

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ALBERTA

Title: **Wednesday, April 20, 1988 2:30 p.m.**

Date: 88/04/20

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

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

PRAYERS

MR. SPEAKER: Let us pray.

We give thanks to God for the rich heritage of this province as found in our people.

We pray that native-born Albertans and those who have come from other places may continue to work together to preserve and enlarge the precious heritage called Alberta.

Amen.

head: TABLING RETURNS AND REPORTS

MR. STEVENS: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to table the annual report of the Department of Culture and Multiculturalism for the year ended March 31, 1987.

head: INTRODUCTION OF SPECIAL GUESTS

MR. SPEAKER: Member for Stony Plain.

MR. HERON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure today to introduce to you and through you to my colleagues in this Assembly, 51 grade 6 students from the Forest Green school in Stony Plain. They are accompanied by their teachers Doug Hamilton and Diane Lukey; parents Rick Maze, Lori Kirkby, Buffy Bartley, Marlene McTavish, Val Wright, Karen West; and bus driver John Nielsen. They also have two special guests from England: Mrs. Meta Adlem and a retired minister Desmond Spackman. They are situated in the members' gallery, and I ask that they stand and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

MR. SPEAKER: Rocky Mountain House, followed by Edmonton-Calder.

MR. CAMPBELL: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure today to introduce to you and through you to the Assembly, 21 grade fives and sixes from the Benalto school. They are accompanied by their teacher Audrey Brattberg; parents Lynne Lawrence, Darlene Adams, Laurie Lemmon; and their bus driver Elmer Brattberg. They are seated in the public gallery, and I would ask them now to rise and receive the cordial welcome of the Assembly.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Calder, followed by Red Deer-North, followed by Edmonton-Kingsway.

MS MJOLSNESS: Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure today to

introduce to you and to members of the Assembly, 30 grade 6 students from McArthur elementary school located in the constituency of Edmonton-Calder. They are accompanied by their teacher Mr. Dame and parents Mrs. Liska, Mrs. Ilnicki, and Mrs. Atkinson. They are seated in the public gallery, and I would ask that they rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

MR. DAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to introduce to you today, four citizens from Red Deer. Craig and Rita O'Connor are involved in Red Deer in some of the province's social programming both at the Michener Centre and in the community in youth development work. They're here today with their children Patrick and Natalie, and I'd ask them all to stand and receive the warm welcome of this Assembly.

MR. McEACHERN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today it's my pleasure to introduce to you and through you to all the members of the Assembly, 32 grade 6 students from St. Pius X school. They are accompanied by their teacher Mr. Ron Huber and an aide Mrs. Shirley Haight. I request that they stand and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

head: ORAL QUESTION PERIOD**Home Care Funding**

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, to the Premier. I have some interesting figures regarding home care. Home care costs the taxpayers about \$4 per day; put another way, the same as a working person pays for lunch in a fast-food restaurant. Nursing homes cost about \$36 per day, perhaps the cost of a play-off hockey ticket in a good seat. Auxiliary hospitals cost about \$114 per day; that might be dinner for two at a downtown restaurant. Finally, acute care hospitals cost hundreds of dollars per day and might be a whole weekend at the racetrack. Knowing this, would the Premier explain why this government refuses to adequately fund health care in this province?

MR. GETTY: Obviously, Mr. Speaker, all of the facilities that the hon. Leader of the Opposition is referring to are necessary in our province. The government funds them and funds them to a greater extent than any province in Canada.

MR. MARTIN: Well, Mr. Speaker, that's interesting. Maybe he wants to talk to his junior minister, the Minister of Community and Occupational Health, because he said yesterday that we have to quit building more buildings and provide more for community care; that's the minister. My question in this is: who is speaking for the government? Is the minister wrong and the Premier speaking for the government, that we are adequately funding community care in this province?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, surely the Leader of the Opposition would know that every minister, every department would like funds to do everything you'd possibly want to wish to do and provide to Albertans. That's natural, and I would want my ministers to do that. But obviously, too, someone's got to worry about the Alberta taxpayer. It surely isn't the NDP or the Liberals, but we have to worry about the Alberta taxpayer and not load up more and more debt on him, as they loaded on the people of Canada over the years in those two governments in

Ottawa.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, the Premier is missing the point. Community care saves money for this government. That's the point he was making.

My question, then, to the minister. Maybe he understands this a little better than the Premier. The minister yesterday indicated that the province should provide more care in the community, and I agree with him. But I would say that he's being insincere, because if he believes this, why is it that we are spending less in this year's budget than we did two years ago in community care? Why is that?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, just before my colleague the minister answers the question, I want to say to the hon. Leader of the Opposition: this government understands completely. That's why we provide all of those facilities to the people of Alberta and why we do it with an amount of money unparalleled in this nation.

MR. DINNING: Mr. Speaker, I want to take up the hon. Premier's support and the hon. Leader of the Opposition's question and say that I'm very proud of the efforts that our government puts forward providing home care, providing community care, for a number of citizens throughout this province. Yes, I am a strong advocate of community care and particularly in providing funding for home care, which this province has doubled its commitment to over the last four and a half years. It's my objective to ensure that we continue that trend.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, I point out again: they're spending less now than they did two years ago. Some commitment.

But my question to the minister is: in some of the places, some of the home care programs, they're facing a crisis situation. I'm sure he's well aware that in Calgary they're running a deficit of \$90, 000 per month. Now, rather than talk -- talk is cheap, Mr. Minister -- what is the minister doing about that? Is he basically saying to the Calgary board of health that they can balance their budget by telling seniors, "Tough luck; there's no money," but they can go and look for institutional care? Is that what they're saying to these people?

MR. DINNING: Mr. Speaker, we're saying nothing of the kind to the Calgary board of health, and as a matter of fact officials in my department are meeting tomorrow with officials from the Calgary board of health.

Mr. Speaker, I want to comment on the hon. leader's questionable, as usual, research. He's gone to the *Calgary Herald* to find research there. If he'd gone and found out his facts, he'd know that the actual home care caseload in the city of Calgary has increased some 35 or so since before the nurses' strike occurred and that during the nurses' strike the caseload did increase. But our government, as was promised, supported that increased caseload and has provided funding to the board of health to help them with that caseload.

MR. SPEAKER: The Chair will now recognize the Leader of the Opposition for the second main question.

The line of questioning is really dealing with the estimates that have been designated for later this afternoon.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to designate my second question to the Member for Edmonton-Centre.

Home Care Programs

REV. ROBERTS: Mr. Speaker, I too have some questions about the inadequate funding for home care, directed to the Minister of Hospitals and Medical Care. These estimates are not up for debate today.

Our research, Mr. Speaker, has shown that if hospitals begin to look at hospital home care programs, for an expenditure of about \$3 million, almost \$65 million could be saved annually in hospital expenditures for patients who are inappropriately placed in hospitals or who are there for an extended period of time. What research has the Department of Hospitals and Medical Care done to demonstrate the accrued savings to the taxpayers of Alberta for having hospital home care programs aimed at reducing the length of stay of patients in active treatment beds?

MR. M. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is not aware, I guess, that home care programs operated by the Edmonton and Calgary boards of health and by 15 other health units throughout this province do provide home care services to active treatment hospitals. In most cases there is a very direct link between the active treatment hospital administration, the nurses, the doctors, and the home care nurses. In fact, I visited last Friday afternoon at a hospital in Beaverlodge where the hospital board chairman, the administrator, and one of the doctors in attendance said they had an excellent relationship between the two home care nurses who worked with the South Peace health unit and the hospital in terms of moving people out even for as short a period of time as a day or two, sending them home earlier so there would be less cost to the active treatment hospital.

I could just add, Mr. Speaker, that if the hon. member hasn't had an opportunity to read it, he should read the report *A New Vision for Long Term Care -- Meeting the Need*, which has a number of recommendations in it which are now being followed up, many of them actively, by staff in my department and Community and Occupational Health and also the chairman of the committee which developed this report, the hon. Member for Calgary-Glenmore.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary to this question.

REV. ROBERTS: Well, yes, Mr. Speaker. It seems one of the recommendations is that the minister of hospitals take over home care delivery in the province, and I'm talking about that kind of policy. Is it the position of the minister that hospitals themselves take over home care programs such as the proposal from Foothills that they do cardiac home care out of the cardiac unit at the Foothills hospital or the postnatal programs out of obstetric units that take moms home earlier or the palliative care programs that take dying patients home early -- that they be nurses from the hospitals not from the health units doing that?

MR. M. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, the recommendation in the long-term care report is that home care be a dedicated, funded program under a single division of some department, not necessarily a single department. The report also recommends that the delivery of home care services continue to be by agencies which presently deliver the services. Just because you fund home care services from one particular division doesn't mean that the delivery of home care services have to come under that area. So there's no anticipated change with respect to the delivery of home care services. It's anticipated that would continue to be

by the existing agencies and organizations that are in the field delivering home care and, I might add, doing a very good job.

REV. ROBERTS: Well, Mr. Speaker, the Mirosh report says that the demand for home care services far exceeds the supply, particularly for long-term care patients who are being deinstitutionalized. You've got it in your report that there should be more funding for home care services. So how can the minister recommend to the Youville program, for instance, which has as its mandate the deinstitutionalization of elderly out of long-term care centres into the home, that they do that when they don't have money in the health units to fund home care services when the people get out, for heaven's sake?

MR. M. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, we'd appreciate very much if the hon. member would take an opportunity to take a broader look at the whole field of care for our elderly citizens. That's what this report does, and it was commissioned by this government because we are anxious to find some long-term policy solutions to the care of elderly people. We do believe very strongly that we have the best long-term care program in Canada now; we want it to be even better. The directions which are recommended here are presently the subject of public discussion, will be for the next couple of months. Then we want to come back after having that important input from all of the care givers and all of the people involved in the field and finalize this into government policy and move forward with a number of these recommendations. In the meantime, some which we know have extremely broad support -- for example, the project of moving the so-called "bed blockers" out of hospitals in Edmonton and Calgary -- we are proceeding with, at any rate. But we want to make sure that we have broad community support and co-operation for these initiatives before we move ahead.

REV. ROBERTS: And all of the players are saying they need more money to do it, particularly more money for home care services, Mr. Minister.

Will the minister personally investigate the needs of Marjorie Reid of Calgary, who, instead of being admitted to a \$500-a-day bed in a hospital in Calgary, decided to receive care at home but waited up to two weeks for home care and homemaking services?

MR. M. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member will look at the recommendations from page 60 through to page 63 in the long-term care report, he'll find that recommendation 7.5 recommends that a pilot project be developed immediately to find ways to move people who have been assessed for longer term care out of expensive active treatment hospital beds, either back into the community, into lower cost auxiliary hospitals or nursing homes. That pilot project is currently under way in Edmonton with a committee chaired by the hon. Member for Calgary-Glenmore, with the hon. Member for Cypress-Redcliff as a member of that committee, along with two other individuals who have been working throughout the course of the last couple of weeks -- in fact, visited the Misericordia hospital for some length of time last week and will be visiting other hospitals in Edmonton over the next two weeks. So there's action going on in the very area that the hon. member is talking about. Fortunately, I suppose he's aware of that; otherwise he wouldn't have thought to raise it.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

Edmonton-Gold Bar.

MRS. HEWES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Clearly the minister understands there are dollar savings in health care through a move towards home care. The Mirosh report speaks to it; the minister of community health speaks to it. Will the minister of hospitals and health care now produce for the House an immediate proposal and a budget as to how we can fulfill these objectives? The time for talking about it is over, Mr. Minister.

MR. M. MOORE: Well, I take rather strong exception to the suggestion that the time for talking about long-term care is over. I don't think it is at all. As a matter of fact, I think the best decisions with respect to how we care for our elderly citizens are made after you put before all of the care givers and those involved some options that are well thought out. That's what these are. Then we get a response that will allow us to come back and say, "There's something we didn't think of," or "There's a different direction we can take in one or two of these areas." That may not meet the time frame of the hon. members of the opposition to do something without giving any thought to it, but we think it's a responsible way to go.

Municipal Liability Insurance

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, my question today is to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and to the Attorney General. A couple of days ago the Minister of Municipal Affairs told the Assembly that he would be doing something to reduce the exorbitant rise in liability insurance costs for local government -- due to the report that he'd recently filed -- and hopefully by September. This is of course highlighted by the Alberta Hospital Association announcing yesterday that their costs are going up another 30 percent.

Also, just a few weeks ago the attorneys general of eight states in the United States initiated legal action against members of the insurance industry for alleged conspiracy to limit coverage and raise premiums for municipal liability insurance in the U. S. and Canada. For fear that he may not have it, I have four copies here that I can give the page, if they'll come around, to file. My first question, then, is to the Minister of Municipal Affairs. Was he aware that there was an action for collusion launched against the very same insurance companies which our municipalities are expected to insure with, just a few days ago in the U. S.?

MR. SPEAKER: This is not the appropriate place to be filing something.

Minister of Municipal Affairs.

MR. ANDERSON: Mr. Speaker, with respect to the question of the hon. member I'm not specifically aware of the filings that he speaks to. They don't, however, bear a direct relationship to our consideration of support for recommendations regarding liability insurance for municipalities. It's our belief that we should assist the municipalities in reaching some conclusion as to whether or not self-insurance would be more beneficial than the current insurance schemes that they're involved with. As I indicated on the previous day, I expect to be able to reach a decision in that regard by September of this year.

MR. TAYLOR: Not much help, Mr. Speaker, if you're dealing with a bunch of crooks.

Would the Attorney General then tell us whether or not he is going to do something to investigate or consider a similar action?

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, I'm aware that the attorneys general in the United States of America have had under consideration the issue of liability insurance. That was a topic under discussion at the annual meeting of attorneys general last year in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, which I was unable to attend although I had an invitation to do so. It is my intention, if at all possible, to attend the annual meeting of the state attorneys general which will be held in early June this year in the United States. I will send a representative if I'm not able to attend myself.

But in terms of a specific legal action launched in another jurisdiction outside Canada, I'm not in a position to comment on what might be under way. However, I should say this: the commencement of legal action does not mean that a decision has been rendered. If the hon. leader of the Liberal Party would care to consult with his legal expert sitting behind him from Calgary-Buffalo, he would know that judgments come down after the matter has been dealt with in the courts. So it is entirely inappropriate to prejudge matters of this kind.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, this isn't a party to go over and share booze with attorneys general down in the U. S. This was an action launched on March 22, 1988. Has this Attorney General the interest of the public of Alberta and the hundreds of people out there in municipal government, enough interest to at least look into launching an action? On page 57 of this action it mentions that Canada is one of the areas that's getting shafted. Surely he has enough...

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, hon. member, for your succinct supplementary.

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, as usual, the Liberal leader is offensive in his opening remarks.

MR. TAYLOR: I tried to be.

MR. HORSMAN: I know. The hon. leader of the Liberal Party has replied to my remark that he tries to be offensive, and he succeeds in most cases, Mr. Speaker. He's done so again today.

If I attend conferences, I do so for serious purposes. I think that while I'm not certain I will be able to attend, I certainly will consult not only with attorneys general in the United States of America but with the attorneys general in Canada. I can advise the hon. member that we have a conference scheduled for Quebec City in late May of this year, and the issue may very well be discussed at that time, although at this stage I've had no representations that it is necessary or appropriate to commence legal action or to commence any criminal proceedings, as the hon. leader of the Liberal Party seems to be suggesting, against any insurance company or set of insurance companies.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, I'm suggesting that he's asleep on the draw.

Could I then divert this question to the Acting Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs, the minister of transport, whose responsibility, I believe, is now for the superintendent of insurance. Would he ask the minister or directly ask the superintendent of insurance to investigate the alleged collusion of

insurance companies that are trying to offer less insurance for more money here in Canada, as they are in the U. S. ? Would he ask that department to look into it?

MR. ADAIR: Mr. Speaker, I'll be happy to take that as notice and pass it on to the minister and the department.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

Main question for the Representative Party, the Member for Clover Bar, followed by Bow Valley, Edmonton-Avonmore, Edmonton-Gold Bar.

Alberta Government Telephones

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Technology, Research and Telecommunications. This comes from a question that we asked in 1982 and, before that, that the hon. member Bob Clark asked in 1980, and this has to do with government competing with the private sector. I am pleased to see that AGT has finally gotten out of competition with the private sector. Now, my question to the minister is: while I applaud the department for doing that, is this a new direction for the government, that they are going to indicate to Crown agencies to stop competing with the private sector, or is this just a small instance of this happening in this case?

MR. YOUNG: Mr. Speaker, the hon. Member for Clover Bar asks about competition and why Alberta Government Telephones made the decision to discontinue competition in the sound system business. I've already explained that Alberta Government Telephones examined very carefully about a year and a half ago the direction of technology and also the directions for the corporation. In doing that, they determined as a commission that they did not need to be in areas that are well supplied currently by other private-sector firms. If those areas were not closely linked to telecommunications as such -- and that's especially significant given that the technology is changing and there's a considerable amount of data processing and manipulation that occurs currently or is possible with telecommunications. The sound systems and free-standing personal computers were two areas that I understand they have determined were not in the future directions of Alberta Government Telephones.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the Premier. If you can't get the answer from the blocking back, maybe the quarterback will be able to tell us what the play is going to be.

Again, Mr. Speaker, to the hon. Premier: is this the start of a new policy? Is this a policy direction, where we are now going to indicate to Crown corporations that where the private sector is serving the public and serving it well, these government agencies will get out of direct competition wherever possible, as indicated with this small step about the free-standing computers?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, I can only say that it's not a new policy. It's one we've been working on for some time.

DR. BUCK: Well, Mr. Speaker, if it's not a new policy, can the Premier indicate in which department, directly, they will be giving direction that we don't want to be competing with the private sector? Or are we just going to let it go along?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, it's not to a particular department;

it's discussed in both our cabinet and our caucus. We believe that as a government, and we've been following that.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.
Westlock-Sturgeon.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, I detect a difference of opinion between the Premier and the minister. Can I find out from the minister possibly, because the Premier's looking puzzled, what are the operative words in whether competition is allowed with the private sector: whether it is a function of the public organization already, an extension of their principles, or whether or not it's competing with the private sector? Which are the operative words?

MR. YOUNG: Well, to the extent that I've understood the Member for Westlock-Sturgeon, first of all, I would want to clarify that the Alberta Government Telephones Commission itself discussed and came to its own conclusions about the future direction of Alberta Government Telephones. I can advise the hon. members that I did discuss with Alberta Government Telephones Commission that future direction. To the extent that the question, which is where I'm a bit lost, Mr. Speaker, asks how to define what is a part of the basic telephone system, that's a judgment call that is being debated nationally in the national telecommunications policy. It's also one that the commission examines, and it's one that the Public Utilities Board as well looks at. And it is a moving target, Mr. Speaker, because the technology does change.

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Supplementary, Mr. Speaker, to the minister. In regards to the latest annual report of AGT, in which there is a loss of nearly \$20 million for the last two years in an affiliated company, could the minister tell us what was the nature of that loss? Did it arise from a partnership that AGT has with a private-sector company?

MR. YOUNG: Well, Mr. Speaker, I don't have great detail in terms of that partial subsidiary of Alberta Government Telephones, because I think it is a company that's owned 50 percent by the private sector. The underlying cause, as I understand it, was some defective components which were purchased offshore and did give rise to some difficulties in warranting product, but apart from that, that problem has been corrected, was quite some time ago. Different sourcing has been obtained, and I have already given the hon. member the information, I think, that is identifiable with the question.

MR. SPEAKER: The Member for Bow Valley, followed by Edmonton-Avonmore.

Special Grains Program

MR. MUSGROVE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Agriculture. In 1986 the federal government came out with the Canada special grains program. It was to assist producers of particular grains financially because of the subsidies in Europe and in the United States. Much to our surprise and disappointment the forage producers were left out of this particular program. Inasmuch as summer fallow is recognized as a crop rotation and inasmuch as forage is used for a crop rotation, would the minister indicate whether there is any chance now of the forage producers being in the present program?

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, what the hon. member indicates is so, so correct with one exception, that being dehydrated alfalfa. Forage producers are not involved under the special grains program. As the hon. member is aware, it is our belief that they should be included under the special grains program because there is a correlation as it relates to forage production and depressed grain prices. To my knowledge the federal government has not changed their position. To this date the rule is as I have indicated to him: only dehydrated alfalfa is included under the special grains program.

MR. MUSGROVE: Mr. Speaker, I would just like to ask the minister: has the Alberta Department of Agriculture taken a stand on this situation, and could he indicate what the stand is?

MR. ELZINGA: Yes, Mr. Speaker. We have indicated to the federal government our hope that they would include forage production under the special grains program, by way of letter. I had an opportunity yesterday to reinforce that in a conversation that I did have with the minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board, the Hon. Charlie Mayer.

MR. MUSGROVE: Mr. Speaker, I have a lot of forage producers in my area, and their next question to me, and I pass it on to the minister, is: short of the federal government including forage in the special grains program, would the Alberta government be prepared to come up with some type of a program to assist these people?

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member is aware, we have been extremely supportive of the forage producers within the province with programs such as the farm fuel allowance, the fertilizer offset, and our farm credit stability program. In addition to that, we have committed to date somewhere in the vicinity of \$1 million for research activities. Last year alone we made a commitment to them of some \$316,000 for research activities. So we are very supportive to date of our forage production in the province of Alberta.

MR. MUSGROVE: Mr. Speaker, it's obvious that as long as there's a subsidy on certain grains in the United States and in Europe, the special grains program will carry on. Could the minister indicate whether he is putting any pressure on the federal government to include it in a program in [future] years?

MR. ELZINGA: Yes, Mr. Speaker, we are going to continue to make strong representations to our federal counterparts as it relates to forage inclusion under the special grains program. As the hon. member has indicated and I indicated in my opening comments, we believe there is a correlation. We're not sure if the correlation is direct as it relates to depressed prices, as there is also a surplus of hay in the province, as the hon. member is aware. But acknowledging that there is a correlation, it is our hope that there will be some recognition in the event that there is another special grains program for our forage producers.

MR. SPEAKER: Member for Vegreville.

MR. FOX: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In terms of the obvious need for an additional payment this year under the special Canadian grains program, if we're to believe everything we hear in this Assembly, farmers can thank the tough-talking Premier of Alberta for that program. I'm just wondering if he's decided

what the rate ought to be this year, what the level of payment for the special Canadian grains program ought to be this year.

MR. GETTY: No, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The Chair recognizes Edmonton-Avonmore, followed by Edmonton-Gold Bar and then Cypress-Redcliff.

Maintenance Enforcement Program

MS LAING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the Attorney General. I've had a number of calls in regard to the maintenance enforcement program. I recently spoke with a woman registered with the program in February of 1987 who did not receive her first payment until November of 1987, and as of March 1988 she was \$2, 000 in arrears. A second woman reported that her ex-spouse paid into the program with four NSF cheques and is now \$600 in arrears. Part of the problem is inadequate staffing for nearly 20, 000 cases. Is the minister willing to commit himself to adequately staffing this program?

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, the maintenance enforcement program, as was discussed during the course of the estimates of the Department of the Attorney General, is a new program. It is getting off the ground with a fair degree of success, as I pointed out in the statistics I had available at that time. Certainly there are problems associated with the volume of work which has been encountered. We are doing our very best, as are the staff and my office, to try and deal with individual cases that are brought to the attention of myself or to hon. members. Many of our hon. members have referred those particular issues to me to try and obtain attention for them. We are, we believe, adequately staffed, but of course we are reviewing that new program as it proceeds in its implementation. We think it's succeeding generally well, although of course there are problems similar to the ones the hon. member has referred to.

MS LAING: For sure there are problems, and some of them are with the policies. Will the minister change the policy of holding cheques to creditors for 14 days to ensure those from the debtor are not NSF? Because the current practice punishes the innocent creditor for the fraudulent behavior of the ex-spouse, or debtor.

MR. HORSMAN: That is, of course, a matter of making sure the funds are in hand before they are paid out. The funds which we handle in that way are basically in the nature of a trust fund situation. We can't pay out money that we do not actually have in hand. Certainly we will review whether or not that is an appropriate period for which to hold the cheques. Actually, they're not held; they're deposited and hopefully clear within that time. In view of today's current banking practices it may be possible to shorten the time. That will be taken under consideration, and it is a very good point. It's certainly easier now to clear cheques through in a shorter period of time than that. At least mine normally clear faster than that.

MS LAING: Perhaps the maintenance enforcement program could demand certified cheques or money orders.

Will the minister direct the administrator to vigorously enforce maintenance orders rather than merely seeking the co-operation of the debtor?

MR. HORSMAN: It's my understanding and my view that they do indeed vigorously attempt to enforce the payment. It's called the maintenance enforcement program. I think that given the relatively new nature of the program and the relatively high volume, one has to look at the overall performance, and it's indicated to me that of the new registrations, collections are running over 90 percent.

MS LAING: My understanding is quite different.

Will the minister direct the chief administrative officer to use the computer system to ensure that creditors can receive up-to-date information on the status of their account via telephone and that it be given in a courteous and a consistent manner?

MR. HORSMAN: Well, Mr. Speaker, I do believe the staff of the Department of the Attorney General are courteous in dealing with the public. If there are specific examples, I would certainly appreciate having that brought to my attention.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Gold Bar, supplementary.

MRS. HEWES: Yes, supplementary, Mr. Speaker. When there is a court order to a recipient and the errant spouse has been located, will the minister take steps to pay the recipient at that court-ordered rate if court intervention is then made by the errant spouse, which draws out any conclusion for months and months?

MR. HORSMAN: Under some circumstances, if the hon. member is aware as to how the program works, it is possible for the government, through the Department of Social Services, to make payments which will assist people in being maintained over that period of time. But, of course, members of this Assembly would have to vote considerable additional funds to the Department of the Attorney General to provide us with a pool of funds to accomplish the member's suggestion. At the same time, it must be noted that when these matters are in dispute before the court as to the level of maintenance, either for the spouse or for children, it is possible for the other spouse to apply from time to time to have the order varied. That is a court proceeding which I would like to see shortened in terms of its determination, but I would certainly not want to see it taken away.

MR. SPEAKER: Main question, Edmonton-Gold Bar, followed by Cypress-Redcliff.

Social Policy

MRS. HEWES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This document speaks to differences in expectations, relationships between social and economic development, and an environment for independence. The document could also be used to excuse, to reinforce any government decision, action, or inaction. Now, more than noble statements and increases, however well acknowledged, in the minimum wage, the people of Alberta want a commitment from this government that immediately provides incentives for survival to the working poor, many of whom are women who are suffering under successive blows and who are attempting now to maintain independence. My questions, Mr. Speaker, are to the Premier. Will his government reconsider such actions as the renters' tax credit deletion and the increase in medicare premiums, which hit hardest on the working poor of

the province of Alberta?

MR. GETTY: Well, Mr. Speaker, the medicare premiums were frozen this year; there was no increase. Also, the hon. member would know that if you put in rental assistance when there are very few vacancies and where rents are abnormally high, it's needed then. But when there are many vacancies and when the rents are low, obviously a program isn't needed.

I must tell the hon. member that the constant push to spend, spend, spend is something governments just can't continue to do.

MRS. HEWES: Mr. Speaker, accommodations for the working poor are still very much in short supply. Will the government now review the salary allocation for the STEP program? Five fifty an hour hasn't been looked at for years. Many people are trying to live year round at that rate of pay.

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, the STEP program is administered by the Minister of Career Development and Employment.

MR. ORMAN: With regard to the STEP program, Mr. Speaker, it will not be affected in that the minimum wage increase is coming forward in September, and we will be through the summer months.

With regard to the priority employment program there will be an impact in terms of total budget dollars, but I might point out to the hon. member that at \$5.50 an hour it is above the minimum wage, even the new levels.

MRS. HEWES: Mr. Speaker, back to the Premier. Will the Premier, then, eliminate from the .5 percent income surtax families who are existing below \$20,000? This deals most harshly, Mr. Premier, with the working poor, the food bank users of our communities.

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, I would review that with the hon. Provincial Treasurer. I should remind the hon. member that last year some 500,000 Albertans by selective tax reductions were removed from paying any tax at all or had theirs reduced even when there were tax increases last year. This year, when taxes were cut and reduced dramatically in the province, the emphasis was on the people in the lower tax brackets so that they got a far greater benefit, and that's something the government wanted to do to deal with the very problem the member raised.

MRS. HEWES: Mr. Speaker, that's not what the numbers show.

Mr. Premier finally: will the government open the process on this document called Caring & Responsibility, that your government has tabled? Will you invite public input and discussions on this important document, its consequences, its ramifications for programs before it becomes policy?

MR. GETTY: No, Mr. Speaker. It is policy. It's the government's policy, and as the hon. member said when she opened her line of questioning, she thought the document provided excellent ability for...

MRS. HEWES: I didn't say that.

MR. GETTY: Sure she did, Mr. Speaker. She may not have wanted to, but she said it: that it works very well in providing

an opportunity for dealing with social care policy in the province.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, it may be that the Premier doesn't want to talk about spend, spend, spend, but he must recognize that there's a lot of people below the poverty level in this province. One specific example -- if I may ask the question I asked of the Minister of Social Services: would they look at operating with the federal government under the Canada Assistance Plan to at least help hungry children in our schools? There are many of them. They will do it on a 50 percent cost sharing.

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, as the Minister of Social Services mentioned, the government is working with families to make sure they understand the best possible way to provide adequate food and nutrition for their children.

MR. SPEAKER: Member for Cypress-Redcliff.

Federal/provincial Agricultural Programs

MR. HYLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Agriculture, and it's related to the stabilization programs. I wonder if the minister can inform the House, after his meeting in Toronto some weeks ago, if there's anything further in the stabilization program that relates to beef.

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, I'm happy to share with the House that after our recent meeting in Ottawa with the federal minister and the provincial ministers, whereby we're hoping to have greater provincial participation of the provinces that are presently not participating in the tripartite programs, there was general agreement as it related to the participation of provinces in the event that they involve themselves in a national program, and it was important that they withdraw their own provincial programs. There is still debate going on as to what provinces might join, but we are hopeful that there will be a greater provincial participation in what we consider a truly national program.

MR. HYLAND: I wonder, Mr. Speaker, if the minister can inform the House if, in his feelings on the discussion, Saskatchewan is any closer to joining the program, because as an MLA along the border it does distort our cattle market to some extent.

MR. ELZINGA: Yes, Mr. Speaker, there is an indication by the Premier of Saskatchewan, who also serves as their provincial Minister of Agriculture, a willingness whereby he is examining ways whereby hopefully he can participate in the national tripartite stabilization program. As the hon. member is aware, they do have their own provincial stabilization program, and the Premier of that province indicated his willingness to examine his entry into the national program.

MR. HYLAND: I wonder, Mr. Speaker, if the minister can inform the Assembly what percentage sign-up we have under the beef stabilization program, related to cattle, feeder cattle, and cow/calf.

MR. SPEAKER: The time for question period has expired. Might we have unanimous consent to complete this series of

questions?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed? Carried.

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, I don't have those figures at my fingertips, and I'm not quite sure whether the hon. member is referring to participation on a national basis or whether he's referring to the participation rate of our individual Alberta producers. On a national basis under the majority, if not all, we have in excess of 50 percent of the production of the areas that are affected involved in the tripartite programs. On a provincial basis, as it relates to our slaughter cattle, I believe it's somewhere in the vicinity of 80 percent.

I should share with the hon. member also that we are working with the federal government as it relates to the bringing forward of a program for the honey producers also in the province of Alberta.

MR. HYLAND: I wonder, Mr. Speaker, if the minister can inform the Assembly of the sign-up related to the dry bean stabilization program, the percentage sign-up of Alberta participants.

MR. ELZINGA: Here again, Mr. Speaker, I regret that I don't have those figures at my fingertips, but I will get them back to the hon. member. That was our latest entry into the tripartite program, and we're delighted. The acceptance level has been very great as it related to that.

MR. SPEAKER: Athabasca-Lac La Biche, followed by Westlock-Sturgeon.

MR. PIQUETTE: Yes, Mr. Speaker. Is the Minister of Agriculture lobbying the federal government to increase the payout for the cow/calf producers under the red meat stabilization plan?

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, no lobby of the federal government is required, because it's a tripartite committee that establishes the cost as it relates to a payout and the cost also as to what is going to be included in the cost of production. We are working as one of those participants on the committee to increase the cash cost as it relates to cow/calf production within the province.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, supplementary to the minister. In view of the fact that the penetration of the American market goes down considerably as the Canadian dollar moves up -- and it's been moving up fairly rapidly -- could the minister tell the House whether or not in the stabilization plan there's any process factored in that would cover the industry as their export markets towards the U. S. dried up?

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, the program relates directly to price and input costs, as to what it has been the previous years. It does not relate directly to export of our livestock. But in the event that there is a dry-up of that livestock export market and the price is depressed, it naturally would trip into effect so that there presumably would be a payout under the program. As the hon. member is aware, as it relates to slaughter cattle, there was a payout for the last quarter of 1987. We are projecting that there will be some payouts in the red meat sector for 1988.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

head: **COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY**

[Mr. Gogo in the Chair]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Would the Committee of Supply please come to order.

Under Standing Orders the opposition may designate. They have chosen to designate today the Department of Community and Occupational Health.

Department of Community and Occupational Health

MR. CHAIRMAN: As this is the second time this has been before the committee, the Chair will determine the speaking order based on the number of members who have both spoken to the estimates and those who wished to speak last time. So the Chair will call your name in its appropriate order.

Before we proceed, the Chair would remind the committee that the ministerial responsibility for this department is on page 75, along with the estimates for this department.

Hon. minister, Mr. Dinning, do you have any comments to make before the committee?

MR. DINNING: Mr. Speaker, despite my delight in being asked back for an encore performance, I would suggest that my introductory remarks from last time would suffice. I'm looking forward to supportive comments from all corners of the Assembly.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon. Member for Edmonton-Centre.

REV. ROBERTS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There were just a few items of unfinished business from the last time that we wanted to raise with the minister and ask for his comments on and responses to.

One area that we didn't get into at all is the whole area of smoking and smoking cessation programs and other things like that. In fact, I heard on the radio this morning someone commenting on the performance of MLAs during committee estimates, that they were just chatting away, drinking their coffee, and smoking their cigarettes. To have this go out on the CBC this morning was not flattering to us, and it might be even something we can look at in the Assembly in terms of cessation of smoking in the workplace. I know the minister has wanted to.

MR. STRONG: Don't start on that.

REV. ROBERTS: You'll have to deal with our Member for St. Albert before I do.

I know the minister wants to leave it up to the health units, that they've got good programs and they're doing work in this area, but I'm finding even from the health units that there are efforts that they're trying to develop where there's just not funding for it, that there's a need for provincewide programs in smoking cessation and the development of clean air in the workplace. I'm particularly concerned about the increasing number of women who are smoking as a kind of appetite suppressant, so I'm told. In the attempt to be ever so thin and slim, a number of women are turning to slim cigarettes and other means. So there are some real concerns, some real areas, and

I'd like to see some bold initiatives from the minister that we on this side of the House would support. I think about 80 percent of us would support strong initiatives in smoking cessation and clean air.

In terms of following up on the federal government's initiatives with Bill C-51 and what we're going to do about regulating the advertising of cigarettes and the sale of cigarettes, even the member from -- you know, over here; where is he from? -- Calgary-McCall, selling cigarettes with great abandon to young kids in Calgary: what could we do to really regulate the sale of cigarettes, particularly to our young people and throughout? It seems again an irony to me that here we should put \$70 million new dollars into the Cross Cancer Institute, when of course a good case can be made for people developing cancer, but how much money are we putting into smoking cessation programs which would alleviate in the first instance the high rate of cancer, not to mention heart condition?

The second area we wanted to make sure the minister knew that there was great concern around was the whole area of adult day care: new efforts and vital efforts of many in the community to have programs for our senior citizens and for our elderly to go for social and emotional support during the day, one of many preventative health care measures for the elderly. In fact, I looked at the Edmonton board of health's proposals for keeping the elderly well -- and certainly adult day care would be one of them -- but again, so much attention is focused upon the frail elderly and the long-term care system for those who are sick. But we need to continue programs for the 83 percent of elderly who are well to keep them well and to keep them at home.

Now, I read with interest how the minister was there with other Calgary MLAs with a generous grant for the Kerby Centre's adult day care centre. But I know there are similar proposals from people here in Edmonton who, I am told, are afraid their funding might run out by November of this year. So they're in an awkward position in terms of knowing whether to plan or to hire staff to advertise or what they're to expect past November, whether or not their funding levels are going to be up to what they need.

I know we go through it every year. I don't know whether we're not listening on this side of the House or whether the minister's just not speaking on that side of the House -- but the whole issue of the discrepancy in the per capita allocation for health units. And here we are again, all 27 of them all over the map, with, of course, High Level coming in at the highest level of funding per capita for its health unit -- \$145 a person -- whereas so many members of the governing party coming from that poor city that happened to lose the first game of the battle of Alberta last night, so many members coming from Calgary, being at the bottom of the barrel in terms of per capita allocation funding for health units. You'd think there would be some effective lobbyists in the government party from Calgary, not to mention the minister himself, who would be able to see that figure go up a bit or at least be more equitable with the other health units. Now, I know their argument about different programs and what they're doing and so on, the whole argument we're getting into about global funding for health units: all of these bear on the discussion. But there does still seem to be in the minds of many, not to mention those on this side of the House, inequities in terms of per capita allocation for health units.

We didn't talk last time either about the very important area of suicide and the number of emotional and personal discussions even in this Assembly about people who have experienced family members or friends who have committed suicide, the very

high rate of teenage suicide and increasing high rates of suicide among our native people, increasing suicides in the farming community and in rural Alberta, and that we need to be doing far more in terms of both suicide prevention and crisis lines. Now, I know again we get into the thorny issue of whether we need to be funding the direct service of crisis lines -- those needs of people who are in crisis, who are suicidal -- and whether to intervene at the particular moment or whether to fund prevention programs aimed at social workers and teachers and clergy and psychologists and all those who perhaps can do a better preventative job. All I know is that the people here from AID Service of Edmonton, now Community Connections, continue in a desperate need for funding for their suicide crisis line, and they wish there could be better linkage, better co-ordination, and better delivery of that service along with, as we recognize, needs for prevention of suicide, particularly in the community by care givers.

So some comments by the minister in terms of what direction they want to go on that score, together with the provincial suicidologist, would be helpful in terms of policy.

And then in terms, also, of a number of mental health agencies, the minister rightly noted the number of Albertans that have had some history of mental illness or mental disability -- one in four, I think the figure is -- and that we need to do far more both from government and from the community in terms of meeting those mental health needs in the community. One very fine group has come to my attention, the Calgary Association of Self Help, who have done very good work as a drop-in centre, with hours after the community mental health services have closed. They work late into the night and work with a number of different people who have had problems with the courts, work problems, or a whole variety of attendant mental health problems. They, together with the health promotion effort of Jake Epp, want to put emphasis on self-care and self-help, which is a direction we desperately need to go in, particularly in the mental health field. Here's an agency that wants to do it asking for \$32,000. Now, it seems to me that would be money well spent, and that they, together with other groups who would deliver this kind of service in the community, are ones that government in partnership and in covenant with should really get their act together and help to support.

My last point, which I really wanted to stress last time and ran out of time in order to do so, is a proposal to the minister to do something really bold and creative and new. I know it's going to be criticized at the time at least for costing more money, but it would seem to me that if we're really serious, as the minister has said before, about community health and health promotion and if we're really serious about having Albertans take a great deal more care for themselves in the community, I would like to see not just the development of the Heritage Savings Trust Fund but the establishment of a new fund called the health savings trust fund, to have \$100 million, for instance, that would be in a new fund which would do nothing but fund creative, imaginative, innovative new health promotion projects in the province of Alberta. It seems to me that such a fund would tap the imagination of many who have all kinds of projects and innovative programs they would like to try out, they would like to develop, they would like to test and do some research around. It's actually going to cost some start-up money or some research money or some funds that need to be drawn on for a year or two in order to establish the way in which new health promotion effort could be that which would reduce the need for institutionalization and sick care.

I challenge the minister: if he really wants to be as creative and imaginative as he can, let's put some money into a health savings trust fund. Get some money even from the federal government, which I'm sure Jake Epp would support fifty-fifty, and have a new pool of money which Albertans could access to do some transitional programming, to do some kinds of work and effort that would help reduce the rate of institutionalization, reduce the need to continue to build more buildings and cut more ribbons and put up more plaques and rather do the healthier thing, which is to deliver health care by Albertans for Albertans in the Albertan community and not in the sick care institutions. I would challenge the minister to consider the need for such a special fund and to have it work over the next four or five years to really put some funding teeth into the number of creative and imaginative and innovative programs and proposals Albertans would like to have some funding for to develop research around.

With these comments, Mr. Chairman -- as I said, last time we weren't able to get them in -- I would beg the minister's response.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon. Member for Cardston.

MR. ADY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. You caught me off guard because I'm usually way down the list, but this time I'm not. I'm racing to find my notes. [interjections]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order in the committee, please.

MR. ADY: Mr. Chairman, I would like to compliment the minister on the thrust of his department, especially when it comes to the preventative measures being put forward in this year's program in an effort to establish and maintain good health with the general populace of Alberta. I'd like to make a few comments regarding vote 4, having to do with community mental health services, and compliment the minister on some of the things he's doing in that area, specifically as it pertains to my constituency.

In 1983 the government established a pilot project for allowing elderly mentally handicapped people to move out of institutions as we have known them for years and years, and into a home environment. The local community became involved and established a regular residence that would house six patrons. So in 1983 six ladies were moved into this new home environment after having spent virtually all their lives in an institution. They were put into a home environment where they were allowed to assume some responsibility to take care of their personal needs, to plan menus, to cook, to shop, and paid some of their room and board out of their pensions that were coming to them. This proved to be so successful that our present minister established an additional home in 1986. This, too, has proven to be successful and has only been able to reach the degree of success it has because of the local support available in the community in that these people are helped by people driving them to shop for their food and clothing and some of their basic needs are taken care of by people in the community.

My reason for bringing that up is to encourage the minister to continue with that type of program. Because having visited these homes, I've seen the attitudes of these ladies change from an attitude of no communication with outside people to one of being able to communicate and being quite comfortable out in society because now they attend certain functions within the community and are being integrated to a greater degree than

they ever have in the past.

Also, I'd like to compliment the minister for having allocated some funds to the reconstruction of the Raymond home which was used for years and years to house these patients. Now, with many of them moving out into these residential projects, we're able to move into a different phase for the Raymond home, and the minister has seen fit to put funding there to reconstruct the home to provide some diversified functions that were not available to these handicapped people.

I'd like to leave that and move on to some comments on vote 2 having to do with communicable disease. I'd like to say that the minister has made some good strides in trying to deal with the spread of AIDS in our province. He has put out information and has consultation made available for people who may have AIDS or may suspect they have AIDS. But it would seem that things aren't working out quite as well as we would hope they would in that we have 41 new cases of AIDS in the province, which is an 86 percent increase over the previous year. In 1986 we had 319 people test positive on the HIV virus. So perhaps something isn't working quite as well as we would like it to, because of course what we'd really like to have is the eradication of the disease.

But if I could just put a question to the minister, I'd like to know if a person who has the actual AIDS disease and goes to his doctor is treated any differently, as far as tracing the path he has followed in contracting AIDS, than a person who goes to a doctor and has contracted any other sexually transmitted disease, be it syphilis, gonorrhea, or such diseases as those. I suspect there is some difference there, and if we could address that and identify perhaps handling the tracing of that carrier differently, we might be able to control the spread of this disease better in the future.

Again, in closing, I would just like to compliment the minister on the approach he has taken to control this disease and also in the field of mental health services. Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon. Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark.

MR. MITCHELL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to add a few comments and questions to those that have already been presented by my colleagues -- not to repeat what has been undoubtedly raised many times in this Legislature; however, to emphasize certain points.

The Workers' Compensation Board. I think it is important for the minister to be clear, and I would like to think he is, about the overwhelming responsibility the Workers' Compensation Board and therefore this government has to workers who do not have recourse to the courts to settle liability claims against employers by virtue of their participation in the Workers' Compensation Board. On the one hand, the service provided is a service which many workers might not have access to. At the same time, in receiving access, they have been asked to give up an important right. I would like to point out to the minister that of all the difficulties we deal with in our constituency office in Edmonton-Meadowlark on behalf of constituents, the overwhelming, the greatest number of problems relate to Workers' Compensation Board dealings.

It seems to me that of the problems the bulk are administrative problems: delays in processing, delays in having appeals heard, failures to respond to a request as quickly as should be the case, apparently arbitrary cuts to benefits, disputes over which medical opinion should be followed by the Workers' Compensation Board in assessing the severity of a particular

injury and its consequences to a worker's life. Whether these administrative problems stem from lack of funding, I am not certain, but I expect that is the case. I would be more concerned if these kinds of problems and the lack of funding for staffing, et cetera, would be related to a direct policy on the part of this government to reduce costs of the Workers' Compensation Board and the payment of benefits under the Workers' Compensation Board no matter what the human cost involved. Could the minister please indicate whether he feels there is sufficient staff; what steps he is taking to reduce delays in processing, to reduce delays in appeals, to allow workers the courtesy of more adequate explanations for cuts to benefits which, as I have pointed out, seem to be arbitrary at times?

I also note in the minister's estimates that there seems to be an inherent contradiction. On the one hand, more pressure is being put on the Workers' Compensation Board; on the other hand, there is a significant reduction to funding to occupational health and safety. Could the minister please comment on the need for long-term, effective health and safety programs as a potential solution to Workers' Compensation Board funding increases, which seem to be the problem this government is focusing on?

With respect to home care, preventive health care, could the minister please indicate what the status of funding for organizations like the VON, the Victorian Order of Nurses, is? That is an organization which provides excellent home care service which has been affected by funding cutbacks. Could the minister please indicate what funding they will be receiving and what his longer term plans are for organizations such as that?

I was at a volunteers' reception for the Misericordia volunteer association today, and I met, among others, a staff member who has been given the responsibility of co-ordinating recreational activities within that hospital. She made the point to me -- and I think it's a very strong point -- that there should be a recreational component in the home care area. I wonder whether the minister could indicate whether that feature of home care is being considered, has been considered, and what plans the government has in store in that regard. Clearly, the line of reasoning is that a person's physical and mental health can be enhanced by a broader view of health care which includes recreational activities for those people who are shut-ins or who have difficulty, due to their illnesses or their failing health, structuring productive social relationships outside their home.

Finally, with respect to AADAC funding, could the minister please clarify, give a broader explanation of proposed funding for drug addiction centres for youth, institutional health care in that regard for youth? I notice there is a reduction in funding for AADAC. Does that represent this government's assessment that there is a lessening problem with respect to alcohol and drug abuse in the province, or is it an initiative simply to save costs short term, which may result in increased costs long term? If it is in fact that the government believes there to be a reduction in the problem of alcohol and drug abuse, could the minister please provide us with statistics that would bear that assessment out?

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon. Member for Edmonton-Mill Woods.

MR. GIBEAULT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd like to make a couple of comments on the estimates of the Minister of Community and Occupational Health. First, in the area of smoking, I don't need to tell the minister he's made a lot of very fine comments in the House about the danger this presents to health and

so on, but I have to wonder how much longer it's going to take before he can convince his caucus about the merits of that position. I mean, there are still some diehards over there, like the Member for Stettler and others, who continue to indulge in this hazardous activity, and there's nothing more than example when we're talking about initiatives in the preventive health care area. If we could have a resolution, which would be supported certainly by myself, and enthusiastically so, to ban smoking in this particular building, in the entire Legislature, that would be a great initiative. [interjections]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order in the committee, please.

MR. GIBEAULT: You can see, Mr. Minister, you got some support for that, so perhaps you could pursue that.

I would have to say as well that one of the things I noticed in the provincial budget is that the Minister of Community and Occupational Health apparently wasn't able to convince the Treasurer, perhaps after lobbying from people like the Member for Stettler and others -- but why did you let the '88-89 budget go by without an opportunity to tax a product once more to make it heavier, to discourage it even more, and enhance the taxes paid on cigarettes and tobacco products? Mr. Minister, you know we talk a lot about how Alberta is number one, and I'd like to be proud. I'd like to go anywhere else in this country and say Alberta is number one when it comes to taxation on tobacco products, on cancer products. I'd like to encourage him to work on his colleagues, particularly the Treasurer, to make sure such an opportunity is not missed in future budgets. If we can't encourage people through education -- and I think that's certainly one component of it; the minister's done some good things there. But what really counts is the pocketbook, and if you make it expensive enough, then all the damage that is created directly by people who smoke and indirectly by associated health risks and property damage and so on, fire hazards and all the rest of it, the tremendous cost to society could be very substantially reduced.

The second thing I want to make a few comments on, Mr. Chairman, in terms of the budget estimates for Community and Occupational Health is the area of the Workers' Compensation Board. I'm glad to see that the minister finally, after years of pressure and bringing to his attention numerous problems, has decided to take some action in this regard. However, I am concerned that the mechanism he's chosen to use here -- and I'm talking particularly about the one-man hearing process that is going to take place -- is one that lacks credibility. I hope you're listening carefully to these comments, because a lot of the workers who are injured on the job and have come to my constituency office and to my colleagues' offices for assistance are looking at this process and wondering why one individual, Mr. Millard, was appointed to this particular capacity. He may have very interesting experience, but as far as I know he has none in terms of the workers' compensation system.

There are a lot of people in this province who would like to know why there are not some injured workers on that panel, people who have been through the system, who know how it works or how it doesn't work, what the shortcomings are, how it could be improved. I would suggest to you seriously, Mr. Minister, that if you're really looking to come out of this hearing process with something that has some credibility, one of the ways you could do that is by immediately appointing to this review panel at least one, if not more, members of the Injured Workers Association or other people who have got some experi-

ence with the system, as well as representatives from labour and business.

I'd like to ask the minister as well: when are these hearings going to start? I've been trying to find that out for some time now. I know a number of people who want to make presentations, and we haven't got an answer to that. Could the minister tell us when this process is going to get on the road? There is urgency to the problems that have to be addressed, and I'd like to know just how soon these hearings are going to take place.

Mr. Chairman, I don't want to preclude this investigation and hearing process into the board, but it seems clear, looking at the financial position of the board and the liabilities it has to workers to cover the costs of claims and pensions and so on, that there is going to have to be a sizable increase in premiums. Mr. Minister, given the corporate sector's habit of whining and sniveling every time there's some improvement in the conditions that apply to workers in this province -- just as there was the other day when the minimum wage was increased and we had all kinds of sad stories from the chamber of commerce about how awful that was -- I wonder if you can assure the members of the House and the public, and particularly the injured workers of this province, that you will not cave in to that kind of pressure from the Pocklington sector, as I would call them, when it comes to raising the premiums to make sure this agency is funded properly and can cover the claims injured workers legitimately have.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon. Member for Highwood.

MR. ALGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It's my pleasure this afternoon to commend the Minister of Community and Occupational Health for his tough portfolio and the way he's handling it. I'm delighted with the progress he's made. It's an awkward thing to handle from A to Z. Primarily I'm standing on my feet to indicate to him that I'm proud of the way he's managing things and delighted with the way he has brought around, if you like, the Workers' Compensation Board to at least a feasible and recognizable feature that we've all strived over the years to understand and try and improve on. He's doing a great job in that respect.

My prime purpose in being here today, though, is to indicate to him that in the home care and long-term care field, of which I'm justly associated, I would have to guess he is doing an awful lot. But I want to advise the House in particular that while he may not have the funding at this particular time to do all the things we'd like to do in that area, the fact of the matter is that the problem is growing by leaps and bounds as our senior citizens grow in numbers. We can't do much about that; in fact, we're very grateful for that fact. Between him and the Minister of Hospitals and Medical Care there's a strong necessity for both of them to co-operate fully in the respect that there are still more hospitals to be built and certainly more nursing homes to be built and more auxiliary hospitals to be built. We're trying, Mr. Chairman, not to build them in too radical a fashion and not too quickly. To avoid that, of course, if we do put some sincere effort into home care and long-term care and get enough people to organize to handle our senior citizens at home, where they would rather be for the longest time or as long a time as possible, I'm sure the minister will have to strive with this feature until he's old enough to join one of those institutions himself. In the meantime, we will accomplish an awful lot for a lot more people for probably the same amount of money that we have in

our budget today.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Keep up the good work, Mr. Minister.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon. Member for Athabasca-Lac La Biche.

MR. PIQUETTE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to address a number of concerns and questions to the minister -- fairly quickly, I hope, because I see there's quite a lineup here. One of the concerns I have, Mr. Minister, in the constituency of Athabasca-Lac La Biche is the funding situation relating to the Athabasca Health Unit, which I'm sure the minister is aware of, in terms of some of the cutbacks in services in outlying areas, cutbacks in home care services of about 45 to 50 percent in the procedures in the region. I'm very concerned that there appears to be a lot of downgrading of the programs occurring in the Athabasca Health Unit area. Since as minister you are ultimately responsible for indirectly supervising the operation to make sure that standards are maintained, I'm hoping you will be addressing the need for additional funding to bring the standards of delivery of these services to the outlying areas in terms of nursing services, for example, in communities like Smith and Peerless Lake, areas where they're many miles away from doctors. I think the minister should be aware that for many places in northern Alberta the commodity of a doctor can be many miles away. I believe there should be supplementary funding for a health unit like the Athabasca Health Unit where many areas are without the services of any doctor. So the need for community nursing care is very important.

I'm really shocked by the fact that here in the province your department has reduced home care funding by 9.8 percent this year. I think it does not keep in mind the Mirosh report on senior care, which is advocating that much more funding be made available for home care services. I believe it's very, very important that we attempt to keep our seniors in their homes as much as possible, and it's a very low cost to the health scheme in order to implement the home care services. It creates a lot of local employment for volunteer groups and women who are seeking to get into the work force. So I would hope that in next year's budget the minister answers that concern very directly in terms of increasing the home care budget and making sure that in rural Alberta we actually encourage seniors to remain in their homes as long as they can by increasing the type of home delivery care to make that possible.

Another area of concern I have is in the operation of senior citizen lodges. I'm really shocked and amazed that Alberta Mortgage actually operates or funds the building of these buildings, but we have no mandate from Community and Occupational Health to establish any provincial standards in terms of the kind of care that occurs in those institutions. I would like to see Community and Occupational Health -- and I would recommend to the minister that he take on in his department the supervision and the setting of standards for senior citizen lodges. I think it's high time we did that. It should have been the responsibility in the past of Community and Occupational Health and not Alberta Mortgage and Housing Corporation to do that.

I see some of the problems, for example, relating to the kind of care within those institutions. They are not to the standards that our senior citizens deserve. The food, for example, seems to be a problem in many of these institutions, at least in one of the ones in my constituency. I received a petition from a group of seniors complaining about the quality of the food in the Lac La Biche seniors' lodge. What they were complaining about

was that it was operated under the situation where the chef or the cook was leaving at about 4 o'clock in the afternoon, having prepared the food ahead of time before leaving, and leaving the food to sit, basically cooling off, until the supper around 5 o'clock.

I was surprised that there are no standards here that mandate the operators of such senior citizen lodges where they know the level of care they have to provide, the kind of wages that can attract well-qualified staff. I think one of the biggest problems I identified when I met with the staff there is really the inadequate level of funding for the salaries of these institutions, for their operation, and for the hiring of staff.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Excuse me, hon. member. I believe senior citizens' lodges are under the jurisdiction of the minister responsible for housing.

MR. PIQUETTE: What I'm recommending is that it be put under the responsibility of Community and Occupational Health. So I think I'm making the point here that the minister should be looking after the operation, setting up the standards, and raising the level of professionalism so that we can hire the best people possible to make sure our senior citizens are not treated as second-class citizens in these homes.

Another area, of course, that I as an MLA receive a lot of complaints about is related to the Workers' Compensation Board. I'm glad that finally we have a review. I hope the review finally separates the appeal committee from the administration so that we can actually have some independence in decision-making relating to cases that are presently awaiting the board's decision, the reappeal decision, for example. I find that Workers' Compensation appears to be in some situations forcing people back to work who are really physically unable to carry on the type of work they were doing before. It's all very nice to say, "Well, you're physically able to get back to work," but if it's a very physical type of labour job they have experience in, I find it really inconceivable that we can expect them to get back to their regular job. And the kind of training program that goes on does not very often prepare that individual to take on alternative types of employment.

So in terms of the Workers' Compensation Board, I would hope we have more consultation in the whole review process: make sure that you sit down with a lot of the workers who are presently injured and see what their feedback is about the operation of the Workers' Compensation Board. Because if you really want to hear the real story, I think you have to take a look at many of the workers who are very unhappy about the operation of the Workers' Compensation Board.

So with these comments I'll pass it on to other members. But I hope the minister has listened very carefully, relating to my appeal that he takes on the responsibility of the operation of the senior citizen lodges. I think it's a really shameful situation right now that we really have no provincial standards in terms of how these institutions are operated.

Thank you very much.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Chair is impressed with the brief eloquence of the members in their elucidation of the estimates. There are 14 members left on the list. The hon. Member for Red Deer-North.

MR. DAY: Thanks, Mr. Chairman. A few questions to the minister. [some applause] I also appreciate that resounding and

spontaneous applause echoing throughout the Chamber.

Mr. Chairman, I'd like to say, first of all, that I do appreciate dealing with the minister of this particular department and his response to concerns, certainly, that my office has brought to him. Our health unit in Red Deer, recognizing some difficulties in terms of space requirements -- some very real difficulties there -- brought a proposal through myself and the MLA for Red Deer-South, Mr. Oldring, and we're very pleased with the response of the minister in his willingness to sit down and crunch some numbers and look at what could be done. We much appreciate the help that was subsequent to those meetings, and are pleased to report that the development of the new health unit facility is going ahead, and we're proud to be offering some of the best care in Alberta. So it's another sign of a minister who responds to concerns.

He responded also from requests across the province when it came to health units asking to be able to set up their budgets on a global budgetary system. His response to that was positive. We've had other situations in Red Deer where the minister, upon our request, has specifically come and sat down and looked at the particular needs, and has helped to be part of some positive resolutions arising from some challenges that come with the everyday operation of something as significant and important as a department like this. We certainly appreciate that response.

Also, the Red Deer FCSS folks are vitally active and I believe have their hand on the pulse of the community and are allocating dollars in a responsive way. We as MLAs want to continue to work closely with them to see that those needs are met.

In some specific areas, vote 2. 5 in the estimates -- in looking at home care, I applaud the government and the department for the fact that home care has doubled over about the last five years, and I do think we offer an unparalleled level of care with our home care. With that, I'm going to say here and also to the minister that I see this particular area of care as one that's absolutely essential, one that directly takes care of not just the physical but the emotional and social needs of those people wanting to remain in their homes, and lastly, but also very importantly, is a very cost-effective way of caring for people.

As we move into the coming year, and several months from now as the minister begins to prepare another budget for another year, I want to say very clearly that he will have my full support in even seeing this particular area expand. So vote 2. 5, while it is encouraging, I'm committing myself to full support to the minister's initiatives again for next year, to seeing that increase again, and would ask him to also vigorously continue to move in that direction.

Under vote 4. 2 in the area of Community Mental Health Services, I'm happy to report that our Catholic Social Services in their most recent opening of a mental health facility in Red Deer, a type of drop-in centre -- a day care centre, as it were -- is one that's very valuable. This type of facility again goes a long way on the prevention end. I believe it keeps people from having to access more expensive direct care. We're very encouraged about that facility and would also ask the minister to continue to be sensitive to these types of requests, not just in Red Deer but around the province.

I was also able to be present and represent the government at the opening of the Karos House here in Edmonton. Again, Catholic Social Services is vitally involved there. Father Bill Irwin deserves full recognition and congratulations for his initiatives. I believe, Mr. Chairman, to the minister, that this type of facility for those suffering with AIDS again meets a very vital

need in terms of not just physically and at the disease end but socially. Again we're looking at a cost-effective way of dealing with people who are suffering from AIDS, to be able to have a facility like this in which they can be resident. It's a very positive move. I want to encourage that also.

Under vote 4.2 under Mental Health Services, I would ask the minister what he could do in some specific areas. In Red Deer we have a very successful group psychotherapy centre headed up by Mr. Jim Freeman. Jim Freeman is offering a program there in dealing with the whole question of battered women. What he has to offer is a program for the men who are involved in doing the battering. I believe that has to be a major part of the answer as we deal with this very difficult subject. You are not going to see men changing their ways if they are not confronted with their wrong ways and then helped to deal with them. Mr. Freeman has had some difficulty in accessing increased funding to be able to see this program come into operation. I would ask this minister to look at this case specifically, and the whole question of battered women and treatment programs for the men. I believe that in doing that, in meeting the issue head on, confronting the men and seeing them successfully going through programs, we can see some real gains made in this particular area. So I would also encourage, under that vote of 4.2, and let the minister know that in the coming year I'll be continuing to work with him to see increased funding there.

Under vote 2.3 we see one of the most significant increases in any area of the minister's budget, and it's the area of prevention of communicable disease. We see -- I think this is correct -- a 31 percent increase in funding. That's a very large increase, and I believe much of it is going to education, if I'm correct. I recognize the fact that we need these sex education programs. We do have them in place. I think we've got to be more aware of what type of education we are delivering in these programs. There's no question about their need, but there's a common denominator that is disturbing to me not just in Alberta but in any jurisdiction that we look at. And I'm not going to break every jurisdiction down into minute detail, as time is ticking away. We want to allow as many members in as possible, and I know the minister wants to respond, especially to as many of the opposition members as possible. But there's a common denominator here that I would like the minister to address in his upcoming budget to be able to access dollars for it.

Here's the equation, and it may sound simplistic, but oftentimes things are dismissed as being simplistic. Simplistic really in many cases means you don't agree with it but you don't have an answer for it. So I don't want this to be dismissed as merely being simplistic. But in every jurisdiction where sex education increases, we do see a corresponding rise in sexually-transmitted diseases, in abortions, and in sexual activity.

Now, before people leap off their seats and say all kinds of nasty things to me, I'm not saying here that those two are directly linked. But we do have that common denominator that as the education and exposure and discussion increases, the activity also increases. So I'm saying it's not that we don't need sex education. But what type of education -- if the minister can give that some consideration -- are we advancing? For instance, according to one of his reports, I believe called "In Trouble -- A Way Out," which I believe was funded under vote 2.3, we're told that Alberta apparently has the highest rate of STDs and other consequences of high rates of sexual activity. There's an automatic assumption in that report that that's because of lack of education. Yet also in the province we have the highest divorce rate and the highest rate of family disintegration. So I think

we've got to look broader than just education or what types of education.

As we're looking at \$9.858 million going into the program, can the minister answer me this: can we make sure we're integrating into these programs, in terms of knowledge, the consequences of the activity itself, the consequences of promiscuity? For instance, in drunk-driving programs that I have seen there are programs out which show you demolished cars and broken bodies. That's used to drive home the point of what can be the consequence of drunk driving. The member opposite mentioned smoking and was giving some of my dear colleagues a hard time because of the fact that they engage in that somewhat noxious habit. Yet at the same time, I recognize that that particular member is quite a heavy coffee drinker. So I don't think he should be beating on my poor colleagues about nicotine when he himself is consuming caffeine in great amounts. But the point...

AN HON. MEMBER: May he who is without sin throw the first rock.

MR. DAY: That's right, hon. member.

The point I'm making here is that in smoking education or nonsmoking campaigns that I have seen -- and I remember seeing them in high school -- they showed us pictures of lungs that had been contaminated by the effects of nicotine. [interjection] I'm making some of my members nervous here. Are we using similar techniques in our sex education programs in terms of really pointing out, not from the point of view of scaring but bringing the reality of promiscuity to the fore of the minds of our young people? In our recent many seat belt ads, we remember very vividly -- I can see it very clearly -- the picture of a pumpkin flying through the air, hitting a tree, and just disintegrating in a hundred pieces. That's a very graphic demonstration of the effects of driving without a seat belt.

So to the minister are we fully integrating our sex education programs with the very awful consequences, which we must accept as adults, of people being involved in promiscuity? We need to see and have these consequences told. If we're looking at spending \$9 million in this particular area with a raise of 31 percent, what are we really accenting here? I think this would go for discussions on abortions. Young women need also to know that there's a very negative side to abortion in terms of physical consequences. I could recommend to the minister a book titled *Aborted Women*: 284 case histories of very negative consequences. So integrating more of this into the education factor I think is something that's necessary.

As we look at prevention of AIDS and some of the very significant measures the minister is taking there, again, are we getting into our education programs the physical consequences of some of the physical practices of that particular activity? Are we really bringing that out and touching on the fact that nature itself appears to reject that practice in very clear ways? Also, in our AIDS education programs, are young people informed? Are they informed, Mr. Chairman, to the minister, of the actual physical consequences of AIDS in terms of a very terrible and agonizing death? That is something that certainly we agonize over for those who contract the disease, but by the same token, are we informing young people in our education programs about this? Are they graphically being exposed to that reality? Do they know, for instance, that dementia is one of the latter stages of contracting AIDS? In fact, we're talking about clinical insanity. Are they informed of that? Those types of things work

in our drug programs, in our drunk-driving programs, our seat belt programs. Can we also make sure that this type of education is going into our education programs in terms of dealing with sexual activity?

And to have the Member for Edmonton-Centre stand in this House and say that the only cure or way to protect from AIDS is condoms is... [some applause] Mr. Minister, they applaud ignorance. But doctors tell us that we're looking at a 25 percent failure rate in the use of condoms. So are kids being told in the education under vote 2.3, \$9 million, that if they engage in that activity with a condom they will have about a one in four breakage or slippage rate and, in fact, they are dealing with the possibility of death? This is a very serious matter, Mr. Minister. I feel very strongly about it. We can't teach these things in a vacuum.

I'm hearing from diabetics in Red Deer some grave concerns they have in terms of expense to do with their blood glucose testing strips, and I applaud the minister on the difficulty he has in operating the department where he's got very real needs, physical needs, and yet very real budgetary restraints. So I guess what I'm doing is putting out the question to the minister: is there some way that our diabetics, in this area of the cost of these blood glucose testing strips, can be facilitated? And I recognize the dollar factor if we were just to pay for them carte blanche, but I'll ask the minister if we can direct our energies to looking at that particular question and seeing if there's a resolution there.

I again applaud the minister for his past history of responsiveness to community health care needs, certainly from my perspective and the people of Red Deer, and I again pledge my continued support to him in the areas which I've outlined.

MR. MUSGREAVE: Mr. Chairman, I just have a couple of quick questions I'd like to ask the minister. The first one is: because of the follow-up from the nurses' strike in Calgary, I understand that many more people are being looked after in their homes. As a result of this, the Calgary Health Unit is running about \$90,000 a month short in their budget, and I want to know what the minister plans to do to try and resolve this situation.

The other item, brought to my attention by a constituent in Calgary today, was that the Premier's council that has just been established for disabled persons has a budget about three times that of the council on the status of women, and I just wonder what kind of rationalization we have for the obvious disparity between the two budgets.

Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Before proceeding to Edmonton-Glengarry, the chairman of AADAC, under vote 5, had requested a moment or two to respond to a question put earlier by the hon. Member for Edmonton-Centre. Calgary-McCall.

[Mr. Musgreave in the Chair]

MR. NELSON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to make just a couple of very brief comments with regard to the youth treatment area that was brought up by the member for Glengarry...

AN HON. MEMBER: Edmonton-Centre.

MR. NELSON: Edmonton-Centre; I'm sorry. There were a couple of questions even asked yesterday in the Legislature.

There are currently facilities for youth to be treated for substance abuse in Alberta. They enter into existing programs where possible. AADAC is currently examining other methods to assist in the treatment of our youth in developing some methods in the province.

I should indicate, Mr. Chairman, that officials of AADAC have just returned from examining a new facility in Saskatchewan to examine and indicate whether or not there is an ability for residents of Alberta to participate in this facility. At the present time, of course, it's been determined it's not possible under the existing program that they have there. It's a new development at White Spruce Centre in Yorkton, Saskatchewan, which will hold about 60 young people. It's a development that used to be an air base which has been renovated to assist in the field of alcohol and drug treatment, particularly for youth. Many of the programs that are being developed are in their developmental stage, and it would not be in the best interests of our youth in Alberta at this point in time to recommend they participate in that program. This facility has been developed not only for Saskatchewan but possibly for use by provinces in western Canada, and until such time as a program is acceptable to the high standards that AADAC has had over the years, we cannot recommend use of this facility presently for Albertans. So we will proceed in our efforts to develop a high-quality program in Alberta at some point in time and then further that effort within the province.

Certainly there are groups of people who make recommendations to AADAC for different programs outside the province and, in particular, into the United States. AADAC is examining some, and they've examined anywhere up to 31 different programs at this point in time, all of which have some good but not necessarily the complete program that would facilitate our youth.

Mr. Chairman, I just wanted to make those comments to ensure that we all understand that AADAC is determined to ensure that our youth are well looked after, but in so doing we want to develop the program prior to them being placed in a situation without a program that would enhance their wellness. Without that type of program in place, all we would do is more damage to that youth. So we would like to ensure again that when a program is developed, it will be one that is acceptable to Albertans, and it will be an Alberta-developed program that will certainly have the high standard and quality that the AADAC programs have always had.

Thank you.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The Member for Edmonton-Glengarry.

MR. YOUNIE: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I'm delighted to address a few comments to the minister on the topics of community and occupational health. Based on his past responses, I would say that I'm confident that at some future point, whether it be later this afternoon or in writing, I'll receive polite and informative answers to my questions and concerns. That will raise my average on the three estimates I'm dealing with to two out of three that I've received those kinds of responses. And that's certainly the kind of response we all hope for when we address a minister's estimates.

Before I do, I'd like to leap to the defence of my colleague who was criticized for his criticism of smokers on the grounds that he shouldn't criticize smokers if he drinks coffee. I thought it was an interesting leap of logic, and I would point out that I

spare no effort in my attempts to criticize those who smoke. I do that on the grounds that as one who doesn't smoke, I'm justified in criticizing those who do. You would find that I would never criticize anyone for drinking coffee, considering my consumption of eight or 10 cups a day. I would, however, point out that the one who was criticized for it generally has one cup for breakfast, which would probably not endanger his health, according to any research I've seen.

I have a couple of other points and one that relates to both community and occupational health, and that is the danger of pollution in both the workplace and the community. One pollutant especially I'd like to make a few comments about is dioxin. Two communities in Alberta presently host industries that do produce dioxin, and officials from those plants have both agreed that yes, they undoubtedly do produce dioxin, that being Champion Forest Products in Hinton and Procter & Gamble in Grande Prairie. They have never disputed that all the research done indicates that it's virtually inevitable that they are producing it. Due to the production methods they're using, Daishowa in Peace River will, when under production, produce dioxin. I'm concerned because that dioxin does go into the workplace and into the community at large, and therefore it comes under both areas of this minister's responsibility. I'm concerned that there's been so little talk about the potential danger in the workplace from dioxin as it's related to the pulp and paper industry.

I would just read from a Health and Safety newsletter, and it has quoted from the International Federation of Chemical, Energy and General Workers' Unions bulletin of January 1986. It says:

A study on the long-term health effects of working in the pulp and paper manufacturing and paper converting industries, carried out by ICEF U. S. affiliates, the United Paperworkers International Union, shows an excess of deaths in these industries from overall cancers, cancer of the oesophagus, liver, pancreas and lung, lymphosarcoma and reticulosarcoma, and leukemia.

Further analysis by industry sector showed that cases of cancer of the lung, lymphosarcoma and leukemia were significantly elevated in the pulp and paper manufacturing sector.

Now obviously, it would be making a fairly unscientific leap to argue that there's a direct link between the dioxin that's associated with that industry and that increase in deaths from all those forms of cancer, but I would argue that it would be a vastly greater leap of illogic to assume that there is no connection. I think what we have to do is look at the rate, and that requires testing the worksites involved and doing some research into what connection there might be. I certainly think we need as quickly as possible in this province some sampling in workplaces and then some announced results of the analysis.

On the community level I would be concerned that, in fact, tests have been conducted on fish samples downstream from our pulp mills, and yet we're not finding out what the levels of dioxin are so that we can then make judgments about whether or not it's safe to eat the fish downstream from those plants. My choice would be, if I do find the time to get out this summer, if we finish the session before the end of August, to maybe catch them but to put them back in the water and not eat them.

So I would like the minister to announce whether or not he has plans for conducting, either in co-operation with the Minister of the Environment or on his own, testing of the workplace and of the communities involved for dioxin levels.

I would also like to ask this minister if he accepts the position announced in the Legislature by the Minister of the Envi-

ronment that the only proven effect of dioxin on humans is chloracne. I think he should consider what answer he would give to that very carefully, because depending on whether he says he agrees with the Minister of the Environment or disagrees, it implies two very different courses of action that he should take. If he disagrees with the Minister of the Environment and does in fact accept that dioxin is a carcinogen and causes a lot of other problems, then he would want to be pushing the minister to in fact require the best available technology on the planet for the Daishowa mill, to urge Procter & Gamble and Champion Forest Products to upgrade, and so on. Those things would be logical extensions of disagreeing with the minister's position on that.

If, on the other hand, he agrees with the minister, then -- and I'll explain in a few seconds why he should be doing this -- he should be lobbying the Department of Consumer and Corporate Affairs to remove numerous products from the market that have been generally accepted as safe. The reason for that is that many, many products we use on a day-to-day basis with confidence they have been proven safe and many that we do not use because they have been proven dangerous were done so through tests on animals, not tests on humans. We test all of these products on animals. If they kill animals, we assume that they won't be very good for humans either, and we don't put them on the market.

Now, the argument of the pulp and paper industry that says dioxin is not dangerous to humans except to cause a few pimples, although chloracne is indeed much greater than that, but that it does cause more than acne is the test done on animals. They say that tests on animals cannot be proven to extend to people. Well, I'm saying, by logic, that if tests on dioxin damage in animals do not apply to people, then tests on the effect of makeup on animals that prove it's safe for women to put on their faces are not applicable, and therefore it doesn't really prove that all those makeup articles are safe for women to use. The tests on medications on animals that prove that they're safe are not really applicable to human beings, and therefore we cannot safely put them on the market, and so on. Now, all of those tests must be unreliable if we can't rely on the dioxin tests done on animals. So by that logic we, I think, have to accept that the tests done on animals and the effect that dioxin has on them has to apply to people as well.

I would point out one article that the minister might want to refer to. It's an article from the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency entitled "2, 3, 7, 8-tetrachlorodibenzo-dioxin ambient water quality criteria" out of Washington, D. C. The minister might check the part of it where it says:

It [meaning TCDD] has been shown to be acnegenic, embryolethal, teratogenic, mutagenic (in certain organisms), carcinogenic, and to affect the immune responses in mammals. TCDD has also been shown to persist for 10 years after application to soils and to bioaccumulate in aquatic organisms by factors as high as 8,000-fold. These findings, in conjunction with the wide distribution of contaminated products, lead to the conclusion that TCDD represents a potential hazard to both aquatic and terrestrial life.

The last time I checked, human beings were indeed accepted as a form of terrestrial life.

So I think the Minister of Community and Occupational Health will want to research the world literature, beyond just the glossy pamphlet that the Minister of the Environment demonstrated for us some time back, and check the real dangers of dioxin and can come to the conclusion that the EPA has, that one part per trillion is a sufficient level of dioxin to be a serious

health concern, and that in parts of Canada there is, in fact, I believe as high as 23 parts per trillion in human mothers' milk, which is the entire diet of many children for the first year or two of life, obviously not giving them the kind of start we want. That makes it, I think, a very legitimate health concern for the minister. In fact, seeing as we have had so much talk today about smoking and it causing cancer and the effect that has on the Cross Cancer Institute, I would wonder if the minister might want to estimate which percentage of the people at the Cross Cancer Institute are there from smoking and which percentage are there from environmental pollution. I fear you might find a fifty-fifty split, if it could be proven.

I would also like the minister to answer a question for me, and that is whether or not -- seeing as I think dioxin is a legitimate concern of his department, in both portions of it -- he has checked the assertion of Environment Canada that analytical protocols for dioxin testing have not been developed, and therefore we don't need to go ahead with testing yet. I would like to know, from this minister's point of view, who has said that the protocols used in Sweden and the United States and Japan and other countries are not adequate and that we can't trust them, because the pulp and paper industry has not disputed their protocols or the findings that result from the use of their protocols. So I think that's something of obvious concern.

Another area I'd like to ask the minister about has to do with the ongoing construction at the Daishowa site right now, although the minister who is -- the Minister of the Environment is an expert at bandying words and using the English language very carefully to sometimes obscure what is real rather than reveal it. The construction is ongoing; they've cleared acre after acre in the building of the plant. Now, we're told that no construction is happening there. I'm wondering, from this minister's point of view under the Acts that he operates on...

MR. DOWNEY: A point of order, Mr. Chairman. I've been listening to the member for the last 15 minutes, and I really can't figure out how he's managing to relate this, at very infrequent points, to the Minister of Community and Occupational Health. He's really engaged in an environmental debate.

MR. YOUNIE: If this member doesn't understand how interrelated environment and community and occupational health are, then he should remain silent and hide his ignorance, because he obviously doesn't know what he's talking about.

To continue, I would like to know, under the legislation that applies to the WCB and the Minister of Community and Occupational Health, if the Daishowa site, where earth movers are moving earth and leveling ground, where work is ongoing, is a construction site under his legislation. And are those workers being afforded all the protection of the Workers' Compensation Board and all the protection of the occupational health department to make sure that they are not in danger? Because if there's no construction going on, I'm wondering why all those machines are there and the workers' trailers are there and all the rest that is happening, why roads have been built, railway right-of-ways have been cleared, and so on. I await the minister's response.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The Member for Calgary-Glenmore.

MRS. MIROSH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am pleased to be able to speak to the estimates with regards to the support of in-

dependence of the elderly and the growing needs of the elderly. I want to show my appreciation to this department, to this minister, for the piloting and support from the health care units in Calgary on a single point of entry system.

As we are all aware, the population for seniors is at 8 per cent, and we have to address the growth of this population. We have probably at least 10 years to plan this. Over and over again we hear members opposite talking about throwing more and more money towards home care and doing it tomorrow. I think this minister has done an excellent job in providing home care in this province and, particularly, in Calgary, but I think we have to look at a process that is adaptable for all the needs and not just...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I wonder if the hon. member would please uncover her mike so we can hear what she's saying.

MRS. MIROSH: Oh. Should I start all over again? I didn't realize you couldn't hear me. I'm talking about the single point of entry system. [interjection] Keep the mike covered; is that what you're telling me?

I'm talking about the single point of entry system piloted in Calgary and the one-stop shopping for the seniors. Calgary is just south of Edmonton, not very far; a three-hour drive, for those members who don't know.

Within the single point of entry system the dollars, I think, are available for the home care services, but what is missing in that system is the voluntary component and utilizing the services that exist. This minister always alludes to the fact that the new vision for long term care is not a new vision; it's an old one. Perhaps the services are old ones, but I think the new vision is alluding to the co-ordinated programs and the co-ordinated care. When you talk about just providing home care, you can't address that without addressing all the other programs that have to come with it. Your department does fund the FCSS program at 80 percent, and the municipalities decide where that funding goes. I would hope that that funding would be addressed more towards the elderly, in providing homemaker services and handyman services and helping volunteer services co-ordinate with the single point of entry system and home care services.

I think it's also important to continue to stress the promotion of wellness for seniors to avoid any possibility of needing long-term care. I think your department has already started to address the needs there in educating the public, more specifically on nutrition and exercise and training of staff members to help the elderly address their needs and their problems.

The home care budget has tripled, as you've mentioned. I think it's tripled in the last decade for sure, and it's continuing to grow. When we talk about the long-term care book, in the book we talk about funding targeted towards home care. When we're addressing targeted funding, I would hope that the department would look at those elderly who are currently assessed for nursing home care, auxiliary care, as their number one priority for the provision of home care services. I think those that need other services that have not been assessed for a nursing home can be looked after by some of the adult care programs, the day programs that already exist, such as the Kerby Centre. Your department has increased the funding there, and I commend you for that, Mr. Minister, and addressing the problems of the adult and expanding that program to providing nutritional care and other services that are so necessary.

The minister of hospitals has already addressed some of the

day care hospital growth and needs in Calgary, and I think that with the day hospitals and expansion of respite care and the adult day programs along with the home care, all these services have to be co-ordinated together and support services have to come from many, many areas.

I'd like to just go back to the volunteer services. We see so many groups out there that are willing to serve the elderly. In my own constituency there are a group of high school students who, as part of a project, meet with seniors on a monthly basis and call on them and help them for groceries or transportation to the doctor. Or just checking on them on a day-to-day basis is all that is needed -- just sitting and talking to them and being with them is important. And I don't think that home care throwing money to this is there. I think we have to bring everybody in line in helping our seniors stay at home for as long as possible.

I think, too, when we hear members opposite talk about the cost of home care services related to hospital care, that the home care services can be inexpensive, but they can also be expensive. When you compare the costs, it is unfair, really, to say it is \$5 to keep people at home and \$115 to keep people in the hospital, because there does come a time when elderly do need to be institutionalized, and the cost there, if they are staying at home, can exceed the care of a hospital.

So I think when we are addressing the needs of the elderly, the first and most important is the promotion of wellness and keeping people in their homes for as long as possible. And then when they do become ill, address those needs with a co-ordinated system. We have a recommendation in here looking at the quick response team to prevent people from entering into the institutions. It is a system that I would hope the department would look at very carefully and very quickly and perhaps implement soon. I know that that program has been addressed by the home care services here in Edmonton. And I would like the minister just to perhaps give a brief overview of some of the areas in the long-term care recommendations that you could see implemented very quickly.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The Member for Edmonton-Kingsway.

MR. McEACHERN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to talk to the minister a little bit today about safety in the oil patch; or shall I say the lack thereof? I would start by suggesting that if you looked at page 75 of the estimates, you would find that, in fact, the government has cut the money available for Occupational Health and Safety, depending on which numbers you want to choose. If you look at vote 3, a 2.4 percent cut on the Occupational Health and Safety Services. If you look at the overall, there's a 1.4 percent increase in the total budget, but the occupational health and safety part and the Workers' Compensation Board part have both been cut.

I would like, also, to remind you that if you were to look at page 80, you would find that it is the responsibility of this minister to do something about occupational health and safety in this province. And that we have a very abysmal record in the oil patch is something that I want to make a case on now.

On page 80 it says "Work Site Services;" that is, that this department

Provides client-oriented services including work site inspections, accident investigations, advice in hazard reduction and promotion of work site preventive programs. Undertakes prosecutions...

I wonder which oil company was prosecuted recently for killing what person.

... legislation development, certification of equipment and personnel, and the development of codes and standards.

Now, I say to the minister that the record of the Alberta oil patch is abysmal, and he knows it and has stood up and said so in the House. In December 1968, 11 deaths in one month. In the early part of 1988, by his own words the other day, in some 60-day period, 9 deaths.

If you look at the number of accidents in relation to the time worked in certain parts of the oil industry, for example, the drilling and well servicing accident frequency in 1982 was 12.5; in 1983, 12.4; in 1984, 14.9; in 1985 -- and here you have to try to figure out exactly what the statistics mean, but the figure would come out at something like 16.61; and in 1986, 17.41. The early figures from '82 to '84 come from the occupational health and safety division report WHOH6102, 1982 to 1984. The other numbers have to be sort of figured out, because the way of recording accidents was changed, and it makes it much more difficult to figure out exactly what is going on. However, the estimate is that the rate would go up in '85 and again in '86. Those numbers stand for the number of accidents per 100 years of man-work in the area of drilling and well servicing accident frequency.

Now, I looked at the Workers' Compensation Board annual report for 1986 and also picked out a few numbers just to show the cost of accidents in the oil patch. Now, the oil patch isn't isolated out from the other accidents in the WCB report, but nonetheless, to get an idea of the magnitude of some of the problems, some statistics might be helpful. On page 12, for instance, they give a whole list of the numbers of fingers, toes, feet, ankles, chests, hips, multiple injuries, hands or wrists, and so on that are damaged in accidents in this province, and a lot of that carnage goes on in the oil industry. Some 2 million days were lost due to injuries in 1986. Some 56,741 employees are registered under the Workers' Compensation Board, and they put out something like \$302 million in payments to the WCB. So we're talking here of a problem that is far bigger than it should be, and the record in the oil patch is, as I said, abysmal.

I maintain that these statistics are worse because of the policies of this government. I see no real concern, or at least no serious programs, to help cut the accident rate in the oil industry, the lack of safety inspections, I suppose by the ERCB, or by the department to see that the ERCB does it. They don't enforce what rules we do have. I would point out that the companies in the last few years, because of the downturn in the oil industry, have been using in many cases substandard equipment, used and old equipment, because they're worried more about the bottom line than they are about occupational health and safety. The competition by contractors forces the companies into that situation. In fact, it's got so bad that some experienced roughnecks are refusing to work in the oil industry because the wages are so low and the safety record is so bad, and the consequence of that is that more green workers are going into the oil patch. Of course, the more green workers you have, the more accidents you have.

This government has added to the danger by running programs that have a specific time line on them, so that we get the kind of thing we had in December of 1986, where all the oil companies hurried to get oil rigs into the field and get drilling before the time ran out on a particular incentive program, and we ended up killing 11 people in one month. Something similar has happened this winter, by the minister's own admission, in

terms of the nine deaths I referred to earlier.

Now, it is the responsibility of the minister to do something about this, and yet when I put forward an idea to him at the heritage trust fund hearings in November, 1986, a suggestion of a near-miss program which I will describe somewhat later, the minister answered and said:

No, I don't believe it is the government's responsibility to be the number one promoter of safety, whether it's a near miss, a miss, or an accident. It's got to be the responsibility of all of us in the province as workers, employers, managers, or whatever. I would suggest that it is not government's responsibility to keep that kind of registry, which would be exponentially greater than the one we keep today.

Now, the program that I'm suggesting was put forward by a fellow by the name of Don Taylor, and it's not necessary that one would hire him or hire a company that he would like to set up to do this program, but the idea is quite a good one. The idea is that workers and supervisors on the oil rigs would record near-miss accidents, and they would be investigated in the same way that an accident is investigated. It's not a totally new idea. In fact, the CAODC, the Canadian Association of Oilwell Drilling Contractors, is supposedly doing that on a sort of ad hoc basis now, or on a voluntary basis. The idea would be to collect the information and once a month shoot back out to the people in the field the information about those accidents in a compiled and consistent manner that would be easy to digest. This near-miss program -- according to Don Taylor, he says that if people in the field kept track of their near misses, they would also tell you a tremendous amount about which pieces of equipment are safe and which are not, which procedures are safe and which are not, and you could cut down on the number of accidents tremendously.

It seems to me a logical and reasonable idea, and there are some reasons for doing it that way. The response of the minister when we talked to him was to turn us over to an executive director in his office by the name of Mr. Rozel, and he suggested to Mr. Taylor that he should concentrate on the accidents. Now, there's a good reason why you don't. The accidents should be recorded and investigated too. Nobody's suggesting that that shouldn't be done. In fact, I understand it is now being done, and if that needs to be compiled and analyzed more systematically, so be it; that should be done. But this program would get a lot more statistics because there's a lot more near misses than there are accidents. Therefore, you would learn a lot more about what equipment is dangerous and what procedures are dangerous.

There's another reason as well. If you took that information about accidents and passed it back out into the field, you are talking about actual people who have been hurt. Their families may not wish that information made available; the companies involved may not want that information made available. The government itself doesn't seem to be too keen to release details of that sort because there is some possibility that some of the parties might want to sue other parties in relation to the accidents. Whereas with the near misses nothing has happened, and there would be no chance that anybody would get into any lawsuits over the collection of the data and the dissemination of the data.

Mr. Chairman, the idea behind this is that Alberta is one of the few places in the world where we have a sophisticated enough oil industry and a good enough communications system that we could collect enough information and analyze it with computers and pass it back out to the oil field so that it would be helpful. In fact, we probably could, once it was well estab-

lished, become an exporter of such information to the rest of the world. Lord knows that the oil drillers of the rest of the world probably need to improve their safety records as well.

Now, the minister's executive director, Mr. Rozel, also suggested that there was a task force already established by the minister and that Mr. Taylor should get in touch with them, which, as a matter of fact, he did. The task force I'll just describe briefly. It was the minister that charged a certain group of oil organizations with this task force: the CPA, the Canadian Petroleum Association; IPAC, the Independent Petroleum Association of Canada; CAODC, the Canadian Association of Oilwell Drilling Contractors; and PSAC, the Petroleum Services Association. In fact, Mr. Taylor did get in touch with the task force, and he talked to one member of the committee one morning. I don't know if he caught him on the wrong side of the bed or not, but the minister should know that the response was something like this: "Why in hell, " said this member, "should we be concerned when the government doesn't know anything about the industry? We'll go through the motions, but since nobody else has any commitment to this, then why should we bother?" Now, I've sort of ad-libbed the latter part of it, but the first sentence was a direct quote of the response.

So, Mr. Minister, I say to you: you've set up this task force, but I'm not quite sure how you expect any results from them because you haven't said they have to do something. You've said, "Will you guys come up with a plan?" So it amounts to nobody doing anything. You don't seem to be prepared to take the responsibility to say, "Yes, you will do this, " and lay out some safety ideas or some way of improving the safety record in the oil patch.

In fact, I heard the tail end of an announcement by yourself the other day indicating that you had seriously considered increasing the fines for companies that are shown to be negligent when somebody gets injured or killed and that you had changed your mind and decided to back off. So I would ask the minister to explain that, please. I think he was talking about some million dollar fine or something that he was intending to impose but has decided to back off and leave it at its low rate of -- I'm not sure what the number is but some few thousand-odd dollars.

Mr. Chairman, I'm just saying to this minister: on safety in the oil patch, this minister is a paper tiger. He has no policy with any real teeth in it other than for a very pleasant smile. I would just remind him of his mandate on page 80 which says that he is supposed to take his job seriously, and he should be doing something with safety in the oil patch.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The Member for Edmonton-Avonmore.

MS LAING: Mr. Chairman, thank you. I'd like to thank the minister for bringing up the issue of mental health, because I think this is, as he has said, a very difficult area. The thing that we have to look at, I think, is prevention, and that prevention means intervention at a very early age. From psychologists and psychiatrists we hear that approximately half of women who seek psychiatric and psychological care have been victims of violence in their childhood. So if we're going to look at the prevention of mental illness in adults, we need to deal with the effects of those childhood experiences. I would ask, and I plead in some ways with the minister to commit himself to treatment programs for children who have been in homes in which there has been assault against one of the spouses or where there's been physical or sexual abuse of children.

Another area that is not really addressed very well is the area of children who are sexually abused by someone outside of the family, and that is 40 percent of children that are sexually abused. When we think of one in four female children and one in 10 male children suffering sexual abuse by the age of 16, we see that this is a problem that needs to be addressed.

Not only do these unresolved experiences show up in terms of mental illness, but they also show up in terms of drug and alcohol abuse. So we need to see mental illness as well as drug and alcohol abuse not only as illnesses but coping mechanisms to deal with painful life experiences, life experiences that fill them with hopelessness and helplessness and a sense of despair. I would ask that the minister look at that: early intervention and treatment programs.

[Mr. Gogo in the Chair]

Another concern I have is that there is a dearth of resources for men that batter their wives. It's not enough to send them to jail or put them on probation or fine them; they need treatment.

I would ask the minister also to consider funding a province-wide crisis line that would hook up to local major centres so that there is a guarantee of anonymity.

I'm wondering, from the person responsible for AADAC, exactly the nature of treatment programs for adolescents who abuse alcohol and drugs. Is he being cognizant of the recommendations of people that have provided care for adolescents in this situation? What will be the basis of his choice?

The final area that I'd like to raise is the increasing reliance on volunteers for funding and for service. We have a limited number of volunteers and a limited number of charitable dollars. Too many volunteers spend too many hours searching for funds. Those hours could be better spent in delivering service. I hear from the volunteer sector that they really are being pushed to the limit. The amount of funds that are available is also being reached; the limits are being reached there. So when we're working with volunteers, we need to recognize that the communities have finite resources, and we also need to recognize that volunteer agencies have to have staff. There need to be funds for staffing, because the staff provides training and supervision and consultation for the volunteers, scheduling and following up as to the effectiveness and the appropriateness of programs.

Thank you.

MR. DINNING: Mr. Chairman, I rise now to respond to some of the comments that have been made, many excellent comments by my colleagues on the government side of the House and others that have come from the opposition ranks.

I just want to briefly mention National Volunteer Week. The hon. Member for Edmonton-Avonmore was just speaking about volunteers. Mr. Chairman, I would take exception with what she says. I know that we have in this province literally hundreds of thousands of Albertans who are anxious and willing to dedicate time and effort to volunteer activities. Now, I just think of my own home city of Calgary and some 20,000 volunteers who got involved in the Olympics, many of them having gotten involved in volunteer work for the very first time. They now realize the satisfaction that's derived from committing their time to worthy causes, and they've only touched the tip of the iceberg in wanting to devote more time to worthy causes. So I think one thing that the Olympics did among many things was to build that awareness level of volunteers and the value that they are to the community.

Mr. Chairman, I want to briefly touch on comments made by members, and I'll do them on a member-by-member basis. First of all, the Member for Edmonton-Centre. I am anxious that he hear these comments. He mentioned day care for seniors, talked about community care -- I think virtually all members touched on it -- and the importance of providing community services to our seniors. As I have mentioned during question period, I'm a strong advocate of community care, and I'm clearly supportive of it, just by looking at the departmental budget that I bring to you today.

I think of the Kerby Centre in Calgary and their desire to put together an adult day support program. They came to us over a year ago, Mr. Chairman, and asked for support and know that these are difficult times for all of us in government in trying to find resources to allocate and dedicate to worthy projects. But we were able to find a sum of some \$57,000 to help the Kerby Centre set up their adult day support program. That's just one program amongst many across the province that I hope this government will be supporting in the days ahead, because the idea is that community care is a real alternative to institutional care. I agree with the Member for Calgary-Glenmore that the costs are certainly greater than \$5 a day, but they are substantially and significantly less than the high-cost institutional care.

I want to talk about the discrepancy amongst health units with respect to adequate and equitable funding. The Member for Calgary-Buffalo has raised this with me a number of times. At the recent issues conference of the Health Unit Association of Alberta this issue was addressed, and we had the good fortune to present to all health units our proposal with respect to finding a better formula, a more equitable formula, so that health units were more equitably funded. Clearly, there are health units in this province, including the one that I represent in Calgary, the Calgary Health Services, which are underfunded, and our work shows that we have work to do to raise that level of funding so that they come up to a standard. Clearly, the health units suggested to me that there are some that are less underfunded than others; there are none that are overfunded. Well, I have to take some exception with that. But we will be discussing this at a May meeting of health units where they will have an opportunity to advise me as to their views on this funding formula. I look forward to that.

Suicide prevention and crisis lines: the Member for Edmonton-Centre and the Member for Edmonton-Avonmore raised this issue. I'm very proud of Canada's only major key comprehensive suicide prevention program. No other province has a Suicide Prevention Provincial Advisory Committee nor a provincial suicidologist; Alberta does. We are committing in this fiscal year a little over \$775,000 to provide funding to Calgary, Edmonton, Grande Prairie, Fort McMurray, Smoky Lake, Red Deer, Lethbridge, and Medicine Hat. Mr. Chairman, no other provincial government provides this kind of funding to community agencies -- again, relying very heavily on volunteers to deliver suicide prevention programs. I had mentioned briefly the suicide prevention training program and the suicide information education centre that support the delivery of those excellent suicide prevention programs.

I mentioned mental health agencies, and the Member for Edmonton-Centre referred to the Calgary Association of Self Help. Mr. Chairman, the \$600,000 that's provided to the Calgary Association of Self Help for their community program, their life skills program, the Westhill Group Home, and the skills pursuit program, is, I believe, money well invested, well spent. They are seeking an increase in their funding this year,

but in order to provide funding to all agencies like the Calgary Association of Self Help, we've chosen to keep a zero percent rather than a reduction in any one program, tried to keep a consistent level of funding to virtually all agencies across the province.

If I could just mention some in addition to CASH in Calgary, I think of the South Peace Day Treatment Centre society in the northwest region; I think of St. Paul and the White Oaks group home, the White Oaks assisted living program, the White Oaks maintenance day program. In Calgary we have the House Next Door society, which operates a number of group homes, and we have the Canadian Mental Health Association that does the same here in this city. I think of the Boyle Street Community Services Co-op; our funding and support for them enables the co-op to continue its good work. In Red Deer my colleague for Red Deer-North referred to Catholic Social Services and the community living programs that they put on, as well as the Overdown Drive group home put on by the Canadian Mental Health Association. I mentioned CASH in Calgary. The Wood's Christian Homes and the CMHA in Calgary are very active, as they are in Lethbridge. The Canadian Mental Health Association puts on resocialization programs, life-skills programs, and Laura House in Lethbridge. Mr. Chairman, that is because of the funding that's asked for in this Assembly today, some \$25 million to continue to support those community mental health services operated and delivered primarily, largely, by volunteer groups.

The Member for Cardston referenced the Raymond Go Getter's, Mr. Chairman, and this is a typical example of an Alberta success story: some 12 grand ladies who left the Raymond home and went to live in their homes, two homes amongst the 12 of them. Amongst those 12 women there were 551 years of institutionalized care, yet they could leave the care of an institution like Raymond, live on their own in their own homes in their own communities and be able to enjoy a life that they weren't able to enjoy in the institution.

The Member for Cardston also raised the contact tracing of those persons in Alberta with AIDS. Mr. Chairman, he was concerned about consistency of treating those with AIDS vis-à-vis those who have other sexually transmitted diseases. The method of contact tracing is almost identical with those for other sexually transmitted diseases. It certainly ensures confidentiality, but it ensures, also, that counseling and follow-up and free lab testing for those with the AIDS virus is continued. We certainly are committed to continuing to do that, and it's essential that an important part of our communicable disease prevention program is that contact tracing.

The Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark raised the Workers' Compensation Board. He spoke of delays; he spoke of arbitrariness; he spoke of disputes; he spoke of administrative problems and courtesy. Well, Mr. Chairman, I want to refer members -- as I'm always delighted to refer members to good news -- to positive contributions by this government to informed public debate. I refer hon. members to the Shaping the Future document on the Workers' Compensation Board that we released on March 30. What the hon. member raised was a number of legitimate concerns, a number of concerns that have been addressed in this report and that we have now sent out under the chairmanship of Mr. Vern Millard to seek public input on. But the report in a nutshell responds to all of the concerns raised by the Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark. It calls for a greater emphasis on rehabilitation, to strike a better balance between rehabilitation and compensation, to get the injured worker back

to work as quickly as possible. Because that's where the injured worker wants to be. He doesn't want to be at home; he doesn't want to be on welfare; he doesn't want to be on WCB. He wants to be back at work.

The report calls for a wage loss method in determining compensation benefits. Rather than taking a meat-chart approach, it says that every single person has an individual, unique circumstance -- a unique injury, a unique salary and job situation -- that's got to be respected and reflected in the compensation benefits he receives and the rehabilitation program he participates in. The report calls for the organization to be a more service-driven outfit. The basic courtesies that are two-way courtesies must be reflected and respected in the delivery of Workers' Compensation Board benefits. The report calls for an aggressive and proactive case management system that, again, is driven by rehabilitation. So I believe we have responded to a number of the concerns raised by hon. members.

As for occupational health and safety and how it relates to the Workers' Compensation Board, Mr. Chairman, I want to refer to comments made by the Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark and also for Edmonton-Kingsway. I have said in the Assembly a number of times; I've said it a number of times outside of this Assembly: I don't believe that more regulations and more laws are the way to go to ensure safety in Alberta's worksites, including the oil patch. What government programs have got to be directed at is providing more knowledge, more information, more education, and helping to change attitudes in Alberta's workplaces. I am a strong believer that industry, both employers and employees, have a responsibility to ensure that the workplace is a safe place to work. I think what government can do is to facilitate and support that, and I think of a program that we will introduce by way of legislation in this spring session. It is the workplace hazardous materials information system, which is a system of educating and informing workers and employers to ensure that hazardous materials, hazardous chemicals on the worksite are handled properly, safely, and with due concern, first-priority concern, to the health of the individual worker. But again, Mr. Chairman, we as a government are there to facilitate and nurture that support, to encourage and to prod. And where an employer or an employee breaks the law or doesn't follow the regulations and should be taken to court, we will do that. We have done that, and we will continue to do that in the future.

Mr. Chairman, the Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark also referred to home care and the status of the Victorian Order of Nurses. I think of the tremendous work that the VON has done in this province, but I must remind the Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark and others that home care is not delivered directly by the government. It's not an Edmonton-delivered home care; nor should it be. It must be a home care that is delivered in the community that is designed to meet local community needs. It isn't an Edmonton solution; it's a solution designed and delivered by local volunteers, local groups, in individual communities. So the VON continues to deliver services to the Southeastern Regional health unit and the Lethbridge health unit. The VON also continues to provide a valuable service to seniors through foot care clinics. So the VON still has a role to play. It's an evolving role that is changing and will also begin to focus on delivering health services for occupational health and safety purposes in the small business industry in this province.

The Member for Edmonton-Mill Woods raised the Workers' Compensation Board and the review process. Questioned is the

appointment of one of Alberta's most esteemed citizens, Mr. Vern Millard. Mr. Millard comes to the public consultation process with incredible experience and background and knowledge in that process, a deep commitment to the fairness and the impartiality of that process, and a deep commitment to ensure that all sides, all views, are heard. He comes with a fresh, unencumbered view of the Workers' Compensation Board, and he will be able to listen sincerely, honestly, responsively, and responsibly to injured workers and chambers of commerce and all other citizens like that.

I think of the comments made by my colleague the Member for Highwood that related to home care and community care. And yes, our auxiliary hospitals and our nursing homes and, perhaps, our active treatment hospitals have an important role to play for the medical care, the sickness care, of our senior citizens. But, Mr. Chairman, I'm a strong believer that before auxiliary hospitals or nursing homes are built in a community, we must take all steps practicable and all steps that we can to ensure that community services are available and delivered and that the community option is exhausted before we build bricks and mortar to care for our seniors.

Other comments, Mr. Chairman, I could comment on -- just for my colleague the Member for Red Deer-North. He expressed concern about sexuality education, integrating consequences into the curriculum. Most definitely I'm a believer that our young people must have discussed with them the alternatives and the options but also the consequences of any action they choose to take.

Other comments by hon. members I will respond to at a later date, and I would happily call the question now, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Are you ready for the question?

HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon. members, I don't believe there's going to be time, but we can attempt it.

Agreed to:

1.0.1 -- Minister's Office	\$181,780
1.0.2 -- Deputy Minister's Office	\$497,424
1.0.3 -- Communications	\$723,405
1.0.4 -- Management Support Services	\$1,051,776
1.0.5 -- Human Resources	\$1,337,061

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon. minister, the rules of the committee deem that we must rise and report.

MR. KOWALSKI: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I was just getting to my feet to move a motion that we stop the clock at this appropriate time, pending the conclusion of this vote.

MR. CHAIRMAN: It's been moved by the Deputy Government House Leader that the clock be stopped. All in favour, please say aye.

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Opposed? Carried.

Agreed to:

1.0.6 -- Executive Director -- Program

Support Services	\$191,512
1.0.7 -- Financial Services	\$1,343,377
1.0.8 -- Administrative Services	\$1,262,541
1.0.9 -- Information Systems and Services	\$2,496,555
1.0.10 -- Library Services	\$431,524
Total Vote 1 -- Departmental Support Services	\$9,516,955

2.1 -- Program Support	\$560,831
2.2 -- Family and Community Services	\$31,729,770
2.3 -- Prevention of Communicable Disease	\$9,858,649
2.4 -- Provincial Laboratories of Public Health	\$8,767,248
2.5 -- Home Care Services	\$32,653,575
2.6 -- Environmental Health Services	\$6,413,719
2.7 -- Dental Health Services	\$8,173,632
2.8 -- Auxiliary Health Services	\$60,052,726
2.9 -- Independent Living Benefits	\$48,796,435
2.10 -- Vital Statistics	\$1,525,491
Total Vote 2 -- Preventative Health Services	\$208,532,076

3.1 -- Program Support	\$228,350
3.2 -- Industry and Technical Services	\$5,249,496
3.3 -- Worksite Services	\$4,223,978
Total Vote 3 -- Occupational Health and Safety Services	\$9,701,824

4.1 -- Program Support	\$1,443,807
4.2 -- Community Mental Health Services	\$25,400,857
4.3 -- Extended Community Care Centres	\$16,657,554
Total Vote 4 -- Mental Health Services	\$43,502,218

5.0.1 -- Administration	\$2,444,295
5.0.2 -- Provincial Prevention and Education Services	\$4,347,182
5.0.3 -- Field Services	\$6,608,253
5.0.4 -- Institutions	\$5,570,635
5.0.5 -- Funded Agencies	\$6,736,099
Total Vote 5 -- Alcohol and Drug Abuse -- Treatment, Prevention, and Education	\$25,706,464

Total Vote 6 -- Workers' Compensation	\$15,879,370
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Department Total	\$312,838,907
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MR. DINNING: Mr. Chairman, I'm delighted to ask the Assembly that we rise and that we report the votes.

[Motion carried]

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Chairman, I move that the committee rise, report progress, and beg leave to sit again, and I also move that the clock remain stopped at 5:29.

MR. CHAIRMAN: We have two motions. Presumably the first one should come first: that the clock be stopped at 5:29. All in favour, please say aye.

HON. MEMBERS: Aye

MR. CHAIRMAN: Opposed, if any? Carried.

The Deputy Government House Leader has moved the committee rise and report progress and beg leave to sit again. All in favour, please say aye.

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Opposed, if any? So ordered.

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, resolved that sums not exceeding the following be granted to Her Majesty for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1989, for the department and purposes indicated.

Community and Occupational Health: \$9,516,955, Departmental Support Services; \$208,532,076, Preventive Health Services; \$9,701,824, Occupational Health and Safety Services; \$43,502,218, Mental Health Services; \$25,706,464, Alcohol and Drug Abuse, Treatment, Prevention, and Education; \$15,879,370, Workers' Compensation.

MR. SPEAKER: Having heard the report, does the Assembly agree?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed? Carried.

The Chair must point out that while the Assembly at any time by unanimous consent can do almost whatever it pleases, nevertheless what transpired is in violation of Standing Order 60.

Now that the clock is indeed 5:30, the House stands adjourned until tomorrow afternoon at 2:30.

[At 5:37 p. m. the House adjourned to Thursday at 2:30 p. m.]

