best possible way of dealing with capital punishment or any other issue, in that it allows for a matter to be readdressed as attitudes change over a period of time or as different views become prominent. It allows matters to be opened up at some future date. That can work both ways, so that those who are unhappy with the decision that was previously taken by the House of Commons in 1976 can keep pressing and encouraging that matter to be reviewed and readdressed. Perhaps they will be successful in the next couple of years in having that free vote in the House of Commons. Even if they should succeed in getting capital punishment reinstated, those who disagree with that particular point of view themselves can continue to press, so that in essence this matter would be continually in the forefront of public debate.

Mr. Speaker, the other alternative — and one that I personally don't favour, but it is the motion as presented by the hon. member — is that a national plebiscite on reinstating capital punishment be held. First of all, I don't know why we would choose to have a plebiscite on this particular issue. We didn't have a national plebiscite on the Constitution, which had a far greater effect on individual Canadians than any discussion of capital punishment would have on the vast majority of ordinary Canadians. So I don't know why we would call for a national plebiscite on capital punishment when far more important issues are dealt with in a different way and in a different form.

There is one thing that could be said about a national plebiscite: that would decide the issue. I would submit to hon. members that a decision on the basis of a national plebiscite could likely only be overturned by a future plebiscite to overturn that same issue. Perhaps to some degree that's only speculation on my part, Mr. Speaker. But having dealt year after year with the city of Calgary on an issue that was determined many, many years ago by a plebiscite in that city, I know that we were continually told that that matter could only be reversed by a similar plebiscite being held and by the people changing their minds in a similar manner. The matter was not nearly of the importance of capital punishment; it simply had to do with whether the city of Calgary could enforce the metering of residential properties for the use of water. We were continually told that the plebiscite that had been conducted many, many years ago could only be overturned by having

the people of Calgary overturn it in a similar manner. So I submit that if a national plebiscite were held and approved for the reinstatement of capital punishment, it would firmly and in a final way settle the issue for many, many years and perhaps for several generations, in that it would take a similar national plebiscite to overturn it.

Mr. Speaker, in terms of the preference of having a free vote versus a plebiscite, my second point is this: I believe that more free votes should be the norm in the House of Commons and in the Legislative Assembly of Alberta, with less emphasis on the importance of party caucus and party discipline in making members vote on one side of any issue or another. I think that what the hon. Member for Edmonton Strathcona was saying earlier is: why are we telling the federal government that they should have more free votes in the House of Commons in Ottawa if we ourselves are not prepared to conduct the same kind of reform in our own Assembly over which we have direct jurisdiction? It's fine for us to point fingers at the federal government and say that they should have more free votes and should have a free vote on this particular issue and to call on the federal government to conduct their business that way, but we have not taken similar steps ourselves to allow the same opportunity and privilege to members of this Assembly to vote as a matter of conscience on those items over which this Legislature has direct jurisdiction.

It seems to me, Mr. Speaker, that what goes with us as an Assembly taking the step of adopting this particular amendment calling on a free vote in the House of Commons is an implicit understanding that we are also prepared to extend the same privilege and opportunity to ourselves as members of this Assembly on important matters affecting the province of Alberta. I know that that was the stated position of the Premier in the recent months leading up to the provincial election last May 8. I welcomed and applauded that statement on his part, and I would ask the members of all parties in this Legislative Assembly to consider very, very seriously in the next few months, or certainly during the life of this Legislature, adopting similar kinds of rules over important matters affecting the life of this province and extending those to ourselves here in this Assembly. I can think of free trade as being one we talked about earlier this afternoon that affects the economy of this province in a direct way. Is that the kind of issue equal to capital punishment in importance on which we as individual members of this Legislature should be allowing ourselves a free vote? What other matters of substance coming before this Legislative Assembly could we extend the same privilege to? I think one of our standing policy committees could perhaps look at that.

In a way, I think this is a significant amendment, not for the fact that it deals with capital punishment — I think we can get into those particulars later — but because of what it says about the way we ought to be conducting our business not only in the House of Commons in Ottawa but here in the Alberta Legislature.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DR. WEST: Mr. Speaker, I would mainly like to address the amendment to Motion 208. I'll take issue with the hon. Member for Calgary Mountain View on this. We're specifically talking about one order of capital punishment, in direction to the federal government, and I by no means want to put the importance of other issues that you just mentioned in the same bracket as capital punishment or to state to the people of Canada that murder is on the same

degree as trade. By no means do I ever want to insinuate that. I hope that today is not doing that. It says:

Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly urge ... the Government of Canada to introduce a Bill in the Parliament of Canada that would reinstate capital punishment and permit a free vote on the Bill, enabling Members of Parliament to vote on the issue independently of Party position [on one occasion only].

We are not trying to imply that we're changing their order of rules.

I am convinced that if we look at this question objectively from a logical, public-policy point of view, we must conclude that capital punishment should be reinstated for once and all. This subject has always erupted in many debates, discussions, and emotions over the decades. The problem arises when we do not address the reality of this question in our present times. The reality is that people do murder other people; for example, as stated, 699 did so in 1984, 44 of which were manslaughter and seven infanticide.

We must remember that murder, the taking of someone's life other than your own, has permanent results in time and place on one side of the issue, namely the victim. The victim is dead by definition, and their sentence is permanent. The time and decision is 1986. If we look back to 1962, the last time that capital punishment was enforced, at that time 1.27 per 100,000 inhabitants were murdered. Now it's 2.74; it's over double. The total murders in this country from 1961 to 1984 equalled 10,659. That's total murders, not homicides. If you put that in perspective ... I come from a town of approximately 3,800. Let's remove them by death three times in '61-84. Let's look at it in those perspectives.

The Canadian people, since the removal of capital punishment in 1962, have demonstrated by poll that 60 to 70 percent are in favour of capital punishment and 85 percent are in favour of taking a vote to decide this. This history of our attitude over the years for government to play a father/protectorate role in such matters and avoid addressing society's demand for such a decision has perhaps brought it to a head at this time in our generation.

Regardless of one's emotions and reasonings that could be listed as pros and cons forever, the major issue is justice. As I have noted, the victim has immediately been given an ultimate sentence — death — not by choice. Therefore, the offender must address society, which must not only deliver justice but be seen to do so.

Obviously, by our previously mentioned statistics, justice in murder cases is not perceived in today's system as having been done. Concern has risen recently when sentences in murders of categories less than first degree are seen to be too light. In this society we may have been lulled into this situation because the sentence for first-degree murder has had a maximum of 25 years, with or without parole.

Using the above as a base in judgment in cases of less than first-degree murder, we see individuals with parole serving three, four, or five years, and that's substantiated by statistics. Actually, first-degree murder expectancies have ranged over the last 15 years between 13 and 24 years; that's the maximum sentence. Again, is this justice?

I am sure that if we could interview the some 13,000 people murdered from 1961 to 1986 and ask them five minutes before they were murdered how they would vote on capital punishment if someone were to murder them, specifically — and I'm talking about the victims, not the relatives, because as time goes on relatives or associates of people that have been murdered traditionally tend to ask

for clemency. Let's specifically ask the victims; their answers might amaze you. What do you think those answers would be?

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. member, the Chair hesitates to interrupt, but perhaps in the course of your debate you are soon coming to your references with respect to the amendment.

DR. WEST: Very good. I was saying that in real life we must make a decision on this. We are all potential victims in this issue, and I think some of us are just not dead yet; think of that. If this decision is not to be a plebiscite or referendum, then the next best thing is a freestanding vote in Parliament. Our elected officials then have the liberty to vote, hopefully on behalf of the people who elected them, with full knowledge of their constituents' wishes, hopefully uninfluenced by party policy.

There are those in this situation that are afraid to vote on such an issue for fear that we may encroach on human rights and representation of freedom. In 1986 with our Constitution and Charter of Rights, I know my fear is the direct opposite. Defending explicit rights by our justice system beyond reasonable self-responsibility as a society in itself may remove the rights of the majority.

I believe that a freestanding vote on capital punishment would address that. We may well end up with a just society, as declared by Mr. Fuddle-Duddle a few years ago, but in the transition we are going to lose mankind. The death penalty has always caused confusion between those who address it as an emotion embodied in revenge and those who wish to call it straight justice. Justice must be our paramount concern in society, and we must always guard against drifting to the righteousness of the rights of the offender and in so doing fail to address the rights of those victimized. A freestanding vote partially addresses society's right in a democracy to have the access to discussions that affect and impact total justice.

Therefore, I support the amendment to this motion in both its intent and physical direction. I urge all of you to consider this, and if in doing so we save but one innocent life, we have accomplished a great deed.

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The Member for Ponoka-Rimbey. Excuse me, the Member for Lacombe.

MR. R. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, I would like to speak to this amendment. It's nice to know that Ponoka and Lacombe are one and the same; we live side by side. They're very synonymous and very good places to be recognized in this House.

This amendment challenges this Assembly to confront an issue that, quite frankly, too many politicians are not willing to face. The capital punishment debate has raged since civilization first began, but throughout the last 30 years Canada's federal governments have decided that it is a debate that does not merit their serious consideration. The last free vote, and I use that term loosely, was held in 1976, and only six votes decided the issue at that time.

Mr. Speaker, repeated polls and surveys show that the federal government has been wrong in its assumptions. Gallup polls show that whether they are for or against the issue, about 75 or 85 percent of Albertans and Canadians believe that a free vote on this issue should be held in Parliament. The federal people are not responding to Canadians

on this issue. As provincial politicians we have an obligation to see that concerned Albertans are heard in Ottawa. Contrary to the Member for Edmonton Strathcona, that is one obligation we have: to make sure that Alberta's concerns are heard and listened to in Ottawa.

This motion today gives us a chance to fulfill this obligation. There is a crisis of confidence in our legal system. When Albertans see Clifford Olson and others like him receiving money to show us where he left 11 victims' bodies, it is clear that something is terribly wrong. When an unremorseful serial killer's rights have been given precedence over victims' and society's rights, something is terribly wrong, Mr. Speaker. When over the last 40 years the Canadian public has consistently been polled in favour of capital punishment in certain cases and the government consistently treats this issue as a low priority, something is again terribly wrong. The issues of deterrence and repeat offenders, victims' rights, and judicial fallibility should all be put front and centre.

While we're talking about being for and against capital punishment, I'd like to point out that we have those who are against capital punishment saying that we as humans have no right to take another human life. But let me point out, Mr. Speaker, that I don't classify as human Mr. Olson or the Browns down at High River and the other chap who was with them who killed those two young ladies and left the burned bodies in the ditch. They are the lowest form of life, and I don't think they have indicated through their actions the right to live on this earth.

My personal view is that capital punishment certainly has its place. I mentioned one prime candidate, Clifford Olson, as have other colleagues in this House. There is not one iota of doubt about his guilt. He is a serial killer who shows no remorse and has been psychologically pegged to kill again if given half a chance. Here we have society today spending money to keep him and protect him from other inmates in the institution where they would mete out the justice he should have received through our judicial system. We see him there, and over time he will be paroled under our present system and will strike again.

I fully endorse this motion, and it would ensure that Albertans' views will be heard. For or against capital punishment, no one is served by ignoring this issue as if it doesn't exist. I strongly urge this Assembly to urge the federal government to hold a free vote on capital punishment. It is in Alberta's interest and the interest of society generally.

MR. EWASIUK: Mr. Speaker, my approach to this particular issue is perhaps going to be somewhat different than most of the people who have spoken up to this point. When I look at capital punishment, I think of something much more than simply someone who picks up a gun and kills another person. If you're going to talk about capital punishment, I think you have to expand it to a greater degree. I'm going to point out some areas in which I feel killing occurs, yet we never make reference to it when we talk about capital punishment.

Let's talk about industry, where workers are subjected to conditions which affect their lives. They may suffer, maybe not immediately, but sooner or later they will. They are killed because they worked in that industry. Let's talk about the people who pollute our rivers and our environment. Are they killers? I think not. When we talk about capital punishment, we must think about those who pollute. Are they criminals? Should they be addressed as if they were criminals and subjected to capital punishment? How about

you and I in the Legislature, who have the prerogative to legislate against pollution of our environment and our water? Are we then also in the same category and subjected to capital punishment?

I think that when you talk about capital punishment, Mr. Speaker, it needs a much broader base than simply an individual killing someone else in a fit of anger or whatever. I suppose I could support a resolution that would call for a free vote, but I don't think I can under the circumstances in which it is before us today. As has already been mentioned, when we talk about a free vote on this issue, let's have a free vote in this Legislature as well. Let us not simply pass the buck to someone in another level of government.

MS BARRETT: Mr. Speaker, I guess I'd like to imitate a member of this Assembly who, prior to dissolution, got up from his seat and said, "Well, aren't the tables turned?" It seems to me that in addressing the amendment in front of us, we have a very sudden change of heart with respect to democracy and the procedures of democracy on behalf of the government side. It's very interesting that we'd like to go for free votes in Parliament. May I humbly inquire: what about free votes in this Assembly? Have we suddenly changed our minds about this?

I would point out to you that for several years in this Assembly there was practically a wall of silence when it came to the issue of extra billing. Extra billing affects thousands and thousands of Albertans, but for some reason there was caucus solidarity on extra billing because it was the government's position, and the government's position was the most important thing. I saw it; I was up in the gallery watching this going on. [interjections] Oh, I'm speaking to the amendment all right.

Unfortunately, I'm speaking against the amendment, to the hon. member. I'm speaking against the amendment because I think it's time this particular Assembly cleaned up its own act when it comes to a free vote. I think it's time this Assembly started looking at the effects of caucus solidarity in this House. Year after year when it came to people issues that affected thousands of Albertans, ordinary Albertans, not murderers or victims, ordinary people whose incomes may not qualify them even for premium subsidies when it comes to Alberta health care coverage, ordinary Albertans who have children who need medical or dental attention and can't afford the extra bills from the doctors, ordinary people who have inadvertently been affected by this government's lack of gumption to go for seat-belt legislation — people have died because it was never deemed important to go for seat-belt legislation. After all, we're a province of individuals, and we wouldn't want to infringe on individuals' rights, would we?

Hundreds of people die from those little events that never came up because this government didn't see fit to have free votes. Now, it may be that things were decided in cabinet and we were never told that you people in fact have free votes. But I can tell you what it looks like from the outside. It looks like democracy was considerably limited in this Assembly and on issues that affected a lot of people.

Labour legislation is also brought to mind in this regard when we want to talk about going for free votes. There was a hue and cry from one end of the province to the other upon the introduction of one famous Bill, known at that time as Bill 44. This Bill, as members who were in the Assembly at the time may recall, was the most incredible rigging of the arbitration process that one could possibly

imagine in all of Canada. So there was a call from one part of the province to the other to have public hearings, and so-called public hearings did occur, Mr. Speaker. Yes, select groups out of lots that applied were allowed to come to this very floor, this red carpet, and present their written briefs in an oral fashion. The Assembly listened to all sides, very carefully, I'm sure, and then clearly, like a herd, voted 75 to 4 in favour of passing Bill 44.

Now I'm not convinced, Mr. Speaker, that there was ever such a thing as a free vote. Every time a controversial item came up on the floor of this Assembly, I saw 75 Conservatives vote identically. It didn't matter how many people were being adversely affected. It didn't matter if 100,000 people lost their right to Alberta health care coverage because their premiums were lagging. So 100,000 people lose their little blue cards — did I see a Conservative member exercise his or her right for a free vote? I didn't.

I think it's very interesting that we, the Conservative side of this House, the government members, now think we don't have to exercise democracy, we don't have to live by free votes, but it's quite all right for us to ask our federal counterparts to do the same. I argue, Mr. Speaker, that it's much more important to clean up our own act in this provincial Assembly. I've even written down a little note ...

MR. STEVENS: Mr. Speaker, I hesitate to interrupt the member, because I think her remarks are helpful in the debate, but I would like to ask the Speaker to consider a remark that was made a few moments ago by the member. The member said words to the effect that the Legislative Assembly, or possibly the government, had made amendments which rigged the arbitration process. I'm concerned about the use of the words "rigged" or "rigging". There may be an opinion as to the impact of those decisions, but I do question the word "rigging", since a number of courts have made decisions that do not agree with her opinion that it has been rigged.

MS BARRETT: Mr. Speaker, I would voluntarily like to read into the record that it is absolutely my view as an MLA and as an ordinary citizen that the effect of Bill 44 was to rig the arbitration process; however, I would never under any circumstances like to impute that motive to any government member.

May I continue, Mr. Speaker? The amendment which is in front of us deals with free votes in Parliament, and I was about to say before the member from Banff-Cochrane rose on his point of order that I had casually written down: democracy when it suits the Tories, not when it doesn't. I have to say that I still believe that that's the case. I would like some response if members think that I'm wrong in my interpretation of the effect of this amendment.

Mr. Speaker, some other members have risen to speak to this amendment, and they have pointed out a number of items. With respect to capital punishment — which as far as I'm concerned is not really what we're talking to right now; we're talking to the amendment which in substance is saying: let us request our federal counterparts to go for a free vote as opposed to conducting a national plebiscite — I noticed that a couple of members keep citing the fact of murder. Murder is dreadful, no doubt about it. However, I don't see the word "murder" in this amendment or, as a matter of fact, in this motion. I would argue that there seems to be some deficiency with respect to how government members are arguing in favour of this amendment when it

comes to continually citing the instance for which capital punishment ought to be levied by the judicial system. Perhaps it's a weakness in the amendment or in the original motion, but it seems to me that perhaps a subamendment to clarify it a bit more might do in this regard. This is pretty wide open.

One is left to ask: how are the Members of Parliament who may have to accept this if it's ever passed — they would do it as a matter of courtesy, I'm sure, and not as a matter of necessity. Under what circumstances are they supposed to have this free vote? Are they supposed to look at, for example, the passing of a law which would require capital punishment for the offences of sexual assault or robbery? How about the offence of pinching a loaf of bread? This is pretty wide-open stuff, Mr. Speaker. I'm not sure who drafts the government's motions, but I would say that we're into some pretty complicated territory here.

How on earth can we expect our federal counterparts to deal with a motion as wide-ranging as this? Is it that we're going to deal with another motion later on to give specific instructions? It's pretty wide-ranging. I would think we would owe it to our federal counterparts if we were going to give this kind of instruction. Please have a free vote even though we don't bother in this Assembly; please have a free vote on the matter of life and death, but don't define under what circumstances. Big stuff.

I note that a member also talked about the event of the Clifford Olson serial killings. I think I'm safe in saying that none of the members of this Assembly at any time would ever condone any such hideous activity. However, it was noted in the member's remarks that the events surrounding the capture and subsequent imprisonment of Mr. Olson struck a crisis of confidence in our legal system.

This doesn't speak directly to the amendment, but I'm going to ask that I be accorded the same privilege that that member was and be allowed to elaborate on this particular little instance. It seems to me that here in this Assembly we caused a crisis of confidence in our own judicial system with respect to the Dial Mortgage collapse. I would like to point out that through that whole process, we had a number of instances in which the Attorney General's department simply could not keep pace for one reason or another with the investigative procedures as enacted by a quasi-judicial body under legislative authority from this Assembly. It was a funny thing; the time kept expiring, the government couldn't keep pace and neither could the prosecutors, and pretty soon the two years had expired and it was too late to make a real official inquiry. Mr. Speaker, I would argue that that caused a crisis of confidence in the Alberta judicial system much greater than that which the member is referring to with respect to the desire for capital punishment.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to return briefly to the point of the concept behind the free vote as compared to that which underlies the initial motion. I intend, by the way, if we get to that point, to speak to the initial motion as well, or its revised version, whichever might be the case. Probably I can warn the Assembly I will speak against it. However ... [interjection] Yes, I'm sorry to surprise the caucus members around me.

When we talk about asking our federal colleagues to act in a fashion in which we ourselves — and I would like to say "we ourselves" not meaning the Official Opposition caucus, at minimum. Perhaps I should extend that courtesy to the other opposition caucuses, because I believe that we do operate under free votes, in a fashion, when it comes to matters of conscience. When we do this, why don't we

ask ourselves why we're not going to ask the public itself? I have to wonder what the purpose is of going for a free vote in Parliament as opposed to going for a national plebiscite. Is there an underlying assumption that if we stack the deck in terms of who gets elected, we'll be able to determine the outcome, as compared with letting people themselves decide on the vote? Again, I have to ask the question: under what circumstances would people decide the vote? It's not clearly stated in this amendment. Technically speaking, it's not stated in this motion either. It's not a very thought-out motion or amendment, Mr. Speaker.

I'd like to return briefly and finally to the item of free votes, because I pointed out how important it would have been to have had free votes in this Assembly prior to the 1986 election and how many ordinary people's lives could have been affected in a less adverse way had we had free votes in this Assembly, and talk about some issues related to that. For example, the issue of privatizing public services: it would appear that we would charge the public purse more and get less for our money. Either that would be the case or the people who are entitled to the services, the taxpayers and those who don't earn enough income to pay tax — and of course those who are really rich and don't pay taxes — would suffer the short end of the stick when it comes to privatization.

But whenever the issue came up in this Assembly, I didn't see government members hop to their feet to oppose privatization, just as I didn't with respect to extra billing and with Bill 110. I recall, Mr. Speaker — and I'm absolutely confident in my recollection — that all the Conservatives in the House at the time voted in favour of Bill 110, no doubt the most controversial bit of labour legislation that ever hit the floor of this Assembly since its inception.

I think we talk out of both sides of our face if we're not prepared to go for free votes on issues that directly affect the quality of our lives in Alberta, prior to asking our federal colleagues to do the same. There are many in front of us right now that qualify like that, Mr. Speaker. I would put out, for example, the continued debate on extra billing. I would put out, for example, the matters which pertain to social services, particularly with respect to budgetary considerations which keep those who cannot find work at substantially below the poverty line, as recognized by Statistics Canada in what are called the low-income cutoff statistics.

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. Member, the Chair appreciates your ingenuity with respect to debate on the amendment, but perhaps you could narrow the focus, please.

MS BARRETT: Actually, the Speaker's intervention at this point couldn't have been much better timed. I was almost concluding my set of remarks.

Mr. Speaker, before considering passing this amendment — and believe me, I intend to get to my feet after the amendment either passes or fails to deal with the actual issue at hand, which no doubt is capital punishment — I think we have to drive home that we who live in glass houses should not throw stones. We had better be prepared if we — and I mean the government members — pass this amendment that this member and this caucus are going to be absolutely vigilant in making sure that free votes come to the floor of this Assembly on the issues which affect the ordinary people in this province. We intend to do it. We will do it. On that note, I object to this amendment. I urge members not to pass it.

MR. SCHUMACHER: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to express a few remarks in response to the those of the Opposition House Leader. I rise today as one of two members of this Assembly who did have the occasion, the opportunity, the privilege, or the burden — whatever you wish to call it — of voting in 1976 in the House of Commons on that occasion when capital punishment was abolished, as my hon. friend from Lacombe mentioned, by six votes.

I also think the Opposition House Leader should realize that this is private members' time we're dealing with this afternoon; it's not government time. This is not a government motion, as she indicated. This motion was prepared by the hon. Member for Wainwright, and the amendment before us has been produced by the hon. Member for Taber-Warner. It certainly has no connection with any member of the government.

I suppose like most things in life, we have different points of view when we're in different positions. I guess it's a question of applying the old cliché, "Whose ox is being gored now?" as to what the hon. Opposition House Leader's point of view might be on other things. But this is not a government motion, and the amendment we're dealing with is an amendment to remind the government in Ottawa of a pledge that it made in the 1984 election. The Prime Minister of this country did campaign for success in that election on the basis that during the term of this present government he would bring forth legislation that would be decided by a free vote, and the matter would not be dealt with on the basis of party discipline, as was the abolition of capital punishment in this country. That was dealt with on the government side on the basis of party discipline and the whips being laid on.

Of course I think it's quite clear, when we note that the measure only succeeded by six votes, that action by the government of the day was the reason for the law being changed. We've heard reference this afternoon to the strong desire of Canadians in general to have this matter dealt with. I believe they feel it should be dealt with by their elected representatives who had a chance to campaign on the matter in 1984 when the Prime Minister made it one of the issues that he thought was important.

The reason I support the amendment in particular — and I don't think anyone will have any doubt as to where I stand on the general question of capital punishment in view of the fact that it is a matter of public record and has been for over 10 years now. The fact is that plebiscites cost a lot of money. In this day and age of horrendous deficits in this country, I don't think we need to be launching a national plebiscite which would cost several millions of dollars, when we have elected representatives in Ottawa who know what their people want and should be expected to stand in their place and express that point of view on behalf of their constituents.

Mr. Speaker, I noticed in the discussion this afternoon that many members had difficulty expressing their total point of view because they were confined to the amendment before the House. Therefore, I would like to close my remarks at this time by suggesting that we dispose of that amendment. I would like to move that we deal with the amendment at this time.

MR. SPEAKER: We have a motion that the question be put on the amendment. All those in favour of the motion?

MR. M. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to make some comments with respect to the amendment.

MR. SPEAKER: The Chair was involved in this one earlier time, and I believe I must put the question without debate. I await further advice. The previous question being put therefore means that the question should be put without debate.

AN HON. MEMBER: Shall the question be put?

MR. SPEAKER: May I entertain what your question is.

MR. M. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, could I speak to the point of order of the question of whether or not you should put the question?

MR. SPEAKER: Yes, indeed.

MR. M. MOORE: My understanding is that an amendment to the main motion has been introduced. The members are in a process of debating the amendment. I was unaware that a member could call for the question on an amendment when there were still other members who wish to speak, and I had risen to speak to the amendment, Mr. Speaker. I don't know to what extent those who are learned about the rules, including yourself, can help us. But I don't recall another previous case when an amendment like this has been stopped in terms of its debate because an hon. member requested the vote be called.

MR. SPEAKER: I understand that in *Beauchesne* there is a reference . . .

The Member for Calgary Fish Creek.

MR. PAYNE: Mr. Speaker, I'm hardly an authoritative source on such matters, but in the absence of the Member for Kingsway's predecessor, I would like to draw, if I could, the attention of the Speaker and members present to our *Standing Orders*, with specific reference to section 17(2) which indicates that

all other motions, including adjournment motions, shall be decided without debate or amendment.

The preceding section, prior to the reference to all other motions, lists debatable motions, and the one that I infer from the Member for Drumheller's concluding remarks would preclude any further debate.

MR. SPEAKER: The Chair appreciates the comment, but with respect to *Standing Orders*, I have 17 but no subsection. However, in *Standing Order* 18, it mentions: "The following motions are debatable: every motion" and then under that "(c) for the previous question." And following on a previous learning experience, a "previous question" really does mean to put the question. However, the Chair has also received communication with respect to *Beauchesne* 459, and in this regard, this occurs: that the previous question cannot be put with respect to an amendment. This is a citation from *Beauchesne* 459:

The previous question [being the motion to have the question now put] has been moved upon the various stages of a bill, but it cannot be moved upon an amendment . . .

Therefore, the question as put by the Member for Drumheller is inappropriate, and I would order that the debate continue with respect to the amendment. The Chair recognizes the hon. Minister of Hospitals and Medical Care.

MR. M. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, in speaking to the amendment to Motion 208, I want to make some comments with

respect to the involvement and the jurisdiction of our Legislative Assembly and myself, as one of those legislators, and the government of Canada and make reference in particular to my Member of Parliament and others who are involved there. Firstly, I've always regarded laws which are, by way of our federal Constitution, the responsibility of the federal government, particularly ones in the nature of a situation regarding capital punishment, as matters that ought to be dealt with by the federal Parliament. The debate should occur there and the decision should occur there. There are always exceptions to that. We, of course, get into the area of things like trade and commerce, where we may well look at the British North America Act and realize that trade with other countries is a federal prerogative, but it has such a major economic effect on a provincial government that we involve ourselves from time to time in those debates. But I have taken the position, since I was first elected to this Assembly in August 1971, that matters for debate with respect to capital punishment belong in the House of Commons, and its members, who are elected by the same people that elected me, should be making those decisions.

Following that line of thinking, I find some difficulty in supporting a motion that purports to have this Legislative Assembly and me, as a member of the Legislature for Smoky River, tell the federal Parliament or my federal member of Parliament, Mr. Albert Cooper in this case, what they ought to be doing, or tell the leader of that particular party what they ought to be doing. The federal leader of government today and previous leaders know full well the very difficult problem with respect to a resolution, if there is one, of the issue of capital punishment. Successive Parliaments have dealt with it over the years, and many of us have read those debates with interest and have been swayed by those debates, first one way and then the other way, depending on the kinds of points that the individual is making. I believe it is a matter that at some point in time has to be considered again by the entire Parliament of Canada. I understand that the Prime Minister, in commitments he had made at least prior to his election to that office, had indicated as leader of the federal Progressive Conservative Party that he was prepared to entertain a debate and a discussion in Parliament and that his members would not be bound by party policy with respect to this matter.

I believe therefore, Mr. Speaker, that it would be appropriate for us as members of this Legislature, if we feel strongly about this matter, to contact our federal Members of Parliament. That's what I usually do when I think there's an issue to be dealt with at the federal level. I call my Member of Parliament whether that member be of my own political stripe or some other — fortunately in Alberta usually a Progressive Conservative member — and say to him, "We've got a concern here; it's been brought to my attention by my constituents and yours" and simply express my viewpoint that it's a matter that he or she should attend to at the earliest opportunity. So on that particular point, whether or not a Legislature ought to be saying to another Legislature or a Parliament to another Parliament, "Please take some action, that's in your jurisdiction" by way of a motion such as we're debating today, I think I would have to weigh fairly heavily on the side of saying that is the business of the Parliament of Canada, of people who are elected as Members of Parliament, and not of the provincial Legislature.

If I could just conclude with some remarks about the issue and say this: it's terribly unfortunate when murders

and other loss of life is taken by willful actions of people in our society. But I'm not sure that a strict move back to capital punishment, without somehow or other placing all of those checks and balances in that system that are demanded in a society like ours, is necessarily going to be the answer.

Perhaps one could be persuaded that capital punishment or a return to capital punishment is the way to go if one could be persuaded that that would suddenly eliminate a high percentage of the crime that exists in our country today. I believe there are other reasons. We talked about some of them perhaps in this Assembly when we were discussing even last week matters of mental health and so on. There are other reasons aside from the lack of capital punishment that result in the crimes that are committed on other people's lives. Perhaps our Assembly ought to spend a great deal more time thinking about those other causes and reasons for the kind of situation that exists in Canada today.

The only area where I have some discomfort in suggesting that a return to capital punishment is not the appropriate thing is the area of people we ask to protect us and put on the front lines. Certainly those who are asked to be guards in our criminal system, those who are asked to be law enforcement officers in this country, do have in my view some right to protection from someone who believes that there's no way that they can lose their life by taking another person's life. I find that to be an untenable situation. My recollection is that the Parliament of Canada took that into consideration in a very major way when this matter was last debated and amendments were made. The unfortunate thing, perhaps, is that the actions which need to be taken with respect to those who are in our penal system as guards and law enforcement officers are oftentimes overshadowed by the larger issue of whether or not there should be capital punishment involving everyone in our society.

Mr. Speaker, in conclusion I believe that it's necessary for our Legislature to think very carefully about the extent to which we want to direct the Parliament of Canada and that in so doing we recognize we have specific jurisdictions in this Legislature as well and we may not often want the Parliament of Canada or the federal Members of Parliament advising by resolution how we ought to be conducting ourselves with respect to our responsibilities.

So I conclude, Mr. Speaker, by suggesting that while there may well be some reason to vote for the amendment, the motion itself, whether it's in its original form or amended form, does cause me some discomfort in getting into an area that clearly is a federal responsibility.

MR. FOX: Mr. Speaker, in speaking to the amendment to Motion 208, I'd like to congratulate the hon. minister on some of his comments. I think the benefit of many years of experience in this sort of thing often shows in his remarks. I think what we have to look at in debating this amendment is not the issue of capital punishment itself, which is a very emotional topic and something that we, if it were the place of this House, could debate at great length, but we're looking at the amendment and what the amendment instructs us to do.

I appreciate the remarks from the Member for Drumheller that it's not a government motion. It's a private member's motion, and I can understand the sentiment with which the Member for Wainwright brings forth the motion. Indeed, I'm sure all of us at some time are pressured by conscience or by constituents to discuss this sort of thing. But looking

at the amendment and what the amendment asks us to do, I have to speak against it for two reasons, both of which were eloquently stated by my colleague for Edmonton Highlands.

In the first place, I have a great deal of difficulty with our Assembly here instructing members at the federal level what they should and shouldn't be doing in terms of procedure. We have recommendations for them often on things that they should be doing, but in terms of procedure, especially since we have not had a free vote in this House, I have some great reservations about our feeling that we're quite right in recommending that they do the same.

The other thing that my hon. colleague tried to bring out and I want to emphasize here is that in advancing these arguments we're not trying to compare the act of committing murder to the act of extra billing or introducing punitive labour laws. We're not comparing those as issues. What we're comparing is the fact that there have been things that the government or governments generally advance on occasion that can have direct and negative effects on people in society. This Assembly has not been allowed to vote on those things in a free way in the past. I don't mean to trivialize the kind of emotions that my hon. colleague and friend for Vermilion-Viking feels on this issue of capital punishment, but looking at the terms of the amendment, Mr. Speaker, we're being asked here to instruct the federal government to introduce a Bill to reinstate capital punishment without any instructions about what capital punishment would be administered as punishment for.

We have to be very careful as a Legislature to bring forth motions that we can stand behind, defend, and explain to people in general. I just think that regardless of what the intent of the motion is, the motion and the amendment are poorly conceived and we'd be getting ourselves into a great deal of trouble if we went ahead and voted on this. I might suggest that by whatever procedure this amendment comes to a vote we experiment with a free vote on this very issue in this House now, and that would allow the hon. minister to deviate perhaps from the sentiments expressed by some of his colleagues.

MR. SPEAKER: Might the mover of the amendment sum up on the amendment?

MR. YOUNG: Mr. Speaker, I think this is a good opportunity for me to express a personal view with respect to the proposed amendment.

First of all, I'd like to make it clear that I have very strong reservations about whether this Assembly should be dealing with a matter which is really not the jurisdictional prerogative and responsibility, certainly in a constitutional sense, of this Assembly. Equally, Mr. Speaker, I defend vigorously the right of the hon. Member for Wainwright to bring forward his motion and his views in this Assembly. I guess if I feel strongly that they are inappropriately presented here, I will find myself in the final analysis voting to advance my particular point of view on that matter.

Having said that, I want to say that I have some little difficulty with both the motion and the amendment. My reason for expressing a personal difficulty is that I think we tend to view the question of capital punishment in a very simplistic way. It's either all one way or all the other, and I have come to the conclusion that life isn't quite that simple. Certainly a question of this magnitude, which for many is a question of conscience — for others it's a question of the maintenance of public safety, which is a very, very

important issue in our society. For still others it is a question of cost. If one is a prison guard or working with condemned prisoners — condemned in the sense that they may not be condemned to execution but they may be condemned to life imprisonment. One has to realize just how difficult those kinds of individuals are to protect the guards who have to deal with them and see to the security of those kinds of individuals.

There is also a distinction which could be made between the murderer or the person who is found guilty because they have, possibly in cold blood, knowing that they are being chased by the security forces, taken the life of a member of the security forces who are out there trying to protect us. I really think that is at that stage a different grade of crime than perhaps a murder in a fit of emotional passion. I suppose one can say that when one is being hunted and fearing for one's life, there is a lot of emotion involved. I'm sure there is. But, Mr. Speaker, I make those very brief observations about either one of the suggestions that is before us because I'm not sure that they really address the complexity of this particular subject, at least as I would see it.

In concluding my very brief interjection in the debate, Mr. Speaker, I am having a great deal of difficulty about the interjection in this Assembly and the recommendation to this Assembly that it address a matter which is clearly the constitutional jurisdiction of another body. I feel the same about that as I would if a city council decided to tell this Assembly what we should be doing or if, for that matter, the federal Parliament decided to tell us what we should be doing. From time to time each of those august bodies does verge into our area of jurisdiction. I want to put on the record my discomfort with dealing with a matter which isn't of our jurisdiction and my equal discomfort with what I regard as a somewhat oversimplified proposal, both in the amendment before us and in the original motion on this matter.

MR. MUSGREAVE: Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak on this briefly. I agree with the hon. Minister of Municipal Affairs that if I have a concern about what my Member of Parliament is doing, I just get on the telephone and tell him fairly straightforwardly what I think is bothering me and what we probably could work out together.

I would like to suggest to the hon. members that we've got enough challenges of our own to occupy our debates in this Assembly. We have falling oil prices, we have rising unemployment, we have an increase in suicides, we have the concerns of the mentally ill, we have battered spouses and children, and on and on. The list of those things that we could concern ourselves with is almost endless.

As I suggest, I would have difficulty supporting this amendment. There are many members pressing in the House of Commons for a vote on this issue. I suggest that for us to get involved is at worst presumptuous, but at best it certainly weakens our pressing of the federal government on issues of far greater concern to many more citizens in our province. Objectively, in my view, it would mean that if we really wanted to pass the amendment and the amended motion, first of all we should make a study of those countries that have brought in capital punishment and then compare the statistics as to what actually has happened as far as murders of violence. Then we should compare the statistics of the periods of time when we've had capital punishment in our own country and what the results have been.

If, as some suggest, it would curtail murder, then I would suggest to those members — and I feel that it's not a matter of justice, it's more a matter of revenge — that it should be on prime time television. Not at the midnight hour with few people in attendance, but on prime time in living colour so your children can watch. I think that if this motion is to go to the federal government, it should be amended to suggest that to make it really effective it should become a national spectacle on national television, on prime time and in living colour. I have a simple question that I would like to put to all those who support the amendment: why kill people who kill people to show that killing is wrong?

Mr. Speaker, to return to the amendment, we have not sent a similar message on other issues. It obviously has a low priority with many people. It obviously is a very divisive issue. That perhaps explains why our Prime Minister is trying to postpone it as long as possible, to do the other things that he feels are more pressing in the interests of the nation. For us to tell him how he should have Parliament operate is something I cannot support. Thus I could not support the amendment.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to suggest to some members who have suggested that because the huge majorities of their constituents, 80 or 90 percent, are in favour of capital punishment they should automatically vote — I'd just like to read a very brief item from a speech given in 1774 to the electors of Bristol by Edmund Burke. He says as follows on this issue of who you represent and how:

Certainly, Gentlemen, it ought to be the happiness and glory of a representative to live in the strictest union, the closest correspondence, and the most unreserved communication with his constituents. Their wishes ought to have great weight with him; their opinions high respect; their business unremitted attention. It is his duty to sacrifice his repose, his pleasure, his satisfactions, to theirs, — and above all, ever, and in all cases, to prefer their interest to his own.

But his unbiased opinion, his mature judgment, his enlightened conscience, he ought not to sacrifice to you, to any man, or to any set of men living. These he does not derive from your pleasure, — no, nor from the law and the Constitution. They are a trust from Providence, for the abuse of which he is deeply answerable. Your representative owes you, not his industry only, but his judgment; and he betrays, instead of serving you, if he sacrifices it to your opinion.

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, the very, very important debate before the Assembly today — we're now on the amendment to the motion. I think the amendment, if one looks at it very, very carefully, really has several components attached to it. One deals with the involvement of the Parliament of Canada, the mother of all Parliaments in our great democracy. The second aspect of the motion basically deals with the whole question of reinstating capital punishment. The third part of the motion deals with the question of a free vote on the Bill and of course, associated with the peripheral side of that, whether or not individual Members of Parliament would have an opportunity to vote on the issue independently of party position.

Mr. Speaker, I think it's really important that we are having this debate in the Legislature of Alberta today. This is a matter that has been before the attention of countless numbers of men and women in every constituency from the far north to the deep south and from the east to the west

in our province. This is a matter that is discussed periodically in coffee meetings and as people gather and meet in social functions and the like. As hon. members so far this afternoon have indicated, the matter of capital punishment has been on the national agenda for a rather long time. The hon. mover from Wainwright is to be congratulated for bringing this matter to the attention of this Legislative Assembly in the province of Alberta.

Be that as it may, hon. members, no matter where they sit in this Assembly, may argue that this is a matter that is solely within the jurisdiction of the national Parliament. There's some validity to that argument. They may argue as well that this whole question of capital punishment was dealt with two decades plus ago. There's some validity to that argument. They might also point out the fact that there really hasn't been a great tradition in this Assembly with respect to hon. members being involved in a free vote. There's certainly some validity to that argument. I think it's important that we recognize all of those arguments this afternoon, Mr. Speaker, as we deal with this amendment and this motion.

I think it's really important that we all ask ourselves one question: what is the responsibility of an elected person in our society? Is the responsibility of an elected person in our society to simply get elected, come to this Assembly — or for that matter go to Ottawa — then return three or four years later and say: "Hey, good to see you, Mary. Good to see you, Hank. I'm back. Remember, you voted for me some time ago. I've trotted off to Edmonton, or I've trotted off to Ottawa, and during that time I have made decisions on your behalf, and I want you to know what all those decisions have been." You pull out the *Hansards* and say, "Look, I voted this way." Little Mary or Hank or Henry might periodically want to ask the question: "Well, Mr. MLA or Mr. Member of Parliament, did you consult with me? Did you ask me what my views are? Did you ask me what my thoughts are on a particular issue, on any particular question?" I frankly believe that if the hon. members of this Assembly truly looked into their own hearts and truly looked into their own minds: how many have basically asked the people in this province what views they want expressed on this particular matter?

We haven't heard yet from the hon. Member for Westlock-Sturgeon, a delightful fellow that I had a grand opportunity to run against in 1979. I had a grand opportunity once again to run in 1982. I didn't see him in 1986, and I was looking forward to it, but I do happen to know quite well the people who live within the constituency of Westlock-Sturgeon. I have a great familiarity with what their views are on the question of capital punishment. I happen to be aware, Mr. Speaker, of the various mechanisms and forums that have been used in that constituency over the last number of years to elicit from the individuals who live in Westlock-Sturgeon their views with respect to this very important question. I think it's extremely important that an hon. member must come here and represent those views.

The first and major question that all hon. members have this afternoon in this Assembly is to ask themselves: have they simply been elected to come here and ignore their constituents and go back in four years and say, "Hey, re-elect me again," or is it to ask their individual constituents what their views are on this particular question of capital punishment. I think if the hon. members . . . You know, some have already participated in the debate, and it's their choice to speak on whatever subject matter they want or in the theme they want to use as they bring their thoughts

and their views here to this particular august Chamber. But how many have basically pointed out what the views of their constituents are on this matter?

That brings up a very fundamental question of justice and democracy, Mr. Speaker. I know that there are some systems in the world that basically take the view that an elite must somehow get into power. Once that elite is in power, then it somehow seems to govern on behalf of the people, ignoring what the concerns and the wishes of the people are. I happen to be one who strongly believes that the people are the intelligent factors and forces in our society. It is the people that have the wisdom, and it is the wisdom of the population which will eventually ensure that we have the maximum amount of justice in our society.

When I talk to my constituents in the constituency of Barrhead, they tell me — and they are probably not quite as aggressive on this matter as the men and women who live in Westlock-Sturgeon — quite emphatically that they're quite concerned that the national Parliament has not taken upon itself and placed before it this question of capital punishment. They're telling me: "Ken, what're you going to do about it? Why aren't you doing something about this?" I say: "Well look, you know we've got a Member of Parliament, and I talk to the hon. Member of Parliament, but he happens to take a different point of view than what you're asking for. He happens to be opposed to the question of capital punishment. He says, 'Well, we shouldn't really have capital punishment.'" So then what do these constituents do? Of course they come back to their Member of the Legislative Assembly and say, "How are you going to help us in putting forth the views of us, the people in our constituency, when our Member of Parliament has made the choice and the decision?"

I respect his choice and I respect his decision, but it still comes down to a very basic fundamental question: does the elected person represent the will of the people or does the elected person make a decision upon himself to say, "I'm smarter than you" or "I'm entitled to a greater will than you have and I'll make a decision for you, then you will come back at some point in time and tell me if you're happy with the decision or not"?

On this question, Mr. Speaker, of introducing a Bill in the Parliament of Canada, I am totally supportive of it. I think that the people who live in the constituency of Barrhead have been asking for this, have been demanding it, and want to see this matter brought before the floor of the Canadian Parliament. They want the matter dealt with. If the choice and the decision of the 283 men and women who currently sit in the Canadian House of Parliament — minus the one, of course, who's now joined us here in this Chamber — is to go against capital punishment, so be it. But the decision would have been dealt with, and the matter would have been brought to the proper democratic fruition that countless numbers of men and women not only in this province but in this country are asking for and demanding. They want to have it heard, and they want to have it dealt with.

So the question of, really, reinstating capital punishment is secondary to the main issue, Mr. Speaker: basically having the matter brought to the Canadian House of Commons and the Parliament of Canada. It's a matter that — not to be repetitious or redundant — comes back to the fundamental question of what is the role of an elected Member of the Legislative Assembly or a member of the Canadian House of Commons?

I sincerely hope that hon. members — some of them — who have not yet had an opportunity to participate in

the amendment this afternoon would want to rise in their place and put forward the views of their constituents. I happen to be a Member of the Legislative Assembly who believes very, very strongly that I am here solely because of the will of the people, and it's my responsibility, indeed my sacred responsibility, to represent the majority views of the people who live in the constituency of Barrhead. It is not my right to stand up in this Assembly and say: "Forget it, folks back there. I'll come back and see you in four years, but in the meantime I've trotted off to Edmonton. After all, we're here; we get 75 bucks a day; there's high living, and we just make decisions and periodically let you know what we're doing."

The fact of the matter is, Mr. Speaker, that it is not this hon. member's — some people may debate whether or not I'm honourable — position to remain out of touch with his constituents. Now, they want me to come here. So we're talking about a motion that's calling for a free vote on the Bill. What's wrong with having a free vote now and then?

I really, really applaud the new Member for Edmonton Highlands, who stood up there and really just gave a charge. I really look forward to seeing that kind of enthusiasm on the other side. In many ways it's unfortunate that she has not had an opportunity in the past to be a Member of the Legislative Assembly. We had 79 members before the 1986 provincial election, and surely there was an opportunity for her to have been here before. But now that she is here, the view that she's put forward and the position she's put forward on the particular issue of free vote is a very, very refreshing one, Mr. Speaker.

I can actually think of a number of issues and a number of opportunities in which individual members of the House would want to participate in this kind of item. Really, when you take a look at the Order Paper and the variety of motions that we have on the Order Paper, there are countless numbers that would really allow hon. members on both sides of the House to stand up freely, but not in a group of 16, and on the one hand say, "We're in favour of something," but on the other hand say, "We're opposed to something else." How many of the hon. members, Mr. Speaker, who currently sit in their chairs, and they're not all there this afternoon in the Official Opposition, have risen on this very important question and have stated the views of their constituents? How many? I ask that question.

I don't have the Blues right now, and it won't be until tomorrow that I can really answer that question for myself, so all I can do today is ask the question: how many members? Twenty-five percent of the members in the Liberal caucus are not even here today. We're talking about a free vote, Mr. Speaker, and I haven't heard yet from the hon. members present. I think they have a duty to tell us what their position is on a question of free vote. I think quite frankly, Mr. Speaker . . .

MR. SPEAKER: The Chair and the whole Assembly appreciate enthusiasm, wherever it's coming from, but in that spirit, I'm certain that perhaps the hon. minister is about to rapidly and succinctly conclude his remarks with respect to the amendments so that other members may indeed participate.

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, when you're having fun, time goes by. When you're involved in important public issues, time almost escapes you. I indicated a little earlier that I was elected in the constituency of Barrhead, by a

substantial number of people, by the way, hon. members — better than the last time — to come here and represent their views. Countless numbers have talked to me about this very important question. Now the matter is before the Assembly today.

It was my understanding, Mr. Speaker, that all hon. members had an opportunity to speak up to 30 minutes and question. When I rose, I looked at the clock and it had a couple of minutes past the hour of 5. I appreciate that all members will probably be rushing to the trough to get involved in this debate on this particular issue. I certainly would not want to rob them of the opportunity, but I thought it important, as I know there is interest, and in the public interest and the importance to the hon. men and women of the Assembly today, to know exactly what the position is of the people who live in the constituency of Barrhead and, more particularly, for them to understand and recognize that the Member for Barrhead truly believes and represents the majority views of his constituents. I think that's very important.

I would be delighted, Mr. Speaker, at any time to participate further on this debate. It may very well be that, as the clock winds down this afternoon, we will not all have an opportunity to get back into this. We are currently simply on the question of the motion. Mr. Speaker, I thought the hon. members wanted to know what the views were of the Member for Barrhead.

Thank you.

MR. McEACHERN: Mr. Speaker, could I just suggest to the hon. Member for Barrhead that at least the members on this side of the House spoke to the amendment, which is what you're supposed to do. I have a question for him: what percent is 29 out of 61?

MR. SPEAKER: The question has been addressed to the former speaker.

MR. KOWALSKI: Well, it's certainly less than 50 percent, Mr. Speaker.

MR. FOX: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, [interjections] We know where you belong. I'm just wondering if the hon. Member for Barrhead could tell us how many times people in his constituency actually debated the amendment to Motion 208, because it's never been discussed in that form in my constituency. Otherwise, I certainly would have represented the opinions of the people in my constituency on the amendment to this motion.

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to have the question. I think it's important, first of all, for the hon. member to know that there are a variety of communication mechanisms that an MLA who is really concerned about communicating with his constituents might want to take. First of all, I have a regular radio show once a week on a very important radio station called CFOK radio. It's dial 1370. It's Saturday at 12:02 in the noon hour. I express concerns and I bring forth issues.

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, I write a column. It's written by myself, not a researcher, but penned by myself. It may surprise some members that one does have a command of the language, but nevertheless done by myself. It's included in all the newspapers on a regular basis. There are no rewrites, no reruns. This has been going on for seven years,

so that's about 365 different and unique columns. That's only a second form of communication.

Thirdly, Mr. Speaker, periodically I undertake advertisements in the various newspapers asking for people's views on a number of issues. This issue of capital punishment has come forward on a number of. . .

MR. SPEAKER: The specific point of order, which I know is about to be addressed by yourself, is with respect to the question raised by the Member for Vegreville as to this exact wording of the amendment.

MR. KOWALSKI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The last opportunity I basically had to convey this question of capital punishment to my constituents was approximately one year ago, when advertisements were taken out. I guess there were about 12,000 or 13,000 papers from which I received approximately 1,200 or 1,300 responses. Recently, in the spring of 1985 questions were asked at a number of trade fairs in which I participated for three days' duration on both occasions and asked people what their views were on a number of issues, including Sunday shopping and capital punishment. I know what the views are, Mr. Speaker. It's very, very current information.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you very much. The Member for Calgary Currie.

MS BARRETT: Saved by the bell, Ken.

MR. ANDERSON: Mr. Speaker, while I'm reluctant to end this enthusiastic and exciting exchange, I move that the debate be adjourned.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. member for. . . I apologize to the minister. I have known him in other manifestations since 1979. The hon. Minister of Culture has moved the adjournment of the debate. All those in favour of the motion, please say aye.

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: All those opposed, please say no. The motion is carried.

MR. ANDERSON: Mr. Speaker, I move that when the House sits this evening it do so in Committee of Supply and that it remain as such until it rises and reports. That will begin at 8 p.m. for discussion on the estimates of Social Services. I'm sorry, Mr. Speaker, if I could correct that, it is indeed Recreation and Parks. Social Services will be tomorrow.

MR. SPEAKER: Having heard the motion by the hon. Acting Government House Leader that when the members reassemble at 8 p.m. they will be in Committee of Supply, does the Assembly agree?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed, if any? Carried.

[The House recessed at 5:28 p.m.]

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

head: **COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY**

[Mr. Gogo in the Chair]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Could the committee come to order, please.

Department of Recreation and Parks

MR. CHAIRMAN: The government has called the Department of Recreation and Parks, page 311 in your estimates book and page 133 in the elements book. The Hon. Norm Weiss is the minister. Mr. Weiss, would you care to make some opening comments?

MR. WEISS: Yes, I would, Mr. Chairman. Before we proceed, though, I'd like to make sure all members are aware that they have two material handout kits on their desks. I hope they have time to review some of the items. If there are any concerns, we'd certainly be prepared to respond later.

Before we get into the budget items specifically, Mr. Chairman, I'd like to take a minute to introduce some of our senior staff who are in the gallery tonight. I'd ask that they stand and be recognized: Barry Mitchelson, deputy minister; Don Cline, assistant deputy minister; Dave Rehill, executive director; Ken Wilson and Bruce Duffin, branch directors; Sherri Thorsen, the Olympic Secretariat; and Rod Burkhardt, Kananaskis Country, [applause] My thanks to members of the Assembly. I'm pleased to have them here. I'd certainly like members to feel free that their office door, as well as mine, is open at any time, and they're there to work with us and for us.

With their help and guidance in particular, I say that credit is due to the department for the positive program and management initiatives which have been implemented by Alberta Recreation and Parks. Mr. Chairman, I'd like to say that much of this has been under the direction and guidance of my predecessor, the hon. Member for Whitemcourt.

Mr. Chairman, tonight I would like to perhaps speak for about a half hour on some of the highlights, activities, and ongoing events of the department and would then welcome the opportunity to try and respond by answering questions and concerns that may or may not arise. I would try and respond in a short manner so that we would be able to complete as many questions as may come forward.

The continuing trend toward fiscal responsibility, while maintaining an equitable balance of meeting public needs and desires, demonstrates what I believe is a clear commitment to maintaining a high degree of quality in the development and delivery of programs, services, and facilities. Tempering public expectation with economic realities is a challenge all public-sector managers face on an ongoing basis. The quality of programs which continue to be delivered within that framework is the bottom-line statement of how well a department is performing.

I'm pleased to say that Alberta Recreation and Parks, in my opinion once again, Mr. Chairman, is performing well. This continuing effort toward developing a leaner, more efficiently run department is clearly evidenced in a few key areas. When we consider, for example, manpower

reductions within the design and implementation division, the realization of achieving a more cost-effective staff establishment can be seen. This division has managed to significantly reduce its project manpower since 1982. From an economic perspective, manpower reduction initiatives have been translated into direct transfers of funding to the private sector for the fulfillment of professional services.

With respect to permanent staff, Mr. Chairman, the division was able to reduce the staff complement from some 113 positions to 84 during the same period. That's a reduction of some 29 persons. Similarly, in the parks operations and maintenance division the department has realized a reduction from some 555 person-years in 1983-84 to just over 500 projected for this year. In total, Mr. Chairman, the department has reduced its permanent staff complement by an average of some 2.2 percent per year since 1982. That relates to from some 642 positions to some 585 over the past four years. I believe those statistics speak clearly of this department's commitment to strive for more streamlined operations, a commitment that I'm sure you will agree is in the best interests of both the public and overall government initiatives and, I believe, one that the members of the opposition will well support.

The department also recognizes that because it is particularly people-oriented in the design and delivery of its programs, we must keep the needs and concerns of the public at the forefront in meeting operational objectives. To that end the department has undertaken to amend the Provincial Parks Act and general regulations in order to ensure that Albertans can more readily and easily gain access to our programs. I'm sure the hon. member across has a concern with regard to access, and I'd love to deal with it later.

This amended legislation is now generally viewed as being clearer in its intent, which in turn will undoubtedly improve public acceptance and understanding of the legislation. The department has also successfully deregulated its financial assistance programs. As an example, some 32 pages of regulations governing three separate grant programs have now been streamlined to just two pages of regulations covering one comprehensive program; namely, the community recreation/cultural grant program, a major reduction and I would say an elimination of red tape. The move to significantly cut government red tape and allow greater access and understanding of government programs is one which I'm sure all Albertans will applaud. It is a move that I'm particularly supportive of and will continue to stress within the department and work with the department to see that we meet that goal.

Privatization has been another key initiative of the department over the past several years, and it is an area where this department has a particularly impressive track record. For example, in just over four years the design and implementation division has increased the percentage of work contracted for capital projects to the private sector from some 48 percent to 98 percent. This year the division anticipates that some \$7.2 million will be spent on capital projects through contracts with the private sector. In addition, the department expects to contract out some \$5.2 million for a variety of other services, which could bring the total private-sector involvement to just under \$12.5 million in service and construction contracts. This very positive move has resulted from a decisive shift in emphasis from a hands-on approach in the area of parks construction to one of project management.

At the same time, Mr. Chairman, in the areas of parks operation and maintenance action has been taken towards

increasing the purchasing of certain park-related services such as refuse collection, grass cutting, septic pump out, the provision of firewood, and other general maintenance-related work, which certainly helps support the private sector.

In the move toward increased privatization, the department has not and will not relinquish the stewardship responsibility it has for Alberta's much treasured and diverse parklands. Mr. Chairman, I believe that is a very important commitment to the members of this Assembly. Wherever possible, whether it is contracting with planning and design consultants and construction contractors or purchasing the provision of local community-based service operations, the department will continue to encourage private-sector involvement in our parks operations and construction programs.

On the recreation side as well, the department began moving toward greater diversification in the program delivery area. This is seen with the creation in 1984 of the Alberta Sport Council, an arm's-length Crown corporation whose objectives include fund-raising and other corporate-sector involvements and a group that I'm very proud of. Joint venturing, where the department provides the capital infrastructure for service which is then managed by a private operator, has been another initiative to encourage and secure private-sector participation. Perhaps the best case in point is the operation of the Kananaskis Country golf course. Others include the Strathcona Science Park ski hill, a golf course at Lesser Slave Lake Provincial Park, and the development of substantially upgraded downhill ski facilities in Cypress Hills Provincial Park, which I'll outline in detail in a few minutes.

Mr. Chairman, collectively these initiatives have added up to a significantly improved level of co-operation and involvement between government and the private sector, which has resulted in reduced public-sector costs and improved services in the overall department, an admirable objective for any government and one from which this department can claim some very positive results. I might also point out that privatization does not start and stop with the corporate private sector. The department has also undertaken appropriate action to involve community organizations. For example, take the participation of a local sailing club in delivering programs at Kinbrook Island Provincial Park, the involvement of Boy Scouts and Girl Guides at Cypress Hills Provincial Park, and the Pioneer Ranch Camp at Crimson Lake. These, too, are but small examples and an important facet of privatization of the departmental services.

All of these initiatives are carefully reviewed to ensure that they do not jeopardize the integrity of our parks or programs while at the same time providing maximum benefits and returns for both the community and the businessperson alike. These approaches help to diversify Alberta's economic base and provide employment opportunities. For example, last year in construction projects undertaken by or financially supported through the department, the estimated implications for the private sector were significant. Through projects involving such areas as Kananaskis Country, provincial parks and recreation areas, the 1988 Winter Olympics, the various grant programs, and the urban parks program, it is estimated that about 1,700 person-years of employment were generated with a total economic impact of approximately \$75 million. Add this to the influence on local and regional economies through contracting services for the operation and maintenance in our provincial parks and recreation areas and the economic spin-offs that result from such initiatives and you can see that the department continues to contribute a positive economic climate for Alberta and Albertans as well.

In conjunction with the economic impacts I've just mentioned are the tourism development-related initiatives involving the department. These include the provision of a wide range of recreation and parks opportunities closely lying to and in many cases part of the tourism industry in Alberta. The department's programs and services related to the tourism industry both currently and as they might enfold in the future are reflected most clearly in the areas of the department's parks and open space system, the hosting of major sport and recreation events, and the development of a municipal recreation and parks facility base.

Mr. Chairman, I'd like at this time to touch on some of these areas to briefly demonstrate the benefits of the department's involvement, recognizing that last year there were in excess of some 4.6 million public visitations through the department's park systems. Mr. Chairman, I say 4.6 million; if you use the 2.3 million factor, that's the population of Alberta. Every Albertan visited the facilities twice, if we were to use that as a comparison. Consideration is being given towards improving the present system of parks and recreation areas with a view toward providing a wider spectrum of opportunities. These opportunities would range from wilderness recreation to basic outdoor recreation experiences and to simple travel stopovers in wayside recreation areas which are more and more in demand. In this regard, the department has continued to proactively promote a good host image portrayed through our parks field staff while at the same time providing greater flexibility in land use controls and multiple use of existing land bases.

Program areas such as our campsite reservation system and interpretive education services, coupled with the general upgrading of services and facilities for camping and other related outdoor recreation opportunities, all help to enhance and improve our tourism industry. Mr. Chairman, it is important to recognize as well that Alberta has gained a worldwide reputation for the successful hosting of major special events which generate significant economic benefits to the province. Between 1978 and 1988 this province will have hosted such international events as the Commonwealth Games, the Universiade games, and the Winter Olympic Games. Such events are set on a world stage, and I am proud to say that Alberta has shown a worthiness as a host province that has gained respect and admiration the world over.

If we're to continue to be a world leader in this regard, we must continue to invest in our future with initiatives which carry long-term benefits for all Albertans. It is with this belief that we will commit some \$11.5 million in grants to the University of Calgary in this fiscal year to assist with a major facility expansion of the athletes' village in preparation for the 1988 Winter Olympic Games. I'd remind members of the opposition and those that are critical of the expense that I emphatically said "long-term benefits for all Albertans." We can't have these facilities and we can't continue to provide the services for the public without having to foot the bill.

This \$11.5 million is a major budget item and constitutes a significant investment on the part of this government. It is an investment which is not only expected and required for the hosting of such a world-class event but one which will provide a valuable legacy for generations to come. It is indeed an investment for our future and in particular for our young citizens of tomorrow.

The hosting of and participation in amateur sporting events is important to Albertans on a provincewide basis. Through our support and involvement in programs such as

the Alberta Summer Games, Alberta Winter Games, Special Olympics, Western Canada Games, the Seniors Games, and the Canada Summer Games, we're helping to develop better athletes in encouraging participation in positive life-style pursuits. Amateur sport competitions have been developed at all levels in order to allow maximum opportunities for all Albertans.

This past March an Alberta north contingent of athletes participated for the first time in the Arctic Winter Games held in the Yukon. Initially, our involvement was experimental. We are now committed to future participation in these games, because we are convinced, Mr. Chairman, that they will add another dimension to sport development opportunities to Albertans living in more isolated communities in northern Alberta and provide the opportunity to them. The Arctic Winter Games are held every two years, and \$60,000 has been identified in this year's budget to assist in athlete training and selection in preparation for the 1988 games in Alaska.

On a different scale but of equal importance to Albertans are our program initiatives aimed at developing and sustaining a municipal recreation and parks facility base. Over the next four years we will see a commitment of some \$11.5 million from the Heritage Savings Trust Fund allocated to communities throughout Alberta through the new municipal recreation tourism areas program. This program, with an annual budget of \$2.5 million coupled with the transfer of an existing \$1.5 million from the former municipal recreation areas program, will go toward the development, construction, and operation of community-based facilities.

Recognizing that municipal recreation and cultural facilities are vital components of tourism development in Alberta, the commitment of these funds will help to broaden the base of our tourism industry as well as provide much needed facilities and enhanced opportunities at the community level. It will further allow for greater sharing of the economic benefits generated by such developments and in particular as well will involve the private sector once again.

In question period in the House in the last month, I responded to a question from the hon. Member for Bow Valley. I had indicated that I would be supplying a list of the municipal recreation tourism areas program. I'd like to circulate that list now to all hon. members, Mr. Chairman, if I may. I have copies for the pages, if they wouldn't mind.

The first phase, Mr. Chairman, sees the approval of some 26 municipal recreation tourism areas involving the \$100,000 program. I would encourage all MLAs at this time to submit their application so we could get on to the second- and third-year phase of the program, so they would know when they are approved so funds would be in place and preparation and planning could be done well in advance of these.

Our belief in a more diverse approach to recreation and cultural facility development and program delivery is further evidenced through the community recreation/cultural grant program, which constitutes a major portion of this department's budget. This five-year program, which is now entering its second year, provides \$100 per capita in funding to assist municipalities and volunteer community groups and clubs in the delivery of community-based recreation and cultural services.

Mr. Chairman, it's no small dollar value. Some \$48.2 million has been allocated to this program this year. That will go toward facility development and operation and maintenance as well as recreation and cultural programming,

planning, and service delivery. It is a program which helps support the very foundation of our society at the grass-roots community level.

As we look to the future with programs such as this, we can also look to the past to see what possibilities have been realized. This calendar year will see the end of our commitment on the capital development side of the urban parks program, a five-year program supported by the Heritage Savings Trust Fund which has made possible the development of urban parks and recreation facilities in the cities of Medicine Hat, Red Deer, Lethbridge, Lloydminster, and Grande Prairie. With the end of the capital phase of this program on December 31 of this year, a total of \$87 million will have been committed, while the operating phase will continue into the year 2011 to ensure the long-term viability of these projects. To all members of the Assembly, I commend them for that decision to ensure — as all hon. members I'm sure will agree — that the operating facet of the program is indeed a very important stage of it.

I'm very pleased to say, Mr. Chairman, that two of these urban parks — namely the Bud Miller All Seasons Park in Lloydminster, named after the former member, and the Muskasepee Park in Grande Prairie — have now been totally opened to the public. While partial openings have been possible with the remaining three, I'm sure residents of all these cities are greatly looking forward to the recreation opportunities these facilities will provide for many years to come.

Our commitments are also continuing in the area of upgrading and developing our provincial parks and recreation areas. Parks wear out, Mr. Chairman. Some people might be surprised to find that out. This year \$6.5 million will go toward our ongoing upgrading and development program to ensure that our park and recreation facilities are maintained at the high-quality level expected by Albertans. While some of our park users may experience minor inconveniences due to park closures necessary during construction, they will find significantly improved facilities once these parks are reopened for public use. I certainly apologize to those people we have inconvenienced, but I'm sure they'll see that the ongoing, long-term benefits will be for all for many years to come.

In many instances, such as was the case with the recent reopenings of Saskatoon Island and Hasse Lake Provincial Parks, for example, the user public will find a virtually brand-new park on an old, familiar site. Maybe we should be doing that with some of the members — I'm not sure; have a face lift. I didn't look back at all when I said that. The millions of visitations our parks receive each year represent a clear statement from the people of the importance they place on this cherished natural resource. It is a natural resource, Mr. Chairman, that we must administer and look after.

I spoke earlier, Mr. Chairman, of the importance we place on ensuring that the private sector is given the opportunity to participate jointly with government in the delivery of certain services. A case in point, which I briefly mentioned a few minutes ago, is the substantial upgrading of the downhill ski facilities in Cypress Hills Provincial Park. This is a three-year, \$3 million program, which will see a commitment of \$700,000 this first year towards site preparation and development. Ultimately, once this project is complete, we will seek to enter into an agreement with the private sector to operate and maintain this facility. This approach has two distinct advantages. It ensures that regional needs for enhanced recreation opportunities are met while

the allocation of public funds is minimized through the involvement of the private sector. Of course, it also provides economic benefits to the region through enhanced employment opportunities, as I mentioned earlier, and a diversification of local tourism attractions, which is much needed to ensure that the public come, see, and use.

Diversity is also the key word when we consider program areas such as the Blackfoot grazing reserve concept near Elk Island park, a multi-use recreation area just east of Edmonton, which will see over \$600,000 earmarked for development this year. This funding, while administered by Alberta Recreation and Parks, is designated as well from the Heritage Savings Trust Fund and made available for facility development purposes through Alberta Forestry, Lands and Wildlife, a case, Mr. Chairman, of the departments working together for Albertans. The Blackfoot grazing reserve is now becoming operational, and the long-range planning objectives for the area are currently being mapped out by an interdepartmental committee to ensure that all user needs are addressed. A marketing plan for the area has been initiated this year, which will help to set future development directions. Throughout this process — and this is important, Mr. Chairman, and I'm sure all members would be pleased to hear — we are ensuring that the public has a voice in future decision-making from the establishment of management objectives to the actual development of facilities. It's not a one-way show. It's not our program. It's a program for the public and the users of Alberta.

Mr. Chairman, with specific reference to Kananaskis Country, vote 5 in particular, if all hon. members would like to look at it, I viewed the Kananaskis Country budget in the context of the remarkable growth and popularity of the area. Visitor use in the 600-plus square mile park — I can't relate how many football fields that is, but I'm sure it's more than the nine the hon. member referred to. It is a multi-use recreational area. Last year over 2 million visitors — some 2.3 visitors, almost every single Albertan, if you were to take that again as a comparison — visited the park. So all hon. members will be aware of the users, it is anticipated that this year visitors to Kananaskis Country will in all probability exceed 3 million.

AN HON. MEMBER: That's got to be 50 times over.

MR. WEISS: Well, sometimes you need to be counted 50 times over, but that's all right.

With two Olympic venues in Kananaskis Country — Nakiska at Mount Allan and the Canmore Nordic Centre — both popularity and use will continue to grow. Demand for overnight hotel accommodation in Kananaskis Country gives rise to the development of the Kananaskis village at Ribbon Creek. An important aspect of the village is the resort association. The government is committed to assisting the resort association with marketing, promotion, and operation of the common facilities. It will also act co-operatively with the ski area, golf course, and RV park.

Mr. Chairman, members will note many of those particular items in vote 5. I raise attention to them so they will understand why that type of fund is being committed. Construction of an emergency service building with its fire, ambulance, and rescue vehicles again reflects the service level required in Kananaskis Country due to the increasing number of facilities and visitors. I had the pleasure, Mr. Chairman, of officially opening this facility on Friday, June 11.

The William Watson Lodge, the popular facility for handicapped, disabled, and senior citizens in Peter Lougheed Provincial Park, has been expanded to double its capacity, resulting in increased operating costs which are reflected in this budget. I was also there this weekend, Mr. Chairman, and it will be fully open for use very shortly. I point that out because in vote 5.2 there's a significant increase in the operating cost. I think it can be rationalized, if everybody were to understand that the facility becomes twice as large as it was.

I want to make reference to a letter, Mr. Chairman, that I just recently received from the War Amputations of Canada. It comes from H. Clifford Chadderton, the chief executive officer. He refers to the handicapped skiers and the training they're going to use in this facility. I'm sure everybody has seen a gentleman by the name of Mr. Karl Hilzinger, the sports consultant, at one time or another in a television commercial. Mr. Karl Hilzinger, as well as others, will be using this facility shortly. I would just like to close by reading one sentence:

... congratulations are to be extended to yourself and the Alberta government in regard to the William Watson concept. I know of no similar facility anywhere in the world.

It's so true, Mr. Chairman. I would encourage everybody to see it personally.

To more accurately meet the demands for visitor information, major upgrading of information materials and increased quantities are also reflected in this budget. Every attempt to maintain a satisfactory level of program delivery in 1986 and '87 will be made and — I make this commitment to all hon. members — without increasing permanent positions.

Mr. Chairman, while restraint measures have been ongoing over the past several years, the department has also been re-evaluating some program areas which require some expansion because of demand. A case in point is the Percy Page Centre in Edmonton — I'm sure hon. members are familiar — a program which provides administrative support to some 108 provincial recreation and sport associations. The intent of providing such support is to allow these associations to operate more effectively and efficiently, thereby better serving their respective constituents.

Currently the Percy Page Centre operates from three separate locations, and requirements for the services provided continue to increase. It is our intent as a result of this, Mr. Chairman, to consolidate the centre's operations at one location in Edmonton later this fiscal year. This consolidation will also allow the centre to increase its accommodation capacity from 33 resident and 33 nonresident associations at present to some 70 resident and 45 nonresident associations which are forecast for future program use. This support role approach is in keeping with the department's philosophy of helping others to help themselves.

Mr. Chairman, I'm going to take about three minutes to summarize here and will then sit down to answer any questions I may have. Many of the associations which receive administrative support through the Percy Page Centre or are granted developmental and operational funding through other departmental programs are associations run by volunteers. The development of volunteerism has been an underlying objective of the department for many years and continues to be encouraged in ways that enhance existing programs. Through the operation of such facilities as the Blue Lake Centre, which helps to train Albertans for work with volunteer associations and community groups, to the

co-ordination of initiatives like our campground host program, the department continues to support and encourage the role of volunteers. Personally, Mr. Chairman, I don't think enough can be said about the value of volunteers in today's society, as many of our recreation programs and social services simply would not exist without them. As a department, Alberta Recreation and Parks will continue to put a very high priority on volunteer development through our range of programming.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, I'd like to reiterate my support of the management initiatives which have been undertaken in Recreation and Parks in an attempt to provide the best, most responsive programming possible and the most effective and efficient management. With the sense of dedication and commitment I've witnessed to date, I am convinced this department will continue to strive for excellence in the level of quality and delivery of its program responsibilities.

Mr. Chairman, as I said earlier, I've tried to highlight some of the activities, programs, and future goals in my overview. I fully appreciate that hon. members have questions pertaining to individual items and votes within the estimates, and I welcome the opportunity to try and respond to their concerns. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and hon. members.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Minister, you made reference to the urban parks program, which I believe is funded under the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund and therefore not in these votes. The Chair probably requires some guidance. But as that vote is not being considered, perhaps those comments could wait until the heritage fund estimates are called for your department, if that's satisfactory.

MR. WEISS: Mr. Chairman, I might say that if anything is good and the department can say something good about something, it was an opportunity to say it. Maybe if you want to leave it at that, I'll accept it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Perhaps I could read to the committee those who have indicated they wish to speak, and members could judge themselves accordingly. This is the order: Calgary Mountain View, Stony Plain, leader of the Liberal Party, Banff-Cochrane, Cypress-Rédcliff, Highwood, Edmonton Calder, Edmonton Glengarry, Athabasca-Lac La Biche, Edmonton Strathcona, Calgary Millican, and Wainwright. The hon. Member for Calgary Mountain View, please.

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Mr. Chairman, I appreciate your reiterating the list, and with that as your way of gently reminding me to keep to the point and not wander in order to let as many fellow colleagues get on the agenda this evening, I'll launch into what I think will end up being more a series of questions the minister could at some time come back with responses to.

I'd like to begin my comments this evening, Mr. Chairman, by referring very briefly to some of my experience as a former member of city council in Calgary and saying to the minister and the people in his department and the government some things that I have previously said as to what a good program this community recreation assistance program has been to municipalities. Certainly to communities all over the city of Calgary, it has meant a great deal to those people in getting their community facilities, recreation centres, and sports facilities together.

I must say this is one example in particular where municipalities brought concerns about that program to the government some year or two ago, made recommendations, and they were carefully listened to and implemented. As a result of that consultative process, I think we have a program in this province that is commendable and one which I applaud. I think the key aspect of that particular program, Mr. Chairman, was that it was a partnership with another level of responsible government, and I think that is a very key reason for its success in being able to deliver those programs in a meaningful way to individual neighbourhood communities, at least as they are in the city of Calgary.

The minister did make reference to urban parks, and I think the whole concept of the provincial parks system should also be seen as a partnership with the urban parks within the province. I'm going to speak again from my particular perspective as a representative from one of the province's largest urban municipalities, that being the city of Calgary. I am particularly concerned that we do with one hand and take away with another.

I recognize some of the leadership this government and the department have in the area of providing for urban parks. We have a very successful and popular provincial park in Fish Creek in the city of Calgary, and I know others have been built in other cities. But last fall the former Minister of Municipal Affairs indicated that he was giving very serious consideration to making changes to the Municipal Government Act which would make it extremely difficult for urban municipalities to go about the process of acquiring property which they have identified in long-range planning documents for parks purposes.

The reason I'm concerned about this in particular, Mr. Chairman, is that for many years many citizens within the city of Calgary have been working very hard to make Nose Hill park a reality. It's a large area of land in the north end of the city of Calgary. The city of Calgary itself has acquired over half of the 2,600 acres designated for that particular park, but another 1,200 to 1,400 acres still remain to be acquired by the city of Calgary. By the way, they started their acquisitions in the early '70s. Those properties are privately owned, and to this point there has not been a possibility of the city being able to reach a mutually agreed purchase price for those lands. Because of the size of them, the city has a very difficult financial base on which to proceed with those acquisitions if the acquisition prices are not going to be favourable to the city. By the same token, it's very reluctant to proceed with expropriation, because the Land Compensation Board is in a position to make the determination as to value. Again, if that determination was not positive, the city would not be able to afford that acquisition.

In order to intervene in this impasse, the former minister indicated that changes were being contemplated and would be introduced in this Legislature to amend the Municipal Government Act or the Alberta planning Act to prevent municipalities from delaying its acquisition process. I want to say to this government that in my view that would undercut any progress and any accomplishments they've made in being able to help municipalities across Alberta acquire urban parklands. The problem would be that long-term plans in planning documents, like area structure plans, general municipal plans, land use bylaws, and so on, relative to community open space areas and parks would have to be excluded, because if these kinds of amendments were brought in that were contemplated by the former minister, they would force the municipalities into choosing between

expropriation at unknown cost very shortly after adopting those plans or else releasing those lands for development if they were not successful in reaching a sale agreement with those private landowners. It would make it extremely difficult for municipalities to make any meaningful plans for the long-term acquisition of lands for parks. As I'm sure the minister is well aware, those urban parks in our large cities are probably more frequently and more intensively used than any other parks anywhere in our province. I don't want to see this government undercut the ability of municipalities in that area.

The minister's department has also circulated a policy statement for the Department of Recreation and Parks. It's a draft statement which I would first of all like to commend the department for proceeding with. I don't think there are many other provincial jurisdictions in Canada that are proceeding with this sort of process, and I would like to say to you that in my view a process that asks for the input of the public and for interest groups and people who have a stake in parks and recreation — getting that input is valuable. It's all part of a participatory democracy and in the end I think leads to good decision-making.

But I also recognize that a similar process was used in determining the Eastern Slopes policy many years ago in the '70s, which was also a positive process and the policies were good. But at some point the government turned its back on public participation and altered the Eastern Slopes policy without a series of public hearings. As a result, I believe that document is faulty and limited, and I think it was in many ways a step backwards from some enlightened policy direction. So I commend the minister, and I hope his department will continue to make public participation in determining its policy a very high priority.

However, having looked at the draft statement, I must put in my strongest possible objections to any statement that would waffle on the issue of allowing oil and gas exploration and extraction and commercial mineral exploration and extraction in provincial parks. As it reads, it states:

Commercial mineral, oil and gas exploration and extraction will not be permitted in Ecological Reserves and Wilderness Areas; and will not normally be permitted in Provincial Parks ...

Mr. Chairman, it's very important that the word "normally" be dropped from that draft statement. I think we need a clear and stronger statement that these will not be permitted in provincial parks, normally or abnormally.

I'd also like to make note of the minister's extensive comments on the area of privatization. He made a number of claims for the privatization of services in his department. I have not seen any evidence in front of us that we can properly evaluate the claims the minister has made as to the benefits of privatization in his department. I don't know what examples we can look at. For example, the Bar E & H lease on the shores of Ghost Lake, which is just west of the city of Calgary. One of the first things I did as a member of this Legislature was to table a petition from close to 1,000 fellow Albertans who were not at all happy with the way that decision was taken and the effects that decision has had on their access to Ghost Lake. So in that regard, I would like the minister in his remarks to explain what his government has done with that petition. Are they responding to the individuals? Will they be making a public statement? Will they be reviewing those leases with a view to altering their terms and conditions?

At no time have I seen those leases, those sale agreements, or whatever it was that brought about that privatization of that area. Nowhere have I seen the financial affairs tabled and made public so we can evaluate how successful this has been in cutting costs or improving services. Obviously, if it improves services, we wouldn't be getting 1,000 signature petitions in the Alberta Assembly.

The Ribbon Creek hotel and village: is that an example of privatization? Or Mount Allan? I again understand from reports that the minister is not going to release details on the Ski Kananaskis proposal. How can we evaluate the success of privatization if the financial deals that go along with privatization are never made public? So my question to the minister is: in terms of these private deals that are made to farm out the operation, the management of recreation services and provincial parks, are those leases, sale agreements, or whatever they might be, part of the public record? Are they public information?

I know in the city of Calgary, for example, any land sale had to go through a public meeting of city council. It's available in the city clerk's office. You can just go down and you can get it. Lease agreements hundreds of pages in length — you can go down and you can get that information. Can we do the same with any provincial leases or any provincial sales, particularly in the area of the parks department? Are those public information?

I'd also like to briefly turn to some questions about the Olympics. I think all of us want to contribute to the success of the 1988 Winter Games. For some that's taking on the role of asking the difficult questions about the financial plans of OCO '88 and the participation of this government in those plans. In my opinion, part of the success of the 1988 Winter Olympics will be that the legacy left will not be the financial legacy left in the 1976 Summer Olympics Games in Montreal.

The price increases for Olympic facilities are following a general trend, that being that prices are constantly increasing. In 1981 the estimates were \$415 million; in January of 1985, \$630 million; in March 1985, \$718 million; and in March 1986, the estimates are \$838 million. They've doubled since 1981. Major developments were slated to occur in 1985-86 with facilities ready for Olympic testing by 1986-87. With these increases in costs already and many of the projects still under way, can we be assured by the minister that the price of the 1988 Winter Olympics will not be increasing substantially over those announced in March of 1986? Judging by the funding received by the athletes' village in the estimates in vote 4.4.2, could the minister assure the Assembly and the people of Alberta that the costs will not go over budget, as was the case with the Olympic Saddledome and McMahon Stadium?

In vote 5.2.5 emergency services have grown 100 percent from last year's estimates. I'm pleased with the commitment to emergency needs. What does that jump reflect? Does it reflect any indication that funding was initially inappropriate or inadequate? Vote 5.3.1 shows major maintenance is up 75 percent to \$1 million. What are the projects receiving these amounts of money? Are they going to golf courses? Are they going to roads? Are there some other areas where these maintenance dollars are being spent?

The province is playing a major role in the 1988 Winter Olympics, along with the city of Calgary and the federal government. Is the minister satisfied that financial controls are in place to ensure that expenditures will not exceed revenues? I'd like to ask as well if the minister is satisfied and if he would outline to the House whether contingency

plans are in place to alter any expenditure commitments of the 1988 Olympic Winter Games if revenues for some reason might fall short of projections. My next question, also related to the Olympics, is: to what extent is the province of Alberta responsible or liable for debts if for some reason the expenditures by the Olympic Games Organizing Committee exceed their revenues?

Mr. Chairman, I asked earlier about the privatization of provincial parks and recreation facilities. I did mention that in my view where those have succeeded and succeeded well it has been where they have been done in partnership with another level of responsible government. In all cases that I'm aware of that has been with the municipal level of government. In those instances also the financial arrangements are public knowledge. Do the same principles apply with regard to privatization in the private sector? Why do these negotiations have to be kept confidential, particularly in regard to the Ribbon Creek hotel, Mount Allan, or Ski Kananaskis? Is the \$25 million figure attached to the cost of Mount Allan taking into account all of the public costs that may be incurred? Again, this comes back to the matter of maintenance mentioned earlier. Are road construction, road maintenance, and especially winter clearing of access roads part of that \$25 million figure, or are those the kinds of costs that we might find in the Transportation department's budget?

Is the government willing as well to make public the deal at the Kananaskis hotel? Does this deal with the Ribbon Creek hotel include costs for ground construction, or is this to be another public expense? How much of the cost is the government actually going to pay, and what percentage of the total does this work out to? I wonder if it's anywhere near the 75 percent figure touted by some people.

This Kananaskis hotel contract was granted to Stuart Olson Construction Limited. Mr. Allan Olson was named manager of the construction of the 250-room hotel project. Why did this project not go out to tender, even if the sterling capital group did pull out? Shouldn't all government projects go to tender? I would like to know what this government's and this department's policy is on the matter of public tender, as well as the doing of public business in public.

With that series of questions, Mr. Chairman, I'll conclude my remarks. Thank you.

MR. HERON: Mr. Chairman, I note with some pleasure the Minister of Recreation and Parks' remarks about reducing the total manpower from 1982 from 642 to 585, which translates to a 2.2 percent annual reduction, while at the same time introducing enhanced programs which positively affect many Albertans.

I would like to applaud your emphasis on this privatization and ask for your encouragement of privatization of all services and programs which compete directly with the private sector. I think there are some further advances that could be made in this direction.

Looking over your handout this evening, which shows the municipal recreation tourism areas program, I can assure you that the village of Wabamun will appreciate the \$100,000 earmarked for a major recreation area development. I'm delighted to have the task of communicating that to them.

I have a question which I would like to ask that deals with the recent announcement pertaining to municipal recreation tourism areas. I have some concerns that major centres such as Medicine Hat, Red Deer, Grande Prairie, and Lloydminster all receive significant funding under the

urban parks program. What is the minister doing, and what will this program do to assist centres such as Stony Plain and Spruce Grove for future urban park development?

One area of concern expressed to me by a constituent — I will be very brief, recognizing that list of speakers, Mr. Chairman — centred on the duplication of enforcement officers, which fall under Fish and Wildlife but also under your department. The concern was expressed in this form. He said that he was out to one of the provincial parks and was checked in his boat three times in a weekend — once by the RCMP, once by fish and wildlife officers, and once by provincial park wardens — for liquor and for life jackets. He was concerned that we're now building an empire within your department which essentially duplicates many other areas. As he said, thank goodness he wasn't stopped by the Solicitor General's road patrol and the county police on the way home or he would have had a full weekend of it.

During the past seven years as councillor or mayor of a summer village, I can certainly reinforce the importance of Recreation and Parks' grants toward accelerating specific development of facilities in the area of recreation. They are most welcome and definitely ease the burden of providing facilities to the property owner, mind you — I say this with tongue in cheek — not as luxurious as those provided to transients who use the provincial parks. But that said, they certainly are appreciated, and they have gone a long way toward accelerating many, many parks and recreation [facilities] in the summer villages of the province.

That concludes my observations and remarks, Mr. Chairman. Perhaps the minister could answer them later this evening.

MR. TAYLOR: First of all, Mr. Chairman, I would like to compliment the minister for a very good and thorough report. I hope what I'm saying is mostly constructive. I think recreation and parks are often overlooked as one of the main supports of modern-day society. It's too often thought — maybe the old puritanical idea — that if we're going to cut the budget anywhere, we cut it in recreation or parks, failing to realize that just as in the past pipelines, power lines, and highways were the public utilities that built industry, because we were in manufacturing and processing, today in a service society you're trying to get people who render a service — whether it's in banking, finance, tourism, or computers — to live in your community, establish their homes and their businesses and do their investing for a different set of utilities. It's not highways, pipelines, and water mains anymore; it's recreation, culture, and education. Recreation is one of the very basic posts.

If I need to cite any history, in minding my businesses around the world, one of the things that always intrigued me was how Switzerland's policy, in the middle of Europe when it was highly industrialized over 100 years ago, enabled it to say: "Look, we can't compete in manufacturing and industrial development, but we can compete in parks and recreation. We can compete and leave an environment to make it a wonderful place to locate your banks, your institutions, and your financial headquarters." Hence, Switzerland to this day has retained that leadership in the banking and finance communities. That's the type of thing. Landlocked Switzerland in the centre of Europe is not that dissimilar from Alberta in the centre of the North American continent.

I would like to compliment the minister and tell him that if he has any trouble at all with any of those cabinet

colleagues of his and some of the troglodytes we heard earlier today on capital punishment, just call on us; we'll support you. I think parks are very important. It's so easy to start cutting in that area.

The second part is in the use of parks. It appears that for at least another three to three and a half years there is not going to be any great change and improvement in the economic climate of this province; consequently, maybe we should have parks handy for the people to get out to. It's not a case of just bringing in international tourists; the economy is down to the stage now where the average family is only going to be able to afford to go to one of our local parks.

I'd like to touch a little on privatization if I might. One of the things that bothers me — and I can't understand this government because it happens time and time again on privatization. Without getting into the arguments of whether privatization of a social service or a park or a school is good or bad, one thing all people seem to agree on when they push for privatization is that one of the advantages is that it's open and free. Everyone can see that. Yet we're inheriting the worst of both worlds. We're going on the system of refusing to say what kind of an economic deal has been made in a hotel or a park. We're falling into one of the very worst things a bureaucracy does; in other words, the deal is out of sight. It's between buddies. You can't pin it down. If there is any advantage to privatization — and sometimes maybe there isn't — surely one of them is the fact that it's open, it's competitive, and everybody can see it. Yet that one great advantage, that any good Tory all the way back to Sir Edmund Burke would stand up for, you sweep under the rug and say, "No, we're not going to talk about it."

Other areas I'd like to touch on: megaparks, miniparks. I feel there's a great deal of pressure in the province. All of us politicians do love edifices; we love pyramids or things that will last for thousands of years after we're gone. We have Kananaskis park, Loughheed park. I want to ask the minister to fight off any urge to create another megapark in the north — Taylor park or Martin park or anything else in the middle or other such illustrious politicians of the future, [interjections] There's Buck for wildlife. But the point is that miniparks are a much better way of answering the problem. I'd like to suggest in a constructive way that many of the miniparks could develop things, even something like a farm experience that kids from the city can get out to, ecology and nature walks through swamps and areas like that. I just throw these out as ideas for miniparks here and there and all over.

When I was talking about miniparks, I couldn't help but notice that on the map of provincial parks and recreation areas you've given me, the concentration isn't as good as it could be. It's not the fact that Westlock-Sturgeon hasn't got a provincial park within its boundaries. It goes more for living monuments like its present MLA, a legend in his own time. But the point is that you could probably do a little better planning and moving around of the things than we have done. The east side of the province, in close to Edmonton, and Edmonton are areas I notice don't seem to be well serviced by that.

That applies also in the provincial recreation areas. For some reason there is a blizzard of them in the Cold Lake area, a few in Lacombe. In Calgary and southern Alberta there's a fairly good concentration, but when we go to the Edmonton area and just north of Edmonton, the concentration seems to leave much to be desired.

If I may move on to oil and gas development in parks, this is one of the things that's always bothered me. I've drilled dry holes in most countries of the world, and one of the things that's always puzzled me is why you would have to be fighting with oil and gas development in a park, particularly when we have a surplus of oil and gas. Nearly always if you look into it, it is that some overanxious bureaucrat, in order to make the money look good, had put the darn thing up for auction about five to eight years earlier. Then a company goes in, buys it, and spends quite a number of dollars shooting it. Then they come for a drilling development plan, and the big argument is: "You let us in there five years ago. We did all the shooting; we did all the work; now we want to drill it."

I think that's a fairly natural reaction, Mr. Minister, and I would suggest that you should have a chance for a veto on what the Energy department is putting up for bid, because if you stop it in the early stages, you're not going to have a problem down the road, as we now do north of Waterton. I've seen ecological reserves around Stettler and different waterfowl areas where the land didn't need to be put up. If there's anything running out of our ears right now it's gas and oil, so why should an overenthusiastic Energy department be putting up areas for development that should be used on parks?

I move on now to the second area I want to talk about. It's more specific. Having lived for some years on the Ghost River, I would like to support having around the cities some areas that can be windsurfed. Windsurfing is one of the great recreation sports now. It doesn't require that much, just access to a flat body of water here and there. It seems to me that the whole concept of parks has overlooked this. All windsurfers really need is access near the cities, something like a parking lot; it doesn't need to be a well-developed park.

Vote 1: if you get a chance to answer, Mr. Minister, what financial services at \$1.38 million are needed? I don't quite understand that. Vote 2: I noted that outdoor recreation jumped 58 percent to \$0.8 million. Was this scattered around the province, or do we have some major outdoor recreation scheme that caused that huge 58 percent jump? If it's scattered around, I think it's nothing to worry about, but if it's all on some special ball diamond or some special type of recreation in one spot, we'd like to know about it.

AN HON. MEMBER: Taylor park.

MR. TAYLOR: Taylor park, yes, just south of Westlock.

Vote 3: this one kind of intrigued me. I have had representations from residents. I'm sorry the representative from that area isn't in the House. I've had representations that there is a perfectly good park at Moose Lake as it is, yet I notice that in the budget there is approval for \$60,000 to renovate it. I understand there has been a plebiscite to try to stop the renovating. They're quite happy with the way it is. It's not so much that Moose Lake is being renovated or innovated or redone — maybe some PhD from Harvard just got back and decided that the poor natives don't really understand what's going on — but maybe it set in motion some other ideas. I'm wondering how much of these other renovations and how many of these other costs have been put in without the people in the area not only not asking for it but in this particular case asking that it not be done, from what I understand. At least that's the petition I have seen.

We move on to vote 4, the athletes' village in the Olympic development. I'm a little concerned that we're going to have another boondoggle like the hotel business in Kananaskis park. Again I point out that the advantage of private enterprise and private ownership is the full, open competition of private industry. What is the ratio expected to be that the government puts up in the total project as to what the government's equity will be when it's over with? Was there any competitive bidding on the area? In particular, I'm interested in what the contractor or the private people get percentage-wise out of the total process for the amount of money they put up.

Finally, vote 5: the hon. Member for Mountain View asked the questions much better than I could have. All I can do is underline what he's asking for. I think it behooves this government to be much more open about it. The rumours and stories that are spread are doing you considerably more harm than any possible revelations as to what is actually going on could do. Once again, if you really believe in free enterprise, if you really believe that private ownership is as beneficial as it is, surely you can get out there and announce just what wonderful things it has done.

Thank you very much.

MR. STEVENS: Mr. Chairman, it's interesting for me to have the opportunity to immediately follow a former part-time constituent, someone who for a number of years we've enjoyed watching from his view from the gallery. It's interesting now to have the opportunity to follow the Member for Westlock-Sturgeon here in the Assembly.

As the Member for Banff-Cochrane, Mr. Chairman, I appreciated very much — and I'm sure the Member for Highwood did — the travelogue the minister presented tonight to us about Kananaskis Country and about the three provincial parks within the country itself. He referred to the William Watson Lodge and the expansion there, and I would remind all members — those who are in the Assembly tonight may not be familiar — that this is the only facility of its type in North America. Anyone in Alberta is entitled to stay there overnight for a cost of \$3 per person provided he or she is accompanied by a senior citizen or a disabled Albertan.

I visited recently the Mount Kidd Recreational Vehicle Park, and I'd like to mention something that is shown in the material the minister presented to us today; that is, you don't need a recreation vehicle, and you don't need to look for a fully serviced site. There are sites available that are not serviced. One can tent in that facility, which is run by two Alberta families under an arrangement in Kananaskis Country.

I'd like to mention the staff who work for your department, Mr. Minister, many of whom not only do not have the opportunity to live in communities with full services but live in our provincial parks or adjacent to them in sometimes very remote areas. There are many staff in Kananaskis Country now, staff with families, single staff, and seasonal staff. I would suggest that through Kananaskis Country's capable management team headed by Managing Director Ed Marshall, you and your staff give very careful consideration to the needs of the staff and their families in the form of associations they may wish to form for recreation facilities, for recreation grants, and all of the other necessities of life that men, women, and children living in remote areas in our provincial parks providing services to our visitors deserve to have.

[Mr. Deputy Chairman in the Chair]

I'm not suggesting, Mr. Chairman, that we are looking at establishing another Banff townsite or Jasper townsite, as fine as those visitor service centres are, but that the staff who are living in these areas do need access from time to time to a physician, to such federal services as a postal service, to the possibility of a Treasury Branch agency, where in fact instead of driving 100 miles round trip there will be some opportunity to have a deposit system and a withdrawal system for their cheques and for their daily needs.

Mr. Chairman, I would also like to mention staff of related departments with whom provincial parks and recreation officials work so well, and I refer specifically to Forestry, Lands and Wildlife and to Transportation. All of the officials who provide these services to Albertans do so in some cases under extreme hazard and dangerous conditions. We have alpine specialists in this province who are second to none in Canada. I appreciate, as all members do I'm sure, the special service that our alpine rescue and park ranger people provide in times of trauma, in times of missing persons or, as we know, the recent tragedy of the missing aircraft.

I'd like to compliment too, Mr. Chairman to the minister, the work of the Kananaskis Citizens' Advisory Committee and urge that in the management of Kananaskis Country, as more and more lessees and more and more staff of those private lessees come on stream, special efforts be given toward considering their unique municipal-type needs. Many needs will be developed over a period of time in Kananaskis Country. I believe the citizens' advisory committee or some other committee working with the managing director, who is also the manager of improvement district No. 5, could provide responsible answers for it.

Mr. Chairman, I'd like to have the minister's views on park fees and the possibility of his assessment of these fees as time progresses, as costs continue to escalate and, of course, as the pressures of revenue declines are upon the province. If one looks tonight, for example, at the Kananaskis Country campground guide — this is just one guide of the many facilities in Alberta — it notes that camping fees are \$3 per site per night. That includes water, vault toilets, fire pits, wood, and tables. There are other fees for other facilities and other services. Of course, there are different fees for sites that have full hookups. There are additional fees for the reservation system.

In representing the area of Banff-Cochrane, my concern is that the national parks have recently announced an increase in park camping fees. Most if not all of the adjoining United States have fees that are much higher than Alberta's fees. They are much higher in Saskatchewan and Manitoba. I'm concerned that we as Albertans do not appreciate fully the costs per site per night for providing these facilities, which welcome many tourists to our province and all of the spin-off effects that has in employment to Albertans. I think, Mr. Chairman, the minister might have some broad estimates of the costs of providing these services and could indicate those so that we understand when we are being asked to pay \$3 per site what the actual subsidy or cost of providing this site is.

Mr. Chairman, I'd also like to ask if the minister would give a comment or two on our reservation system. When the former minister announced the establishment of a camp-site reservation service, it was my understanding that this would be assessed and either it would be expanded or there

would be additional information to the Assembly about the success of this program. I would like to know if specific studies have been undertaken by the minister or his officials which would indicate whether or not this reservation policy has in fact become an opportunity for non-Albertans to reserve in advance provincial sites in a greater proportion than the desirability, let's say, to Albertans to visit their own sites. I don't know if there are any studies on that or if the minister is considering expanding the service to parks in other areas of the province.

Third, Mr. Chairman, I would like to ask if the minister in describing the way in which his department has responded well to a very difficult program of restraint is considering the growing impact of the visitors not only in Kananaskis Country but elsewhere throughout the province to our parks and what options the minister has either for developing proposals to establish a move toward a user-pay philosophy to help offset the growing demands for services or, alternatively, for privatization or a decrease in some other programs, with emphasis on the programs where the increased visitation necessitates more staffing.

I'd also draw to members' attention in another document presented tonight for information the community recreation/cultural grant program, which we have had previously, of course. This program was developed with two main objectives, including the first objective, to assist Alberta municipalities and other organizations with expenditures incurred in the provision of recreation and culture services.

I would like to note to the minister that unlike that program the municipal recreation tourism program does not extend to Indian reserves. The first program does. In fact, it indicates in the brochure that the council of a special area improvement district, Metis settlement, or Indian band may access this program, but the municipal recreation tourism program does not. I understand that is specifically because the lands in question must be publicly owned and available to the public. But I'd like to suggest to the minister that as revenues recover or as other options for expending these funds are developed, an alternative or a supplementary program be considered and presented which might foster the establishment of appropriate facilities using the economic tool of development for the Indian bands in those areas where tourism presents an opportunity.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, as the member for the area in which this situation has arisen, I'd like to refer briefly to the Ghost reservoir situation and indicate that there is another side to this story. The Member for Calgary Mountain View and the Member for Westlock-Sturgeon have conveniently discussed the needs of the windsurfers but have not mentioned the needs of the surrounding community, which for some period of time experienced destruction, garbage, noise, sewage disposal on land and, in fact, a growing concern about violence, alcohol, and drug abuse on land that was virtually left unmanageable. At the same time, when the minister's department explored ways of achieving some sort of control and some access to the beauty of the area, the reservoir itself, and the surrounding land, there were no dollars for public expenditures identified, and there were no dollars identified for provincial staff.

I would like to ask if the minister has been able to determine if there is an alternative, given that the present agent or contractor did not carry out the intent of the arrangements undertaken with the department and ignored the processes established by improvement district No. 8, Big Horn, for obtaining necessary approvals prior to proceeding.

Mr. Chairman, we have a unique province, a unique area in North America. The people of Banff-Cochrane welcome not only their opportunity to act as hosts to daily, seasonal, and yearly visitors but the immense exposure to this part of our province in 1988 when some 2 billion people may for the first time through the media of television see not only Kananaskis Country and the city of Calgary but our province of Alberta. I am very proud that the Minister of Recreation and Parks and his officials and the Minister of Public Works, Supply and Services and his officials have developed a provincial strategy, a provincial plan, and implemented that plan, which is not only on budget but on time. We welcome the opportunity and hope that all members will visit our area many times.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. HYLAND: First, Mr. Chairman, some comments related to Kananaskis Country and Mount Allan or Nakiska or whatever you want to call it. I took some time last summer and spent about a week in Kananaskis park. My kids ask when we're going to go back. I tell them that when everybody here quits making long speeches and we get estimates through, maybe we'll make it. So I'll try and live with the short speech rather than the long speech in making my comments.

Mr. Minister, last year while I was in Kananaskis, I took the opportunity one morning and part of an afternoon to go up the ski slope on Mount Allan with the person in charge of construction in Kananaskis Country, Mr. Wilnot, and a few other people in a four-wheel drive Suburban. It was an interesting trip; It had just rained the night before, and as the driver said: "You don't worry as long as the thing is sliding into the mountain. When it begins to slide away from the mountain your problem starts."

Mr. Chairman, I can see that if you come in by helicopter, it may be different. But if you go up there on the ground, you really get the sense of how big, how high, and how steep that hill is. As you're standing at the top base for the chair lift, you get the feeling of how big and imposing the development below it is. It was interesting for me, and I found it very impressive. When you're standing up there looking down, you can see the foundations of the lodge in the middle, the structure of the main lodge down below, the parking lots, and that sort of stuff. I think it would be interesting to go back once that facility is completed and stand in the same spot. I can assure you, though, that would have to be in the summertime for me, because I sure wouldn't go up there and try to ski down that damn hill in the wintertime. I understand there is a question as to how steep it is in some areas; to me that whole hill looks pretty steep.

Mr. Chairman, a few comments to the minister about the Cypress Hills townsite master plan or the Elkwater townsite master plan, whichever title one wants to put to it, which concerns me. I've discussed this with the minister a few times since he was appointed to the portfolio. We must get public input to this plan when it's drawn up. We need to see if we can obtain that public input without any problems, without people feeling they've been shut off from having a chance to have input, and try to achieve that input from the public at large and not from confined groups. I think there are a lot of areas and a lot of people that have an influence on that park. A lot of people including myself have concerns over the initial position by the planners on that park. I know there's a long history of planning in that park. I know that one of your staff in the gallery, Mr.

Minister, is very familiar with that planning because he was involved with it for many, many years. There's a feeling, I think, that you don't get in many provincial parks. It's not only a feeling of the people there; it's a feeling of the people that use that park, that very jealously regard it as a people park and a people townsite. They feel very strongly about that park, and they guard that feeling strongly and jealously with a lot of feeling and effort. I think there's a lot of knowledge there, and it's something we have to make sure we maintain through this next planning exercise held, I believe, on September 21 and 22 or something like that. We have to make sure that everybody gets a crack at that.

The ski hill at Cypress Hills or Elkwater townsite is much appreciated. As I think the minister is aware, in the initial response to the townsite master plan the main focus of those groups that attended the workshop was the ski hill, and I'm glad to see the first step of that in the estimates. It will attract, I think, a lot of winter use in that park. There have been some winters where the ski hill that is there now has operated, and there have been a lot of years it hasn't because of the quick change in the weather, with the wind in that area. This is a unique park, but it's also unique to our different changes in the weather in the south, and skiing in the area obviously does suffer.

The final thing I would like to talk about is municipal taxation in the provincial parks. I fully support the minister's push toward privatization of various sections of provincial parks that we can privatize. I should say that one of the places we stayed in Kananaskis was Mount Kidd RV Park, and that's operated by a private sector — I guess it's a family rather than a group of people. It's a good facility. But the concern I have and that I have been working on with people in the department and the minister is that if a private operator goes in to run a complex built by the government where there's a store and a restaurant as a service to the park, because of the Municipal Taxation Act he gets taxed as if he owns the building. Yet the municipality is not providing any service to that building; it's provided by the park. If we are going to continue to work and push privatization, especially knowing the taxes on that building and we get into campgrounds and that, we're going to drive the costs significantly up just through that operator having to pay that taxation.

I would submit that if one looks at the section in the Municipal Taxation Act following the section of what the taxes are being charged on, it would be my estimation — and maybe I look at it too simplistically because I'm not a trained lawyer — that when a facility such as a complex or restaurant or a store is operated inside a provincial park boundary, that is operated as a service to that park; thus it should be as if the government were operating it and be exempt from taxation.

According to subsection 3 of the Municipal Taxation Act, if it is used on behalf of the park, it would be exempt. This is something we really have to look at, because I know it's caused a problem in two or three places. If we're going to go for more privatization, it's going to be an ever-increasing problem we're going to have to face. We might as well face it now; we might as well face it quickly and make our decision. Because to me the decision is simple. When it's part of a park, if it's not exempt from taxation and they're paying substantial rent on those facilities, we should assume the taxation. If we don't assume the taxation, we should have them exempt, because to build that extra amount — in this case of \$7,500 a year, and that's a small

facility. It's a lot of money to put into the facility, when we're receiving somewhere in the neighbourhood of \$50,000 in rent for the year.

Where it really concerns me is, if the estimates are right on assessment, the tremendous assessment the ski hill would be faced with, thus driving the cost up. It's going to either force the people not to go to the ski hill or go somewhere else where it may be cheaper with longer runs. I think it's something we have to face so that we make sure that all our work toward private operations in the parks doesn't end being a white elephant hung around our neck.

Thank you.

MR. WEISS: Mr. Chairman, if no one else has risen, perhaps I might be able to respond to a few of the member's concerns.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Mr. Minister, there are other speakers, but if you would wish to make a few comments, go ahead.

MR. WEISS: I would apologize to the hon. member. I didn't see him rise, and I'm so anxious to respond.

MR. ALGER: I won't take long, and he will be rather pleased that he doesn't have to make an awful lot of response to me. The reason I wanted to get up, I think, was primarily to offer a hearty vote of thanks to the minister's predecessor for the goodness that he has provided the constituency of Highwood in the conversion and rebuilding of the George Lane Memorial Park right in the town of High River as well as the municipal grant I got last year for the municipal park, the Archie Hogg Memorial Park, which provides a beautiful facility on the Highwood River and is certainly right in the centre of my constituency and offers all the people there the benefits of easy access and beautiful terrain and good roads and just a lovely park all around to visit in.

I could, I suppose, irritate him a little bit in view of the fact that I'll need more support for a park program we have a great ambition for in the town of Nanton, as well as a smaller park in Black Diamond that handles hundreds of people every year as they're on their way out to the Kananaskis Country or, indeed, west of Turner Valley on 546 into the Burns Mine country and that sort of thing.

The Okotoks people, too, are very ambitious, Mr. Chairman, and I brought with me some ideas and profiles of a lovely area they intend to build. It's going to be very expensive, and I think we'll have to have a lot of co-operation from you as well as nearly every other department in the building, since it will need a bridge and another road and that sort of thing, but it will be nothing we can't handle. I'd like to put the plug in for it now. I'd like to commend the people in Okotoks for the Okotoks Lions park that's already in operation and as well entertains an awful lot of people from weekend to weekend. It starts very early in the spring and winds up very early in the fall.

Through all this country, of course, we have interspersed several golf courses. One of the best is in Turner Valley, another one is in High River, and a third small one is in Okotoks. It will be bigger someday when we annex another section of land into that town, but that's a municipal problem I'm working with and will have to take its turn. Priddis Greens opened not too long ago. It's rather a hilly course but absolutely in a most magnificent setting. I'm not sure Recreation and Parks has really done much to fund it, and

I don't think they will be expected to. It's a private course and should be able to look after itself.

Within Kananaskis Country I was amazed — I must get this plug in, Mr. Chairman, for the simple reason that the minister has explained that 2.3 million people arrived in Kananaskis last year, and I just don't know how the hell they got there. The road is closed for over six months of the year from the south, and I don't want that to happen any longer. I could boost your attendance to 5 million people if you just opened that road. The highway to that road I think should be commended, too, for the simple reason that 541 from Longview to the Kananaskis Country into the Highwood junction is probably the prettiest highway in all of Alberta. Certainly, on Highway 40 from that point to Kananaskis Country and to the golf course you traverse the highest pass in Alberta. There is no place in Alberta you're travelling any higher on good highways.

To finalize, I would like to indicate to you that we're rebuilding road number 7 to the oil fields from Highways 2 and 2A, and Highway 22 south from Longview to Chain Lake is in the process of being refinished. People are very dependent on these roads to get into that beautiful country. While I didn't start out this way, now that I'm getting homesick, Mr. Chairman, I must indicate to the minister that if you never spent another nickel there, you really don't have to, for the simple reason that the Highwood constituency is one big park from one end to the other.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MS MJOLSNESS: Mr. Chairman, I have a couple of brief comments to make in terms of recreation developments. I want to start by saying that I recognize that we do have many excellent recreation facilities across the province, and I am an avid user of some of them. However, there are many communities that simply do not have recreation facilities. I am most familiar with my own constituency, of course, where we don't have any type of recreation facility at all. We are fairly isolated. Being in the northern part of the city, we don't have access to the river valley, so there is a real need in that area for a recreation facility.

I do recognize the fact that per capita the grants have been very generous and also that the city sets the priorities when it's distributing those grants. However, there is a shortage of recreation facilities. I know that in Edmonton alone we're short about three or four ice arenas, in terms of meeting the needs that are there. This is only one area of recreation, so there are other areas that need to be addressed. As well, I know that some of the communities would like to build facilities that would encompass high schools, pools, day cares, libraries, and have all of it in one complex. There seems to be a little bit of a gap created between departments when these kinds of avenues are investigated.

In looking at vote 2 under the community recreation development, under indoor recreation facilities there happens to be a .1 percent increase or a little bit more than \$300,000. I'm wondering if the minister could explain exactly what's included when this money is put to use. I'm wondering if the money is used simply for equipment or if it's used for the construction of any type of recreation facility. I would suggest that if it's used for construction, it's not very much money at all. If in fact it's used for indoor equipment or whatever, it still isn't that generous.

AN HON. MEMBER: Would you clarify what you're pointing out?

MS MJOLSNESS: It's under vote 2, under community recreation development. Also under that comes the outdoor recreation facilities. I have the same types of questions. The total has been increased 57.7 percent, but when we look at the total number of dollars, it's only \$750,000. I'm wondering exactly what that money is allocated for.

I want to make a quick point that we have high unemployment in Edmonton, and it seems to me that if we were looking in terms of job creation programs, building recreation facilities would certainly be something to consider.

Also looking at vote 2, under program management there is a decrease of 25.5 percent. I'm wondering if the minister can explain if any programs have been cut due to the fact that we have such a decrease in program management. Of course, if it's simply efficiency of the department, that's commendable. Under grant administration there is a decrease of 23 percent. I'm wondering if any programs are being cut to enable such a decrease under the administration grants.

Those are my comments. Thank you.

AN HON. MEMBER: The NDP have been admirably brief; see if you can keep it up.

MR. YOUNIE: I'm sure I will allow the minister his full 30 minutes to respond to our questions. In fact, we've had a two-way debate, with references from both sides of the House on these issues, and I would start out with a compliment. I've camped and travelled by trailer right across Canada. I would say that this is one area where the government might justifiably say that it has done the best in Canada, even though we haven't agreed when they've said that in other areas. Perhaps they've even done that without being the most spendthrift in Canada in that department.

Perhaps part of the reason we've done a fairly good job in that area is the demand. Approximately 80 percent of people in this province get at least part of their recreation from camping or other forms of enjoying nature and wildlife. So provision of ways that they can enjoy that is very important in the province.

A couple of specific points on votes 3.3 and 3.4, perhaps a minor confusion on my part. I'm wondering what the difference between reconstruction and redevelopment is. Those seem fairly similar, yet what is listed there obviously is not the same kind of thing. So a little explanation there . . .

In terms of the allocation of money to the four regions, being from the north side of Edmonton and as I tend to avoid travelling through the full length of the city and in fact head north when I want to go camping for the weekend to save an hour and a half of travel through smoggy streets, I'm concerned that the area that gets the least amount by over \$1 million is the northern region. I'm interested to know why that area needs less. Perhaps it is cheaper to develop parks in that area. I'm not sure, but it would be interesting to have an explanation.

The minister mentioned multi-use policy. I have some concerns about that based on a letter from a hiker who wrote to the *Lethbridge Herald* about being pushed off a hiking trail by trail bikes. As one who leaves the city to get away from the noise and smell of internal combustion engines, I certainly would be horrified to find that multi-use means that somebody is going to allow trail bikes along the hiking trails. One sentence I think summed up the person's attitude with admirable sarcasm. Referring to the trail bikes, he said:

I loved the sound of those powerful machines. It was sweet music to the ear, so much sweeter and more vibrant than those nauseating chirps of a flock of chickadees. I even had a sniff of exhaust to help clear my lungs polluted with fresh air and pine scent. Fresh air, yuk!

I would commend the rest of it to the minister. It's rather humorous and enjoyable reading and very well illustrates his concern that when he goes hiking he may find himself forced off the trail by trail bikes. I would like to know exactly what the multi-use policy is for those kinds of areas and whether or not it does include that.

I have some concerns about grizzly hunting in Kananaskis. The statistic I've received is that 25 permits were given out in one year, and that is to hunt in a population of grizzly bears that is estimated to be between 65 and 100. The purpose, it would seem to me — in fact, the stated purpose has been to make the bears more wary of people so there will be fewer encounters between grizzly bears and people. In the time I've lived in the province, I can't remember reading about more than about one or two encounters between grizzly bears and the public, and I don't think any of them were in that area. It would seem to me that hunting at that level would, in fact, totally exterminate the problem along with the population of grizzly bears in that area and take somewhere between two-and-a-half and four years to do so. I would suggest that the hunting is not necessary. Hopefully it will be discontinued. There is certainly a large number of people in the province who are worried about the extinction of grizzly bears in North America who would agree.

I have some reservations about the loss of recreation land in the Southcastle area. I think preserving that area as recreational land only is very important. It's close to a national park and for that reason should remain recreational. It has all the attributes at the moment which make it a world heritage site: lack of pollution, abundance of wildlife — some of which is rare or near extinction in other areas — and delightful areas for camping and fishing for those who like a very wilderness level of camping. So I think that area would be much better for Albertans if it was preserved as recreational land — perhaps a provincial park, as was proposed by the Alberta Wilderness Association. That is something I would certainly like to see looked into, to see that area preserved better for that purpose.

I have some serious reservations about the development of Mount Allan as a major ski resort and the ski area.

AN HON. MEMBER: He can't ski.

MR. YOUNIE: It seems to me the problems are closely related. In fact, I do enjoy skiing, and when the project in Cypress is finished, maybe I'll see the Member for Cypress-Redcliff there. It looks like we won't be through this session until the snow flies anyway. I was planning on camping this summer; it looks like it may be winter camping and skiing.

Mount Allan has a couple of problems. One is the lack of snow, which seems to me to be very important for skiing. Downhill skiing without snow becomes dangerous and difficult. Anyway, I am concerned about that.

I'm also concerned that there has had to be a lot of modification of the terrain of the mountain because in fact, the terrain there was not, according to many, sufficiently challenging for world-class skiers for the Olympics. There's

been a lot of moving one part of the hill to another to change the terrain so it would be challenging enough.

I was just getting to the wildlife aspect. In fact, it's that very lack of snow that makes that area one of the most important grazing grounds for a large alpine herd of bighorn sheep. It won't be very soon because we'll be spending very large sums of money to make sure there is too much snow on it for them to get to the grass to feed. Because this is an alpine herd it is one of the few that is not plagued by a form of pneumonia that has been decimating herds lower down. With the number of mountains we have in the area that get lots of their own snow and have a much rougher and more suitable terrain for the Olympic skiing, it might have been much better if we had left Mount Allan for the bighorn sheep to use the grass when there is no snow on it after the chinooks and found a mountain with better terrain and more snow. That's no snow job.

I would appreciate the minister's answers to those concerns and look forward to hearing his comments. Thank you.

MR. PIQUETTE: I would like to start off by congratulating the Hon. Norm Weiss who has been named Minister of Recreation and Parks. Norm comes from the northern part of Alberta, and I think he understands a lot of the recreation needs and the potential in northern Alberta. I look forward to working with him in terms of making sure that the hard work of the previous MLA from Lac La Biche in his aspirations for park development in the Lakeland Tourist Zone be realized in his term of office. After the mountainous areas of southern or western Alberta, there's no doubt that northern Alberta can become the tourist mecca of Alberta if properly developed in terms of theme parks, et cetera.

Also, on behalf of the Kikino and Caslan communities, I would like to thank the minister for announcing the municipal recreation grants tonight. Those communities worked very hard developing recreation facilities, and I think the awarding of \$50,000 for each community will go a long way in terms of completing their goals.

I'll start off by basically raising a concern that Mr. Gurnett expressed here. A teacher from the High Prairie area was talking to him about her concern that there is no good campground facility in Edmonton for school groups. She like many other teachers likes to make an extended year-end trip with her class, and one of the purposes of the trip is to teach camping skills. This can be done by going to places like Jasper, et cetera, but she also wants them to experience the city of Edmonton. Usually groups coming to Edmonton stay in a motel, which doesn't allow much learning about camping skills and does add a lot to the cost of the trip. Why couldn't there be some private, simple, safe facility in or very near Edmonton exclusively for the use of such organized groups rather than near day-by-day traffic areas as at the present time? She mentioned, for example, the Strathcona Science Centre, which has lots of beautiful and little-used grounds. Development of such a facility would be very welcomed by many teachers from rural northern Alberta. When I brought a group of students, I arranged to use a private campground at Cooking Lake, but most would not have access to such possibilities. So this would perhaps be an idea for the city of Edmonton, where thousands of children come every year in terms of field trips, to arrange for such a facility.

Another issue I would like to raise is to ask the minister to indicate how many provincial parks are located north of Edmonton compared to south of Edmonton and also to

indicate the dollars invested in parks and recreation facilities in northern Alberta compared to central and southern Alberta. The reason I ask this question is that there is a feeling among many northerners that in dollar figures especially, northern Alberta has not had their fair share of parks' dollars over the years. Since he is from northern Alberta, as I indicated before, I hope the minister would prioritize spending for parks in northern Alberta within his term. Next to our mountains, northern Alberta with its many lakes could, through a proper parks and recreation network, become a tourist mecca and create many spin-offs in small businesses and much needed job creation.

In the Lakeland Tourist Zone, I have shared with the Minister of Recreation and Parks and the Minister of Culture a proposal for the Lac La Biche mission society to turn the Lac La Biche mission, begun in 1844 and the second oldest in Alberta in terms of a permanent structure, into an historical site. That would be turned into a major historical park like Fort Edmonton, honouring the Metis people of northern Alberta, who have a very proud history; the missionaries; the French Canadians; and the mapmakers of northern Alberta, individuals like Peter Pond, who mapped the Athabasca River and the Lac La Biche and Beaver Lake areas. By taking advantage of historical buildings which are still standing today but which need an infusion of money to make sure they will not fall apart before this major proposal is completed, I think it could become a focus of tourism in that part of northern Alberta.

Also, I would like to get the minister's response to the fact that I think we have a lack of co-ordination between the departments of parks, transportation, and Tourism to make sure that along with park and provincial campsite development we also have the upgrading of roads necessary to attract tourists to northern Alberta. A lot of this seems to be lacking. In checking with the deputy minister of the Department of Transportation, for example, there doesn't appear to be a priority set on the paving or upgrading of provincial campsites in many areas of northern Alberta, where the traffic counts on weekends can be as high as many of the provincial parks. I think there has to be better co-ordination along this line. The same with Tourism. I think all three departments have to work very closely in terms of realizing the goals of Recreation and Parks. I would like to have the minister's comments on this.

Finally, I would also like to raise an issue relating to improvements of camping and access sites along the Peace River. These sites would encourage and enable people to enjoy the natural recreation potential of the river valley. They would be located in such a manner that conflict with existing land uses would be avoided or minimized. In the Peace River area there is a need for recreation opportunities along the Peace River; that part of the country is lacking in recreation areas.

I will look forward to your answers, Mr. Minister, and I would again like to extend our appreciation to the Recreation and Parks Department in terms of a lot of the initiatives they have taken over many years to make Alberta a very important area for tourism.

MR. WEISS: If I might have the opportunity to respond for a few minutes, Mr. Chairman, I can appreciate that there may be some other hon. members who wish to ask some questions, but perhaps by responding at this time I might even answer some of those questions in advance. In fairness to the members who have raised some concerns,

I would certainly appreciate the opportunity to try and respond to some of them.

To the Member for Calgary Mountain View who started off, I would like to express my thanks for his overall support and mention of the good programs, in particular the sports programs and facilities, and for his discussion with regard to urban parks. I don't support his one comment, though, and I would like to try and quote him. He says that we do with one hand and take away with the other. I am aware of some of the problems pertaining to Nose Hill park. I'll certainly work with my colleagues, and I would encourage him and all hon. colleagues to support the urban parks program, realizing fully that it comes under the Heritage Savings Trust Fund. I think it's one that we should encourage to work and hopefully will implement in my tenure, because I believe in it and know full well what has happened to the five communities and the two major centres. It certainly has been a worthwhile one.

I would like to indicate to that particular member, though, that CRC funds are available, and perhaps some of those funds could be diverted or allocated from the city of Calgary for that. I believe in excess of \$12 million is allocated to the city of Calgary for that.

In response to the policy with regard to the overall Recreation and Parks statement, yes, we have a draft policy. We hope to be able to implement that, work with all the groups — recreation wildlife, and others — to see that become not a gospel, not written in stone, but something that's flexible and can be changed as public needs and concerns change, something we can work with, more or less a guideline or a framework for the future. I will certainly be reviewing that with all other ministers and colleagues from across Canada at the forthcoming minister's conference as well.

The one commitment I would like to make to the hon. Member for Calgary Mountain View in particular was the public input. I would like to make that a personal commitment. As long as I am minister of this department, that will take place. I can appreciate his concerns on the Eastern Slopes policy. I would like to table a response later that the hon. member raised to me. I won't take time at this particular opportunity to file that response. I'm sure he will be pleased with the overall remarks I have. I believe there's a balance there, and I would like to discuss it with him as well later. It's a long written one, so I'd rather not read it at this time.

The Ghost Lake reservoir is a very interesting one. My predecessor made a commitment that he would resolve that matter in two years. That commitment was made several months ago. Having followed in his place, I would hope that we could shorten that time frame. We're working with the alternatives — the word that he chose — mentioned by the Member for Banff-Cochrane. Yes, we hope we can work up some alternatives. There are some good things from that decision for privatization, though, that I'd like to indicate to the member as well. I'd like to read a letter I just received, as a matter of fact, about 10 minutes before coming into the Assembly. It's an unsolicited letter. It comes from David McDermid, and it goes on to say:

Please be advised that my brother and I are the immediately adjoining landowners to the Lakeside park and Camp Ground located at Ghost Lake ... We had many problems with respect to trespassers, cut fences, theft, vandalism and other nuisance generally. Subsequent to the Wanjoes taking over management of the lands we are again able to use our land for grazing

cattle as the fence posts are no longer used for firewood, after the barbed wire had been cut by people trespassing from the adjoining lands.

And it goes on and on and on to support that. I'm not saying that's a gospel fact and it's resolved. Please don't accept that as a condition. To the hon. Member for Calgary Mountain View: as I said, we will resolve it one way or another. We want to see that the access is there. The windsurfers have that concern. We'll work with them. I might indicate to the hon. member as well that while I wasn't presented with the petition, I took the liberty of trying to determine who might be a spokesperson for the group. I have responded to that individual with a commitment to try and resolve the situation in a lesser time frame than was indicated by my predecessor.

The Ribbon Creek hotel project: yes, privatization, along with the Ski Kananaskis. Please keep in mind, hon. member and all hon. members of the Assembly, that with the exception of one or two areas where government has gone out and developed because of timeframes or time constraints, generally, all of these projects are called for in public tender. The terms and conditions are outlined in that public tender. The final details of that contract are of a confidential nature, just as a confidential agreement would be with you or me. But if we have a mortgage agreement, for example, that's open and public knowledge, that's different. The initial details of it are what's out there in the public proposal. It's the final details of that contract that are of a confidential nature. I'd love the opportunity to review it with the member in private as well.

He refers to and talks about the Olympic legacy. I predict that it will not be in dollars, but it will be in the ongoing facilities that will be left for the citizens of Alberta and in particular the citizens of Calgary and area. As far as prices and increases, we're working well within budget, as the Member for Banff-Cochrane indicated, well on stream. The debt situation should be well taken care of. I particularly want to point out to the hon. member and members of the Assembly that under the government of Alberta Olympics program the budget summary is \$129,011 million; the total contribution by the Alberta government was some \$33.3 million, which includes \$5.5 million toward the costs, as was indicated, of McMahon Stadium, which was then cut back as well because the original tenders didn't come in within a normal framework. So there was some holdback in that particular area, and it wasn't allowed to proceed. So we're still well on stream.

The particular items in the budget referred to: in vote 4.4 \$11,462,050 is for the athletes' village. That's all that will be. No, it won't be coming back for \$15 million. It's \$11 million, as indicated in the budget.

Keep in mind with regard to the Olympics the dates — I would hope everybody would mark it in their calendars and mark it now — February 13 to 28, 1988. The invitation is there. I hope to see you there, and I hope you will be there.

The village will accommodate some 300 students, and I think that's commendable in the sense that all will be accommodated in good facilities. The particular item 5.2, operation and maintenance and in emergency services: I've indicated I recently opened the facility, and we're very please to have it on site. I hope it doesn't have to be used as in the last few months, but it's there and in place.

In 5.2 under operation and maintenance, while it has an increase of some 16.8 percent, I think it should be noted. I'd like to recall a few figures for the hon. member, because

there are some large dollar volumes in there that account for that expense. The new \$15.1 million Canmore Nordic Centre: there is \$616,000 in there. We are still developing it, of course. In an expansion of emergency services, for the ambulance, air disaster, and the building, there is some \$200,000.

The William Watson Lodge, as I explained in my opening comments, has been expanded from a current capacity of 40 to an additional 40 units. That's where the extra expense comes in, because there has to be some related dollars for manpower as well. The \$96,000 is budgeted for that particular item.

The major item of \$535,000 under 5.2 is for the purchase and replacement of fixed assets. Under that come snow groomers, trucks, power equipment, and of course there are various other major items, but it's some 532. There's also a fire engine which I had the privilege and pleasure of driving when it was first delivered on Friday last. It should be noted that units of under one ton are being used for the garbage to cut down the expense of driving on the highways, and it runs a very efficient service. Those particular items, because they're not supplied through the central vehicle services, are also included in that particular budgetary item.

The financial controls the hon. member speaks about when he asks, "Will the expenditure exceed the revenues?" I'd like to make the prediction that they will not. I stand to be corrected. It's an objective we're going to work to. I recently met with the committee as well. As I've said, they're well on stream, well under control. We're very positive about it and very positive about the results that we're projecting.

The municipal level of government was an interesting one, in particular with regard to the principles applied to privatization and the comparison that was made. As I've indicated to the hon. member, there are some areas of confidentiality with the signing of the agreement, but in general those private tenders are open. Of course, as I said, the individual agreements would be of a private nature.

The \$25 million that is attached to Mount Allan, in question to where it is and what it is: I would love to go into it with the member. I've provided him a written response rather than go into detail on it. As to the road clearing and all the items in there, of course it's covered under Kananaskis in this particular area.

As far as the Kananaskis hotel and the deal made public, I commend the government of the day, who took the decision at that time to get on with it, to get the facilities in place for the Olympics, for the people to use it as a venue. To the hon. member — I see he has some concern. Sometimes you have to make decisions and you have to live with them. I accept that responsibility as the minister because I think it was a good one. Facilities are well on construction target. As far as the particular individuals, Stuart Olson Construction and Allen Olson, as it was named, I have no qualms about their capabilities or their ability to perform.

To the hon. Member for Stony Plain, the indications as far as the reducing of the manpower of some 2.2 percent and with regard to his comments into the area of expansion of privatization, I certainly appreciate it. It's an area we'll certainly explore, without seeing that the services are going to be lessened or deteriorated as well. The Wabamun area: we're pleased that we could come forth with that announcement of a \$100,000 municipal recreation tourism area.

As I've indicated to the hon. Member for Calgary Mountain View, I would encourage him to write letters of

support to the hon. Premier in response to the urban parks program, because it's certainly one I'd love to sell, as I said before. I won't go on and on about it. I believe that we should be encouraging it so that areas like Stony Plain and other areas would be eligible for further programs in future years. There are priorities that have to be considered, and I accept that as a responsibility of the minister as well. There are areas of unemployment and areas of economic development that we must not cut back, as the hon. Member for Westlock-Sturgeon referred to, but must look for the timing as well. As increased revenues are improved, I will certainly be able to look at it and hopefully resurrect it as a program to expand it.

The duplication of enforcement officers: with regard to being checked three times, I accept that as notice and will certainly try and ascertain and see that it doesn't occur again and would not want it to. I welcome his comments and suggestions. I appreciate that constructive point of view.

The hon. Member for Westlock-Sturgeon: I respect his knowledge as a learned individual. While I don't agree with his politics, I'll certainly bow to his knowledge and his seniority as far as his overall expertise in some of the areas. I appreciated his remarks about the cuts: not to take it from parks. I feel it very personally when he says that, and I know that he means it as a very kind, sincere person. To compete with the parks systems in funding — it is a tough one, when we have people out there with social problems and other conditions and have to say, "Why we are putting it into building structured parks or monuments?" Hopefully if we can create to the well-being of people, maybe we could eliminate some of those other concerns as well. I would like to say thanks to the hon. member. I'm glad that his remarks will be recorded in *Hansard*, because some day I might have to come back, and I certainly will call on him for that help.

The use of parks is an important one. I would like to stand on record as saying that parks are for people. Let's keep it that way, and let's ensure that that is who uses it. The privatization, as indicated by the Member for Calgary Mountain View, is an area I believe I've covered. We certainly want to be competitive. The northern park area that he talks about: I hope we would be able to see such a development. I've made comments from the first day I was appointed as minister and many years before as the chairman of the Northern Alberta Development Council of my belief in seeing such a park developed. I don't believe that it should be another mountain park. I might have some of my colleagues disagree with me on that comment. I believe it should be a lakeland style park. Do I hear any comments over there? I believe in that type of development, and that's what I'd like to try and work toward and see that it happens.

As far as the overall monumental declaration that the hon. Member for Westlock-Sturgeon referred to as being the member-elect, perhaps it should've gone the other way, and we should've declared him as an ecological site. I thought that might be a little more appropriate. There is access for the people, of course, to the Thunder and Carson-Pegasus lakes in his area. I'd encourage him as well to develop a municipal recreation tourism area. The oil activity that he refers to: I believe there can be a balance. He talks about the Waterton National Park, I think in particular to the hon. Member for Pincher Creek-Crowsnest, who referred to the 26 sites in Waterton Park. That has been there for some time.

The Ghost River area: as I've indicated to the Member for Calgary Mountain View, I believe we'll be able to

resolve that over a period of time. In particular, the member mentioned votes 1, 2, and 3. I wanted to relate specifically to vote 3, where he refers to a petition with regard to Franchère Bay. I'd like to inform the hon. member that we've had several public meetings pertaining to that particular park and development, and as I indicated once earlier in my remarks, parks wear out. Without ongoing redevelopment and maintenance that park would not be there for generations and for other people to use. It certainly won't be structured the way some individuals want it. I'll take that responsibility. I made that decision this week that we're going to proceed, because while there are some people not wanting to proceed, there are many, many other Albertans who wish to see that park proceed and be developed, to have proper water, to have a park that they can use and go to that has the facilities and some of the amenities. So we're going to continue with that development.

The Member for Banff-Cochrane indicated in his remarks specifically to William Watson Lodge. I don't think enough could be said about it in reference to what it is, how it performs, and the services it provides. I'm certainly pleased that he as the member for the area recognizes it and encourages people to use it. I've indicated in my letter I just read from the war amputees just how well recognized it is as a worldwide facility as well.

The Mount Kidd Recreational Vehicle Park is an example of two individuals running a fine facility. I met with the James brothers recently and am very pleased with the operation they run. The staff facilities: it's just a great comment. We'll certainly review it and keep it in mind. It's a concern. I could appreciate the concern — I guess a little pun — when I heard that some of the people living there refer to working and living in Kananaskis Country as already being in heaven, but I guess we better give them facilities to work with; we can't always be in the clouds. I say that with tongue in cheek, because it certainly is a point worth taking, and we'll try and address those issues.

The Kananaskis Citizens Advisory Committee: I'm pleased the hon. member would refer to that, because I think it's a very valuable one and a very valuable one to have their input and to have them keeping us in tow of what the needs are and the concerns for the park. So let's work with them. We'll continue that, and hopefully a few municipal concerns can be addressed through the municipality as well.

But the very interesting one, Mr. Chairman to all hon. members, one that's going to have to be addressed sometime, is in the area of park fees. We have not increased fees since 1980, but no, we're not going to increase fees in 1986 either. We're reviewing them; we're looking at them. It is quite right, as the member indicated, that we are the lowest in Canada. That's one area I'm not proud of, but it's something we're going to have to assess. I hope that all hon. members will support me, that we never have to get to a full user-fee concept, because it just ain't gonna work. We can't expect to put the infrastructure in place and then come around and say to these people, "We built it for you; you better pay for it." We just can't. We still have to provide some ongoing services for these people, even though it's going to take some infrastructure and capital dollars to do it. I hope the people will recognize and support that level that we need to provide those ongoing services. So we will continue to review them, and unfortunately, within the next year or so, we'll probably have to come in with recommendations to be more fair in the overall system.

The reservation comment was very interesting, because I just happened to have clipped an article out about booking ahead your favourite campsite, noting that we have 40 of Alberta's 63 provincial parks on the reservation system. Yes, hon. members, it's working well; no, we can't confine it to non-Albertans. It's a system that is there for people to use. I'm pleased that they are using it. For that \$3 fee they're insuring that they have that facility in place. It works well; we're going to expand it. It's a service that we're not going to look back on. It's a service we're going to increase to accommodate their ongoing needs.

The growing numbers of visitors: no, we can't contain or control them. We're just pleased they've used the parks.

The hon. Member for Banff-Cochrane referred to three specific areas: a user-pay philosophy, privatization, and a decrease in some other programs. We'll certainly look at all areas. The user-pay philosophy I think I've addressed. Privatization is an area we'll explore. The decrease in some other programs is an area that I sure hope we don't have to do, and I'll address some of those as some hon. members referred to, with regard to cutbacks.

The CRC program is a strong program. We certainly believe in it and encourage people to support it, the volunteer and community groups as well. The Indian band MRTA program is an interesting one. I would like to assure the member that if he has particular concerns and assurance can be made for ongoing future use by the public or of the public, I would love to work with him on any individual specific area or program.

The Ghost reservoir problem: I'm glad he presented the other side of the story. As I say, it's not the full one. I'd love to try and resolve it, and we're working on that.

I appreciate the hon. Member for Cypress-Redcliff's remarks re the size. I'd like to indicate once again to all hon. members, though, that Kananaskis is not just a ski site, not just a golf course. There are many other multi-users: horseback users, wilderness outings, family facilities, the RV and ATV users. It's unbelievable to see the corrals there for the horses people take into the parks and park their trailers.

The Cypress Hills: I'm pleased the hon. member would refer to the master plan, because once again public input will be requested. We're programming a public meeting for the latter part of September. I hope and encourage that all groups be involved, not just special or lobby groups. I'll be disappointed if the citizens concerned do not make their concerns public.

The ski hill: as I said earlier, I'm pleased that we were able to announce the \$700,000 for the first phase, and we'll continue to work on that development. As far as the municipal taxation review, we certainly hope to be able to assist them within the department. But I'd like to point out to the hon. member that there are two sides to it, the two sides being that we do provide some of those services in the way of clearing roads and other goods and services as well.

The Member for Edmonton Highwood specifically paid thanks to my predecessor, as I did earlier. Certainly, an awful lot of the programs and guidelines that are in place have been as a result of his good guidance and the sincerity and efforts he brought to the department.

He said that he could irritate me. No, he can't irritate me, because I love this job. I think I'm one of the luckiest persons in the world to be doing it, and I hope I have the opportunity to continue. So no, you can't irritate me, hon.

Member for Highwood, because I get up every day saying it's another plus day.

The need for additional parks: I certainly would ask him to support the municipal recreation tourism areas program, to get the applications in. I'd like to try and work with them. As far as Highwood being a park on its own, I'm pleased he recognizes it as that.

I'm surprised that the hon. Member for Edmonton Calder said that there were no facilities. I can appreciate there might not be any within the specific area, but I would encourage her to work with local service and community groups to perhaps develop some in-house community parks such as I've seen in other areas and such as I see in my own community in the city of Fort McMurray. We just have one community group park being developed where there were no funds coming from any other group but the volunteers. I encourage her to try and involve a local service group. Keep in mind as well that there are areas such as the Capital City Park and others around her they should be using as well. I appreciate her remarks on the shortage of recreation facilities. I certainly will try and see what can be done with regard to CRC funding and working on improvement of rinks. With regards to the schools, she particularly indicated about one complex. I have supported that, and I'm pleased that in my own constituency of Fort McMurray we have a first. The Fort McMurray YMCA complex, being jointly developed with a high school, is well under construction and hopefully will be opened in October of this year.

I won't have time to go into the individual votes, while I would love to, perhaps at another opportune time. In particular, the Member for Edmonton Glengarry raised a few questions on vote 3. I'd just look at it for a second. In vote 3 I want to answer a couple of specific questions that were referred to about the differences of 3.3 and 3.4, particularly vote 3.3, parks reconstruction. A simple definition, Mr. Chairman, would be the wearing out or the use in particular, and the construction in 3.4 would be for the development as referred to in earlier remarks like the capital development of Cypress Hills, the ski facilities, the Delburne Lakes, the Whitney Lakes, Kinbrook, and so forth.

But I'd like to come back to 3.3 for a minute. While you particularly note that the item is up somewhat at this time, keep in mind that in future years we'll have to look for greater dollar funding in those areas to ensure that the future dollars will be there to continue with them.

I'm almost to the end, but I think that in view of the time perhaps I could come back at a later date and continue. If any other hon. members would like to ask further questions, I would be pleased to try and respond. I'd like to thank all hon. members for their overall support, in particular in an area that I feel very strongly about and believe in. I felt it both ways.

Thank you, gentlemen.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

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

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The committee has heard the request of the Acting Government House Leader. I would mention that there are still seven people on the list that wish to be heard.

[Motion carried]

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

MR. MUSGREAVE: 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, does the Assembly agree?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. YOUNG: Mr. Speaker, the order of business for tomorrow afternoon is that shown as designated under Votes and Proceedings, Department of Social Services.

[At 10:34 p.m., on motion, the House adjourned to Wednesday at 2:30 p.m.]