

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ALBERTA**

Title: **Thursday, June 29, 1989 8:00 p.m.**

Date: 89/06/29

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

head: **COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY**

[Mr. Schumacher in the Chair]

MR. CHAIRMAN: If the members of the committee could take their places so the committee could come to order. It's now 8 p.m.

head: **Main Estimates 1989-90**

**Executive Council**

MR. CHAIRMAN: We have the estimates for Executive Council this evening, which begin at page 161 of the main book, and the elements are to be found on page 63 of the elements book.

The hon. Premier will be introducing the estimates and is responsible for vote 1. The hon. Member for Grande Prairie will be answering questions with regard to vote 2, the Northern Alberta Development Council. The Minister of Energy will be answering for vote 3, the Energy Resources Conservation Board. The hon. Minister of Labour is here to respond to concerns on women's issues in vote 4. Vote 5: the hon. Member for Cypress-Redcliff is here to respond with regard to the Water Resources Commission. The hon. Premier will answer questions concerning vote 6 as it relates to Public Safety Services and the Public Affairs Bureau. Vote 7 is the responsibility of the hon. Attorney General; that's the Public Service Employee Relations Board. The hon. Minister of Education will answer for vote 11, the Premier's Council on the Status of Persons with Disabilities. The hon. Minister of Family and Social Services will take questions as notice on behalf of the hon. Minister of Occupational Health and Safety, who is unable to be here. Of course, the Minister of Family and Social Services and the associate minister will be responding in respect to vote 14, the Premier's Council in Support of Alberta Families.

I think I've covered the general gamut of what's on the menu tonight. With that, I'll recognize the hon. Premier to introduce the estimates.

MR. GETTY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd just like to advise the committee that any ministers who are not here, if they have questions that I am unable to answer, I will get it for the committee and provide it to them during the course of estimates as quickly as possible.

Mr. Chairman, in looking ahead at challenges facing the government that members may wish to ask questions about or comment on, I would say that probably the biggest challenge that faces us in the coming year will be to continue to build the Alberta economy on a diversified, broadened economic strength basis, continue to work on providing the best health and education system that's possible to be provided, and make sure that as a caring government we help those who are unable to help themselves.

I think, Mr. Chairman, probably the most dramatic change that is going on in our province right now is in this area of diversification and broadening of our economic base. It's some-

thing we set out to do. It was virtually mandated by the recession that hit this province when both energy and agriculture went down at the same time. We were determined then -- and I know members of the House felt strongly, both in opposition parties and in government -- that we had to diversify the economy. We've set out to do it. It's something that I've described as a fistfight, and it is. At times people who talk about diversification back away from the actual commitment to making it happen. We've been determined as a government not to do this. Frankly, in a way that was one of the issues that popped up prior to the Western Premiers' Conference and getting some attention in the media, at least, where other provinces kind of drew back a bit at the aggressive nature of Alberta's diversification efforts. Well, we make no apologies for those diversification efforts, Mr. Chairman. I consider, with my responsibility of chairing cabinet and the priorities committee of cabinet as well, that one of the most pressing commitments we have is to make sure that that diversification promise is carried out.

Hon. members know that beyond our borders we have been dealing with the federal government on various matters, but particularly this matter of high interest rates has been one that we feel strongly about. We believe the federal government is wrong. The Bank of Canada is wrong in its current high interest rate policy, and we're doing everything possible to muster the attention of the public and other governments on this policy which is wrong for Canada. Hon. members need only look at what this province has been able to achieve in the last several years, which is to turn around a damaged economy, a \$3.5 billion deficit and high unemployment, and start to get growth and confidence going again in our province, and realize the one thing that could stop, could frustrate those efforts would be high interest rates breaking confidence and once again causing small businesses to no longer employ people and expand as they're doing now and start to take the edge off the growth that is starting to flow across this province. Therefore, I see on a beyond our borders look the continued threat of high interest rates as an extremely important issue for this province.

Members know that we've made, at least as a provincial government, a breakthrough in the area of negotiations with native people. We have been able to resolve the land base with the Lubicon Band, which has been one of the long-standing irritants in native matters within Alberta. I'm looking forward to seeing the final resolution of that band settlement with the Lubicon Band in this coming year. I hope we have the goodwill from the federal government and the co-operation of the band in being able to make that happen.

Just recently another breakthrough was the agreement in principle with the Metis people. We'll be able to sign an agreement in principle on Saturday in Kikino, celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Metis settlements, and I'm looking forward to that, a very historical moment. I'm looking forward, too, to seeing the Metis people on the settlements move through this transition period until they can become independent and able to move fully into the mainstream of public and economic life in Alberta and Canada.

The other matter which stands before us on an interprovincial or national basis is the matter of Senate reform and a reform of the Constitution. There has been some discussion today in the House about constitutional reform and the importance of constitutional reform to the people of Alberta and the fact that constitutional reform will unlock the opportunity to reform the Senate, the reform of the Senate being something that we think

this nation has to have. We've been working very hard at convincing other parts of the country of the importance of reforming the Senate. I think we're making a breakthrough there and that if we can put together the constitutional working arrangements where we can concentrate on Senate reform, we will have done something that should lay the base for future co-operative growth and strength and a more solid foundation amongst the people of Canada.

I'm just touching on a few highlights, Mr. Chairman. I reviewed the *Hansard* from the estimates last year, and I noted that the members had general comments to make in a variety of areas and asked questions. I urge them to do that again tonight. I'll try to answer them. If I can't, I'll seek the answers from those people who are here in the members' gallery from my office, or from other ministers, and provide them to the House.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Mr. Premier.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Highlands.

MS BARRETT: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the opportunity to speak to these estimates and regret that the Leader of the Official Opposition some 30 days ago confirmed that he would be attending the Great Canadian Awards banquet and could not be here tonight. So I'll make comments on behalf of our caucus that will be general. There are several members, I believe, who will want to address specific votes from within the estimates of Executive Council.

The Premier mentioned in his opening remarks, Mr. Chairman, that Alberta is facing a fight on interest rates and a fistfight on diversifying our economy. Well, that's certainly true. I realize that he's prepared to answer questions, but one of the things we've not been able to get answered at other points in this House is why it is that this Premier did not raise the issue of the interest rates, that were very high even in October and November of 1988, and also did not fight the spectre of the value-added tax that we knew, all Canadians knew, would be imposed upon us if the federal Conservatives were returned to government.

They were returned, not with a majority of votes, but they did manage to get a majority of the seats. In the meantime, what we saw under the stewardship of this government was at least half a million dollars and possibly more of taxpayers' money being spent by the Alberta government to advertise through various means, including commercial television, radio, and newsprint outlets as well as door-to-door delivery of print material, the Alberta Conservative government's position in support of the pending free trade agreement. Now, I challenge the Premier when he responds to explain how it is that it was justified that that sort of money was spent under his stewardship, taxpayers' money, to sponsor a public appeal to support the free trade agreement when his government knew very well that the same government, if re-elected, was going to impose on Alberta a value-added tax which is going to cripple the economies from one coast to the other in this country, and why they didn't fight the high interest rates, which at that time were as high or almost as high as they are right now, Mr. Chairman.

The fact of the matter is -- I hear Conservative ministers get up and talk about the inflationary effects of the interest rates and the value-added tax, but where was the action when it could have counted? I can assure you, because I campaigned with him, that the Leader of the Official Opposition was out in minus

40 temperatures with written material to hand out at the doors when we went door-knocking during the federal election. We didn't run a single-issue campaign in Edmonton East or anywhere in Alberta or Canada; we talked about the other issues that people, we believed, wanted to hear about. Sure enough, in the riding that I worked in, Edmonton East, the good people there decided to not vote Conservative on the basis of the information that we brought to their door, Mr. Chairman.

Now, the Premier's just returned from a two and a half day conference with western Premiers, and I understand there's a major PR effort to gloss things over. But the fact remains that the federal government will, if necessary and if the Alberta government doesn't come through with stronger mechanisms and more accountable mechanisms, for the environmental impact hearing processes, impose its own processes upon Alberta. I think that points not to the federal government imposing, necessarily, on a jurisdiction where it's not welcome; it points, more importantly and where it counts on the ground, to a process that's been developed in Alberta that does not meet the needs either of the long-term implications for the environment of certain projects under consideration or the needs of people, who have a right to be heard, Mr. Chairman.

The Premier's talked about the difficulty we'll face in our economy, and that is certainly true. But one of the things we would have expected during the recent provincial election, knowing that the federal government was contemplating cuts at that time to certain transfer payment programs such as advanced education and hospitals, was to go and fight for our fair share. Instead, what we saw the Premier do during the provincial campaign is wing his way down to Ottawa after showing the media his fists up, his dukes up. He was going to go and fight for Alberta. He came back a day and a half later and said to Alberta, "I went to Ottawa to fight against the high interest rates, and I guess I lost, so I figured that what we'll do is we'll use the taxpayers' money to subsidize the profits of the banks instead," and ran that as an election campaign promise. Well, it's one of the few promises, as far as I can see, that hasn't been broken, but the fact of the matter is that that's no way to go and fight Ottawa over an issue like interest rates. Those people, and John Crow in particular, should be told to conform to a reasonable political/economic terrain or get out of the kitchen if he can't do his job. One person with the sanction of the federal Finance minister, as far as I can see, is practically single handedly ruining our economy and the outlook for its future.

Another thing the Premier didn't mention in his opening comments is what he plans to do to help rebalance the unfair tax system that he has overseen for the last three and a half years. Practically every year when tax changes are imposed, the taxes are always imposed on ordinary people, and there's almost never a corresponding increase for the corporate sector. Moreover, there is the issue, as the colleague for Calgary-Forest Lawn often mentions, that while we take in money, \$3 billion-odd a year in royalty payments for the oil, particularly oil, and gas that is owned by all Albertans, we -- I should say "they," the government -- proceed on an annual basis to hand back \$2 billion or more of that to those very players, many of whom are very large players and don't need that form of incentive. We in Alberta face tax increases basically to subsidize that program.

When is the Premier going to realize that fair taxation is not an esoteric issue? It is not one that is meant to be dealt with as a statesman or any other fancy description you might want to apply. It's a grass-roots issue that affects people, and it affects

their spending power. If you want to talk about improving the nature of our economy, try putting a little more money into the consumers' wallets, and believe it or not, they'll do the remarkable thing of spending it, which will increase the velocity of the circulation of money, which in turn generates wealth. Now, that is pretty basic information. I don't understand why it is that we don't have a government headed by a Premier who wants to invoke that sort of economic stimulation when it's so clear that it works.

I understand that the Premier's fallen in love with rural Alberta, Mr. Chairman, and that's good. But I wonder if he's got any plans to take care of a problem that his own government identified last year, 1988, in a document called *Caring & Responsibility: A Statement of Social Policy for Alberta*, in which it is identified that the rural population of Alberta is predicted to decline by the end of this century, which isn't that far away -- it's 1989 already, so 11 years from now -- by a net amount of 92,000 people. Now, if you're in love with rural Alberta, what are your plans to hold on to rural Alberta without giving it away to the mega corporate sector that runs corporate farms that employs people only on a seasonal basis and usually, I would add, at a very minimal rate, and then sends them back into the cities to starve or go on unemployment insurance or social allowance during the winter? If you love rural Alberta, come up with policies that are going to keep people in rural Alberta so that they can be a self-sustaining economy as they have been in the past and as they should be in the future under proper political direction.

Now, the Premier's been one to announce certain commissions and councils during the last couple of years as an attempt to resolve conflicts between his government and the public at large; for example, the Premier's Council on the Status of Persons with Disabilities. Well, I looked at some information that I got recently from the Municipal Affairs minister, and I want to tell you that what I have from the minister's office says, under an analysis of housing units of various descriptions in progress or planned during this year -- under the handicapped housing it says, "dot, dot, dot in progress and dot, dot, dot planned." Now, dot, dot, dot means nothing. You see, they really are dots. It means zip. Nothing is there. Now, I don't mind ultimately authorizing expenditures for certain councils and commissions, but one is forced to say: what do they do aside from talk? If the government is not going to act upon the obvious and real needs of the people that are meant to be served by these councils and commissions, then what's the point, I ask, and I'd be interested in a response from the Premier on that point.

Now, today in question period, as with yesterday, the issue of poverty arose, and I think that I would like to conclude my remarks on this point, because the Premier has uttered during the last two years a new emphasis, his desire to see the family become an important unit, a reintegrated unit, whatever pie-in-the-sky unit. Well, I ask the Premier: if that's the case, then why is that we have 93,000 children living in poverty in Alberta, and what are his plans? This is the Premier, the man who is responsible for all of the other ministers within his cabinet. We haven't gotten any answers from the Minister of Family and Social Services. Perhaps we should go to the associate minister, and we might get some answers. But I would like to get some answers directly out of the Premier himself. I mean, what are the plans? If we've got a province that is facing what I believe to be a condition of stagflation -- that is, no or low economic growth with inflation being imposed on us by a new value-

added tax to come into effect next year, imposed by the federal government, and high interest rates imposed by the federal government and an environment where the job creation is almost exclusively in the low-paying sector, the growth occupations being clerical, sales, waiting tables, et cetera -- what is this Premier going to do to work towards the elimination of poverty in Alberta? I would argue that it's going to be a growing fact again, not a declining fact. If there's one issue that will tear a family apart time and again, it is poverty. I lived in an environment of poverty as a youngster, and we weren't as poor as a lot of our neighbors, I can tell you. It ripped those families apart. I would say that that's the number one area to target when you want to talk about the family.

So I would ask the Premier to respond to these concerns and state where it is that he believes he's bringing this government, where he's directing it to address all of these problems in a concerted and dovetailed way so that we're not getting one announcement one day, another one, unrelated, the next day, and a third one the day after that. I think Albertans deserve a better, more cohesive series of policies from this government and some substance to the concept of "we want to save the family." If you want to save the family, let's start talking about eroding the basis of poverty, treating people fairly -- why not start with treating women fairly, for instance? -- and have policies so that people can earn enough income so that they're not living in poverty.

I know that there are a number of other members in the Assembly wishing to make comments on various other votes. I'll leave those comments with respect to the Premier's budget and turn the floor over to the others.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

MRS. HEWES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I have comments about votes 1, 4, 10, and 14. You're not taking them in order, are you? I can speak on all of them? Thank you, sir.

Mr. Chairman, just a few brief remarks on vote 1 to express my dismay at the Premier's insistence on support for Meech Lake as it is. I believe this is an unfortunate position on his behalf, and I think it bears second and third and perhaps more thoughts. I think it's time for rethinking of where we are vis-à-vis this most important document, and I would have hoped that his opportunity to discuss the matter with other western Premiers in Camrose this week would have given him some sense of that and that he would have perhaps taken some initiative to do it on his own.

Mr. Chairman, there have been a lot of comments expressed in this House about Meech Lake. I see it flawed on many, many fronts, not simply on those that have been discussed here. This afternoon I was dismayed when the Premier did not wish to describe to us exactly what his thoughts were about a distinct society, because I think we all need to be very sure of what we mean by that. I see flaws in the amendment relative to immigration, to the suggestions for change in the judiciary. I see major flaws in national social programs and how national objectives will or will not be described and will or will not be missing. I see difficulties in enshrining in an amendment to our Canadian Constitution a first ministers' meeting with agenda items but with no limitations on what the mandate of those meetings will be. I see great flaws relative to the potential to ever reach unanimity on such things as the Senate or the entrance into our

Canadian Constitution of the territories.

I see real dangers in the Charter of Rights being attacked. I believe section 16 was hastily written, should not be there in the amendment, and I would hope that our Premier along with other western Premiers will have the courage and the honesty and the straightforwardness to look again at the long-range consequences of this particular constitutional amendment for Alberta and for Canada. Like the Premier I want to see Canada with Alberta in its Constitution and with Quebec in its Constitution, and I think these flaws need to be addressed, Mr. Chairman, and need to be addressed now. Hopefully, our Premier will take these comments as they are meant, with sincerity, and will understand that when I suggest that it's time for an amendment that that requires some humility, which I respect, that perhaps we have been more hasty than we should have been.

Mr. Chairman, I want to comment on vote 4, the section relative to women's issues. The Women's Secretariat budget is up by 38.6 percent, an interesting increase, and I'll be interested to hear the minister responsible's comments as to what we as Alberta citizens and Alberta women can expect to achieve as a result of that. This particular secretariat was established in '84 "to assist the Government to better respond to the wide range of women's issues in the Province." Now, in five years the secretariat has quite a few things under its belt and has accomplished a number of things, a number of publications. Many of them, however, I note from a list that I have, that I'll be glad to table with you, are simply updates of some that date back to 1976. They are, of course, important pieces of information for women of the province, but they don't give me any tremendous sense of the significance or importance of the secretariat. I have never seen the regulations that in fact give substance to the legislation for the secretariat, and I would be interested, if they exist, if perhaps they could be tabled as well in the House.

I'm interested in and I'd like to hear the minister's comments about what it is the secretariat has been busying itself with over the last few years and why we have not heard any commentary from the secretariat, if this is appropriate, on a number of major issues that I believe affect women, such as that I've just been talking about, Mr. Chairman, Meech Lake, which I believe could have a dramatic effect on women in that section 16 that doesn't embrace all of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

The secretariat has been curiously silent on such issues as pay equity, affirmative action, family planning, reproductive health, women's health care -- the disorders and diseases that are most peculiar to women: anorexia, bulimia, women's cancers, and so on -- education and training opportunities for women, the impact of free trade on female dominated occupations, family violence, sexual assault, gender imbalance in upper management within the public service, lack of female representation among Provincial Court judges, part-time employment -- mostly occupied by women -- women and poverty, homemakers' pensions. The list is endless. But I have not heard from the Women's Secretariat. I would like to hear from the minister about where the Women's Secretariat has been effective in raising the consciousness of the legislators of this province, who have not yet conspicuously in any way, shape, or form created legislation that refers or relates to these issues of great significance to the women of this province.

Mr. Chairman, the Women's Secretariat is supposed to provide advice to government departments and assist in the preparation of new proposals as well as conducting studies and preparing research. That's from their own information brief. I

need to know exactly how that has occurred, because I have not seen the evidence of it, nor have the women of the province seen the evidence of it. If it is there, then it's not working, because apparently the legislators are not paying attention to the statements from the secretariat.

I'd like to know, Mr. Chairman, and these budget documents give us nothing. The Women's Secretariat is not required to present an annual report and evidently does not, so I'd like to know -- because I'm sure they're hardworking people -- what it is they are doing, how many significant interventions they have made in the development of legislation in the province, how many and the kinds of inquiries they are getting from women and women's organizations, whether or not they are doing seminars and workshops for women of the province to help them in their work, and whether or not these have been effective. I'd like to know, Mr. Chairman, because I'd be interested, as would many women, why they don't produce an annual report. I think it would be important to see it.

The secretariat, according to my information on the budget, is given \$50,000 to disburse as grants. I'm sure these are important dispersals, but I have not been able to determine where the funds were spent and what the effective use of them was. I think it's important that we know that.

If I can turn to the Advisory Council on Women's Issues: 4.2, the second item under vote 4. This council has had a rocky road over a number of years, and they've produced a number of reports with some very good recommendations. My major concern is that these recommendations have not received the kind of attention that I think the women of Alberta would have liked from the minister and the cabinet. We have not seen them effectively develop programs or legislation as a result of some of the very excellent recommendations. To be sure, Mr. Chairman, we are now hearing, several years subsequent to the recommendations, statements that we are going to see, perhaps in the fall if we are fortunate, changed standards in child care. These are recommendations that have come from the secretariat some many months back and, I think, were well researched and developed by the secretariat and should have been acted on.

Mr. Chairman, I have spoken at length in this House about the absence of autonomy in the secretariat. I beg your pardon, Mr. Chairman. I'm using the wrong terminology: in the Advisory Council on Women's Issues. I think that is still a great handicap to the council. The minister and the cabinet have not seen fit to change the legislation, but I would hope that they will in the months ahead pay more serious attention to some of the very excellent recommendations that the advisory council have made. Otherwise, I think the women of Alberta, with myself included, will continue to say, "Why are we bothering to have one?" These are volunteers who work very hard, put a tremendous amount of energy into their activities and into their study and research.

I'm grateful to see an increase in the amount that has been allocated to the Advisory Council on Women's Issues. I hope this will allow them to conduct more in-depth research, Mr. Chairman, into some of the very important items that they have been studying.

The advisory council has in recent weeks indicated that they are going to be studying pay equity. Now, last year we had another department of the government ask for funds to study pay equity. This was denied. Then we had a curious document, a dialogue done by the secretariat. I have it here someplace, Mr. Chairman. I've never really been able to understand why we

did it or what the consequences of that particular piece of action research were, what it was intended to achieve. But among other things it did comment on pay equity, and we now understand from the women's advisory council that they're going to be studying this same subject. Now, it's curious to me that their study is not going to consider equal pay for work of equal value. It seems to me that with the kinds of things that are happening across the rest of the nation, we owe this to the citizens of Alberta, if the study is going to be conducted, to make it comprehensive in this fashion. I simply fail to comprehend why the hesitation is there, and I would hope that the minister will tell us tonight that it's her intention to request that the study be extended to a far more comprehensive mandate: to study equal pay for work of equal value. I don't believe, if it doesn't, that the study will in fact result in any real improvement to the wage disparity in Alberta, and this has been demonstrated over and over again.

Mr. Chairman, I'd like to know from the minister why her suggestions -- and I've been pleased to hear them -- of a study regarding a homemakers' pension have not been pursued by the women's advisory council. Hopefully she will be requesting that they pursue this most important subject that the women of Alberta are waiting for.

Mr. Chairman, there have been no particular comments from the council or from the minister regarding the lack of female representation on government-appointed boards or those boards and commissions and agencies that are business related where the government has influence or opportunities to make appointments. I would hope that we see some change there.

The total vote for the Women's Secretariat and the advisory council is \$1,058,665, but we don't see a great deal of evidence that the taxpayers and Alberta women are really getting the kind of value they had hoped for from this investment, in the sense that the work that's being done produces anything in the way of significant results and change in the circumstances that face the women of Alberta. The secretariat lacks accountability -- no annual reports and so on -- and I believe we need better information there. As for the advisory council, I think the problem there is lack of action on the part of the government towards the recommendations that the council has been making.

I had some comments on vote 10. Vote 10 is the Premier's Commission on Future Health Care for Albertans. We all look forward to the results of this. My only concern here is the pre-emptory move on the part of the minister to introduce a new health Act, with some very significant consequences in the health Act, before the Hyndman commission on Future Health Care for Albertans has been tabled in the House. I believe those two items are in the wrong sequence, and I would have liked to see Mr. Hyndman's results, even in a summary form, in advance of taking those steps to change how we approach health care in Alberta. I look forward to that report. I've read with interest the kinds of statements in their summary report from the Hyndman commission and those reports that the people of Alberta have made to them, and I expect we'll be seeing some quite dramatic recommendations from the Hyndman commission, Mr. Chairman, but I would have wished that the minister could wait in putting forward the health Bill until that commission is in, because I believe it could have some significant and dramatic affect on what we would have wanted to do in this House.

Mr. Chairman, I'm not going to comment on vote 11, the Premier's council on persons with disabilities. This council, it

seems to me, is really too new to make any effective remarks. I'm disappointed, as many Albertans are, that they have chosen to have some of their public meetings in private. I think that's unfortunate, but hopefully we will all benefit from their reports when they are made public.

Vote 14. What can I say? What can anybody say about this one? We simply don't know what it's about. This is a great puzzle to Albertans. We have here "No Sub-program," \$236,100. We've been told this is going to do a study. I suppose we can wait with anticipation for the results of that. But who knows? Mr. Chairman, I've spoken in this House about the many things that need to be done to help families, families who are experiencing real stress, families in poverty, families with violence and unemployment, family breakup, problems with child care, problems with abuse, problems with drug abuse. It appears that this concentration in support for Alberta families is going to go to families who are experiencing stress as the result of drug and alcohol abuse. Certainly that is a major problem, and I'm grateful that we're doing it. But I believe there are many, many other things that we should be putting our minds to. There are many means already at hand, many pieces of legislation and programs that this government has instituted that need to be supported, that need to be assisted, that need more resources to allow them to function to support Alberta families. I would hope the government puts their minds to that.

There is some cynicism in our communities about what this whole Premier's council in support of Alberta families will be doing. I would hope that the Premier and the minister tell us with all speed what the mandate is, what it is they anticipate from this council, because I believe Albertans are cynical about the commentary that has been made before. I think if there's anything we need to do, it's to restore confidence in the government's sincerity about supporting Alberta families. I think they can do that in many ways by supporting the programs we already have at hand.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. GETTY: I can see where the committee could have some problems with time and certain ministers responsible for very important responsibilities having an opportunity to really debate in the way that the members would like. Now, I could talk, and we will in the House often, on Meech Lake, free trade, interest rates. But I do appreciate that the hon. Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar has made a specific request and has a chance in committee to talk freely about the whole matter of women's issues. I don't see often the opportunity to do that except here in the estimates, and they come under the Executive Council. So if the committee agrees, and you agree, Mr. Chairman, I think it would be appropriate if the minister responsible for women's issues does respond to some of the specifics and general matters raised by the Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar.

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The hon. Minister of Labour.

MS McCOY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm proud to stand here this evening and have this opportunity to speak about women's issues and the leadership that our Premier has given on these issues. I would say, too, just to remind members of the Premier's opening comments, that he spoke at great length and eloquently about diversity in this province. Again he has led the

way in diversity in creating jobs in this province, which came about through helping farmers producing food and harvesting it and then processing it too, and in very difficult conditions, he helped the energy producers, and more than that he helped diversity in jobs by kick-starting an industry of producers who are growing trees and harvesting and also processing them -- another value-added industry.

Our Premier talked, too, about the diversity of people in this province. In Alberta today we certainly do have the most marvelous diversity of people. When we walk down Jasper Avenue or we're walking down Stephen Avenue mall, where I come from in Calgary, or we walk down the main street of High River or High Level, an incredible and exciting diversity of people is what we see. Among that diversity we see women. They are as diverse among themselves as the people of Alberta are in the general population. In the two years or so that I have had the privilege for being responsible for women's issues, I have met women from all walks of life. I've met homemakers who are from Britain and from Asia. I've met women who are doctors from El Salvador and from China too. I've met finishing carpenters and fire fighters and pilots. I've met such a wide diversity of women who hold such a wide diversity of opinion that I truly marvel at the fullness and richness of our life here in Alberta.

But it's quite true that not all women are experiencing the richness and fullness to the extent that they might. Many women are trapped. They're trapped by lack of education often enough. They're trapped by lack of opportunity often enough. It is those women that this government seeks to help. It is with the leadership of our Premier that we are succeeding in helping those women who need to seek out more education often enough and seek out the opportunities that we have.

We have two agencies, Mr. Chairman, in this government where we focus our efforts on women. One of them is the Women's Secretariat and one of them is the women's council. I've often described the two this way: the Women's Secretariat is our in-reach group, and the women's council is our outreach group. The Women's Secretariat are civil servants. They are the ones who are the change agents within government. They focus all of our attention on women's issues by co-ordinating the debate and the policy development and the implementation of programs across all of the departments. But the Women's Secretariat does not deliver the programs. If we're talking about health issues, as an example, the initiative, the program, is delivered through the Department of Health. I can mention, for example, one of the exciting new programs that we have there which has to do with the early detection of breast cancer, which is a leading cause of death among our women.

The Women's Secretariat has indeed been very busy in the last year. They have in fact been leading the co-ordination of development for the plan for action for women, which we will be releasing soon. They did help co-ordinate the Alberta dialogue on economic equity for women. The member opposite mentioned the Alberta dialogue on economic equity for women and said she couldn't understand it. Mr. Chairman, I understand why she could not understand it. The dialogue was a summary of views expressed to us by women in Alberta. We went out all over Alberta and we talked to women from every walk of life: a diversity of backgrounds, a diversity of geography, and a diversity of opinion. We listened to real Albertans. I can quite understand how the member opposite would not understand that. She's more used to listening to governments in Ontario and

picking up their ideas and slavishly following them instead of listening to Albertans here in this province.

One of the initiatives that the Women's Secretariat has developed, again co-ordinating the efforts of the departments of Education and Career Development and Employment, is a program that I am very proud of. It's called Stepping Stones. It's a role model program for junior high students. Women volunteer. Women in Alberta take their own time to go into school classes and speak to children and tell them what it is that they do. We've had pilots, we've had carpenters, we've had chiropractors, we've had women in nontraditional jobs taking their own personal time and going and speaking to junior high girls and boys and saying: "This is what I do. This is how I got here. These are the courses I had to take. This is how I balance my job with the rest of my life." It's a very effective program, and it will be going into even more schools this September.

The Women's Secretariat also headed up an interdepartmental committee studying new reproductive technologies. Again they have taken the lead in studying and will be taking the lead in developing policies and programs on that very sensitive and very delicate issue, new reproductive health strategies.

Mr. Chairman, I could go on and on and on about the secretariat, but in view of the time, let me run now to the women's council. The women's council has been in existence for three years, and as I say, it is our outreach group. It is an advisory council composed of 15 women, one of whom is the chair. The women's council has been very active and has brought forward many good recommendations. Those many recommendations have indeed been responded to, each and every one of them. We have in response to the women's council, for example, established a family planning clinic at the Royal Alexandra hospital in Edmonton. We did reinstate contraceptive counseling and sterilization procedures under the Alberta health care insurance plan. Again that was a recommendation of the council and the minister of the day. We did announce a \$1 million reproductive health strategy for Alberta to expand sexuality education and contraceptive counseling services in local health units, and we did establish three new clinics for sexually transmitted diseases: one in Fort McMurray, one in Red Deer, and one in Lethbridge. We did increase the minimum wage to \$4.50. We did amend the Employment Standards Code to introduce new provisions for maternity and adoption leaves, and domestic workers are also now entitled to those leaves. We have this year given additional support to the network of family shelters. In fact, since 1986 this Premier has led the way in doubling the funds that have been devoted to that cause.

We've taken new initiatives to combat family violence, again a recommendation of the women's council, and that will include measures to address cross-cultural needs such as information in a variety of languages, because we so very clearly recognize the diversity of peoples that we have in Alberta.

We have increased subsidies to low-income families whose children attend day care centres or family day homes. We've introduced training requirements for all staff working in day care centres, and those qualifications will be brought in.

I can carry on. We have pledged ourselves to establish a mechanism to review pension benefits for women aged 55 and over and to evaluate the feasibility of homemaker pensions. That is a commitment that is there and that we will be bringing forward.

We have, again recognizing the diversity of our peoples in Alberta, created a fact-finding task force on the recognition of

foreign credentials, and also we've undertaken an economic dialogue with native women through which they can share their priorities, concerns, opinions, and solutions regarding economic development.

Finally, we have also devoted more resources to the maintenance enforcement program, which will be of great assistance to many women in this province.

Mr. Chairman, one last thing I would mention. I have spoken in public and in this House on the question of the appointment of women to boards, agencies, commissions, and so forth. Again, under the leadership of our Premier we have increased the number of women who are appointed to such agencies by some 50 percent. We are still not as far along as we would like to be, as I have said, but with that increase and that trend, we will be there as soon as anyone could be. Talking about business oriented boards, commissions, and the like and women on them, I suppose the member opposite is recalling her own days as chair of CN, an appointment at that time. We will strive to bring more women on, but as I say and I've said it before, we do have women on important agencies such as the Alberta Opportunity Company; we have them, also, on the Agricultural Development Corporation; we have them elsewhere in important boards and commissions. We are increasing our number of appointments in that area.

I would say, Mr. Chairman, that a 32 percent increase in the budget devoted to women's issues through the Women's Secretariat and the women's council is a phenomenal increase, and again I attribute that leadership to this man sitting to my left, if I may say it that way, Mr. Premier. I'm proud to be working with him as we carry on helping the women in this province achieve the full richness and fullness which they so well deserve.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The hon. Associate Minister of Family and Social Services.

MR. WEISS: Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the opportunity to have some response following the remarks of the Minister of Labour. I don't know if they'd have that same input, because the gentleman is now to my right.

On behalf of my colleague the Minister of Family and Social Services, the Hon. John Oldring, it certainly is a pleasure to respond to some of the concerns and questions raised by the hon. members. I say "concerns and questions" because perhaps there would appear to be a little confusion. Maybe I could just go into a little bit of a dialogue on the status of the Premier's council in Support of Alberta families and some of the direction. The Premier's council in support of Alberta families is truly a most ambitious and significant endeavour in support of the family. In the Premier's own words, "It will be the breaking of new ground in this area." Now, admittedly many of these are unknown, but truly this is the start, and it is the intent to work with and reach out to Alberta families and assist them in their challenges. I believe it's just one part of the goal of this government to address the important issues such as alcohol and drug problems, problems with the disabled, along with family concerns and many of those which were just outlined by the Minister of Labour, who took the time to specifically outline some of the programs and the areas that they'll be working on.

I would like to inform the Assembly that the minister and I have met with many groups and individuals, and it is the intent of the minister to maintain an ongoing dialogue with all interest

groups. He is certainly receptive and encourages those groups to meet with him and will work with them.

Recently the minister and I attended a provincial ministers' meeting in Whitehorse, where one of the major topics for discussion was the family. Now, as a result of that particular meeting and conference, the minister is working on some new initiatives and will be taking them forward to the National Symposium on the Family to be held in Regina from July 11 to 14 next month. The amount of funds budgeted, some \$236,100 as noted, is really a small part in tackling some of the criteria as outlined in communiqué 6, which today was tabled by the Premier, in strengthening the family. A particular mention is given to the western Premiers' encouraging a full and extensive public participation at the National Symposium on the Family to be held in Regina, as I've indicated, from July 11 to 14, 1989. I would certainly encourage those who would be able to, to attend that particular symposium.

It was interesting to hear the remarks expressed from Edmonton-Highlands, and she referred to -- and I would like to try and quote, Mr. Chairman, as accurately as I can. She did say "family," "integrated," "pie-in-the-sky," and then tied it to poverty. That was in her dialogue about the family. Well, I'm not going to say that there isn't a relationship, but I certainly would like to say that that isn't the goal the overall Premier's council is working towards. Certainly poverty is a very major issue and a very major concern. I don't know how the hon. member could refer to it in the same light. Specifically, I could ask the question back in reverse: what level is poverty? Whose standards? Let's keep in mind that Family and Social Services provides a safety net for those in need, and that's the overall purpose in addressing those who are in need and who need care.

I would particularly like to emphasize the areas of support as mentioned today by the hon. minister. He indicated the areas of shelter, food, clothing, and health care: all areas which are very important to those, but it doesn't necessarily mean that one is in poverty in a true sense of poverty, because poverty would refer to other things, such as starvation and other areas, and that certainly isn't the case. It's a level of income or a standard that one is placing or imposing. I certainly don't know what that level is. I know there are very many families and people who can do with less and certainly show better judgment in the care and management of their funds and their resources. But it doesn't mean that they're in a state of poverty, as would be indicated by the hon. member and the Leader of the Opposition today.

It was interesting to hear the Leader of the Opposition today as well, Mr. Chairman and members of the Assembly, state that some -- I believe he indicated that some 14,000 families had increased to the level of poverty. Well, I find that very disheartening when he would refer to it that way, because I think his criticism should have been the other way. If the Department of Family and Social Services and this government would not have been responding to meet those needs to those people for the safety net they provide, then I would say there was due criticism. So it's an exact opposite. Thank God this government is caring and responding.

I certainly recognize and appreciate the Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar when she referred to some of the concerns, and I really, really appreciate what she's outlined, because I believe she does care, as all of us care. [interjections] And I'm sorry I can't hear myself speak -- for yourself as well, sir, if you don't mind.

This government is going to do something about the con-

cerns as indicated by the Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar, and to quote her, support programs in hand. There are many, many programs in hand, and I think as a government we have to meet those challenges to better deliver those programs and respond to show proper fiscal management. One area that I could refer to, and the member is very familiar with as well because of her past responsibilities as a member of city council, is in the area of the cultural/recreation grants, one I'm familiar with as my former area of responsibility. Some \$40 million goes back into families and to caring. That's just one area. Are we doing the right thing and managing it the right way?

There are many individual concerns that all of us here do care about. I'm not criticizing the members of the opposition. I'm saying we do care, and it's to that direction that we're going to work for in the leadership that the Premier's providing in establishing this council. I think that's the most important step.

The Lieutenant Governor will be hosting a major conference on the family February 21 and 22, 1990, in the Convention Centre. Those dates have been booked and the Convention Centre has been booked. I think it's going to be interesting to see and hear the people -- I'm hopeful when I say this -- from all over North America who will be here and listening and reacting to what will take place at that family conference. I know the Premier had people listening to him with open ears from all across Canada when he first introduced and talked about the family and the importance to tie it together.

So once again I believe that we're on a first here. It's a learning experience. I ask all hon. members to share their indulgence in working with us to make it successful. I believe we can, collectively and together. Government can't do it alone. I believe that there is a responsibility for others to work with too, and I'm sure we'll see them come on side. The kick-off, of course, will be the first annual Family Day to be held in February, the third Monday of the month. I think it's going to be significant. It will be very interesting, ladies and gentlemen, members of the Assembly, to see how many other provinces will follow suit. I predict that Alberta once again will have proven to be a leader. And that truly will be another first for our Premier.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member for Lesser Slave Lake.

MS CALAHASEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm really pleased to address the estimates tonight of the Executive Council. First I'd like to congratulate the Premier on his leadership and particularly in different areas which I would like to address.

One particular area is in dealing with native people, specifically with the Metis, regarding the negotiations that have taken place and the agreement in principle. I know that the Premier had little time to be able to deal with the people when they had their concerns, and he made the time. I think I'd like to congratulate him. As a native person, a person of native ancestry, I want to congratulate him in dealing with that particular issue and being able to come out with some agreement. I believe that he has been able to achieve something which has never been able to be achieved in this Legislature, and I think it merits a great deal of congratulations.

Another area which I feel merits mention is the fact that the Premier was willing to deal with land claims. I think this really tells us what kind of progressive leader we have and that he should be congratulated on that area. Because when we're looking at the Lubicon land claims and the Atikameg land claims, it

certainly has helped the native people to be able to deal with those particular issues and to be able to negotiate their land claims with the federal government. I think that's something that has to be addressed in terms of native people becoming self-sufficient. I believe that this is one way that native people can become self-sufficient, by being able to give them the ability to deal with some of the land claims issues, as well as some of the kinds of things that we have been able to do in this government.

I would like to also say that the Premier should continue to deal with native people in the airing way that he has been dealing with them, and to really encourage in any way possible that we should be able to give any kind of help in anything that comes up with native issues.

In addressing the poverty-stricken kind of people in terms of some of the ways that the Premier has been questioned on -- and particularly the Minister of Family and Social Services. When we're talking about poverty, it seems like my constituency, some of my people may fall into that particular area. And I think that we are trying to address that in the sense of economic diversification, particularly when we're looking at diversifying the economy. I think that the forestry and manufacturing and tourism projects which we are trying to initiate in the northern part of Alberta -- that this is a plus. I think that each time we have some initiatives in any of these areas, we should push for it and not fight against it, because it seems that's the only way that we're going to start addressing poverty and trying to deal with the problems that we have as families.

And when we're looking at the family situation, my area certainly merits a lot of looking at. Because when we're looking at the northern part of Alberta, the families in my area certainly need help; they certainly need permanent jobs. And not just jobs; we're talking about permanent jobs. When we're looking at the forestry initiatives, when we're looking at the tourism projects, when we're starting to look at manufacturing, these bring permanent jobs, which means that we will start addressing the poverty issue. I believe that this is the way that we have to go and that's the way to start stabilizing families. I would like to encourage the Premier that he continue to do so and continue to bring any kind of positive initiatives which will eliminate -- not totally; I know we'll never eliminate totally the poverty situation, but it certainly will help in my area.

Northern Alberta development: I certainly would like to say that the feedback I've been getting is that that particular element is certainly doing an excellent job. And I would like to see that continue and that we give a lot of support in that area, because they're dealing with specific concerns, particularly for northern Albertans. I'd like to see that support continue.

When we're talking about women's issues, I know that native people certainly have come forth and addressed some of the kinds of things they would like to be involved in, and particularly in women's issues. I know the women in the native world certainly play a major part in anything that happens in families, in jobs, in education, and that native people, particularly native women, keep continuing to be involved in any of the native issues and in women's issues. I know they have been considered, and it's nice to see all women being able to be put on different commissions, on different boards, to address female and women's issues.

Basically, I'd just like to say thank you very much to the Premier and to the Assembly for the support they have given to all these different areas and particularly to northern Alberta.



Thank you.

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

MS M. LAING: Thank you. I would like to just address two votes in these estimates; that is, votes 4 and 14.

In regard to vote 4, I would like to congratulate the minister on her recent appointments to the advisory council. I know that there are some excellent women who have been appointed, and I look forward to the kind of work that I am sure they will be doing. I would also say that it's good to see the increase in the budget to both the secretariat and to the council. But again, it is still only 1 percent of the budget to deal with issues that affect 52 percent of our population. And I think of the Racing Commission, which gets \$7 million.

The minister has spoken about the recommendations of the council and how in fact some of them have been acted on. We have heard about an increase in the minimum wage to \$4.50 an hour. My hon. colleague to the left of me said that one would only have to work 133 weeks in a year to earn the poverty level income for a family of four at this rate. I think that's something we should take note of.

We also have concerns that the council may make excellent recommendations, but then we look to the government's action. So no matter how effective these two bodies are, unless the government takes initiative and implements their recommendations, what good are they? It's just a way to drain off people's anger and hostility and frustration. I anxiously await, as other members of this Assembly and as the mothers and fathers of this province do, action on the recommendations for child care standards being implemented.

Another issue is the issue of family violence. It, again, has been addressed by this government, but we know that there is no funding for treatment programs for children who have witnessed family violence; there are waiting lists for children who have been victims of family violence, especially in cases of sexual abuse. We know that there needs to be ongoing support for women, mothers who have experienced family violence, and this includes counseling support as well as second-stage housing. We know there needs to be treatment for offenders, because it is only through this kind of intervention that we will prevent the ongoing violent behaviour. And we know that the funding for shelters has not yet been increased to 100 percent funding for operating costs alone, and this has been a request from the council on shelters for many years.

We also look to the needs of special groups of women, and immigrant women particularly. What action has been taken on training shelter workers and personnel to deal with the unique needs of women from other cultures who are particularly isolated, may not have English as a language in which they can communicate, may not be able to read the kind of literature that explains to them that they do not have to live in violent situations. We have yet to see effective action that will provide protection and care to women from these groups.

We have concerns about criminal justice intervention in the area of violence in the family, particularly in outlying and rural regions. We know from our phone calls that there are still problems. We know that there are issues for native women in the area of violence in the family, and we have heard reports of extremely high incidences of spousal abuse and child physical and sexual abuse. We have yet to see action that will truly im-

plement the kinds of programs and initiatives that are needed to address this issue in sensitive ways that do not violate the cultural experiences of these women.

We have seen no action on the call for a provincewide toll-free crisis line. It was also recommended by the Northern Alberta Development Council, and steadfastly we have heard in the past the Minister of Social Services -- I know we have a different minister now -- say that there would not be implementation of a provincewide toll-free line. But it is important that it be provincewide, because confidentiality is such an important issue in rural areas. It cannot be dismissed or ignored.

In the same vein, the council needs to address the needs of rural women, especially in regard to child care needs. Rural women work on and off the farm, and they need flexible, accessible child care. A major concern for families in the rural area is the accidental injury and death of children who have to accompany their parents into the workplace -- that is, on the farm -- because there is no accessible child care.

We need to address the other needs of immigrant women in terms of their isolation in the cities. We need to provide for them English as a Second Language training. It's often denied to them because they are not considered the heads of households, and they are sponsored immigrants. So we need to open up and make available to them this kind of training so they can truly take their place in society. The courses need to be flexible and accessible, with provision for child care. These women have spoken of the need to have aid in adjusting to life in a new culture and in a new society, in how to deal with the school system and how to get on the bus and how to shop, things that we may struggle with if we visit a foreign country. Immigrant women are the lowest of the low on the economic ladder. They're often marginalized in job ghettos with poor wages, no opportunity for advancement or training, including English language training. We know that the trade deal will seriously affect them through job dislocation, because they are not good candidates for retraining.

I have to applaud the fact that the council has addressed the issue of health and well-being of women, but we need more clinics, and we need a careful study -- and I think the minister may have committed herself to this -- on the new reproductive technologies. They've caused much grave concern, particularly in the area of the ethics of these technologies, as well as their impact on women.

I would also like to address the person-to-person dialogue that was sponsored by the Women's Secretariat. I think most women that are knowledgeable about women's issues in this province would say it was the biggest waste of money going. There isn't anything in there that we didn't already know and haven't known for the last 10 years. We need to address the issue of women's poverty, for it affects not only them but their children, in terms of their children's health and well-being, educational experience, and the kinds of lives that they will live as adults.

We need to look at the issue of part-time work and how it impacts on women and the whole issue of job creation at low rates of pay and jobs that do not have a future. I believe the major issue that must be addressed is the issue of pay equity. We cannot have an economy that flourishes on the backs of women. We have heard far and wide -- and I was again reading the Fraser Institute report on this issue today -- the horror stories about what pay equity would mean, that small business would go broke and there wouldn't be any jobs for women. Yet we

know that in countries and jurisdictions that have implemented pay equity legislation, this has not occurred. In some areas women even have more jobs. Certainly it hasn't discouraged women from going into nontraditional jobs, which is another thing we hear.

In the same vein, I would suggest that women going into nontraditional jobs, or encouraging them, is not a solution to women's poverty or pay inequity. Because the jobs that women have traditionally done, the work that they have traditionally done, is truly valuable work for this society. Without that work our society could not function. So what we have to do is to fairly value the work that women have traditionally done and the work that is primarily done by women at this time, and quit the nonsense of saying they should do the work that men have traditionally done, and that's the way they will receive economic status.

The council has made strong recommendations on widows' and homemakers' pensions. The widows' pension plan is blatantly discriminatory, and the Premier to this date has steadfastly refused to remedy this discrimination.

I would also take note of the number of boards that do not have adequate representation by women on those boards and appointments. I certainly welcome the minister's initiative to remedy that situation. It can't happen fast enough as far as the women of this province are concerned.

I would now like to turn to vote 14, the Premier's council in support of families. In looking at this council, the major question is: how is the family defined? Now, we hear fine, intellectual phrases about the diversity of families, but one has to question what is felt emotionally when one talks about families when establishing the policies. It is important to recognize that the demographics of families have truly changed. In the 1960s, while 65 percent of all Canadian families were the traditional family with mom at home and dad in the work force and 2.4 kids and all that goes with that, we now know that makes up only 13 percent of our families. And almost 13 percent of our families in this province are single-parent families. So when we make plans and policies for families, it's not good enough to think about, in our heads, the family with mom at home and dad in the work force and 2.4 kids and all that goes with it. Those policies have to be adjusted to take into account the other types of families, including two parents who are working in the work force families. That's the difference between talking about it rhetorically and intellectually and dealing with it emotionally and in a real way.

The first issue that I would address, and I would think if this council is going to truly look at legislation and policy in support of families, is the Family Day. Family Day will only benefit those families in which no member is employed in the retail sector. It's okay for the Premier and the ministers to say, "I'll be with my family," because this Assembly will not be sitting on Family Day, but not all families have that luxury. If one member of the family is employed in the retail sector, then that family will not be able to be together that day. So we want all families to be able to be together if that is their choice. We do not want some members of those families to be forced to work. And all too often the member of that family that is forced to work is the mother or the woman, because they are employed in the retail trade. So we have to say: what kind of a Family Day do you have when the mother has to be at work and cannot be with her family?

Another policy that I think should have been addressed in

terms of the impact on family is the new practice of allowing credit cards for liquor purchases. Certainly this may well have an impact on families if now one of the family members can take out the credit card and run the family into debt through purchase of liquor.

A major issue that needs to be addressed by this council is poverty. Unemployment, underemployment, and poverty are the major sources of stress in families these days. We need to look at providing choices for parents, including child care choices as well as supports for mothers in the home, including respite care.

We need to look at social assistance allowance guidelines and policies. One that I have spoken of for at least three years since I've come here, and long before that, was the social assistance policy that holds that the healthy mother of a healthy four-month-old infant is considered employable and should be in the paid labour force -- without a telephone, of course. This ignores the need for mother/child bonding in the early months, which we well know is a prerequisite for healthy personality development of the child. In addition, the local board of health recently released a report that talked about the importance of breast-feeding a baby. Well, you can't breast-feed a baby when you're at work. And the fact that a mother with a tiny infant can't have a telephone is beyond the pale. How else do you consult with a doctor without taking the child out, possibly putting the child's health at risk, to get medical care? So when the Premier talks about his support for families, I suggest that he treats these mothers and their children as second-class citizens.

We hear great paranoia about women exploiting the welfare system, but in fact a study held by the Ministry of Family and Social Services has proved that is not the case. It's an old mythology that hangs around.

This council needs also to address the issue of violence in the family. It's a problem that touches 10 to 15 percent of families, and surely must be a major concern.

Another question I would have is: will this council address the integration of the family in the workplace, a topic for discussion at the 1986 First Ministers' Conference? Will this council address itself to how labour legislation can be made responsive to the needs of workers and their families? Because families do not live in isolation. They live in a social, economical, and political context. We can't just focus on family itself: mom, dad, 2.4 kids, and all that goes with it. We have to look at the economic and social context in which that family exists, and if we do not address those issues, we can talk until we're blue in the face about what kind of strong families we will have, because we will not be addressing the issues that impact on these families.

If this council is truly to be supportive of families, it must address the issues of housing. Is there adequate, affordable housing for families? Is there an adequate social infrastructure, including education, health care, and recreation? Will that infrastructure be there to meet all the needs and aspirations of all families, including families with low incomes? User fees exclude them from many of these services both in terms of education and recreation. Will this council also look at families with children with special needs, including mental health needs? There is a tremendous dearth of resources for families who have children suffering from mental illness. Estimates are that 12 percent of Alberta children have mental health needs. It is estimated, then, that 50 percent of these 12,000 children who are in need of mental health services do not have access to the care

that they need.

If this council is concerned about families, they must also address the needs of the elderly and the care givers for those that are elderly. This council also needs to look at and address the impact on families of criminal and drug abuse behaviour of children, and particularly the need for programs for young offenders. Again we've seen the withdrawal of treatment programs for young offenders, and surely treatment, intervention, is the best form of prevention of long-term criminal behaviour.

We need support for families experiencing divorce. We need mediation and counseling services to be available, and again we've seen a cutback in the last three years of the mediation services available to families.

We need to focus on prevention programs, parenting courses, premarital courses, and support for people as they experience difficulties. It is important that we recognize that early and effective intervention is the best form of prevention. So I would ask the Premier and his council, if they are there to support and strengthen families, that they understand in their hearts the diversity of families and the diversity of the needs of the families in this province.

Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member for Red Deer-North.

MR. DAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My original intent tonight was to just briefly address some of the specific votes. Unfortunately, with some of the comments that have been coming from across the floor, I feel I really have to address some of those also, though I don't want it to be a rebuttal of the throne speech, which I've already done. I would like to say that the Premier is certainly to be commended for the leadership he's shown in so many of the areas that have been addressed tonight already. I want to touch on those in just a few minutes.

The Member for Edmonton-Highlands needs to face the fact -- and I've checked the following terms that I'm going to use, Mr. Chairman, to assure you that they are parliamentary language, though it may seem that they are not -- that either intentionally or otherwise, her statements tonight, and many evenings, are largely based on falsehood. They are misleading; they are full of misrepresentation . . .

MR. McEACHERN: Point of order, Mr. Chairman. The member should really be addressing the votes to the Premier, not rebutting other members in this Assembly. That is not what this particular debate is for. It is for the minister, the Premier in this case, to lay out some points and then answer the members in this House. It is not for him to stand up and see how close he can come to slandering every member of this Assembly with that kind of garbage. [interjections]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order please. Order please.  
The hon. Member for Vegreville.

MR. FOX: A point of order, if I might, Mr. Chairman. I regret that the hon. Member for Red Deer-North seems to like to do his research for speeches in the Assembly by wading through the phrases deemed barely parliamentary in *Beauchesne*. That's not the kind of research a member should do if he wants to make a legitimate contribution here. If he's got some points to make about the Premier's estimates, let him go ahead and make them. [interjections]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order please. The Chair would say that if debate is entered into from one side, that could engender debate from the other. I recognize the . . . [interjection]

Order please, hon. member. I have made a ruling on this, and I won't need to hear from you any further.

The hon. Member for Red Deer-North.

MR. DAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for some sound reasoning.

The Chair will notice, though *Hansard* will not be able to record, I am not raising my voice; I am talking in a very calm fashion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: We can't hear you.

MR. DAY: You can't hear me?

There's a very serious . . . [interjections]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order please, and you'll be able to hear him.

MR. DAY: Mr. Chairman, there's a very serious matter at stake, which the members opposite need to be aware of, and that is that when falsehoods are brought out in this Assembly, they need to be challenged; when misrepresentations are brought out, they need to be addressed; and when somebody is not telling the truth, they need to be exposed. That also can be found . . .

MR. McEACHERN: Get the facts. Never mind the accusations.

MR. DAY: Mr. Chairman, through the vehicle of the estimates, I am coming to the facts. I've already stated some of the facts . . . [interjections]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order please.

MR. DAY: . . . and I'm going to continue to state the facts . . .

MR. McEACHERN: Leave that on the garbage pile. Just talk the facts.

MR. DAY: . . . even though the truth is very unsettling to the members opposite.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Member for Edmonton-Kingsway, would you please keep order in the Chamber.

MR. DAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Member for Edmonton-Highlands talked about the Premier and this government not opposing the federal sales tax. I'd just like to read something into the record, and then leave that point.

You have to say for Alberta Premier Don Getty that he was in at the suit of what might well be the next battle for the heart of Canada's Confederation.

. . . Getty opposed right from the outset Ottawa's plan to levy a national consumption tax instead of the old manufacturers' sales tax.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order please. I believe the rules require

that you should identify the document you're reading from for the benefit of the members.

MR. DAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, I'm coming to that. I've got it right here. I'm going to read it to you.

Other Premiers made lukewarm sounds of approval, but Getty was left to carry the fight.

And the quotation from that source is not from a government researcher, not from a government MLA, but in fact from the *Calgary Herald* and a column by Mr. Gold. That is where that quotation is from.

So let's dispense with that falsehood right off the bat. I'd like to say that if I was coming out with falsehoods, misrepresentations, and not telling the truth, I hope I would have the jam to sit here and take the rebuttal and not depart. That's my only comment there.

We hear about corporate taxes not increasing. The plain truth, the facts, the black and white reality is that corporate taxes in Alberta in '87-88 were \$560 million; in the current year, \$650 million. That's an increase of 20 percent. So to say there's no increase is a falsehood, is misleading, is misrepresentation, and is not telling the truth. Now, not just in raw numbers, Mr. Chairman, but in the '87 budget, very clearly delineated here, corporate tax rates -- not raw dollars -- increased by 36 percent. Now, I get a little nervous saying that, because I don't want to scare businesses away from Alberta. But in fact that's printed in the throne speech; it's there in black and white. So when the members opposite say there's no raise in corporate tax dollars or the increase, they have the right to say that, but they need to know that they are coming out with a falsehood, that they are misleading, that it's a misrepresentation, and it's not telling the truth.

On women's issues. I'm glad that the minister responsible for women's issues has gone into very good detail on just some of the areas that we have moved on in terms of government initiatives in the area of women's issues, and I certainly won't take the time of this House to recount all of those. I would like to have on record, so that we understand the issue when the members opposite talk about this figure of women earning 63 percent of what men earn -- they need to know where that source . . .

MRS. HEWES: It's 65, Stockwell. Get it right.

MR. DAY: Sixty-five, 63 . . . Actually, the source came from the Green Paper on Pay Equity published by the Ontario government in 1983. Now, this is the green paper itself saying . . .

MS M. LAING: It comes from Stats Canada.

MR. DAY: Yes, that's correct -- saying these Statistics Canada figures in 1983 were four to five years old. This is the green paper that this 62 percent, actually, figure comes from. The green paper tells us that

    females are paid only 62 percent of what men are paid.

It then goes on to say

    that actual wage discrimination . . .

and what is true discrimination

    . . . accounts for five percent of that 38 percent differential.

The remaining differential is due to differences in hours worked, [which would be about] 16 per cent; education, experience and level of unionization.

So about 5 percent was accounted for. This is the green paper

that came out with the 62 percent figure that the people opposite always quote. Five percent is counted down to actual wage discrimination, and I'm glad the minister responsible for this area and our Minister of Labour and others are even working to eliminate that 5 percent.

I'd also like to address a question to the Premier on this point, since the members opposite hardly did at all; just a couple did. The Premier could certainly address this later, but in terms of the cabinet, the Executive Council, which is what we're talking about, when you look at the women in our Executive Council, there's a far greater representation of the women in our caucus in our Executive Council than of men. And there may be a problem of male discrimination there, but I'll leave that one to settle out. It shows that this Premier certainly has no hesitation in looking at individuals and looking at women and putting them in places of very senior decision-making in this province. And so he's to be commended for that.

In vote 12, under Occupational Health and Safety Services, to the minister responsible there. I support the thrust of the program which is explained on page 184, especially where it says:

    . . . to promote industry adoption of programs and activities to foster safe and healthy workplace environments.

The caution that I'd like to suggest to the minister -- when you look in the vote itself, there's some \$11 million to be voted. Nine million of that is in salaries and wages. I've no problem with that, but the minister needs to be aware that small business in the province has, number one, a desire for safety and to see it promoted, but also has a concern about adopting too many programs and too many activities at such a rate that they can't handle it within their own budgets. When I see the significant part of this budget being applied to salaries, and therefore inspectors and the people who are promoting the programs, just a word of caution that it be done in such a way that especially small business can accommodate. I might suggest to the minister even looking at ways in which funding in the year ahead from this particular vote could possibly be directed towards businesses to help them accommodate the safety services, the equipment, and even the personnel that are needed to put in place the very good safety programs.

Under vote 13, where we're looking at workers' compensation. As a suggestion, workers' compensation is like any other insurance program. The danger of any insurance program -- and we need workers' compensation; we need all insurance programs -- is that if we're not careful, it can in some cases lead to the very type of behaviour that we're trying to insure against. And so we need to be exercising caution and using the technology of the day that is available to really move in and ascertain injuries. I'm thinking mainly in the area of back injuries, which comprise the majority of workers' compensation claims. They're very hard to determine. The chiropractic industry has come up with advanced technology -- I'm thinking of the thermography developments they've made -- in which they're able to determine certain types of injuries that X rays, CAT scans, and other types of instruments cannot, in fact, determine. I would recommend to the minister that some of the technology that's available both to treat and to locate these types of injuries be looked at.

Just to close, to congratulate the Premier especially on the Premier's Commission on Future Health Care for Albertans, the Premier's Council on the Status of Persons with Disabilities, and also on the family initiatives. These are to be commended. Often governments are accused of only focusing on the economic

issues, and in fact, you can't have a strong economy without strong people. All of these commissions that I've just named under vote 10 and vote 11 are devoted to seeing strong people and strong families, and the Premier is to be commended for not just having the insight but for vigorously addressing it.

The Member for Edmonton-Avonmore talked about services for mentally disabled children as if they were nonexistent in the province under mental health. I'd like to share with the Chair a meeting that I attended in Red Deer just some weeks ago. It was a gathering of parents who have children with mental disabilities, and we were looking at how to better co-ordinate the many services in central Alberta. After some discussion, a lady from Ontario got up and said that her son of 18 years, who is severely mentally disabled -- they've been in Alberta one year, and her comment to all the parents there was, "You have no idea of the quality and the degree of programs you have here for your children." She said she was so thankful for what was available. So on these particular votes, which are addressing the needs of Albertans, I commend the Premier and the government for taking initiatives in these areas.

I'll leave the other questions to the ministers to respond to, either tonight or at some future date.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member for Lacombe.

MR. MOORE: Thanks, Mr. Chairman. I've listened with interest tonight to the various statements said around the House, and I took particular interest of the statements made by the hon. Member for Edmonton-Avonmore. I appreciate her outlining the concerns of Alberta's women, and I appreciate it because it only emphasizes what we have here tonight before us, because we address those concerns.

When I look at vote 14 and vote 4 -- if you just take a look at it -- it shows exactly what we're doing. We're out there addressing those concerns, and we're addressing them very well. We're giving the money to those people so that they can carry out the obligations given them. The Premier's Council in Support of Alberta Families: if you look at that vote, and that's what we should be discussing tonight -- we've been wide ranging, from free trade down -- we're discussing these votes. When you look at it, new money going in there. And I'm proud to say that our Premier is out there ahead of the Member for Edmonton-Avonmore already addressing the concerns before she even expressed them tonight.

When we look at vote 4, Co-ordination and and Advice Respecting Women's Issues: 32.4 percent increase. The hon. minister in charge of women's issues pointed that out. That is an excellent indication that this government is prepared to back up rhetoric with the money to carry out that job. And we will carry out that job, because we have that concern. We had it long before Edmonton-Avonmore did, and we are addressing it. I can assure you that we will look after the women of this province in a fair and just manner.

MS M. LAING: You haven't done it yet.

MR. MOORE: However, as usual, I take the comments like that with a grain of salt. I am sorry that we see somebody making political hay out of women in Alberta who I feel we are certainly supporting and promoting.

Now, there's one little area here in vote 1 which isn't shown.

but I'd like to talk to it for a minute because it's very important to every Albertan in his daily life. In vote 1 is regulatory reform. Nobody said anything about that. If you'd only known, since we became a province we've built up regulations right across this province. The Premier and this government are out there to address that overregulation that was created over years not by this government but by successive governments since 1905 to date. We have a lot of regulations there, and we have regulatory reform. It's in vote 1, and it affects every Albertan. On top of that, we're watching the new regulations coming in to make sure that it is not allowed to impact on the daily lives of Alberta citizens. So it's a very important vote, and I think that all Albertans should support it and be proud of the initiative of this government that we're out there addressing it.

Now, when I look all votes, 1 to 14, I think it's an example of good fiscal management. Mr. Premier, we're all proud that in your area of responsibility, Executive Council, you're taking the lead. And on that, all our excellent programs are there being carried out, but the administration is down 3 percent. That shows good fiscal management, and we're still going along with our programs, the excellent programs we all enjoy. So it shows we're taking the leadership and can be fiscally responsible.

I have one question to the Premier that I'll leave with him. I want to have his assurance that we'll continue with this good fiscal management and give the citizens of Alberta the good, just type of government we have in the past and that in the future we can be assured it will be there.

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

REV. ROBERTS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I wish you'd give me some warning about this, Mr. Chairman. I never know when I'm on the list.

I would like to address a few remarks to several of the votes before us and say at the outset that I know it's been a very difficult year for the Premier since these votes last came up for Executive Council, his department, so to speak, both personally and politically. I really would like to say to him that I think leadership today is a very difficult role to play in almost any aspect of life. I really hope he can deal with the difficulties of it with honour and with respect.

I often think, Mr. Chairman -- just as an aside to the Premier -- how I'm asked to take church services now. There's a certain form in the liturgy of the Anglican church, at least, which offers prayers for the Premier of the province each time the Eucharist is offered. So knowing him as I do, I sort of add a little more to it. I do wish the liturgical reform would go as far as offering prayers for the Leader of the Official Opposition as well, but we haven't made it that far as yet. Nonetheless, I think the Premier should know of the support that comes to him as a person and as a politician from a number of different quarters as well as the opposition that comes to him and his government from the appropriate quarters. I'm about to get into that right now.

In terms of the Premier's own office, I don't know if anybody's already asked questions tonight about this 36 percent increase for general administration in his office. You know, we're trying to hold the line in a number of different government departments and the bureaucracy thereto, but here we see a rather sizable 36.5 percent increase in the Premier's own office. I don't know if the Deputy Minister, Dr. Mellon, or others can explain what's going on there or why there's such an enormous increase there, but certainly it begs some questioning.

As well, Mr. Chairman, I would like to ask about the increase in the vote for the Office of the Lieutenant Governor. It's up 44.5 percent. Again, from my Anglican background I am a great supporter of the Crown, the Queen and her designate in the Commonwealth, but at the same time I think we need to ask some questions about why such a significant vote is allocated here. I was wondering, maybe it has to do with the Lieutenant Governor's conference on the family or some extra duty or project she's undertaking. But at the same time I'd like some answers with respect to that allocation.

As well, just on vote 1 generally, though it's not in any specific line, it's a general policy question which I bumped into sort of by accident this past year when there was some misunderstanding, a lack of communication or something, between my constituency office and the legislative office in terms of the use of this building, Mr. Chairman. As things got ironed out, I guess all is well, but it still did leave me with some questions as to why we in Alberta, in this province, are, I think, one of the only remaining provinces where in fact the people's building, the Legislature Building, is under control of the government and Executive Council. My understanding is that most other provinces have moved to understanding that the people's building is the people's building. It's under the control of the Speaker, not the government. It seems to me a government has a Government House and a number of other ways in which it can deal with its own business and have huge amounts of dollars and room in which to do that. But when it comes to the Legislature Building itself, it would be my contention that we should follow the pattern well established in Canada and the provinces, that this should be under the control of the Speaker's office and that the rooms here really do belong to the jurisdiction of the Speaker, not to government and to government political and partisan decision-making.

If I could then move to vote 9, I don't know if anyone has made any comments with respect to the Public Affairs Bureau. I again have had some difficulty in trying to decipher the politics behind the wild variations in the subvotes as they've gone up and down, in many instances down 69 percent and 85 percent in others. There's obviously something going on here. It's been shifted around by several different ministers. It's hard to know who really is in charge of it. I guess it is the hon. . . . Where is Kowalski from?

AN HON. MEMBER: Barrhead. Pavementhead.

REV. ROBERTS: Right.

Just some questions about why, for instance, the International Awareness vote is down almost 70 percent. Now, I hope this isn't again my fault, as a constituent of mine sent me an ad put out by the Alberta government in the *Economist* from Britain, Mr. Chairman, which is going to all these international markets. It was in wonderful, living colour, a very extravagant and I'm sure very, very expensive ad that was put into markets in the international arena. Here I see it's getting cut almost 70 percent. So I don't know whether it was the complaint from my constituent or whether there is in fact value for dollar in advertising in the *Economist*, but I think some of us should know what the decision-making is about that.

As well, of course, we're very skeptical about the advertising budget, as it's gone up 85 percent. I mean, all those Tory ads to put out the Tory message, whether it's in the newspapers, on TV, or whatever, but it's certainly up 85 percent. Yet Publica-

tion Services, which I thought were publications of importance to the people of the province on a variety of issues, is down. I would think that that should be a vote where there should be perhaps a greater allocation so that more and more people in Alberta, through our constituency offices and other ways, have access to good information about the workings and reportings of government and the publications from government.

At the same time, Mr. Chairman, my questions aren't quite so much to do with the funding and the various allocations in this Public Affairs Bureau. I'd like to also direct some questions to the Premier or the Member for Barrhead to find out more about the politics going on behind this department. As we know, the whole area of communication and public affairs can very easily become a whole area of propaganda. Whether or not in fact this area should be entitled the ministry of propaganda -- George Orwell, in his novel, so aptly described how in that totalitarian world the ministry of propaganda had a very essential role to play in how the medium was the message. We know it's a very, very powerful tool, the tool of communication and public relations, more and more powerful all the time. Certainly we're getting the influence of American politics and having all the spin doctors getting more and more employed by government to put a certain spin on the government's message or political angle on a certain story. I want to just find out how many of the spin doctors are being employed by government here and to what degree. As far as I'm aware, this is still an area under the Public Affairs Bureau and Miss Bateman, who I believe heads it up, that really has a legitimate role to play in terms of getting the government's message out but has a very inappropriate role to play in terms of being partisan and in putting out the spin of the Progressive Conservative Party.

It seems to me there's a very thin line that needs to be tread very carefully here, that in fact this is not a Tory communication shop, not a spin doctor group to put out the work the Progressive Conservative Association of Alberta should be doing. I think when we fall over that one line, the people of Alberta have some very legitimate questions to ask about why in fact taxpayers' dollars are going to support very partisan people doing very partisan activities under a government department. Now, in Edmonton-Centre I come across a number of the people who work for the Public Affairs Bureau. I know Jane Simmons, D'Arcy Levesque, Jim Dau, and many others who are very involved in the Conservative Party and the different elections that have gone on, particularly in Edmonton-Centre. I think that's very fair. In fact, at this point in government I don't believe these are order-in-council appointments; these are public servants providing public service, and they have a right to political activity. So in a sense it's fair for them to take very high-profile roles in the Tory party and in election campaigns and bring their skills as public relations people to help out certain political candidates. Certainly the candidate in Edmonton-Centre needed all the help he could get for the Conservative Party here.

MR. FOX: How much did he spend?

REV. ROBERTS: I don't know. I think the \$56,000 was not even near what he needed.

What I would ask for is the degree to which the politicization of this area has been understood, at least from the cabinet level, when in fact decisions have been made that people who work for the Public Affairs and as communication directors for different departments must in fact be card-carrying Conservatives.

Now, if they want to be partisan, as they want to be their own advisors and advocates and in their own confidences, then maybe they should come forward and say, "No, we want all our communications people to be order-in-council appointments." But insofar as I understand, that's not the case right now.

Then I think of some people; for instance, Don McMann, a friend of mine who worked in the campaigns of the Hon. Neil Crawford, on my own campaign, and the campaign for the Member for Edmonton-Whitemud. We have some questions as to why such a member of the Public Affairs Bureau should be all of a sudden pulled out of the job to which he was duly appointed and applied and given another job, which has no job description, in a sense constructively dismissed from his role in the Public Affairs Bureau, all because of some political activity which was outside of what I think was deemed acceptable by card-carrying Conservative members of the cabinet. So I just really think there's a lot of politics going on here, Mr. Chairman. I'd like the Premier, in all honesty and with the respect for the people's positions in this department, to come clean in terms of what the design and the future is for the spin doctors of government, as I see them.

I've also heard some nasty rumours about certain people in the Public Affairs Bureau working for certain cabinet ministers as they're preparing for their leadership campaigns. Now, I draw the line there. I say there's no way in which people employed with public dollars in the Public Affairs Bureau would help with certain leadership campaigns in the Tory caucus, but there you go. We need to have some answers in terms of just how neutral and how well placed these people are to do the job for government and the people of Alberta that we're paying them to do.

Vote 10, Mr. Chairman, has to do with the Premier's Commission on Future Health Care for Albertans. I don't know; I'm trying to get used to the fact that they're out there and doing good things. I still have some difficulty with a \$4 million allocation provided for their work. I guess I appreciate the Premier's initiatives in this regard. It's certainly politically vogue to have health commissions investigating the very thorny, comprehensive, complex areas of health care in the future. I mean, Ontario's done it, Manitoba's done it, Quebec's done it, Nova Scotia's done it, so I guess it's just part and parcel of a pattern that's part of the 1980s to look at health care from some kind of neutral, objective basis. In that way, I certainly hope the Hyndman report doesn't sit on the shelf like some of the other reports in the other provinces have sat on their shelves. I still would have liked to have thought we could have had an all-party committee, which might have been less partisan and have people who were at least known for their views other than being very supportive of government, like the hon. Mr. Hyndman. I would like to have seen, for instance, what a Richard Plain commission would recommend to government or somebody else who has had a very critical approach to health care and how it's played itself out. I mean, if they were chairing this commission, I think we'd have some very different slants on how health care is being delivered and its future directions.

I also would like to point out, Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, that we talk about health care taking up so many dollars -- I mean, \$3 billion -- and it's just this voracious appetite for public dollars that go into it, and then we set up this commission. I would have thought they would have had some sense of being -- you know, not all the gloss. I don't know how much it costs to produce all these different colours on their re-

port and very fine paper, and it's all very nicely laid out, I know they want to be a professional outfit and produce professional documents. But still you'd have thought that in this day of austerity, when it comes to health care and spending, there could have been a bit less of the gloss and bit less of the fancy production involved in it. It would have been a reflection of the fact that we want to look in a very real way, in a genuine way, in a common approach to . . . Now, we in fact have done that, Mr. Chairman, in the New Democrat caucus. We had a health conference which looked at many of the same things the commission did. We did it for \$500, brought over 100 people together in Red Deer and picked their brains for a period of time. We produced a report that cost about \$400, for looking at the same questions, bringing the same minds together. It's certainly not as comprehensive and detailed as what we're going to get from this commission. But again, there's some value for dollar here which we need to look at.

Also, I might point out, Mr. Chairman, the nagging question to me about the whole health commission: is this government work that needs to be done at taxpayers' expense, or is this just a way in which the Conservative association in this province is trying to get some policy development done? To test this out, I even called the Progressive Conservative Association here in Edmonton and asked about their health policy committee. I thought, well, this is great. They are a political party, a major force in Alberta. You'd think they'd have certain policy committees in their party that would do the same kinds of things the Hyndman commission is trying to do. But in fact I'm told that there is no health policy committee for the Conservative Party in this province. Certain resolutions come from associations at policy conferences and so on from time to time, but there's no group within the Conservative Party that looks systematically and comprehensively at health care issues in the province. So you know, it seems to me it's showing that they're doing the same things they should be doing in their own partisan, party ranks on the public dollar. I just don't think that's fair. This should not be PC party work that's being done here at the taxpayers' expense. Again, I get back to the point that it should have been an all-party commission. That would have been fair and would have been more of a guarantee that the recommendations they come up with may be implemented in the future if there was input from all three political parties in the process.

Vote 11, to do with the Council on the Status of Persons with Disabilities, I again have some questions about. I share with them some of the concern I heard expressed that they had a number of plans that were ready to be launched in the spring of this year and that there was some great concern as to why the plans being laid down were interrupted by a very unnecessary election. In fact, they had some things ready to go and thought they had the support of the Premier. Then all of a sudden, for whatever reasons, an election not even three years into the mandate of a majority government was called and threw off their plans by some many months. Some good planning had gone into seeking from the people of Alberta certain directions with respect to the status of persons with disabilities.

I was pleased during the election, however, when I discovered that one of the polling stations in Edmonton-Centre was not able to be accessed by people in wheelchairs, and the Tory who was the district returning officer said, "Oh well, we have provisions to be made for incapacitated voters." I said: "Well, listen to me. It's not that the voters are incapacitated; it's the building the polling station is in that is incapacitated, and that should

have been changed." I was very pleased, in writing a letter to the Premier's Council on the Status of Persons with Disabilities, that in fact they agreed with me and sent a letter to the district returning officer complaining, in the same way, that this kind of attitude needs to change. The point I'd like to really make here is that I think with the good people that are working on the council, I really hope and beseech that the Premier and the Minister of Education responsible for them would sit back and take some of the critical and the courageous kind of vision that they want to lay out for this government and for the people of Alberta.

I am hopeful, for instance, that they will be recommending that we need to look much more comprehensively at a disability income plan and have disabled people dealt with not on the basis of how they became disabled but what their needs are, being disabled. I think there's a very key distinction there. We in this province and throughout Canada have different provisions in terms of the income supplement and other support for people, depending on how they became disabled, whether it was from birth or whether it was from an accident on the job or whether it was from an accident in a motor vehicle or however. Much of the support, both in terms of income and other means, that comes to disabled people comes on the basis of how they entered or became disabled. I think that is irrelevant. What really should be looked at is: okay, being disabled, what are your needs? What are your costs? What do you need to live a full and fruitful and productive life in society? So a comprehensive disability income plan would be something that -- as other provinces have sort of looked at and tried to develop and then recommended to government. It's often not gone beyond first look because it is very bold and imaginative and takes some courage to implement.

My expectation is that they will raise the political heat quite a bit on this and many other issues, and I again beseech the Premier and the members of Executive Council who, both with this council and with the Hyndman commission, do not see these groups as being a way to deflect and defer criticisms, saying, "Oh well, we have a commission that's looking at that" or "We have a council that's dealing with that," but rather understand that these councils and committees they've set up really should be thorns in their sides, saying to them, "This is really off base here, Mr. Premier and government; you've really got to re-evaluate and relook at your policies and your funding in a number of different areas." They should be thorns in the side and press and in fact be on the side of the opposition many times, saying, "Yes, the opposition's right on this area and that area," and enter in a much more full debate on a number of issues which are before us.

I did have some questions, finally, on vote 14. I hate to end on this because it's just a matter, I think, of my own confusion. But I really thought at some point this vote had something to do with the family and drug abuse foundation. I see that it's not that. It's the Premier's Council in Support of Alberta Families. I mean, family is all over the place in terms of policies and funds. I did check the budget books in other areas, and I just didn't quite see where the \$200 million endowment is out of. I think it's out of the Capital Fund or the Heritage Savings Trust Fund. I don't know whether it's under the Minister of Health's jurisdiction or under Executive Council's. So I assume my confusion is that it is not vote 14, but I would like to have some sense of where that's coming from, how much has been allocated this year, who's going to be responsible for its jurisdic-

tion, and when we can start raising some critical questions about that as well.

So with those comments, Mr. Chairman and Mr. Premier, I thank you very much.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member for Wainwright.

MR. FISCHER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to just make a few comments and ask a question or two about our family life and drug abuse foundation, the \$200 million foundation, and just where we're going to be spending that money. I know it says in our throne speech that we would like to put it toward prevention and research and awareness and treatment of our drug and alcohol addicts, and I guess I would like to know kind of where the emphasis is going to be regarding this foundation.

I'd first of all like to commend our Premier for setting up that foundation, as I know that the need in this province is great. We are the highest consumers per capita of alcohol in Canada, and we do have a lot of problems that have to be addressed in that area. As you have probably heard in question period, we do have one of the more severe problems in our Wainwright constituency. I might say that since the problem was identified in the early '80s, in a small community of about 2,000 people we've lost about eight teenagers in accidents that were related to drug and alcohol. We in our constituency would like to see some of those funds go toward prevention and treatment in helping us obtain a drug and alcohol counsellor.

I know that we also need a lot of prevention and awareness programs as well, and that is one of the reasons why I am introducing my Motion 228, to raise the drinking age from 18 to 19. I do hope our members of this Assembly will take a good look at it and weigh it carefully and possibly carry on with it. I believe it's extremely important to get liquor out of our schools and get access away from the 14-year-olds so that liquor and driving is not a learning combination together, because it certainly is a bad combination. Also I would like to see the foundation get into other prevention programs. I do have reservations about our credit card program. I hope it does not conflict with what we're trying to do with our prevention with the foundation.

The other thing I'd like to see our foundation do is get into why our society is accepting the excuse that alcohol and drugs are something that take the responsibility away from the person. We do hear, and I believe it was in the paper just the other day, that our Crown prosecutor reduced a murder charge down to a manslaughter charge because the person was extremely drunk. I feel strongly that our society has to accept the responsibility for drinking. Another example of that is our safe grad program, where we as adults accept the fact that teenagers are going to drink until they cannot be responsible. I think those kinds of awareness programs have to be looked at. I do hope that this foundation is headed in that direction. I would just ask if the Premier could comment on that and maybe outline a few of the initiatives that he feels the foundation is going to be taking.

Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The hon. Premier.

MR. GETTY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I made a lot of notes when the hon. members were talking and I must confess that it's strange that as you listen to the comments -- not very often questions, but comments -- you tend in the moment of the com-



ment to prepare what might be referred to as a rebuke or debate or something. As time goes by and you look back at the notes, you wonder to yourself: is it really worth it to try and refer back to some of the debate the hon. members raised?

I do want to say to the Member for Edmonton-Centre that I appreciate those personal comments he made, but I also noted that he said he wasn't prepared. He didn't have to take 20 minutes to prove it to us, Mr. Chairman. I would have taken his word for it.

Mr. Chairman, there was a question by the hon. Member for Edmonton-Highlands, who raised the old issue: why is it that there was an election; was the government so strongly involved in favour of free trade? I only remind the hon. members, when they say, "How come?" that that's what you were talking about; the federal election became a single-issue election. When the election was called, both the Liberals and the NDP, frantic about the disarray their parties were in, tried to focus on only one issue, and that was free trade. They tried to, in fact, make that the issue, wrap themselves in the Canadian flag, and go through a series of trying to scare senior citizens and other people about the matter of what free trade might do to them in social services and pensions and those types of things. Then having made that the only issue, they ran about saying, "How come that's what you talked about?" That's what you debated, and that's what our government got involved in during the campaign.

Well, obviously it became a single-issue campaign. It was so important to the people of Alberta, a province that produces so much more than it uses, where markets are just the lifeblood of this province. You can imagine the cloud, the lack of confidence, and the feeling of being depressed that would have hit this nation if we had missed the historic opportunity to enter into a trade agreement that provides us for the first time in history a place to sell our products on a long-term, assured basis to the greatest market in the world. I know the hon. Member for Edmonton-Highlands had to leave. She sent me a note, by the way. She can see tomorrow in *Hansard* what really brought about the interest in free trade during the federal election.

The Member for Edmonton-Highlands also talked about the matter of environmental jurisdiction, and I discussed that today in question period in talking about the Premiers' Conference. I think members from any party should not take lightly moves by another government to inject itself into the jurisdiction provided to the province through our Constitution and particularly to use such an important issue as the environment, and we all accept how important it is. While I must say that the government has been working and leading Canada in environmental matters for years and that we welcome the newfound interest of the other parties in the environment, nevertheless the jurisdictional issue is an extremely important one.

There is a body of thought in central Canada and I guess in the minds of certain politicians that central Canada can and should control most of the decisions in this country. We reject that completely. We rejected it on energy matters, and everyone knows how important that is. We also reject it in areas of environmental jurisdiction, not because we don't care about the environment; obviously we all do. But we also care about the rights of Albertans, and they must be stood up for. Therefore, it is extremely important, while this issue is before the people of western Canada and before Albertans, that all the Premiers, the other three western Premiers, recognized this and threw the weight of their support behind Alberta in the Premier's Conference and specifically did it in writing in a communiqué.

I was surprised, Mr. Chairman, that one of the members mentioned the Lieutenant Governor's budget. I can't believe I heard it. We have such a fine representative of the Queen in this province. She asks so little. She gives so much, has such a small budget. Just having one more secretary and the equipment for that secretary increases it by some \$25,000 or \$30,000. I really found it strange. I wonder that any member would think our Lieutenant Governor in any way is trying to increase her budget, spend money that isn't absolutely needed. As a matter of fact, one of the things that has bothered me over the years is the lack of support that Her Honour receives from the federal government. I have told her on many occasions, and our minister of public works, to please allow us to help where these services that are paid for by the federal government are deficient. I just want members to know that I was surprised and disappointed, and I wanted to make some point about Her Honour's budget.

I would also say, Mr. Chairman, that the comment about the Legislature being shared jurisdiction between the government and the Speaker is an interesting policy argument. The situation in Alberta is this: all of the ministers of the government are in this building. That's completely different from most of the Legislatures in Canada, where they are in buildings with their departments, spread throughout the capital cities. Here, obviously, if you have all the ministers, the cabinet, the government here, there has to be shared jurisdiction in the Legislature.

Now, the Member for Edmonton-Centre asked some questions of the minister responsible for the Public Affairs Bureau. Well, what I'd like to do is make sure he gets the answer. I hope he doesn't rue the day he asked for the full and complete report from the hon. minister, because if he can do it verbally, you will pay for it.

Mr. Chairman, we will have occasions, I'm sure, to talk about the Meech Lake accord in the future. As I've said before in the House, and I say again to the Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar, you must take the time to look at the requirements, for the first time in history what it would take to have a constitution made in Canada and agreed to by all the people of Canada and their elected governments. That is something historic to reach for. It will take giving on both sides. One of the unpleasant things that is going across our country is, without a doubt, a negative reaction towards Quebec and their desire to strengthen their French culture. Now, in our mind they may have taken some wrong policy decisions, but we should not be trying to fan that flame of negative thought which would prevent us from bringing together all of the governments of Canada under the same Constitution.

A comment, Mr. Chairman, just briefly about lower income Albertans. In talking with the other Premiers -- and this is fresh in my mind because we were able to talk about lower income Albertans when we were talking about strengthening the family -- one of the things that we agreed on was that you do a very big disservice to lower income people when you run around telling them that they're living in poverty, because they do not believe that. They are working. They are trying, and they are being helped to bring themselves obviously to higher incomes, to improve the lot of themselves and their families. I think it's a real put-down from some of the socialist-thinking theorists who keep telling them that they're living in poverty.

In talking about that and comparing with the other governments what we do and what they do for lower income people, the other Premiers were astonished that over the past two years

we have been able to either lower the taxes or remove taxes completely from 500,000 Albertans. That has been something that hasn't been matched by any other government, and it just shows the commitment our government has. What we are doing here is providing greater and greater take-home pay and helping them. At the same time we are subsidizing their health care, we're subsidizing housing when they need it, we're subsidizing day care, and we're subsidizing training to help them to be able to participate in higher earning jobs in our work force.

Here's where the socialist theories of the hon. members miss. Having trained them, what then has to be there? A job has to be there. The hon. Member for Athabasca-Lac La Biche has been making that point in this Legislature when the members are running about trying to frustrate and stop the projects that are going to provide opportunities and jobs for individuals and families in areas that have not been able to attract that kind of economic growth before. They can use the resources and they can use the investment and have that opportunity. I urge the hon. members to stop this nonsense of trying to fan some fear and to frustrate this development and growth.

We work so hard for economic development and diversification. Why do we work so hard at it? It's not that you'd like to just see a building going up or a plant going up. It's not that there will be a billion dollars or several hundred million dollars invested. Surely the key is: what impact will it have on providing opportunities for people? Surely that's the key. Why else do we work so hard at economic development and diversification? To go into areas such as northern Alberta and to be able to tell people that now there is going to be a chance, now there are going to be jobs and opportunities, and to see the light shining in their eyes, that yes, their youngsters, their families are going to be able to stay at home, stay in those communities, and have long-term, stable jobs. Surely the hon. members have to recognize what a tremendous breakthrough that we're able to afford those areas and do it with a renewable resource and be able to do it with the standards, controls, and legislation in the environment that are unmatched anywhere else in the world. So, Mr. Chairman, I just urge the members to think of the opportunities and the growth and the new excitement and interest that can be possible for the people of Alberta.

Only one other thing, Mr. Chairman, and it refers back to communiqué 6, which was raised in the Legislature. It touches on some matters that have been raised under my estimates. People were talking and have been talking about the importance of the family. We've heard some comments about it tonight, and the Associate Minister of Family and Social Services responded. But I want to say that if you would have thought several years ago that we could have brought all the Premiers of western Canada together and made one of the agenda items and one of the communiqués so significantly a communiqué about strengthening the family -- that has been Alberta leadership on a very important matter. The Premiers agreed in this communiqué on the importance of enhancing and supporting the family unit because of its fundamental position in the social and economic structure of our society. The Premiers noted that families and community-based volunteer organizations must once again have a central role in providing social and family support services.

I think that has been one of the problems of well-meaning governments. They have tended to elbow aside the community and volunteer groups as they've rushed in with dollars. Yet if

you look at what is happening, we see family violence expanding; we see drug abuse expanding. We see higher divorce rates; we see family breakup, children dropping out. Yet at the same time we have a tremendous increase in government budgets, a tremendous increase in bureaucracy in this area. At the same time as those budgets are increasing -- huge, tremendous increases -- there is a demand, and I hear it tonight, for more and more spending in that area. Yet what has the spending done? The spending, Mr. Chairman, while it is going up and up, certainly isn't stopping the growth in the area of family violence, drug abuse, divorce rates, family breakup.

So one of the things that the hon. members have to give consideration to is: what else can we do? Surely in that area we come back to this foundation we're talking about. We come back to the foundation and the importance of the family. I hope that through the Lieutenant Governor's conference on families, through Family Day, through a family week, and through our family life and drug abuse foundation, we will put such a focus on the importance of this essential unit in our society that we will have a whole new group of young Albertans who say to themselves: "Well, I know one thing. Things may be spinning around in front of me here: communications, technological change. But I'm beginning to think the thing for me to do is to hang on to my family -- my brothers and sisters, my mother and father, grandparents -- and to try and see if in my community with my family we can't, by working together, stop these things from happening that are tearing apart our society." That's what we're working at when we put the emphasis on the family.

Mr. Chairman, I've enjoyed the debate and the discussion tonight. There are some particular questions of smaller details that we will provide to the hon. members as a follow-up. I thank all members of the House for making the debate on my estimates so stimulating.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

[Motion carried]

[Mr. Deputy Speaker in the Chair]

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

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Having heard the motion by the hon. Member for Ponoka-Rimbey, all those in favour, please say aye.

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, it's the intention of the government to call the Committee of Supply in the morning to deal with Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs.

[At 10:39 p.m. the House adjourned to Friday at 10 a.m.]