

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ALBERTA

Title: **Thursday, April 28, 1988 8:00 p.m.**

Date: 88/04/28

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

head: **COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY**

[Mr. Musgreave in the Chair]

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The Committee of Supply will please come to order.

head: **Department of Labour**

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Mr. Minister, would you like to make some opening comments?

DR. REID: Yes, thank you, Mr. Chairman. Perhaps I should make some opening comments on the department and on the personnel administration office. First of all, in spite of the precedent that was quoted at McKay Avenue school this afternoon, I shall desist from making my remarks in Gaelic.

The department is anticipating a fairly active and interesting year in that we will have the implementation of the new labour legislation, the parts that have already arrived on the floor of the Assembly being Bills 21 and 22, and there will be additional provisions dealing with the construction industry. We're also having a full review of the function of the general safety services division of the Department of Labour, since that is also needed to make sure that it fits the new environment in the province and that that division will better reflect the needs of Albertans. In addition to that, the recommendation of the Human Rights Commission on provisions for mental disability being included in the Individual's Rights Protection Act, which I received last year, is wending its way through the system and is making progress. That may well be, as well, coming forward during the current fiscal year.

Mr. Chairman, it's interesting that both the department and the personnel administration office ~ which, although it's included in the department budget under vote 6, is in many ways a separate entity — have achieved reductions in their budgets for the coming year, the department a reduction of just under 2 percent and the office of personnel administration a reduction of just under 6 percent.

I think I should make some comments about the individual votes before leaving it open for questions from members of the committee. As I said, the Department of Labour itself has a decrease in total budget of some 2 percent. In vote 1 the increase of .6 percent is somewhat misleading. If members care to look at the element details, which they'll find on page 93, they will note an apparently very large increase in Systems of some 14 percent. This is largely due to a change in the way of allocating the costs of the electronic systems which are being developed and would have been in vote 3, but the consolidation in vote 1 means that there will be a better expenditure of the funds and it will be more co-ordinated. If the funds that I'm mentioning, some \$275,000, had been allocated to vote 3 under the old system, there would in actual fact be a decrease in vote 1 of some 6.2 percent. In vote 1 members will note that there's a reduction of some 5 permanent positions, some 6.1 percent.

In vote 2 there is an increase, and members will note that this

increase is related to the workloads that are anticipated from the introduction of the new Labour Relations Code and the Employment Standards Code. This allocation of funds is largely for education and for the communication functions through relations services with the employers and the employees involved. There will also be some additional funds available for mediation for the initial phase of implementation of the new legislation.

To emphasize that point, there's a new element in vote 2, that of Employee/Employer Services, which goes back to the final report of the committee that I chaired where there was a very marked interest and emphasis given to improving the employee/employer relationship in the province. We anticipate that there will be some necessary expenditures for that, but in addition we have isolated this particular service as an element in the vote to again give emphasis to the education and communication activities that the department will be involved in. There are three positions in the Employee/Employer Services, which have resulted in a net increase of one position as there are two positions removed elsewhere in the vote.

I may emphasize also at this time that the funds that are budgeted here — there is some anticipation that they will not be all that is required. But since we cannot anticipate exactly what the costs will be, it is intended that any additional funding and resources needed will be considered in the future, and special warrants may be required to do that additional funding.

As I said at the beginning of my remarks, Mr. Chairman, in vote 3, General Safety Services, there are provisions for a comprehensive analysis of what this particular division of the department has been doing to make sure that its activities, especially in education and public safety, are updated to a concept more of being an educational and information-based function rather than purely a policing and penalty-awarding function. This goes with the concept of our extremely highly educated, skilled work force. Many of the functions of GSS are of course related to inspections in the plumbing, gas, and electrical areas, where it is felt that these highly trained tradesmen can well function without so much inspection but rather with more emphasis on education in relation to new equipment, new techniques in electronics, et cetera.

The size of the general safety services division has decreased quite markedly. A large number of the staff took early retirement under the provisions of the early retirement program that I'll discuss a little later. There have been, in actual fact, some 25 positions abolished in the general safety services division. We are also, of course, in that department continuing the development, as I mentioned earlier, of the electronic data processing so that the requirements of registration and issuing permits and invoices will be much more efficient and much more cost-effective in the future.

Mr. Chairman, the next vote, vote 4, that of the Labour Relations Board, again shows an increase from last year. This increase is once more related to the projected implementation of the new Labour Relations Code which we anticipate for the fall of this year — the proclamation of that. There have been additional funds provided to the board for doing preliminary work in preparation for that enactment so that we will have a reasonable lead time and are able to be up and running when the new Labour Relations Code is proclaimed. There is no change in the number of positions within that allocation for the Labour Relations Board, but the additional funds are there. Again, as I said in relation to vote 2, any additional funds and resources will be dealt with as the need shows up rather than unnecessarily allocating the funds at this time.

Vote 5, the Human Rights Commission, is an interesting vote in that while there may appear to be a significant reduction of some 6.6 percent overall in the allocated funding, the Human Rights Commission has over the last few years persistently underspent by a reasonable amount on its funds. The apparent reduction this year is almost entirely accounted for by the use of in-house legal services rather than contracted legal services, which had been running in the vicinity of \$100,000 a year.

In relation to the Human Rights Commission it's also interesting to note that there is a steady downward trend in the number of complaints received by the Human Rights Commission and dealt with by them. This has been related in an inverse manner to a steadily increasing educational activity by the Human Rights Commission members and the actual people working for the Human Rights Commission. In other words, it would appear that the increased emphasis on education and workshops is showing an effect in a decreasing number of complaints registered with the commission. I think it is evident that Albertans are becoming much more conscious of the whole concept of human rights, and it's for that reason, I think, that there was so much interest shown in the Human Rights Commission's hearings around the province on the subject of including mental disability as a protected area under the Individual's Rights Protection Act.

Mr. Chairman, before inviting questions, I would like to make some remarks about the personnel administration office. The activities in the personnel administration office demonstrate in a factual manner the attitude of this government as an employer rather than as a government. We have a record, I think, that this Legislature and the government can be proud of in developing that relationship in changing times. While the budget for the personnel administration office is being decreased by just under 6 percent, with a reduction of some seven permanent positions, it is not anticipated that the services to our employees or to other departments of government will be significantly affected. There are some changes in the functions in the PAO in that we are transferring more responsibility and independence and flexibility to the individual departments of government, again in response to the new approach to relationships between employees and employers.

Since the departments vary so much in their type of operation and the responsibilities that they have, there is a need for greater flexibility and individuality in the way they deal with the employees, with hiring, with advertising, and things like that. For that reason recruitment advertising has been transferred to the department concerned, other than for the hiring of senior positions in executive management. We are, in actual fact, relying to an increasing extent upon in-house advertising in *The Bulletin*, which is produced and distributed throughout government so that employees of government in one department are much more aware of the promotion and advancement opportunities that may occur in other departments. We are in addition going to use less external consultants to advise on various programs, in view of the expertise that has been developed within the personnel administration office itself.

There is also in the personnel administration office a new program, as there is in the labour relations division of the Labour department. This program, which is referred to as executive management planning and development, is one which corresponds to those programs we have had for government employees in the other levels of the public service. This program is specifically designed for prospective candidates for senior management positions and will enable them to transfer between de-

partments — in other words, interdepartmental transfers — and also exchanges with the private sector and other public-sector employers. While the cost at \$85,000 is not large, I am quite convinced that the investment will pay off and will show excellent dividends in the future in that managers staying within the government on a long-term basis will benefit from transfers to other departments and would certainly benefit from temporary assignments to the private sector. Indeed, I anticipate that exchanges with the private sector will benefit both the private and public sectors in that both parties will realize much better how the other party works and the stresses and the relationships that exist in the other party's environment.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to put some emphasis on programs in the personnel administration office for women. There has been a lot of misguided and ill-informed criticism of these programs, but they have been remarkably effective. There has been a specific concentration on making sure that the women in the public service can achieve their career potential to the maximum degree possible with the opportunities that are available. This program has been operating now for 10 years with, I think, a degree of success that indicates a commitment on the part of the government as an employer but also a very marked commitment on the part of the employees. It is true that Alberta is blessed with a public service which is dedicated to ensuring the highest standard of government service while at the same time recognizing economic realities and the need for restraint. But in spite of that there has been a steady increase in the number of women within the public service reaching administrative and senior management positions. Rather than going for quick fixes and buzzwords and fashionable types of programs, as I said, this has been a steady job, going on for a decade, of encouragement and ensuring employment equality and equity within the public service.

It shows perhaps most markedly in the steady increase since 1975 when in the management group of the public service women comprised only 5.7 percent of that group. By 1980 it was 9.1 percent, and as of now it is 13.5 percent. Now, some would say that's not good enough, and I'm sure those numbers will be criticized by the opposition. But the situation is that we have to make sure that the public service does deliver excellent service, and therefore the people who take the posts have to be qualified for them. We have worked hard at assisting these women in attaining the qualifications necessary to achieve these management positions. We cannot, of course, control the number of them who may apply for those positions.

I think more important than the numbers I just gave are the numbers of women in the sort of feeder groups from which we derive our senior management. If one looks at the opted out and excluded services, the percentage of women has increased from 23 percent to over 33 percent. In the educational service it has doubled from 22 percent to 44 percent, and in the administration program service it has increased from 27 to 42 percent. It's from those three groups that we derive most of our management personnel, so I think we can well anticipate within the succeeding decade having the number of women in the management group increase very significantly because there are obviously women in the service who are able to take positions as they become available. I will make, indeed, the commitment that we will continue our active program to ensure that women have equal access to all the occupations they may wish to enter within the public service. I think in the last year approximately 1,150 women took advantage of the programs that we have.

In addition, of course, there's the resource centre with about

400 books and audiocassettes on a whole variety of topics that relate to the role of women in the workplace, and the formal policy on career development for women is obviously working to ensure that managers in the public service understand their responsibilities in this area. We have also developed a full catalogue of the occupations within the public service.

Another special program of the personnel administration office is related to the special placement program for those who are emotionally or physically disabled or for those over the age of 45, to assist them in acquiring skills to enable them to take part in competitions and achieve success in those competitions. Of the 107 who took advantage of the program in the last calendar year, there was almost an even split between those who were physically or mentally and emotionally disabled and those who were over 45. Of the 107 it is interesting to note that 61 were placed into experience projects.

I would like to make some comments about the attitude of the provincial government to the required downsizing associated with the economic realities. They were highlighted, of course, by the early retirement program developed in conjunction with the Alberta Union of Provincial Employees last year, a program that resulted in some 1,617 employees taking advantage of it. Of those positions that were vacated, already 338 have been abolished and almost another 800 remain vacant at this time.

But I would like to go back over the previous years. Since the 1984-85 fiscal year the government has abolished a total of 4,438 positions, and even when new positions created for new requirements in the departments are taken into consideration, there has been a net reduction of 3,685 positions. As I said, there's an additional 800 positions that remain vacant. In spite of this, Mr. Chairman, of those positions, the number where they were occupied by an employee at the time they were abolished — in view of all the efforts that have gone into intradepartmental transfers, interdepartmental transfers, and the other efforts of the departments in the personnel administration office — there have been very few employees that have actually had to terminate their employment with the government against their wish. Indeed, last year out of some 1,324 positions abolished, there were only 300 notices required, and to date out of those only 56 have been released with severance pay. I think it's a record that is an indication that while government may have been subjected to very severe cost restraints due to the decrease in natural resource revenues, we have dealt with our employees as fairly as anyone could wish, especially when one considers the efforts that were put into the early retirement program last year and the budgetary allocations that were made to that process.

The total budget, as I have said, is down by some 2 percent in the department, and some 6 percent in the personnel administration office. I would commend the budget of the department to the members and will be prepared to answer any questions that may be put.

Thank you.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The Member for St. Albert.

MR. STRONG: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think it's important to note that while this minister has a budget of only not quite \$36 million, this department probably touches on almost every Albertan at some point in time through the various functions that it performs, whether it's employment standards, Labour Relations Board, or any of those other departments that the Department of Labour represents in Alberta. I think the

most serious question for me is: is the Alberta taxpayer getting his or her money's worth in the services that are provided to them by this department? Mr. Chairman, through you to the minister how much money will this government continue to spend reviewing and bringing new labour legislation to the province of Alberta, legislation that's both just and fair, legislation that is going to create a level playing field for all Albertans, a true level playing field?

In addition, Mr. Chairman, how much money will this department spend in its '88-89 budget towards that goal? The minister spoke of processes that are in place now to finalize his new Employment Standards Code and his new Labour Relations Code, and while he mentioned a number of different votes that he was going to get money from to work towards that goal of establishing that legislation, he wasn't very specific to say, "Where are we going to get it from?" Is it going to be vote 1, 2, 3, 4? I think, Mr. Chairman, it's important to note as well — and I ask through you to the minister how can working Albertans expect fairness and equity when this department's total budget is faced with almost a \$1 million cut?

The minister also promised building trades union agreements in the construction industry. Question through you to the minister when? And where is the cost analysis of how much money that's going to cost, to finalize those agreements in the construction industry? We look at the '86-87 actual expenditures for this department, '87-88 estimates. We know, Mr. Chairman, that this minister spent half a million dollars on a major vacation in 1986-87, touring the world to bring fair and equitable labour legislation to the province of Alberta. That holiday was paid for by the taxpayers of this province, and what were the results? Did Albertans get sound value for the dollar that this minister spent? Did they get sound value for that dollar?

I also ask through you, Mr. Chairman: where in the new Employment Standards Code or the Labour Relations Code is there any evidence to show that the minister revised Alberta's labour legislation to reflect labour legislation found in those countries that he visited? I think it's interesting to note that in the final report of the Labour Legislation Review Committee that was issued in February of 1987, some of this tour was described. I'll draw the minister's attention, through you, Mr. Chairman, to a visit that he paid to the Federal Republic of Germany. It's interesting to note that in that final review one of the almost very first sentences states:

In particular, labour and management have accepted each other as equal partners essential to the success of [any] undertaking, and have agreed to work out their differences without outside intervention.

Mr. Chairman, in Alberta I for one would certainly appreciate if we did not have the adversarial roles that labour and management have here in the province of Alberta. There has been no acceptance of labour as equal partner in the decision-making process, no acceptance of labour when it comes to collective agreements that would enhance both parties' positions, make them more competitive, and give those owner/clients out there better productivity and better value for their dollar. No, what we've seen, Mr. Chairman, in this province is legislated inequality.

I'll draw the minister's attention to Bill 53, the Construction Industry Collective Bargaining Act. I don't see any figures in these estimates that take into account the cost to this department of finalizing those negotiations, of speeding those negotiations along. This minister is responsible for that Bill, but the minister hasn't allowed his own Bill to work, and why hasn't he done

that? How much more will it cost the taxpayers in the province of Alberta in this year's estimates, and which vote will provide the dollars to finalize collective agreements in the construction industry for the building trades unions? Surely this minister must realize that when an employer's federation asks at a bargaining table in a union agreement for the ability to hire non-union tradesmen, certainly that doesn't dictate much of a dialogue or dictate that meaningful labour relations and meaningful negotiations are taking place.

Mr. Chairman, why will the Minister of Labour not recognize that registration, covered in the current Labour Relations Act, and a 25-hour lockout are the root of the problems that labour faces in the province of Alberta? Mr. Chairman, why will he not address these? Why will he not save the taxpayers in this province thousands, tens of thousands, hundreds of thousands, and millions of dollars in addressing and finding solutions to these problems?

Again I'll say this, Mr. Chairman: the minister is responsible; this government is responsible for the problems that were created in labour relations in the province of Alberta, particularly in the construction industry with registration. This government is the only government in all of Canada that allowed 25-hour lockouts to take place in this province that were acceptable in conjunction with the legislation. No other province in Canada allowed that, no other province.

Again, Mr. Chairman, if these problems were addressed and solutions found to them, perhaps we could come here in the Committee of Supply and see this minister drop his request for dollars, perhaps not by \$1 million but maybe \$3 million or \$5 million, and do his job in achieving labour stability in the province of Alberta, in working towards equitable labour legislation for everybody in this province.

Mr. Chairman, it was this government's labour legislation -- this government's -- that caused property tax payers in the city of Edmonton to be faced with in excess of a million dollar policing budget with Gainers. I'd like to ask this minister: how much money over and above that did it cost the taxpayers in the province of Alberta to pay for that problem that was created by bad labour legislation in the province of Alberta?

Mr. Chairman, we go on in this government minister's tour that cost us a considerable amount of money. We go to the United Kingdom. The minister visited there. What we read -- I'll read it into the record. This is from the Labour Legislation Review Committee's final report, verbatim. It says:

Picketing an employer, other than the one with whom the dispute exists, has been removed from the immunities by narrowing the definition of trade dispute to that between workers and their own employer.

It goes on further to say, Mr. Chairman:

Labour relations policy at the collective level is a highly political issue in Great Britain. Both union and management organizations maintain direct links to political parties in anticipation of receiving favourable treatment from government. This politicization of labour relations is producing ever greater swings in policy when governments change.

Mr. Chairman, I know that labour in the province of Alberta does not want to get involved in the political process. They want the ability to seek fairness, to seek change, to seek that equity that the minister promised. If that equity is maintained or that goal is worked towards, we would see a lot less dollars being asked for by the Department of Labour and this minister.

Through you, Mr. Chairman, to the minister: is this where our new picketing legislation came from, the United Kingdom? The United Kingdom hasn't gone as far as this minister's gone

in this picketing legislation. How many more tax dollars in this minister's budget are going to be spent on court battles to determine whether or not section 81 of the new Labour Relations Code is legal and not in violation of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms in this country? How many dollars are we going to spend, or has the minister even considered how many dollars it's going to cost this government and those that oppose section 81 of his new Labour Relations Code? Where's that in his budget? I don't see a little line saying that, well, it's going to cost us \$50,000 to abuse Albertans with labour legislation that perhaps he got from the United Kingdom. But I don't even know if that's the case. But how much is it going to cost the taxpayer?

Mr. Chairman, I'd like to read into the record what section 2 of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms says. Section 2 of the Charter, labeled Fundamental Freedoms, reads in part as follows:

2. Everyone has the following fundamental freedoms:
  - (b) freedom of . . . expression, including freedom of . . . media of communication;
  - (c) freedom of peaceful assembly; and [finally]
  - (d) freedom of association.

I'd like to ask the minister where the bottom line is in how much money this government is willing to spend through this Department of Labour budget to treat people unfairly, to discriminate against Albertans whom they are supposed to have a commitment to. How much money are we going to be forced to spend? Did the minister assess the cost in this proposed budget? Where is that cost? In which vote, which proceeding? Has the cost been assigned to any one of the departments, any one of votes 1 through 6? Because in looking at these budget numbers, I certainly haven't seen them.

How much money will it cost this government to put formerly law-abiding citizens -- and I'll use as an example 11,000 nurses in the province of Alberta that thought the labour legislation was unfair. Certainly I can stand here and say that those nurses were in violation of the law. But again, I do not see in this Minister of Labour's budget the cost of putting all those 11,000 nurses in jail for violating the law. Through you, Mr. Chairman, I'd like to ask the Minister of Labour where in his proposed budget does he deal with that? Or does he think people are just going to roll over when they're treated unfairly and accept what is the law in the province of Alberta? Because I don't believe that for a minute. People throughout history, when they have perceived legislation to be unfair, in some cases have taken up arms to create fairness and equity for all.

Mr. Chairman, we go on. Let's go on the tour with this minister. He visited the United States. It's interesting to quote again from the final report of the Labour Legislation Review Committee, and here I'll read it verbatim again. It says:

The swing towards non-union construction has brought about a change in strategy within the AFL-CIO and the union [management] generally. Today in the United States the unions appear to be adapting to this change which has been forced upon them . . .

and I'll stress "forced upon them"

. . . by competitive pressures, the anti-union movement, right to work legislation, double breasting and a trend away from national agreements.

Through the Chair: is this where this minister obtained the new certification process in his new Labour Relations Code? Mr. Chairman, is that where it came from?

I'd like to say that this is a fundamental and unprecedented change in Canadian labour relations. The new Labour Relations Code envisions government-supervised votes in all applications for certification even though a union might have one hundred

percent support from the employees it is trying to organize. We see contained in vote 4 a 15.7 percent increase in Labour Relations Adjudication and Regulation, the Labour Relations Board. It's almost \$182,000. Yet the staffing remains constant. How can that be? Now, the minister addressed some of that in his opening statements: well, perhaps if the need is there, we can draw on other departments for more people.

Well, Mr. Chairman, I'd like to take the minister and draw his attention and look at the American tradition in the certification process, which I feel is counterproductive. I'd like to also draw the minister's attention to Paul Weiler, who's an acknowledged expert in labour relations at Harvard University. He describes the differences in Canadian and the American certification process as a great divide, that the American system of labour relations and the certification process has created intimidation; strife; professional union busters, whom they call labour relations consultants, that are nothing worse than labour union breakers; electioneering; and a host of unfair labour practices. In fact, statistics show that the American experience of unfair labour practices during certification drives -- they've experienced a 25-fold increase in unfair labour relations practices, unfair labour practices, at the National Labor Relations Board.

Mr. Chairman, which vote contains the funding for this massive increased cost in those unfair labour practice filings? Who's going to pay for that? If this minister's new Labour Relations Code is approved, what is the taxpayer going to be faced with? I would suggest to this minister that if his new Labour Relations Code goes through, it is going to cost a significant amount of money, for this minister will be back, maybe not prior to the end of this fiscal year but certainly next fiscal year, asking for a significant increase in the budget for the Labour Relations Board in the province of Alberta.

Let me demonstrate that. I can do some research and I have. The applications for certification in the province of Alberta: in 1983-84 there were 707 of them; in '84-85 there were 415 of them. There were 86 from '82-83 that were popped into the '83-84 year. There was a significant drop in applications for certification before the Labour Relations Board in '85-86; they were down to 107. In '86-87 they went back up to 215. But I can tell the minister through you, Mr. Chairman, that the reason for the drop in those applications for certification was because of no agreement in the construction industry. The construction industry and those building trades unions could have filed all the applications for certification they wanted, because they weren't worth the paper they were written on, were absolutely meaningless. Because you could not force or ask or beg that contractor to come to the bargaining table to bargain terms and conditions acceptable to anybody; they wouldn't show up.

That's an average, Mr. Chairman, of 382 applications a year over the last four years. If the minister would check with his people at the labour relations department, even they would tell him that there's about 400 average that come in a year, and eventually, when there is a collective agreement for the building trades unions in the construction industry, with all of the spin-offs, all of the double-breasted employers that are out there -- when the building trades unions start on them, you are probably looking at 600 government-supervised votes anywhere across the whole province of Alberta, from Fort McMurray to Lethbridge, in every little hamlet where work is going on.

It was funny. When I went through these estimates, all I saw was a \$182,000 increase in the Labour Relations Board's budget and no increase in the numbers of people that were going to do all these things. How much is that going to cost the taxpayer?

Because it's certainly not in these budget estimates. But, Mr. Chairman, I've said on a previous occasion that the budget estimates that we're given as Members of this Legislative Assembly certainly do not get into all of the dotting of the i's and crossing of the t's, because you do not get the detail to make intelligent comment on any department's budget.

I mentioned earlier that there's no staffing increase in the total Department of Labour. As a matter of fact, both the Labour Relations Board and the Department of Labour are somewhat downsized. Through you, Mr. Chairman, I would ask this minister: how will four incumbent labour relations officers handle about 400 applications for certification votes per year? Is the minister aware that the board is backlogged three to four months even now? Is the minister aware of the size of the province of Alberta, the number of diverse locations that a single certification may have to have votes taken at? And is the minister aware of the cost of that?

I would say through you again, Mr. Chairman, to the Minister of Labour: justice delayed is justice denied. How long will Albertans affected by certification votes, government-supervised votes, have to wait before they get justice? The Labour Relations Board administered three to four votes on certification last year. They are overworked; they're backlogged now. What's going to happen when they get those additional 400 votes to conduct? And through you again, Mr. Chairman, I would ask the minister: is this the level playing field? Is this the fairness and the equity that the government promised?

I could continue on through this minister's world tour to Japan, Australia, New Zealand, but again through the Chair I'd like to ask the minister what is new in his Labour Relations Code from these countries? Where are the cost estimates of these changes in the new proposed Labour Relations Code, in the new proposed Employment Standards Code, Bill 21, Bill 22? Mr. Chairman, the new codes as proposed will not work except to deny Albertans justice, fairness, equality, equity, and they'll serve also to destroy your proposed budget and at the same time destroy that fragile balance in many areas between employers and employees. It'll destroy those relationships.

The minister commented, when he was going through, on Communications. Because when I looked through the votes, again in vote 1 we look at Communications. Communications, Mr. Chairman, was something the minister spoke at great length about when he brought in his new Bills, 21 and 22: his new Employment Standards Code, his new Labour Relations Code. Again we go back, I believe to page 90. This is what the minister said:

Leadership on the part of government is necessary to establish the framework in which Albertans can strive to meet the challenges that lie ahead with a commonality of interest and understanding of their role in the international market.

Now, certainly I agree with some of that not all of it. But when we look at a Communications budget in vote 1 that says \$45,785: how are we going to enhance that communications process unless we get an awful lot of money out of some of these other votes? The minister did address that to some extent, not all. Forty-five thousand dollars, Mr. Chairman: is that it?

The Minister of Labour puts out what they call Alberta Labour News to advise the industry of all the good things that are happening. I would suggest to you, Mr. Chairman, that the Minister of Labour will probably spend \$45,000 on Alberta Labour News without going to anyplace else. In addition, Alberta Labour News has been utilized by this minister for blatant political advantage in a thinly veiled attempt to justify this gov-

ernment's lack of quality labour legislation, this lack of this government to put in place labour legislation that would create a true level playing field, and it's obvious when we as Members of this Legislative Assembly consider these budget estimates in conjunction with Bills 21 and 22.

This minister, Mr. Chairman, should reconsider his budget, re-examine his proposed labour codes -- Bill 21, his Employment Standards Code; Bill 22, his Labour Relations Code -- and if this is the best he can do, then surely this Labour minister must resign.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The Member for Edmonton-Belmont

MR. SIGURDSON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to spend just a few minutes tonight talking about the department of international tourism and labour reform. I'll get it right yet. It's the department of contradictions, Mr. Chairman. You see, what we have is the department down by 3.2 percent while the Minister's Office is up by 5.4 percent. The department services are going down at a time when we're having great change in the Department of Labour, but the Minister's Offices goes up 5.4 percent.

Now, I want to make a pitch on behalf of the Minister of Labour to his cabinet colleagues here and to the other government members, because quite frankly, Mr. Chairman, I don't believe that that increase of 5.4 percent in his office is going to be enough. I don't think for a minute that this minimal increase of 5.4 percent is going to be sufficient for the minister to once again travel around the province to listen to Albertans after Bill 22 and Bill 21 are adopted, if they are adopted as they are currently presented to this Assembly. Now, the reason the minister is going to have to go around the province once again is to once again listen, this time listen to what Albertans had to say last time.

I traveled, and the minister well knows it, to every public hearing we had in the province during the labour review. I didn't have the good fortune of flying at 32,000 feet in the king jet; I traveled at about six inches off the ground. [interjections] Lear jet? King air? Thank you. Turboprops.

MR. ADAIR: You got it.

MR. SIGURDSON: Thank you, Boomer.

I had the good fortune to attend most every one of those meetings, and what I heard was very, very different than what the minister heard. I don't know why. Same people at the podium making their presentation to all of the members of the labour review panel, same people talking to the minister, yet what I heard was so very different than what the minister heard. Because when I read the final report, I was amazed. I thought maybe I had been in the wrong province, traveling to the wrong meetings. But no, I wasn't. I went and checked my files and saw that they were all from Alberta. So I would suggest that this increase of 5.4 percent isn't going to be adequate for the minister to travel around the province once again to listen to the complaints that are going to be coming from workers in Alberta if Bill 22 is passed.

Also, I remember that this minister was, in the last government, the Solicitor General. Now, the other problem with this budget is that there's not going to be enough money in Minister's Office to help support some of the needs of his constituency. Although he's the Minister of Labour, his constituency houses the Grande Cache penitentiary, and he's going

to need more money to ensure that that facility is properly staffed and probably expanded, because following the passage of Bill 22, especially section 81, there are going to be a number of other Albertans out in Grande Cache who are going to need the facility that's in the minister's constituency.

You know, I'm amazed that should that section go through unamended, should that Act pass unamended, Albertans are going to be denied the right to support the principles that they believe in. Priests who were on the picket line outside Gainers on 66th Street, workers from other unions, workers that weren't organized, retired Albertans that came out in support of the workers that were on the picket lines: they're not by law going to be allowed to assemble and support their principled positions. However, just like the nurses who were refused the right to withdraw their services, I would suggest that these Albertans are going to assemble at a picket line and probably be in violation of bad legislation. You know, I wouldn't be surprised if at one point there's some anxious enforcement going on on a picket line. We might even see at a . . .

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Order please. I wonder if the hon. member could show how his line of debate relates to the estimates of the Department of Labour.

MR. SIGURDSON: Mr. Chairman, it's under vote 1.0.1, Minister's Office. I'm trying to appeal to his colleagues to give him more money.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I would point out to the hon. member that some of the issues he's raising -- the enforcement of the law is the responsibility of other departments and not the Department of Labour, so please come back to the estimates.

MR. SIGURDSON: Fine; thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I'll come back to 1.0.1. Still, in making that pitch for an increase in Minister's Office -- because I think that as well as requiring the points that I've outlined, he's also going to need some legal counsel for the Premier. The Premier, if he's on a picket line, whether he wants to cross it or stay on the other side of it, he may very well, in all of the anxious moments that go on on a picket line, be carted away. I'd love to see that counsel represent the Premier, and that may very well come out of Minister's Office. [interjection] Maybe he was thirsty.

Perhaps I can just get over to vote 3, which is General Safety Services. When I went through this vote, Mr. Chairman, I was rather amazed that we have a substantial drop of 6.3 percent. Now, this is April 28. Many Canadians recognize that as the national day of mourning for those people who have been injured or killed on the worksite. I think it rather appropriate to look at the General Safety Services of the Department of Labour on this date. To see the drop in Electrical Protection, Elevators, Fire Prevention, Plumbing and Gas, Boilers, building Standards -- we have a substantial drop in every one of those votes.

Is it that the number of claims to the Workers' Compensation Board have dramatically fallen? I don't think so. In the Department of Career Development and Employment I haven't seen an increase in field services to allow the Department of Labour to drop the number of dollars it has from this particular vote. I don't quite frankly, understand the rationale for an almost \$800,000 drop. At a time when we're trying to ensure that the workplace is safe for all Albertans, I am, quite frankly, amazed to hear the minister say that this may be a cost-effective measure. But it sure as heck won't be efficient when we have

an increase in the number of claims to the Workers' Compensation Board, an increase in injuries to Albertans, and perhaps an increase in the number of deaths at the worksites. Surely to goodness this is one area that ought to be on the increase to ensure that when Albertans go off to work they are assured of the safest possible working conditions rather than a drop in funds which may eliminate some of the already too few inspection services that go on at many worksites.

In vote 2, Labour Relations, I have a specific question to the minister, and that surrounds vote 2.0.5. It appears that it is a brand-new vote. Employee/Employer Services wasn't there in previous estimates, as far as I'm aware, and yet it's for a very specific amount of money: \$289,738. Now, normally when we go through estimates, we look at things in millions or thousands. It's not very often that we have it right down to a specific last dollar, especially on programs that are brand new — \$289,738. You know, I recall that when the minister proposed to Albertans that he take this trip around the world, the opposition members of the Assembly stood up and asked: how much is it going to cost? He said: we have no idea, not a clue; we're going to spend as much money as it takes — \$100,000, \$200,000, maybe \$500,000. But here we have an actual specific on a brand-new program. What is it?

Could it be that in this enlightened age of Tory labour wisdom, proponents of right-to-work legislation, maybe what they want to do is communicate with the employees and the employers about some of the benefits they see in not being a member of a union. Could it be? You may think this cynical, but it's not; it's just skepticism. Could it be that this money is for a printing bill to advertise the goals and aspirations of this department in this government? I don't know. Surely not. We hope not. But this is so specific on such a new program that I am extraordinarily skeptical on this particular matter.

Getting back to vote 1, Mr. Chairman, my colleague the Member for St. Albert talked about communications in the department, and again just to underscore — as the Minister of Agriculture likes to say — the decrease in the communications of the department, I again worry. I'm not sure that that \$45,000 is going to be sufficient to tell Albertans the Department of Labour is really concerned about matters that affect Albertans in the work force. I keep on hearing — I saw it in the interim report, and I saw it in the final report of the minister's task force on labour review — that communication was so very important. Well, is \$45,000 going to be sufficient to communicate to Albertans that the Premier wants to get the nurses back to work? Is \$45,000 going to be sufficient to cover up all the negative press that surrounded the Premier's responses to the media? I would doubt it. In fact, I don't think \$45,000 is going to be sufficient for this department to truly indicate to Albertans that it believes in fairness.

Here we had again, with the minister's announcement of the labour review committee, the Premier of the province standing up and telling Albertans that he wouldn't consult with the president of the Alberta Federation of Labour because he didn't like his politics. He didn't like his politics, so that and that alone was sufficient for this Premier to go out and say that we will not consult with a democratically elected president of a federation of labour that represents 100,000 people. That was enough. Forty-five thousand dollars is about to be expended on communications out of the minister's office. That's not going to be sufficient, Mr. Chairman, for this government to communicate with Albertans that it indeed is truly concerned about a level playing field. Because Albertans know, and they see it through

the legislation, that that is not the case. So whether there was \$45,000 there or perhaps \$4.5 million or perhaps even \$45 million, Albertans will know that this government's definition of "level playing field" is so imbalanced in favour of the employer that no amount of money in the minister's department responsible for communications is going to be sufficient.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The Member for Athabasca-Lac La Biche.

MR. PIQUETTE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd like to address some specific questions to the minister and also make some general statements. But first of all, I'd like to turn to vote 3 in particular, which is a rural issue I feel is quite important. It has to do with the fire prevention aspect of standards established by your department to provide fire prevention and standards across the province.

In my constituency I have a mix of improvement districts and counties and municipalities, and one of the things I have quickly learned in terms of visiting a lot of the volunteer fire departments within that mix of municipalities is that we have real double standards in terms of how fire prevention is carried out in this province. For example, we find that in the improvement districts, in most of the area of ID 17 and ID 18, we have the most modern machines out there, fire trucks — much of the equipment now is becoming very modern — but when we step across the boundaries to some of the surrounding counties or municipalities, you find many of them fighting fires with antiquated trucks, antiquated equipment, no standardization of provincial standards for fire fighting. For example, a couple of the volunteer fire departments in my constituency have asked me whether there's any provincial funding or provincial standards established where they can have some per capita money being allocated for fire prevention.

I even asked the Minister of Municipal Affairs whether there was any such per capita funding in terms of municipal grants to municipalities, whether there was any minimum type of per capita expenditure relating to providing funding for the volunteer fire departments in rural Alberta, and from what he's indicated to me there's none. He's asked me to ask you tonight whether there is any under your department. Because for sure, if we have this kind of discrepancy occurring in different parts of the province, you as the minister responsible for fire prevention should be ensuring there's some kind of level playing field in terms of the equipment standards that need to be established throughout the province. If these were at least minimum types of standards of equipment which would be established in the province, then at least the municipalities would have to upgrade their fire department to those standards. I would urge the minister if he could answer that question for me, whether he does provide any types of standards and, number two, whether he does provide any funding to the local municipalities in order to live up to that provincial standard.

Another issue I'd like to raise has to do with the non-union workers, which I feel are very often the least protected of our public. One of the things we have in terms of small business or at least in terms of information provided when small businesses become incorporated — I would like to see that there be attempts by this government through, for example, regional business development centres to make sure that small businesses created in this province are aware of the labour standards of this province, that they are aware of the enforcement of these standards and how they relate to it. I can recall my early days as a small busi-

ness person, setting forth on my business career with no information in terms of what the labour standards of this province are. So very little information has been provided by this department to make sure that within regional business development centres across the province that it would be very important that at least the employers are aware what the standards for the workers are.

For example, information relating to termination procedures. That comes across — and many employers are not aware, for example, of what the grounds for rightful dismissal and wrongful dismissal are. We supposedly have some protection for the worker who's unlawfully dismissed, but I can guarantee you that a good portion of our small business sector is not aware of what some of these termination procedures are which are acceptable and unacceptable. I think that in terms of your budget, in terms of employer/employee relationships, there has to be much more focus in providing the dissemination of that information and the education of the small business sector to make sure that whatever laws we have, which are fairly minimal, are at least understood by employers.

One of the things small business people have to realize is that the key to any good business success is the quality of their employees. However, a lot of small business people don't understand that. They go through business failures before they understand that if they treat their workers improperly, very often that's exactly the reason they go under, as opposed to the fact that treating their key employees fairly and using good common sense, they are much more successful in making sure their business stays alive. Because the key to any kind of business is very much the quality of the workmanship, the quality of the good relationship that exists between employer and employee. There doesn't seem to be in the whole of small business information of that importance. We are starting to educate our small businessmen in terms of marketing strategies, of developing financial packages, of developing marketing skills analysis, et cetera, but we are doing very little in terms of teaching them how to relate to their staff, and that's the key element to good business survival. So I would urge this minister to try to answer that question. I have noticed in terms of my relationship working with small business their great ignorance of that whole importance of employer/employee relationships.

Another thing which I think . . . Just an example today of the Whitemud dispute situation with the truckers, who are very often used by subcontractors, et cetera, and given basically only verbal information about what their remuneration rates will be. Companies were actually refusing to put in writing what some of these remunerations were going to be and when they were going to be paid. I think there should be fair employment laws written in which must mandate that in any kind of employer/employee relationship — whether it be at the subcontractors level or contractors level, it should be mandated. These should be clearly written down as part of any employment contract that exists between companies and workers like truckers, for example, who very often get shafted by very cagey, very foxy operators or subcontractors who work around some of these labour standards that should be in force.

Very definitely the non-union workers need the protection of a higher minimum wage. Any enlightened society understands that having a higher minimum wage paid to the worker ensures that people are not treated as a slave in the labour market and they have a chance to at least be able to fulfill some of their . . . There are three basic requirements of life, which are your food, shelter, and clothing. The kind of minimum wage that we have

instituted for our students, for example, which won't kick in until the fall, I believe is simply unpardonable for any kind of civilized state, to be putting young people in a position where the wages they are paid cannot meet that basic need the dignity of the human being demands for him to be a functioning individual in society. So the need for making sure that higher minimum wage is tied to the cost of living, which is not having to wait until seven, eight years pass on, should be a minimum standard established by your department in terms of its policies.

I'd like also to turn to such issues, for example, as the individual's rights protection situation in terms of the need for this government to take a look at the high unemployment among our aboriginal people, the high welfare rates among aboriginal people. I think it is high time that the government set forward some fair employment, affirmative job allocation program, requiring of companies who operate in northern Alberta, for example, that there be allocation of jobs for our aboriginal people, who are very often sidestepped in economic development. I think, for example, one company which is doing it on their own is NOVA Corporation. They have perhaps shown other companies that when there are jobs allocated in northern Alberta, for example, 25 percent of the jobs are supposedly to go to the native communities. However, their policy only extends to people they hired themselves and not to the contractors they contract the services out to. So it's really meaningless in many of their local projects because of the fact that it only extends to their own employees or their own special project they build themselves.

But we need to start looking at affirmative job allocation for aboriginal people, because we will not get rid of that vicious welfare cycle which is destructive to our native people without something like Jack Kennedy did for the black people in the United States, who saw a situation where 80 percent of black people were unemployed or underemployed in the United States in the '60s and provided the leadership to the United States to make sure that unfairness in the marketplace stopped. At least today we see a complete reversal in that picture with the black American, where now 80 percent of them are employed as opposed to 80 percent of them on welfare or unemployed. So I think we need to address in our labour standards in terms of our individual rights protection some affirmative job allocation program for our aboriginal people, who have lost the sense of their dignity because they have been bypassed by lack of fair employment standards, which relates to a particular people who are not on a level playing field in terms of job opportunities.

I guess the last thing I would like to touch on — not the last thing but one of the other aspects — relating to individual's rights protection, is my concern about what the government is doing about tolerance and understanding in Alberta. You know, this was a situation back a few years ago. We had a Committee on Tolerance and Understanding created in order to take a look at what was happening in terms of the relationships of different people related to religion, to racial origin, et cetera, and that committee found there was a need for more tolerance and understanding in our society. But there seemed to be nothing done about that in the last few years.

I can tell this government that there's a resurrection right now of a lack of tolerance in Alberta society. And where is the leadership provided by this government to stamp out some of these intolerant attitudes which could be the cause for the destruction of our civilized and democratic way of life? I find very little leadership in that whole area of intolerance and a lack of understanding between our founding people, between our



various minorities, et cetera. I'll take an example of the Aryan situation in southern Alberta. Where does the individual's rights protection kick in for individuals, the whole aspect of making sure this government provides leadership in the area of promoting tolerance and understanding and making sure that tolerant viewpoints are perpetuated in a society, that the government comes across clean as a whistle as opposed to hiding behind political expediency in order to gain votes in a situation which is totally out to lunch?

I guess I'll conclude by saying that the labour legislation of this government, introduced by Bills 21 and 22 — it's very much Bills which are going to be a taking away of the history of our democracy that we have fought long and hard for in this country. Any time you start making hindrances for people having the right to associate, you're destroying their democratic right to make choices. I see the 25-hour lockout as an attempt to basically make the ability to organize yourselves as individuals to be able to be on an equal playing field with your employer — that kind of eliminating the democratic rights individuals have. Okay, what's the use of certification into a union if a company has the right to simply create or to lock out . . .

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Order. I wonder if the hon. member could come back to the votes of the Department of Labour. We're not discussing Bills 21 and 22 tonight.

MR. PIQUETTE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, it does have everything to do with the labour estimates, because we have gone through a whole exercise in the budget which has been voted on by this government, which is the Minister's Office, vote 1.0.1, and I think it's totally relevant that we address the whole issue of our democratic rights and also the individual's rights protection which are guaranteed under the charter of our country. I would urge this government before it proceeds with these Bills to make sure they do not break any existing individual's rights protections that we enjoy in this democratic society.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The Member for Calgary-North West.

DR. CASSIN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd just like to make a few comments on the estimates for the Department of Labour. I appreciate that this year is quite different from last year. Last year we were in the process of having tabled Bill 60. We spent a lot of time listening to our constituents, listening to various groups representing both sides of the question, both labour and the employee. Those discussions were certainly most fruitful. I'm pleased to see that the department has recognized that effort is behind us. I would like to think that perhaps it's a vote of confidence for the work that was done last year, that the new Bill that has been tabled and will be discussed later in this Assembly will resolve a lot of the problems that have been faced by the industry and we won't require the numbers of people that have been necessary in the past. And this is certainly reflected in the estimates. I notice that there is a reduction of some 40 people in the full-time equivalent employment and some 29 in the permanent full-time positions, certainly in keeping with the direction of the government to cut back on the size of government and run a more efficient shop, and I certainly support that direction.

I was also pleased, Mr. Minister, to hear you say that you would be looking at recruiting more women and providing opportunity for the employment of women within your depart-

ment. That's certainly a progressive move that we all welcome.

I must also comment on dealing with, again, an outstanding issue from the standpoint of the minimum wage. It's been a very contentious issue. I guess it's always to be expected. We look at an easy solution in that we throw money at the problem, and it would be great if we could solve all our problems just by throwing a little more money at them. Unfortunately, there are some negatives to throwing dollars at projects. We find that it may influence the job opportunities; it may make the difference between some company surviving and therefore a loss of net jobs. We also find it's not long after the wage goes up that the prices of bread and milk and transportation and taxes go up, so it's a never-ending spiral. But it was something that needed to be addressed and you've done that.

Returning to the votes, again vote 1: a very modest increase of some .6 percent. You did explain, Mr. Minister, that within that there was some improvement and upgrading in the way of systems, which will again help with controls and administration.

I would ask also under vote 4 that there is an increase again in the Labour Relations Board — and I appreciate there have been some comments on that — of some \$180,000, you know, approximately, and perhaps you could just review that again, the reasons for that increase. It's already been commented on in vote 1.0.4 that the . . . Sorry; 1.0.5 we've already covered, which relates to the increase in systems.

I would like to compliment both the minister and his department for bringing in these estimates and keeping in line with the direction of our government to reduce the expenditures. I am looking forward to the debate on the labour Act, Bills 21 and 22, and I would conclude my remarks with that.

Thank you.

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

MRS. HEWES: Thank you. Interesting. Just a comment, Mr. Chairman. The government members opposite — one or two of them — seem to have actually heard some of those last few remarks. Or perhaps it was the crash of the member sitting down that brought them around.

Mr. Chairman, I'm dismayed when I see people who come to sit in this House, ministers included, who seem to pay absolutely no attention to the matters being put forward. You may not agree with them, but it seems to me that the very least we can display for one another is common courtesy. Now, perhaps we're only here because our names come up on the roster. But frankly, that's not why I'm here, and I'm dismayed when people pay no attention.

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. I'd like to assure the hon. member that government members are multi-talented. Government members have absolutely no difficulty at all, in fact, in listening and in reading and in chewing gum at the same time, if need be. I think it's important that the hon. member who just joined us a few minutes ago should not be indignant about the fact that she's the only person in her own caucus that's here tonight. If she's frustrated that there is no one from her own caucus here to be with her, to listen to her tonight, Mr. Chairman, she surely should not take that out on government members.

MRS. HEWES: Well, at least I got their attention.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: That's right. The hon. member has the attention of the House. Now please proceed. [interjections]

MRS. HEWES: It worked.

Mr. Chairman, I just want to comment about the minister's tour first of all. Last year when the minister and his entourage toured the world to determine what circumstances prevailed in labour relations in other nations, I tried to stay cool. I must admit there were a lot of questions asked in the general public, and I tried to stay just as cool as the other side of the pillow. I tried to give the benefit of the doubt here, because I know from my own life experience that there are many things to be learned from other nations - good things to be learned - and I was prepared to wait and see. I encouraged people to be patient; that there were things to be learned. But like most people I was disappointed when the report came out. There wasn't a great deal there that really showed any benefit from that tour.

Then when the first Bill came out, I was really quite fearful, because the Bill didn't seem to reflect anything except a very regressive position. And again I was relieved when the minister decided to hold up on pushing the Bill forward in order for more public input. I think that was a very good decision; it gave opportunity for lots of people in labour and management — small business and large industry — to have an input and they did. We all looked forward to an immense change and difference, and we didn't get it. It simply didn't evolve. The Bill was substantially the same, and perhaps even a little worse. So I'm hard pressed, Mr. Chairman, to know what to say to the publics that talk to me about it, employers and employees alike, because I now not only can't justify the tour, I can't justify the legislation. I fear that we are going to have it thrust upon us and that for some years to come we will have to stumble around in this province with a piece of legislation that is ill-suited to our needs in Alberta.

Mr. Chairman, I just want to comment briefly. I know the Bills are coming up for debate, but I think one of the clues to the kind of thing I'm talking about is in the preamble, and it's in the preamble in both 21 and 22. Now, if we're going to have a preamble in our labour Act and in our employment standards Act, one would have anticipated that that preamble would speak to labour relations in the context of progress and economic stability, labour harmony, fairness, equity. One would have thought that the preamble would speak to that. On the contrary, Mr. Chairman, the preamble in both Bills, the first section is exactly the same:

Whereas it is recognized that a mutually effective relationship between employees and employers is critical to the capacity of Albertans to prosper in the competitive world-wide market . . .

So we're talking about something that is quite separate or quite apart from labour harmony. We're talking not about labour relations; we're talking about the worldwide market and Alberta's capacity within it. Now, I would have thought, if we were going to write a preamble, if we were going to put one in, that we'd put one in that really said something positive to employers and employees and taxpayers in this province, Mr. Chairman. I'm disappointed in that and I think that sets the tone for what follows in the rest of the Bill. The preamble doesn't direct for a balanced environment in labour relations. It doesn't set that stage, and I'm gravely disappointed in it.

I asked some questions in the House today, Mr. Chairman, about employment standards primarily related to women, a large constituency, and I don't believe the employment standards Act

really directs itself to some of those very significant needs of this large group of Albertans, the ones who primarily are involved in part-time and temporary employment. It gives them no protection. I think that's a real loss and will prove to be a loss over years to come.

Other members of the House, Mr. Chairman, have spoken to Bill 22 and some of the major flaws in that particular Bill. I think there were four or five things that we expected, none of which we got. The certification process that is suggested in the Bill I find to be clumsy . . .

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Order please. I wonder if the hon. member could try and relate to the estimates of the Department of Labour, her comments dealing with these two Bills.

MRS. HEWES: I'll attempt to do so, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for the admonition.

If I can just be permitted a comment again about 22: clumsy certification processes, replacement workers still there with no direction, spin-offs not defined. But the one fact that I think has troubled all of us, Mr. Chairman, and really goes way beyond Bill 22, is the section on picketing.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I'm sorry. Order please. The hon. member is now getting into some specifics in the Bill. I suggest she come back to the estimates of the Department of Labour. [interjections]

MRS. HEWES: I'm glad you are, Mr. Chairman. The Member for Red Deer-South. [interjections]

Mr. Chairman, if I can be permitted, I just want to say that I find it very difficult in this province that is so committed to law and order, quite properly, that we would write a law that is in conflict with the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. I find that very difficult to understand. I think Canadians in general find it difficult to understand and see it as Alberta muscle-flexing. I think it is improper and unnecessary and will be a very expensive kind of section and will not stand up. It'll be gone so fast it'll make your head spin. I just don't understand a government putting it in in the first place.

Mr. Chairman, one other point I'd like to make before I go to the specific votes. We were all troubled by the nurses' strike. I believed it to be totally unnecessary; it could have been avoided. The legislation that created the environment that caused the nurses' strike I think was importune, was done hastily without sufficient thought about the consequences. I would like to think that the minister will give some sober second thought to removing that section. Mr. Chairman, I don't think our administration of legislation should ever be in the position of writing in pieces of legislation that create that kind of environment. I think we should attempt to create an environment of harmony. And to be sure, that was compounded by the 3 percent reduction to Alberta Hospital Association and through that to the hospitals, but no one gained in the nurses' strike. Everybody lost. Patients, nurses, institutions, communities, taxpayers, governments — we all lost. We lost gravely, and it was unnecessary, and it should come out. I would hope that the minister will give really serious consideration to taking it out. At any point, we should never be writing legislation that creates that kind of situation, Mr. Chairman. It's unnecessary and it invites conflict, and we should be very thoughtful about that.

Mr. Chairman, I'd just like to go to a few direct questions on the votes themselves. In vote 3, perhaps the minister would give

the House some information about why this is reduced. You know, there's such a paucity of information in our budget documents that one cannot tell whether it's been reduced because the numbers of problems have been reduced, whether it's been reduced because the minister doesn't think it's necessary, whether we're being more efficient. If we're able to reduce it, then I need to know why. I need to have some information so I can tell my publics, with comfort, that we have been able to reduce the budget in safety regulations because our inspectors are doing a better job, our industry and business is being more careful, everybody's paying more attention, there are fewer incidents, or whatever. But I need to know that, Mr. Chairman.

The same in Labour Relations Adjudication and Regulation in vote 4. It's up; it's up 15.7 percent. Perhaps the minister will tell us why that increase comes there. Is there increasing incidence? What is the reason that that's up so high?

Mr. Chairman, vote 5 is Individual's Rights Protection, Human Rights Commission. In this particular vote we find the IRPA. Will the minister please tell the House why we are still hesitating about including in the Individual's Rights Protection Act people who have suffered mental illness, people who are homosexual? I believe that when these things appear in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms of Canada, we should conform. Alberta citizens, I think, have a right to know what the intention of this government is in that regard. The minister has made some comments about it in the past. I would like to know if it's his intention to put those elements into the IRPA in this session in order to bring our Act into line.

Mr. Chairman, also in vote 5, the Human Rights Commission, it's my understanding, made an interesting statement to the minister about pay equity, about the need to do a study, and I think they asked for a very modest amount of \$25,000, something in that order, to do a study on pay equity. Now, on the one hand, I'm not sure why we need another study. There are certainly enough going on. I have Nova Scotia's new legislation; I'm sure the minister has availed himself of that as well. There have been many, many studies on this issue. There are many moderately different techniques available to us. Two parties in the opposition have put Bills before this House in regard to it.

Here comes the Human Rights Commission, and they want to do a study. Now, one has to assume, Mr. Chairman, that they want to do a study because they've had inquiries, because they've had requests, because there is information that says that there are inequities. So I need to know from the minister, Mr. Chairman: is he going to do it, or is he even more prudently perhaps going to put the legislation in place? Is that his intent in disregarding their request? Is it his intent to legislate pay equity in this province; that is, equal pay for work of equal value? I think most of the provinces have started rather carefully with public service employees and then moved out over a number of years, when techniques have been perfected and modified, into business and industry. So I'd like his answer on that.

Mr. Chairman, I'm going to wind down here. [some applause]

ANHON. MEMBER: You have one person paying attention, Bettie.

MRS. HEWES: One person paying attention?

ANHON. MEMBER: Yeah, thumpers.

MRS. HEWES: Well, it's remarkable; it's really remarkable.

Mr. Chairman, I believe that this department should be bending its efforts towards creating an atmosphere of fairness and justice, and I would hope that that is their intent, that that's what they're about, that they are working to protect the process of collective bargaining that has served us very well, that they are working to protect employers and employees in non-unionized businesses as well as unionized businesses. But, Mr. Chairman, I regret that the legislation that's been provided to us really doesn't give me that kind of positive feeling, that kind of confidence that we're going to get it. I see very few indicators in the budget, even of those few things that I've mentioned, that point in that particular direction, that we are producing from this department a positive atmosphere for fairness and justice.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Hon. minister.

DR. REID: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Perhaps I can make a few comments in response to the questions that have been asked so far, not that there have been very many of them.

The Member for St Albert. There was a lot of rhetoric, but he was asking questions about where the funding was for all the failures of the system that he anticipates. Now, I'm aware of the fact that he is more interested in failures and fighting than he is in successful relationships. He's made that amply evident in comments both in this House and comments that have been quoted as his being the source of them outside the House. The situation is that in actual fact the budget of the department is aimed at success, not at failure. A fine example is when he asked how many dollars were allocated to treating Albertans unfairly. I can give him a very straightforward answer: none. There are, however, in various parts of the total budget of the department probably at a rough guess \$10 million to \$15 million allocated to achieving success.

The Member for Edmonton-Belmont. I did see him traveling around during the visits around the province. In fact, we more than once commented to each other that we were traveling a long way together and that we'd been at a lot of meetings together. I'm glad that he took that much interest in the communication process between Albertans and the committee. Although he says that he heard different things from the committee, I'm afraid the vote must be 9 to 1, and I'm not including myself, since the report of the committee was written by the committee members. Indeed, the final draft was polished up by one representative from the organized labour representatives on the committee, one from the management representatives, and one from the general public representatives. All of them had an interest in good English as well, which may account for the readability of the final report.

He did, however, ask some questions about communication. Perhaps I should give a clarification. The Communications budget in vote 1 is not the source of the funds that will be allocated to the enhancing of communication between employees and employers. Those moneys will be found in vote 2 and also in vote 4, under the Labour Relations Board. They will be found to be expended by the employment standards branch, where there is going to be an intensive effort to make sure that employers and employees are equally well informed on the provisions of the new legislation prior to the proclamation and subsequent to that, as an ongoing process.

Indeed, I'm sure the hon. Member for Edmonton-Belmont, since he listened so intently to the verbal presentations, although he didn't have the advantage of the written submissions that

were made to the committee, realized, listening to them and knowing the present Employment Standards Act and Labour Relations Act so well, that there is unfortunately — I don't know what adjective to describe it — an incredible lack of knowledge of the laws and regulations, both on the part of employees and on the part of employers in the province. It's for that reason that in both Bill 21 and Bill 22 there are provisions for notification. In Bill 21 there's provision for the posting of extracts from the statutes and from the regulations and for other items to be posted at the behest of an employment standards officer. But there are provisions for considerable concentration on education and communication in votes 2 and 4. In my initial remarks I'm fairly sure that both in relation to vote 2 and vote 4 I said that any additional funding and resources that might be considered to be necessary once the statutes are introduced and become the law of the province will be sought from the Treasury Board.

Mr. Chairman, listening carefully to the Member for Athabasca-Lac La Biche on the matter of fire prevention, he may not be aware that at Vermilion the province of Alberta runs an excellent training facility for municipal fire departments. [some applause] The Member for Vermilion-Viking was obviously listening. There is an allocation for increasing the capabilities of the facility, which has been growing over the years, and indeed the Minister of the Environment in his capacity as minister responsible for Public Safety Services and I have had conversations about the integration of responsibilities under PSS, fire training in relation to dangerous goods, with the responsibilities that I have in relation to the fire inspector's office.

The rest of the fire prevention matters that the member mentioned are, of course, municipal responsibilities. Indeed, there is a very large amount of discretionary grants made by this government to municipalities, and it's up to the municipalities to decide what their priorities are. The member mentioned the excellent equipment that is available in the improvement districts. One has to remember that many of the improvement districts in the province are now essentially self-sufficient financially, and as is the case in improvement district 14 in my own constituency, they decided to allocate funds from the debt reduction program of eight years ago, and from subsequent . . .

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Excuse me, hon. minister. I wonder if we could have order in the committee.

DR. REID: It must be the opposition not paying attention.

I do know that in improvement district 14 the improvement district advisory council decided to spend a significant percentage of their moneys from the debt reduction program and other moneys in building fire halls in the hamlets around the improvement district and in equipping them with up-to-date machinery. However, when one gets to the completely self-governing counties, cities, and towns, I think he should perhaps speak to the councils of those jurisdictions.

He did mention the item of educating small businesspeople and informing them of the laws and regulations. I did mention that in response to remarks by the Member for Edmonton-Belmont, but I will repeat them. There is a considerable concentration in the new labour legislation on that type of thing, and I mentioned before the unfortunate ignorance, both of employers and employees in some cases, of the current legislation. We will make sure that they are well informed in all cases on the new legislation.

The comments of the Member for Athabasca-Lac La Biche

on tolerance and understanding. Perhaps I should emphasize to him that at my very first meeting with the Human Rights Commission I spoke to them and indicated to them that I was very much interested in them increasing their education efforts in the province. They have done so to a remarkable degree. In fact, the number of education events that they have taken part in has doubled in the last three years to some 440, and at the same time there has been a drop of more than 25 percent in the number of complaints received. So it would appear that the education effort has been worth while. I did mention it in my initial remarks, but there is the statistical evidence of the increased effort and the beneficial results of it.

The matter of involving mental disability in the Individual's Rights Protection Act I mentioned in my initial remarks, and that may, of course, produce some additional complaints once it is instituted until people get used to the parameters, the fact of reasonableness, and of course bona fide employment requirements.

The Member for Calgary-North West asked a fairly specific question regarding the employment of women in the public service. It's interesting to note that in the various categories in the public service there are only three of those categories where the percentage of women hired to fill vacancies is less than the percentage of women applicants. In other words, of the total vacancies that occur, about 48 percent of the applicants are women but about 57 percent of those hired are women. So in other words, there is a conscious effort to involve women in joining the permanent work force of the public service.

In addition, the hon. member mentioned some specific votes that he would like some additional information on. I can tell him that in relation to vote 4, of the increase that he was discussing there, about \$165,000 is related to work that is starting already to do with the implementation of the new labour legislation. I appreciated the hon. member's remarks about the efforts we have gone to, both in the Department of Labour and in the personnel administration office, to do as well with less, and the efforts of the department personnel. I think it was nice for them to realize that the Member for Calgary-North West appreciated those efforts.

I think from the questions that were put by the Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar, Mr. Chairman, that perhaps she was not here for my initial remarks. But in relation to her questions about the vote 3 reduction and the vote 4 increase, perhaps if she consults tomorrow's *Hansard* she will see the answers there.

I did mention already the matter of introducing mental disability under the Individual's Rights Protection Act. I did indeed get a recommendation from the Human Rights Commission after they had completed the public meetings that I asked them to undertake. That recommendation was that mental disability should be included under the Individual's Rights Protection Act. The process is, of course, fairly protracted. The required legislation is taking its way through the system, and I do hope to introduce it during the current session of the Legislature.

The only other comments I have in relation to what is referred to as pay equity or equal pay for work of presumably equal value — the matter of women's earnings in the work force has been discussed at some length. It is known that there are many factors involved in the so-called wage gap of 30 to 35 percent, and there have been many studies done already as to the various factors that are included. It has been estimated by some that perhaps 10 percent of the wage gap is related to true discrimination, and of course it's unfortunate if there is any percentage related to that factor. But there are obviously career

choices that are involved. The responsibility of the government, and it has been emphasized in the past, has been to try and have equal access to training of all types, equal access to hiring for all jobs, equal access to promotions within the system of any employer.

Indeed, I did make some remarks about the efforts of the provincial government, not in relation to the Labour department but as an employer through the personnel administration office. There are now statistical indications that those efforts are indeed being successful, and the levels from which we draw our management personnel show very significant increases in the number of women in those positions. It is, however, to some extent a matter for the individual employer, and unfortunately the breaks that women do tend to take from their employment related to their very valid family responsibilities and functions do tend to decrease their chances of promotion at the same rate as their male counterparts. I think we all realize that, and I don't think that women expect anything other than those effects of the interruptions.

The only other comment that I have really at the moment is that there was obviously some misunderstanding on the part of the Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar. It was never the intention for Bill 60 to be taken through in the form it was introduced. It was really the equivalent, in the Westminster system, of a white paper so that we would get the input to it. We did get very considerable input, and we listened to it and very carefully considered it in the changes that were made to Bills 21 and 22, which are the successor legislation.

Without getting into debate on those two Bills excessively, Mr. Chairman, several members brought up the matter of the section 81 provisions. I can assure members that the government has no intention of writing legislation which runs counter to the Charter. I have said it; the Premier has said it. Indeed, we have invited amendments by the opposition at the time of committee study of that Bill, and perhaps we can debate those issues at that time.

Thank you.

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Chairman, in view of this most important day in the history of the Alberta Legislative Assembly and the lateness of the hour, I would move that the committee rise, report progress, and beg leave to sit again.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: It's been moved by the Acting Government House Leader that the committee do rise and report. All those in favour, please say aye.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Opposed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: No.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The vote is carried.

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

[Eight minutes having elapsed, the House divided]

For the motion:

Ady	Fischer	Osterman
Alger	Getty	Pengelly

Betkowski	Hyland	Reid
Bogle	Johnston	Russell
Brassard	Jonson	Schumacher
Cassin	Kowalski	Stevens
Clegg	McClellan	Trynchy
Cripps	Moore, R.	West
Day	Musgrove	Young
Downey	Oldring	Zarusky
Drobot		

Against the motion:

Fox	Piquette	Strong
Hewes	Roberts	Wright
McEachern	Sigurdson	

Totals	Ayes - 31	Noes - 8
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[Motion carried]

[Mr. Musgreave in the Chair]

MR. ACTING DEPUTY SPEAKER: The committee will now rise and report.

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

MR. ACTING DEPUTY SPEAKER: Does the Assembly agree with the report and the request for leave to sit again?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: No.

MR. ACTING DEPUTY SPEAKER: The motion is carried.

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

[Eight minutes having elapsed, the House divided]

For the motion:

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Totals	Ayes - 31	Noes - 8
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[Motion carried]

[At 10:27 p.m. the House adjourned to Friday at 10 a.m.]