

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ALBERTA

Title: **Wednesday, April 27, 1988 2:30 p.m.**

Date: 88/04/27

[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: PRESENTING PETITIONS

MR. SCHUMACHER: Mr. Speaker, I request leave to present the following petition that has been received for a private Bill: the petition of the Calgary Municipal Heritage Properties Authority for the Calgary Municipal Heritage Properties Authority Amendment Act, 1988.

**head: PRESENTING REPORTS BY
STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES**

MR. SCHUMACHER: Mr. Speaker, with respect to the petition of La Verne Erickson, Terrance Schlinker, Wesley Wikkerink, Douglas Madge, Gordon Cousins, and Raymond Schultz for Bill Pr. 8, Rosebud School of the Arts Act, the advertising was completed 10 days after the deadline, and the Private Bills Committee requests that the deadline be extended to permit the petition to be dealt with. I request the concurrence of the Assembly in this report.

MR. SPEAKER: Does the Assembly concur in the request?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed? Carried.

head: INTRODUCTION OF SPECIAL GUESTS

MS LAING: Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to introduce to you and through you to the members of this Assembly, 33 grade 6 students from Malcolm Tweddle school in the beautiful constituency of Edmonton-Avonmore. They are seated in the members' and public galleries, and they are accompanied by their teachers Ms Gloria Kelly and parent Mrs. Heather Wallace. I would ask that they stand and receive the warm welcome of this Assembly.

MR. SPEAKER: Calgary-North West.

DR. CASSIN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my privilege to

introduce to you and through you to the members of the Assembly, another group of very bright, cheerful students from Fred Edward Osborne junior high school in the constituency of Calgary-North West. They are here today with their teachers Mrs. Dawn Jones, Mr. Dale Martin, and Mr. George Stathakis. They are sitting in the members' and public galleries, I'd ask that they would now rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

head: ORAL QUESTION PERIOD**Labour Relations Code**

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, to the Premier. One of the more insidious aspects of the government's new labour code is the provision requiring working people who have joined a union for the purpose of bargaining with their employer to be subjected to a further election process in which the boss has an opportunity to break the union before bargaining can begin. This particular provision is an import from the United States, where it has had the effect of keeping unions out of a majority of worksites even after a majority of workers have joined the union. My question to the Premier: will the Premier advise whether this Americanization of our system is an attempt to fall in line with the Mulroney/Reagan trade deal in labour relations?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, I'm going to repeat what I said to the hon. member yesterday. He has concerns about the labour legislation, and he desires to change any parts of it or ask questions about it: the House sets aside a considerable amount of time for that. I suggest that he use that time and see if he can convince the House that changes need to be made.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, why don't we use this time in question period which was meant to answer questions.

To follow up, Mr. Speaker. Professor Alain Noel points out that the effect of this law in the United States has been to reduce the success rate among newly created unions who have signed up a majority of the workers from 70 percent or 80 percent to less than half. My question to the Premier: is this the result that the Premier intends for Alberta?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, as I said yesterday, the government intends to make sure that the labour legislation provides an equal opportunity for both management and labour to negotiate contracts between themselves, because that's where the responsibility is. The legislation is intended to make sure that that opportunity is given. Again, rather than expressing his own views, the hon. member expresses the views of some professor somewhere. That's really not the business of the House. He should express his own views and see if he can convince the members of the Legislature.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, the Premier may think he can hide, but he can't. This is the place to answer the questions before that Bill comes in.

Knowing clearly what's happened in the United States, I want to ask the Premier: is it the attempt to balance the labour laws on the side of management? Is this what this government is doing as we move into the Mulroney trade deal? Is this the purpose?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, I just dealt with the question, what the intent of the legislation is. I've just explained it to the hon. member, invited him to participate fully in the debate on the Bill, ask all the questions he would like. I think it's a wonderful forum of parliamentary democracy where we provide that opportunity in the way of handling Bills. I invite him and all members of his caucus to participate as fully as possible.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, we're not sure the Premier will be here, but I would remind him about the medicare Bill, when we tried to bring it out in question period.

But maybe we'll try to get an answer from the Minister of Labour. As the Minister of Labour is surely aware, if the Premier isn't, this has had the effect of setting up a whole new business of consultants whose sole job is to crush . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary question, please.

MR. MARTIN: The question is: is this the reason that we're bringing this in, so we can crush the labour movement through consultants, through the Mulroney trade deal?

DR. REID: Mr. Speaker, I was under the understanding that the Legislative Assembly provided certain research funds to the NDP opposition caucus. Yesterday they were talking about something that was put forward by the dean of law. Today he is talking about something put forward in a letter by a professor of the department of political science at the University of Alberta. I didn't know that the purpose of the University of Alberta was to provide research services for the NDP caucus.

If the hon. member would read section 31(3), he'll find the answer there to the question he's asking.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

Supplementary, Edmonton-Gold Bar.

MRS. HEWES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Will the Minister of Labour, then, explain to the House how this particular section creates a level playing field or a fair environment for all parties? Just tell us how it works.

DR. REID: I don't mind anticipating debate on occasion, but this is getting monotonous. The situation is that the directions are there for the Labour Relations Board to hold the vote as soon as possible. Surely if one is trying to avoid coercion, browbeating, and other mechanisms to influence the decision, the best way is to have a secret ballot. It's called democracy, and it's the way this country works and this province works.

MR. SPEAKER: Second main question, Leader of the Opposition.

MR. MARTIN: Yes, Mr. Speaker. Hope springs eternal; we'll continue with question period.

I'd like to designate my second question to the Member for Edmonton-Centre.

Hospital Funding

REV. ROBERTS: Thank you Mr. Speaker. [interjections] Now, easy, easy. There's some soft ones today to the minister.

Mr. Speaker, the mixed messages that emanate from the Minister of Hospitals and Medical Care with respect to funding

the 128 acute care hospitals in this province are entirely unacceptable. On the one hand, the minister has said over the last few days that a 2.2 percent increase is all they can expect, and they must whittle down even further the staff and beds to stay within that budget. On the other hand, the minister has said, and I quote from yesterday:

Let us know what your concerns and problems are . . . without reducing any services [or closing beds, and we'll take a look at that.]

Well, what's it going to be, Mr. Minister? Is the 2.2 percent the bottom line for negotiations with hospital boards or just the starting line for negotiations?

MR. M. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, that's the same question that was asked yesterday, and I will give the same answer.

REV. ROBERTS: I can appreciate the minister trying to hide from these questions too, because what's happened is -- and what is the minister's response to the number of hospital boards who are already saying that they have sharpened their pencils, that the fat is gone, that they are as lean and mean as they can be, and they will still need a 5.9 or 6 percent increase this year either to close beds or to break even? What's the minister's response to those who are already on the record saying that?

MR. M. MOORE: Again, Mr. Speaker, the same answers that I gave yesterday are relevant.

REV. ROBERTS: Well, so is the minister, then, saying today and giving his assurance in the House that the staff in hospitals will also receive a 4 percent raise, as the registered nurses have, that there will be no bed closures in hospitals this year, and that no hospital will run a deficit as a result of the budget from his department to their hospital?

MR. M. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is now getting into a new area, talking about other staff salary settlements in the hospital sector, and in fact as far as I'm aware, the Alberta Hospital Association and about four other union bargaining representatives that are involved have not yet finalized the settlements for those unions for the coming year. So it's not yet known what the cost will actually be.

REV. ROBERTS: Well, it's not yet known how co-operative the minister is going to be either.

To the Premier will the Premier instruct this current Minister of Hospitals and Medical Care to develop a relationship with hospital boards that used to exist under previous ministers of hospitals, whereby the boards knew and agreed in advance with the department what their programs would be, what their staffing levels and bed allocations would be, and have that agreed to in advance instead of this irrational method of erratic funding and strikes at the 11th hour in our precious . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, hon. member. Supplementary's over.

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, frankly, the consultation process has been exhaustive with the hospitals. I might point out to the hon. member that somebody has to have some concern for the taxpayers of this province. The hon. member, I guess, would have the taxpayers borrowing money in Europe, borrowing money in the United States, borrowing dollars, making sure that

they just load more and more expenditures on the taxpayers. When the minister says, "Let's try and find some efficiencies," the NDP merely brushes off such things as trying to help the taxpayers and says spend, spend, spend. Well, that's their style.

MRS. HEWES: Mr. Speaker, to the Premier. Of course, taxpayers want access and quality in health care. That's what they want.

To the minister: is the minister's real objective here to force bed closures in acute care? Has he made a unilateral decision that this is the only way to achieve efficiency?

MR. M. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, again, yesterday I did spend considerable time discussing the matter of what I was hopeful hospitals would be able to do, but I will go over it once more. The hospitals are in a position at the present time where they know what their salary settlements are with respect to the nurses but not with respect to a number of other employees that they have who are a significant part of their operations. They also have a reasonably good idea at this point in time what their costs will be for supplies and services over the course of the next year.

It was only last week that they were advised officially by our department of the exact budgetary dollars which we have made available, and that included the 1.5 percent announced in January plus an additional amount to bring their salary settlements on the nurses up to 4 percent. We've now asked them to analyze that budget and tell us whether or not they can make it through the year without closing any beds and without reducing any services. Because they don't know their final costs in a number of other areas, it's going to be difficult for them to give us accurate figures in that regard right away, but I'm hopeful of getting them fairly soon. After we've had all of that information, we'll be meeting with various hospitals and trying to make sure that there's no way they do have to close beds or reduce services, because we don't want that to occur.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

Main question from the Liberal caucus.

MRS. HEWES: Mr. Speaker, may I designate the first question from the Liberal caucus to Calgary-Buffalo.

Ethane Fuels Industry

MR. CHUMIR: This is to the Premier, Mr. Speaker. The announcement of a proposed \$2 billion petrochemical development near Red Deer is indeed welcome news. However, it's troubling that a large part of our petrochemical plans are based on a government ethanol policy of August 21, 1987, which I have here, which bestows special benefits on a company on whose board the Premier sat and whose plane was made quickly available to help the Premier on a recent personal emergency. NOVA'S benefit is at the expense of natural gas producers who are upset and rightly so. On what free-enterprise basis does the Premier justify his policy which would require producers to make ethanol available to NOVA petrochemical plants at less than the fair market value of the ethanol? Why aren't the producers entitled to fair market value?

MR. GETTY: I gather that the hon. member means ethane. Does he?

MR. CHUMIR: Ethane.

MR. GETTY: Yes. Mr. Speaker, we do not have an ethanol policy for petrochemical producers.

But, Mr. Speaker, the government is determined that there will be processing of Alberta natural resource products within this province. I understand the hon. member's position, and that is that you would have the upgrading plants built outside of Alberta, probably in Ontario, probably in the United States, and that in fact you would then ship the jobs down the pipeline and have others benefit from Alberta's resources and the upgrading of those resources. That is not our position. We will do everything possible to have Alberta's resources upgraded in this province so that the jobs are here for Albertans.

MR. CHUMIR: Well, Mr. Speaker, the Premier promotes free trade and a free market philosophy, yet its policy wimpishly requires a subsidy to petrochemical producers. I'm wondering how the Premier intends to answer complaints from U.S. competitors that NOVA'S ethylene exports are unfair subsidies under the free trade agreement?

MR. GETTY: I gather, Mr. Speaker, we won't have to hear from the U.S. companies. We're getting it from a spokesman of theirs, I guess, the Member for Calgary-Buffalo.

MR. CHUMIR: It sounds to me like we're acting like wimps, Mr. Speaker.

Now, the government's policy is allegedly based on a 1975 undertaking to Alberta Gas Ethylene, but no written evidence of this undertaking has ever been provided. Now, will the Premier tell this House what agreement, if any, was made in 1975 or anytime with Alberta Gas Ethylene, and will he make it public so that the people of this province can see what our policy really is?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, I spelled out the policy in answering the first question, and that is that Alberta resources will be upgraded to the greatest extent possible within this province. We will not ship jobs down a pipeline to some other part of the country or into the United States.

MR. CHUMIR: Obviously, regardless of a free trade agreement or no free trade agreement.

Now, the Energy Resources Conservation Board report on this issue has been in the hands of the government, apparently for the past week. Natural gas producers don't have a copy. Has one been provided to NOVA through Alberta Gas Ethylene corporation, yes or no?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, I assume when the Energy Resources Conservation Board's report is public; we will all get it. As far as Alberta Gas Ethylene sending it to NOVA, that seems strange because NOVA owns Alberta Gas Ethylene.

MR. SPEAKER: Member for Lacombe.

MR. R. MOORE: Supplementary, Mr. Speaker, to the Premier. NOVA'S announcement of 2,000 jobs through the construction period and 500 permanent jobs certainly indicates that it is creating jobs and saving them here in Alberta. The Member for Calgary-Buffalo seems to be against that; we're for it in central Alberta.

However, my question to the Premier: what additional spin-offs to businesses can we expect from such a major construction project here in central Alberta?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member anticipates, it shows that the policy is working and working very positively to the best interests of Albertans -- the fact that this is also an upgrading of natural resources, is a further diversification effort. Also, the fact that it is located in central Alberta is a decentralization feature in our province. I think that the huge number of jobs that will be provided in the ethylene project is only the start, because the ethylene then is a building block for many, many more petrochemical projects, as we have seen from the original two plants. It's hard for me to understand why the Member for Calgary-Buffalo would be so anti this kind of development, if it's in the best interests of the people of Alberta.

MR. PASHAK: A supplemental to the Minister of Energy. Given that no one wants to see the processing of primary products removed from the province, what steps or alternatives is the government proposing to deal with legitimate grievances of smaller producers in the province with respect to this ethane policy?

DR. WEBBER: Well, Mr. Speaker, I think the hon. member knows the answer to that question. The ERCB has had hearings over the last few years with respect to the construction of upstream field plants. Those hearings have been difficult hearings because there's been such divided views between the petrochemical industry and the producers. So we established the policy; we sent that policy to the ERCB and asked the ERCB to consult with industry. They had hearings and they heard both sides. We have received a report from the ERCB, and I intend to make it public next week so everybody will know the results.

MR. SPEAKER: The Member for Little Bow, followed by Drumheller, Edmonton-Calder, Edmonton-Meadowlark.

Transfer Payments

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Provincial Treasurer. Professor Mansell of the University of Calgary has done a study with regards to the distribution of federal fiscal balances between the federal government and the provinces of Canada. It's noted in there the various expenditures and contributions by the various provinces. One note, for example, is that Alberta had a net contribution of \$2.95 billion in the year 1985, whereas Ontario received some \$4.3 billion. Could the Provincial Treasurer indicate whether the government has finalized their study with regards to this and that their figures show the very same type of imbalance at the present time?

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, I don't know that the government has undertaken a study which would either deny or replicate what Professor Mansell has done, but I think this government from time to time has expressed a similar sentiment about the way in which the fiscal federation in particular operates and its impact on Alberta. I think my colleagues from time to time have made some fairly glowing speeches about the troublesome aspects of the way in which central dollars are redistributed back into Alberta.

Nonetheless, Mr. Speaker, we have taken the position that we are members of Canada. We have to make our contribution

in a variety of ways. We continue to support the equalization concept, which was entrenched in the Constitution in November of 1981, and we tend to feel that in these kinds of relationships it isn't all equity and fairness, that you have to be a contributor and to some extent you have to ask what is due to you.

It's on that last point, Mr. Speaker, that I should underline the fact that in the Budget Address we indicated that Alberta is making a claim for stabilization under the established programs financing arrangement, and we expect, as we have done in the past, to pay our fair share and that in fact the central government in this case should pay their fair share. We hope that will be the mandate.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary to the minister with regards to the revenue stabilization provisions. Could the minister indicate what progress has been made on that and what steps the minister is taking to gain as much equity as possible for Alberta in this Confederation?

MR. JOHNSTON: Yes, Mr. Speaker, as I have said before, we are pursuing this claim with some vigour. We believe that the transfers which the province has made to Canada over the past decade, both in terms of equalization and in terms of reducing the price of oil below the world price, for example, have made major contributions to the economic prosperity of this country. But at this time, because of the substantial reduction in the price of oil and gas in 1986, that claim is now being investigated with all the effort and strength of two departments, of Treasury and Energy. We have just about concluded our calculations. I think the real test is going to be to convince the federal bureaucrats, I suppose, that in fact the claim is legitimate, to explain why the claim is necessary, and then, as I've said before, to get the politicians to "yes."

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, supplementary question to the minister. Professor Mansell's table indicates that since 1961 to 1985 Alberta has contributed some \$100 billion, whereas Ontario during that same period of time has given a total of \$17 billion and Quebec has received some \$91 billion, which seems to be very inequitable. Could the minister indicate whether the current financial condition of Alberta at this point in time warrants greater consideration by the federal government to a return of some of those dollars and a reversal of that trend that has been historic since 1961?

MR. JOHNSTON: I'm sure we'd like to reverse the trend. I know during the energy debate the leader of the government and several ministers, of course, made fairly strong statements about the contribution the province has made to the rest of Canada on the oil and national energy program. I won't get into the rhetoric of the national energy program except to say that that program certainly confiscated dollars from Alberta and redistributed those dollars back into the central treasury for redistribution to other parts of Canada. That's a fact. I think we agree that the numbers are large.

But Alberta continues to maintain its position with respect to equalization. That is, if you have a have-not province, it must be able to receive services and a reasonable tax regime similar to other provinces. That's why we support the notion of equalization, and that's why for some only distant time -- perhaps the member will remember better than I -- Alberta has not benefited under equalization. But we are doing all that we can to adjust these circumstances. I think the western development

opportunities fund is one. Perhaps not quite enough money, but certainly it is symbolic in its attempt to address some of these situations.

Nonetheless, I think the strength and vigour of this province come from its attitude towards private-sector investment to develop the strengths we have in our resources and to get on with making Alberta a prosperous province. That's essentially our objective.

MR. R. SPEAKER: A final supplementary to the Premier, Mr. Speaker. One of the instruments that possibly we could use would be the Western Premiers' Conference. Would the Premier see that as being an item on the agenda for discussion and gaining the support of the other three provinces as such?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, I think the hon. member makes a good suggestion. There will be an opportunity for me to discuss this matter and receive the support of western Premiers. I might also point out that due to efforts of the Alberta government, we now have the matter of first ministers' meetings on an annual basis established both in custom and in the Meech Lake accord. We would use that opportunity as well, because now that is no longer at the whim of the federal government but is established. It also provides an excellent opportunity to follow through on the suggestion the hon. member makes.

MR. SPEAKER: Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark. I'm sorry; Edmonton-Gold Bar.

MRS. HEWES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I didn't see him.

Mr. Speaker, to the Treasurer. Fairness is one thing, but we all know that timing is everything. With a federal election on the horizon, can the minister give us his time line regarding the claim so that there can be some assurance to the House on our submissions and a commitment from the federal government in the near future?

MR. JOHNSTON: Well, Mr. Speaker, simply to advise the member that the process is now started. We are affirming our calculations. My understanding of the relationship of the sections which have the established programs financing is that the federal government does not have to initiate payments before the end of 1989. But realizing the importance of this claim to Albertans and recognizing that many things are done at different stages of the political cycle, I will accept the advice of the member and keep my eye on that timetable.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

Member for Calgary-Mountain View.

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last year Alberta with about 9 percent of Canada's population received only 1.5 percent of the money that the federal government spent on regional development. What will the Premier do prior to the next meeting of the Premiers of the country; what steps is he going to take to have this imbalance corrected?

MR. GETTY: Well, Mr. Speaker, again, the opportunities that I outlined to the hon. Member for Little Bow are excellent opportunities. I suppose we will also have now the opportunity to welcome another Progressive Conservative Premier to the circle, and I anticipate that he will be as concerned for western and provincial rights and not as caught up in the old idea of big gov-

ernment being best in Ottawa and Ottawa telling everybody what to do.

Suicide Prevention

MR. SCHUMACHER: Mr. Speaker, my question today is for the Minister of Community and Occupational Health and concerns a very serious problem in our society. Suicide and related mental illness is much more widespread than many of us would think, and one out of three people will at one time during their lives suffer from some form of mental illness. In view of this, could the minister inform the House what his department is doing with respect to the prevention of suicide?

MR. DINNING: Well, Mr. Speaker, it is a tragedy that this government is deeply concerned with, and we've taken action by putting together a program that is -- I know the opposition doesn't like to hear this -- unique in Canada. It provides funding to communities for education, for bereavement programs, for distress lines, and for co-ordination of suicide prevention efforts in a number of centres, including Grande Prairie, Fort McMurray, St. Paul, Edmonton, Red Deer, Calgary, Lethbridge, and Medicine Hat.

MR. SCHUMACHER: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Could the minister detail how those programs are delivered? Does the department provide the services directly, or are volunteer societies and private organizations employed?

MR. DINNING: Mr. Speaker, I believe the program's main strength is that it is delivered by individuals, primarily volunteers, within each of those communities. Through the Suicide Prevention Provincial Advisory Committee we grant dollars to groups that are interagency groups, so we ensure that there is a co-ordinated effort amongst all of the care givers and the groups within each of those communities to make sure that the volunteers are properly co-ordinated and properly equipped to go about their duties of attempting to prevent suicides and ensuring that members of the community, including teachers and schools and physicians within the community, are aware of the signs and the symptoms to put out an early warning, an early check on those who might be thinking of attempting suicide.

MR. SCHUMACHER: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Could the minister tell the House how these suicide prevention programs will be impacted by the social policy statement Caring & Responsibility?

MR. DINNING: Mr. Speaker, it's an excellent point because when the Deputy Premier released the paper Caring & Responsibility: A Statement of Social Policy for Alberta just last week, I looked at the paper as to how our programs stood up against that paper. Quite in keeping with the paper, our suicide prevention program focuses foursquare on the themes of individual self-reliance; on the notion of family, the importance of family as a fundamental value in our society; certainly on our historical traditions of volunteerism; community-driven programs. Basically, the objective of the program is to help achieve self-sufficiency and independence for all Albertans.

MR. SCHUMACHER: Final supplementary, Mr. Speaker, to the Minister of Education. Could the minister tell the House if the Alberta curriculum deals with the issues of mental illness

and suicide?

MRS. BETKOWSKI: Mr. Speaker, members will recall that in July of 1987 the Member for Olds-Didsbury brought forward a motion to this Assembly urging that the issue of suicide be dealt with more thoroughly in the curriculum than it was. As a result of that motion, we now have a junior health and personal life skills program, which does address the suicide issue, and a curriculum guide outlining some of the myths about suicide. Then it's continued on into the career and life management required curriculum at the senior high level, where we address more the issues of self-image, of the frustrations that young people face in their daily living, and how to cope with those frustrations. Further, we have put out in the last several months a teachers' manual for dealing with the issue within the classroom, which has been lauded by both junior high and senior high school teachers as an excellent resource document to deal with this very difficult problem.

MRS. HEWES: A supplementary to the Minister of Community and Occupational Health, Mr. Speaker. This tragic situation of depression and hopelessness and suicide is particularly prevalent in native communities. Will the minister tell us if and how this problem is being addressed that effects extraordinary losses, particularly among teenagers?

MR. DINNING: It is a concern in the native communities, Mr. Speaker. We have been working with a number of reserves in the province through our provincial suicidologist to attempt to put in place programs on reserves, most recently in co-operation with the federal government, which has provided most of the funding for a program at one of our reserves just outside of Edmonton. We're doing basically a test study, a pilot study, to make sure that the band council, working with a worker in the community, has the resources, has the tools to get the word out in the community and to prevent these tragedies from occurring, especially amongst our native young people.

MS LAING: Mr. Speaker, to the minister. In light of a 2.5 per cent cut in funding can the minister assure us that people in rural, isolated areas will have access to a toll-free anonymous crisis line that can direct them to the services they need? Because one who is suicidal needs more than a crisis line. They need treatment and counseling to deal with the depression and the despair they feel. So what commitment does he make to . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, hon. member. The supplementary has been asked. Thank you.

MR. DINNING: Mr. Speaker, I want to clarify the beginning of the hon. member's question. There is in fact a 3.6 per cent increase in our suicide prevention program under vote 4 in our departmental budget. The hon. member raised this question during the discussion of my department's estimates, and my concern with a provincewide toll line is -- although it is a laudable objective and one that I hope we'll achieve someday, what's even more important is to make sure the community network is in place such that when that person in distress gets off the phone and still suffers from the problems that are causing him or her distress, they will be able to go to community workers, go to community resources, community agencies to get the ongoing support they need. That is our objective, Mr. Speaker: to make sure those services are put in place in those communities before

there is such a provincewide line.

Private Adoptions

MS MJOLSNES: Mr. Speaker, my questions today are to the Minister of Social Services. Yesterday I had hoped that the Minister of Social Services would reassure Albertans that her department would not reduce its role in private adoptions. Instead of giving that assurance, the minister repeated her assertion that any changes would be in the best interests of the child. Although the minister is finally moving to introduce regulations into the private adoption area, the report that I am now filing by the department's legislative planner, Bert Walter, proves that the department is considering withdrawing from many of the services it now provides. Will the minister explain how withdrawing the important public services indicated in this report could possibly be considered in the best interests of the child?

MRS. OSTERMAN: Mr. Speaker, I am aware that the hon. member has a document which apparently was used as a discussion tool for a legislative planner from the Department of Social Services, in a public meeting I might add. There are some 5,000-plus people who work for the Department of Social Services. I sincerely hope that many of them will be putting together ideas that come forward to the minister's office, but it does not necessarily reflect the minister's view.

MS MJOLSNES: Supplementary to the minister then. Is she saying that the recommendations in this particular report will not be used as her amendments when she comes out with her legislation?

MRS. OSTERMAN: Mr. Speaker, to get into a discussion about what form the amendments will take is not appropriate for question period, because obviously the hon. member could discuss -- the hon. member, to be fair, should also bring forward the report of the committee that traveled the province and sought the views of all Albertans on this very important matter and many other discussion documents . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, hon. minister. We'll continue when there's quiet in the House.

Hon. minister.

MRS. OSTERMAN: Mr. Speaker, I only wanted for the House to note that there are many, many documents that have surfaced with respect to this issue. Very importantly, it is an expression of opinion from many Albertans, including Department of Social Services employees. Mr. Speaker, I can assure the hon. member that she'll have a lot of opportunity to discuss that legislation when it comes forward.

MS MJOLSNES: Mr. Speaker, the committee's report came out in 1986. This particular report came out in 1988.

Supplementary to the minister: will the minister explain how having lawyers bargaining for babies in hospital parking lots on behalf of their clients, a situation that is outlined in this particular report -- will she explain how her legislation will prevent this from happening?

MRS. OSTERMAN: Mr. Speaker, the outline of the situation that the hon. member has just described, that allegedly has taken place, is certainly not in the best interests of the child and, there-

fore, given my comments on the two previous days in question period, obviously would not happen in legislation.

MR. SPEAKER: Final supplementary.

MS MJOLSNESS: Third supplementary, Mr. Speaker. I'm asking for assurances by the minister. Given, then, that this report indicates that people assessing the suitability of prospective adoptive parents would be the same people who have financial interests in placing adoptive children, does the minister consider this to be a conflict of interest which could lead to placing some children at risk?

MRS. OSTERMAN: Mr. Speaker, once again the hon. member has framed in her own mind what legislation may look like. The hon. member will be able to see the legislation and discuss it when it is put forward.

MS MJOLSNESS: Mr. Speaker, surely Albertans . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. member, this is not discussion time. There have been three supplementaries, Table officers? Sorry.

The Chair recognizes Edmonton-Meadowlark on a main question.

MR. CHUMIR: Supplementary.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary, Calgary-Buffalo. Thank you. With alacrity.

MR. CHUMIR: Thank you. To the minister. We'd simply like to know that low-income Albertans will have an equal opportunity to adopt babies and that those with money will not have special benefits and advantages: that's the heart of the matter. Can the minister give us this assurance?

MRS. OSTERMAN: Once again, Mr. Speaker, that will be a matter of discussion with respect to the legislation when it comes forward, but I can assure the hon. member that this government is trying very hard, within the context of assuring the long-term security of the child, to give the parents of a child and adoptive parents options.

MR. SPEAKER: Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark.

Student Employment Programs

MR. MITCHELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Edmonton hire-a-student office opened today with hundreds of students lined up, many of them who had been doing that overnight. What is clear is that students want to work but that their options and opportunities are awfully limited at this time, with a youth unemployment rate in this province of 15.2 percent. The Alberta wage subsidy program used to be available to employers wanting to hire summer students at a subsidized wage rate. To the Minister of Career Development and Employment: will the minister please explain why this program is no longer available to students?

MR. ORMAN: Mr. Speaker, the wage subsidy program is available to students.

MR. MITCHELL: To the Minister of Labour will the minister

make the announced minimum wage increases effective immediately so that thousands of students across Alberta can earn enough money this summer to pay for their postsecondary education next year?

DR. REID: Mr. Speaker, I've already made public the reasons for setting September 1 as the date for implementation.

MR. MITCHELL: To the Minister of Economic Development and Trade: will the minister consider setting up small business consultants in hire-a-student offices across Alberta to facilitate students wanting to set up their own business during the summer?

MR. SHABEN: Mr. Speaker, we've got a very effective program that is offered through the Alberta Opportunity Corps that provides financing for start-up student businesses. The Federal Business Development Bank provides a similar program, and also through the incubator programs in Edmonton and Calgary there is support to young budding entrepreneurs. I would join, I'm sure, with all members in the Assembly to encourage students who have that entrepreneurial inclination to start up their own businesses during the summer and access the programs that are available to them.

MR. MITCHELL: To the Minister of Career Development and Employment: why are so many STEP positions allocated to government and so few to business?

MR. ORMAN: Mr. Speaker, I'm really disappointed in the research that the hon. member has done. He should know that the wage subsidy program is in fact available to students through the summer and that in fact the wage subsidy program is for the private sector.

For the public sector and for nonprofit organizations we have the summer temporary employment program. That budget this year, Mr. Speaker, is \$20 million. It was \$20 million last year. We had more students employed last summer than in the history of this province, so I believe the program works well.

I had the opportunity to open the hire-a-student office in Lethbridge this week, much to the satisfaction of the members for Lethbridge-East and Lethbridge-West. I could tell you that it is a very fine program. It is one of the oldest programs in this department, the summer temporary employment program, and we will continue to be sure that it works to the satisfaction of students who are wanting a summer job.

With regard to the member's comment to the Minister of Labour, Mr. Speaker, the summer temporary employment program and summer jobs are for young people, not only to assist them in supplementing their educational costs but also to give them the opportunity, in many cases, for their first job. I'm sure the hon. member recognizes and recalls the importance of his first job in terms of learning discipline and the experience that you get with your job, working with people, and certainly the program covers all of those areas.

MR. SPEAKER: A supplementary, Edmonton-Belmont.

MR. SIGURDSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the Minister of Career Development and Employment. Processing applications has been retarded due to government cuts in that department, and I'm advised as of last week that right at the moment they're six weeks behind in processing the applications. I won-

der what plans the minister has, if any, to increase the staff at the programs office to process those very applications that are so important to students.

MR. ORMAN: Mr. Speaker, we have a very active time of year. As the STEP program kicks off at the beginning of April, it is a very intensive period for us, and we bring resources not only from our employment programs, the nonprofit ones, but also for people who work generally in the wage subsidy area to assist in the processing of those applications. We do our very best in the department to assist in processing those applications. The hon. member may know something I don't; I doubt it. But I don't know that there has been any reduction in staff assisting in processing in the summer temporary employment program.

MR. SPEAKER: The time for question period has expired. Might we have unanimous consent to complete this series of questions, if there are indeed any supplementaries, and also for the Minister of Energy to give supplementary information with respect to a question raised by Calgary-Forest Lawn?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed? Carried. Thank you. Any additional supplementaries on this issue?

Minister of Energy.

Ethane Fuels Industry

(continued)

DR. WEBBER: Mr. Speaker, I think it's important to follow up my response earlier to the question from the Member for Calgary-Forest Lawn, in that when the ERCB ethane report is released next week, the follow-up would be consultation with both the petrochemical industry and the producers in this province to get feedback from those people with respect to the recommendations from that report. I want to emphasize that the report was for recommendations to come to the government, and following those consultations, government would make the final decision on how we will see future petrochemical plants develop in this province.

MR. PASHAK: Mr. Speaker, will those recommendations be coming before the Assembly for debate in any way, either by way of a motion or a Bill or a change to existing Acts?

DR. WEBBER: Well, Mr. Speaker, the hon. member, when the report becomes public, is free to do whatever he wants with it. If he wants to put a motion on the Order Paper, I'm sure he can do so.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

MR. SPEAKER: Might we have unanimous consent to revert briefly to the Introduction of Special Guests?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed? Carried. Thank you.
The Minister of Public Works, Supply and Services.

head: INTRODUCTION OF SPECIAL GUESTS *(reversion)*

MR. ISLEY: Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to introduce to you today and through you to the members of the Assembly, 18 grade 6 students from the Beaver River school located in the community of Medley, in that great constituency of Bonnyville, the home of Alberta's most beautiful lakes and best fishing. The students today are accompanied by their teacher Don White, and parents Karen Briand, Janet Prescott, Fran Mullen, Sheila Smith, and Allan Augustson. They are seated in the members' gallery, and I'd ask that they stand and receive the welcome of the Assembly.

head: COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

[Mr. Gogo in the Chair]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Committee of Supply, please come to order.

Executive Council

MR. CHAIRMAN: The President of Executive Council is the Hon. Don Getty, Premier. The following ministers, who on behalf of Executive Council would be seeking support of the Assembly: hon. Mr. Russell, hon. Mr. Crawford, hon. Mr. Adair, hon. Dr. Reid, hon. Mr. Kowalski, hon. Ms McCoy. These ministers may speak under the direction of the President of Executive Council, who will be putting forward the estimates.

Would hon. members wishing to put questions, comments, or amendments to the estimates, please indicate to the Chair.

Hon. Premier, it's customary for the minister to make opening comments. Would you care to make opening comments to the committee?

MR. GETTY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, just a couple.

Obviously, Mr. Chairman, as President of Executive Council there is a whole area of broad responsibilities that I'm prepared to deal with, if the members wish. Also, in addition to the members that you mentioned are here and available to answer questions, I should point out that the Minister of Community and Occupational Health is also available for the Premier's council on the disabled; the Member for Dunvegan, in his responsibility in water resources; and the Member for Grande Prairie, who is chairman of the Northern Alberta Development Council, along with the responsibilities that the Minister of Transportation and Utilities has in that regard.

Mr. Chairman, in responding to members, I am uncertain now whether I'll be able to respond on an individual basis as they raise questions or make points or whether there will be a series of comments that I can respond to. I think we'll just have to judge that as the participation proceeds. Other than that, Mr. Chairman, I'm pleased to participate in any way possible.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Premier, the Chair would appreciate some guidance. There are 11 votes before the committee. Would the hon. Premier entertain questions on any of the 11 votes?

Hon. Leader of the Official Opposition?

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Chairman, I'm not going to ask a lot of questions. We haven't had much success in question period in

getting any answers. So I want to make a few comments, if I may, basically about the tone and the leadership of government. Under vote 1 it can be wide-ranging, and I think this is perhaps the place to do it. It's not often in estimates that the Premier -- I think this is the only time we get to bring up some concerns that we may have.

Now, Mr. Chairman, obviously in the government the Premier is the person that people look to in terms of the leadership at that particular time, I recognize that other ministers have delegated authority, but if I may say so, the overall tone and direction of the government has to come from the Premier and the Premier's image that he sets aside at that particular time. Now, it seems to me that no matter what issues or questions arise, whether we're dealing with home care, as we do from time to time, whether we're dealing with education, whether we're dealing with health care, whether we're dealing with the Principal fiasco, whether we're dealing with the economy, whether we're dealing with the Mulroney trade deal, whether we're dealing with patronage, whether we're dealing with ethics in government, whether we're dealing with taxation -- you name the issue -- it seems that we have a sort of tired rhetoric in answer to every question.

First of all, people are generally tired of the same old rhetoric from the Premier, and if I may say so, we have a four-speech Premier or, another way, a four-answer Premier, depending on the circumstances. We've heard them and we can all recite them by heart. The first one, Mr. Chairman -- the issue doesn't matter -- goes something like this. This is the one where he portrays himself as the only person who's interested in saving the taxpayers money. All of the other parties and even his own ministers are hell-bent spendthrifts and bankrupting the taxpayers. We've all heard that speech. It depends on the question.

Then the second one, Mr. Chairman, that we hear is the one in which he suggests his enemies are only happy when the people are miserable. The Premier means to suggest that he is the only one that is happy when the people are happy. That's the second standard speech that you get in the Legislature.

The third one that we've all heard is where he says that everyone else is foolish and not to be listened to. This is the one he trots out when he doesn't want to answer embarrassing questions. We've had this on the new labour code; we've had it on the Principal affair, on campaign finances, on patronage, on ethics in government: any number of a myriad of issues. Foolish, foolish, foolish. Then there's the other one where all the things, all the problems that we have in Alberta are blamed on the national energy agreement.

Those are the four, and you can recite them. Watch in question period: there'll be a myriad of those four speeches come up all the time. Now, I say to you, Mr. Chairman, that all this posturing by the Premier is unfortunate. The reality is that people are elected to this Chamber to represent the people who elect them. For the Premier to dismiss those concerns with stale and vacuous rhetoric does not serve his own cause and does not add, if I may say so, to the enhancement of the Premier's Chair. While I disagreed with the previous Premier time and time again, you would always get answers in this House, and those answers were always treated with respect. There's been a big difference in terms of the climate here in the House, and rather than blaming everybody else, the Premier should look at himself for the change in this House. Now, Mr. Chairman, I say to the Premier: you can be as partisan, as chippy, as flippant as you like, but you're going to pay the political price for it. I'm

tempted to say that the Premier should spend less time in resorts and country clubs and more time learning new rhetoric.

But it would be better still if the Premier spent his time looking at things from the point of view of average Albertans. He would then see that the concerns over his government's performance on such things as cutbacks and taxation, rural Alberta -- the lack of issues out there, the lack of education, women's issues, all these sorts of things, leaves a lot to be desired. If he would just take a look at how average people are looking at things. I know he'll come back and say, "The other thing is, though, that we won in Chinook; that means people were for us for everything." He won in a traditional Tory stronghold, and there's no doubt about that. I congratulate the government for a big win there. But the reality is that that didn't solve all the problems, and it depends on more than cheap rhetoric from the Premier.

Mr. Chairman, I say to you that ultimately it's a question of honesty. This partisan crap is ultimately a very dishonest way of approaching issues. You may think -- but you're the only one that thinks this -- that you're scoring points, but you're really hiding from the issues. I think the Premier well knows that. As I understand Albertans, regardless of their political philosophy, Albertans want in their Premier someone who looks not to an easy way to deal with complex issues, not to rhetoric. The Premier is the one official in our government that is basically relieved of day-to-day responsibilities of running the department so the Premier can be free to plan over a longer term. I say to you Mr. Chairman, in all honesty that we do not get this from this Premier.

I don't have any idea what type of vision or understanding of the future this government is trying to promote. We're told that there's a white paper before an economic plan; these give us some direction of where we're going into the year 2000. We have no idea. Now, as I say, the 1980s are rapidly drawing to a close. Very soon we'll be in the 1990s and the Premier will have fallen decades behind in his rhetoric and will have failed to grasp the importance of long-range planning to the future of our bountiful province.

Now, my advice to the Premier would be to break with his past ways and turn over a new leaf and get on with the job rather than the rhetoric. Mr. Chairman, I guarantee that the people of Alberta will not be prepared to join the Premier in his battle to relive the glory days of the Lougheed administration. Life was oh so simple then, Mr. Chairman, for a government in power. They had nearly every seat in the House. They had all kinds of money to spend and, believe it, they spent it. It's rather interesting now to see this government, talk about fiscal responsibility -- the billions that went through this province in the good days. They had revenue basically without taxation, and they took advantage of it.

Mr. Chairman, the Premier wants to relive these days by rekindling his attack on the hated federal government. But guess what? The federal government has changed in Ottawa. The economy and the people have changed. Now, our people could not be blamed. Our people could not be blamed in Alberta for hoping that the Getty government would work with the new Tory administration in Ottawa to create real change for the west. How can anyone blame Albertans for believing the Tories when they said, "All you have to do is vote for us and the economy will rise and the west shall be free"? Mr. Chairman, Albertans believed in the Tories. They thought they were sincere and they had an idea about how to govern and how to replace our diminishing oil reserves with a diversified economic base.

Again, they found that that's not the case. This government doesn't know how to manage the economy. They don't know how to manage the social parts of our economy. They don't know how to manage anything, but what they do give us is rhetoric.

The only thing they tend to agree with the federal government about is the Mulroney trade deal. But when you ask questions about this, try to look at it, what it means -- and people are still attempting to find out what it means. When you check into what provincial compliance means, we've given up part of our ownership in resources, at least the right to set a price. When we look at what's going to happen to our service sector, all we get is rhetoric -- "Oh, somehow you're timid" and "We can compete" and all the rest of it -- rather than looking at the issues and having an intelligent conversation about it. Again, all we get, Mr. Chairman, is vacuous rhetoric on this very important deal.

Now, how can the Premier fail to understand why Albertans are disappointed? Why? Worse yet, how can he have failed to appreciate that the stale rhetoric of another decade sounds so hollow, so empty and useless today other than to right-wing Tories? Average Albertans are just not buying it. I really think the Premier should address this question, perhaps even privately.

Now, Mr. Chairman, let's talk about the new image. We see that the government's in some difficulty, so the Premier has plenty of people running around telling him he needs a new image. Certainly that was the talk at the recent PC convention. It's funny how many active members of that party really believe that superficial changes can solve important, long-standing, substantive problems. They're too busy trying to market executives and change over there. They think they can sell anybody anything. "Oh, if we just do this in a superficial way or that, everybody will buy what we're doing." They fail to recognize that people are questioning the policies of the government; it's not just the Premier's image. I say for the image brokers, 1988 is seen to be a make-or-break year for the Premier. His office and the government seem to be putting all their propaganda resources into turning around the Premier's public image. The government is prepared to risk any amount of taxpayers' money in loan guarantees, grants, and subsidies in order to juice up Don Getty's image.

Mr. Chairman, we have to ask whether decisions made under this kind of political pressure are really in the best interests of the province. When you analyze the Premier's new image, it seems to stem from a meeting with an Indian chief and a series of public subsidies to large corporations. This is not new for Conservative economic thinkers, and I say big deal. Every Tory leader in history has met with Indian chiefs. In fact, they even made Mr. Diefenbaker an Indian chief himself, and every Tory leader who ever achieved office has given tax dollars away to corporations. And so it goes.

The provincial government is promoting a fresh round of forced economic growth using tax dollars and the credit of the taxpayers. It's quite a list when we look at it: just recently -- there's more there -- loan guarantees for the Champion mill at Hinton, a purchase of \$5 million in preferred shares in the Grande Cache sawmill owned by B.C. Forest Products, a \$64.5 million grant for Daishowa to set up a pulp mill at Peace River, a \$200 million loan guarantee and a grant of \$8.3 million for a newsprint mill near Whitecourt, another \$100 million line of credit to one Peter Pocklington to purchase Palm Dairies through the Treasury Branches. Then, their favourite guy in Alberta, a \$55 million loan guarantee and a \$12 million loan to

modernize a pork plant, and possibly, maybe just possibly, Mr. Chairman, they'll get around to building a new plant in southern Alberta. Now, these are typical old trickle-down theories that R.B. Bennett was pushing on the people. They didn't work then and they don't work now. But this is supposed to be part of the new thinking of this government.

In addition, it's important to note that some of these projects involve significant land and forest management concessions. These all have significant land and forest management concessions, and these obviously have a cash value and will certainly limit the options of future generations of Alberta. I say to the Premier: he should ask British Columbians, for example, how they feel about the way previous governments gave away perpetual control over the forest resources and the problems they face as a result of it. Certainly Albertans want industrial development. There are a number of Albertans, and I'm sure a growing number, who are not sure, however, if the price being paid by the Getty government so it can make these announcements now may be too high. Believe it or not, Mr. Chairman, we have some history in Canada, and it's far from clear that these kinds of giveaways automatically create prosperity. Decisions made under the political pressure of salvaging the government's image may not and often do not correspond to long-term interests of Albertans. While the government throws grants, loans, and guarantees at its friends in the corporate world, people are being hurt by cutbacks. All the image-making in the world cannot hide this reality.

Now, Mr. Chairman, there's something I would like to just conclude about, and I term it ethics in government. This government fails to realize that whenever they involve themselves in patronage, whenever they create useless jobs for good Tories, there's more and more cynicism, not only against the government but a growing cynicism about politicians in general, because this is the way they believe politicians operate. There are two sets of rules, one for the government and their friends and another for the rest of us. That's unfortunate. It's not only unfortunate for this government; it's unfortunate for politicians regardless of their political stripe. There's no doubt the Premier is a very loyal fellow, loyal to his friends. We notice that back in the last session Les Mabbott, a key bagman for the Premier, benefits from an untendered top-dollar lease in a building which has yet to be built, Olympia & York. It turns out that one of the biggest contributors was the Principal Group of Don Connie. Is it an accident that this government allowed bankrupt subsidiaries of Principal to sell worthless paper to Albertans? Some \$4 million, after, in cash was transferred out of the country in the dying days of Principal to the benefit of the Connie family.

Mr. Chairman, I won't bore the Assembly, but we could go on and on and on about patronage appointments. In another aspect of ethics in government, when we bring in, as we have year after year after year, that we need a code of ethics Bill, they again say, "Oh, that's foolish; we don't need it." Well, if any government needed a code of ethics Bill to understand morality in government, it's this government, Mr. Chairman.

Now, just to take the last particular matter, which the Premier doesn't like but I think he should hear while he's across the way, I say to you, Mr. Chairman, that the Premier took advantage of his position to obtain a free chartered jet from Palm Springs on a personal matter. What is appalling and worse is that he failed to acknowledge the position he and his staff put that particular company in. The Premier took advantage of this particular company. And he says, "Well, what do they expect to say; we were glad to do it." Well, I'd be glad to do it for the

Premier of Alberta if I was in to him as much as they were, too, Mr. Chairman. As a former director of NOVA and a long-serving cabinet minister, the Premier should be aware that he is in a unique position to influence the value of NOVA's investment. Yet he prevailed upon them, in what is acknowledged to be personal business, to supply transportation services valued in excess of \$11,000, and he says this is just neighbours helping neighbours. Well, I've had nothing but phone call after phone call saying what nonsense. The reality is that the Premier has many ways to get back from Palm Springs, and to allow himself and allow the government to be caught in that sort of situation just shows a total lack of morality in politics.

Mr. Chairman, how can you ask average Albertans to go around and sacrifice and say this is for the good of the province when they see this type of behaviour by their leaders? It just doesn't wash. I ask the Premier in the future to think of things, about how they look to average Albertans, before he does them. It's impossible to believe that the Premier can be blind to this point. To suggest that he is that naive is also less than completely honest.

In conclusion, the reason we have this time is to talk about again the tone and leadership in this government about what's happening in Alberta today in 1988. I stress again that leadership is lacking both in tone and what's happening in the province. I say to you, Mr. Chairman, there is no economic strategy other than handing out money to major corporations. And I say there is no fairness by this government for average people. It's a government for the powerful by the powerful and let the little people take the hind leg. That's the reality in this particular government. The tone of government at this particular time, Mr. Chairman, whether we agree or disagree, has got chippy; it's got partisan. There's no vision of where they want to take this province. I say there's no ethics in terms of government, not even a code of ethics Bill, and they won't talk about it. I say specifically this was shown up by the plane flight from Palm Springs.

So, Mr. Chairman, one of the ways we have in a democratic society is to try to force the government to listen, and as a result of that -- to confront the ethics of the Premier's decision -- I have, and I have copies here for hon. members, an amendment that I would like to bring in on vote 1:

Vote 1 in the estimates of the Executive Council be amended as follows . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Excuse me, hon. member, perhaps the pages could . . . The Chair's anticipating what the hon. leader is about to have distributed.

Proceed hon. leader.

MR. MARTIN: Yes. The amendment, Mr. Chairman, is:

Vote 1 in the estimates of the Executive Council be amended as follows: by reducing it by \$11,000, to a total of \$3,575,778.

Mr. Chairman, this is an \$11,000 lesson to the Premier about government ethics: that you can't be in Palm Springs and ask a corporation to come and pick you up. As a lesson in ethics, we reduce by \$11,000 the Executive Council estimates.

Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: An amendment has been moved. Speaking to the amendment, hon. Premier.

MR. GETTY: Mr. Chairman, I thought today that we might

have a discussion of some of the issues facing our province. Unfortunately, I listened closely to the hon. Member for Edmonton-Norwood. Frankly, I didn't hear any significant contribution to the benefit of the people of Alberta at all. I guess it's almost too much to ask for a little class from the hon. Member for Edmonton-Norwood. I would guess he loses sight sometimes that he's no longer just the Member for Edmonton-Norwood; he is the leader of a political party that is of some consequence in Canada. He certainly diminishes that party by his leadership and by the manner of leading in the discussion today. I'm very disappointed in his contribution. It's remarkable that we could have had some display of . . .

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. I think the hon. Premier should be speaking to the amendment.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Point of order, Leader of the Official Opposition.

MR. MARTIN: Yes. A point of order. He should be speaking to the amendment. He can come back after and give us his rhetoric, but there is an amendment now.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon. Premier.

MR. GETTY: We sit here, Mr. Chairman; we listen. The hon. member sits down; we respond. Immediately he's up complaining. It's remarkable that he just can't sit and take it on the other side. He's unable to experience that, but he's going to have to be ready for it because he's so vulnerable to it frankly.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Chairman, that's fine. We can carry on rhetoric behind here. I'll be glad to continue this with the Premier the whole day if that's what we want. But I want him to follow the orders of the House like everybody else.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Chair agrees with the Leader of the Opposition that we are now discussing the amendment proposed to vote 1 in Executive Council.

MR. GETTY: I gather, Mr. Chairman, all the comments the hon. member made in speaking to this amendment are ones I can respond to. So I feel free to say that the member's deportment in the House and the quality of his comments really do diminish not only him and his party but in fact do drag down this Legislature to a certain extent. It's very disappointing.

Other than that, Mr. Chairman, he didn't say anything worth while in backing up this amendment of his. So I'd just say that I'd like to talk about important things in the government and in Alberta in the estimates, but this piece of trash that he has suggested obviously the House will discard quickly.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Speaking to the amendment. Are you ready for the question on the amendment to vote 1 proposed by the Leader of the Official Opposition? All in favour of the amendment, please say aye.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Opposed, please say no.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: No.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Amendment defeated.

[Several members rose calling for a division. The division bell was rung]

[Eight minutes having elapsed, the House divided]

For the motion:

Barrett	Hewes	Piquette
Ewasiuk	Laing	Roberts
Fox	Martin	Sigurdson
Gibeault	McEachern	Wright
Hawkesworth	Mitchell	Younie

Against the motion:

Adair	Elzinga	Nelson
Ady	Fischer	Oldring
Alger	Fjordbotten	Orman
Anderson	Getty	Payne
Betkowski	Heron	Pengelly
Bogle	Horsman	Russell
Brassard	Hyland	Schumacher
Campbell	Isley	Shaben
Cassin	Johnston	Shrake
Cherry	Jonson	Sparrow
Clegg	Kowalski	Stewart
Cripps	McClellan	Trynchy
Day	McCoy	Webber
Dinning	Mirosh	Weiss
Downey	Moore, M.	Young
Drobot	Moore, R.	Zarusky
Elliott	Musgreave	

Totals:	Ayes - 15	Noes - 50
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[Motion on amendment lost]

MR. CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member for Stony Plain.

MR. HERON: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, for putting me on the list.

The official Leader of the Opposition just a moment ago was whining and sniveling about the rules of the House. Believe me, when I look at Standing Order 62 talking about the role of a committee, I certainly can't see where any part of his speech was relevant.

However, that said, I would like to turn to the estimates starting on page 175 and make some mention of some of the wonderful things happening in this province. The Premier's Council on the Status of Persons with Disabilities: what a tremendous initiative. I look for great things from that committee. I looked up in the gallery the other day and I saw Eric Boyd. Eric is a constituent, a disabled constituent, a fellow pilot, a fine Albertan, and I can tell you that his involvement with this committee initiated by the Premier of this province will bring about better things for disabled Albertans.

I looked at the quick, positive response of the Premier of this province to the victims of the tornado disaster. We saw a dynamic government in action, we saw a responsive government in action, and perhaps one of the most sensitive and courageous initiatives taken by any government.

Now, the Leader of the Opposition, of course, went in and talked about the question period. How that relates to estimates I

will never know. But imagine his criticism of this question period. After promising Albertans 14,000 questions, he didn't tell us honestly that we'd get the same question upwards of 14,000 times.

You know, I can't believe my ears. I stood here, with the problems facing Albertans and the many, many wonderful initiatives being taken and the sincere questions that could be asked. What did we hear? For three consecutive days a criticism of the Hon. Dave Russell and public affairs for spending \$100,000 to tell Albertans about the finances of this province. Can you imagine? Can you imagine devoting the time of this Assembly, for three days tying up the question period, for \$100,000 to communicate to Albertans about the state of their finances? Can you imagine taking four consecutive days of prime question time to talk about the labour code, when it's scheduled for debate in the House for -- who knows? -- a week, a month, whatever?

I can't imagine anyone standing up, who has by quantitative data presented by the Speaker less than a week ago 90 percent of question time, complaining about the answers and questioning his role in question period. Believe me, I think Albertans are entitled to a lot more than we've seen. Think of how many times we can read *Hansard* and see the words "draconian," "niggardly," "wishful and selective thinking." Wishful and selective thinking -- I was sitting here the day the official Leader of the Opposition used that expression to our Provincial Treasurer when he spoke of the assumed price of oil for budgeting revenue for the province of Alberta. He took up two complete weeks of accusing him of wishful and selective thinking.

Let me just take you back one year. When the price of oil was somewhere around \$15 U.S. a barrel, the budget assumed price was \$17. Day after day they hounded the Provincial Treasurer on how he could assume \$17 a barrel. Well, when it came through at slightly over \$18 a barrel on average, there was no retraction, no acknowledgment. I think when you look at this year, too, when the Provincial Treasurer, using some of the best inputs and analysts in the world, came up with \$18.50, being very, very careful to point out that that was a composite index price, taking into account land sales, gas sales, and the price of oil -- no, they'd stand up in this House day after day in question period and say: wishful and selective thinking, because the price of oil today is only worth \$17, and he's assuming \$18.50. What happens? Because of world circumstances the last few days, the price of oil moves up. What happens? Nothing. It just drops off the table with no acknowledgment.

No, when the official Leader of the Opposition a few moments ago spoke about the four-answer Premier, he really faulted the Premier for telling the story the way it is, for referring to quantitative data. Just recall how many times they've called out: Canada's best -- the world's best. Well, I think we have a responsibility to tell Albertans that if you're spending the most per capita, you've got to look for the best value for that money.

The other evening we had a beautiful example of manic-depressive behaviour from the Member for Edmonton-Centre. He stood up after the estimates of the Minister of Hospitals and Medical Care and called it a sick budget, a sick system in a sick society. Well, believe me, I sat over here and listened to him bragging about being a Harvard graduate and how many university degrees the caucus had. I couldn't believe my ears, that this same great academic was standing there, exhibiting manic-depressive behaviour, and wasn't the slightest bit objective about his analysis of the estimates before him. No, I think it's a

sad, sad day when one can look at a beautiful bouquet of flowers and pick out the one wilted leaf. Believe me, I know where the sickness lies: in the analysis.

Earlier the member of the opposition didn't focus at all on the economic strategy or on the value of loan guarantees. He didn't at all focus on that. He talked on the negative aspects. What if the sky falls in? What if some sunshine comes through this overcast of socialist doom and gloom? What if? Well, let me tell you "what if." A loan guarantee is a way of leveraging your money. What would you rather do if you had the option: grant a firm \$3 million or put a \$100,000 loan guarantee on it? Well, let me just elaborate. If you properly analyze the risks of the business in which you're going to become involved, and you charge a fee for services, the loan guarantee may not cost the Alberta taxpayer one dollar. Now, tell me what you would rather have: a granting government such as went on in Manitoba -- spend, spend, spend -- or a government that's prepared to analyze the risk, prepared to joint-venture with businessmen, and prepared to get involved? That's the kind of government I would prefer.

No, the official Leader of the Opposition went on to talk about all the negative things that could occur. He spoke about employment, about the programs that aren't working, about the people that aren't working. Yes, it's tragic when a person doesn't have a job. We all know that, and our heart goes out to those people. But why don't we focus on those numbers in the budget, the record number of Albertans who are working? Again I'm proud to tell the data about how we compare in Canada, when we stand up and say two-thirds of Alberta's population is working. A greater number are working than any other province. And when we look at the average -- just turn to the budget and see what the numbers are -- I believe that 62 per cent is the national average.

Why didn't they talk about the 17,000 new business incorporations last year? I think that's remarkable when you consider the economic downturn, when you consider that Alberta is faced with the greatest financial disaster, perhaps, in the last three decades. I think it's marvelous that our engine of growth, the small businessmen, reacted positively, put together new companies, seized on new opportunities, and worked carefully with the government to create a record number of jobs. I think it's just wonderful, and we have so many good stories we could tell out of these estimates beginning on page 175.

You know the official Leader of the Opposition focused on the Ottawa scene prior to the last election. It was very interesting for me to hear him say, and I quote: "Our people could not be blamed." Our people could not be blamed -- well, that just proves what the hon. Member for Red Deer-North has been saying all along when he makes reference to the Liberal/socialist detente or the LSD connection. You know, I just can't believe it that they'd stand up and say "our people" and be so proud of a program here in Alberta that just rendered disaster for our energy industry and our people in general. I can't believe they'd stand up and be proud of any party that could incur the kind of debt that Canadians are faced with. One dollar in three goes to servicing the interest costs. I can't believe when you take a look at the hard data -- and again we hear the criticism, oh, they're bragging again; they're telling it the way it is.

But why don't we turn to page 12 of the Budget Address and see that Alberta pays 4.2 cents, the other provinces pay 13 cents, and the federal government 30 cents towards servicing debt. No, I'm very glad that we have a Premier and a government who will stand up and say: we're not going to pass on the

legacy of debt to our future generations; no, we will look for better ways of spending our dollar.

I think it's important that the Minister of Hospitals and Medical Care can stand up and say that we're spending the most per capita in Canada on health care; we're spending approximately \$1,400. I think it's important that our Budget Address points out that on an average family basis we're spending \$4,000 per family on health care. That's important. Now, what's really important is that if we're not getting the maximum value, if we're not servicing Albertans to the highest possible level, let's all just question and ask: how can we do it better?

[Mr. Musgreave in the Chair]

No, there's so much that can be told, and there are so many good questions that can be asked rather than have the official Leader of the Opposition stand up and say -- and he used words like "partisan" and "chippy"; "you will pay the political price" -- and threatening. No, I don't think that's the way this House should operate at all. I for one think that the government is doing an excellent job. I think that Executive Council have handled the affairs or the financial matters in a good management style. The stewardship is evidenced here. It's open for debate, and I think the course of these committees should turn towards Standing Orders, section 62, wherein we follow the rules of the House and not just stand here and throw cheap shots. I was never so embarrassed, and I'm glad that I didn't have any children attending school from the Stony Plain constituency in that gallery and see a stupid amendment go through that we just witnessed here, reducing the Premier's salary by \$11,000.

I'd hate to think of the times that I have landed at the Fort McMurray airport and met a member of Calgary's oil community, Edmonton's business community, or whatever, and offered them a ride back to Edmonton. Because they'd say -- well, typically it would go something like this: "Jim, we're waiting for the next plane; it's three to five hours." "I'm going directly back; hop aboard." Nobody came up to me and said, "Hmmm, he gave the vice-president of Shell a ride, he gave so and so a ride back, and the least cost of your airplane -- that is, the least with a pilot -- is X number of dollars, and now this has a certain inference." No, I was going back; I could save somebody some time. It's just like picking up a hitchhiker on the side of the road; I could offer a service to someone. I wouldn't expect the Leader of the Opposition to stand up in this House and say, "Here is our calculation, and you should reduce this man's salary by a certain amount." I think it's a sign of a sick, depressive, cynical behaviour when anyone can go that extent.

Really, Mr. Chairman, I've taken some liberties with the Standing Orders, but I feel very, very strongly that we've got to go back to the rules of the House and make Albertans proud when they sit in these galleries that we are their elected representatives, that we are conducting ourselves as good stewards of the financial purse, and that we're conducting ourselves as good managers of the resources, present and future.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Mr. Premier.

MR. GETTY: Mr. Chairman, as I promised I would respond to some extent to the hon. Leader of the Opposition, I would only say to those who are still here that they could carry a message to him: I wouldn't have been that tough; I wouldn't have been that hard on him. He could have had the guts, the gumption, the

courage, if you like, to stay and take it. It is disappointing, a grown-up man who would say something and then beetle out the door. I mean, that is really sad. I may not agree with all of the members who are left, but at least I give them marks for having the nerve to sit here in any event . . .

MR. McEACHERN: A point of order.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: A point of order.

MR. McEACHERN: The member knows full well that he's not supposed to refer to the absence of anyone from the House. He is absent himself quite a lot [interjections] He did.

MR. GETTY: Actually, Mr. Chairman, I'm referring to the members. I'm paying them a compliment. I mean, after all, they have the nerve to sit here. They have guts. They're able to take it, and I just want them to carry a message to their leader who deserts them after making his comments because he's afraid to hear an answer to it.

So, Mr. Chairman, I would just say that it's a kind of sad spectacle. But you hang in there, because you've got my respect for being tougher than he is, and maybe you can help him a little bit to fulfill the other responsibilities he has too.

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

MS LAING: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think the last two speakers brought debate to the lowest level in here I've seen for a long time. The Member for Stony Plain seems to fail to recognize that one can learn from others' perspectives and from other analyses, that a person who is so totally self-satisfied may fail to see the need and suffering of others. There is an old saying: none shall be so blind as he who will not see.

AN HON. MEMBER: That's original.

MS LAING: I didn't say it was original; I said it was old. And there is much wisdom in it.

I would like to address vote 4. I'm glad to see there has been a . . . [interjections]

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Order please. Perhaps if some of the members restrained themselves until they have the opportunity to speak, we could hear from the hon. Member for Edmonton-Avonmore.

MS LAING: I'd like to address vote 4. I'm glad to see that there is an increase in the funding to the Women's Secretariat. But in the scheme of things, in a budget of over \$9 billion, to see only \$0.5 million in the Women's Secretariat is some cause for concern. Women make up 51 percent of the population and face unique problems, including the reality that one in nine women in a relationship is battered. So much needs to be done, and this government has much to learn about the reality of women's lives. I believe the Women's Secretariat deserves a greater level of support.

The Advisory Council on Women's Issues has received a 3.4 percent increase, but it is still under \$0.25 million, totally inadequate if this council is to fulfill its mandate. However, I have even greater concerns about the council's independence from the minister. I have grave concerns when I hear that the minis-

ter is telling council how it should fulfill its mandates and what activities it should initiate.

I've had great concerns about appointees to the council. Of the 14 women appointed to the council seven, or one-half of the women, have been or are involved in business. Yet more than 70 percent of Alberta women are involved in the service sector. I would have to ask: where are the representatives of women in that sector the waitresses, the sales clerks, the secretaries, the child care workers, the elementary school teachers, and the nurses? Where are the people that will speak for the divorced mother or single mothers? Or who will speak for lesbian women? Who has worked with women who have been sexually assaulted or women who have been battered? Who speaks for these women?

I do not believe that this council represents a cross section of Alberta or that many of the members of the council are well versed in women's issues and the needs of Alberta women, nor have I seen a great commitment to the improvement of the status of women in this province by members of this council prior to their appointment. So I have grave concerns about the makeup of the council. I would like to see that new appointments, as they are made, be based on a criterion of work in the trenches; that is, work in the front lines working to improve the status of women in Alberta and dealing with the very real problems they face in this province. Surely the council should not have to go through a consciousness-raising period with its own members; they have enough consciousness-raising to do with members of the government.

Secondly, I would like to comment on the work of the council. The council must make carefully thought out recommendations based on sound research. I do not believe this budget allows for innovative research that goes beyond the gathering together of data and information that is generally available to women working in the mainstream of women's groups and with women whose position in society we're trying to improve.

In addition, information and research generally available in some areas, such as that around equal pay for work of equal value legislation, was not reported, and indeed the council report called for such research. Again we may ask: is this a lack of political will on the part of the council or a lack of adequate funds, or both? Or a lack of autonomy? Some of the conclusions made by the council were unsupported by research and, I suspect, have little basis in reality. One of the statements of the council was:

The Council recognizes that within this province there is a general lack of public understanding and knowledge on the advantages and disadvantages of pay equity.

Then the report goes on to recommend "an extensive and comprehensive public study on pay equity"; that it be done. Yet in Canada three provinces, one of the Territories, and the federal government have enacted pay equity legislation. The information is there. It's been in place in other jurisdictions since 1972. I would ask, then, is the council implying that Albertans are really that far behind the rest of Canada? Or is it that just the members of this council and the government are so far behind and do not understand the reasons for and the value of pay equity legislation?

Some of the recommendations were very weak. The one around the area of violence in the family: one in nine women, it is reported, are battered -- that is, women in relationships -- and women are being turned away from shelters on a regular basis. We need much more than recommendations for public awareness campaigns and a provincewide crisis line. We need shel-

ters. We need treatment programs for children. We need support services for mothers. We need treatment programs for offenders. And we need second-stage housing and adequate social assistance allowances for women and children. That's not new information. Women working with battered women in the women's shelter movement have known that for at least five years. We need training programs for social workers, psychologists, lawyers, judges -- I could go on, even to include Members of this Legislative Assembly. What we need in these recommendations is a commitment to recognizing and to meeting the needs of assaulted women. Finally, we can ask: what has been the impact of the recommendations on government actions? The recommendations were made on October 1, 1987. We still have no provincewide toll free crisis line. We don't even have a commitment to that.

The day care recommendations have not been acted on, and indeed, the Minister of Social Services continues to fail to acknowledge the need for qualified child care workers, the necessity for adequate pay for workers, and continues to fail to address this issue.

We have no equitable fee for abortion. Other changes in accord with the council recommendations, such as the increase in the minimum wage, seem to have come about more because of general public pressure than because of the advisory council's recommendations. Indeed, we have no evidence at all that the advisory council has influenced government policy. We have seen no evidence that the advisory council will tackle such politically sensitive issues as the impact of Meech Lake on women or the impact of the trade deal on women. Yet these are two initiatives that will have a profound impact on the lives of women.

Mr. Chairman, we need a strong, independent council that reports to the women of Alberta, a pro-active council to ensure that council meets with women and women's groups that are committed to improving the status and lives of women in Alberta. The council and the secretariat need to co-ordinate and communicate. I am deeply concerned that the council is serving to marginalize women's concerns, that with the women's council in place the concerns of women can be and are ignored by the rest of this government.

Thank you.

MR. GETTY: Mr. Chairman, I would like the hon. Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs responsible for the women's council to say a few words, because it has been dealt with by the hon. member. But I would just say one other thing to the hon. member. When she mentions \$700,000 out of a \$9 billion or \$10 billion budget would she just please expand her view and thinking about the women of Alberta. Fifty percent of the province are women. This \$10 billion budget goes as much to women as men, and I would not want the House to be left with the impression the hon. member is trying to leave, that somehow or other this \$10 billion budget . . . She feels so poorly about the abilities of women that they would only be interested in that \$700,000. Surely she knows that they are a vital, important part of this province, as men are, and every bit of this budget goes towards them.

MS McCOY: Mr. Chairman, just to make one or two points in addition. Regarding the council's budget I would draw to the member's attention that, in fact they've received a 15 percent increase over what we forecast to be actual expenditures for the last fiscal year. So both the secretariat and the council received

15 percent increases in a budget that, as you cast your eyes over the lines, generally is known for its restraint. So I want to underline that commitment that this Premier and this government has made to advancing the cause of women in this province. We have been as generous as we felt we could be in a continuing restraint.

I would also respond to the representation on the council. There are, indeed, members on that council who have experience in several of the areas that the member mentioned. Lucy Milne from Medicine Hat for example, is in fact a retired elementary school teacher and has been involved in women's issues over the years. To mention just one other example -- I could go on for all 15, but I won't -- Elva Murtick from Calgary. Her professional career is devoted to counseling men and women, but particularly women, and she and her colleagues are particularly involved in counseling in the sexual abuse and sexual harassment areas. As I say, I could go on at length, but I think those two examples will serve to illustrate that the representation on this council, apart from it being from all around the province, also has more than sufficient professional expertise to give the members insights into the very difficult questions that are facing many of our women in Alberta.

One other comment that I would make, and again it goes to funding, is that there is no question we would all like to have more money devoted to women's issues, but we all have to make choices time and time again as to what priorities we place upon the money that we do have available to help our Albertans. When I think about, for example, the women's shelters for abused women and their children and the funding that we are able to put there, and I think about funding for the council or the secretariat, I must say that my heart goes to the shelters and the women and children we are helping there, and I say: please, let's put the money into the shelters and not this area.

Thank you.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar.

MRS. HEWES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm going to confine my remarks this afternoon to votes 4, 10, and 11. I'm sure you'll be glad to know I'm not going to look at them all.

Mr. Chairman, I just want to make a few remarks to begin with about this document Caring & Responsibility, which I believe underlies many of the decisions being made in those three particular areas that the votes are on, and to reinforce comments earlier about the cynicism that's out there and the angst that we perceive in our communities. The document, in the face of that, is full of contradictions and anomalies. It appears to be operating in a different world, a world of fantasy, and not really the world that most of us seem to live in. It also seems to leave the impression, Mr. Chairman, that we in our communities and in our daily lives and in our family life have been irresponsible. I don't believe we have. I don't believe we need to be forced to take more responsibility or more responsibility thrust on us, because I believe that our communities are responsible, that our municipal councils and municipal school boards are responsible, that our organizations and our families in Alberta are responsible. I don't think we need to have this kind of statement thrust upon us. Governments need to create an environment of fairness and justice that is in the reality of today's family life. The references here are very general ones, and they are not followed through with rational or sensible recommendations.

Mr. Chairman, I believe that this document and some of the

actions here are driven by two major factors. One of them is ideology, and that is that the marketplace reigns and that commercial operations can do things better, whether we're talking about human services or any other kind. And the other driving factor is the deficit. While I believe that Albertans are thrifty and that we don't like having a deficit, I do not believe that having accumulated this deficit over many years by spending -- some of it wise; some of it unwise -- we can in fact reduce it overnight on the backs of the helpless and the poor of our province.

Mr. Chairman, the document, I think, could be used to justify any action in this budget or any other budget. Whether we want to build another Kananaskis golf course or if we want to just end family and community support services, you can stand up and say: "Sure; that's what we're doing. We're putting responsibility back into the community. We're supporting freedom of action and independence." It can be used to close hospital beds; it can be used to commercialize human care centres. It can be used to justify anything the government wants to do.

Mr. Chairman, I think the citizens of Alberta are disappointed in this document. I've talked with a great many people since it came out from all walks of life and from all parties. Frankly, I believe they're on to the government. They know what's coming down, and they are disappointed in it too.

Mr. Chairman, I want to just speak about vote 4 within that context. This is the vote on Co-ordination and Advice Respecting Women's Issues. Now, we know this has not really been an equal world, and we're trying to do something about that to make it more fair and just and equitable for all. We have a Women's Secretariat, and that's operated for a good many years. Now, it says in my budget document that that secretariat:

Provides review of public policies and programs having special relevance to women; provides coordination between and liaison with Government departments on subjects of concern to women, and collects and disseminates information of interest to women and women's organizations.

Well, it's a wonderful statement, but let me tell you: it's not working. It's not working, and you know, the evidence that it isn't working is abundant. Here we're putting 14.3 percent more into that budget this year, and I hope that this time something is going to happen as a result of it. Because there are many, many issues of deep concern to women that have not been addressed and should have been addressed in years past.

Now, I have trouble. I know the secretariat provides information to women's groups; they've provided it to me. But as far as influencing government legislation or programs, I frankly have not seen it, if they are doing it. As far as I'm concerned, it's not working, because we still have things like inequities in pay. If the secretariat has the information that the rest of us have, why would they not be trying to influence the Minister of Labour to bring in pay equity legislation? Why on earth? The evidence is abundant. The labour legislation that has just been tabled in this House is deficient. The majority of temporary and part-time workers are women. That legislation does not protect them with benefits. There are many other things missing in employment standards legislation that affect women in a gross and negative fashion, and yet our secretariat apparently has been able to do nothing to influence that. Not a difficult or complex problem; not one that is not well understood.

In child care we have experienced years of investigations and studies and information about the need for standards of training of people who are employed and work in child care centres. We don't have it. Why? The only province that doesn't. We're the worst off, and yet we insist that we have the greatest child care

in the world. We spend more money and we have more spaces, to be sure. But that's a simple thing that can be done with a stroke of the pen. Why are we resisting something that is understood throughout the nation? Why is the secretariat not pushing for improvements in child care, which affects women in such a substantive way?

Family violence. The government has talked about it for years, made it a primary responsibility: "We are going to do something about family violence." Where's the secretariat? Family violence is increasing, not decreasing. We see battered wives, the satellite shelters that exist in our province to deal with the women in isolated communities, the women who are often the most vulnerable because they don't have the connections, they don't have the capacity. Battered women in isolated centres are very vulnerable, and yet we can't seem to find funding for those satellite centres, often the first string of defence in prevention. I don't understand where the secretariat is in regard to that.

We don't as yet have any real, comprehensive programs for the batterers. We now know how this can be prevented; we know what we need to do. Wouldn't you think that somehow, working in consultation with the community and the various government departments, that secretariat could get some of those programs into action with the kind of time they've had to do it? We have increasing incidents of sexually abused women and children. We don't seem to be able to make any creative interventions there. We have difficulty with our maintenance enforcement legislation. To be sure, it hasn't been there very long, but our record as yet is not a very good one. It's not good enough, and I haven't heard the secretariat comment or stand up or say anything about it.

Our social assistance rates, which deprive women more often than men, are ill conceived, are not keeping up with inflation and with requirements. Now, the minister has raised the rates for food by approximately \$3: \$3.25 a week. That's a real benefit, but the housing allowance and the utility rates need to be reviewed and done right away.

The anomalies in pensions; again a problem for women. I have not heard the secretariat comment about that.

I'm disappointed, Mr. Chairman, that these issues have not been addressed or that the secretariat has not been able to make any substantive difference in our legislation and our programs in regard to any of those.

The advisory council. I was immensely disappointed and spoke to it when it was created that this council was not set free. This council should be advisory to the Legislature and the people of Alberta. The men's and women's groups of Alberta who are concerned about these issues should not have their ideas filtered through the ministry, in my view, and I see no practical gain by setting it up in that fashion. In fact, the advisory council's report, which I have in front of me, has been widely criticized by the Calgary YWCA, and their activities have been criticized by the Calgary YWCA. Right or wrong, I think we need to take a serious look at how that council can function within the constraints of the legislation that has set it up.

They have made some recommendations on day care that I agree with, on women's health care that I agree with, and on family violence, pay equity, minimum wage -- presumably, the minister listened to that one, although I don't know that this was the only place it was coming from -- on native, immigrant, and visible minority women. Has the minister addressed these? What is the plan of action? What is the strategy? We created the council. Those women are out there and, presumably, are in

touch -- I'm not sure how -- with the men and women of this province. How are we developing a strategy to relate to their recommendations? Those are not impractical, pie-in-the-sky kinds of things. Those are easy, simple steps that we need to know we are taking now in order to create a better situation for women in Alberta.

Mr. Chairman, let me turn to vote 10, the Premier's Commission on Future Health Care for Albertans. Well, I was glad that we finally got it. We in our caucus had suggested it -- a council -- some time before that. Although this council does not have the mandate that I would have given it, nor does it have the personnel makeup that I would have desired, at least it's there. Now, I hope that the Premier or someone will assure us that there will be interim reports, that those reports will be acted on expeditiously, that they won't be allowed to become barriers and allowed to create inaction until the final report is in.

Mr. Chairman, I regret that the emphasis in the council -- although it mentions prevention and health promotion, that comes at the very last in their terms of reference. At least it does in my budget document.

AN HON. MEMBER: It's number one.

MRS. HEWES: No, that's at the end. I would hope that they would put their minds in that particular commission to some of the tragic circumstances that we spoke about earlier today in question period, to the backward approach to the prevention of mental illness and the treatment of mental illness, particularly related to community activities in our province. Hopefully, something will come out of it and quickly, on that. Hopefully, they will talk about rationalization and utilization of services in a more positive way.

In the meantime, what have we got? In the meantime, while we wait for the Hyndman report, we've got reductions in health care spending -- up a little bit this year, but essentially over two years it's down -- and we see the results of that. In all of our municipalities we see hospital bed closures. We see people being laid off from all parts of health caring staff. That's happening in the meantime. The commission, on the one hand, is presumably working on the future of health for Albertans, while at the same time the government living in this fantasy world, is chipping away at the system that we have now without any -- any -- appearance of a rational approach. Mr. Chairman, while this commission is working, we see even more hospital development. We see more of them being opened and being built and being constructed in our province, and yet they haven't yet commented on it.

I would hope that their report on the nurses will be in soon and that the results of that report will be that the government will see fit immediately to revoke that section of the labour Act that disallows health care workers from striking, because I think that has created an environment of confrontation that has had a very negative effect in our province and on our primary services of health care to Albertans. It was unnecessary. It should never have occurred. Hopefully, the Hyndman commission will tell us that it should be ended, and the government will act on that quickly.

Mr. Chairman, just a few comments on the Premier's Council on the Status of Persons with Disabilities; that's vote 11. Glad to see it. As many of us have, I've worked with disabled people in my own community for many years and will continue to do so. I was a little astonished -- and I hope the Premier will accept this comment in the light in which it's meant. I don't

think we should continue to refer only to Rick Hansen. I have immense admiration for Rick Hansen and for what he has done to raise awareness in Canadians about the plight of disabled Canadians and Albertans. It was a remarkable feat that he performed, and we should all congratulate him. But I know the Premier understands that there are hundreds of disabled Albertans who have worked long and hard -- one of them you appointed as chairman of your commission -- in this province and who have begged for this kind of a thing for years and years and years.

So let us acknowledge Rick Hansen. Let us also give credit to the disabled Albertans who have raised this issue and, unfortunately, did not seem to capture the imagination or the desires of the government until that visit. I was embarrassed, as were many, when Rick Hansen came that we built a ramp for him with a red carpet; I think he was embarrassed. Because that somehow is the manifestation of our absence of understanding. And I would hope that that kind of thing never happens again and that the Council on the Status of Persons with Disabilities will address itself to such things as access and will look at the legislation that creates potential for access to all of our public institutions and private ones, wherever possible, that it will look at the payments that are made through AISH in order to allow disabled people to live as independently as possible, that it will look at affirmative-action potential in our province to make sure that disabled people have opportunities for jobs, for employment for independent living wherever they can, that it will look at the issue of home care. There it is: home care. It's going to be here for a long time, Mr. Chairman, Mr. Minister, until we in fact do pump some more energy into it.

Mr. Chairman, I'm looking forward to reports from that council on the disabled, but I hope that all of these councils -- the women's advisory council, council on health care, council on disabled -- will get some attention. This is the main problem. We set up councils, Albertans' hopes and expectations are raised -- best of intentions -- they make recommendations to us, and nothing happens. Now, until we change that, until we stop writing documents like this, the angst in this province will not go away. I regret to say that Mr. Chairman. I hope that the government will listen to those comments and take them in the spirit in which they were spoken.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The Member for Chinook. The Member for Edmonton-Centre; he's not here either. Edmonton-Meadowlark.

MR. MITCHELL: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I would like to confine my comments to vote 4, Co-ordination and Advice Respecting Women's Issues. I believe there is much to be done in the area of social reform in this province and in this country. I also believe that while many breakthrough panacea social reforms were achieved in the '60s and '70s such as UIC, CPP, medicare, and so on, breakthroughs which make this country and this province special, I believe in that area of social reform -- the traditional area of social reform, if you will -- much of what could be construed as a breakthrough has been accomplished. We have done the CPPs, the UICs, and the medicare. At the same time, it is not enough to say that that should be laid to rest. We have to find out how to make the social programs that we have work effectively.

But where we need breakthrough social reform is in the area of status of women. There is, I believe, an insidious prejudice in our society, all the more insidious because it is so difficult to

identify in ourselves. It is perpetrated by each and every institution, practically, in our society. It is perpetrated within families and by the relationships amongst and between the members of families. It relates to a process of socialization, and in order to address the status of women issue at a broad level, the process of socialization and its result must be addressed. One way to do that is to elevate issues of particular importance to women to a level of public debate in our society that makes people think about those issues.

It was with a great deal of anticipation that I had looked forward to the establishment of the Advisory Council on Women's Issues in this province. It was with a great deal of disappointment that I learned and saw how that council has been structured. That is not to say that the council itself should be criticized for doing what it has done to this date. I think it has worked within a very, very restricted framework and has been limited in what it can do, particularly limited to the extent that it can raise difficult issues, issues that should be addressed in our society, and provide an advocate role with respect to those issues. It is therefore important that we reassess the manner in which the advisory committee on women has been structured. Its relationship to government, its relationship to the public should be reviewed. The Advisory Council on Women's Issues must be allowed to report directly to the public, and it must be allowed to choose whatever issues it would like to choose, to pursue those issues, and to advocate on behalf of women positions on those issues.

One particular issue that addresses the status of women is pay equity. No matter how you want to construe the statistics, there is no question that women are paid less in many instances because they are women and for no other reason. I'm not going to belabour statistics which we have heard so many times. There comes a time when we have to accept that as a given fact, and we have to structure policy which addresses and redresses the problems that are inherent in that given fact. Pay equity is a positive step to redressing pay inequities based upon gender. It will de facto accomplish that. There are practical ways of accomplishing it within the public sector in particular. They have been proven to work elsewhere. They need not be overly expensive. They can be consistent with cost restrictions and also consistent with the need for justice and fairness in our society.

The only two arguments that I have heard from this government that are against pay equity, particularly in the public sector, are these, and they have been expressed on occasion by the Premier himself. One, it is a free market out there for wages and salaries, and we should not tamper with the free market. And two, there is a profound administrative complexity that would be associated with implementing pay equity, and that complexity we cannot overcome.

First of all -- surprise of surprises -- it is not a free market within the public sector. We make judgments all the time about values that we place on positions within the public sector. Secondly, the question of administrative complexity is answered every day in this government in the process of valuing jobs, different jobs, one against the other to see at what level they should be paid. Let me give you an example. Take the Deputy Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs. An ex-Deputy Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs sits amongst us today. If you listed on paper the requirements or the highlights of that job and compared those highlights to the elements of the position of the deputy minister of public works, you would find at face value that those jobs bear absolutely no relationship to one another, and there would be no prima facie case

that they should be paid at the same level.

What does the deputy minister of intergovernmental affairs do? Well, has a small budget, maybe \$10 million; has maybe 50 professional staff, if that; deals in ideas; negotiates on constitutional matters; discusses matters at a conceptual level with various provinces and the federal government. What does a deputy minister of public works do? Well, simply manages 2,500 people; manages a budget of hundreds of millions of dollars; doesn't deal in concepts and ideas -- instead builds buildings; does leasehold improvements and that kind of thing. Those jobs are completely and utterly dissimilar. But you know what? Somehow we have, within this government and probably within every government across the country, come to the conclusion that those two positions should be paid on the same pay scale.

How do we do that? Well, we set up arbitrary criteria based somehow upon our judgment. We say, "Well, same level of education, same level of responsibility, same level of reporting relationship to a minister -- my gosh, we'd better pay those people the same thing." The moment we put another criterion in that list called gender, we all of a sudden say: "Sorry. Sorry; it's too complex. It's too administratively difficult. It will only obscure the market processes." Wrong. That very argument made by the Premier of this province begs the very question about the insidiousness and the subtleness that pay equity would address.

It is not enough to say, as has been said by at least one female member of the cabinet, Mr. Chairman, that many women have achieved in spite of these presumed prejudices, and if many women can do it, therefore all women can do it. That is a classic, classic Conservative perspective, right-wing, dogmatic, that does not allow any room for empathy and for imagination. You know, not everybody is the same, and not everybody is offered the same equality of opportunity. Certainly -- certainly -- there are women who have accomplished tremendous things in spite of all the structural obstacles; no question about that. But not all women have the advantages of those women, and not all women share in the opportunity to overcome the obstacles that face them.

It is therefore, Mr. Chairman, that I cannot vote for this particular budgetary allocation for either the Women's Secretariat or for the Advisory Council on Women's Issues. Because I believe very, very strongly that these two bodies, in the way in which they have been structured, are worse than useless in addressing the issues that face the status of women. They are because they are construed as a positive initiative by this government, leading people to believe that it is actually doing something, and it is not. It is not doing enough, and these two groups should be unhampered and should be given proper reporting relationships, proper funding, proper authority so that they can advocate, be advocates on behalf of women on issues that are important not only to women but to all of society, all people in our society as well.

Thank you.

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

REV. ROBERTS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I appreciate the words of the Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark as well. I want to address my remarks to vote 10. It comes as no surprise, the almost \$2 million allocated for the Premier's hotshot commission on developing future health care policy for Albertans. I've got several questions and concerns and comments to make

with respect to this in vote 10, and I'd appreciate some responses.

The first one really is: what is the purpose of this commission anyway? Why was it necessary? In the light of what I had been led to believe was the Minister of Hospitals and Medical Care, who was trying as ably as he could to cover all the bases with respect to the thornier issues in health care delivery -- he had, for instance, developed an ambulance task force which is going around the province looking at prehospital care, and they seem to be doing a pretty fine job. The Minister of Hospitals and Medical Care had commissioned Moe Watanabe, dean of the medical school in Calgary, to look at a utilization review and the whole Alberta health care insurance plan and find ways to control costs there -- phase two of what had been a utilization committee of just a few years ago.

The minister had commissioned the Member for Calgary-Glenmore to look at the very complex area of long-term care for the elderly. They've reported back, and it's looking like they're going to move along in some areas there. Over the last two or three years we've spent more and more money for policy development within the department itself. There are certain officials, certain people in the department, who are charged with the task of looking at the trends in health care, looking at where things are going, and to come up with certain policy formulations with respect to that.

So I really have to question what the prime motivation was for in a sense pulling the rug out from under the Minister of Hospitals and Medical Care and these numbers of his own committees and numbers of his own people in his own department doing what I thought, as I said, able work in terms of a comprehensive look at the health care system over time. But to have the rug pulled out from under him and to set up a \$2 million expenditure in a separate vote under the Premier to do the same kind of thing with a different set of players . . .

Now, I know it's real trendy and fashionable for political jurisdictions and governments to set up these commissions. We've got the Evans commission in Ontario doing a similar sort of thing. The PQ in Quebec under Lévesque set up the Rochon commission, a blue ribbon commission to go around and look at all the issues in health care in the province of Quebec. Then, of course, when the Liberals came in, they took all the Rochon recommendations and tossed them out, and they're now on the back shelf somewhere. Nova Scotia has a commission that's doing a thing, and certainly in the United States, too, there's a national commission out of Congress looking at health care.

So I know it's trendy to sort of set up a commission which is supposedly to come up with all the answers and look in great detail at all the facts. But what really new thing are they doing? What real purpose are they serving, other than trying to do some political damage control for a minister in a department that might be in trouble, maybe with results from polling that the government's done with respect to how their health policies are not popular with people, so they've got to find a way to do some political damage control?

Now, the members of the commission, too, are an interesting bunch. I've met the former Treasurer of the province, Mr. Hyndman, on a couple of occasions. I know it's probably a great personal expense to him that he's having to leave his comfortable offices at Field & Field for a per diem that has not been made clear -- but at some level of per diem -- to head up this commission. We wish him well. I thought it was unfortunate that he made the comment that he hadn't been in a hospital in several years and he really didn't know what was going on in

the whole sector. I think it's about time that -- as you say with the women's commission, we need some people who don't need to have their consciousness raised; they need to be able to get right in there and do some things in the first instance. But we certainly hope that Mr. Hyndman's consciousness has been raised by the briefs and hearings they've conducted so far.

I really must ask the Premier how it was that the former Deputy Minister of Hospitals and Medical Care, a Dr. McPherson, got so dumped by the Department of Hospitals and Medical Care and then put over to be a kind of executive assistant to this commission. Now, that seems to me to be the strangest turn of events. Here one of the men who's been most responsible for hospital and medical care policy in this province for three or four years, unceremoniously dumped by the minister -- word is that he heard about it, Dr. McPherson did, when he was in Toronto: that he no longer had a job, that it was being advertised. Then all of a sudden he's picked up by the Premier to be an executive director to the commission. Now, very odd selection. I mean, Dr. McPherson is very able and competent, but what are the politics behind that kind of appointment? One has to ask, if one is familiar with some of the background of the Department of Hospitals and Medical Care.

Now, I've heard, and I would hope the Premier would be able to refute this, that it was really a good friend of his, Peter Knaak, who said: "Hey listen; the docs don't like the treatment they're getting here, and we gotta have some kind of commission that's going to set things straight." Now, I would hope there isn't that hidden medical agenda with certain insider friends that is really the motivation behind this.

It's interesting, of course, to see Dr. Collins-Nakai, current president of the AMA, on there. Certainly the medical voice would be well spoken with her present. I know that with people like Joy Calkin, who is a very capable and competent nurse from the University of Calgary, the nursing perspective will be heard very loudly and clearly.

But the question that is being begged is whether or not this commission really has as its purpose to look at and serve the future health care needs of Albertans or whether it is really just a think tank for the Progressive Conservative Party in the province to do some kind of health care policy formulation that they really should be doing with their own money and their own party coffers. Now, why we're using \$2 million of taxpayers' money to go and firm up Tory policy, to get it ready for the next provincial election, is to me a real slight to the taxpayers of this province and rather hypocritical. You know, it will be interesting. So that they can see it just before the next election, it has its mandate to go to the fall of '89, and just then -- wouldn't you know? -- the government will have all these nice things worked out and be able to come to the election with some health care policy for a change.

Well, let's call a spade a spade. If they really want to do some health care policy development for the Progressive Conservative Party, go ahead and do that. Don't set up at taxpayers' expense a kind of a front for policy development for health care that really doesn't have the input of a lot of other players. It seems to me, Mr. Chairman, and to the Premier, that if we're truly interested in some real health care policy development then the government has to get used to listening to some real critics of the current system.

I don't see the names of Richard Plain or Malcolm Brown or the former minister's great friend Bob Evans. All these health care economists who are noted throughout the world for their insightful look at health care from an economic point of view:

why are they not on the commission, for heaven's sake? Now, I know they are not all card-carrying Tories, but they should have a voice on that commission which looks at some of the economic analysis around health care spending.

Why is there no one from organized labour on the commission? You know, health care employs a huge number of people in organized labour, and yet there's no one who represents organized labour on the commission. There's no one from the Consumers' Association of Canada on this commission. I mean, if you really want to get a consumer look at things, it would be good to get some people who have devoted resources to consumerism and get Sally Hall or someone to be a commissioner. But no, we don't have some of these people who have been known to be excessively critical of government; we have a few others who are just sort of getting their consciousness raised and setting up policy for the Progressive Conservative Party, it seems to me.

Or it's been news to me why -- and I guess it's perhaps too much to ask, but if we're really interested in looking at the future of health care for Albertans, why isn't there a method taken, as is out of the House of Commons and as regularly happens out of Congress and the Senate in the United States, to have an all-party committee, someone from all political parties to sit on a committee, which would be able to at least bring some consensus, some bottom line, to what all the political parties in a particular jurisdiction would hold fast to?

[Mr. Gogo in the Chair]

I think it's regrettable that the Member for Little Bow, for instance, who I understand was a former minister of hospitals and medical care in the province back in the '60s -- he, from the Social Credit perspective and the Representative Party, would have a lot to say, and I think his voice could well be on such a commission, in an all-party way. The Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar, in her experience from the Canadian Mental Health Association and other work she's done, has a lot to say. And the Liberal Party: have them involved in an all-party commission that would get the Liberal perspective on this. Certainly, as we have pioneered medicare in the tradition of Tommy Douglas and the numbers of things that we want as New Democrats to bring to the health care system, have a certain voice from our party on this commission as well.

In that way at least we could have -- if we're truly interested in the health care of Albertans and the Premier really wanted to do a new thing, he could point and say: "Well, listen; I've got the consensus of all the political parties of the province. They at least have this in common together." And we can move as Albertans in this direction no matter what political party's in place.

Well, again it seems to me that the commission will, sadly, be doing some work for the next year and a half or so, spending at least \$2 million this year. I'm not sure what the allocation will be next year. It will probably just have its work wound up before the next election. Then as we know and saw even yesterday, how difficult it is for incumbent governments to get re-elected in this country -- you know, where did Bill Davis go, anyway? Where did Richard Hatfield go, anyway? [interjection] Howard Pawley? Howard Pawley's gone, and we recognize that. But it's becoming increasingly difficult for incumbent governments to get re-elected in this country. So with that kind of tide and wind blowing, you would think that this commission in its recommendations that come forth just at the next election -- what are they going to be doing but blowing in the wind come

the results of the next election? The classic example, as I say, in Quebec where the PQ set up the Rochon commission: the Liberals swept in, and where's the Rochon commission? Not even being looked at one bit. And what in a sense, a waste all of that would be.

I know it's not politically smart to advocate for an all-party committee, but it would be smart for the vision and the future health care of this province if we could have had some commission that was truly nonpartisan and had input from all different political parties. Because there are key issues. I mean, there's no question that we recognize, and the Premier, I'm glad, has an appreciation for the fact, that there are certain thorny issues in health care which need a lot of investigation, whether they have to do with the personnel who are involved or what level of education or training. Do we want all nurses to have a baccalaureate education by the year 2000 or not?

What of the various funding mechanisms do we want to bring to hospitals? Do we want diagnostic-related groupings to be a part of our health care system? Do we want a different patient classification system? How are we going to know what patient is at what level of acuity of illness in the hospitals? What about the community health sector? How much is home care really a saving? How much of it is an add-on? We need to look at those kinds of things.

What about high-tech equipment? I'm telling you, that is the area of greatest moral difficulty. When it comes to things like reproductive technologies -- I mean, we know we can have test-tube babies; we can have baboon hearts; we can have all kinds of things that medical wizardry can put out before us. At what price we're not sure. But what are we going to do about that when we have it available and people would like to have it? At what cost are we going to say "Yes, you can" or "No, you can't"?

Health promotion efforts, prevention efforts. What about the development of primary health care in a more organized way that would see the development of community health clinics? What about health maintenance organizations or health service organizations? What about dealing with the various multicultural groups in Alberta that come from distant lands and can bring their health care experience and advice and wisdom to us here in our western scientific health care system?

All these I know represent many unanswered questions and represent very thorny and ethical questions. I guess we need to say that we shouldn't have the expectation that any one commission can come up with all of the answers. We recognize that and that's the part of the stuff of struggling in the social and public policy arenas that we're doing. We need to do it with better co-ordination and compassion and care.

But what one commission can do, Mr. Chairman and Mr. Premier, is to scuttle political debate and do damage control for a minister that's in trouble. Then we get whenever there's a question that's really of great difficulty -- "What about nursing?" "Oh well, the commission's looking at . . ."

MR. CHAIRMAN: Excuse me, hon. member. Order in the committee, please.

REV. ROBERTS: When we're looking at health promotion, what real concrete proposals we're going to make: "Oh well, the commission's looking at that; I'm sure we'll have an answer." Or we're looking at what are the real ways of controlling costs or having different insurance plans: "Oh well, the commission is looking at that"

Well, Mr. Chairman, it's unfortunate that this Premier's commission -- the Hyndman commission, the McPherson commission, whatever you want to call it -- I think may be a great example of how we can actually end up creating more problems when we are earnestly trying to find some solutions. It would seem to me regrettable that this kind of thing is happening when an opportunity could have been struck, a vision could have been made concrete by this Premier to have something which would be far more creative and far more lasting and really contribute to the health of Albertans over a longer period of time. So I'd like to know who really is responsible for this and what is really the hidden agenda behind it.

The other question with respect to vote 11, and I know we'll come up with it in debate on Bill 1: I would like to know if this council on the disabled is referring only to physically disabled. As we know, there are a lot of people who are mentally disabled, and there seems to be no mention of the fact that people with mental disabilities are to be included in this council. But perhaps they are and I've missed something. I'd certainly like that to be clarified, because just to talk about a council for the status of people with disabilities, if that's only for physical and not mental, then something's wrong.

So, Mr. Chairman, I beg of the Premier to take some . . . I know he has this way of wanting to have his ministers go off and do different things and give them support in various directions, but it would seem to me to beg a lot of questions when he wants to pull in the health care system, put it under a former Treasurer, and have some real strings attached to their policy development. I have to ask some questions about that, as to why that's going on and why the Premier of this province at this point in time couldn't have done something with much greater vision, much greater courage, and really do something new and historic for the people of this province with respect to their health.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. GETTY: Mr. Chairman, I thought that since some have referred to certain policies of the government and others have asked about the government's overall policy, maybe I'd have a chance to express some of those matters for the House.

First of all, Mr. Chairman, I thought that one of the most effective things the government did when the downturn came as a result of problems in the agriculture sector and the energy sector was to be the only government in Canada that laid out for the public a plan for a balanced budget. One of the things that I thought Albertans really appreciated was the fact that for the first time they knew where they were heading on a long-term basis. As we traveled about this province over the last several months and the past year, more and more people mentioned to me that that was something they really wanted to see: not just an up-and-down kind of a situation on an ad hoc basis from year to year but rather a long-term plan.

The other thing they really appreciated of the government's policies was that when the large deficit hit -- when Alberta was hurt more than any other province has been hurt virtually in the history of Canada but certainly since the Second World War and certainly in the time frame of most Albertans' memory -- the government didn't panic, that the government instead, in a series of measured decisions and moves, was able to, first, stabilize the agriculture sector; secondly, assist the energy sector until the price of oil improved and the turnaround started to happen; and thirdly, put such an emphasis on diversification.

I think we should take a moment and discuss the emphasis

the government has put on diversification, because so many people talked about it when they experienced the downturn in this province because of agriculture and energy. Members will recall that as we went about this province, people said that the huge forestry resource which we have in Alberta, much of it aspen, has never, ever played a role in the development of this province's economy. So we set out with a promise to the people of Alberta that, first of all, we would move to a balanced budget; secondly, we would turn the economy around as fast as we could; and thirdly, we would diversify.

When you think of the time from 1968 to 1988: \$200 million investment in forest resources. Yet in the last six months we were able to establish \$1.5 billion of forestry investment in this province. That is a remarkable achievement in diversification. This is a renewable resource, and those investments are all over northern Alberta. They have a huge significance not just in northern Alberta, of course, Mr. Chairman; they have a huge significance to the city of Edmonton because the city of Edmonton will become in a natural way a service centre to these forestry developments. So we have a huge diversification in northern Alberta.

The second thing the government did in the diversification area was to capitalize on the tremendous job that Calgary did of handling the Winter Olympics. Because of the government's commitment to making tourism a large part of our diversification efforts in the future, the government capitalized on that tremendous opening that the Olympics gave us. We were able to follow through on the program of selling Alberta to the world -- not just selling Alberta but coming back within the province and helping every community, as my colleague the Minister of Tourism has done. He's provided not just funds for the tourist organizations, the 14 zones, but he has provided millions of dollars, some \$30 million, for every community, hamlet, city in this province. Now, that's a dramatic commitment to tourism, and it's paying off. Wherever I go now in this province, people are excited, thinking, dreaming. Sure, dreaming -- and why not? -- dreaming of the kind of thing they can have in their community that will develop their tourism attractions.

Now, these are the kinds of things, Mr. Chairman, that are causing the Alberta economy to turn around. This is why the Provincial Treasurer was able to bring in a budget the highlight of which was the turning around of the Alberta economy, the new diversification of the Alberta economy. I know that when we started to have these things happen and were able to reduce taxes, and because we had new revenues were able to flow additional funds into education, hospitals, social services, senior citizens' programs, that the people of Alberta really felt the government was living up to their commitment. We had said we would turn the economy around. We said we would diversify the economy. We said the taxes were temporary, and we've started to remove them. We said that as soon as we had additional flexibility in our revenues, we would flow them to health and education and social services and senior citizens' programs. And we said we would diversify.

All of those things are policies of the government that I feel very proud to point out to Albertans and, of course, to this Legislature in the general area of the Executive Council estimates. This is a government laying out a plan to people and then living up to it and then making it happen. That is why Albertans are now looking ahead with such confidence in this province. They're looking ahead with confidence to Alberta being on the move, Alberta building again.

One of the things I find so interesting as this is happening is

how upset it makes our friends across the way. They just don't like those things, Mr. Chairman, and so rather than talking about the facts of life and the way things are going in Alberta right now -- although, no, I take this back. The hon. Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar I think made some points that I was interested to hear and listen to and found that they are thoughts we should all consider -- some I think valid participation in the discussion.

But I did notice that the members from the NDP, what they did is, not wanting to deal with the things that are happening that are so successful, with the confidence that's now being seen in this province, they wanted to somehow get away from all those things, get away from the issues, and try and deal in their petty little negative minds about the kinds of things that the NDP like to talk about. And then, if possible, what you should do is, having said it, scurry out of the room and make sure you never have to face up to it afterwards, because one of the things . . . You know, I even teach my sons about this, my family. I say, "Boys, always be ready to stay there and have the nerve to take it." But we've had the example of the Leader of the Opposition hiding behind the skirts of the little Member for Edmonton-Highlands, for gosh sake.

MR. MARTIN: That's sexist, Don.

MR. GETTY: If that is a sexist statement, I take it back. I never, ever dreamt that that would be a sexist statement, because frankly the little Member for Edmonton-Highlands, she does all she can to carry him on her back. I mean, what the heck, she's trying. [interjections] She can't help it if she's got that weight to carry. She does a pretty good job. I know it takes an awful lot.

MS BARRETT: Go back to finishing school.

MR. MARTIN: He needs a new speech maker.

MR. GETTY: Do you think, Mr. Chairman, I've got their attention?

Mr. Chairman, I just thought I'd conclude on looking ahead for Albertans, looking ahead to the Premier's council on the disabled providing us with a whole new way of thinking of how

to be aware of the abilities that the disabled can bring to us and the qualities they can bring to life in this province. And I know, after my discussion with the Minister of Community and Occupational Health and my discussion with the chairman of that council, Gary McPherson, someone whom I've known for some time, that his thinking and his dedication through that council is going to bring the government some superb recommendations that will change the way people in Alberta think of the disabled and will guarantee that the disabled play a major role in the future of this province -- full opportunity for them.

[Mr. Musgreave in the Chair]

In terms of the . . .

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I hate to interrupt the hon. Premier, but the committee has to rise and report.

MR. GETTY: Well, that's too bad, Mr. Chairman. It's just when I was feeling that I could tell them and teach them a few things, like "Come back to face the music."

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

[Motion carried]

[Mr. Deputy Speaker in the Chair]

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

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Having heard the report and the request for leave to sit again, all in favour, please say aye.

HON. MEMBERS: Aye

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Opposed, please say no. Carried.

[At 5:29 p.m. the House adjourned to Thursday at 2:30 p.m.]