

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ALBERTA**Title: Wednesday, April 8, 1987 2:30 p.m.**

Date: 87/04/08

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

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

PRAYERS

MR. SPEAKER: Let us pray.

Our Father, we 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 SPECIAL GUESTS**

MR. ADAIR: Mr. Speaker, it's my privilege and pleasure to introduce to you and through you to the members of this Assembly, 33 students from grade 5 and grade 6 at the Fort Vermilion school. They are accompanied by three teachers, Mr. Lou Brosha, Mr. Hino Pringnitz, and Ms Pam Pleadwell; three parents, Mrs. Agnes Isaac, Mr. Peter Enns, bus driver, and Mr. Brian Fletcher, bus driver. I might point out that these young students had the privilege of meeting the Minister of Education and me when we were there for the official opening of their facility at Fort Vermilion. And I might also point out while I'm on my feet that Fort Vermilion is the first community in Alberta that will be celebrating its bicentennial, in 1988. I would ask them to rise and receive the warm welcome of this Assembly.

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce to the Assembly 16 students from grade 6 at Lendrum school. They haven't come as far as my colleague's class did -- half the class -- and I'd like them to stand when I introduce the two teachers, Mrs. Gabert and Miss Gallant. I'd like the class and teachers to stand now.

MR. ANDERSON: Mr. Speaker, I'm very pleased today to introduce to you and to members of the Assembly, eight leaders of ethnocultural organizations in the province of Alberta. They are Mrs. Burlie, president of the Black Women's Association of Alberta; Mr. Stribny, president of the Czechoslovak association of Canada, Edmonton chapter, Mr. Khullar, president of the Hindu Society of Alberta; Mr. Allan Hoyano, president of the Edmonton Japanese community association; Mrs. Betty Broen, president of the Sons of Norway, Lodge 143; Mr. Tan, president of the Malaysian-Singaporean Friendship Association; Mr. Frank Zrim, president of the Slovenian Canadian Association of Edmonton. They are in the members' gallery, and I'd ask them to stand and receive the warm welcome and thanks of the Assembly for their work in Alberta.

MR. MITCHELL: Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to introduce to you today and to the members of the Legislative Assembly, 48 grades 5 and 6 students from Callingwood school. They are

accompanied today by two teachers, Mr. Frizzell and Mrs. Johnson. I would ask them to stand and be recognized by the members of the Legislature.

head: **ORAL QUESTION PERIOD****Hospital Utilization**

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct the first question to the Minister of Hospitals and Medical Care. Present funding arrangements allow the University of Alberta hospital to do between 600 and 625 open-heart operations annually. At the present time there are approximately 260 persons waiting for open-heart surgery, which translates to a wait of approximately six months. My question to the minister is: what action has the minister decided to take in order to reduce the wait for heart surgery in Edmonton?

MR. M. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, we have not taken any specific action except to say that there is a capacity in the city of Calgary at the Holy Cross hospital for persons who may wish to go there to be able to receive open-heart surgery somewhat quicker than they would at the University hospital in Edmonton.

The program in Edmonton is an excellent one. Even though there are a number on the waiting list, I'm not aware that that has created the kinds of problems that were cited last weekend with respect to people actually not making it to their operation because of their heart problem. But that again is something that I've asked the president of the hospital and the executive director to look into, the allegations that there are people dying because they have not been able to obtain heart surgery.

MR. MARTIN: Well, supplementary question following from the minister's answer. Of course, he was talking about Dr. Armstrong raising it at the convention in Calgary. My question is to the minister: is the minister then saying that he does not believe that Dr. Armstrong is correct and that a six-month waiting list could not result in problems and possible death? Is that what the minister is saying?

MR. M. MOORE: The hon. Leader of the Opposition wasn't listening to what I said. I said that I've asked the president of the hospital and the executive director of the University hospital to inquire into those allegations to see the extent, Mr. Speaker, to which they are factual and to advise me of what the situation really is. And until they've had an opportunity, which may take several days -- I don't know -- to do that, I'm not at liberty to comment whether or not those statements are accurate or not.

MR. MARTIN: Supplementary question. I think it wouldn't take much investigation to find out that there is a six-month waiting list. I think all of us know that that could create problems. But to add to this, Mr. Minister, would you advise what effect the 3 percent cut in hospital funding will have on the length of wait for heart surgery? It's six months now. Will it be nine months, a year, a year and a half, or what will happen?

MR. M. MOORE: Well, first of all, the hon. member should remember that the allegations that were made over the weekend were not with respect to the waiting period but rather to the fact that deaths were occurring -- "one every five weeks" I believe was the exact quote -- because of the waiting period. There is a considerable difference between that statement and the fact that

there may indeed be a waiting list. The hon. Leader of the Opposition I hope would recognize the difference between those two statements.

With respect to the heart program at the University hospital, I think it's fair to say that the board of the hospital and the senior administration and indeed senior surgeons at the hospital have done everything that they can in readjusting their budget to ensure that the major role of the University hospital in terms of care of sick people, Mr. Speaker, is carried forward without any reduction in terms of patient care. I would not expect the waiting list to grow any longer. As a matter of fact, I'm hopeful that over the coming year the University hospital can in fact do even more open-heart surgery operations than they might have in the previous year. Now, we don't know that that's the case for sure, but certainly the capability is there within the dollars that are allocated to the University hospital. It's the highest dollars of any hospital in Alberta by far and indeed stacks up well with any hospital in Canada. We're hopeful that within those dollars the University hospital can find a way to place a priority on even reducing that waiting list from what it presently is.

MR. MARTIN: Well, hope, hope, hope, Mr. Speaker. To the minister. It seems to me that if there's a longer waiting list, especially with elderly patients, then we're putting them at risk and it's going to result in deaths.

But a positive suggestion here to this minister. I notice the government of Alberta has become one of the largest advertisers in the country, spending almost \$10 million a year to enhance its image. Will the minister ask his colleagues to abandon image ad campaigns and put this \$10 million into heart operations?

MR. M. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, I don't know what the hon. Leader of the Opposition is talking about. I'm introducing an advertising campaign next week that will cost about \$200,000 that will hopefully reduce some of the increases in the utilization of the health care system by people in our province using better health habits and using the system more judiciously than they do now. If he's talking about that, I'm perfectly prepared to defend that during my estimates or any other time.

I should just say to the hon. Leader of the Opposition, with respect to the heart program at the University hospital, I was there at a heart symposium about three months ago and I asked a doctor from a U.S. hospital in Boston what the waiting list was there for open-heart surgery. He said, "About as long as it takes to get your shirt open and to get \$30,000 out of your back pocket."

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary, Member for Edmonton Gold Bar.

MRS. HEWES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Has the minister yet established the numbers of surgical beds in general that will close as a result of his cutbacks, the nature of the waiting list? What kind of emergencies are we creating? We're not just dealing with existing emergencies; we're creating new ones. How about using the \$110 million in the lottery funds?

MR. M. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, I made the last remark to the hon. Leader of the Opposition to indicate that where the cost is absolutely nothing, indeed there is often a waiting list; where the cost is extremely high, there is none. There are far more people going without open-heart surgery in the United States than there are in Alberta.

With respect to the question just posed, I've been in the hospital system quite a bit over the last three or four days even, and I have observed in more than one hospital that the hospitals are operating around the clock and seven days a week now. And in many hospitals where beds indeed have been selectively closed in a medical ward or in a surgery ward, that slack is being picked up by better utilization of the remaining beds and all of the remaining equipment throughout the hospital. I know that some of the surgeons are working very long hours to use all of the available equipment and facilities that are in the hospital that are open. It's my hope that most hospitals, certainly the major hospitals in this city, should finish the fiscal year that we're now starting in having delivered a better quality of health care at 97 percent of last year's budget. I think they can do it, and the challenge by physicians and others in the system has been to do just that. I'm extremely proud of how well they're doing.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary question. Member for Calgary Millican.

MR. SHRAKE: To the hon. minister. Through the years the usage of the hospitals has always dropped off in the months of June, July, and August. Will the minister be attempting to work with the medical profession and the hospitals perhaps to use some of this slack time, this drop-off of the usage of the beds during those months?

MR. M. MOORE: Well, some of the hospital boards have in fact suggested they are going to increase the number of beds that might not be utilized during that period of time, because they believe that it is more cost-effective to be running seven days a week, 24 hours a day, fully occupied than to have a situation where a lot of people aren't coming in, especially for elective surgery, because of holidays and other things. So I think it would be inappropriate for me to say to a hospital board, "This is what you should do during those two months of the year." I think it's better for them to analyze in each individual hospital the opportunity they have for cost savings and, at the same time, continue with the level of patient care that we've become accustomed to. So the short answer is: I haven't. That's one of the options, of course, but I think hospital boards individually do a good job of looking at that.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the minister of health. Is the department giving any direction to moving some of the active care beds in the smaller hospitals into long-term and using those savings to make the active treatment hospitals more efficient and providing them with more funds?

MR. M. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, I just wrote a letter to all hospital board chairmen two, three weeks ago advising that we've developed a new policy within the Department of Hospitals and Medical Care that will allow for the conversion of existing active treatment beds to long-term care auxiliary beds, particularly in smaller hospitals, with a view to converting no less than five, and perhaps in some cases more than that or the entire facility, to extended care. I should advise as well that there are two small hospitals in the province that have been approved for conversion from active beds to extended care beds in total, the latest one being at Galahad that we just approved during the budget process a couple of weeks ago. So there is a move amongst a lot of smaller hospitals to dedicating more of their medical resources to longer term care, freeing up dollars in the active treat-

ment system for the larger, more specialized hospitals. And that's a trend, I think, that is happening right across the province.

Follow-up Care of Cancer Patients

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, to the minister of hospitals and medicare. The minister said yesterday that he was, first of all, unaware of cutbacks in the Cross Cancer Institute follow-up program for cancer patients; then he said that this program had started over a year ago. However, it is clear that since the 3 per cent cuts were announced, this program has greatly accelerated, causing great concern among cancer patients. My question to the minister: has the minister checked, and is he now aware of the concern which has been caused among cancer patients who have received letters canceling appointments and informing them that they will no longer be treated at the Cross Cancer Institute?

MR. M. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, I had my office contact Dr. Neil MacDonald this morning, who is the director of the Cross cancer clinic. They had discussed this matter as well with him yesterday. He advised that indeed the NDP and the media had called him this morning for the same information that I have here, and it's this. The follow-up program at the Cross cancer clinic has been reviewed consistently since the late 1970s to determine in what way the hospital might provide better opportunities for patients to have follow-up care in their own community-based institutions, sometimes many, many miles from the city of Edmonton. There was some acceleration in that program in November of 1986 because the hospital had again looked at their overall operating costs and decided that that was one area in which they could accelerate the number of patients who were being checked in other facilities.

I just conclude, Mr. Speaker, by saying that the critical point is not how many people are served in terms of checkup in other institutions but the nature of their checkup and their ability to have follow-up work done at the Cross. In March of 1986 there were 2,134 people enrolled in the Cross cancer program for checkups on a monthly basis. In March of '87 there were 2,188, which is some 50 more patients, so there hasn't been any dramatic reduction at all over that period of time. I presume that the hon. member's got the exact same information.

MR. MARTIN: Supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. We'll certainly disagree with your figures, because we're well aware of a lot of letters where people have been cut off -- unnecessarily, as far as they're concerned. And I would like to table copies of a letter from Mrs. G. Dinwoodie, who states in part:

A patient with recurring cancer as late as 1986 has been told to see her family physician AND at the [same] time was given no option.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, hon. leader. There's a great difficulty with respect to *Beauchesne* about tabling private letters, especially unless permission has been given.

MR. MARTIN: It has.

MR. SPEAKER: It raises another issue, but please carry on with the question.

MR. MARTIN: Yes. She says, Mr. Speaker -- and permission has been given -- that:

Cancer patients and others needing medical care are prone to accept such a decision . . .

My question is then: will the minister undertake to investigate this situation and determine objectively whether a shortage of funding is behind this situation?

MR. M. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, I've already investigated the matter, and the facts are these. It is far more appropriate in terms of the expenditure of medical funds for the Cross cancer clinic to be advising patients to have checkups in their own communities with their own doctors and their own community-based facilities than to advise them to always come back to the Cross cancer clinic. One of the major complaints that citizens throughout this province have had over the years with the Cross cancer clinic is the cost of traveling to and from. If you travel from High Level or Valleyview or Fort McMurray to the Cross cancer clinic in Edmonton, there's the cost of travel, the overnight stays, and so on. All of us have experienced them with either family or friends. So we're trying very hard in the system to allow people to be treated as close as practically possible to their own home. In every case where a patient is asked to have checkups at their community-based hospital, the patient receives a letter from the attending physician at the Cross cancer clinic saying that if at any time they have any concern about that kind of follow-up, they're more than happy to bring them back to the Cross cancer clinic for a checkup and accommodate them by appointment.

So my investigation of the situation, Mr. Speaker, is that the Cross cancer clinic is doing an outstanding job of trying to match the requirement for patient care in that facility with the availability of patient care in other facilities throughout the province, while at the same time making sure our citizens aren't unnecessarily inconvenienced by having to travel long distances and stay in the city of Edmonton. Now, if the hon. member had ever lived outside the city and been exposed to those kinds of problems of leaving families at home and work and so on to come for an appointment here, he would understand the need for the program that is in place.

MR. MARTIN: A supplementary. The minister is well aware that they always had that option before. They didn't have to come to the Cross cancer clinic, but for many of them I think they thought it necessary, even for their own state of mind. My question following up with that is this. The clinic was forced to cancel follow-up appointments -- we have letters on that -- with cancer patients and refer them to family physicians. Does the minister not agree that cancer patients in Alberta should have access to fully qualified, trained medical staff and that not all family practitioners can do this sort of cancer checkup?

MR. M. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, it may well be that patients always had the option of going to their own physician, but it wasn't a practice in years past that was always encouraged by the Cross cancer clinic. What we now have is a program in place where there is contact between the family physician and physicians at the Cross cancer clinic to make sure that if there's a critical area of need, indeed the patient can come back to the Cross cancer clinic. I can't for the life of me understand how you could have a better program than one of that nature. And I might add that the Tom Baker cancer clinic in Calgary operates in a very similar way.

Now, the Leader of the Opposition should be aware that we're trying, in addition to having these checkups done in their own community-based hospitals, to establish some limited treatment programs as well at satellite hospitals outside of the Cross cancer clinic in Edmonton and the Tom Baker centre in Calgary. In fact, there has been one operating for many years in Lethbridge, and there's now some assistance available in Medicine Hat. We're hoping to expand that program to Grande Prairie, Red Deer, and probably Fort McMurray in due course. So the whole concept of medical care of cancer patients in the Cross Cancer Institute, both in Edmonton and Calgary, is one of trying to do the very critical things in that institution, while at the same time freeing that institution up for those things, and getting the checkups done by private physicians in other hospitals. I'm proud and pleased that the board of the hospital, the administration, have worked so well to make this happen for our citizens.

MR. MARTIN: It's frankly irrelevant whether you're proud or pleased. We're trying to get to the bottom of this matter. It's not only people outside of Edmonton; it's people in Edmonton that are getting cut off.

My question is -- because there is a great deal of distress, and if the minister hasn't been getting this through his department, he'd better check with his staff -- will the minister at least, because of the concern expressed, agree to provide funding for the Cross Cancer Institute to restore the existing, just the existing, medical appointments for cancer patients which the Cross Cancer Institute has been forced to cancel, so that cancer patients can be apprised of their medical situation in relation to the cut-backs firsthand, rather than through a form letter?

MR. M. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, the hon. Leader of the Opposition doesn't seem to understand what the approach is in this whole area. What I would like to be able to agree to do, if we can find enough dollars in our budget this year very, very soon, is expand the programs at Grande Prairie, Fort McMurray, Red Deer, Medicine Hat, in the community-based regional hospitals there, so that we can first of all do some additional training with respect to people who will provide treatment in those centres but provide the facilities and the equipment as well. The real challenge is to do that; not to create a situation where we actually go backwards, by saying to people who have found a way to get checkups in their own communities and making sure they can come back to the Cross cancer that they should now all come back to Edmonton and we'll provide more dollars to do the same thing here that they can get done in Grande Prairie or Red Deer or perhaps many other community hospitals.

So, Mr. Speaker, I'd just conclude by saying we want to go forward with medical care in Alberta, not backward, and I think the Cross cancer clinic indeed is going forward.

MR. SPEAKER: Member for Edmonton Gold Bar.

MRS. HEWES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The minister seems totally confident in this, more confident than perhaps those that we're hearing from. Is the minister telling us that Dr. MacDonald of the Cross institute is totally convinced that not only have the numbers being treated outside the institution been maintained, but that the quality of the outreach care has been maintained as well in this reduced-cost method?

MR. M. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, occasionally I'm guilty, as are

members, of mixing up the word treatment and checkups for certain recurrences. The checkups that are being done should probably not be confused with treatments, and the treatments, as I understand it, are only being done at Lethbridge at the present time and perhaps to a limited extent in Medicine Hat. And that's the program we'd like to expand to other regional hospitals.

But I'm confident, from my information about what the Cross cancer clinic is doing, that if there is any danger or problem at all with respect to the checkups that are being done outside the Cross cancer clinic by other physicians in other hospitals, they would quickly have those patients return to the Cross cancer clinic. I think the whole scope and idea of treatment of cancer patients is one of moving away from dedicated facilities for a certain amount of the work. So I hope that the hospital is confident that is working. They've given me every indication that it is.

Farm Loans-- Interest Charges

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to put this question to the Minister of Agriculture. Mr. Speaker, Mr. Larry Whaley, the borrowers' advocate, has determined that many Alberta farmers have been overcharged tens of thousands of dollars in interest by the banks over the last number of years. The Minister of Agriculture too, of course, has indicated that he is willing to assist these farmers in checking out their claims and pursuing that. My question is: is the minister aware of any cases in Alberta where a farmer has successfully recovered the interest costs that did not involve a court challenge with the attendant high legal fees?

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, as I did indicate when I was contacted by, I believe, somebody from the *Edmonton Sun*, we're more than happy to make inquiries on behalf of farmers who feel that they have been treated unjustly. To my knowledge there has only been one case in the province of Alberta, but I stand to be corrected on that also. And I should point out that it's only alleged by Mr. Whaley that this has taken place. If there is concrete proof, we're more than happy to make representation on behalf of the individual farmers concerned.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, I'm just trying to determine how this help to the farmer will take place. Acknowledging the fact that many farmers who may have been overcharged by banks -- may have been -- cannot afford the legal costs of pursuing their case, will he consider assisting them with the costs of fighting the banks in the court?

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, it's all rather hypothetical because as I indicated to the hon. Member for Westlock-Sturgeon, it's alleged. Until we do have something concrete to work from, it's rather difficult for me to commit myself.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, it's not hypothetical. If you're sitting there as a farmer without very much coming in and you feel you've been ripped off and your government will not help you in any way, it's not hypothetical at all.

Well, has the minister approached the banks to ensure that if the farmers want to recover or want to get some documents, they will turn over those documents so the farmers can determine and analyze or have independent consultants analyze whether they have been overcharged?

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, individuals from our office have been in contact with the banks, and the banks have indicated to me that they are more than happy to examine their records in the event that the farming population feels that it has been treated unjustly. I also understand that there might be some complications involved with that, because if we go beyond a certain number of years, they do not have it computerized, so it does involve a considerable amount of work. But they have indicated to me as best they can that they are going to be obliging to making further inquiries for those farmers who feel that they have been treated unjustly.

MR. TAYLOR: Surely, Mr. Speaker, that's like asking the fox to check how many chickens are still in the henhouse. Nevertheless, is the minister aware that there are very complicated calculations involved in this and it requires very specialized accounting and abilities. Would he go as far as to offer the services of some people in his depleted department, admittedly, to help them in calculating whether or not they have been gouged, shafted, or whatever you want to call it, by the banks?

MR. ELZINGA: Well, Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member should be aware -- and I must say at the outset that I am somewhat frustrated when the hon. member continues to judge others by his own low standards. And I will say to him in all fairness that the standards of others to date have been a great deal higher than his. But I want to indicate to him, too, that as I indicated earlier, we're more than happy to make inquiries or representation on behalf of individual farmers. He is no doubt aware also that the banking legislation does fall under federal jurisdiction, and as best we can, we're more than happy to go to bat for our farming population, as we do consistently within this party.

MR. R. SPEAKER: A supplementary question to the minister. Could the minister indicate, in his investigations and discussions with the banks, whether the major six banks have reduced the amount of finances or capital within their agricultural portfolios in Alberta and, specifically, in a broader sense, western Canada?

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, those figures I don't have at my fingertips, but I will investigate and report back to the hon. member at an appropriate time.

MR. FOX: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary to the Associate Minister of Agriculture. I'm wondering if her department has done any investigation to determine whether or not there were loans made through the banks that were guaranteed through the ADC loan program, that may have involved these overcharges to farmers?

MRS. CRIPPS: Not that I know of, Mr. Speaker, but I'll take that question as notice.

Meeting with Ontario Premier

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Premier. Yesterday, the Premier of Ontario visited us. Could the Premier indicate -- and I raised the question yesterday -- whether discussions followed following question period on the matter of the Triple E Senate? Was there any indication at that time that the Ontario Premier would be prepared to give support for that concept's being discussed at the upcoming first ministers' meeting in a few days?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, the Premier of Ontario, like myself, of course, is not the chairman of the upcoming conference on April 30. Nevertheless, we did have a good discussion about the concept of Senate reform and our belief that the most effective way would be the Triple E Senate type of reform. The Premier of Ontario expressed his view that reform was necessary and timely, and that he would give very serious consideration to the matter of a Triple E type, though he felt there were a variety of other options that should also be considered. But we did provide his government with details on the Triple E Senate, and I noted that today in Ontario, reporting back, Ontario Premier Peterson said: an elected senate with equal representation from each province should be considered as a way to help curb a strong sense of alienation in western Canada. So he said that while that has some concerns, nevertheless he sees it as a constructive thing to take a look at.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, certainly that's some progress. Could the Premier also indicate whether the concern with regards to gas being sold to Ontario was discussed? I raised the questions earlier in question period. Was that matter discussed, and was there some resolution or some procedure worked out by which we could resolve this matter to the best of Ontario and Alberta?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, the point was discussed, and I made the case that it would be a very big mistake for the province of Ontario, as purchasers of natural gas, to concentrate on the one feature of low price. Because if they did that, they would not be protecting themselves in the longer run with security of supply. The Premier of Ontario accepted that that was a balance that should be struck and that when he returned to his province, he would be encouraging his various organizations, his various boards, to make sure that that was a consideration that they actively considered.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, the last supplementary I have is with regards to further coal sales. Could the Premier indicate whether that matter was discussed and that some increased agreements were obtained?

MR. GETTY: We did discuss the matter of additional coal sales. We have both participated now at the meeting and on the committee chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister, and Premier Vander Zalm is a participant, as is Premier Devine, on the matter of additional coal sales to Ontario. Our discussion yesterday was on the future needs of Ontario Hydro for coal for the production of electrical power and also on the future needs of steel producers in Ontario, because they are using almost no metallurgical coal. We are devising a strategy that would allow us to bring the benefits of using Alberta coal for the making of steel to the producers in Ontario.

MR. SPEAKER: A final supplementary.

MR. R. SPEAKER: A final supplementary. I know I said "final" earlier, but could the Premier indicate whether discussions took place with regards to the inequalities between, say, Alberta, western Canada, and some of the treatment of Ontario by the federal government; for example, the DRIE program? Was there any discussion with regards to that? I know that makes the agenda very long, but it is a very crucial issue, I think, in the minds of Albertans and western Canadians.

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, we didn't deal with that specifically, but you can't talk about the impact of a Triple E Senate without getting into the whole manner of balanced representation and a balanced regional input to federal government programs. So in that light it came up, and he agreed with me that such a program as a Triple E Senate would have been very effective in causing sober second thoughts or stopping completely such ill-devised schemes as the national energy program brought on by the parties represented: NDP and Liberals.

MR. SPEAKER: A supplementary question still on this issue, Member for Calgary Buffalo.

MR. CHUMIR: Yes. To the Premier. We're obviously not going to get a Senate out of the generosity of central Canada, and the matter is apparently not even on the agenda. What firm steps and negotiating chips is the Premier prepared to use in order to assure Albertans that the Senate initiative is not just another public relations exercise of the government?

MR. GETTY: Maybe I should use buffalo chips, Mr. Speaker.

Frankly, Mr. Speaker, surely the hon. member would be clever enough to know that the most foolish thing to do would be to express your negotiating position in advance of doing the actual negotiations.

MR. HYLAND: Mr. Speaker, supplementary question to the Premier. I wonder if the subject of the sale of oil and oil self-sufficiency came up in the meeting yesterday as well?

MR. GETTY: Yes, it did, Mr. Speaker, because we were talking about a whole range of energy matters. One thing that we talked about was the need of Canada in the late 1980s and then early 1990s for additional supplies of oil, and under current circumstances it appears those supplies will have to come from foreign sources. We talked about the advantages that would accrue to Canada if we were able to commence additional developments of Alberta's oil sands, and to the extent that such a development might provide security of supply for the people of Ontario, the Premier of Ontario advised that his government would give very serious consideration to assisting and financing such a project.

MR. SPEAKER: Main questions, Member for Olds-Didsbury, followed by the Member for Edmonton Highlands.

MR. BRASSARD: My question has been answered, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. The Member for Edmonton Highlands, followed by the Member for Edmonton Meadowlark.

Social Services Shelter Allowance

MS BARRETT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to direct my question today to the Minister of Social Services. I'm sure that the minister is now aware of statistics which have recently been gathered which indicate that there are about 1,200 homeless Edmontonians. I think this tragedy will doubtless grow as the effects of the cuts she has recently imposed on social allowance recipients transcend into hard reality for about 20,000 more Albertans. What plans has the minister, if any, which will ensure that the people currently rendered homeless will have access to

affordable shelter; that is, shelter they can afford on the new low, low rates for shelter allowances given by her department?

MRS. OSTERMAN: Mr. Speaker, I would say for the hon. member's information, particularly if she has potential clients contacting her office, that there have been vacancies, and they are still there in significant numbers, in the shelters in downtown Edmonton for both women and men.

MS BARRETT: Oh, so they'll live in the shelters, will they? I understand that they have pretty strict time limitations, Mr. Speaker.

I wonder if the minister is aware that even coupling up in apartments, which the minister is constantly advocating, two people in a one-bedroom apartment still would not be enough money to meet the average price of a one-bedroom apartment. I'd like to know: is the minister recommending that three people share a one-bedroom apartment? If she is, will she supply a list of landlords prepared to rent one-bedroom apartments to three tenants?

MRS. OSTERMAN: Mr. Speaker, I responded to the first question because the hon. member had used the term "homeless," and maybe the hon. member did mean something else.

In response to the hon. member's second question, my information now is that in many, many cases the landlords are dropping the price of their rent, which I think is interesting in and of itself.

MS BARRETT: Well, Mr. Speaker, I think that is a good sign, because what happened is when the minister imposed shelter allowance limitations, the landlords learned real fast to hike their rents to match that ceiling. So what I'd like to ask the minister now then -- I've seen the Municipal Affairs report on their plans for accommodating Alberta to the International Year for Shelter for the Homeless, and what I see is the possibility of 125 units maybe becoming available in 1988. Can the minister explain what plans she has right now to accommodate those people who currently can't find accommodation -- that is, shelter -- at the rates which social allowance will pay?

MRS. OSTERMAN: Mr. Speaker, I would certainly challenge the hon. member's comments that there will be those numbers that would suddenly become homeless because of the shelter rate. There are many, many people living within the shelter allowance that is allowed, and I believe that will continue into the future.

MS BARRETT: Mr. Speaker, I was not saying 20,000 would become homeless. I was identifying 1,200 Edmontonians who have been identified by a coalition as being homeless right now. My final supplementary question to the minister then. When will the minister start to work with the minister responsible for housing so that we can actually get a comprehensive social housing policy developed, especially for the inner city, for those people who are sleeping in doorways?

MRS. OSTERMAN: Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member knows of people sleeping in doorways, I certainly hope that she'll direct them to shelter.

MRS. HEWES: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary to the minister. Is this then really the intent in dropping the shelter allowance.

that those who are joining the ranks of the single unemployed every day and are considered employable by your department are to spend their nights in shelters and their days on the street or else leave? Is that the intent of dropping the allowance?

MRS. OSTERMAN: Mr. Speaker, I'm sorry; I missed one part of the hon. member's question. Did she say unemployable or employable?

MRS. HEWES: I said . . . May I explain, Mr. Speaker? I suggested that they are unemployed and considered employable by your department.

MRS. OSTERMAN: Mr. Speaker, I think there has been -- the hon. member should be aware of the various programs that are available to people, both in terms of the programs that my hon. colleague the minister responsible for career development has, as well as many significant community organizations. And I would say to the hon. member that those people will indeed be looked after.

MR. SHRAKE: Just on the same matter, Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the minister would consider putting out booklets or brochures directing these people to the Alberta Mortgage and Housing Corporation, because in Calgary I think there is a 30 to 35 per cent vacancy rate in Murdoch Manor and in several other of the large apartment buildings. But have you considered directing them to those buildings?

AN HON. MEMBER: They can't afford it.

MR. SHRAKE: It's only 25 percent of the income, sir, if you check.

MRS. OSTERMAN: Mr. Speaker, the social workers are well aware of the number of shelter options that are available to people, but I certainly will make sure that that information is reinforced.

Unfunded Pension Liability

MR. MITCHELL: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Treasurer. This government has not followed the advice of members of the Legislative Assembly and the Auditor General about important financial reporting procedures. A case in point is the way in which the province accounts for its \$5.4 billion unfunded pension liability. To the Treasurer: why does he continue to record this \$5.4 billion unfunded liability in an obscure footnote to the province's balance sheet, rather than fully disclosing it as has been directed by the Auditor General?

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, we're following the normal approaches of disclosure of the contingent liability, and it is consistent with what we have done historically and consistent with what all other provinces have done.

MR. MITCHELL: The Auditor General, of course, is not enamoured of it. Will the Treasurer confirm that this \$5.4 billion will eventually have to be paid out of general revenues because the province has set aside no assets in its pension fund to cover the liability?

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, that's a very misleading state-

ment. The pension fund, in fact, is underfunded; there is no question that the gentleman is right on that point. But there are clear assets involved in that fund, and those assets produce income which are used to pay the current charges against the fund. Moreover, the member should be aware that before he even lit upon the problem of dealing with the unfunded liability in the pensions, this government transferred \$1 billion to that fund to ensure that it would be funded for the future. In terms of time, the present value of the future flow of funds would discount sometime into about 2025.

MR. MITCHELL: Mr. Speaker, this is present value. In over 25 years it will be much more than \$5.4 billion, believe me.

Can the Treasurer tell the House why the government has not regularly set aside assets to cover these unfunded pension liabilities, because they will come out of general revenues in the future?

MR. JOHNSTON: Well, now, that's a strange fiscal plan, Mr. Speaker. We've seen it before with federal Liberal Party. Now we see it again here today: this inconsistency which really provides no consistent policy approach at all to any of the issues. What they would rather do is have us take away from the current expenditures which are now provided to the Assembly, increase the deficit, and put the money into some fund which would be paid 50 or 70 years from now. That's the kind of backward thinking I see coming from that side all the time. We have a consistent plan; it's a plan which is accepted. We know we're going to make the commitments to the pension liabilities, and everyone knows that in the province of Alberta as well.

MR. MITCHELL: What we would have the government do is simply set aside money planned for the future. It hasn't done that.

What comment does the Treasurer have on the fact that in addition to this year's \$3.3 billion deficit, which of course will become debt to this province, the province also has a \$5.4 billion unfunded pension liability that will eventually have to be paid out of general revenues, and therefore in many respects this government actually has a \$9 billion deficit becoming a debt?

MR. JOHNSTON: Again, Mr. Speaker, the clear message I want to leave with the people of Alberta is that that is an absolute misleading statement. First of all, the consolidated assets of this government -- this is the only province with an aggregate surplus. When you consider the savings in the heritage fund and the accumulated deficit in the General Revenue Fund, we have an accumulated surplus, contrary to what the member is suggesting.

Moreover, Mr. Speaker, because we are dealing with the size of the deficit, a clear direction from the citizens of Alberta, contrary to the fiscal plan given to us by the Liberal Party across the way -- we are taking hold of that problem right now. That's the responsible fiscal plan which has been presented to this Assembly in the Budget Address, and the member knows very well that it receives the large endorsement of the people of Alberta. We're dealing with the problem, we have a plan, and we're moving ahead on it.

MR. SPEAKER: The time for question period has expired. Might we continue this series of questions with unanimous consent?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed? Member for St. Albert.

MR. STRONG: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We're well aware of just how well this Provincial Treasurer is handling this unfunded liability. It's growing every year. My question to the minister is this: will he recognize that he has an unfunded liability in a number of pension plans, and what is he going to do to rectify that? Let's get action; let's not talk about defer, defer, defer. Let's take some action on it. Let's get it. . .

MR. SPEAKER: The question has been asked, hon. member. Minister, please.

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, again the lack of understanding from the member is clear. It is a matter of choice among governments as to how they deal with this issue, and we have taken the choice of providing clear information to the users of the fund that in fact there is an unfunded liability which will be paid sometime in the future. Moreover, Mr. Speaker, the fund is now being addressed. As I've indicated, we have transferred \$1 billion into that fund to ensure its liquidity and to ensure that the assets are in place. Moreover, the continuing contributions by all people who participate in that fund add to its viability.

Now, what the member is saying is that the future of Alberta is at risk. Frankly, I can't buy that. I believe that there will be a government when the obligations are due, and the government of the time will continue to make the payments as we're now doing. If he knows of anyone who has not received a payment under the pension plan, I wish he'd let me know that person's name.

MR. HYLAND: Supplementary question, Mr. Speaker, to the minister. I wonder if the minister would inform the Assembly of his feelings on the idea that having a notation in the statements is better than having it hidden somewhere in the statement, at least to those of us that don't understand financial statements as well as he or other members do.

MR. JOHNSTON: Well, Mr. Speaker, that's a very valid observation, wherein many people can see, when looking at the disclosure of the public accounts, including the consolidated statements of this province, that in footnote form the Auditor General is drawing to the attention of the reader that in fact there was some other information that should be factored into the judgment or the assessment of the accounts at the time. And one of those deals with this question of the unfunded liability for the pension plans. The member is very accurate when he suggests that in fact by showing it by footnote, you are being more specific and underscoring the importance of the liability and, moreover, drawing the reader's attention to it more specifically.

MR. SPEAKER: The time for. . .

MR. TAYLOR: Sorry, Mr. Speaker. I have a point of order.

MR. SPEAKER: There was no prior notice, but if the member does indeed.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. Sorry, when

I leapt up before, I was interfering with one of my party's supplementals, but I wanted to bring to the attention of the House that the only political party that was present from Alberta in signing the national energy policy was the Conservative one.

MR. SPEAKER: There's no point of . . . [interjections] Order please, hon. member.

The Chair was waiting with great anticipation to hear which citation of *Standing Orders*, *Beauchesne*, *Erskine May*, or some other learned source was going to be quoted by the member but . . .

MR. TAYLOR: I was prepared, but they interrupted me. [interjections]

MR. SPEAKER: Perhaps the hon. Member for Westlock-Sturgeon is becoming an author and wishes to do his own book on parliamentary procedure.

AN HON. MEMBER: Taylor-made.

MR. SPEAKER: Taylor-made indeed, hon. member. And I'm sure that it would make rather interesting if not very convoluted reading.

Yesterday a matter was raised in the House, a purported point of privilege. The Chair after listening to some discussion directed that Standing Order 15(2) would take effect. The Chair advises the House that indeed a statement was received from the Member for Athabasca-Lac La Biche, and the Chair has had not sufficient time to peruse the issue and so under Standing Order 15(3) takes the matter under advisement and in all likelihood will report to the House tomorrow.

MRS. CRIPPS: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to respond to the member's purported point of order. Alberta didn't sign a national . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order please, hon. member. No point of order, therefore no need to respond.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

head: COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

[Mr. Gogo in the Chair]

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Committee of Supply will now come to order. The estimates called before the committee today by the government as designated by the Official Opposition: Department of Social Services, the Hon. Connie Osterman, minister.

Hon. minister, would you have any opening comments to the Committee of Supply?

MRS. OSTERMAN: Yes, Mr. Chairman. I would first ask if I could revert to Introduction of Special Guests.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The hon. minister has requested that we revert briefly to Introduction of Special Guests. Would the committee agree?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon. minister.

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

MRS. OSTERMAN: Thank you to the committee. I would like very much to introduce a number of guests in the gallery, people who play a very major role in the delivery of social services, particularly in the Edmonton area. As I call their names, I'd like them to stand, and then I know the committee will give them the warm welcome of the House.

First, Father William Irwin, president of the Catholic Social Services; Mrs. Ardis Beaudry, past president of the Alberta Council of Women's Shelters and board member of Edmonton Women's Shelter, and they operate WIN House, of course, in Edmonton; and Jessica Hanna, a board member of WINGS. Is Jessica here? Loretta Bartell, executive director of the Alberta Council of Women's Shelters; Ross Chevalier, past president and chairman of the board, Goodwill Rehabilitation Services of Alberta.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

head: **COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY**

Department of Social Services

MRS. OSTERMAN: I welcome this opportunity today to make some additional comments on the Department of Social Services. Having spent a number of hours on a Tuesday evening speaking to the various estimates of the department, I think it was the concern of a number of members in the House that many questions possibly had not been put and a number of comments had not been made, so again I welcome this opportunity.

I thought that today I might deal with more of an overall perspective and in detail about what some of the organizations and the department are doing in specific delivery of programs, because while we went through the other evening various votes in a general way and spoke to the manpower increases or decreases and specific funding, I think we probably didn't put a human face on a number of these services. I think that's very important.

And so, Mr. Chairman, I think I would like to start out today first of all, because of the friends in the gallery who are doing such an incredible job serving people, particularly in the Edmonton region -- and of course organizations associated with them as well work around the province. But I thought it would -- especially since members often raise questions about the contractual arrangements or granting arrangements that we have with a number of organizations and also possibly in between the lines raise concerns about: who are these people, what kind of a face do they put on their services, and should we have confidence in them?

I would first like to address Catholic Social Services and just speak briefly about the organization, because it's probably one of the largest in the province that in fact touches on many, many people's lives. First of all, the historic relationship. The department has had involvement with Catholic Social Services for over 25 years. They just celebrated, in fact, their 25th anniversary; I believe it was in December of 1986. Many proud people there. Father Irwin, of course, has been an integral part of this organization for all those many years. While initially they played a consultation role, in 1965 the first funding was provided by the department, and it was for children's treatment services. This was followed in the early '70s with them becoming involved in community living alternatives for the mentally

handicapped and physically disabled, and recently they have provided accommodation for teenagers between the ages of 14 to 17 involved in prostitution.

Catholic Social Services is also, of course, as I mentioned, the largest multiservice agency in Canada, and in spite of being called Catholic Social Services, two-thirds of the people served are other religions. And it's largely due, of course, to the variety of services. The numbers are approximately 33,000 to 35,000 clients that are served in any one year.

Now, what about the funding? When we see the \$1.2 billion-plus that goes out across the province, what, for instance, does an organization like Catholic Social Services do, and what is the funding that's provided? Well, in 1986-87 the following funding flowed. That is, in the Wetaskiwin area they received \$461,437 for group homes and \$653,000-plus for community living arrangements, and I think that speaks to the move from, first of all, larger institutional care into gradually a more informal community arrangement. Ideally, Mr. Chairman, we'd be looking at individual living beyond that. In Red Deer there was some \$330,000 for program workers in approved home spaces. In Edmonton -- and I know the Edmonton members would be very interested in this -- there was \$2,212,596 for residential setting for 38 children between preschool and 18 years of age who have child welfare status, and of course that included a family-based treatment program for 10 children. Another huge program was \$2.325 million for the community rehabilitation program offering residential and outreach development for 130 handicapped adolescents and adults, and \$50,000 for counseling support for teenage prostitutes between the ages of 14 to 17.

Mr. Chairman, I had the opportunity to just briefly -- it should have been days that I spent, as opposed to hours -- look into some of these facilities and realized just the terrific job these people are doing, particularly with very severely handicapped people. And the other services ... Just to give everyone an idea of the relationship between the province and the funding that flows there and the other people in the community that this organization works with, it's in these areas: immigration and settlement services, which is funded by Manpower and the federal government; family counseling department, funded by the Hope Campaign; young offenders program and drug and alcohol abuse, funded by the Solicitor General's department; the Thrift Store, St. Vincent de Paul, funded by the Hope Campaign. In addition, Catholic Social Services receives funds from the United Way, Lloydminster and Red Deer, and Family and Community Support Services, Edmonton and Lloydminster.

I think, Mr. Chairman, that is an example of an organization which does just a tremendous job. Again, when we speak about community involvement with government sharing in some of the costs of those programs, I believe Catholic Social Services fits that profile in a very precise way, along with a number of other organizations.

Another one I'd like to speak to is the Goodwill Rehabilitation Services of Alberta. This organization -- while I could say that we've achieved some interesting moves just in the last while, I can't take credit for that; Goodwill has been working for some time with the department and others to do and move in a way that they believed would be in the best interests of the community. Goodwill, as many people will know, is a private not-for-profit agency providing comprehensive rehabilitation services to disabled and disadvantaged persons living in Alberta.

Just to give you an example of some of these services, Goodwill provides in three major areas. The vocational and rehabilitation programs, which are under the auspices of Good-

will Industries: there is an intake and assessment unit, a work adjustment, skill and transitional training, placement, sheltered employment, which is for approximately 60 disabled Albertans; a second area is the activity services, which is continuing education; and third, infant and child development -- Goodwill child development, which is the Elves Memorial Child Development Centre. This service will become the responsibility, as I am given to understand, of an autonomous board in 1987.

So they reach very far into the community. In the 1986-87 fiscal year Goodwill Rehabilitation Services of Alberta received approximately \$962,000 -- and as with the other organizations, I firmly believe that every nickel was well spent, and those are the kinds of questions that we receive from the taxpayers -- and, in addition, this year a capital grant for \$250,000 to allow the agency to consolidate their operations through the purchase of an integrated service complex in Edmonton to serve handicapped adults.

Chairman, another example of a fine organization. And while you could get into a discussion of all the components of their programs, I think all hon. members can see that they are serving needs in our society, special needs people that should be first and foremost in our minds when we're looking at the budget process and those people who we believe deserve the priority.

Mr. Chairman, another area that is vitally important. While the dollars are not as large, the significance of the program I would like to outline, and I want to speak now to the Alberta Council of Women's Shelters. I have to admit that I probably fit the description of John Q. Citizen in Alberta who would have had, except in exceptional circumstances, very little understanding of the incredible work and the very sensitive work that this organization has undertaken across the province. Of course, they're the umbrella group for all the women's shelters.

Chairman, they've been fighting quite a battle over the last number of years to raise the profile of this very incredible problem of family violence in the province, and they've done just a magnificent job. I think it's fair to say that maybe they've had to over time beat a few ministers about the ears to get their attention and funding, very precious funding, that should flow because, after all, they're not only doing the special task of working with the women who come to those shelters but they're also out there in the community fund-raising. And that dual task I think is a burden that I believe shouldn't have to be undertaken to the degree that it has. So in speaking to their cause and finally getting more and more attention across the province and particularly that of the politicians, I think other organizations have now come to the fore. I am so pleased when we speak to, for instance, a group like the Knights of Columbus and know about their Knights for Moms campaign, and also other service clubs that I'm aware of that will become a part of addressing this very, very, serious problem of family violence.

I think all hon. members will realize that more and more people in every community in this province, as opposed to just the major centres, will become aware that in fact they do have a problem in their midst and the community must address it. It can't just be a small group of basically women with some assistance from some pretty good guys who have come on the scene. Historically the majority of people who have been working in this area have been women. Mr. Chairman, I think it's fair to say that with the kind of support that I see coming -- the people who have visited my office and those whom we have contacted to raise with them the idea that maybe they could play a role -- notwithstanding the very important fund-raising that is done for

cultural activities, recreation activities, and so on, if we all gave just a little bit, so many more dollars could be committed to the work by this group.

And an example, Chairman, of community involvement, just an incredible one. Last year -- I think probably it was just a year ago that a very good friend of mine brought a group of people to the office and said: "Connie, there is a very badly needed service in this city. It is like one that we presently see provided in Calgary by way of Discovery House, and we would call our organization WINGS, WINGS of Providence, which is Women in Need Growing Stronger." And of course the request was: "How can you assist us? There are many things and commitments that we have, but what assistance can the province be?" Unfortunately, Chairman, my answer was, "I have no funds." And I'm pleased to be able to report that not withstanding that very negative answer, one that may have had a lot of other people go back and say, "Well, there is nothing we can do," what did this organization and many dedicated people do? They were out in the community making the project happen in any event.

And some dollars that flow to municipalities, that I know from time to time a number of provincial people question, by way of Family and Community Support Services -- I think this is an extraordinary example of those provincial dollars that flow to our municipalities -- I see translated to some degree into support for an organization like WINGS, because the city of Edmonton responded magnificently in terms of presenting the proposal for accommodation that, while it is true it required considerable upgrading, certainly was the basis for a start for WINGS. And this shelter, this advanced shelter, if you will, Chairman, now provides an opportunity for 12 women and families to get a fresh start on their lives, because there are 12 separate apartments in this particular complex.

I met one particular lady at the opening the other day with her, possibly, children -- I just saw one child at the time -- who had come from another province. To give you an example of the problem, many times we've believed that we can support people in their home environments, deliver the services and counseling that is necessary for them to get their lives back together. But where you see people who are continually having to deal with an abusive situation and can't bring in this case the husbands to counseling, they are literally running at times for, I suppose it could be described, their lives. So when they have an opportunity to in a very private way achieve accommodation and know that they are secure, they're in a position to get that counseling, to have their children feel secure and hopefully, after maybe a maximum of a six-month period, be able to get on with their lives in a far more positive sense.

Of course, Chairman, that then raises the whole question of going from the women in violence to the effects on children. So often hon. members, and appropriately so, ask questions of the minister as to how we are responding: how do we look after these families and, particularly, what are we doing for the children? One of the very sad facts in terms of departmental statistics is that of the children who are in our care, some 40 percent of them -- and I know there are a number of hon. members who have a great interest in this area and probably already know that, but for others, 40 percent of the children in our care are native children. Obviously, this is just not acceptable.

Over time all of us and other people before us, very well intentioned, have been delivering services in a certain way, and to some degree I think we could call those services very intrusive, because for the most part we have taken native children away from their families and dealt with them off reserves or outside of

the family through foster homes and so on. Again, all very well-intentioned people, but it hasn't been working. If you see the history of these children as they work their way through the system and probably finally into the hands of the Solicitor General's department, we can all admit that we have got to find a better way.

So when you look at the Child Welfare Act, there is a special reference to cultural heritage, and it allows the delegation of duties and powers to third parties, including the delegation to Indian and Metis communities and agencies. And, Chairman, that is exactly the type of thing that we are now working on, and with relative success. Alberta has entered into dialogue and collaborative approaches with other Indian communities throughout the province, and pending resolution of the federal government's position on Indian child welfare policy, I think the department is wishing to extend its services to Indian people and consult with them, as I said, in a very collaborative way.

That has been bearing fruit. Just to give you an example, there have been a number of agreements signed. The latest one was with the Yellowhead Tribal Council that, again, will delegate authority to the various bands within that council for their welfare services. I had the opportunity that day -- and I mentioned it the other evening -- to meet with a number of people who have told me that as a result of the native bursaries that are offered, they see themselves being able to go to their home community and take a very active role in the delivery of those services on the reserve. For instance, in the central region -- and I have a vested interest in that region because part of that region serves the north end of the Three Hills constituency -- in a move towards Indian bands and the province administering their own child welfare services, two workers in the Rocky Mountain House district office, one a Cree Indian, are working with the local native bands under the direction of the recently announced Yellowhead tribal agreement. Although based in the Rocky district office, the two workers are separate from the department's central region administration and report directly to their own supervisor appointed under the Yellowhead tribal agreement.

There are a whole host of initiatives like that, and basically what I want all hon. members to know is that there is a very great effort being made by many people in the department and the native community to work together in order to address this problem, particularly since in the child welfare area we're speaking to a very large percentage of native children.

Of course that raises the whole concern of sexual assault as a part of the family violence that is often discussed. We now have a Yellowhead family sexual assault program. Mr. Chairman, why would a program like this have to come into being? Well, I'm sure it's as a result of many questions being asked and concerns being raised by not only members inside this House but those outside in the community. Start-up reasons: I have a list. First of all, no treatment in the area; offenders going to jail; families going on welfare; children being taken into care through child welfare; offender suicide; victim suicide; single-parent families; destroyed families; high prison cost, et cetera, et cetera.

So what is it that this organization can now offer to work with the various people who are involved again in this horrendous program? There are a number of types of therapy being offered and they deal with the following: the offender groups; the nonoffending spouses groups; victims groups; adult victims groups; marathon groups; couples groups; individual sessions, particularly for offenders; family sessions; marriage counseling sessions, and so it goes on. We believe that there has already

been a demonstration of a fair amount of success in this program.

I could speak to many, many other programs in the whole area of family violence and child welfare services because so many of them are, in my view, having to be delivered because of the family violence problems. I think an example of the system that we see coming into place in Edmonton is one that involves planning, that I hope will be looked at carefully by the other five regions of the province because it demonstrates the spectrum that is now coming into place to deal with all of those people we want to treat and of course help.

I want to just deal with the spectrum, if I could, in my closing comments for now. Again, this is the children's services that are delivered in the Edmonton region. There are about nine categories, Chairman. If you could just imagine, as I name these off, the spectrum of young people that we're working with. First of all, secure treatment. This secure treatment provides the same kind of care described under treatment institutions, but it provides this care to children with more intense problems. These children have more intense problems, and of course there is a greater concern for their security. This, of course, is a facility which we describe as a secure treatment facility.

Then there are treatment institutions one stage down, Chairman, where we're not as concerned about the security but these resources care for children who are experiencing more extreme difficulties because of the serious emotional, behavioural, or family dysfunctions. Care may be short term or long term, and it includes institutions operated by the region and contracted institutions. I think it's fair to say that over time a number of the organizations I've cited today will interface in all of this area.

Then there are group homes. These are homes in the community for up to six children in care. They provide basic care and other supportive services for short- or long-term periods. The type of facility we're talking about: parented group homes where staff live in the home, group homes for older children where staff do not normally live in the home, therapeutic group homes for children with more serious emotional or behavioural problems.

Then there are special agreement homes, Mr. Chairman. These homes provide long-term, intensive intervention for five to seven older children with special needs who may have been in institutional settings and who, without these homes, might be placed in institutions. These are district office supervised homes.

There are foster care homes, Chairman, and private family care in their own homes. And I might add that there is now an upgrading in terms of education that will be available for people who take some of these special kids. They are children with special needs who may have been in institutional settings and who, without these homes, might be placed in institutions also. The foster care home . . . I should say, Chairman, let me just go back here; I'm reading from a wrong column. They're private families, short or long duration. They have regular foster home care or specialized foster care, parent-counselor homes where foster parents are trained, as I just mentioned, to care for children with more serious emotional or behavioural problems -- again, a preventative measure to keep them from having to be taken into institutional care.

Then there is receiving and assessment. These residential resources provide short-term care for children of any age whose survival, security, or development appear to be at risk. These

resources allow time for situations to be assessed and stable solutions planned. They include receiving foster homes, receiving group homes, and the receiving unit of the Yellowhead Youth Centre.

Another area, Chairman, is the supported independent living. That's a program designed to prepare for independence for youths 14 to 18 years old who are in care. These youths live with supportive adults for a period of six months, or it could be up to several years. Again, this is done under the supervision of their social workers. Programs are operated by our district offices and also operated by private agencies.

Independent living: this, of course, is a major goal in terms of our workers and the clients they are serving, along with all the other organizations. The independent living is to assist youths 16 and 17 years old living independently for short periods up to two years. These youths live with support and supervision from their social worker and other significant adults, and they include department boarding homes and other independent settings. Hopefully, Chairman, as a result of this type of independent living they are ready for a much larger degree of autonomy in the community.

Then there are specialized children's services -- services in the community to children with special needs and services to their families, which include the youth employment program, youth hostel services, and others.

Then, Chairman, there are the community-based proactive intervention, and these, of course, are nonresidential. They are preventative services, the support and assistance in the community in situations where a lack of support may lead to more serious problems. Here is where -- and it was spoken of the other day and, I think, raised in question period -- we must be into the counseling area: the district office based family support services, family counseling, day care, life skills counseling instruction, and others.

Chairman, I think that in dealing with the specific and more technical information to deal with the broad program for children in particular -- because I believe that first of all in my own mind and in the minds of many people in the department and organizations out there, children obviously must continue to receive very special services -- while it is true that in most instances we would like to get away from institutional care, this will not always be possible until we see the community playing a greater and greater role not only of awareness but working specifically with these young people.

Chairman, I sense that there are a number of people that would like to comment or ask questions, and I look forward to those comments and would be delighted to respond to questions.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order please. Members of the committee, under Standing Order 58 a department cannot be designated a second time, so Social Services will not be designated again under *Standing Orders*.

The Chair would observe that there are 88 minutes left in the estimates of this department. [interjection] Order please. The Chair would indicate to members of the committee, and save them some traveling time to the table, by reading out the list that's here very quickly, so as not to take from debating time. You might note where you stand: members for Edmonton Calder, Calgary North Hill, Edmonton Meadowlark, Calgary Foothills, Edmonton Highlands, Banff-Cochrane, Calgary Mountain View, Calgary Glenmore, Edmonton Avonmore, Red Deer North, Pincher Creek-Crowsnest, Vegreville, Calgary McCall, Cypress-Redcliff, Edmonton Mill Woods, and Ed-

monton Belmont.

Hon. Member for Edmonton Calder, please.

MS MJOLSNESS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd like to say first of all that the Official Opposition had a lot of concerns about this department and that is why we've designated it today in the first place. I'm really disappointed that now we've lost over 30 minutes and we haven't heard from any of the members yet in regards to their concerns and the questions we've got. I don't know if the minister didn't look around when people's hands were going up, but surely she knows that a number of people in this Assembly would like to ask a lot of questions.

MRS. CRIPPS: You're wasting time.

MS MJOLSNESS: I know.

Last week when we debated the estimates, we talked a little bit about Hilltop House. The minister stated at that time that these clients would be moving out of Hilltop House; they would be moving into A Safe Place and McDougall House and other women would be moving or going to AADAC and to other counseling services. Now, before the Member for Edmonton Avonmore and myself even raised the questions in question period, we checked around and found out that those two agencies would not in fact take those women. The minister had said that night that she would check into the matter, and we haven't had a response on that yet.

I'm quite dismayed that the department makes a decision to close the centre and then has not thoroughly investigated where these people are supposed to go. I was shocked that this procedure would be used by the department. I would hope that the minister has had time to check into that issue and could respond and give us some answers on that.

Mapleridge is another centre that will be closing at the end of June. I'm very worried that the same approach has been taken to this centre for these children. This centre treats children between six and 12 years old. They also take in adolescent girls, 10 adolescent girls between the ages of 13 and 16 years.

I also worry, Mr. Chairman, that the minister doesn't fully understand the kind of treatment these children need. It's fine to say, as the minister did in question period, that we can move these kids into the community. Sure, many kids can be moved into the community, but these children need treatment. They have suffered severely. Many of them have come from abusive homes; many have been abused since birth. It seems to me what the department wants to do is that they've made the decision to close the centre and then they've scrambled around for some kind of plan of action: what can we do with these kids? "Let's advertise for some foster parent homes" is what will happen in this case. They're going to put these parents through a 20-hour training course, as I understand, and these are kids that haven't been able to cope in a family setting and that is why they are in this treatment centre to begin with.

The minister indicated yesterday in question period that it's my opinion that they need professional help. Well, I would like to say to the minister that it's not just my opinion; it's the opinion of many people that are working in the field and have been to Mapleridge. They have worked with these kids. They're community members that know what's going on at Mapleridge. I would like to ask the minister: if this is just an opinion of mine, why then is the department referring these children to this treatment centre? Her own social workers are referring kids to this treatment centre. Why are they doing that if this is just my

opinion? I would hope that the minister would take a look at this issue and thoroughly investigate what exactly will happen to these children if they are not allowed professional treatment.

Now, I've gotten a lot of letters about this issue. I think it's a very, very serious one. I think there are a lot of unanswered questions that surround this issue. For example, if the children move into parent-counselor homes and these parents have had 20 hours worth of training, who will work with the natural parents to reintegrate these children back into their homes? This is being done at Mapleridge. I ask the minister: who will work with the natural parents, then, to reintegrate these children back into their families? Who will work with the families? Who will guarantee that these children will not be passed on from foster home to foster home, because these children are experiencing severe emotional and behavioural problems. Do we have any guarantee of that?

I attended the family violence conference that was in this city a while ago, as I know the minister did and the Member for Edmonton Avonmore, and I was able to attend a session where there were five young adults that had gone through the system, had been in care, many for up to 12, 13 years. I was really quite shocked and alarmed to hear the kinds of concerns they were bringing to our attention at that conference. I think it's really important that we start listening to kids and that we start caring more and more for them, because they've been through the system and they know what happens to them. Their major concern was that they had been moved from foster home to foster home to foster home, that they never saw their social worker and they don't know many times who they even are, I ask the minister again: what is going to happen to these kids that move out of Mapleridge? Who will be monitoring what happens to these children? Is the department going to monitor like they have in all other areas? Are we supposed to put our trust in that? We know that the child welfare workers are having to deal with so many cases that they're unable in many cases to know exactly what's going on with these children.

I hope the minister would really look seriously into this issue and try and come up with some of the answers to these questions. I wouldn't expect her to respond immediately to me today, but I think these are questions that really need to be investigated. I don't think that moving these kids out of this treatment centre is solely irresponsible, but it's also endangering the lives of these children, I would hope that the minister would consider this a very serious issue. Because if something happens to these kids, who is responsible? Can we come back to the minister and say, "It's your fault"? Can we do that? Can we say to this government, "It's your fault"? Or will they just say to us: "Well, you know, it's just one of those things that happens; it's not our fault. Maybe something was wrong with the foster home, or maybe we just couldn't help this child. They were beyond help, or whatever." Who can we come back to? I would suggest that it is the government's responsibility, and we will come back to the government and hold them responsible for what happens to these kids. We've had a lot of discussion in this Assembly about the cutbacks of single employables. The Member for Edmonton Highlands brought it up again today. Now, what the minister is doing is suggesting that these people can simply move in together, and she doesn't believe that accommodation is a problem. And I know that despite many of the agencies saying that this isn't the case and many of the members here saying it isn't the case, the accommodation is short out there. After hearing all of this, I'm wondering if the minister still maintains that yes, there is lots of accommodation

out there for the price that she's asking these people to get that accommodation at. She said, "Well, we'll put up lists of roommates for people." Well, what they need is a list of accommodations, because the accommodation, first of all, isn't there.

I would ask the minister: how would she feel if she was told that she had to go out and find a roommate and move in with that person? You don't know who they are. With all of the violence happening in our city recently -- and I'm speaking specifically for females right now -- are we not putting these people in a little bit of danger when they have to move in with people that they don't know from Adam? I mean, isn't that a concern of the minister's? I would suggest that we are putting these women especially -- and men as well -- in danger by making them move in with people that they don't even know.

Now, the minister says that single employables are the most flexible of those on social assistance and that they should be able to be flexible enough to change their life-styles and do what she is asking them to do. I would ask the minister: if we take a look at a 55-year-old widower, a man 55 years old, how flexible is he? Or how flexible is a young mother with one child who's expected to go out and find work? How flexible can they be? There are many scenarios that we could look at, Mr. Chairman, and how flexible are these people if the accommodation isn't there?

Operation Friendship has written a letter to the minister. They have been working with the poor and the homeless for over 18 years. They stated in the letter they wrote to the minister that in fact the poor, the unemployed, and the disadvantaged are not flexible, because they have feelings of despair, feelings of low self-esteem, depression, and that in many cases they will turn to suicide. Now I ask you: how flexible are these people when they're considering suicide? It also states in the letter that a person's flexibility increases as one's economic and social status increases. So I would say to the minister that these people aren't quite as adaptable as she might think they are.

Again I would bring up the point about damage deposit. Surely the minister has been around long enough, Mr. Chairman, to know that it is very difficult to get a place without a damage deposit. I mean, we're expecting these people to go out and secure a place without even giving them a damage deposit. It's just unreasonable to me, and I would also suggest that it's putting these people in danger when we're forcing them to try and move in together.

It's very clear that the government has targeted the single employables, and it's not just the Official Opposition and members of the opposition that are concerned about this but in fact there have been many, many people in this province that recognize the pain that these people are experiencing and are very concerned about what this government is doing and who they're picking on.

I'd like to move into day care because I have some concerns about day care that weren't answered last time. I would like to ask the minister if she would deal with the accountability of day cares. It was previously brought up in estimates, and last year in session the minister stated that she was concerned about the administrative area of day care and that a better accountability system should be put in place, and that even the Social Care Facilities Review Committee agreed that the area of administration within the child care system must be tightened up. I'm wondering what steps the minister has taken to pursue this. I know it was stated that a review was under way, but I don't think that her review is dealing with this particular problem. So perhaps the minister could make some response on that.

I expressed concern last week about the homeless in this province, and I would suggest again to the minister that it's a very complex problem; it can't be solved by just building a few housing units. And I'm not just talking about -- as the minister alluded to last estimates debate -- some elderly alcoholics, although of course they are without homes. The minister must realize that we are talking about teenagers, for one. And I know that she's talking at the Youth Emergency Shelter next week. Surely to goodness she knows that these kids are without family, they're without community, and that they need some help. We're talking about the chronically ill that are wandering the streets of Edmonton. What about these people? Does she recognize that they're homeless. Does she want to do anything about this, or is she just satisfied in this International Year of Shelter for the Homeless to sit by and do nothing or in fact start closing centres and increase the number of homeless? Is this what she's satisfied in doing?

I'd like to bring up the issue of McMan again. A few days ago I heard that three programs that they're running -- Project Breakthrough: north, west, and south -- in the city have been tendered out to a for-profit agency and that a lot of the staff have been laid off in these programs. They are attempting to relocate these families and these teenagers in other programs similar to theirs, but they are having great difficulty, because most of the programs that are available charge the families a fee, whereas they did not. So I'm wondering if the minister could comment on that whole area and if she has in fact looked into what's happening with McMan and these programs.

Again with the job-finding clubs, we were expecting to get some kind of evaluation done on them in February, 1987, which was said last session. I'm assuming that the minister will be forthcoming with some kind of written report suggesting facts that substantiate what we've heard over and over again, that these job-clubs are in fact very successful. I'm sure that kind of information will be very, very, helpful to all the members of the Assembly.

It was brought to my attention that there is reported in the Auditor General's reports that uncovered funds from the Canada Assistance Plan were in the area of \$18.2 million from the widows' pension plan and \$12.3 million in expenditures by institutions. These have not been approved by the government of Canada through the Canada Assistance Plan, and I'm wondering if the minister could please explain why these expenditures have not been approved and that a figure in the range of \$30.5 million has not been forthcoming from the federal government.

And I would just like to quickly make a last comment about the women's shelters and the whole family violence area. I'm afraid that many of my colleagues won't get a chance to speak today, and many of them had a lot of concerns. We've heard a lot this afternoon about the great and wonderful things we're doing in the area of family violence, and I would just ask the minister: where's the crisis line across this province that she talked about in the last session, or where's the funding that many of these shelters need to simply cover their operational costs? Where is that funding? I mean, they are receiving some; we know that. But they are badly in need of additional funding. So I would say that we have a commitment there, Mr. Chairman, and I would suspect that the minister would like to comment on that.

Thank you.

MRS. OSTERMAN: Mr. Chairman, may I revert to Introduction of Special Guests?

MR. CHAIRMAN: That would be, hon. minister, up to the wishes of the committee. Would the committee agree to reverting to a brief Introduction of Special Guests?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Any opposed? Hon. minister.

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

MRS. OSTERMAN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Also in the members' gallery is a person who plays a very vital role in an organization that is an umbrella organization, I guess, of many that are working in the human services area across the province. I would like Ann Tweddle to rise. She's the executive director of the Association of Human Services of Alberta. Would you welcome her.

I think that those people who work with the department in the delivery of services find ourselves challenged not only by the opposition and my colleagues but by the very organizations who work with us, all of us striving to deliver services in a better way and address the needs that we see.

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

Department of Social Services
(*continued*)

MRS. OSTERMAN: I shall try to quickly answer the hon. members' questions as were raised today. I first of all apologize for having lost my sheet of paper that had the information regarding where the people who had been formerly utilizing something like Hilltop House, for instance, over the past while would have gone. Our checking of a number of those places showed vacancies, and indeed the policy in those instances would allow the McDougall centre, for instance, to take the type of people that the hon. member mentions. And while she may be looking for permanent guarantees, again, Mr. Chairman, I am not able to make those. The services are provided to the best of our ability, and it will at some times, I suppose, be proven that a service at a given instant was not in place when someone needed it. Unfortunately, that is the way, at times, of the world. We are not able to put everything in place that we would like to do. But I shall get that briefing note for the hon. member and make sure that she has it.

The reason that I had gone, Mr. Chairman, into some amount of length about the services that were delivered is that there was my sense from the questions raised in the House and also in estimates, both last year and this, that indeed the opposition particularly had wanted to know: what were the services going to be? What was going to be in place? And I thought that I had done a reasonably comprehensive job of, for instance, describing the spectrum of service delivery in Edmonton. While I acknowledged that in the past there were probably a number of children who have not had the case plan that should have been in place for planning with the advent of the new Child Welfare Act, it is my firm hope, because of the work that's being done -- and we are now halfway through the implementation program in that Act -- that in fact those various areas would be addressed. As we see ourselves going through that implementation plan and we pick up the various -- if there are blips occurring, we in fact

will be able to get our act together, so to speak, and make sure that a reasonable job is being done; I always welcome the critical comments of my colleagues in order to identify specific areas and speak to them in a program sense.

Chairman, I also wanted to speak to the accommodation discussion again. It's raised almost daily in the question period, and I would say that a damage deposit is available, where need is demonstrated, as a result of going to the appeal committee. Normally, when people are moving accommodation, they would take their damage deposit with them when they are seeking new accommodation, and I would expect under anything but exceptional circumstances that those damage deposits certainly would be back in the hands of the individuals that we're talking about.

The hon. member also raised some points about Mapleridge. I could just briefly say that the money previously allotted to Mapleridge will be used to create new family- and community-based resources, and this is not a downsizing measure. Obviously, we look to our kids being treated in a different way and, where possible, to have families treated as a unit. All of the children presently at Mapleridge won't be placed in parent-counselor homes. Some will return to their families after the school year, and they were scheduled to do that, regardless of our Mapleridge decision. Others will go to group homes, others to community services such as the parent-counselor homes. Individual assessments have been conducted on each child to determine his or her best placement, and just because we have closed institutional beds doesn't mean that we have eliminated all residential resources.

Chairman, I think it's important that we establish what I believe to be a discussion of attitude here. A number of members of the opposition, when they're speaking about the various areas, usually preface their comments or questions by saying, "The minister doesn't see a concern." Well, I do see a concern -- all hon. members see concerns -- but we don't have all the answers. And so to say that we are not concerned is very inaccurate and I think a very inappropriate comment.

But to say that we don't have all the answers -- and if that is the challenge that is going out to this minister, that she doesn't have all the answers -- Mr. Chairman, I certainly am guilty of that.

MR. STEWART: Mr. Chairman, I welcome the opportunity to participate in the consideration of the estimates of this particular department. In so doing, I make a general comment that I suppose relates not only to the debate on these estimates, both today and on the previous occasion, but also to debate generally and question period in particular, as it relates to this minister and this particular department.

May I just say that I would like to express my general disappointment in what I have heard from those that sit to my right, on so many occasions. Occasionally there are some positive suggestions and some meaningful questions that are posed to the minister, but so often it is the case that we have a dialogue of negativism and opportunistic rhetoric that I find a little bit disappointing.

The Department of Social Services and indeed the various agencies that are represented in the gallery today are in the people business, Mr. Chairman, concerning everything from the anguish of family violence to the joys of adopting a child. They address the needs of those who are unable to help themselves and at the same time provide the opportunities to others to reach their individual personal goals with a degree of independence and dignity. I would suggest that the department is the helping

hand, the department of care, and it produces its rewards in the joys when the results of its various programs and services replace anxiety, frustration, and hardship with new confidence, peace of mind, and material assistance.

But it is not an easy task and it's not a perfect system. There is no way in which every misfortune, every injustice, every hardship can be remedied. The department provides professionals, it provides funding, it provides solutions to address the needs of our community, but there is no Utopia. No governmental system, no matter how perfect, will ever remove all suffering, all hardship, prevent all violence, and remove every injustice. And when it comes down to it, it's basically people helping people, doing the best they can with the resources that are available, motivated by a basic desire to help one another and based on natural instincts of human beings to care about others.

Mr. Chairman, it is at that point that I become somewhat upset with what I hear so often coming from some of the members in the opposition. All too often we hear self-righteous, sanctimonious, holier-than-thou platitudes from that part of the Assembly over the course of these estimates, debates, and in question period. *Hansard* is full of it, Mr. Chairman. And do they really believe and feel that they have the sole monopoly on caring or that they are the only ones capable of human feeling?

When I look at the biographical background and the experience and the community service rendered by all members of this Assembly, it occurs to me that we are all here because we do care and because we do feel that we can make a positive contribution. However, Mr. Chairman, I guess we choose to make that contribution in different ways. The opposition obviously feels that the way to make that contribution is to seek out instances of personal misfortune, run off to exploit it with the media close behind, and rise up in righteous indignation. I had hoped for something better, something positive and constructive. I'm disappointed but perhaps not surprised.

Mr. Chairman, I want to deal with a number of programs and services of the department which impact upon the constituents of Calgary North Hill. It is important to point out the fact that Calgary North Hill probably has more senior citizens proportionately than any other constituency in Alberta, even Vegreville. It includes some of the oldest areas of the city north of the river, people living in their homes for 30, 40, or 50 years, maintaining their independence and continuing to make a contribution to the community in which they live. Others are residents of one of several seniors' complexes that are scattered throughout the constituency. They are able to maintain their independence but at the same time are free of certain responsibilities that would otherwise come with home ownership.

The Confederation Park Senior Citizens Centre is in the very heart of the constituency, involving over 1,500 members in programs and activities and services provided almost entirely by volunteer members. I believe they only have two permanent staff members and two part-time persons. The Fanning centre provides residences for many whose physical condition requires a higher degree of care, and many of those residents access the assured income for severely handicapped. These are the people whose lives each day are made a bit better through the services they receive from the department. But, Mr. Chairman, they do not want to be wards of the government. They want to live their lives in a way that allows them the opportunity to continue to make a contribution to the community in which they reside and to give them every chance to continue to make their own decisions.

That is the thrust of the programs and services that are before us today in these estimates. It is not a policy of state control of the lives of our citizens which removes the sense of self-worth and personal responsibility. It is a policy of fostering independence, assisting where requested and required, and maintaining a sense of personal responsibility. I would suggest that the latter policy of fostering independence is a thread that runs throughout all of the programs and services affecting the lives of my constituents in Calgary North Hill. If we say to people, "I'm sorry; this business of looking after yourself is just too much personal responsibility for you to handle all on your own, and therefore government will have to take over," then we will soon arrive at the point where the only personal responsibility left for us will be to pay taxes. Everything else will be taken from us, including our own personal sense of self-worth.

Mr. Chairman, providing programs and services for people is easy in good times. All of a sudden, however, our province has suffered a major economic blow. Oil and gas revenues are down 64 percent, total revenue down 30 percent, and a deficit of \$3.3 billion. So what do you do as a family, as a business, as an individual, or as a government when you have that much less to spend? You provide first for necessities for those in need and establish your priorities on that basis. This is precisely what has happened. The Speech from the Throne and indeed the Budget Address make that clear. I am pleased that the first consideration is given to our seniors, the handicapped, and those in financial need. Basically, the services of this department and indeed other related departments will continue and in many cases be enhanced, but not at the expense of the groups that I have mentioned. Revenues are down 30 percent, yet the moneys allocated to programs and services that are so closely related to the lives of our seniors, the handicapped, and the poor have been increased.

That is the evidence of this government's priorities. That is the evidence of caring, to say nothing of the other evidence in the form of the variety and high standards of services that the citizens of this province enjoy as compared to any other area of Canada. That is the evidence of our commitment to the people in need.

Mr. Chairman, I'm not going to deal in detail with the programs of this department or the moneys that are budgeted, as I'm sure that other hon. members would like to speak on these estimates. Let me just say that the constituents of Calgary North Hill are pleased that in difficult times priority has been given to those in need and to our seniors. Let me also say -- and I applaud the policies of the minister and her department in the care of people, because these basic policies reflect themselves throughout the various programs.

I'd just like to cite four policies that I think are uppermost in the programs and for which I would like to give special mention. First, fostering independence is vital to the sense of self-worth and dignity. It is a worthy policy of the department, and I know it's found in many of its programs. Secondly, as the minister has said on many, many occasions, the policy of the department is to provide a hand up instead of a handout, another worthwhile guideline in the programs; thirdly, a policy of providing flexibility to the greatest degree possible in the choice that any individual has in the services that are available, so that they can be made by those persons that wish to access such services to accommodate their needs; and fourthly, a policy of establishing, within programs such as adoption, foster care, and group homes, a sense of family. To me those are four worthwhile objectives, and they're policies that are uppermost, I

know, in the minds of the minister as she works out the programs and services of her department. They are policies that maintain individual self-worth and dignity. I don't think we should be painting everybody gray and create wards of the state; rather, let us maintain some individuality and personal responsibility.

Lastly, Mr. Chairman, may I congratulate the minister. She has a very difficult job to do; however, we are very, very fortunate. She is a person with energy, with talent, and with the commitment necessary to fulfill her responsibilities. However, most of all I believe that she is a person that cares.

Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon. Member for Edmonton Meadowlark.

MR. MITCHELL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to begin by addressing some of the principles that are implicit in the minister's estimates that underline the reasons for her doing what she is doing with this budget, that somehow support, if you will, what this government is doing by presenting a Social Services budget which we believe is in many respects punitive, in many respects is asking very vulnerable people to pay today for the excesses of this government over the last 15 years.

Implicit in this set of estimates, in this department's estimates, is a belief that there is a trade-off between social services and economic development and government fiscal responsibility. Somehow I believe the minister thinks -- it's implicit in her presentation -- that government fiscal problems and the province's economic problems are related to high social program costs. Nothing could be further from the truth. In fact, if this government honestly believes that social programs deteriorate their ability to deal with the economy effectively, and if any way they believe that these social programs are significant in that regard, then we have a much more serious problem than we even see before us with respect to these estimates.

The fact of the matter is that government has a responsibility to do a number of things and to do them all well, one of which is economic development -- absolutely -- but one of which is implementing effective social programs which provide for the dignity of individuals, which provide for a sense of self-worth in those people that, due to no fault of their own and certainly out of no particular desire of their own, find themselves requiring the support of social service programs in our society.

There is a fundamental realization or principle as well implicit in this presentation by this minister, that somehow Albertans, people in Canada, don't really want to help other people through their government, that maybe the community should do that and would do it more effectively if volunteers decided that they wanted to do that. Well, of course there is a tremendously important role for nonprofit organizations in the social-service sector to provide effective social services. It's our belief that that is done many, many times throughout the delivery of services in our society extremely well. Clearly, nonprofit organizations have people who are extremely dedicated to what they're doing, who are motivated therefore, and who will probably do as good as or even a better job than any government could do.

However, there are some fundamental problems in leaving it up to a private nonprofit sector and certainly even more problems in leaving it up to a private commercial portion of our society to provide these services. First of all, there's not necessarily going to be a co-ordinated approach. What happens, for example, if there is a need that nobody out there is particularly interested in providing? It's also true that one of the strengths

of having government involved in these processes is that government can be held accountable if certain services aren't being properly delivered.

Mr. Chairman, it is not enough to say that a community should take the responsibility and that the community should in some haphazard, nonregularized fashion deal exclusively or generally with the delivery of social services. It is true that government is an extension of the community. We heard last night the Consumer and Corporate Affairs minister, who somehow similarly wants to remove government from an effective or aggressive role in our society. We lose sight of the fact that government is a coming together of people in our society; it is an extension of the community. It can only be construed by this government as not being an extension of the community under two circumstances and has not been an effective extension of the community under two circumstances, and those are: they have either lost touch with the community, they are divorced from that community, they do not understand that they rise out of it, are given a responsibility by it and are charged with a mandate to provide services on its behalf; or they are simply admitting after 15 years of being in government that, yes, it's not working very well and that that's not their responsibility but somehow that's the problem inherent in government, the delivery of government in our society.

Clearly, that does not have to be the logical conclusion. Clearly, government, if done properly, can be a positive extension of our community, can ensure that social services which are needed are delivered not in some haphazard, just-in-case-somebody-might-be-interested-in-that-particular-problem manner but in an effective, regularized way that ensures that all those segments of our society, all those people in our society who have a need, who need support, will receive that, not by happenstance if there's somebody out there who has an interest in providing it, but because they need it and because as a society we have a responsibility to deliver it.

Perhaps what I find most offensive, Mr. Chairman, in reading between the lines of this particular set of estimates is the underlying assumption -- and it's not all that underlying; frequently it has been stated explicitly in this Chamber -- this assumption that somehow if people would only work harder, apply their initiative more effectively, work as hard as we work, work as diligently as we work, then they therefore would not need the support that is inherent in the provision of social services. There is such an arrogance in this position.

AN HON. MEMBER: No dust at the doorstep.

MR. MITCHELL: No dust at the doorstep.

My belief is that most of us in this Chamber -- in fact, all of us in this Chamber -- and most of the people in our society are extremely privileged. We are extremely fortunate that because we've been born to families that gave us an education and secured our health and looked after us and loved us in a way that ... That isn't something that everybody gets in our society. But because we had all those things, quite apart from anything we did -- I happened to be born when I was born; I had no real role in that -- that somehow because of that, yes, we're special and somehow we deserve things that other people don't deserve: I cannot accept it. I fundamentally cannot accept it. And what I find disturbing is that rather than being arrogant about that and believing that somehow we are especially special, we should be extremely humble and grateful and thankful for that, and we should be rushing headlong to give back so much of what we've

been given, quite apart from anything that we've done to deserve it ourselves.

And that, Mr. Chairman, represents the dignity of government, it represents the integrity of government, and it represents our ability to create a society -- that attitude represents our ability to create a society that has a richness and a decency and a goodness that we're forgetting, that this government is forgetting when it presents these kinds of estimates.

Yes, there is no doubt in any of our minds that government has to be efficient. If only this government began to realize that in 1971 and in 1976 and in 1979 instead of spending \$65 million to pave the grounds in front of this Legislature, instead of spending \$75 million to celebrate the 75th anniversary, when a sister province spent \$3 million. If we had begun to consider that management effectiveness and management efficiency should have been applied then, then we wouldn't have the kinds of problems that we have to confront now. Yes, we have to be efficient, but I submit strongly that government is efficient for one overriding reason: so that it can justify and do properly effective social programs to protect, defend, support those people who are far more vulnerable in our society, particularly at a time like now when they need to have that protection and that support.

Several specific issues that I would like to raise, Mr. Chairman. Privatization of social services: there is a moral ethical question involved in this, and I think it is very clear that while nonprofit private organizations can provide social services effectively, and probably more effectively than government can, it is not acceptable to say that commercial enterprises should be providing social services. There is a fundamental problem with making profit based on the delivery of social services.

A second issue that is of concern with respect to privatization is the manner in which this government is doing it and the implications in the process by which it's doing it, the implications for avoiding the question of standards in social service delivery. My colleague from Edmonton Gold Bar and I spent some time with the people of McMan Youth Services, and they informed us that they had been negotiating for some time on a fee-for-services contract. That originally had been about \$2 million and after negotiations had been reduced to \$1.6 million. They had accepted the \$400,000 reduction as part of their contribution to reducing costs in government, and they were prepared to go out and find private-sector groups to fund that amount of money. No sooner had an agreement been arrived at than the government changed its mind and said: "No, we're going to tender the services now offered by McMan. McMan, you can tender, and if you win, you'll get it."

What will happen? McMan is an organization that has a strong belief in the quality of social services. It is not an unreasonable belief; it is a very, very reasonable belief. They will tender at a level up here. At the same time, a commercial enterprise may well tender down here, and the government will be quick to go with the commercial enterprise. And the one powerful argument they will use is: clearly it's cheaper, therefore, we have to go with it, the implication being that we're getting what we would have got if we paid McMan more to do it. We will not get what we would have got ...

MRS. OSTERMAN: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. The hon. member ...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Your point of order please, minister.

MRS. OSTERMAN: Yes. The hon. member is unfortunately providing misinformation to the House. His conversation obviously relates back many months ago to a conversation with the former director of McMan. If the hon. member would check with the present board, he would find that the circumstances had been corrected. In fact there was misinformation put abroad by that director, who is no longer with McMan.

MR. MITCHELL: Mr. Chairman, we had conversations with a number of board members on this. In fact one of the board members is no longer with McMan, yes. That's because he and his wife have gone to Europe to travel for a year.

MRS. OSTERMAN: Mr. Chairman, I'm talking about the executive director . . . [interjections]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order.

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Mr. Chairman, which citation is the minister rising on in terms of the point of order?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon. Member for Edmonton Meadowlark.

MR. MITCHELL: My point being that, yes, McMan and other organizations like McMan, if you will, will tender at this level and commercial enterprises will tender at this level, and the government will go with the commercial enterprise, the cheaper level, and will never ever address the issue of quality of Social Services standards. They will not have to do that. And if we were ever suspicious before, we certainly have to be convinced of it now when we see that the government has discontinued its study of generic standards in delivery of social services. If ever we had to be concerned, we have to be especially concerned, because this decision not to establish clear-cut guidelines in the delivery of social services is coupled on the other hand . . .

MRS. OSTERMAN: Mr. Chairman, one more point: the hon. member is obviously getting his information out of the newspaper and it is absolutely inaccurate. There is a standards program, and it has not been discontinued.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order please. There appears to be a disagreement as to what may or may not be fact. Perhaps that can be dealt with in due course. Member for Edmonton Meadowlark, do you want to conclude?

MR. MITCHELL: Perhaps the minister could indicate to us then what were the terms of the tender provided for services that were previously provided for by McMan. Could we see that tender, and could we see listed there the guidelines for the delivery of social services that will be involved in the fulfilling of a contract under that tender? And where is the Don Storch report that dealt with that issue? Thank you.

Similarly, we have concerns with the manner in which the department, the minister, has been dealing with groups such as McMan and such as Kara. I'm sure she is aware of Kara. Kara had spent some time negotiating a fee-for-service arrangement with the Social Services department and had been told that they would get \$4.40 per hour per referred clients. And no sooner had that been arranged, that was cut out. Once again Kara, an effective social services agency -- nonprofit, private -- will have a great deal of difficulty providing the kinds of services they do provide, and believe me those services are necessary. Could the

minister please indicate how that process of negotiation was undertaken, why it was that Kara was not provided with the money that they had originally had committed to them, and could she, for the record, please clarify what exactly happened in the McMan case? Thank you very much.

With respect to the expense of privatization, it is difficult to understand how we will avoid spending more money in the process of privatizing or commercializing. Government will still have a responsibility, we would hope, to ensure that standards are set and implemented effectively, that that will become an important part of the responsibilities of this government, and that that is a labour-intensive, difficult thing to do. The prospect is that not only will we have the delivery of the services in the private/commercial sector, but that won't really effect a reduction of, for example, staff in the Social Services department because tremendous staffing will be required to ensure that the implementation of those programs does meet whatever standards it is that this government happens to subscribe to.

Mr. Chairman, we are very concerned with the emergence or the new awareness of social problems in our society which are not being aggressively addressed in these estimates by this government, and I am speaking specifically of one: violence towards women and children in our society. It's probably been a problem for years and years; it has been inherent in our society. Now we have the advantage of having a widespread awareness that this is going on, and we therefore have a profound moral obligation to do something about it.

There is nothing new in this set of estimates to address that issue. We have seen the *Breaking the Pattern* book and manual and various pamphlets that go with that. It's an interesting initiative. It's a well-thought-out document. It will not solve the problems. It would only solve the problems if a person who beat his children or his wife were to come into a social services agency, pick up the document, read it, and decide not to do that. It is not an aggressive, outwardgoing, forthright approach to solving this problem.

We have new problems, if you will, in our society today, and we need creative, innovative government to react to those problems and to solve them. Violence to women and children is unacceptable. We have to move aggressively to do something about it.

Social service levels. Could the minister please answer the following questions. Will the minister include clothing allowances to short-term social services clients? Will the minister address the issue of shelter ceilings? Currently it's evident that 30 percent of the people requiring shelter support are spending more than the ceiling. Where are they getting that money? They're getting that money from food allocations. Similarly, with respect to day care, it's evident that day care allocations are insufficient and people requiring day care in order to leave the home and search for jobs are not having enough to do that.

Discretionary funding for people who are job hunting. Could the minister please ensure the House that people who require that funding are aware of it, that everybody who has a chance to get it has that possibility presented to them? Can the minister indicate what will be the caseload in the area of income security? Certainly she is to be congratulated for increasing staffing in that area, but what relationship does that staffing increase bear to the increased caseload, and what will the ultimate ratio of staff to caseload be, both in the income security area and in the child welfare area as well?

With respect to shelter, it's been made clear many times that \$180 a month is insufficient for single employables. I can only

ask the rhetorical question: what if there is an odd number of single employables out there and we know for a fact therefore that one of them will not be able to find a roommate? What then? What if it is that simply many, many of those people cannot find a roommate, and finally why is it that we even have to require that they should find a roommate? Perhaps the debate should be on the quality of their life and the level of income they need to have some fundamental, basic dignity in that quality of life, Mr. Chairman.

MRS. OSTERMAN: Mr. Chairman, I believe it would be appropriate for me to respond to a number of comments that have been made by the hon. member. It is unfortunate that in particular the organization of McMan -- the name is raised so often -- because if the hon. member had read from the previous discussion, page 499 of *Hansard*, he would have certainly seen that there was a full description of that particular situation. I did receive a letter apologizing for the actions of the previous executive director from the chairman of the McMan board. I don't think we need to belabour that fact, because they are a renowned organization, they have been doing an absolutely excellent job and will continue to in the future. That doesn't mean, however, that they will continue to deliver every single service they might have delivered in the past, that that in fact will go into the future.

Just a couple of points that I had missed previously. The hon. Member for Edmonton Calder had raised day care administration, and I don't believe I touched on that. I did make a commitment to review that administration. And while that has been under way -- and we want to make some changes -- we believed it was inappropriate to be making any more changes, as we had begun to last fall, until we ascertained the role of the federal government, whether it might, with our concurrence, change the manner in which day care, in a number of aspects, is delivered in this province. So I didn't want to get into making changes in an ad hoc way. That is why that hasn't occurred. It certainly is an ongoing concern; obviously the hon. member realizes that, and I appreciate that.

The Hilltop House again. I recall one other note I didn't have in front of me before. I think the hon. member is raising Hilltop as if we were speaking to counseling and a whole number of things that were going on there. Hilltop House is a residential facility, not a treatment facility. So it is important to note for all hon. members that regardless of where the people live who need that treatment, the treatment is ongoing and the fact that they're not living at Hilltop House does not mean that somehow their treatment will be discontinued.

I also want to note that the hon. Member for Edmonton Meadowlark, I think with a little coaching -- appropriately so, because from time to time it is recognized that there are people with experiences that can be utilized in the House and they can refer to those experiences, as I see the hon. Member for Edmonton Gold Bar has done in assistance of the hon. Member for Edmonton Meadowlark. And that is that the standards project in the information that was put together by Mr. Storch is in its final form, as I understand it. It is still in department hands, and it should be in my hands very shortly. So I will look forward -- as the hon. Member for Edmonton Gold Bar last year had indicated a concern in the questions she had raised -- I certainly will look forward to addressing that.

A lot of discussion about private-sector people delivering services as opposed to possibly direct government intervention in the delivery of services. I find that rather interesting, in that

somehow some hon. members will continue to try to lay the base with the public that something very terrible is going to happen as a result of the private sector getting involved in the delivery of services. I really find this is unfortunate. They can come back with a self-fulfilling prophecy after they've been out discussing all over the country that, "Oh my God, all these terrible things are going to happen, the roof is falling in." I find that incredibly interesting, because after having done that and generated all the discussion and the concern, they then come back to the House and say, "We have all this concern that we bring back to you, Madam Minister."

I want to use an example, and I hope it will have some value in making sure that the hon. members know they should look carefully at what exactly is happening before raising all the concerns and then having that permeating out to the greater community. The tender, as I understand, for one particular area of child care was won by a private-sector group. That private-sector group has been blessed, if you will, by the Child Welfare League of America. We look to such a group to give us guidance about who will deliver services in many instances. And certainly with that blessing, if you will, I would expect that hon. members should take some comfort in the level of service that will be delivered. For the hon. Member for Edmonton Meadowlark to suggest that there is automatically a lesser service being delivered I think flies in the face of a number of things. Probably, if nothing else, the hon. member should be apologizing to a number of those people out there who in fact are delivering very excellent services.

I hope that in future when we get into that discussion, rather than the sense that the sky is falling, hon. members will bring forward the precise example of services that in fact are not being delivered in an appropriate way, that in fact somehow we have entered into -- I will check every contract that is raised with me -- that the contracts aren't spoken to in a way that speak to the service being delivered, the price that the service is going to be delivered for, and the standards that must be met in the delivery of that service. Because certainly if there are instances where those services aren't being delivered in an appropriate manner, this minister is very interested. Again, not everyone is perfect in any sector, whether it's the private or the public. I know that those people, for all intents and purposes, that I have met want very much to do a good job. So when information comes to us or comes to them and it speaks to needing to correct whatever is occurring, generally in fact that will happen.

So we would appreciate -- as opposed to just speaking in general terms that in fact this or that is not right in a philosophical sense, let us speak to the service that is being delivered. Because after all, I think that instead of sitting or standing on our respective philosophies, we ought to look at the clients that are needing to be served and all of those people in our society and then saying, "Is this a good service?" So often we again speak in generalities that services aren't being delivered. I want to just enumerate a whole host of examples, because again we don't ever get into that there is a particular area that "You've got a program, Madam Minister, but it isn't delivering the service."

Handicapped Children's Services, for instance, in Calgary. Let's get into a couple of areas that I think have provided in a program sense some degree of controversy. Handicapped Children's Services is a marvelous program. It allows families to keep children with handicaps at home as opposed to having to have them in some sort of residential institution. But we've found out many things, Chairman, as a result of in fact getting into a discussion of budget restraint. In this area, when we ex-

amined how we were handling our budget, we found out that the delivery of service wasn't necessarily as uniform across the province as it should be. And when the Handicapped Children's Services was being addressed in the Calgary region, certainly a whole host of those particular concerns were identified. So there's an example of specifics being raised, our ability to address them, and as a result of that, looking at a program and saying, "Yes, we can do this better. We can make sure that parents across the province who have handicapped children are dealt with in a far more even-handed way."

The child welfare area in the Calgary region -- and I know there are many members here. The hon. Member for Calgary North Hill -- and I thank him for his kind comments -- spoke to a number of programs that are delivered in that region, and of course that's a huge region along with Edmonton. The Calgary region has redistributed some \$1.6 million from residential programs to community-based programs in response to the focus under the new Child Welfare Act. I think that's just incredible, because there are programs now that are able to be entered into that wouldn't have been delivered before if we had stuck to the old model of the residential programs. I can look at five programs in particular: the Salvation Army school age, day care treatment program; the joint integrated measures for youth program, which they have short-formed into JIMY; runaway homeless youth shelter, by the Boys' and Girls' Club; the Calgary Crisis Nursery, by Parents Anonymous; early childhood treatment program. Chairman, this is an example. I know hon. members are concerned with that, because there is a perception that if they see a program being downsized in one particular area, they don't take the time to look for the detail or to ask for the specific detail of what is replacing some of those programs. For instance, the Salvation Army school age day-treatment program was developed in response to an increase in community need for day-treatment services to school-age children and their families. Child welfare workers estimate that approximately 30 percent of children placed in residential care could remain at home if adequate programs were available to them. So this project was designed to provide out-patient, so to speak, programs for significantly disturbed children aged 8 to 16 years, and the program will divert seriously emotionally and behaviourally disturbed children from more costly residential care. The role of the program is to prevent the placement of children in those residential services and of course is in support of the family as a whole.

In the JIMY program that I mentioned earlier, the joint integrated measures for youth, this program began as a demonstration program and has been in full operation since May 1986. It is administered jointly through the Department of Social Services and a private agency, Calgary Integrated Services. The intent of the program is to provide a single entry for 16 to 17 year olds and their families requesting assistance. "Single entry program" refers to the availability of both child welfare and income security programs through a single intake. I think it's been particularly successful in operating in Calgary in the downtown core with youth who would otherwise be under departmental status, or another word might be "guardianship."

The Salvation Army preschool program. This program was developed as a result of identified need for services for behaviourally disturbed preschoolers. Again, Mr. Chairman, a very important initiative, because we keep saying it is not only looking at treating the problem as we identify it now, it's the prevention of the problem reaching or manifesting itself in the way we have seen now with older children.

Through the Salvation Army children's village a multidisciplinary program provides individual, group, family, and psychiatric treatment. In addition, therapeutic classrooms also provide life skills, recreation, and occupational therapy. This program helps fulfill a need in the area of child/family support, which is an integral part of the new Child Welfare Act. It is anticipated that this program will reduce child apprehensions and the subsequent need for residential beds. Mr. Chairman, while on the surface of it a new program may look very expensive, indeed it is cost-effective and for families provides a most important form of support.

Very interesting discussion with the Calgary food bank, Mr. Chairman. Last year in meeting with a number of people who are associated with food banks in the province, the Calgary people were most forthcoming. A study of food banks was completed in the city of Calgary, and numerous meetings were held between senior department officials and a number of the community organizations in Calgary. This was very important because we've had on numerous occasions information raised, particularly as a result of the discussions that I imagine a number of hon. members have with the food bank in this particular area. But I thought it was important to share the Calgary experience because senior officials were directed by myself, starting out with the deputy minister initially and then others, to liaise with the food banks. So as a result of these meetings, various changes were made to the delivery of income security in Calgary. As you know, various regions have the autonomy to bring forward programs or to do a number of programs and vary them just slightly in their own region. That provides us with an opportunity of, instead of using a cookie-cutter approach, looking at the programs that seem to be achieving the most success and all of us learning from that in every region of the province.

One of the key changes, Chairman, was the hiring of a liaison worker. A social worker is assigned to deal specifically with a number of agencies in the Calgary region on a regular basis. The liaison worker on almost a daily basis visits the UIC office in Calgary. I think we realize that there are many people that need additional support who are on unemployment insurance. This provides a liaison between the department's income security program and the UIC office. Many times clients come to the department to seek social assistance because they are awaiting unemployment insurance benefits. In order to speed the flow of information from the UIC offices to the various social workers within the region, this liaison worker visits the UIC offices, again, as I said, on a regular basis. The liaison worker also visits community organizations such as the Unemployment Action Centre, the United Church social action ministry, the city of Calgary's social services department, the Calgary Coalition for Support of Persons on Welfare, and the Calgary food bank. Because of the availability of this worker, the Calgary food bank has immediate access to a departmental individual to determine whether social allowance clients need assistance with budgeting courses or referrals to other community agencies. Obviously, this saves many, many steps, and more than anything is particularly valuable to the individual client that we are trying to serve.

And also as a result of these meetings held between various community organizations and the department, Calgary was able to pioneer new standards of service for social allowance clients. With the hiring of additional temporary wage employees, the Calgary region has now established a standard of delivery of two days for social allowance clients in almost all instances. Clients normally come into the office on day one, are provided

with basic information, and the correct documentation has to be returned by the next day when the appointment is scheduled with a social worker. Of course, some time later on that second day the cheque should be available, if in fact they fit the criteria for their assistance.

Mr. Chairman, another very important initiative, as I mentioned, of one of the five, is the Boys' and Girls' Club, again speaking to the delivery of services that deal with our young people, and I believe this should be one of the most important aspects of our initiatives in the Department of Social Services. The Boys' and Girls' Club of Calgary recently completed a survey indicating that there was a chronic need for a shelter for street children. Approximately 90 street kids in Calgary exist at one specific time, and over 50 percent of these children are living by illegal activity. I know most of us would certainly be appalled in coming to grips with that kind of information. With this information identified by the Boys' and Girls' Club, a presentation was made to Alberta Social Services in Calgary. With the shift of funding from one area to another -- to be precise, \$340,000 was made available to the Boys' and Girls' Club of Calgary to provide this emergency shelter for street kids. The Boys' and Girls' Club of Calgary began searching for a shelter and eventually were able to acquire the old Calgary Women's Emergency Shelter, and with some modification to the building and the new executive director in place, Madelline McDonald, I'm pleased to say they are now operating. Madelline McDonald was hired earlier this year, and the centre opened.

Just some specifics, Mr. Chairman, to have a full understanding of the kids that we're talking about. Avenue 15 can accommodate 17 youths, nine boys and eight girls. Again, it operates with a very significant grant. It provides a safe, secure environment for runaway and homeless youths who might otherwise attempt to meet their immediate needs on the street. Six full-time staff and part-time workers operate the centre. They cook breakfast and lunches, and a cook comes in to prepare the evening meal. The cleanup and chores are the responsibility of the kids. I think this is a reasonably ideal situation. Hopefully some responsibility is put into the hands of the children, but also there are other people there to meet the kids' needs. The basement level houses offices and recreation and laundry facilities; the ground floor has an intake and office area, living room, and bright dining room and kitchen; and upstairs the boys occupy three rooms, while the girls share a large dorm on the top floor.

There are more and more pieces of information about this particular shelter, Mr. Chairman, but I think that if you look at the individuals that are being attracted to this type of work, that are now in place to serve the kids -- an example I spoke before of is Madelline McDonald. She's had numerous years of experience working with the street kids in New York city and of course was recently hired by the executive of the Boys' and Girls' Club. I think we will see some very significant results of that type of activity and facility being made available to our young people.

The hon. Member for Edmonton Meadowlark again referenced: what is it that we're really doing for battered women and their families? The Calgary region has recently commenced a diagnostic assessment system that works in co-operation with the Calgary Women's Emergency Shelter, the Sheriff King Home for battered women, and Discovery House. A psychologist completes an assessment of all children that enter these shelters with their families. The children that are high risk or that exhibit behaviour problems are then referred to the child protection system and an immediate investigation is done.

Mr. Chairman, one can only just imagine, in reading and hearing the kind of abuse that we have to recognize in the women and children that come for this type of diagnostic assessment -- but needless to say, the program is so valuable because it trains shelter staff to deal with intervening and behavioural problems manifested by these children, and we believe that this type of intervention will certainly provide a key step in breaking the cycle of family violence.

The crisis nursery recently opened in Calgary. This facility provides relief for families who are encountering problems with their infants, and we know that in particular we have a number of young people that face that situation. The facility is located in southwest Calgary. It provides accommodation for up to six children at a time, under six years of age, with a maximum stay up to 72 hours. The program is operated by a community agency, Parents Anonymous. Alberta Social Services funds the program on an annual basis for \$216,000. This program is unique in Canada, we understand, and the program in Calgary is only the second to be operated in the country. The original crisis nursery is located in Saskatoon.

And last year another important initiative for the Calgary regional area. I think hon. members will recall our special funding that was dedicated to the treatment of sexually abused children, and of course we're most anxious to see what type of programs would be manifested from that additional funding. I wanted to tell hon. members that over the past year the Calgary region has increased funding for this area from \$266,000 on an annual basis to \$619,000. The original programs operated by Anderson & Mayes Counselling services, Alberta Psychological Resources, and the Alberta children's hospital child abuse team operated in the Calgary region. With this additional funding available this year, these three programs have been expanded to permit more clients to enter this badly needed treatment area. In addition, new child sexual abuse treatment programs will be operated by the Holy Cross hospital social work team and the Catholic Family Service bureau in Calgary.

Mr. Chairman, the Baker Centre redevelopment project of course also speaks to children in care, and while I could get into a fair amount of details about the redevelopment project there at Baker, some \$20 million has been expended over the significant phases of the program.

Some time ago the universal rehabilitation service association, a private agency in Calgary, began the operation of six-bed group homes. And I think all hon. members again recognize the important efforts that are being made to change the so-called residential institutional services that have been present in the past -- certainly believed to be appropriate at the time, but as we have seen the delivery of services change, I think most hon. members would recognize that the location of services in a much more individual fashion in the community is what's really required.

Chairman, I might just close by saying that while we could go on and on and on about the incredible programs that fall under Social Services, there is nobody being conceited or arrogant in the idea that somehow we have met all the needs. I don't think it's possible. I don't think we even know about all the needs that are presently out there. But I would say this: that we continually seem to discuss political philosophy and somehow identify the treatment as if it should be attached to our political philosophy. And that just isn't so. I think what we do is keep looking for opportunities brought forward in terms of ideas by all of those people who are out there in the community interested in delivering programs, interested in meeting the clients'

needs in the most appropriate way possible. I am not going to check those people out with some sort of a litmus test to see if they have a private-sector philosophy or if they have a public-sector philosophy. What I am interested in, what we as a government are interested in, are services that are delivered in the most appropriate way possible and, obviously, to meet the needs that we can see identified for all of those special people out there that we will continue to try to serve.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Member for Calgary Foothills, please.

MRS. KOPER: Mr. Chairman, in view of the time I beg leave to adjourn debate.

MS BARRETT: Speaking to the motion, Chairman, I was going to move that we agree to stop the clock. [interjections] In light of the fact that a number of opposition MLAs, who haven't the ability to discuss the issue in government caucus . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: Point of order, point of order.

MS BARRETT: I'm making a motion at the moment, sir, and I'm speaking to the motion that has been made by the Member for Calgary Foothills. That's a legitimate thing to do. [interjections]

MR. BRADLEY: Mr. Chairman, the adjournment motion is not debatable.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Agreed.

MS BARRETT: I'm sorry; would you like me to quote *Standing Orders*?

18 (1) The following motions are debatable: every motion . . .

(f) for the adjournment of the Assembly when made for the purpose of discussing a matter of urgent public importance.

Chairman, I would argue that there has been a thinly veiled attempt to ensure that opposition members cannot get in on this most important debate. The motion to adjourn is extremely inappropriate under the circumstances. There is such a thing as moving to stop the clock. I urge members to defeat the motion by the Member for Calgary Foothills and entertain a subsequent

motion to stop the clock so that all members of this Assembly can discuss the . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order. Order please. Standing Order 60 states what the committee must do in terms of rising. The committee will now . . . Hon. Government House Leader.

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Chairman, the House can stop the clock, but the committee cannot. I move the committee rise and report progress and ask leave to sit again.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Moved by the hon. Government House Leader that the committee rise and report.

MS BARRETT: Point of order, Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order please.

MS BARRETT: The previous motion was that we adjourn debate, as enunciated by the Member for Calgary Foothills; I believe that has to be dealt with first.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order please. The committee will now rise and report under Standing Order 60.

[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 agree?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed? Carried.

The Chair recognizes the Government House Leader. The Chair's watch seems to be a bit more accurate than that up on the wall. The Chair recognizes that as being 5:28.

[At 5:30 p.m. the House adjourned to Thursday at 2 p.m.]