

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ALBERTA

Title: Thursday, July 24, 1986 2:30 p.m.

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

PRAYERS

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

MR. SPEAKER: Let us pray. On this day we give special thanks for all those who were prepared to make the supreme sacrifice in order to assure to us freedom and peace. Our Father, we confidently ask for your strength and encouragement in our service of you through our service of others. We humbly ask for your gift of wisdom to guide us in making good laws and good decisions for the present and the future of Alberta. Amen.

head: INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill 17

Highway Traffic Amendment Act, 1986

MR. ADAIR: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce a Bill, being Bill 17, the Highway Traffic Amendment Act, 1986.

The principle of this Bill is to clarify a number of issues related to various sections of the Act. By example, one is the definition of an emergency vehicle. It involves not only the definition or the clarification of that particular term but the order of precedence when approaching intersections and the likes of that. Another section relates to the introduction of the eight-light safety system, including stop arms for the use of school buses. Another section is the repeal of section 61, the repeal of the prohibition of radar detectors, which will attempt to clarify the situation that has occurred in the last number of months. Finally, Mr. Speaker, there will be one other amendment that will clarify the fact that speed limits are now 100 kilometres day and night. That will be corrected in this particular amendment.

[Leave granted; Bill 17 read a first time]

Bill 263

An Act to Amend the Remembrance Day Act

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Mr. Speaker, I request leave to introduce a Bill, being An Act to Amend the Remembrance Day Act.

The Bill would require almost all public and private enterprises in Alberta to close down between the hours of 6 a.m. and 12 noon on Remembrance Day. It exempts from its provisions certain essential public and industrial activities and allows the Lieutenant Governor in Council to set further exemptions. Mr. Speaker, I mark in a special way the 60th anniversary of the Royal Canadian Legion by introducing this Bill today.

[Leave granted; Bill 263 read a first time]

Bill 18

Mines and Minerals Amendment Act, 1986

DR. WEBBER: Mr. Speaker, I request leave to introduce Bill 18, the Mines and Minerals Amendment Act, 1986. This being a money Bill, Her Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor, having been informed of the contents of this Bill, recommends the same to the Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, this amendment will enable benefits provided to the energy industry under several recently announced incentive programs to be paid from the General Revenue Fund and treated as a reduction of nonrenewable resource revenue. Currently the Act allows moneys from exploratory drilling and geophysical incentives to be treated in this fashion. The amendment will broaden the scope of the provision to include other types of incentives.

[Leave granted; Bill 18 read a first time]

head: TABLING RETURNS AND REPORTS

MR. RUSSELL: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to table the 1985 annual report of the Southern Alberta Institute of Technology.

head: INTRODUCTION OF SPECIAL GUESTS

MR. STEWART: Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure and indeed a privilege to introduce to you, and through you to members of this Assembly, four members of the New Zealand delegation who have contributed so much to the success of the World Sheep and Wool Congress being held in conjunction with Klondike Days. With us today in the members' gallery are Beverley and Bruce Beard and Mary and John Rowan. I would ask them to rise and receive the warm welcome of this Assembly.

MR. HERON: Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce to you, and through you to members of this Assembly, two very special guests who are situated in the members' gallery. The first, Mrs. Mary Norman, is a lifelong friend. The second is Mrs. Ruth Flanagan, who was my school teacher over 30 years ago. I would ask that members of this Assembly join with me in giving them the traditional warm welcome.

MR. FISCHER: Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce to you, and through you to the members of the Assembly, a former colleague, Tom Lysons. He represented the Vermilion-Viking constituency for 11 years. I would ask him to rise and receive the warm welcome of this Assembly.

MR. OLDRING: Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to introduce to you, and through you to the Members of the Legislative Assembly, a person that is very important to me. Mrs. Eileen Schultz is with us today — Eileen is the person that runs my constituency office while I'm up in Edmonton — and her husband Stan Schultz. I would ask that they rise and receive the traditional warm greetings of this Assembly.

head: MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Public Safety Services

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to advise the Legislative Assembly that the government of Alberta in co-operation with the city of Edmonton will register damages and losses sustained to property resulting from the flooding

of the North Saskatchewan River July 18, 19, and 20. Residents of Rosedale, Riverdale, and Cloverdale who sustained damages or losses are being advised to register with Alberta Public Safety Services at Donald Ross school board room, main floor, 10125-97th Avenue, and the Kinsmen Big Sisters building, 10135-89th Street, on Sunday, July 27, and Monday, July 28, between the hours of 12 noon and 10 p.m. Application forms and advice will be available at the registration centres.

For residents unable to attend these dates, applications for assistance can be completed at City Hall or at Alberta Public Safety Services, 10320-146th Street. Registrations will not be accepted after September 1, 1986.

Earlier this week I tabled in the Legislative Assembly and provided to all members a copy of the government's policy statement on disaster assistance. The policy statement outlines the authorities; general considerations, guidelines, exclusions, and limitations of the disaster assistance program. The policy statement is specific and will be used as the key document in the accepting, adjudicating, and payment of claims.

Applications will be accepted from all homeowners affected by the flood. Individuals who are living in homes owned by the city of Edmonton may submit their claims for personal loss. The city of Edmonton may submit claims for damage sustained in publicly owned infrastructure.

While the \$1,000 deductibility clause will remain in effect, the minister is prepared to waive this deductibility on a case-by-case discretionary basis for those individuals and families who can show that the losses and damages sustained have been so devastating as to threaten the economic survival of that individual or family. The Premier has directed that the minister be compassionate, and I will be.

Residents will be advised of this information by handbills delivered door to door in the affected communities on Friday, July 25, by the city of Edmonton. Advertisements will appear July 25, 26, and 27 in the two Edmonton daily newspapers.

Applications for assistance will be assessed by certified government of Alberta appraisers, and assistance grants will be made as quickly as possible. Conclusion of this matter is a priority with the government of Alberta.

Alberta Public Safety Services is in close contact with all rural municipalities also affected by the recent flood conditions, and tomorrow I will be making a ministerial statement on the government's initiative with respect to the procedures that will be implemented by the government in the accepting, adjudicating, and payment of claims of those individuals and municipalities affected by recent and current flooding in rural Alberta.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, to reply to the ministerial announcement, I appreciate the minister reading it, otherwise we might have been here all afternoon. But I say to the minister that I would like to compliment the government for moving quickly during these uncertain times. The only qualifier I would put is that I would have preferred to waive the \$1,000 deductibility clause. I understand why the government is doing it, but it seems to me it could become a little bureaucratic and perhaps end up costing the government more by the time they judge who is in need, because it says that it would be on a

discretionary basis for those individuals and families who can show that the losses and damages sustained

have been so devastating as to threaten the economic survival of that individual or family.

That's going to be a very difficult position to figure out. I would welcome the minister telling us how he will be able to do that.

Let me say, though, that all in all I am satisfied by the response, particularly the response, "The Premier has directed that the minister be compassionate, and I will be." I hope that is the case. I accept the minister on his word. So I would say that I'm generally satisfied, but I think it would have been easier on the minister if he'd just waived the \$1,000. But all in all, a good response by the minister.

head: ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Health Care Premiums

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct the first question to the Minister of Hospitals and Medical Care. It seems that now the election is over, we are seeing the real Conservative agenda. It seems to include, if I may by looking at *Hansard*, an increase in health charges for ordinary people. But we'll give the minister a chance here today to qualify. My question to the minister: will the minister take this opportunity to make clear that as a matter of policy this government is not in favour of raising medicare premiums, which after all are a regressive tax?

MR. M. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, first of all it was the hon. member's own so-called health care critic last Monday afternoon who was wondering why there was such a dramatic increase in the government's expenditures for the health care insurance plan. I believe the figure was about a 17.5 percent increase and a contribution from the General Revenue Fund to the health care insurance plan, which has in it about \$700 million in total. I indicated at that time that the health care insurance premiums, when the plan was first implemented in 1970, covered about 58 percent of the total cost of the health care insurance plan. The plan at that time, by the way, cost \$87 million. In 1985 health care insurance premiums paid 36.7 percent of the total health care plan. In this budget that we are now debating, the premiums, which have not been increased for a very long time by this government, cover less than 30 percent of the total health care cost.

So I did express a view then and I express it again that at some point in time we have to reckon with the fact that the health care costs in terms of utilization and additional fees and so on are going up, and there's been no reflection of that at all in the health care insurance premiums. My suggestion to the Leader of the Opposition is that all of us have some responsibility in trying to figure out how to counter that problem of increased utilization, increased costs that must be borne obviously, at this point in time, by deficit financing.

MR. MARTIN: I appreciate all the figures and that, Mr. Speaker. I take it by the roundabout answer that we are considering it. We will be glad to give him help on costs; just come to our office. My question to the minister: is there one single study anywhere which the minister can table or even cite which concludes that increases in health care premiums reduce utilization?

MR. M. MOORE: Contrary to the views of the hon. Leader of the Opposition, I think it's common knowledge amongst

most governments in this country, if not elsewhere in the world, that a concept where the state pays for everything and the usage that individuals have of a medical care system or any other government service is not reflected in what they pay — the costs ultimately go up. I don't have to do studies to indicate that. There's no question that if health care insurance premiums are directly related to the use of the health care system, there will be a better recognition by those who use the system of what it costs.

I should go on to say, Mr. Speaker, that the hon. member should be aware that we've implemented a very effective system of ensuring that people who pay health care insurance premiums are not financially burdened beyond their means to pay. No one over the age of 65 pays health care insurance premiums. Every individual under the age of 65 is entitled to apply, depending on their level of income, for a subsidy if their income is too low, and many, many people who are under 65 years of age pay no premiums whatsoever. So we have put in place a very effective system of ensuring that those people who cannot afford to pay in fact do not pay. I think there can be nothing fairer in a health care insurance plan than the system we've got in place.

MR. MARTIN: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. It's nice to know that it's just common knowledge and he doesn't have any studies. That's the type of research we expect from this government. But I'm sure the minister is aware that there is a utilization committee report to the previous minister back in September 1985. They say, directly contradicting what the minister just said:

Analysis ... did not bear out the hypothesis that the rate of increase in service utilization is that unreasonable ...

My question, given this finding, Mr. Speaker: why does the minister continue to promote the myth that there is abuse of our system by patients and doctors?

MR. M. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, in case the hon. member's unaware, I in fact tabled the report that he's referring to in this Legislature four weeks ago, and I've read it and studied it. I don't happen to agree with all of its conclusions. The fact of the matter is, Mr. Speaker, that there's a philosophical difference between the hon. Leader of the Opposition and perhaps most of us on the government side of the House, that being that he believes everybody should be taxed and taxed and taxed and the state should pay for most of our needs. Some of us believe that a more direct relationship between the services provided by the government and what you have to pay is a more appropriate way to go. That's a philosophical difference that I don't expect to be resolved in this Legislature.

MR. MARTIN: Marv's general knowledge is more important than his reports. It seems that he doesn't agree with them. He happens to know. Instead of talking about the costs, if we're sincerely interested in controlling costs, as the minister has said, why hasn't the minister directed his department to do a top-to-bottom review of ways money could be saved through support for preventative measures such as seat-belt laws, community health clinics, and better home care? I could go on. Perhaps we should build less political hospitals. Why haven't we done that sort of review?

MR. M. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is completely ignoring the fact that this government has spent

a lot of time and effort over the course of the last several years in developing new preventative health measures. My colleague the hon. Minister of Community and Occupational Health is involved in a very comprehensive home care program that's been improved dramatically in terms of the financing provided to health units and people on home care over the course of the last years.

We've just been debating in this very Legislature the last three weeks the Youville pavilion at the General hospital in Edmonton, which was designed, built, and staffed as one of the finest facilities on the continent with respect to ensuring that our elderly people aren't just shuffled off to nursing homes. I could go on and on, Mr. Speaker, about the kinds of things we've been doing to ensure that the health care system in this province is responsive to the needs of people and is cost effective when it comes to institutionalizing.

The other day I opened, or helped the Deputy Premier open, the Rockyview hospital in Calgary where there are 16 day beds for day surgery. We're encouraging things that never existed before in this province. That saves up to \$500 a day with respect to a bed for people who come in and have surgery and go out that same night. There's a host of things, Mr. Speaker, that we're doing and will continue to do to ensure that Albertans get the best value for their health care dollar.

MRS. HEWES: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Does the minister have any statistics whatsoever on the frequency of use of health care, the administration costs, in provinces where premiums are not charged as opposed to provinces where premiums are charged?

MR. M. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, I don't have any with me, but I know there is some reference to that in some of the material we do have. Unfortunately, in provinces like ours the relationship between the premium and the actual cost has never really been reflected, so it's rather difficult under those circumstances. That's partly what the utilization report referred to — to make a comparison. Because we're really not saying, "Here's your health care insurance plan, and you must pay 50 percent or one-third or two-thirds of the cost." We simply strike a figure that bears no relationship to the amount people use it, so it's pretty hard to compare that with a province that doesn't charge any health care premiums at all.

We do know that if people are required to pay the full cost of their insurance plan, utilization does go down. Recent studies in the United States have indicated that where individuals are paying their own insurance premiums, utilization is substantially less than where corporate employers are paying it all for their employees. That's a good factor in terms of the relationship between who pays and who doesn't.

Provincial Revenues

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to continue with this line along the terms of provincial revenue and direct this question to the Premier. During the recent provincial election the Premier went around the province assuring Albertans that there would not be tax increases if his government was returned. Given that an increase in health premiums would certainly violate that promise, what steps has the Premier taken to inform the hospitals minister that an increase in premiums is not acceptable and will not occur?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, the comments that I made during the provincial election are matters that we will enforce and stand by.

MR. MARTIN: A supplementary question then. The Premier doesn't like to be misquoted, so we'll make it clear. Following up with his election promises, the Premier is saying that while he's the Premier there will be no increase in medicare premiums.

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, that's not what I said. I guess he'll have to read *Hansard* again to learn what I said.

MR. MARTIN: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. By the Premier's nonanswer, can we say then that he is in agreement with the hospitals minister that we should look at increasing medicare premiums?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, the hon. Leader of the Opposition is going to have to frame his question in some other way. I answered it the first time.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, I think we're seeing the clear Conservative agenda by these nonanswers, as I predicted they would say. Let me ask the Premier this question. It's clear that premiums have nothing to do with utilization and a lot to do with provincial revenues. Will the Premier assure Albertans that there will be no increases in medicare premiums, income tax rates, or imposition of a sales tax in 1987?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, we have a budget before us now. That budget contains no tax increases, as we said, and I'm certain that the budget, which runs to the end of March 1987, will be passed in the House, albeit at times progress seems slow. We stood by that budget, we reintroduced it, and we expect the people of Alberta to be very pleased with it.

MR. TAYLOR: A supplementary to the Premier, Mr. Speaker. In view of his promise not to increase taxes, when is he going to decrease the royalties on oil and gas to the Alberta producers?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, starting last June the government moved into a procedure of reducing royalties to the oil and gas industry. There has been a massive reduction: hundreds of millions of dollars. Again, this spring there was another reduction in royalties. In addition, there was an exploratory drilling program announced this spring which will allow a \$300 million reduction in royalties. All of those programs are done to assist the energy industry when they need that help.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the hon. Premier. It's relative to the question of taxation. As I recall in an earlier session this year, we talked about a possible committee studying various approaches to taxation. Could the Premier indicate whether that committee of persons is studying the matter at the present time, and will there be any reporting back to the Legislature relative to that matter?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, I can't quite recall the matter the hon. Member for Little Bow is referring to. Could he amplify on his question, please?

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, certainly to the Premier. My understanding was that a committee of private-sector individuals was involved in studying various approaches to taxation and was going to make recommendations to the Premier. I was wondering if that committee has reported yet.

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, I'll review any comments I've made in the House with regard to that, or the government before me, but I currently do not have a group studying the matter to report to me.

Small Business Equity Corporations

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, to the Premier. Since the small business equity corporations were set up in early 1984, have any cabinet ministers or entities controlled by cabinet ministers registered for loan eligibility?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, I understand that there is some reference to this in one of the papers in the province today. I will take some time to look into the matter and report back to the hon. member.

MR. TAYLOR: A supplementary, Mr. Minister. Possibly the Premier could also check whether or not there were any grants actually made. Maybe he could also tell us whether or not, if there were any cabinet applications for eligibility, these are against the present government conflict-of-interest guidelines.

MR. GETTY: Yes, I will, Mr. Speaker.

MR. TAYLOR: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker, to the Premier. Would he undertake to make clear to the House what the guidelines are with respect to the use by cabinet ministers or any entities controlled by cabinet ministers as to grants that are being made by any department of the provincial government?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, there is legislation in the House, the Legislative Assembly Act, that covers exactly that matter.

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Mr. Speaker, to the Premier. When will the answers to the motion for a return about SBECs that was approved a week or so ago be tabled in this House?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, once the House gives an order for a motion for a return, it's developed as quickly as possible and then provided to the House. I might say that some of them require a tremendous amount of research and, for that matter, a great deal of cost. They are being prepared as quickly as possible.

Mortgage and Housing Corporation

MR. R. SPEAKER: My question is to the minister of housing, and it's with regard to the Alberta home mortgage corporation's possible building of 700 units, as outlined in the Speech from the Throne. At the present time the government now holds, in terms of foreclosed properties, some 4,000 properties. My question to the minister is with regard to the utilization of the agreement with Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation for social housing, as

to whether these foreclosed houses could be used in terms of that program.

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, some housing in a number of communities has already been transferred to the community housing program by agreement with Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. I should say on the overall issue that the construction of new accommodations is for targeted areas and uses like senior citizen accommodations in communities where there is not deemed to be sufficient of that type of accommodation and social housing as well.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, could the minister assure us, and I believe that was the content of the answer, that areas where existing foreclosed homes or housing could be used for social purposes such as senior citizens will not have new units built but will utilize what is already in the inventory of the government?

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, that is the intention and the approach of the corporation in dealing with those matters. I think the hon. member asked for an assurance, and I'm describing the policy. It's certainly the policy that housing won't be created in a market where there is already housing of that type in surplus.

MR. HAWKESWORTH: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker, to the minister. Would he be prepared to convene a meeting between himself, the board of AMHC, nonprofit groups, municipal officials, and local elected officials to seek some guidance and solutions to the problems of vacant units as they exist in municipalities all across this province?

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, I think it is a useful exercise to discuss that with the board of the corporation. I've already met with the board of the corporation and addressed some of the difficulties. The further consultation process involving municipalities is a suggestion that I will also take under advisement.

MR. NELSON: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary. Considering the number of housing units that are vacant, would the minister consider the input from not only the municipalities and the MLAs but also the communities that are affected prior to making further decisions and turning housing over to municipal housing authorities, so there's proper input as to the concern of many residents living in these communities that have a considerable amount of this housing?

MR. CRAWFORD: Once again, Mr. Speaker, I think it's a question of how the consultation can best be done. I'm not sure it's practical to consult with every community, but if the corporation is consulting with municipal governments I would think there would be a way that the people in various communities can also be consulted.

MRS. HEWES: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary. Can the minister tell us whether discussions have taken place or any consideration is being given to vacant housing units now in the AMHC inventory, that they be made available to housing co-operatives?

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, I mentioned the arrangement by which some housing of that type in inventory is being transferred, and has been in some cases, to community housing. I'm not sure if the discussions have gone into the

question of co-operative housing, but there is, as I understand it, a portion of the budget of the corporation which is to be settled upon co-operative housing this year.

Calgary Emergency Telephone System

MRS. KOPER: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Technology, Research and Telecommunications. It's regarding the fact that the city of Calgary has found it necessary to replace its 911 emergency telephone system because of an unduly and unnecessarily long response time created when emergency calls must be traced. Is the minister aware of this inadequacy of the system in Calgary?

MR. YOUNG: Mr. Speaker, the answer is yes, and as a matter of fact Alberta Government Telephones initiated discussions with the city of Calgary as long as four years ago. The system in question is owned by the city of Calgary, however. The system is bid upon by various suppliers, or various suppliers could supply the city of Calgary. It is a Calgary-owned system.

MRS. KOPER: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Can the minister further advise why the present system, which I understand is only 20 years old, must be retired because AGT can't supply the parts?

MR. YOUNG: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to advise that I've checked on that particular aspect, and AGT can supply the parts. The problem is that the existing system is not capable of tracing a call providing a location of where the emergency is. The hon. member has quite correctly identified that the system is quite old, in the sense of rapidly changing technology. It is only the newer generation of systems which can provide a trace on the call. As far as the parts are concerned, those can be supplied, but the system simply can't do what emergency system operators like to be able to supply these days.

MRS. KOPER: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Are there other 911 systems in the province experiencing similar difficulties with this kind of planned obsolescence?

MR. YOUNG: Mr. Speaker, the hon. Member for Calgary Foothills suggests that it's planned obsolescence, and I have to take a little bit of issue with that. It's a matter of changing technology, especially over the last 20 years.

As to whether there are other systems in place of this vintage, I really couldn't respond. I could probably get the information, although since each municipality can arrange and does purchase its own system for whatever purposes it may have in mind and these can be purchased from different sources, I'm not sure that Alberta Government Telephones or any government agency has the total information the hon. member has asked for in terms of what is available out there in the municipalities.

Energy Industry

MR. CHUMIR: Mr. Speaker, a question to the hon. Premier. The Independent Petroleum Association of Canada has just asked for government action on a number of matters, including reducing natural gas export conditions and also pipeline transportation costs for moving energy. Of course, these transportation costs and taxes could take over 80 percent of the price of some natural gas sales, and they

reduce the price received by our producers and, of course, our provincial royalties. This week Nova, an Alberta Corporation responded by lowering its charges for transporting gas in Alberta by 10 percent because of falling interest rates. The question, Mr. Premier, is whether the government has taken any action to press for a commensurate reduction in the rates charged by national pipelines, particularly TransCanada PipeLines which has, of all things, just asked for an increase.

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, national pipelines fall under the jurisdiction of the National Energy Board and, as such, any requests for increases in their charges must be approved, and an exhaustive process is then gone into by the National Energy Board. Both buyers and sellers participate in that process, as do, at times, certain parts of the government. As a result of those hearings, which go on for some period of time, judgments are made either to reduce or to increase charges, and over the years these judgments and this review process have proven to be a good way of controlling those pipelines. I think, in judgment and in balance, that is the way it should continue in the future.

MR. CHUMIR: I take it the answer is that the government is not taking any action. However, does the government plan, Mr. Premier, to take any action at the impending Premiers' Conference or otherwise to press for a similar reduction in the gas distribution charges within other provinces, particularly Ontario and Quebec, just as Nova, an Alberta Corporation has reduced the charges within Alberta?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, the process by which buyers and sellers of gas and utility boards deal with these matters seems to be working well, and we would not try and interfere with them in other provinces.

MR. CHUMIR: Mr. Premier, is the government now prepared to support the sensible and fair position of the Independent Petroleum Association of Canada that gas deregulation should be delayed unless export surplus tests are effectively reduced and the current price restraints on exports removed?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, we together with others who are involved — as I've said before, the matter of deregulation is part of an agreement signed by three provinces and the federal government, but should it appear that what IPAC is asking for is reasonable and fair, then obviously it would be accepted.

MR. CHUMIR: It appears that the government is doing nothing on any of these matters. Can the Premier please tell this House exactly what the government is doing to help the natural gas industry in this regard and when we're going to get some action?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, as I've outlined to the hon. member, there are many things going on to help our energy industry. The Minister of Energy has told the House at least five or six times in this session alone the amount of assistance that the energy industry is receiving from the province, the work that is going on with the industry and the Department of Energy now to deal with the problems facing that industry. I'd say, Mr. Speaker, that the amount of assistance given to the energy industry in Alberta in the past six months has been a huge commitment by this

government and the people of Alberta to ensuring that their energy industry is as strong as possible during a period of incredible price instability.

MR. PASHAK: Mr. Speaker, to the Premier. As the price of gas is falling to Alberta producers, other governments have either placed or are placing extra taxes on this gas. What steps does the government of this province intend to take to prevent this from happening?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, we make sure that other provinces do not intrude into our responsibilities. In Canada that is what happens as a part of being Canada. Other provinces have certain responsibilities; they are free to do them. We may not agree with them, but we don't intrude into their areas.

DR. WEBBER: I'd just like to say, Mr. Speaker, that some of the culprits in the business of taxation are the hon. member's colleagues in Manitoba, with a tax on compressor fuel, and if netback pricing occurs as it would under complete deregulation, then of course the producers in this province would be the losers. So I think it's entirely unacceptable that provinces such as Manitoba would impose such a tax on our industry here.

Education Funding

MS LAING: To the Minister of Education. We are hearing about teacher cutbacks in Alberta. In Ponoka county, for example, up to nine more teachers are to be dropped after 21 reductions in the past few years. What information has the minister assembled as to the full extent of teacher reductions by school jurisdictions in the years 1986-87?

MRS. BETKOWSKI: Mr. Speaker, I'm proud to support in the budget — if we do get to the Education estimates — a 4 percent increase to school boards across this province. I believe that given the rate of inflation in Alberta over the past year, this is very worthy and admirable support for those school boards. As to the specific circumstances of the county of Ponoka, I would be pleased to look into those for the hon. member.

MS LAING: In view of the past low increases of 2 percent, I'm surprised that decisions about funding are being made without efforts to determine the effects on the delivery of service. My question would be: would the minister please agree to immediately gather information on all school jurisdictions that are having to make cuts and make that information public?

MRS. BETKOWSKI: Mr. Speaker, I am constantly in touch with school boards across this province as well as with their representative association, the Alberta School Trustees' Association. I will continue in that communication process, and as I say, I'm very proud to support a 4 percent increase in grants across the board to those boards.

MS LAING: Mr. Speaker, what information does the minister have of the extent to which specialized programs such as art, home economics, counselling, and special education cannot be staffed by specially trained people to meet the demand for such programs, especially in view of the new curriculum and increased disruption and dislocation in families?

MRS. BETKOWSKI: Mr. Speaker, I simply cannot support those allegations made by the hon. member. In the last four years alone we have increased special education funding in an unprecedented way. We are leaders in North America with respect to special education funding and programming in this province, and I'm proud of that as the Minister of Education.

MS LAING: Mr. Speaker, in view of the increased funding to special programs — last year a 2 percent increase of funding to education — what then has been the impact on ordinary classroom teacher/student ratios?

MRS. BETKOWSKI: I don't have the specific information with respect to the effect on student/teacher ratios. I guess that question could well be addressed to some of the boards, and I would suspect that's the best place to go.

MR. JONSON: A further supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. In her investigation of these matters, would the minister find out for us the extent to which the staff reductions quoted were caused by declining enrolment, to what degree they were caused by the contribution the local board was prepared to make, and also, of course, the effect that our level of funding had on that situation? Further, since I am not aware of any new curriculum that was being referred to, could she check to see if there is any new curriculum in those areas?

MRS. BETKOWSKI: In fact, Mr. Speaker, with respect to the new curriculum, the only changes for this fall, as I have indicated in this House on at least two occasions, involve the changing of the pass mark from 40 percent to 50 percent and the dropping of the so-called B options, which I believe is supported by the province and by the people in the province.

MR. CHUMIR: Mr. Speaker, will the minister consider special provisions for those rural areas which have been particularly hard hit by the reduction in the percentage of education costs from approximately 85 percent 15 years ago to in the low 60s now, and which do not have the municipal tax base to rely on, as do the urban areas?

MRS. BETKOWSKI: Mr. Speaker, I look forward to getting into these matters in greater detail during my estimates, but again I simply cannot support the statement by the hon. member opposite that education funding in Alberta has fallen over the past decade. In fact, with falling school enrolments — and there has been a real drop in those school enrolments over the last, say, six years — education grants to school boards have increased about 70 percent over that term. Given that over the same period inflation has increased at about 50 percent, I don't think the member has a point on the second part of his question.

On the first part with respect to rural education, I share the concern of the hon. member and have been in touch with many parents and boards who are facing a difficulty with respect to rural education. The Alberta School Trustees' Association is about to publish a report on rural education, which I look forward to reviewing. I would be happy to share a copy with the hon. member, knowing his interest in education as well.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the minister. One of the recommendations of a study of

three rural school divisions in southern Alberta is that in some of the rural schools funding be done on a program basis rather than on a per pupil basis. I was wondering if the minister has considered that, and would there be any recommendations coming back to the Legislature relative to it?

MRS. BETKOWSKI: I have read in the newspapers about the report to which the hon. member refers. I haven't yet seen the report. If he would care to send me one, I would be delighted to review it, and I will, when I do receive it.

MR. SPEAKER: The Member for Calgary North West, followed by the Member for Edmonton Highlands if there is time.

Liquor Licensing Fees

DR. CASSIN: Mr. Speaker, a question to the Minister of Tourism. In view of the thrust and the importance that this province is trying to give the tourist industry and in view of the fact that the food service is the backbone of the tourism and hospitality industry, creating many jobs for young people and the unskilled labour force, would it be unreasonable to ask this province and the Alberta Liquor Control Board to do away with the 7 percent licensing fee on wines, spirits, and imported beers purchased by these licensees?

MR. FJORDBOTTEN: Mr. Speaker, over the course of the last few weeks I have met with representatives of all the major tourist associations in the province, and the question of the 7 percent surcharge on sales to liquor licensees has been a topic of discussion at every one of the meetings. I have given the commitment to each of those associations I met with that I would review it and would also raise it with my hon. colleague the Solicitor General, under whose responsibility it falls, to see if changes could be made.

DR. CASSIN: A supplementary to the Provincial Treasurer. Will the Provincial Treasurer look into the impact of these changes on provincial revenues, and whether it would be necessary to increase an across-the-board tax on liquor sales at the retail level, recognizing that some of the losses should be offset by increased activity, business, and jobs in the food and service industry?

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, similar to my colleague the Minister of Tourism, who has indicated that in many cases one of the key complaints of people who participate in the tourism industry or that service sector is the 7 percent tax, I as well would undertake to do the review the member requests. I must say that the tax goes back some time before my time in government, and I think it would probably be wise for us to check and see what validity that tax now has. I'm sure my colleague the chairman of the Alberta alcohol and drug commission may have some views with respect to whether or not it does change consumption patterns, but nonetheless, having factored that in, I will undertake to do a review for the Member for Calgary North West and report back to him.

DR. CASSIN: The second supplementary is to the Solicitor General. Since the food service industry already pays a

business tax as well as an operating licence fee, pending reports from the Provincial Treasurer, could we ask the Solicitor General and the Alberta Liquor Control Board to take immediate action?

MR. ROSTAD: Mr. Speaker, first of all, the business tax is a municipal responsibility and not within our jurisdiction. However, liquor licensing has two components to it: one is based on the type of establishment you're running, and one is levied against the purchases that you obtain from the liquor board. That's the particular tax that I think you're directing your interest at. I might point out that Alberta has traditionally had the lowest licensing fees in Canada, as well as the lowest price of liquor, and I am advised that we are still in that position, although in this particular levy I think there is one province that has one a little lower. I think it's 5 percent, not 7 percent. They range somewhere from 5 to 12 percent.

I might relate to the hon. Member for Calgary North West that recently the Liquor Control Board deregulated the pour. The pour went down from one and a quarter ounces to whatever you wished, and I think it's presently around one ounce. That's a 20 percent reduction, and I'm advised that very little of that ever went through to the consumer. So obviously the industry is getting that benefit. I might relate, too, that at present a highball has an average markup of 400 percent. That's a pretty significant markup for any businessman. I think some would be just delighted to have that type of thing to work for. I can relate that to the commission itself on a 26 of rye. The average markup is around 116 percent, which as well is significant but certainly not the percentage that the operator of the industry has.

I appreciate the thrust and initiative of tourism and the components that make up tourism, and I'm certainly more than willing to discuss this with the Minister of Tourism, the Provincial Treasurer, and yourself. But I think perhaps it's an indication that the industry should look within itself to become more efficient rather than coming to the government looking for more help.

MR. SPEAKER: The time for question period has expired. May the Assembly revert to introduction of special guests?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

head: INTRODUCTION OF SPECIAL GUESTS

(reversion)

Royal Canadian Legion

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. members, 1986 is a year of great significance to the members of the Royal Canadian Legion, Canada, and our democratic freedom. This is the 60th anniversary of the Royal Canadian Legion, and I welcome Legion members seated in all galleries to the Legislative Assembly.

Seated in the Speaker's gallery are the executive members of Alberta and Northwest Territories. I would ask them to rise as they are introduced: the Immediate Past President Hugh Greene, First Vice-President Bert Sharp, Second Vice-President Peter Morrison, Third Vice-President Bud Blackwell, Fourth Vice-President Terry Buchanan, the Hon. Treasurer Stewart Black, the Hon. Solicitor Vincent O'Connor, Vice-Chairman Harold Dratrud, TVS Representative Alex

Vail, Command Secretary Glen Canning, District 1 Commander Pat McNamara, District 2 Commander Jack Norwood, District 3 Commander Tom Barton, District 4 Commander Ray Edger, District 5 Commander Peter Borgos, District 6 Commander Bob Burke, District 7 Commander Archie Bevington, District 8 Commander Wally Franks, and President of the Ladies Auxiliary Madam Kay Schultz. Would all members of the Assembly kindly welcome all of our special guests.

Would all members please stand.

[The Premier and the Sergeant-at-Arms left the Chamber and returned with the Associate Sergeant-at-Arms, who bore the Royal Canadian Legion Articles of Faith. Representatives of the Royal Canadian Legion also entered and stood at the Bar of the House with the Sergeant-at-Arms and Associate Sergeant-at-Arms]

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, I request unanimous consent of the Legislature to move Motion 230 on the Order Paper.

MR. SPEAKER: Does the Assembly agree to give unanimous consent?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed, if any? Carried.

head: MOTIONS OTHER THAN GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

230. Moved by Mr. Gogo:

Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly congratulate the Royal Canadian Legion on its Diamond Jubilee and endorse the Articles of Faith of the Legion.

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, I'm indeed proud to move this motion today, as it regards an organization with a distinguished record in many areas in Canada in its 60-year history. The Royal Canadian Legion has some 69,000 members in the province of Alberta and over 600,000 in Canada. Members of the Assembly will recall that just last month their national convention was here in Edmonton, with over 7,000 members attending.

Many members of the Legion fought for democracy in two world wars, plus Korea, and it's interesting to note that some members in the Assembly today are either veterans or served in the Canadian Armed Forces. Mr. Speaker, with your permission, I'd like to mention that the Member for Highwood, Mr. Alger, served in the air force; the Member for Lloydminster, Mr. Cherry, in the army; the hon. Member for Calgary McKnight, Mr. Musgreave, in the air force; the Member for Banff-Cochrane, Mr. Stevens, in the air force; the hon. Member for Calgary Fish Creek, Mr. Payne, in the navy; myself in Korea; the hon. leader of the Liberal Party, Mr. Taylor, served in the navy; the hon. Member for Edmonton Strathcona, Mr. Wright, in the Royal Marines; the Member for Lacombe, the hon. Mr. Moore, in the navy; and our own Sergeant-at-Arms, Mr. Oscar Lacombe, served in the army. In addition, Mr. Speaker, there are many members of this Assembly who serve and are members of the Royal Canadian Legion. The Member for Medicine Hat, who cannot be with us today, and the Member for Cypress-Redcliff, who has to be away, are both members of the Legion. We are indeed proud that

the former Member for Sherwood Park was the honorary president of the Kingsway branch of the Royal Canadian Legion here in Edmonton.

Mr. Speaker, the Royal Canadian Legion stands for principles that are contained in the testament of the Articles of Faith which hon. members have signed and which we request Mr. Speaker to sign today. I'd like to point out just a couple of those principles that are important or should be important to all members of the House. First of all, Remembrance Day, the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month, in respect of those who paid the supreme sacrifice so that we may have the freedoms we have today. I had the honour of having the Remembrance Day Act passed by this Legislature on May 31, 1984, not very long ago. This Bill will ensure that our school children are made aware of the men and women who paid the supreme sacrifice for the freedoms that we have today in our society.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, loyalty is a strong and meaningful word to the members of the Legion. No one could be more loyal to the widows and widowers of those who gave their lives. Support and loyalty are really in many ways the key to the members of the Royal Canadian Legion.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to comment on just two or three additional symbols that are not only so important to our society but were in effect created by the Legion. The poppy that we all know so well in honour of Remembrance Day: it's that emblem of the supreme sacrifice and holds an honoured place in the hearts of most Canadians, I'm sure, and those in the western world: the symbol of those who lie in Flanders fields. The torch, which represents justice, freedom, and honour throughout our country: here on the Legislative grounds we're proud to have that symbol in the floral design just behind the Legislature. Members and visitors today are encouraged to go by and look at the testament of the gardeners of the government of Alberta who have done such a beautiful job in creating in floral design the torch, which represents a very significant factor to the Legion.

Mr. Speaker, we as Canadians and as Albertans are fortunate indeed for the 600,000-odd members of the Royal Canadian Legion and the role they play in our society, proof positive that government cannot and should not be trying to do everything for everybody. Mr. Speaker, Members of the Assembly have signed the Articles of Faith representing their constituencies throughout Alberta. I now request with the passing of this motion that you sign the Articles of Faith as affirmation of this motion.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: All those in favour of Motion 230, please say aye.

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed, if any? Let the record show the motion was carried unanimously.

[The Sergeant-at-Arms brought the Articles of Faith to the Chair, and they were signed by the Speaker. The Sergeant-at-Arms bore the Articles of Faith out of the Chamber, accompanied by the representatives of the Royal Canadian Legion]

ORDERS OF THE DAY

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, I would like to move that questions 150, 152, and 159 and the four motions for returns on the Order Paper stand.

[Motion carried]

head: WRITTEN QUESTIONS

160. Mr. Mitchell asked the government the following question:

- (1) What are the names of the individuals who make up the 43 permanent, full-time positions in the Executive Council administration?
- (2) What is the wage or salary range of each full-time employee?
- (3) What positions account for the additional 17 man-year authorization?
- (4) What are the names of the individuals who hold these man-year authorization positions?
- (5) What remuneration does each individual receive?
- (6) What are the job titles and duties of each Executive Council administration employee?
- (7) What is the location of each Executive Council administration employee's office?

[Question accepted]

161. Mr. Mitchell asked the government the following question:

- (1) What amount of money has been invested to date by each Small Business Equity Corporation (SBEC) in commercial enterprises?
- (2) What amount of money remains to be invested by each SBEC?
- (3) What is the government's policy on the resale of SBEC funds?
- (4) How many SBEC funds have been resold since the creation of the program?
- (5) How many SBEC funds are presently pending sale?

[Question accepted]

head: MOTIONS OTHER THAN GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

(continued)

211. Moved by Mr. Brassard:

Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly urge the government to develop a suicide prevention program for inclusion in the curriculum for junior and senior high school students, in conjunction with a suicide prevention and awareness week targeted specifically towards the students and their families.

MR. BRASSARD: Mr. Speaker, in early June, around the time we were assuming our duties at the Legislature, I read a news story about a 10-year-old native who hanged himself. The principal of the school where this young boy had recently become a pupil said that he was quiet and always very polite. I think we all share the feelings of frustration and futility experienced by that school principal when he tried to speak to this tragedy, and I quote:

It's something that's hard to live with, a little 10-year old guy finding life so miserable that he had to destroy himself.

These news accounts of suicides among young people serve to remind us that teenage suicides happen with chilling frequency in our society.

[Mr. Musgreave in the Chair]

As a matter of record, the crisis centre in Edmonton alone received 63,000 calls last year; that's in excess of

10 percent of the population. I challenge each and every member of this Assembly to look around at home, at work, at the ball game: one in 10 of those people consider themselves to be in a crisis situation. Agreed, they're not all suicides, and they're not all teenagers. But not all who are planning suicide phone the crisis centre either. In Alberta there is the suicide death of a young person, on average, every eight days: almost one every week.

As we legislators discuss this sad problem, many of us do so with some personal experience that no matter how much love and care there may be, self-destructive behaviour can erupt without warning, especially — and generally — caused by other factors which those who care most are totally unaware of. Self-worth is not like a broken leg that we can put a cast on and simply wait for it to heal. It's a tragic, devastating experience that impacts most painfully upon the family and close friends and leaves everyone involved bewildered, dismayed, and feeling somehow to blame for not listening, not understanding, not reacting in some positive, preventative way.

I'm not an authority on suicide, but I do know that what is needed is greater awareness, which in turn will hopefully lead to better communications between all age groups. We must address the problem face-on, because if we don't do something positive, then we are in effect denying that it exists. We have to confront the nontraditional problems that are being faced by our young people. Can there be a sadder statistic than the fact that over 40 young people in Alberta each year have reached such depths of despair, such a low level of self-esteem, that he or she is able to take their own life? Watching a show the other night entitled *Silence of the Heart*, I listened to a young man say, "Sometimes life is so bad, you don't really want to die, it's just that you really don't want to go on living." Last year 5,000 American teenagers felt exactly that way.

We know from psychologists that adolescence is a critical period in a person's development, and at this time of their lives young people are just beginning to sort out their identity. Their value system is indeed at risk. During this important stage, new desires surface. The sense of identity nurtured in childhood changes. Teenagers are particularly prone to stress. We no longer live in a black and white world where decisions are based solely on the right thing to do. Today's standards and morals are less clearly defined. We are constantly encouraged to do our own thing.

It would be wrong to say that the current weakening of the family unit is the prime cause, but it is certainly a major consideration. Many young people today have the feeling that they're not connected with many people. There isn't always the same sense of affiliation, nor does there seem to be an adequately developed sense of caring for other people in the community and being cared for in return. It seems to me that nowadays there is a serious shortage of the kinds of bonding that tie us together in society. When many of us in my generation were growing up, we had a belief in the future, a confident sense of optimism, a knowledge that there was somebody to whom we mattered and who took care of us. It was a bridging mechanism through adolescence until we got more experience.

In Alberta we may have more to be concerned about than elsewhere in Canada. The most recent national statistics indicate that across Canada the suicide rate for teenagers between the ages of 15 and 19 was 13.2 per 100,000, and 289 young Canadians ended their life in suicide. Our experience is far worse than most of the country. For the same period, 1983, the teen suicide rate in Alberta was 20.6 per

100,000. In case I'm making this sound too clinical, Mr. Speaker, we should remind ourselves that this figure represents the self-inflicted deaths of 42 people in Alberta between the ages of 15 and 19. Our overall suicide rate is among the highest in Canada, and we seem to be returning to the high level of frequency that peaked in the early 1980s, a fact which I find extremely alarming.

Government must take a leadership role and maintain its significant contribution towards finding ways of dealing with this problem. We must fight, not feed, the denial process. We must increase awareness in all members of society, both adults and young people, and eradicate the stigma that causes denial. This is a disease no one wants to talk about. When most people approach the parents of a suicide victim, they generally don't know what to say. We want to somehow deny the fact that such a thing could happen in this day and age of freedom and abundance. We also don't want to admit even to ourselves that perhaps we failed to recognize the symptom and thereby became a part of the problem.

All of us in this Assembly recognize that Alberta spends more on suicide prevention than any other province. We fund the Provincial Advisory Committee on Suicide Prevention with an annual budget of \$800,000. However, our main concern must always be to allocate funds and resources in a way that will be most beneficial to the individual. This will sometimes necessitate changes in our priorities, not necessarily an increase in our financial support.

Currently we have a number of areas where government-sponsored initiatives are playing a vital role. We have the Provincial Advisory Committee on Suicide Prevention, which I just mentioned, which advises the Minister of Community and Occupational Health on the development of programs for suicide prevention, intervention, and 'postvention.' This committee has created three distinct programs: outreach, education and training, and research.

The outreach program is designed to co-ordinate existing community agencies. Education and training has taken the approach of a funding mechanism, funding provincial programs that are designed to meet local needs with two major projects which have already been put in place: a suicide information centre in Calgary and suicide prevention training programs throughout the province to train gatekeepers. Gatekeepers are people who are in positions that allow them to be among the first to recognize suicidal symptoms. Finally, the research field, which is funded by the advisory committee, underwriting a resource collection of academic titles on suicide at the University of Calgary. Furthermore, the Medical Examiner's office in Alberta has also been compiling a great deal of statistical data on the incidence of suicide.

We are also helping through the schools. High-risk adolescent problems such as suicide are usually first observed in school settings. These behaviors of concern are difficult to assess by parents because of their emotional entanglement with their children. The new junior high health and personal life skills program, parts of which specifically address suicide as well as related issues of self-worth and self-acceptance, has been successfully pilot-tested and will be offered as an elective to schools across Alberta in September of 1987. This program will become mandatory for students entering grade 10 in September of 1988.

Another critical piece in the support system and network of listening posts is through social and community agencies. We have built up in this province a significant social resources inventory. Aid, information, and direction centres are found in our major population centres. Crisis and distress

lines and a whole range of family and community support services exist across the province. For example, I think it particularly appropriate that the hot line and drug centre in Calgary is manned by teenage volunteers. Callers know that someone their own age is listening to their problems, and that is its appeal.

However, the greatest responsibility still rests with the family. But as those of us who are parents know, we cannot do the job alone. We don't have expert knowledge. Much of the time we're extremely busy with our own lives, and for the most part we were brought up in a generation where adolescence was very different from today. What we can do is to take on the challenge to help improve and save teenage lives. I encourage members to support the work of the Provincial Advisory Committee on Suicide Prevention, to support school programs that establish listening posts and address adolescent emotional confusion, to work with agencies and service groups that provide front-line emotional support and treatment for adolescents, and to build up the strengths in family and community that help address adolescent life-style problems.

I think there is a further positive step we can take today. We can support a provincial suicide awareness and prevention week. By making this a provincial effort, the awareness programs of the various social action groups can be co-ordinated, blanketing the entire province. An awareness week will bring about the pooling of information and experience. It will have an important public educational role. Hopefully, it will bring forward volunteer teens. The volunteer component is vital to the success of the social action group.

Beyond that, such a week will start to break down the denial response and destigmatize the suicide phenomenon of our society. Because we in Alberta have been willing to confront suicide as a social problem, suicide prevention week will encourage others elsewhere to give some attention to the Alberta experience. We have now reached a stage where everything is in place. The backup is there so that those whose lives seem so worthless have somewhere to turn to, someone to talk to.

I sincerely request every member of this House to support Motion 211. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS LAING: Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak in support of this Bill and applaud the introduction of this Bill by the hon. member. Adolescent suicide is indeed a common problem. In my research with students when I taught at the university, I've found that rarely is there anyone in my classes who does not personally know of someone who has killed himself. I have worked with many people myself who have attempted suicide and in some cases have died by their own hand.

Suicide is the second major cause of death, next to accidents, in young people between the ages of 15 and 25. Indeed, many accidents, including car accidents, are masked suicides. There are many other forms of suicidal behavior, including drug and alcohol abuse. Indeed, childhood depression and suicide is a major health problem in our society. We must, I believe, address the underlying causes.

I will speak to you of some of my experiences. One of the causes that has increasingly come to the fore is the threat of nuclear war. I have heard of counsellors who have worked with children of eight or nine who have suicidal ideation and impulses that without intervention would mean their lives would end by the time they were 10 years of

age. We in this way lose our most bright and sensitive children.

Another area that I have worked in is family violence, with children that have either been targets of or witnesses to that violence. I have worked with hundreds of incest victims, and almost without exception these children have attempted suicide. Many have succeeded, starting at the age of seven, eight, or nine. They may slash their wrists, they may overdose by drugs, or they find some final solution to their pain. Indeed, one study has shown that one-third of adolescent female suicides were victims of incestuous abuse. Suicide is a way out for them, a way of drawing attention to their pain, a way of escaping a painful reality.

Another area that I see children facing is unemployment, a lack of a sense of an economic future that results in despair, hopelessness, and helplessness. They feel that no one cares and no one can help, that they have no future. I believe courses in our schools must help and can help. They must be an opportunity for children to voice their fears, their pain, and the conflict that they may experience in their own families, to someone who will listen, hear, and offer hope. I believe much is needed.

Teachers, as the hon. member has said, are on the front line and must be sensitized to the indicators of childhood depression, suicidal ideation, and impulses. Sometimes this means looking beyond the passivity which we see in the well-behaved child or violent outbursts, which are another indication of childhood depression. Suicidal ideation may also show up in artwork, in written work, in stories, and in how children talk about themselves in their world, and teachers must be sensitive to that. We must also have class sizes so that teachers can have a personal relationship with these children and can pick up on the symptoms that are often very masked and hard to see.

I welcome the concept of homeroom teachers so that children can have a personal relationship with a teacher or a school counsellor because often — particularly if there is conflict in the home, that is not a place that they can in fact receive help. We need counsellors in schools. There seems to be a tendency at the present time to reduce the number of counsellors in schools, particularly in elementary schools. Research indicates that children as young as six or seven years old consider killing themselves, and we must have an intervention. We see that these interventions can be both preventative, in terms of working with children as they begin to show the signs of distress, and an intervention, as children begin to voice their despair. We must have community agencies to aid children in conflict with their parents and with schools.

Particularly distressing to me was the Social Services discontinuance of funding to the runaway project at Group 5 in 1985. It was a way that children could come and voice the conflict in their homes and receive help. In fact, 50 percent of those children were victims of sexual abuse. It was frontline to picking up these children who were potential suicides and many who had already attempted suicide.

We must have public education programs to sensitize parents and all people involved with children as to the indicators of depression, but more importantly, we must also sensitize them to the signs that suicide is being planned. We must have community programs to aid parents in facilitating communication with their children, which may in fact involve courses on child development so that parents can have appropriate expectations in regard to their children.

As a final area I would suggest that we must look to the very goals of our education curriculum. Focus on technology and knowledge in career preparation is not enough. We need to address the human issues of understanding, compassion, human interrelatedness, and families. We must help children deal with their feelings of failure. We must reduce unending pressure to achieve a focus that comes out of a focus on knowledge. We need to help our children in dealing with the feelings of powerlessness that this increasingly complex, technological, and bureaucratic society engenders. We must help empower children in relation to the pain, helplessness, and despair they experience in relation to their personal relationships and the world situation. We need to help children feel they can influence the course of their lives, and that they can influence the course of world affairs. Suicide comes out of profound feelings of helplessness and hopelessness. We must be able to be open to their feelings, and to do so we must deal with our own feelings of powerlessness, despair, and suicide.

[Mr. Deputy Speaker in the Chair]

Lastly, we must work to create a world and a society worthy of our children. To do so we must grapple with world problems of poverty, economic disparity, injustice, environmental pollution, and the threat of nuclear holocaust. Thank you.

MRS. BETKOWSKI: Mr. Speaker, I'm delighted to speak to this motion today and would like to congratulate the Member for Olds-Didsbury for putting it forward. My heart aches for the victim of a suicide, for the despair that he or she must experience in order to take that very drastic step. My heart aches, as well, for the bewilderment left with the parent or the friend or the spouse who's left behind to deal with the despair of their loved one.

I believe it's important, given the focus of the motion, that I speak to the education curriculum and to the way in which I believe that this motion could be included within that curriculum. I'm reading from the secondary education in Alberta paper about which we've had some discussion in this House, and if I may, I would like to read into the record the opening and the principal statement of the goal of education in this province:

The aim of education is to develop the knowledge, the skills and the positive attitudes of individuals, so that they will be self-confident, capable and committed to setting goals, making informed choices and acting in ways that will improve their own lives and the life of their community.

Every principle outlined in the secondary education policy, Mr. Speaker, is consistent with that statement of goals.

I believe that suicide prevention is, of course, a very important matter, but I would like to come at it from a more positive point of view. I would support people having positive and realistic self-images. To me that is the most important way of preventing suicide. I also believe that self-esteem is probably one of the most important gifts that a friend, a parent, a teacher, or a community can give to a child. In the past several years we've had in this province a very important exercise on tolerance and understanding. Last week we celebrated one year since the report on those public hearings was made available. I think tolerance and understanding is a very important focus of what we're talking about here today.

I think, for example — the Deputy Speaker is in the Chair, and I'm glad he is, to congratulate him on the program which the Alberta Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission has developed over the past several years, a program which has in fact had an effect on teenage drinking, which is another problem that we all share. The thing I liked about the AADAC program was simply that it gave a message to young people, and that was: "Make the most of a good thing. Make the most of you." I think that's what we're talking about and is something I really support from a very positive point of view.

As I said in my maiden speech in this Assembly, my goal as Minister of Education is to ensure that students are nurtured in an environment of excellence within their community, which we all share, that they have a sense of themselves when they emerge from that school system, a sense of the resources available to them and, finally, a sense of their place in the world we all share. I welcome a motion from this Assembly, and I would welcome a motion from this Assembly, in order that I might pursue this matter as part of the existing and the new secondary curriculum in our schools. I will look forward to hearing the views of hon. members in this regard.

Thank you.

MR. ADY: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to participate in the discussion on Motion 211. I'm motivated to participate in this because suicide is such a devastating thing in society. I'm particularly interested in it as it pertains to the youth in our province.

Suicide has no winners. It is a decided waste of human life. It carries no dignity to its victims, and it is almost always irreconcilable to the victim's family and friends. There are just no positive aspects for anyone in a suicide situation.

What are the causes of the increase in our provincial suicide rate, which statistics tell us is the second highest cause of death to youth in our province, second only to automobile accidents? Young people commit suicide because life seems too difficult to them. They sometimes feel that they just don't measure up to their parents' expectations, or they can't handle the transition between the tradition of their parents and the new freedom that our society seems to be experiencing. Suicide sometimes becomes an alternative because of rejection by their peers, which causes them to feel ugly or unattractive and thus unaccepted. Sometimes failing to achieve will put them into such a mood.

I'm told that in some countries there is a high rate of suicide among young people because they fail to become accepted into the so-called right school or academy they've been striving for so long to achieve. In our society we also have the influence of drugs and alcohol contributing to the instance of suicide among our young people. I personally have known three young people who have suicided as a direct result of these two influences on their lives.

We also have the influence of television and the romanticism and quick fix scenarios that are portrayed there. I also have had the unfortunate experience of having two working colleagues that I was very closely associated with commit suicide. The effect on their families was devastating. It was unfortunate that those of us who worked with them were not able to see the signs and the causes that were mounting which brought these unfortunate results.

I don't think we can discount the influence that broken homes and divorce can have on our young people and the pressures that are brought to bear on them with this very

prevalent influence in our society today. I can't help but feel that the home environment plays the largest part and should be lending to our young people the stability that is necessary to allow them to cope with the stresses they're confronted with in their everyday lives.

I'm sure the rate of broken homes in our province has an impact on our suicide statistics. I think it is important and necessary that we identify the outside influences that bring our young people to consider the alternative of suicide. I have some concerns that we as a society are prepared to let all the problems that I have just recited, which are a cause and contribute to suicide, stay in place, and then we're prepared to recommend or put in place a program which would tend to decrease the problem itself.

I think it may be better if we set out to provide something in our school curriculum which would help young people to cope with the problems I have mentioned. By that I believe we should be teaching some things which give self-worth, that also impress the value of a life, that teach young people and give them some idea of their potential and that problems can be worked out.

I believe that these things could be taught using a positive approach and thereby avoiding the so-called contagion theory which argues that suicide may be a suggestive or imitative act. I personally am in favour of this approach, which could easily be incorporated in the new career and life management program which I understand is to be optionally implemented in September of 1987.

Suicide is a serious problem in our society and specifically to our youth. I support this motion and hope that this Assembly will as well.

Thank you.

MRS. HEWES: Mr. Speaker, I wish to add my support to that already expressed for this motion put forward by the Member for Olds-Didsbury, and I was most pleased to hear the undertaking from the Minister of Education regarding her role in this matter.

The rate of suicide among young people is one of the most perplexing problems in North American society today. To most of us it's incomprehensible that one could intend and carry through taking one's own life. There is a desperate need for intervention mechanisms before this problem becomes systemic.

What causes it? We've heard a great deal today: fear of failure; fear of the future of the individual, uncertain of where they're going to go and what will become of them; fear of what will become of our fragile world; fear of loss of self-esteem; the inevitable peer pressure that many young people are under; the family pressure that causes a great deal of stress; and the sense of powerlessness that young people have today.

Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, the signals are quite often present. The indicators are now pretty well documented. We know what they are: acting out, unacceptable behaviour, change in attitudes, change in work habits, withdrawal. All of these things are signals and symptoms, and they're very often present and have been in young people who take this action.

What do we need to do? We need to strengthen our family life activities throughout the province, strengthen those community programs and organizations that promote family life. We have to do that in a way that makes it easy because, unfortunately, those who most desperately need help in this area seldom seek it. We have to make it universally fashionable and easy for people to have

assistance in family life education. We need to put more energy and more assistance into distress lines. These people are already working at capacity, often with well-trained volunteers who serve tirelessly hour after hour.

Mr. Speaker, we need to strengthen our support systems in schools through teacher training, the presence and availability of counsellors, and the support systems in our communities, so that those at risk are recognized early and the supports, including family, church, and other institutions in our communities, can close ranks around them.

We need mechanisms, Mr. Speaker, to develop and reinforce self-esteem, self-worth, and self-determination. This should be a major goal of all our educational institutions and programs and of our community programs.

Mr. Speaker, I will support this motion, and I look forward to learning more about any education programs that would address the problem.

MR. JONSON: Mr. Speaker, I rise to say just a few words in support of this particular motion. I commend the mover of the motion for bringing this very important item forward. It is certainly something that needs to be emphasized in the curriculum, and I think the suggestion that it might be part of the new careers and life management program at the high school level is good, although I think junior high school and earlier has to have attention.

In addition to the specific aspects of the motion, Mr. Speaker, I feel that there must be support for the overall improvement of the guidance services in our schools to deal with the problem before us.

Mr. Speaker, from personal experience in the schools, I would like to have spent more time on this topic, but I feel it very, very important that this motion, which has been before the Assembly before, come to a vote. If it is in order, Mr. Speaker, I would like to move that the question be put.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: May the hon. member close the debate?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. BRASSARD: Mr. Speaker, it has all been said. This motion was raised during the last session. It was my understanding that the one who spoke to it did so on a very personal basis. Here we are one year later, and we are still talking about it. The 63,000 phone calls to the crisis line in Edmonton are still going on; they haven't gone away.

Mr. Speaker, in Alberta we are known for our positive attitude. We have the energy and the will to be a model to this country in solving the serious social disorder of teenage suicide. Suicide is not a personal problem; it is a people problem. It's something we all have to be involved in preventing. I sincerely urge everyone in this Assembly to support Motion 211.

Thank you.

[Motion carried]

MR. ANDERSON: Mr. Speaker, I move that we move directly to Public Bills and Orders Other Than Government Bills and Orders.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: That would have to be put to the House as a question. All members in favour of the

motion by the assistant deputy government House leader, please say aye.

HON MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Opposed, please say no. So ordered.

head: **PUBLIC BILLS AND ORDERS**
OTHER THAN
GOVERNMENT BILLS AND ORDERS
(Second Reading)

Bill 208

Council on the Status of Women Act

MS BARRETT: Mr. Speaker, I take great pleasure in presenting this Bill to the Assembly for second reading. I'd like to preface my comments by noting with regret that as far as I know, it wasn't adopted as a government Bill, as I had hoped. I had said that I would be happy with that when I introduced the Bill just a few weeks ago.

Mr. Speaker, this Bill was designed and thought of long before the government Bill which was introduced just prior to the election call in April, known then as Bill 7. It had been our hope that some of the ideas flown in our Bill would have been picked up in the government's Bill prior to the election call. We couldn't help but think that it was no coincidence that Bill 7 had been introduced just a few days before the election was called, but its replacement seems to be suspiciously absent.

I'd like to address just a couple of political points with respect to the need for such a council, Mr. Speaker, before I actually go into the Bill itself. I am by training an economist, and therefore I frequently tend to look at the world through economic parameters, shall we say. I frequently do so as a woman, as well. What I know obtains in this province in terms of economic considerations is frightening, and I think they actually prompt a serious consideration of the Bill in front of us today.

I happen to know that poverty is four times more likely amongst families headed by women than it is amongst families headed by men — good for men, not so good for women. I also happen to know that women in the work force earn on average 64 cents on the dollar compared to their male counterparts in the work force. One has to say that there is a wage gap there; I don't think anybody would dispute that. The statistics actually get alarming — I don't think that's an overstatement — when one considers that Alberta is one of two provinces in Canada where a woman with a university education in the work force earns on average less than a man with some or a complete high school education. It's pretty clear that we need to address these very serious imbalances.

We also need to address the fact that women in Alberta work for low wages, and probably not by choice, Mr. Speaker. Of Alberta women in the work force, 68 percent earn less than \$15,000 annually. I have the new poverty statistics from the national council on poverty, and it's pretty clear that most of the working women wouldn't meet the poverty line, especially if they had dependants. There is a need for a Bill which recognizes the validity of concerns of women, which places women's concerns above that of being a political football.

Mr. Speaker, at this point I'd like to talk specifically about the Bill in both principle and in detail and at the same time conform to the rules which govern discussion of a Bill under second reading. The reason I do this is that I'm pretty sure that it's not going to hit committee stage. I'm going to do what I can to stay within the rules of the House while going through this Bill in detail.

I would like to point out to all hon. members that section 2 of my Bill, a Bill which is heartily endorsed by every member of the Official Opposition, identifies the heart and soul of such a committee on the status of women. You'll note first of all that this Bill refers to "the status of women" as opposed to "women's issues." This is because we do not accept the contention that there are such things as women's issues. In other words, those issues which affect women affect all of us. Violence affects all of us; economic disparity affects all of us; sexism affects all of us. Therefore, section 2 under Bill 208, the Council on the Status of Women Act, says:

The objective of the Council is to help promote the full and equal participation of women in the economic, social and political life of the Province.

No playing footsie. That's its role: equality — to promote equality, to improve the status of women in Alberta. No fiddling, no studying, no analyzing, no "maybe you can publish and maybe you can't; maybe you can do this; you can talk to one minister but not another." This is its goal, Mr. Speaker. That's why it's put so high up in this Bill. It's a principle.

There's another principle, Mr. Speaker, under section 3(a):

To enable it to carry out its objective, the Council
 (a) shall be a means of communication between
 the government ...

Not just the minister responsible for women's issues, as this government would apparently like to call it.

... and individuals or groups who are concerned
 with the equality, rights or status of women.

This is a very important principle inasmuch as it speaks to the fundamentals of democracy and also provides the sort of latitude that an autonomous women's council with teeth can have if this Bill ever sees the light of Royal Assent. I can assure you it will when the New Democrats become the government. [interjections] Pardon me? I shall, I'm sure. That's right.

The next section that I would like to point out that enhances the capacity of the council to do the sort of work that I believe it should be able to do is under the same section (c), in which it is stipulated that the council may

... communicate their views thereon to any
 member of Executive Council.

The point of this, Mr. Speaker, is that as a means of communication, one has to assure through legislation — not regulation, which can be changed behind closed doors in cabinet — that one is not forced through an interpretive channel called the minister. This is very key. The minister may not have all the wisdom in the world to interpret all the information that may go through his or her hands. With respect to the information and as stipulated under subsection (e), key to this is that the council

(e) may study any matter relating to the equality,
 rights or status of women or cause research to
 be carried out on such subjects and be reported
 to the Council.

It says nothing about whether or not you've got the rubber stamp approval of the minister.

This is a very important principle, Mr. Speaker. If we are ever to take a hard look at the many issues which are an affront to women in this province, we cannot agree to what might amount to a gag order under some circumstances. The women on the council have to decide what is important. Not only that, Mr. Speaker, but this Bill would enable the council, without going through cabinet or the minister, to publish reports, studies, or recommendations as it deems advisable.

But there's something really implicit in all of this, and that is that it recognizes the fundamental ability of women to recognize their own experiences and to have the legitimacy to interpret and report on those experiences. It doesn't say that we will submit to someone else to do the interpreting and to decide what's right. It's an advisory council that is actually given the recognition of its own validity. This, Mr. Speaker, was sorely lacking in the government's Bill 7 in the previous Legislature.

Mr. Speaker, there's another principle operating here which I would like to point out. It's just a little bit of a jump. Under the composition of the council — I'm sure this may be controversial — what I've stipulated in this Bill ...

SOME HON. MEMBERS: No.

MS BARRETT: It might be amongst Conservatives, who seem to have a mind-set against what it means to have equality.

However, another item which was sorely lacking in the government's previous Bill, which died upon the call of the election and hasn't been introduced since, is that this Bill stipulates that it would be comprised of women. It stipulates women. It's a bold move; I know it is. It reflects a commitment to women. It reflects an understanding that experience is the highest authority. It reflects a knowledge that all kinds of policy changes which would end up changing statutes would still have to come before this Legislative Assembly, which is comprised of men and women, although mainly men. Any changes to regulations would still have to go through cabinet, Mr. Speaker, which is comprised of men and women but mainly men.

So we're saying let's be bold; let's give credit where credit is due. Let's have just women on this advisory council. It can't change the law; it's not going to railroad people. It doesn't have that power. It has the power to communicate, it has the power to recommend, and it has the power to publish, but it doesn't have the power to change the law. So there's no danger that you're going to be faced with decisions that Members of the Legislative Assembly can't change. That's taken care of. But it does say it should be women, because we recognize the validity of women being on a women's council.

My friend here has a funny comment about a certain man who was reported to have been interested in sitting on the council. I'm not going to reply while the microphone is on. By the way, Mr. Speaker, it's not my intention to talk this Bill to death, so I'll just make another couple of points.

Under section 5(4) I have stipulated that it would be the Lieutenant Governor in Council, who does not belong to one part or another of this Assembly but rather speaks on behalf of the throne and is understood by all parliaments to be impartial — in this case it would be she who would appoint members to this council from a list of names submitted from organizations around the province. Those

nominees need not be members of organizations. But the important thing here, Mr. Speaker, is that in choosing members for this council, the Lieutenant Governor in Council would have to

consider the knowledge, background and expertise of each person nominated and shall bear in mind the desirability of representation of special women's groups [I've cited, a number] including labour, native, immigrant, economically disadvantaged, [the broad interpretation would be from various socioeconomic strata] professional, rural, urban ...

And on and on. What we would be looking for is an honestly balanced representation on behalf of women in Alberta.

It would also mean that by having all these items stipulated in the Act we wouldn't be subjecting the council to fiddling behind closed doors. I know that's a rare thing for members opposite in this House when it comes to wanting to look like we're doing the right thing but not really wanting to. No matter who is the government, I think it's really important, Mr. Speaker, that if there are to be changes to this Act, all members would be able to debate the changes. Therefore, the public would be able to, and the changes wouldn't go on behind the closed doors of cabinet.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to point out that the Speech from the Throne, as read on April 3, 1986, contained this:

In reaffirming my government's commitment to equality of women, the Alberta advisory council on women's issues will be established ...

Mr. Speaker, I don't know where it is yet. Then we have another Speech from the Throne on June 12:

As soon as the necessary legislation has come into force, appointments to fill all positions ... government is committed to equality for women and will actively promote the full and equal participation of Alberta women in the life of the province.

I note some slowness, Mr. Speaker, in introducing the Bill that was promised and the sort of commitments it would fulfill. I don't know what causes this slowness. I can certainly assure all members of the House that many women in the province do not appreciate having been treated or perceived to have been treated as collective political football with the introduction of Bill 7 — not an autonomous council, not a council with teeth, not a council with a sufficient research arm, and not a council that was clearly an arm's length distance from the government — which has not reappeared in a more adequate version. There's a sensitivity, and I think it's justifiable. Women don't want a council just to play partisan politics. And I'll say this right into the record: neither do I. My principles go beyond that.

Mr. Speaker, if there was ever a Bill in this Legislature that I think Conservative members should take a really close look at and pass in the name of all that is decent, in the name of fairness for the 50 percent of the population that suffers systemic discrimination at every turn, this is the Bill. I urge that you agree to second reading.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Before we proceed with the debate on Bill 208, would hon. members agree to go back very briefly to Introduction of Special Guests?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

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

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Mr. Speaker, this afternoon I take pleasure in introducing to the members of the Legislature a special person in the gallery who has shown excellent leadership for this province at the municipal level, who has served on the board of the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association, who preceded me as chairman of the Calgary Regional Planning Commission, and who has been elected and acclaimed as a mayor of one of Alberta's loveliest and finest communities, High River. Would you please join me in welcoming in the public gallery one of Alberta's loveliest and finest mayors, Mrs. Lucille Dougherty.

head: **PUBLIC BILLS AND ORDERS
OTHER THAN
GOVERNMENT BILLS AND ORDERS**
(*Second Reading*)

Bill 208
Council on the Status of Women Act
(*continued*)

MR. MUSGREAVE: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased the Member for Edmonton Highlands has brought this Bill forward. Having sat in the gallery before she gained her seat, she no doubt recalls that there were some people in this Assembly who were just as concerned about women's rights as she is. I find it unfortunate that it's necessary that we require legislation to ensure women receive what is rightfully theirs. By that I mean the equality of opportunity, no discrimination because of their sex, and equal treatment by the business, education, and government communities. I don't think it's just the government that's at fault here; I think it's our whole society. With her background, education, and experience, I think the hon. member would agree that this is a societal problem and not just governmental.

However, I'd like to deal more with the Bill. I note the proposed council was supposed to be a means of communication between the government and individuals who have these concerns. I would suggest to all members of this Legislative Assembly that we should all be concerned about the treatment of women, that they're treated as people, they're treated equally, and not just leave it to a group who in effect want to become dedicated watchdogs.

I think women are moving ahead, albeit not as fast as some of us would like. But when I came to this Assembly in 1975, there were two women members out of 75, which is not 10 percent. It's about 2 percent. Today there are 10 members from both sides of the House, and I would suggest that 10 members of 83 is more than 10 percent. So we are making some progress. Those of you who are familiar with the students enrolled in our universities posteducational facilities, in the accounting professions, or in these kinds of organizations will all be aware of the high numbers of women in engineering, accounting, law, and architecture, not to mention medicine, versus not too many years ago when women didn't take much in the way of advanced education other than what they could gain in the fields of teaching or nursing.

I'd say that many more women are taking their rightful place in society because they have help from their parents, they were fortunate enough to be given brains when they were born and had enough sense to work hard. Perhaps

their families had money to send them to universities, and they've had support from their spouses or friends.

But I'd like to deal with the Bill itself, particularly with subsections (b), (c), and (d) where it talks of study, receiving representations, and reviewing. These are the kinds of things that are in normal Bills and the purpose and function of any advocacy group. In subsection (e), Mr. Speaker, they mention that the council would study any concern they may have that affects the role of women. I would suggest that this could lead to an academic's paradise. There are many things they could study, but I don't think we need a study. I think what we need is specific decision-making, to be involved not only in government but in the business community as well. We don't need an agency, such as the hon. member is proposing, to tell us that there are things that concern women who aren't being fairly treated. We all know that.

But I'd like to move back to the Bill. They mention the fact in subsection (f) that it would liaise with the Women's Secretariat and then tell them what, if anything, they have determined should be passed to a member of Executive Council. I find this rather strange, Mr. Speaker. Why do you want a specific minister, as you mentioned earlier in the Bill, if you then proceed to say the council can talk to any member of Executive Council? I ask the hon. member: why wouldn't it be a responsibility of the council to report to the minister charged with the responsibility? This particular defect occurs several times throughout the Bill.

One of the more difficult parts of the Bill that I see is how the hon. member suggests this council should be put together. She suggests, Mr. Speaker, that they would prescribe 30 volunteer associations that are active in the area of the equality of rights and status of women.

I have a very rough list here, and there are 66 women's groups in Edmonton. There are 60 in all parts of Alberta excluding Calgary, and there are 44 in Calgary. For the record I'd like to read some of these women's groups to give you an idea. What person or persons are going to be able to select 30 people from these groups? We have the Alberta Women in Support of Agriculture; Women in Scholarship, Engineering, Science, and Technology; Alberta Native Women's Association; Pomography Action Committee; Native Women's Network; Positive Images: Women by Women; Indian Rights for Indian Women; National Council of Jewish Women; the Elizabeth Fry Society of Calgary; the Alberta Federation of Women United for the Family; the Planned Parenthood Association; the Business and Professional Women's Club; the National P.C. Women's Federation . . .

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Leave that one out.

MR. MUSGREAVE: I'll leave that one out, if you'll leave out another one. The Calgary Association of Parents and Professionals for Safe Alternatives in Childbirth; the Calgary Midwife's Collective — that's one you could perhaps leave out, because I see it's headed by an NDP candidate in Calgary that wasn't successful. Those are just a few, Mr. Speaker. If we pass this Bill, we have to pick 30 people from this group. Solomon himself wouldn't want that job. To make it worse, you then have to take 15 out of the 30. So now you're going to make not only all the people angry who weren't in the first 30 but you're going to make another 15 even more angry because they were in the first 30 but they're being rejected.

I agree that you want to pick people who are advancing particular points of view, but I would suggest to you: what about the hundreds of thousands of women who do not belong to any of these groups?

MS BARRETT: They could still be nominated.

MR. MUSGREAVE: It's going to be difficult. [interjections]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order please.

MR. MUSGREAVE: Mr. Speaker, moving on to section 7(1). This is perhaps another area where we're getting a little of the ND philosophy of the new order of things. We have seven deputy ministers. [interjections] Be careful now — seven deputy ministers plus a senior civil servant or their alternates. Having served for four years on a science advisory committee with four deputy ministers or their alternates, I can assure you that you're going to have one very difficult time dealing with seven. Can you imagine seven deputy ministers sitting down with women's groups? They are going to be wondering who in the world these senior bureaucrats they've got to fence with are and, yet out of all this are supposed to come sensible recommendations.

The one part of the Bill I could support, Mr. Speaker, is the fact that they suggest the council be submitted within 30 days of the commencement of the next sitting. That is certainly preferable to the 15-day period that exists in most legislation.

In general, I support the Bill, though I regret that it is necessary. I think there is improvement for women, particularly those endowed with brains, good health, and a good home environment to get started in life. But I would suggest the hon. member, indeed all the members of that party, have been carried away with a bureaucratic desire to run everything all the time, everyday, in every possible situation. I would suggest, Mr. Speaker, that would be the worst possible thing that could serve the women of this province.

To sum up, I would say that I have concern in two areas. One is the involvement of so many civil servants in what is "supposed to be an independent agency." This concerns me very much. The other is how you get order out of this suggested chaos of taking 30 out of 160 and then cutting that down to 15 and then convincing yourself that those are your best representatives of women's concerns in the province of Alberta.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, I rise to support Bill 208. I say to the hon. Member for Calgary McKnight that from the debate in the House I know his concerns are legitimate. I find it unfortunate that he's really trying to camouflage the intent of this Bill by, if I may say, bringing in a lot of bureaucratize about the problems.

First of all, Mr. Speaker, let me say that I, too, wish this Bill was not necessary. But I think we're hiding our heads in the sand if we think there is true equality of opportunity in Alberta today. In fact, we're even behind some other provinces. I also agree that it's not just government. This should be a concern for all of society, including business, labour, and all the groups in society. But when I look at the fact that women make, for one example, 53 cents of every dollar that men do; when I look at the fact that the group that is chiefly in poverty is women, especially elderly women; when I look at the fact

that we have day care systems that are not up to snuff, and it's usually dealing with single parents; when I look in my own riding and see the types of activities that people, specifically single parents, have to go through in welfare, I'm telling you, Mr. Speaker, equality of opportunity is not in this province. That's why it is necessary to bring a Bill like this to the Legislature.

Mr. Speaker, the point of a Bill like this, which is different from the government's Bill, is that we think it is important. The key point about this Bill is that there is some independence from government; in other words, an arm's length direction from government. That is very, very important. You can talk about all the groups, including the PC groups, but the reality is that it should be the women's groups and women in the province that choose these particular people. They should not be beholden to government, having to run to government to say, "If we criticize you, are we going to be in some difficulty with our financing?"

The whole point of a Bill like this is to achieve the independence from government. It's a necessity, Mr. Speaker, because there are many, many issues that have to be discussed in this province. As the member says, many of them go beyond but many of them have to do with government. We can look at our own provincial employees — and it's been quoted many times — and see who's in management and who's not. We can see the fact that that increase hasn't changed much over the last 10 years. It's all right to say that it's a little better than it was in 1940, but that's not good enough.

It's good enough to say that, for instance, the government thinks these things will happen, as Conservatives do. They hope things will happen. I think some hon. members opposite really want to achieve equality of opportunity, but they can't go that other length and say that something has to be done to achieve that equality. Mr. Speaker, it's just not going to happen on its own.

The point of this Bill and why we think . . . I agree with the hon. member that some things don't need to be researched. I can tell you that when women make 53 cents on every dollar men do it doesn't take much research to know that something is wrong. The reality is that there is some research that has to be done, and what we need in a women's council is to bring these to the public's attention but also to keep pestering governments to do something about it.

Mr. Speaker, it seems to me that if we're going to move on some of the issues I've mentioned, like day care, women in poverty, pay equity, affirmative action . . . As the minister said the other day, maybe the government is not prepared to accept these right now. But surely that minister would want that sort of debate. He indicated he would. How does he expect he will get that sort of debate if the women's council is beholden to the government? They're not going to do it, but if they're at arm's length, as many other groups are and it has been working in other provinces, they will not be afraid of government. They will not be afraid of business. They will not be afraid of labour. These issues then will be in the public domain.

As people that believe in democracy and sit in this Legislature, it's not our job to make government comfortable. The purpose of this council would be to stimulate ideas and debate in the province. Coming from the hon. Member for Calgary McKnight, some things are so obvious they don't need study. It's up to the government to move on these, and I will be hopeful the member will be approaching them.

Mr. Speaker, I know there are a lot of other members that want to get into this debate, so I'm not going to take up a lot of time of the Assembly. I want to say that I don't care how right wing and how much you want to go back to the 19th century, those days are not there, hon. members from Red Deer. For sure, they're not there. The point that I would make, Mr. Speaker, is that I have sons and daughters of approximately the same age. I think any hon. member had better think about this: do they want their sons and daughters to have equality of opportunity? If they don't, I frankly do not understand their logic at all.

I would just conclude by saying that it's not a matter of lip service anymore. Equality costs. Inequality costs more. We say to this government: let's get on with fixing the problem. This Bill is at least a start. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MRS. HEWES: Mr. Speaker, I wish to speak in support of Bill 208. I do support the Bill in principle. I think the need for a women's council is long overdue, and there's ample evidence of that in this province. Above all, and I've spoken before in the House about it, there's an urgent need for a separate Act, an independent, freestanding piece of legislation on this particular council. It needs to be created independent. It needs to have the legal status of an Act of the Legislature, not an order in council and not part of another Act that could be changed by ministerial order. It needs this for its own independence and for the understanding of the men and women of Alberta, who need to know that this is a council that will act independently and is not a part of the government.

Mr. Speaker, the citizens of Alberta have waited a long time for this, too long in my estimation. We've waited a long time, so let's get it right. I've perceived some flaws in the specifics of this Bill that I would like to suggest could stand consideration and correction. I'll speak to them, but first of all I want to say that I see the Women's Secretariat as a totally separate function. I've not understood why Bill 7, which was brought forward before, was necessary to develop the Women's Secretariat, and perhaps someone could explain that to me.

I see it as an essential part of government that allows for an opportunity for direct study and response to the government to ensure that operations, legislation, policies, and programs don't discriminate, that they offer equal opportunity for men and women in government and that they offer opportunity for advancement and equal remuneration. I don't believe the function of the secretariat should in any way be muddled with the function of the council or that the council should be rolled into the Act for the secretariat.

Mr. Speaker, as I reviewed this Bill and the former one, I asked myself four questions. Why do we need a council? How will it operate? Who will it be accountable to? Who will be on it? There's ample evidence as to why. We've heard about the inequities. The present situation in Alberta is well documented. The inequities have been exacerbated or perhaps have become more visible in the economic recession, and they are legion. Equal pay for equal work: we know it isn't happening. The situation of unemployment is more critical for women than for men. There are increasing numbers of women as sole supporters of families. There are increasing demands for child care services. The majority of people in part-time and temporary work are women. It's much more difficult for them to get permanent positions.

The opportunities to advance in the workplace are not there for women, and I can attest to that from my own experience. The problems of women over 55 are beginning to be better understood. Women who are isolated and unable to get work because of their lack of training and yet are at an age in their lives when they do not command support from the government is a situation that is particularly critical for divorced women. If you're a widow and over 55 without means of support, you can now get help. I am pleased to see that. But if you are divorced, somehow it's different for those women, and I think we need to look more carefully at that.

The new legislation on maintenance of support payments for women who are separated and divorced will hopefully begin to work, although I think there are some major problems with it to date. We all know the situation of women in poverty and abused women. Mr. Speaker, I can go on at length about the inequities. There is ample evidence and documentation as to why we need a council for women.

Now, how will it operate? Yes, it must be independent of the government. It must be a freestanding council accountable to the people of Alberta, neither the servant of the government nor the go-between. It should not be there to shield the government from citizen approaches. It should not be a messenger for the government or a barrier as an approach from citizens, either individuals or organizations, to the government. Let's make sure the individual points of the Act reflect this. I'm not sure, Mr. Speaker, that section 3(a) in fact does reflect the kind of independence from government that I want to see in this Act when it is finally passed.

How will it function? I see five major functions for the council: a major component on research on what is happening, what is the reality for women in Alberta today, equal pay for work of equal value, and other major new concepts that are being put forward which need to be researched in depth. Another very obvious function is education, the dissemination of information to the citizens of Alberta, advice and recommendations to government and, as the Member for Calgary McKnight indicated, to private business and industry, to institutions and organizations of the province, and to the enlightened businesses and industries that want to apply affirmative action programs in their daily work and want to develop programs of equal pay for work of equal value.

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

There are enlightened private businesses and corporations in our province, Mr. Speaker, but it's not always easy for them to find advice and consultation about how they can apply these programs even if they want to. There is some uneasiness about how to do it. I would like to see this council make itself available as a consultant to private business and industry and to the institutions of the province to make these programs happen.

One of their major functions should certainly be the publishing of documents, monographs, and reports on contemporary issues so that all persons of the province can have them simultaneously. I do not believe such reports or advice should simply go through the ministry or the cabinet before citizens of the province have access to them.

Who will it be accountable to? Very simply to the people of Alberta and no one else. Who will be on it? Here, Mr. Speaker, I had some problems with the suggestions that have been incorporated in Bill 208. I do believe it should

be made up of women, because I happen to think women are just as intelligent, just as capable, and just as motivated as men. Who will be on it? The Bill suggests that the people be chosen from 30 organizations set down by the Lieutenant Governor. I'm puzzled by that. I would not want to choose them, since some 60 organizations made the request for this legislation in the first place. I don't know how we are going to reduce that to 30.

I would prefer, Mr. Speaker, to see groupings that could be chosen from. I haven't formulated a precise way of doing it, but I think we might easily look to general categories of business and labour, homemakers, native and intercultural, the mentally and physically challenged, farm women, and so on. Nominations could be solicited and accepted in these categories. From each of these, two or three should be chosen by the Lieutenant Governor for appointment. I think we have to ensure that the council is representative of all Albertans geographically and demographically.

In regard to having deputy ministers as members of the council, though without vote, I again suggest they should be available for consultation but not full members. I think the people of the council should be able to do their work as independently and objectively as possible without the influence of the government through deputies. Certainly the council should have access to persons other than government officials as support and consultants as necessary.

Mr. Speaker, I don't have any other major problems with features and terms of the appointments that have been suggested in this proposed Act. I do want to stress that I think the appointment of a chairman, made well in advance of the passage of the Act or the appointment of other members, has raised expectations of Albertans that the government is in fact serious about this Act and that it will come into being as soon as possible. I hope I'm correct in that assumption because, as I said at the outset, the Act is long overdue and we need to get it right.

Mr. Speaker, I want to reinforce the need and the urgency for it, having drawn attention to what I perceive to be flaws in the construction of the proposed Act. I support it in principle, and I hope we can move swiftly to put it in place.

MR. SCHUMACHER: Mr. Speaker, I don't propose to take a great deal of time in this debate, but I would also like to say that I do believe we are making headway in this area. Reference was made to the professions and the participation of women in the professions. When I entered law school 30 years ago, along with the hon. Attorney General, we had a class of 101. I know four members of that class were women. I am now told that in many law schools around this country 50 percent or more of the students are women. Therefore, in some areas I think males may be falling into the minority, and maybe one of these days we're going to have to have a council on men.

I am a little concerned about the word "equality" in section 2(2). I think the hon. Member for Edmonton Highlands could have been a little more forthcoming in her remarks in explaining what she meant by promoting the equality of women. Does she envisage that we are going to have to have an equal number of the members of this Assembly being women? I certainly don't argue that it might be desirable, but is this to be a mandatory thing? Would she not be happy if it perhaps were 45 percent or 30 percent? Does she really feel that in order for things to work correctly in our province we would have to have 50

percent of every undertaking in our province made up of women? I don't think she really means that, but I don't know. It hasn't been stated.

We've also said this council should be free of intervention. I don't know how anyone can believe under our present system of government — and I think we have a good system of government — that there won't be intervention. Even by Bill 208, it's the Lieutenant Governor in Council, which is in fact the cabinet, that is going to decide who makes up this council. I think it's pretty naive to suggest that this council will not have any political input.

I'm also quite surprised about the suggestion that there be seven deputy ministers and somebody from the Public Service Commission as members of the council. They may be ex officio; they may not have a vote. I think they're less than ex officio; they're there by reason of their office which is ex officio, but they're also restricted by not having a vote. But that doesn't mean they won't have a very big influence when you consider that we're saying that 23 people will in fact have a large, large influence. I don't know whether I would want that.

Also, the question about the remainder of the Council. Maybe that's how the hon. Member for Edmonton Highlands is going to get around the question of the constitutionality of the make-up, because as far as the voting members, if they all have to be women, isn't that a little offensive under the Charter of Rights? I don't know.

MS BARRETT: No.

MR. SCHUMACHER: She says no. She says it's allowed. I don't know where she got the opinion. I would be a little dubious about that, because any other council set up by this Assembly that said it was going to be made up of voting members 100 percent either male or female — I would think we would have some shrieks of indignation by one side or the other over that composition. I don't know whether this is now because we're dealing with women and they're going to be the only controlling people on this council. I don't know; I think that could be an offence with regard to the Charter of Rights.

I see the Leader of the Opposition has gone. I know he was enthusiastic, but I heard the Member for Edmonton Highlands say that women work for 67 cents as compared to the males' \$1.

MS BARRETT: Sixty-four cents.

MR. SCHUMACHER: That's okay. So I stand corrected.

MR. SPEAKER: Please excuse me, hon. members. Perhaps the Member for Drumheller could make his points, and the hon. mover of the Bill could sum up when we come to vote on the Bill rather than this dialogue.

MR. SCHUMACHER: Mr. Speaker, I thought I heard 67 but it was 64. In any event, the Leader of the Opposition said 58 in one breath and then practically in the next breath said 53. I don't know what's happening here, but I do agree that we should certainly be moving towards equal pay for work of equal value and this 64-cent figure should move up. Maybe the Leader of the Opposition was referring to figures of four or five years ago and the Member for Edmonton Highlands was referring to current figures. That just shows that progress is being made.

As I said, I don't want to take up too much time in this debate. It's not my intention to talk it out. I think there might be somebody from the government who wants to say something about their reaction to this.

MS LAING: Mr. Speaker, I would like to respond to a couple of the questions of the hon. member across. Fifty-three cents is the average wage paid to women as compared to men. For clarification, 64 cents is the average wage of full-time working women as compared to men working full-time.

Equality to me means that my sons and daughters will have equal access and opportunity to develop and become full human beings. That means they will have equal access to the economic and social structures of our society, and they will not be denied access to any parts of society because they are male or female.

I believe we need a council on women and for women that is composed of women because we need to articulate women's particular experiences in the world. It is necessary to articulate those experiences because women's experiences in the past have been held in the silence of their lives, and they have had no avenues or alternatives to bring it into the public forum.

Through the efforts of women and women's groups many of their experiences have now come to light because women have in some areas achieved voice. In addition, for too long women's experiences were analyzed from the male perspective. Let me give you an example. I worked for a number of years in the area of rape and sexual assault. In the past, before 1965 or '70, rape was held as a horrendous crime but was addressed as arising out of a crime against property, women being held to be the property of men. So a raped woman was considered damaged goods. Until 1965 or '70 we did not address women's experiences of rape. In fact, because they were held to be damaged goods and because they internalized society's analysis of them as damaged goods, they were too ashamed to speak of their pain and their experience.

It was not until the 1970s that women working together with women started to articulate the experiences of women who had been sexually assaulted and to establish treatment programs for those victims of sexual assault and their families. Not until women addressed the issues through research in the 1970s did we know what was really going on and the impact of rape on the lives of women, which made it unsafe for them to walk the streets and to go out alone. In fact, they were held responsible for the assaults upon their very being if they did not stay in the care of a man. It was only in the 1970s that we articulated that analysis, which is the analysis of women's experiences.

After that we started to deal with the issue of incestuous assault, which had been shrouded in mystery and denied as fantasy since it was first discovered in 1897 by Freud. It was only in listening to women and giving them voice that we heard the reality of their experience and started to establish treatment programs not only for past victims of sexual assault but also for current victims. Those very programs have only been in existence for five years in this city. They are now taken for granted. It was through the efforts of women speaking of their experiences, unfettered by male analysis, that this became a reality. In 20 years we have seen women's experiences, which were held for centuries in silence, articulated and dealt with. In the centuries that preceded the last 20 years, those women were silenced because their experiences were analyzed from a

male perspective. Therefore, we must have women on this council to speak for women, to bring their experiences into the public forum, and to address the issue and the remedies from the experiences of women.

Thank you.

MR. ANDERSON: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to participate this afternoon, albeit briefly, on Bill 208. As other members have indicated in the House this afternoon, I and the government certainly have no opposition at all to the concept of the Bill or indeed to the purpose for which the hon. member has designed it. There is no question in the minds of members of this Legislature, I think on all sides of the House, that there are aspects of opportunity for women that must be dealt with and must be improved in this province. The government has stated its intention to bring in a council, much as is envisioned by the hon. member in this Bill, and that is the promise that will be kept.

I might briefly deal with that particular question, though I will not impugn the motives of members of the House with such things as political expediency or having political footfalls, as was indicated. It must be a lack of hearing that hon. members opposite have not heard me when I responded to questions in the House indicating that the council would be presented, it would be this session, and would hopefully be within the next week or so. It must also be a lack of ability to hear that the same thing happened in the estimates and that indeed allowed members opposite to somehow still not comprehend the commitment that is there.

I might further indicate, Mr. Speaker, that after the introduction of Bill 7 just prior to the election, when the government received opposition from some individuals and groups in the province to how the Bill was proceeding and suggestions for changes that might be made, in attempting to be sensitive and open to all ideas and concepts, the government said clearly — and I as the new minister responsible said that I would talk to individual women in the province and women's organizations. As well, I'm happy to have the input of Bill 208 and the speech by the hon. Member for Edmonton Gold Bar in that respect.

Indeed, I find some incongruity in the fact that the hon. member opposite suggested during the election campaign that the government wasn't being sensitive to that need and should be listening and is now saying, "Where is that Bill, and why isn't it here yet?" when indeed the time frame has been promised. If members will look at their Votes and Proceedings next week, I'm sure they'll find the answer to the question they've raised.

Mr. Speaker, with respect to the Bill itself, members have dealt with specific provisions which have been articulated. I have some support for and some concerns about the first portions of the Act, but I won't go into those. My concerns very much relate to the concerns raised by the hon. Member for Edmonton Gold Bar. I guess I have to take very firm exception to the hon. Leader of the Opposition's suggestion to this House that what is required is a council at arm's length and total independence, and he points to this Bill as the epitome of just that.

Mr. Speaker, I also find it interesting that in looking — and I have looked at the composition of all the councils in the country and how they were formed. The Manitoba government — often pointed out as the perceived Utopia at least from one side of the House in terms of progressive items in the country — as well as the majority, formed them by order in council. Mr. Speaker, I can assure this

House today that any council the government will introduce, when compared to the tenets of this Bill in terms of attachment to government, will be far more at arm's length. I can't see how a council could be more tied to the directives of government than first saying that only 30 organizations of the government's choosing, albeit if we coin it in the phrase of "Lieutenant Governor in Council," will be allowed to even submit names to be considered.

Hon. members have raised that point, but for assistance I'd dearly like the hon. Member for Edmonton Highlands or the hon. Leader of the Opposition to table in this House the other 135 organizations at least in this province whom we should not even consider names from. Indeed, if we pass this Bill, we could pick the PC women's organizations of 30 constituencies. If the NDP were the government, by this Bill they could do the same. I can't see how one could tie a council more tightly to the apron strings of government, except by adding to the council, as hon. members have already indicated, seven articulate deputy ministers to voice the opinions and the directions of the government and a public service commissioner.

Mr. Speaker, while I support the general intent and the general direction of the Bill and indeed the need for a council in the province of Alberta, I do not think the women of Alberta want a council this inexorably tied to government. We will have one that is certainly more at arm's length than that Bill would indicate.

Mr. Speaker, those are some of the remarks I have to make. There are others, but in view of the hour, I move that the debate be adjourned.

MR. SPEAKER: We have a motion before the Assembly. Having heard the motion for the adjournment of the debate by the Minister of Culture, all those in favour please say aye.

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed, if any, please say no. The motion is carried.

MR. ANDERSON: Mr. Speaker, I move that at 8 o'clock this evening the House resolve itself into Committee of Supply and that we do now adjourn until the committee rises and reports progress.

MR. SPEAKER: Having heard the motion by the Acting Government House Leader that when members reconvene at 8 p.m. this evening 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: Would the Committee of Supply please come to order.

Department of the Solicitor General

MR. CHAIRMAN: The committee is meeting to consider the estimates of the Solicitor General on page 343 of your working papers and page 147 of the elements book, the Hon. Ken Rostad, minister.

Mr. Minister, would you have opening comments, please?

MR. ROSTAD: Mr. Chairman, a few preliminaries. Make note that the Alberta Liquor Control Board is a Crown corporation and not part of the estimates, although it does take policy direction through this ministry. I would also like to point out that this is one of the few departments that contributes more revenue than it spends. As an example, we took in \$299 million profit from the liquor board and over \$80 million from our motor vehicles division.

Actually, after sitting in the House and listening to the woes and ills of farmers in the agricultural industry who always attest to being flat broke, I was relating to the fact that Dolly Parton was in town the other day. I suppose if she were a farmer, she'd be flat busted too.

Mr. Chairman, there's quite a contrast in the different areas of this department, as you'll hear tonight. However, I wish to express my pride and appreciation to the executive and staff of the department for keeping things co-ordinated and operating successfully. Tonight I have present in the Assembly a number of them, whom I would like to introduce. We have our deputy minister, Bob King; our assistant deputy minister in charge of corrections, Jack Davis; director of finance, Aslam Bhatti; and my executive assistant, Dave Millican.

At the risk of being reprimanded, when I relate my pride in my executive, I also think of a story of a chicken and a pig who are going down the street and are confronted by a sign in a restaurant that says, "Ham and Eggs, 99 cents." The chicken says, "Let's go in; heck of a deal." The pig turns around and says, "That's okay for you to say, but with me it's total commitment." It's total commitment with my staff.

Mr. Chairman, I welcome the opportunity to present the estimates of the Department of the Solicitor General. During the past couple of months I've had the opportunity of visiting several of the field operations of the department and various correction facilities in Lethbridge, Calgary, Grande Cache, Peace River, Edmonton, and St. Paul to gain a firsthand impression of the scope and mandate of the Solicitor General's office. My initial impression as a result of these visits is that while programs and services administered by the department are varied and in many respects have different goals and objectives, I nevertheless believe the emphasis is placed on providing services to both law-abiding Albertans and people who come in conflict with the law.

The estimates placed before this Assembly respecting the Department of the Solicitor General essentially cover five main areas: departmental support services, correctional services, law enforcement, motor vehicle administration and driver licensing, and the Alberta Racing Commission. I would like to make general overall comments by vote or area.

Vote 1 covers the departmental support services, an area that members of this Assembly are somewhat familiar with because of previous submissions by cabinet colleagues. More specifically, this vote covers expenditures associated with the operation of my office, the deputy minister, the provision of finance, personnel, library, and computer services to the department, and funding required by the Liquor Licensing

Review Council. The Liquor Licensing Review Council is mandated pursuant to the Liquor Control Act to examine liquor licensing matters such as licensee requests by way of panel reviews to give licensees the benefit of a second look at any of their concerns.

Vote 2, correctional services, is the largest component of the department and includes responsibility for upwards of 3,000 adult and young offenders in a variety of facilities, including detention centres for new or fresh arrests; remand centres for persons awaiting court appearance, on trial, or awaiting transfer to another facility; centres for sentenced offenders, ranging from minimum security forestry camps, community correctional centres, and group homes to maximum security centres for longer term and more high-risk offenders; and young offender centres for persons aged 12 to 17 inclusive, charged, convicted, or sentenced pursuant to the Young Offenders Act. There were over 27,000 new cases processed through the various centres during the last fiscal year. Additionally, correctional services are responsible for a network of community correction offices in 34 communities across the province that provide community supervision to more than 11,000 adult and young offenders on probation, parole, or temporary release to the community.

Correctional services also has a number of contracts with the private sector which provides a variety of community-based services to offenders, as well as agreements with municipal governments, specifically Edmonton and Calgary, to provide both community and institutional-based services to offenders.

Three areas I wish to highlight during this introductory statement are young offenders, the federal/provincial exchange of services, and native offenders. In regard to young offenders, I want to emphasize the importance of early intervention in the lives of young people who come in conflict with the law and the importance of diverting as many as possible of these impressionable young people away from a life of crime. With the introduction of the new Young Offenders Act on April 1, 1984, the Department of the Solicitor General assumed responsibility for young offenders. I am pleased to state that the department is making substantial progress, irrespective of some slight overcrowding experienced in some facilities and the transitional difficulties encountered with the new federal legislation, legislation that places a greater onus of responsibility and accountability on the young offender than was the case under the former Juvenile Delinquents Act.

More specifically, a number of program initiatives have been taken to ensure that incarceration is used as a last resort and to ensure that community-based options to incarceration are fully utilized, such as pre-trial release, community services, fines, probation, and restitution. Diversion programs such as alternative measures have also been introduced, which permit young offenders involved in minor offences to avoid prosecution and a criminal record by entering into an agreement to perform community service and to avoid further conflict with the law. Contracts have been entered into with school boards and districts to provide quality educational programs to young offenders. Improved mental health services and programs have been planned and developed in co-operation with the mental health community. Emphasis has also been placed on planned and early release for young offenders who have demonstrated a desire to change their behaviour and an ability to accept the responsibilities associated with early release.

The department has additionally placed emphasis on the importance of ensuring that those young offenders who must

be incarcerated should be provided an opportunity to develop constructive skills in a positive and humane environment during their term of incarceration. In this regard two new secure custody young offender facilities are presently being constructed in Edmonton and Calgary and will provide a level of custody and programming comparable to progressive practices elsewhere in Canada and the U.S.

Additionally, a number of contracts have been entered into with private-sector agencies to provide community-based facilities and programs to young offenders. The net result of these initiatives is that while there are upward of 3,300 young offenders in the system, fewer than 400 are actually occupying an institutional bed within a government-operated facility.

The second area I want to briefly mention is the exchange of services agreement that has been recently entered into between the federal department of the Solicitor General and this department. The underlying purpose of these agreements is fourfold: to provide an opportunity for adult female offenders from Alberta who receive sentences of two years or more to remain in Alberta and avoid being sent to Kingston, the only federal penitentiary for women, which is more than 1,500 miles away from the family members who are critical to the offender's eventual successful return to the community. Also, these agreements provide that adult male offenders the age of 18 to 23 who have never been in a penitentiary before avoid the penitentiary experience. That's an experience generally recognized by criminologists to more likely have a debilitating rather than a rehabilitative effect. It also provides an opportunity for native offenders from Alberta to remain closer to their home communities than would otherwise be the case. Also, the exchange of these agreements reduces the level of duplication and overlap that exists between the federal and provincial governments. It reduces the overall costs to governments in terms of prison construction, community supervision of offenders, and the annual operating expenses of providing these services.

The third area that will be given a high priority is that of the native offender. Presently, the percentage of native offenders in custody, especially native young offenders, is in the order of 30 percent. That's far in excess of an acceptable level, and initiatives will be taken with native organizations during the fiscal year under review to more effectively address this area. Native organizations will be consulted and will be asked to become involved in developing more prevention-type programs and community alternatives to incarceration than exist at present.

The law enforcement division, vote 3, is responsible for the administration of the Police Act, the Private Investigators and Security Guards Act, federal gun control legislation, and the operation of the Alberta Highway Patrol. While discharging these responsibilities, the division maintains a close working relationship with police departments, municipal police commissions, private investigation and security guard agencies, the transportation industry, federal and provincial government departments and agencies, as well as the general public.

Initiatives that are presently being undertaken under this vote are as follows: firstly, the department is reviewing various ways that the delivery of several services can become more efficiently and effectively achieved. Areas that are being addressed in this context include the enforcement of provisions of the Motor Transport Act by the Highway Patrol, the escort and transportation of prisoners to and from court and between federal and provincial prisons, and

the provision of courtroom security. Additionally, initiatives will be undertaken to rationalize the qualifications and appointments of special constables to ensure that upwards of 1,500 special constable appointments presently in effect across the province are consistent with the overall law enforcement objectives and requirements of the municipalities and the province.

I will also be taking initiatives that will result in the reintroduction of a new police Act, that is urgently required to address a number of issues identified by police commissions, chiefs of police, and police associations. I also want to meet and consult with native leaders to ensure that the particular policing needs of the Indian reserves are examined in relation to provincial policing standards, and in recognition of the fact that Indian reserves are special communities, that may warrant some adjustment to the policing service delivery system.

The recent initiative undertaken by the department in relation to missing children will be monitored and assessed during the fiscal year, including consultations with the educational community, police agencies, interest groups such as Block Parents, to determine if more effective safeguards can be developed to ensure that the safety of the young children of the province is provided a sufficiently high level of priority.

Another area I will be assigning a high priority is that of crime prevention and the importance of involving community associations and volunteers in prevention activities at the local community and grass-root levels across the province. I will also be consulting with my federal counterpart on gun control legislation to address a number of issues that impact directly on the generally law-abiding recreational firearms community. My objective in this regard is to ensure that the provincial application of this federal legislation requirement is directed through our provincial firearms office in a manner that proves the greatest level of control respecting persons who have criminal intent and does not, however, unduly frustrate law-abiding citizens who belong to gun clubs for recreational purposes.

I want to also report to this Assembly the high degree of co-ordination and co-operation that presently exists between the Calgary city police and the RCM Police in planning and developing security plans and strategies in preparation for the '88 Olympics in Calgary. As members of this Assembly can appreciate, this is a major international sporting event, and the safety and security of the officials and participants must be given a very high priority, especially within the context of the unstable world environment that exists today and in all probability will exist throughout 1988.

As a final comment in relation to vote 3, I want to ensure that citizen complaints related to police activities are addressed in an expeditious yet effective manner. In this regard we will be contacting my federal counterpart respecting the appointment of an Alberta representative to the federal complaints commission to be established by his department to review complaints against the RCM Police. I will also be reviewing this matter respecting municipal police forces during the development of a new provincial police Act referred to above. While I highlight these intentions respecting complaints against the police, I nevertheless want to express my support of the police agencies across the province for the quality service they generally provide and the high degree of professionalism demonstrated by the majority of their members.

I want to briefly cover some priority areas and initiatives under vote 4, the motor vehicle registration and driver

licensing department, which is primarily responsible for the licensing of drivers, which in '85-86 totalled \$1,814,879, and the registration of motor vehicles, which during the same fiscal period totalled 2,096,119 vehicles. Firstly, I want to point out that legislation will be introduced during the current session to increase the driving suspension period for drivers who fail to provide a breathalyzer sample.

As I stated previously in the Assembly, I believe it is imperative that this government, and all governments for that matter, do everything possible to prevent and deter the driving public from drinking and driving and to enact penalties that can more effectively impress upon offenders that drinking and driving cannot be tolerated. I will also be reviewing the current Check Stop program with the various police agencies across the province to determine if the chiefs of police believe that more emphasis should be placed on this program, as was recently proposed by the Canadian Bar Association in its brief on impaired driving. I will be co-ordinating my efforts with those of my colleagues the hon. Attorney General and the chairman of AADAC.

A second area that will be given priority is that of service to the public with respect to the issuing of drivers' licences, motor vehicle registrations, and driver examinations. In this respect the motor vehicles' administration will continue to refine and enhance its automated motor vehicle system for the benefit of the driving public.

I am also hopeful that initiatives can be taken in consultation with my colleague the hon. minister of transportation respecting a review of private driving school standards and procedures to ensure that the practices of these schools are consistent with motor vehicles legislation and policies pertaining to new drivers. I want to ensure that before any new driver is granted a driver's licence, the driver not only is technically competent but also fully understands and knows how to apply safe rules of the road. In this regard I have recently approved restructuring the working relationship between the Driver Control Board and the motor vehicle administration, to ensure that these two agencies of the Solicitor General work closely together in identifying drivers who have unsafe or erratic driving habits and to initiate early intervention procedures, either to have these drivers change their attitudes, habits, and behavior in order to retain their driving privileges or to have their driving privileges revoked.

I also want to draw this Assembly's attention to a program that has been recently undertaken and is scheduled to be operational by this time next year. I am referring to the fine collection program, which will result in more effective enforcement and collection of fines for parking and traffic tickets. It has been estimated that upward of \$6 million is being written off annually in this regard. This loss of revenue impacts on both municipal and provincial revenues. Consequently, this initiative, which essentially utilizes the motor vehicle automated system, will ensure both that defaulters do not avoid paying fines and that the two levels of government do not do without the revenue.

The development of the new automated motor vehicle system has not only meant a more responsive over-the-counter, one-stop shopping service for the consumer motorist but has also provided an opportunity for a controlled, high-speed electronic interface between this system and high users of the system in the business community, such as insurance companies, automobile clubs and associations, and financial institutions. The motor vehicle administration is currently evaluating the development of a suspended driver enforcement program called Automated Alerts. This

program is expected to not only increase the probability of apprehension but also that of prosecution, to discourage motorists from driving while under suspension. We are planning introduction of this program over the next few months, and discussions are currently under way with various police agencies throughout the province.

Another initiative that has recently been undertaken in co-operation with the disabled community — and I am pleased to report that already several hundred disabled Albertans registered under the new disabled placard and licence plate program. I intend to continue to consult with this group of Albertans to determine if any other initiatives are warranted in this regard, to ensure that their mobility is not encumbered because of a lack of understanding of their desire to become less dependent and more mobile.

I also intend to evaluate the current system of assessing demerit points for highway traffic violations to ensure that the current system is an effective enforcement tool in relation to improving highway safety generally and, more specifically, to ensure that the demerit system reflects advancements in vehicle technology, highway construction, and law enforcement practices. In making this reference, I am not suggesting a more lenient approach to highway traffic law enforcement; however, I am proposing a more effective approach to this problem area. Indeed, it may well be that some infractions, such as passing a school bus with flashing lights or speeding in school zones or children's play areas, require a more severe penalty than what exists at present, whereas a minor speeding infraction may merit fewer demerit points than presently occurs. I intend to consult with the police community, highway safety groups, and other jurisdictions during the course of this review before making policy decisions in this regard.

Vote 5 pertains to the Alberta Racing Commission. The commission operates under the authority of the Racing Commission Act, with the objective of providing financial support to, and direction control and regulation over, horse racing in the province. The commission oversees two class A tracks, Edmonton and Calgary; two class B tracks, Lethbridge and Trout Springs, outside Calgary; and some 20 class C tracks where short summer meets are held.

The revenue for the commission comes from two sources. The first source is 4 percent of the handle or the amount bet in the previous year of racing, and the second source is from track assessment, licence fees, and fines. It should be pointed out that the 4 percent rebate is of moneys generated by racing and not from the general tax revenue. In effect the increased support last year was made possible by a surplus in the lottery account, making it possible to relieve racing of the burden of grants for capital improvements at the exhibitions such as the Coliseum and the Calgary grandstand and hence give an increase from 2 percent to 4 percent of the handle to the commission.

It is the government's policy through the Alberta Racing Commission and the Department of Agriculture to further the horse racing industry as an adjunct to agriculture. The industry is labour-intensive, with 5,600 people licensed to work in it as well as many more indirectly involved. We hope to see the day when Alberta-bred bloodlines and stock are being exported.

Mr. Chairman, I have presented these opening general comments respecting the mandate of the Department of the Solicitor General to demonstrate the diversity of the department and the fact that the services and programs are directed at a very broad cross section of the Alberta public. I trust I have provided this Assembly with an overview of the

various votes and some of the ideas and initiatives that have been recently undertaken or will be undertaken during the fiscal year under review. I am now prepared to respond specifically to each of the votes outlined in the estimates book.

Thank you.

MR. CHUMIR: Mr. Chairman, it's a pleasure to rise to speak on these estimates. In commencing, I would like to congratulate the hon. minister on his appointment to his position and also on what appears to be a growing grasp of his department as shown by his in-depth understanding of the liquor industry profits in this afternoon's question period. One wonders whether he has either a background or a future in the bar business. I would also like to congratulate the hon. minister to the degree that he has hinted at some very sensible directions in some of the policies of his department. I would like to comment on some of these areas and in certain cases push the hon. minister more rapidly or more certainly in the direction he seems to be leaning — and of which I approve — and in other cases push the hon. minister in a direction that the government should be going but perhaps isn't aware of yet but will be in barely moments.

The first area I would like to comment on is that relating to the responsibility of the minister for the federal and provincial young offenders' legislation. This is a matter that deals with the incarceration of young offenders. It is under the jurisdiction of the Solicitor General's department. It is a relatively new mandate. I gather that in its early days there was some uncertainty as to whether the matter would be taken under the wing of the Social Services department as opposed to the Solicitor General's department. The Solicitor General's department won, and I hope the rumour that the rationale for its success was basically that it could do the job more cheaply is not accurate.

However, some concern in the community has been expressed to me, and that concern is that the philosophy which the Solicitor General's department exemplifies with respect to its treatment of young offenders leans too far in the direction of the custodial and does not place enough emphasis on the therapeutic. In short, there seems to be too much of the prison and not enough of the treatment philosophy that one might expect with young offenders. A symbol of this philosophy, at least in the early days, was that the old guards from the former Calgary prison were kept when the Bow River young offender institution was opened. It's clear that some custodial aspect is required, but it is also important that a balance is adopted. Accordingly, we need to develop some form of hybrid in this direction, and I hope the minister will be able to do something in that regard.

Another problem is that to date there has been inadequate co-operation between the Department of the Solicitor General and the Social Services department. Of course, many young people with problems are treated and receive services from the Social Services department. When they transfer over to the Solicitor General's department it's important that some contacts and connections be maintained with the people with whom they have previously been dealing.

A serious concern that has been raised, Mr. Chairman, is that there is inadequate psychological and psychiatric treatment given to the many disturbed youth who find themselves in the correctional institutions in this province. The figures I have are provided by people who are apparently familiar with the situation in Calgary. I am advised that

there is only one professional psychologist at each of the Bow River and Strathmore institutions, that the Bow River institution has psychiatric treatment for only one half day per week, and that the Strathmore unit receives only one half day treatment every two weeks. This is certainly inadequate. The types of youth who end up in these institutions are often disturbed. They mix with other disturbed youth and come out worse than when they entered. I would hope that the Solicitor General would see that this problem is addressed.

I would like to move on to deal with the problem of impaired driving. There are two aspects to which I would like to refer, both of which have been alluded to in the minister's comments. The first is the Check Stop program, for which provincial government support at the present time is limited to \$150,000, which I understand is an advertising program. The minister referred to recommendations of the Canadian Bar Association committee on impaired driving which reported in January of this year. I had the honour and pleasure to be a member of that committee. I can inform the hon. minister that the most significant conclusion our committee reached was that the single most important law enforcement aspect one could recommend for helping reduce the amount of impaired driving on the road was to increase the perceived risk of apprehension on the part of the impaired driver.

We see that effect. This appears time after time after time in the studies and the books. It goes back 20 years, and we rarely find governments acting on that finding. The circumstantial support for the finding is seen by the results of the Check Stop program at Christmas. When we double the number of check stops, the number of people caught diminishes. There are fewer impaired drivers on the road because they know there are going to be check stops. The Canadian Bar Association concluded that we need safe roads 52 weeks of the year and not just for two weeks of the year. Accordingly, the recommendation of our committee was that the number of check stops be increased.

Calgary has perhaps the finest Check Stop program in the province. It is year-round, but it also doubles it at Christmas. In speaking to members of the Calgary police department during our committee deliberations, they indicated that they would welcome Christmas or near-Christmas level check stops throughout the year and that it was only financial constraints that prevented this. Insofar as financial constraints are concerned, the city of Edmonton reportedly did not have check stops during the New Year's period because it didn't have enough funding.

There seems to be a role for more check stops and for reasons valid or otherwise — whether it's a reduced priority or budget problems — the municipal police forces do not seem to be ready to act, and accordingly, it very simply becomes a question of: does the provincial government provide leadership in this matter or does it not? Is the problem worthy of being addressed, or do we want to fall back on some bromide that we're going to leave matters to our local jurisdictions regardless of whether or not they're doing the job? It would be my suggestion that this is a case where senior government has to decide that a problem merits provincial action and we should take the single most important step that all of the authorities state we can do in the realm of law itself; that is, to increase the perceived risk of apprehension by having more check stops. I heard the hon. minister indicate that he was going to review that, and I commend him and urge him to move in that direction and do this province and the country a favour by setting an example in that regard.

The second area I would like to comment on and one which the minister also alluded to is the issue of driver licensing. The Canadian Bar Association committee pointed out that licence suspensions could in fact be a significant deterrent to impaired drivers but that that deterrent effect is eroded by the fact that the licence suspension laws are not adequately enforced. The fact is that there is little likelihood of getting caught if your licence has been suspended. If you are caught, the fines and penalties have been very, very low. As a result of this, it is common knowledge in the community that many, many suspended motorists drive and the deterrent effect of the licence suspension is lost.

Further support for the fact that suspended drivers continue to drive has been given to me by members of the People Against Impaired Drivers organization, who indicated that there was a one-month test during the month of December 1984 in which there was a cross-check between those who were charged with various traffic offences and those who had their licences suspended. This was an after-the-fact thing. Those who were charged with the offences had not been charged with not having a licence. After the fact it was discovered that during that month there were 300 correlations of offences with those who had had their licences suspended. This is a serious problem. It's an essential and important brick in the battle against impaired driving. I gather we now have a computerized driver licensing system, to which the minister alluded. A great deal of money has been expended on this system. The minister has indicated that something in the lines of a program called Automatic Alert is proposed. I hope it's along the lines of what I have been discussing, in that it meets the needs of liaising the incidence of traffic offences with the suspension of licence so that this matter can be monitored.

A second aspect of the licensing problem that I don't believe has been addressed by the minister — he will correct me if I'm wrong — is again a question of the deterrent effect. That is, what is to happen when a person whose driver's licence has been suspended for impaired driving is caught by the police under those circumstances? At the present time in Alberta a relatively minimal fine is imposed. For some years up until December 1985 federal legislation did not provide for any form of penalty. There is now an optional prison sentence available as a sentencing alternative for judges.

However, it was the conclusion of our Canadian Bar Association committee that those who are caught while driving with suspended drivers' licences are in effect second offenders. When you consider the low risk of apprehension, some fairly strong medicine is required. It was our conclusion that some form of mandatory prison sentence should be considered. I for one would think that a mandatory seven-day prison sentence for those who are caught would be justified. One might note in passing that in fact that conclusion was reached several years ago by the province of British Columbia, which provided for a seven-day prison sentence. That legislation was unfortunately struck down for other peripheral grounds under the Charter of Rights recently, but the principle of that form of penalty, that means of showing one's serious intent to address this particular problem, is merited.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to move on to deal with some problems relating to the police service. In commencing my comments on that subject, I would also like to second the words of confidence in the high quality of our police service earlier expressed by the minister. When I make

these comments with respect to the police service, they are made in a spirit of intending to improve what is already a very good police service but one which can be improved in the manner of each and every one of our institutions.

The first subject I would like to deal with is that of the manner in which the police themselves are policed. What happens if a citizen makes a complaint with respect to the manner in which a police officer has conducted himself? At present the structure in this province is that the police themselves make at least the preliminary decisions with respect to these types of complaints. The police police themselves. They receive, investigate, and adjudicate the complaints, as a result of which — and this is a subject I became interested in approximately eight or nine years ago. I've had extensive dealings with the Calgary police force; in fact, I was a member of a Calgary Police Commission committee on this very subject. As a result of this, I discovered that many members of our community lack or lose the requisite confidence in the police as a result of a system that they perceive to lack credibility. What they want is to see some form of outside monitoring in keeping with the principle that justice not only must be done but must be seen to be done. This is not just a provincial or a local phenomenon. It's a problem that has been faced by police in jurisdictions around the world. As a result, police services across the United States and some in Canada have been developing external monitoring and complaint systems.

In Canada the city of Toronto has what is probably the most sophisticated system, with a separate complaints officer with his own office and his own investigators, and I understand that this is working well. A new system has been implemented very recently in Manitoba. The city of Calgary as a result of the recommendations of the committee that I was on some three or four years ago did appoint a complaints monitor as well. However, that appointment was in the nature of a very significant compromise, and in fact the complaints monitor has a very token role in the process. It is a slight improvement over the prior system, but it is my belief that we can do much better. It is apparently also the belief of the Calgary complaints monitor that we can do much better, Mr. Chairman. I have the minutes of a meeting of the Calgary Police Commission of February 7, 1986, here. I was at that meeting. The Calgary citizen complaints monitor, Mrs. Balmer, suggested that

perhaps the position should be more visible and accessible to the public and that the Monitor's annual report could contain more information of interest to the public. She also suggested that the monitor be allowed to advise the Chief Constable prior to the determination of the disposition of a complaint.

Chairman Scott stated that he could see some justification for the Citizen Complaints Monitor becoming involved prior to the disposition of a complaint provided that it was confined to offering comment as to the fairness of the investigative procedure.

I would note that the chief constable of the city of Calgary disagreed with that suggestion. In fact, it is traditional for police services to dislike the concept of having citizen complaints monitors. Nobody likes to have someone looking over their shoulder. However, Mr. Chairman, I would suggest to the minister that it's very much in the public interest to have a process which has an independent input. The police will get used to it, public confidence will increase, and over time it will help police/citizen relations and benefit the whole community. We all have a stake in building a better police force and better relations between

the community and the police. Because the police can't do the job themselves; they need the support of each and every member of the community.

So I would suggest, Mr. Chairman, that our Police Act should be amended to provide for some independent input at the initial level and not after the fact as at present with the current system, which relies almost exclusively on an appeal to the Law Enforcement Appeal Board. I would note that the hon. minister made some tantalizing comment with respect to some form of official relating to investigations of complaints against the RCMP and I think alluded to the fact that this official might have some role in dealing with complaints dealing with police forces throughout the province of Alberta. I would encourage that, particularly at local levels and at the very initial stage, as an option. I think there are many models to follow and we'd be well served.

Another area I would like to deal with is that of more open policing, Mr. Chairman. This is an era in which citizens want to know more about their institutions. Knowledge is recognized to be power, and it's reflected in the enactment of freedom of information legislation virtually across the whole of this continent and across this country, with the unhappy exception of this province, I might note. The police themselves, when you're dealing with the issue of police information, are by nature secretive, and they have a great deal of information that must be kept confidential. However, I note that all of these freedom of information Acts to which I referred earlier apply to the police services and provide for disclosure and release of information held by them unless the release of the information would impair law enforcement or satisfy some similar harm test.

Many police forces recognize the need to be more open with respect to their information. The city of Calgary some six or seven years ago became much more open as a result of citizen pressure. It now makes a large number of its policy bulletins available to the citizens of Calgary. You can go into the Police Commission office and get copies of bulletins such as those relating to high-speed chases. On the other hand, I've discovered in my very brief time in Edmonton that the city of Edmonton is more restrictive. I consider this to be a very serious thing, Mr. Chairman, and I would hope that the minister would do something about this. I was told on the phone the other day by a superintendent of the city of Edmonton police that citizens could not get a copy of the city of Edmonton high-speed chase policy, which has been available in Calgary for five or six years. I called and gave my name but did not identify myself as an MLA, simply as a citizen. I find it very difficult to understand why the citizens cannot get copies of matters like this which relate to policies in which life may be endangered.

I would suggest, Mr. Chairman, that we need provincial rules that require police services to give to the public information of public interest along this nature. We need rules to define what is and is not a matter which will impair law enforcement. The general response one gets when the police don't want to give you something is that is going to harm law enforcement. If you look throughout jurisdictions across North America, you'll find many have been very, very open with many types of policies that relate to public interest, which does not have any impairing effect on the law enforcement, but we are still faced with that as a continuing argument.

The best means to do this is a freedom of information Act, but second best is for some rules to be set at the top.

Through the Solicitor General's office would be one means; through a provincial police commission if one can't get some response from the local police commissions on these matters would be another; perhaps an expanded role for the director of law enforcement would be a third means.

I would also like to expand my comments on the issue of openness of police forces with respect to information, and that is relative to meetings held by police commissions and hearings held by police commissions. This has been a matter of some concern to myself for a time, Mr. Chairman, and the concern was raised once again today and yesterday by the reports that the city of Edmonton Police Commission is going to be holding a closed one-day hearing to review the policy relating to the 1984 police stakeout in this city. I'm sure members of this House will recall reading about that stakeout in which an armed robber was killed and a civilian involved in the incident by the police on short notice had her life endangered. A fatality hearing took place, and the decision of the hearing officer was that there should be review of police policy with some civilian input. The hon. minister's predecessor supported the concept of an open hearing with some civilian input, and unfortunately this sensible decision was reversed. I'm concerned not only for the reversal of that decision but for the role model or for the precedent that it sets in these matters. So I would suggest, Mr. Chairman, that we ...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order please.

MR. ROSTAD: Hon. members, I'd like to correct the comments of the hon. member. I will answer his other questions, but he is alluding to the fact that my predecessor said that this particular Townshend hearing would be open. That's incorrect. He didn't have any jurisdiction on the Townshend hearing. That was set by Judge Rolf.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Minister, the hon. member has one minute 20 seconds left. If you wish, you could respond at that time.

MR. CHUMIR: Mr. Chairman, I would simply state in that regard the bottom line. That is that meetings of this nature, meetings of police commissions, should be open to the public. I'm concerned that from what I've seen throughout the years, while most meetings are open, I think a lot of police commission business takes place behind closed doors. We don't know about this, and there is nothing to prevent the police commissions from doing it. What I would suggest we need not only in this area but in many other areas — because we've had meetings of the finance committee of the city council in Calgary, we've had parks and recreation board meetings held behind closed doors. The most effective way to address this is to enact what almost every state in the United States has; that is what they know as sunshine laws, which say that when public bodies meet and conduct public business, it's an open meeting unless they fit into certain criteria relating to the need for confidentiality.

I think those are the heart of my comments. If I have another 30 seconds, I might ask some brief questions with respect to the authority of the Attorney General. The current Attorney General noted ...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you, hon. member. The time has expired.

Minister, would you care to respond before the Member for Edmonton Strathcona?

MR. ROSTAD: Mr. Chairman, if I might relate a few comments to the Member for Calgary Buffalo. The member has raised a number of questions relating to the young offender program, feeling that there is too much custodial reference to it and inadequate co-operation between the Solicitor General and Social Services and inadequate psychiatric help given to inmates. I would like to indicate that the Bow River young offender centre and the Strathmore young offender centre, as referred to by the hon. member, each have full-time psychologists. Each has psychiatric services available for the more disturbed cases on a fee-for-service basis. Bow River has three contracts with psychologists and social workers in Calgary to provide special counselling, treatment, and assessments. Also, there are 16 beds available under contract with the Woods Christian Home and three beds at the William Roper Home, both providing treatment to disturbed youths, as well as a 19-bed secure unit for young offenders at Alberta Hospital. So it can't be taken that the Solicitor General in administering the young offenders' program does not have the health concerns, mental or physical, of the inmates in mind.

[Mr. Musgreave in the Chair]

I might indicate, too, that we have extensive education and recreation programs available for all offenders. The education in most instances comes through the public school board wherever the facility is located. Recreation services are usually in hand.

I might indicate that in the transfer from Social Services to Solicitor General there was some problem in respect of staff more accustomed to adults being utilized to take care of young offenders. That has been addressed and is quickly if not already corrected through the hiring or placing of people that have more compatibility with the young offender.

In regard to impaired driving, I personally concur that the Check Stop program is a good program. As I mentioned in my preliminary comments, that program is being studied intensively. We're in constant communication with the chief of Calgary city police who does run a program on a year-round basis, but we are getting input from other police forces to find out the effectiveness. As an example, you cite that Edmonton city police did not use it on New Year's. It wasn't just sporadic, inadequate financing; it's because the Edmonton city police do not think the Check Stop program is the program to utilize. They have their own particular program, which is as effective.

In terms of drivers' licensing, driving while suspended, I agree. At present, the usual penalties of \$400 and a slap on the wrists and you're off and driving again are not adequate. I also agree that the optional prison thing is not utilized more adequately, but I must point out to the hon. member that those are areas that fall under the jurisdiction of the Attorney General and the court system. What we are trying to do through the motor vehicle division of the Solicitor General is institute the Automated Alert program, whereby the police will have instantaneous indication through the computer that this person is driving while suspended, and there will then be that apprehension of a higher risk of being caught.

In regard to the police service, I do believe a new Police Act in Alberta is very, very important. I'm advised that my predecessor tabled the first version of this and that it

never passed because of some inadequacies, some things that didn't seem to fit with the various people that are involved in interfacing with the Police Act.

My reference to an Alberta representative to the federal police complaints commission was not indicating that that particular person would be involved in hearing complaints within Alberta, but I do think the proposed new police Act should address the fact of having a complaint commission for municipal and provincial policing complaints, which would then, in turn, address your concern that there be a hearing that wouldn't be run or adjudicated by the police themselves. As far as police commission hearings being closed or over a short period of time, in the specific instance you brought up, that is not presently under the jurisdiction of the Solicitor General. That's purely under the jurisdiction of the Edmonton Police Commission. They set the parameters; they set the rules.

I believe those are the questions, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHUMIR: Might I just comment? I'll not speak, but I would just like to express a sentiment that I should have expressed earlier on behalf of those who sit in this House with beards: our gratitude to the hon. minister for having set the precedent of having a role model of a member in the cabinet with a beard.

AN HON. MEMBER: What a smoothy.

MR. WRIGHT: Mr. Chairman, I'll deal first with a problem in the motor vehicles administration section of this portfolio. I am sure the Solicitor General is aware of the Auditor General's report for the year ended March 31, 1985, which, in the nature of things, is not published till about a year later. It was published in April of this year. This had a critical section on the main computer system of the motor vehicles branch, which is called MOVES, the motor vehicle system. His report showed that a program costing \$12 million had been badly mismanaged to the extent that the department accounts showed, for example, \$36 million as being in the account when it wasn't and also understated the amount of mailed receipts to the extent of \$2 million. This is a high-cost and, indeed, a high-risk innovation, which I think started to be planned at least back in 1979, yet the program does not appear anywhere under that name in the estimates and never has. In view of the importance of this program, why doesn't it?

This was not caprice on the part of the Auditor General. The computer program, as installed, could not reconcile the books. What it could do in the way of balancing was not in fact used by the staff. The data entry staff could, in colloquial words, cook the books whenever they wanted to, without authorization. I mean by that that they could go back into the entries and adjust them at will without authorization from senior accounting staff. Whether they did or not is another matter, of course, but there were no reports ever taken from the computer to see whether there had been any such revision. All these things are set out in the Auditor General's report.

On page 52 of that report, Mr. Chairman, it was suggested by the Auditor General that only "suitably trained and experienced personnel" should be working in the system. I wonder why this was not the case before, since it seems such an obvious requirement. The Auditor General also requested a chief internal auditor, a position to be instituted and such an appointment made. My question is: who was appointed? I suppose the name of the person is irrelevant.

Was the appointment made? What are his or her designation, skills, and experience, and to whom does he or she report?

The annual report of the department for '84-85 was published about the same time, on March 4, 1986: sessional paper 110/86, Mr. Chairman. There is not the slightest hint in this report of the serious deficiencies in MOVES. I wonder whether these reports of the department are simply publicity exercises or an attempt seriously to report on what is going on in the department. In fact, in request for proposal C05489 published by Public Works, Supply and Services in April of this year, it's stated that MOVES was successfully implemented in the year 1984, which also is the tenor of the department's report. This must presumably have been information supplied by the department. I ask the Solicitor General how the department can truthfully have represented this to the department of public works.

It may be said that in certain parts of that program there was chaos. Yet in 1979 the department had an executive director of program development as well as two other executive directors, one of licensing and one of operations. Only the executive director of operations remains, so far as I can see, Mr. Chairman. The position of executive director of program development was abolished in December 1982 or thereabouts, after he brought an internal auditor into his part of the department because of what he considered to be some problems developing in the implementation of MOVES. My question at this point is: why may we not conclude that the chaos described in the Auditor General's report was not the result of the abolition of that position? It's one thing to fall on misfortune, although that would seem very difficult in a program of this size; it's another thing to court it deliberately.

My next question relates to the Racing Commission, Mr. Chairman. For some extraordinary reason the Racing Commission vote, which is vote 5, does not have any summary of elements; it's just a lump of money. That lump of money, as the Solicitor General has said, is 4 percent of the amount of money bet in pari-mutuel betting in the province, called a "handle" for some amazing reason. The tax is 5 percent. Up till this year 2 percent was devoted to funding the Racing Commission; 2.25 percent to subsidizing fairs and exhibitions, whether in their operations or in capital is not quite clear — perhaps capital projects — and the remaining .75 percent of the total went into general revenue.

Suddenly this year, for reasons not stated at all and not even noticed as being a new program, the amount was doubled from 2 percent to 4 percent, as the Solicitor General has said. The explanation given is that lottery income came in bigger, which relieved the tax on betting of the burden of the subsidy to fairs and exhibitions. That may be so, but why is it suddenly necessary to increase the amount going to the Racing Commission by some \$3.6 million, an increase of 91 percent? It's all money. This is a tax which, in the absence of being devoted to specific objects, goes to the relief of Albertans' tax bill.

Mr. Chairman, I would think the Solicitor General might have some explaining to do to explain a 91 percent increase to the Racing Commission in the year 1986 in Alberta, when there is so much desperation and trouble in so many quarters in terms of unemployment and lack of job creation. Perhaps there was some hint of the answer in the Solicitor General's explanation that thoroughbred racing — well, racing of all sorts — is a labour-intensive activity. But I'm not so sure whether there aren't priorities ahead of that activity in 1986 in Alberta.

In any event, how is the extra \$3.6 million to be disbursed? Or for that matter, how is any of it disbursed?

Is it just in purses? I notice from the report of the Racing Commission that only \$30,000 was spent on equine research in the reporting year, which was '84-85. Is this simply the provision of greater purses, or is there some more direct benefit, job spin-off, to be provided? It is not always the case that the owners who win on the horses plow the money back. They sometimes buy condominiums in Hawaii with the money or make other discretionary use of their winnings. At a time when there is a 13 percent unemployment rate locally, it does seem somewhat extraordinary that it should be found necessary to make a 91 percent increase in the allotment to racing. It must do good to the heart of the Premier, who as we know is very interested in this area. The thought did cross my mind that it might be more than a coincidence, but perhaps we could hear from the Solicitor General on that, Mr. Chairman.

I, too, have something to say about the youth detention centres. The budget for this is in vote 2, of course. It does show only \$663,000 for capital projects. It's common knowledge — at least I believe it is common knowledge; I stand to be corrected if it isn't — that there is overcrowding both in the Edmonton Youth Development Centre and in the Strathmore Youth Development Centre. I question the minister about the department's ability to provide adequate facilities for the young offenders who are being detained in the institutions. We believe that the numbers of youthful offenders who are in detention have significantly increased during the past year. Are the facilities at the two centres I have mentioned being expanded?

Mr. Chairman, there is an oddity in the RITE Directory, which is, of course, the directory of government phone numbers, offices, et cetera. On page 97 of the current one, under Solicitor General there is a mysterious heading which is just "Privatization, 10th Floor, John E. Brownlee Building." There's a name of a co-ordinator there and a telephone number. What is that, and where does it fit in in the vote? I have no idea really what it deals with. We do understand that group homes and youth centres and other facilities for young people and perhaps others under the aegis of this department are run by contracted-out services; perhaps this is the general subject heading, Mr. Chairman. My question on that, though, is: to what extent are these homes run for private profit and to what extent not? And if nonprofit — for instance, there was a private Bill before our committee yesterday for the incorporation of one such foundation. It was a nonprofit foundation which contracts for youth services in many different areas of Social Services and perhaps this department too. This described itself as a nonprofit organization. But if a nonprofit organization, then what check is there on what the revenue of the nonprofit organization is devoted to? I mean, it could pay very large salaries out to the incorporators who are actually working in it and, in fact, be for practical purposes a profit-making organization. Perhaps it's irrelevant, at least in the opinion of the department, whether it's profit or nonprofit if all that matters is the service provided and the standard of that service. Perhaps we can hear from the Solicitor General on that.

The Solicitor General spoke of the exchange of services agreement as being part of one of the votes. This agreement is, of course, between the provincial and the federal governments, and under it there can be switching back and forth between the penitentiary service run by the federal government and the prison service run by us. It does happen sometimes that people who for whatever reason, perhaps because of their youth or because of the fact they are first-time criminals, are told that they will be spending their

sentence at a local institution wish in fact to go to the penitentiary, not so they can meet with more experienced criminals, which is in fact a danger, as the Solicitor General has said, but because I understand that a greater range of training programs are offered in the penitentiary. Is this so? If it is so, does the department pay attention to bona fide requests by prisoners to be transferred to a place where they can have a better chance for the training they seek, which may of course help to prevent return as a prisoner on a future occasion.

One point occurs to me on check stops, Mr. Chairman; that is, as a lawyer, I've often had some trouble really understanding the authority of the police to stop people at check stops. Maybe this has been fixed up in the legislation and I'm not aware of it. But if a motorist is proceeding down the road, not breaking any rules and not driving oddly, in the absence of some legislation the police do not have the right to stop him. Yet we believe that Check Stop is a valuable program and should not rest on an insecure legal foundation. Could we hear from the Solicitor General on that?

Those are my comments.

MR. ROSTAD: Mr. Chairman, I thank the hon. Member for Edmonton Strathcona for his comments. I believe the most recent question, relating to Check Stop, was addressed in a case coming out of either Calgary or Ontario, where it established the right to conduct the check stop. Whether that is factual or not — I think it is — the new proposed police Act would in fact incorporate something to that effect, which would allow us the privilege.

Relating to the MOVES, or motor vehicle system, I'm not aware of the reference in any Auditor General's report to loss of revenue, staff impropriety, or "cooking the books." There were some initial problems, no doubt, with implementing the system, but these procedural deficiencies and several deficiencies related to the transition from the old to the new have been or are being corrected. There is a chief internal auditor. He is hired and he reports to the executive director of finance, and he is a qualified accountant. His name, as you mentioned, I don't think is that relevant, but there is that position.

The new motor vehicle system has been successfully implemented in relation to the service to the public, the benefits to the law enforcement community, and the benefits to the business community — those specific items I mentioned in my opening remarks. It has proven to be very, very beneficial in the sense that you can walk into a motor licensing issuing office and on rare occasions do you find the line more than maybe four or five people at any position. That's because the one-stop shopping concept is there. The document can be printed right while you're there, which is the benefit of this MOVE system.

The law enforcement community also is plugged right into it. That's how we're going to implement this Automated Alert program in apprehending people driving while suspended. The police officer, when he does apprehend the person, can just plug into the computer and find out exactly whether or not this particular driving record is suspended. Again, that's the benefit of the MOVES.

The business community uses it a great deal in financial institutions, insurance companies, and those types of things. In that respect MOVES is superb. In fact, we have had numerous inquiries in person from various other states, provinces, and countries to look at it. I'm not for a moment going to cover up that there were some deficiencies, and

it was referred to in the Auditor General's report, but those inadequacies have been addressed.

In relation to the Racing Commission, first, we should understand that there's always been a 5 percent levy against the handle or the amount that's been bet, and it's always predicated on last year's amount bet. The 5 percent was previously allocated by 2 percent going to the Racing Commission, .25 percent going to administering the Racing Commission, 1.5 percent going to exhibitions and fairs for capital expenditures, 1 percent going to exhibitions and fairs for operating expenditures, and .75 percent going to the General Revenue Fund. That made up the 5 percent. Incidentally, those two particular items, the 1.25 and the 1 percent, went through Consumer and Corporate Affairs. There was a change made where 4 percent goes to the Racing Commission, and it pertains to the same parameter of activity where the previous 2 percent went. There's 1 percent going to major exhibitions and fairs that goes through the Department of Manpower with the other lottery funds.

Why, as you say, at this time are we increasing the amount that goes to the Racing Commission? We're only changing the direction of where it's going; we're not taking it out of the hands of the individual taxpayer. There's no more going to the Racing Commission than there was before.

MR. WRIGHT: Three and a half million.

MR. ROSTAD: Yes, but the others were going to exhibitions and that that conducted the racing. This is actually going to the Racing Commission, which goes back into purses and incentives to the breeders to increase the breeds of horses in Alberta. As I mentioned in my covering remarks as well, we're trying to initiate a program whereby Alberta-bred stock can be exported.

In terms of the young offenders, overcrowding, and whether we can provide adequate facilities for the inmates, in Strathmore the numbers are reduced to below capacity as an expansion of our release program. Again, we won't deny the fact that there was some overcrowding in a number of institutions, but that was from the sudden intake of 16- and 17-year-olds after the one year. The program which pertained to the 15 and under came into effect in April of '84. In April of '85 the 16- and 17-year-olds came in, which was a larger influx than was anticipated. In the Edmonton Youth Development Centre the numbers are again well below capacity. Again, it's due to temporary release plus the opening of a minimum security camp at Judy Creek. There are two new facilities under construction, one in Calgary and one in Edmonton. They're scheduled to open in '88, and together they have around 250 beds. In the meantime, we are trying to utilize the temporary release and minimum security facilities to overcome any extra problem.

The transferee to a provincial system from a penitentiary requires the consent of the offender. If the offender wishes it and there is room in a particular facility, I don't think, unless there are unusual circumstances, that there is any problem in accommodating that person's particular wish.

The oddity in the RITE Directory as to what privatization is: at this stage I couldn't answer you. I'd be more than happy to find out and inform the member or the Assembly.

In regard to nonprofit organizations and whether the Solicitor General's department is utilizing their services, such as getting beds from them, we check the background and the financing of that organization. I might indicate that

we have recently discovered a situation where there was a great deal more funding going to a particular organization than we thought was reasonable in the situation. What it was really doing was enriching a couple of proprietors of a number of properties. That has been corrected. That was a transition facility, not one that was originally under our particular jurisdiction.

I believe that answers the questions. Thank you.

MR. ALGER: Mr. Chairman, it gives me great pleasure to speak to these estimates tonight on behalf of the Solicitor General. Unlike my learned friends who have spoken before me, you'll need not set the stopwatch on my account, because I assure you that if I thought of everything I could think of in my whole history, I couldn't stay up here for half an hour at a time. If I started with the Book of Genesis, I'm sure I'd be at the end of Revelations before 30 minutes. In any event, it's just a chide. I enjoyed your remarks.

The actual fact is that I want to compliment the Solicitor General, in the first place, for assuming this big responsibility in the manner in which he has and for gaining so much knowledge of the department in such a short time. I'm sure that he has stayed awake many, many nights catching up on the department's work and efforts.

I would like to congratulate his staff, too, some of whom are with us tonight, in particular Mr. Farran and Mr. Millican, who are personal friends of mine. I'm sure that between them and the rest of the staff he is getting fine support. It is a big department, and he needs fine support.

With regard to his general duties, I'd have to guess that the police force must be almost the toughest part of it. In a complimentary manner I would like to commend the police force of the province and the nation, for that matter. I've had a lot of dealings with policemen from time to time through my short history, my driver's licence being 154777. It's been out so many times, Mr. Chairman, I can remember the number. But I've always found them to be very polite, very helpful, very suggestive, and at different times very consoling, particularly when I wasn't right.

They have a difficult time in the police force for the simple reason that — I don't know whether it's the speed of things nowadays or the changing times or television or whatever it is — every time our policemen open a car door, they face a good chance of getting their head blown off. That's something I'd like the Solicitor General to work hard at, to see whether or not we can't cut down the ungraciousness of the citizenry in some areas where they're just too inclined to be too gun-quick. Maybe our laws are a little lax in that respect, and maybe too many of us can carry firearms that shouldn't. That's one of the things that I detest about the system. They don't have a chance sometimes.

With regard to driver's licensing and so forth, I must tell the minister that I do have a problem with one constituent in particular who I think has reached the age of 80 and who just detests the fact that she must take a medical to receive her driver's licence. For the life of her she can't understand why a doctor should have anything to say about why she should have a driver's licence. In her thinking, and in mine too for that matter, a driver's licence really should be offered to her after a complete driving examination. Her medical status should be determined by that driver examiner. If she can't see or can't hear, that shouldn't be hard to pick up, and her physical faculties shouldn't be hard to discover either if they're not perfect or not good enough to drive. So why should she completely strip herself

for an examination by a doctor who will tell her whether she can drive or not? It seems a little bit strange, and I wish the Solicitor General would look into that one as soon as he possibly can.

In the nature of security guards throughout the province, I've always found them to be very polite, very alert, and very interested in what's going on in the area they're guarding. I think they've done a great job in that respect, and I commend them for it.

With regard to the Alberta Liquor Control Board, Mr. Chairman, I guess I could go either way. Sometimes I agree with people that our laws are a little antiquated, but on the other hand, I've found that in the last 20 years we've made great strides with the handling of alcoholic beverages, the processing and the delivery. Our lounges and everything else are top-notch.

I must relate an experience that I had. I've always felt that Texas was a wide open state and you could raise all the dickens you wanted in that state. I flew in there one night. This was some 20 years ago and it may have changed; I don't know. But our own laws were becoming more sensible, in a word. When we flew into Dallas that night, naturally it had been a long day and I immediately asked for a Ne Plus Ultra and some soda. The lady at the bar said: "That will be fine, sonny. I've got the soda, I've got the ice, and I've got the glasses. Did you bring the Ne Plus?" You see, at that point in time — in Texas, if you don't mind — you had to bring your own liquor. It was that far behind us. From watching picture shows and stuff, I guess you get confused about how other people behave and live and what their life-style is. Having watched 150 cowboy shows, I always thought you just stood up to the bar and really belted 'em back. But that's not the case at all in Texas. You have to bring your own liquor. Not a bad arrangement, but it's just to show you that ours is far better and far more sensible in my estimation.

Another area that I would like to deal in particularly, for a little while, is the race business. I saw a certain amount of consternation from the people opposite me when we talked about raising the price paid to the racehorse people. I must reiterate that there's a good reason for that. I've been in that business myself for a long time, a good deal longer than the Premier, and with any luck I'll be in it a good deal longer than he will, too, to wind it up. The reason for that is that I'm a breeder. To be a breeder, you must have a lot of help from every direction, for the simple reason that it's a very expensive hobby. It's the sport of kings, or classified as such, and we have been encouraged by the Alberta government to stay in that breeding world for the simple reason that what we have to have are good Alberta-bred horses.

To get into that business, of course, automatically you have to buy a horse or two. Secondly, immediately after you get in it, you have to have a place for them. And it has to be a good place; nothing mediocre about racehorses. They are thoroughbreds, and as the word suggests, they're timid, they're exciting, they're just beautiful animals, but very, very hard to raise and control. Along with the stables, they have to have wooden fences. You can't put a racehorse out in any place where there's any wire; he will cut himself to death. Thirdly, those stables have to be cleaned every day and the horses have to be fed every day, and all this takes time and costs money.

We'll now get into the breeding of the horse. Supposing you've got a good mare, the breeding itself has to be done properly, and it has to be done by a good horse if you

want to get any bloodlines at all in Alberta that are going to amount to anything. For quite a while we had to take our horses to Kentucky, Toronto, Phoenix, or California for good breeding. Don't think that doesn't cost a lot of money, because it does. The breeding fee itself is horrendous, and so are the travelling costs. All the people that have to go with these horses add up to a terrific bill. Then you wait for 11 months to see what transpires. If the colt drops to the ground and lives, you pay the breeding fee. If he dies on the spot, you do get out of that.

[Mr. Gogo in the Chair]

The reason I bring that up is for the simple reason that fewer than 50 percent of all thoroughbreds that are born ever get to the track. I'm sure I'm using an exaggerated figure at that. I think it's closer to 35, but I'll give you the advantage of the doubt. Let's say it's 50 percent. That's still a terrible risk and a hard business to be in.

So he's born. The first thing he does is grow up, and by the time he's two, he's ready to be broken and trained. That costs a lot of money, and the two years that you've had him cost a lot of money. Then the fellow that breaks him charges you a lot of money. In the meantime, as the trainer gets hold of him, the first thing he does is buck his shins, so he's off the track for at least six or eight weeks. Then the worst thing that can happen to him is bow his tendons. If that doesn't break you, nothing will.

In any event, horse racing is very expensive, and I commend the Solicitor General for having the ability to supply more money to the actual owners through their ability to win races. It isn't just tossed out there. You've got to be on that track, and you've got to be able to win some races or you're just as far behind as you ever were. I hope that answers some of the questions with regard to the almost 100 percent increase to the owners this year. It was one thing that was much desired, has been worked on with Roy Farran for I don't know how many years, and it finally came about. I'm proud as the dickens that it has. I'd also like to commend the lottery system for being able to help so much in that respect.

Somebody told me to sit down. I don't think my half hour is up, is it, Chairman? Set the clock again.

In reality if not in fact, I would like to wind up by commending the Solicitor General and his department for the good work they do. I'm sure that as time goes by the police force, the Liquor Control Act, and the Racing Commission will improve. I'm very proud that they have done as much as they have for the province of Alberta.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The hon. member has another 12 minutes. The Chair wasn't calling his time.

MR. ALGER: Thanks, Chairman. I think I'm pretty well wound up.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon. Member for Calgary McCall.

MR. ROSTAD: Before that member starts, could I respond to a couple of items that the Member for Highwood brought up? First of all, for the Assembly I might indicate that the Millican he's referring to is my executive assistant up above. The Farran that he's referring to is the chairman of the Racing Commission.

I'd also like to accept the compliments from the Member for Highwood. I believe it's a privilege to be a member

of this Assembly and an extreme privilege to be a minister in Her Majesty's government. I also think it's a pleasure to be associated with all members in the Assembly, whether they are government or opposite. I think it's delightful.

The member raised the issue of age past 70 requiring a medical for obtaining a driver's licence. I've heard from his constituent. I won't mention her name.

MR. ALGER: I'll mention it.

MR. ROSTAD: Actually, Mary Dover is her name. I've indicated to Mary that I would review the substantial correspondence in her file relating to this issue but that I feel we all have to acknowledge the fact that age does come on us. As we proceed up the ladder of age, parts of us deteriorate. It's the same as the youngsters that we put through quite a testing procedure when they get their licence. I think it's only normal that we would ask people over 70 to get a medical. If there's no problem, they get their licence. If there is, I think we owe it to the rest of society to have whatever is wrong corrected or unfortunately they lose their licence. Perhaps something we should institute is not only looking at a medical at 70 but, in fact, having everybody rewrite their driving test on a two- or five-year basis or something to upgrade us all, because I'm sure we've all forgotten a great deal about the rules of the road.

Thank you.

MR. NELSON: Mr. Chairman, to follow the hon. Member for Highwood, I'm sure that there are many in here that have been breeders throughout their lives. Mr. Chairman, I'd just like to make a few comments relevant to the estimates.

Some comments that have precluded me here this evening in a couple of spots have kind of concerned me a little bit — one from the Member for Calgary Buffalo, of course, regarding the police commissions and what have you. I have been a member of the Calgary Police Commission for four years, in fact, at the same time the member had been appointed to a committee on our behalf to look into a subject. First of all, Mr. Chairman, it is necessary from time to time, because of the sensitivity of many of the police issues that have to be dealt with by the commission and the police service themselves, that they have to be dealt with in a closed session. I'm sure there are people who think otherwise, albeit a lot of times they are politically motivated. But fortunately, I think most people who have lived with objectivity in their minds know that there are times when we have to deal with issues, because of their sensitivity, in a formal session behind those closed doors. It's very easy to go out and have a drink and shut the doors and have an informal session and deal with these issues anyway, so it's no big deal. Certainly, there are times when councils or others have to meet because of sensitivity of issues that they deal with.

There are some areas that do concern me within the budget, and I just want to place them on the record. I know the minister has spoken to them. In vote 1, it seems that we have a reduction of staff a little bit, and of course the budget seems to go up. In vote 2 we have an increase of 154 full-time positions but an increase of only 10.5 man-years in the budget.

One of the areas that does concern me, not being a horse breeder, is that great big large lump of 91 percent increase in the area of control and development of horse racing, especially when I have to consider that we can't

assist to fund the Check Stop program additionally in Alberta, when we can possibly save the life of a human being.

Mr. Chairman, I am one of those that has had the opportunity, as a member of the Calgary Police Commission, to go out and sit at check stops and view the activity of the police on these check stops. For the money that's spent and for the good that these stops do, I don't think there's a better program in policing in checking for people that are drinking and driving. If we save only one life, I'll tell you it's worth the cost of breeding a horse. I'm not into horses. My girlfriend is the horse person in my life; she does her thing with Morgan horses. [some laughter] I think the members over there had better behave themselves. [interjection] You too.

Mr. Chairman, a couple of other areas in vote 4 bother me. Again, I consider our policing situation, where I think it's important to support the activities of the police in our communities. In vote 4, of course there's a program development of \$1.2 million which is extra to the estimates of last year and, of course, the finance and planning area, which seems to have a fairly large increase.

I also want to talk about the liquor laws in the province very briefly. I think we have to start becoming a little more proactive. I know there's been considerable change over the years to our laws and our drinking habits within the province, but at the same time, we're going to be on the world stage soon. Having been able to travel around the world a little bit and live in another country for a number of years, we still have a long way to go as far as how we deal with the things.

One of the first steps should be that the minister might examine the privatization of the retail sale of all alcoholic beverages in the province to ensure that we can become a little more open and proactive in the community. It seems that the hotel industry certainly has a point when we go out and allow these great big barns outside the municipalities. In fact, I understand there's one or two drinking establishments inside the municipalities of Calgary and Edmonton. Yet the hotels get limited to a very small number in comparison, and certainly we get the flak regarding those. It seems that there are different sets of rules that relate to different sets of people in the community. So I think we should have an overhaul of our liquor laws in the province and maybe send some people overseas that have sat behind a desk all their lives and never seen anything but what they've read or whatever.

Mr. Chairman, the area of motor vehicle administration, it's my view that especially in Calgary — in northeast Calgary we have one motor vehicle office that I've had the misfortune of having to go and visit a couple of times recently to do some business. The staff there work very hard. They're very diligent, very polite, and I don't think anybody can really complain about that. However, what a person can complain about is the length of time that you have to stand in line to wait for service. I would think that we're in the service business there, and certainly if there's a deficiency in the number of offices that we operate, if we need to expand those offices in the same premises or operate another building somewhere, I think we have to examine that to accommodate the consuming public. If it was a supermarket or some type of business that had the kind of activity throughout the day that that place does, they'd soon open another store in a hurry to accommodate the business that they would get.

The other area of concern as far as motor vehicle activity is that we need to examine the point system very quickly

relevant to what points are taken off for what offence. We have a system where if a person gets a speeding ticket on the highway, and he's in business, and he gets two, three, or four of them, his points go up very quickly. Not only is he out of business; he hasn't got a car to stay in that business, and it's very costly. Many times it's not due to careless driving. A person may have a clean record all their lives with never an accident, never a speeding ticket within a city limit or something, and out on the highway he gets nailed for 10 or 15 kilometres over or even down to six kilometres over. I have a case in mind that I could relate to the minister. The former minister had that one, too.

The other concern I have relevant to this is that there are cases that come to mind where the courts have given a penalty because of a driving offence. They've removed the licence of an individual because of that offence. Because the Act has indicated that the penalty should be a little more than what the court has given, it's an automatic thing that the bureaucrats out there look at their little blue book, or whatever color it is, and automatically the guy gets an extra three months on his licence suspension.

We have to examine our legislation to the extent that the courts have to be brought up to date on what that legislation is. Those people who are given a sentence — I'll use the term sentence, but it doesn't matter whether it's into the lockup or a loss of a licence or whatever; it's still a sentence — feel that they have been dealt with by the court of law, and all of a sudden they get a little piece of mail suggesting that they now have a little addition to that sentence they've been given by the court. So to them the day in court they've had is a joke. They haven't really had a day in court, because the bureaucrats send them a little piece of paper that says, "Look, the judge didn't give you enough time, so we're going to increase it." If we're going to have our day in court, I think that should be where it's at; otherwise, we had better update our courts to what the laws are.

Mr. Chairman, another area I want to just briefly touch on is our jails, and I call them jails because that's basically what they really are. I often wonder how many people are really in fact rehabilitated by the way that we provide the nice things we do in these jails. There are some, including myself occasionally, who suggest that if we don't want these people returned, maybe we have to be a little tougher with them within those confines. I know nobody likes to be locked up. Nobody likes to be incarcerated at all, but at the same time there is a reason for their being there. I was through one of the facilities myself a few years ago, and I was surprised to note that the people inside are treated much better than what I might have if I had been out there as the keeper of the key. Sometimes I think I'm in the minority on that, especially in our social climate in this country, where everybody wants to be nice to the people that have done damage to our citizens, be it an act of robbery, violence, or a little suspension on their driving licence. There has to be some type of grading, I guess.

One other comment I would like to make goes back to the area of policing. One of the areas that the municipalities — and I know that in talking like this, of course, it does mean some additional moneys. If we take a little bit away from the horse racing, breed development, program development, finance and planning, and maybe even a little bit from management services, we could put a little into Check Stop and expanding our police and our schools.

A very successful program in Calgary is operated jointly by the public school board, separate school board, and the

police service, where police officers spend time in the high schools. I think it might be useful to expand that into the junior high schools and try to have these young people involved with the police so that when they have a problem or some difficulty, they are able to have that checked, corrected, or otherwise at an earlier age before bad habits occur or expand as young people get older. I'm sure we're all aware that once something has been ingrained into a young person, it's very difficult to change that way. I would like to see our police service personnel in the schools to a greater extent and expanded to the junior high schools. With that expansion it may be that we don't need them to continue in the high schools.

Mr. Chairman, I think those are about all the concerns I have at the present time. I'm sure I could talk for a few more moments on all the smaller items, but certainly those are the ones that are of some concern to myself and some members of my constituency. It does give a different view of some of the items the minister has in his program.

I would just like to say that I'd like to congratulate the minister and in general terms the people that work with him. I'm sure they all make every effort to provide the services the community is asking for, and I'm fully supportive of these services. Sometimes I think we just need to get a little tougher and maybe change some of the financing around to some of those services that are more visible to the community, especially our police and what have you, which I think would lessen our incarceration rate at a later date.

Thanks, Mr. Chairman.

MR. ROSTAD: Mr. Chairman, I thank the Member for Calgary McCall for some of his complimentary remarks, and I would like to try and answer a few of his questions. A lot of them were coincidental with my initiatives and the aims of the department.

The first relates to the reference to the staff increase in vote 1. There is an increase of 137 permanent positions indicated. I might relate that in corrections there is actually an increase of 154 positions, but that relates to an increase of only 9 and a half man-years. The positions are for Red Deer and Medicine Hat, which are two new centres coming on stream. In Red Deer there are 99 positions; in Medicine Hat there are 94. Also within the particular department of corrections, 39 jobs have been lessened by attrition and various other means. The Red Deer and Medicine Hat man-years were only 25 percent due to the opening in the spring; in this particular budget year we only needed the 25 percent. With that and with the various other areas where we have some increases, but in most cases decreases, we relate to having a 137 positions increase in the particular year.

In relation to the motor vehicle division licensing office in northwest Calgary, I must admit that I haven't been to that particular ...

MR. NELSON: Northeast.

MR. ROSTAD: Northeast; sorry. I was in the hon. Member for Calgary North West's bailiwick. I haven't been to that particular office, but our intention and initiative in this department is to have as our motto "Service is our Business." We should relate to the retail trade and take some lessons in serving the public. There should be more hustle and a good attitude. In most instances I think we do have that. There are occasions where you will get a lineup, but they have certainly been alleviated by the alternating licence

plate timing for purchasing and by automating our licence-printing capability through MOVES.

Relating to the crime prevention program, we do have quite an extensive program whereby police officers visit schools and various other institutions to try and instill in the young people the objective of crime prevention. In fact, we have budgeted \$346,800 toward crime prevention.

Those are the questions that I had marked down from the Member for Calgary McCall.

If I may, Mr. Chairman, I'll revert at this time to a question the Member for Edmonton Strathcona asked me in terms of the privatization department listed in the RITE phone book. As I now recollect, we do have a co-ordinator of privatization, and this office is designed to ensure that services and programs that can be provided by voluntary, nonprofit organizations are in fact being delivered. They also co-ordinate the financing that you were alluding to and make sure that the quality of service and funding is in line with what the contract, in fact, implemented.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MRS. KOPER: Mr. Chairman, I would like to congratulate you, Mr. Minister, and your department on your deep commitment and mastery of the portfolio so very quickly. I sincerely admire that.

I also sincerely appreciate the comment you made, Mr. Minister, that your department is one of the very few that earns more than it spends. But at the risk of sounding a little bit like a charter member of the WCTU, may I suggest that it appears to me that a large part of the success seems directly related to the demon rum. I really admire the Check Stop program, the efforts you have made at impaired driving and looking after repeat offenders, and I know that you're working on the problem of people driving while their licences are under suspension. But I really wonder, and seriously ask: how big a problem is alcoholism in our province, and what proportion of the work of your department is directly related to problems in consumption of alcohol?

My second question to the minister, Mr. Chairman, is on the Young Offenders Act. Since it was instituted, many things have happened. We have heard briefly about the accommodation problems. When we look at vote 2, we see that it's all correctional centres, development centres, transition centres, et cetera. I am concerned that the thrust of the Young Offenders Act may be missed by the courts. I wonder what initiatives have been taken by the department to seek alternatives to incarceration and what efforts have been made to work with the courts to find these alternatives.

My third question, Mr. Chairman, relates directly to a statement made by the minister that was quite shocking to me. Knowing that the native population of our province is 4 percent and finding out from the minister tonight that 30 percent of the inmates are native, I am most interested in the preventative efforts being made by the department and how your department is working with other departments to change this. I know the minister said something about efforts being made, and I wonder if you could be a little more specific.

I also would like to know about female native inmates. Where do they serve time in our province? What happens if, say, they were to have a baby while incarcerated? What are the problems there? Is there any special mechanism to look after native women that are sentenced under federal law, and how do we work with the federal department?

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd appreciate the response.

MR. ROSTAD: Mr. Chairman, I thank the Member for Calgary Foothills for her comments and questions. In relation to alcohol and the level of alcoholism in the province, I would have to direct that question to the chairman of AADAC, who perhaps would have a more informed basis. My mandate as it relates to the ALCB seems to be to sell it, not to implement these particular programs, albeit that these programs are very, very important.

In relation to the young offenders, the thrust of this program when the Act was implemented in April 1984 to replace the Juvenile Delinquents Act was to keep the young offender from being incarcerated by implementing a number of alternate measures and a number of community-based options to incarceration. I, too, agree with the member that we are experiencing quite a significant proportion of the young offender that is being incarcerated. Not to cast that aside or to paint it over, the jurisdiction of the court and the particular sentence they mete out is under the jurisdiction of my colleague the hon. Attorney General.

However, we are communicating with the federal Solicitor General, expressing our concern at the number of young offenders that are incarcerated. As I mentioned in my opening remarks, we have 3,300 young offenders in the system and fewer than 400 are actually in institutional beds within government-operated facilities. We do have some pride in keeping the number down to that amount. But we're asking the federal Solicitor General to check with other provinces to find whether their experience is the same as ours, whether in fact the courts are utilizing the Young Offenders Act to lower the hammer on what might be perceived as a trouble section of our society rather than utilizing the community-based options such as pretrial release; community service, whereby the young offender can go out and provide some service to the municipality or to some group within the municipality; fines; probation; and restitution.

There are also diversion programs, such as the alternative measures, that the court could look at where there's a minor offence. Rather than incarcerating the young offender, he or she can be forced into making an agreement with the community service to provide some sort of service in so many hours or whatever.

We do have a problem with the Young Offenders Act which we are also addressing with the federal Solicitor General. This relates to the judiciary being required when you want to move a young offender from one level of custody to another level of custody. Also, the Act limits temporary releases to 15 days. Our department has initiated a program where we do the 15-day temporary release back to back to in fact extend the temporary release for a young offender until such time that he is eligible to go out on parole or whatever. This enables them to get education out of the institution or, in fact, get themselves aligned with the community rather than having to stay within the institution. Those are programs that we have instituted on our own basis by bending the rules a bit rather than having these people incarcerated and having the number substantially up over 400.

If the experience of incarceration is substantial in other provinces, it's my plan and our department's initiative to then work with the other provinces to convince the federal Solicitor General that amendments are necessary to the Act to alleviate that problem and to get back to the initial thrust of the legislation, which was to keep the young offender out of prison, on the street, and bring them back into alignment with the mores of the society.

In relation to where native women would spend their sentence, if it isn't a young offender, as an adult it would

be in the Fort Saskatchewan correctional institute. If, in fact, it relates to a young offender, we do have some other facilities where they can be accommodated. In relation to the inmate having a baby in prison, there is provision within our rules whereby adequate medical help would be given to the inmate during the term of pregnancy, but once the baby is born, it cannot be held within the institution. I guess you would need family or Social Services' help at that time to take care of the baby until such time that the inmate is released. In the federal system, if it's on a very long term, often the baby is given up for adoption unless there's somebody in the particular family that can help.

I trust that that has answered the questions for the Member for Calgary Foothills. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

[Motion carried]

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

MR. GOGO: 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 motion, do members of the Assembly agree?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed, if any? Carried.

MR. ANDERSON: Mr. Speaker, tomorrow morning the Committee of Supply will deal with the estimates of the Department of Energy.

[At 10:18 p.m., on motion, the House adjourned to Friday at 10 a.m.]

