

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ALBERTA

Title: **Wednesday, July 12, 1989 2:30 p.m.**
 Date: 89/07/12

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

[Mr. Deputy Speaker in the Chair]

PRAYERS

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Let us pray.

O Lord, we give thanks for the bounty of our province: our land, our resources, and our people.

We pledge ourselves to act as good stewards on behalf of all Albertans.

Amen.

head: TABLING RETURNS AND REPORTS

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to table with the Legislative Assembly the annual report for the year 1988 for the Alberta Association of Architects: Registered Architects and Licensed Interior Designers.

head: INTRODUCTION OF SPECIAL GUESTS

MR. ISLEY: Mr. Speaker, approximately five years ago the hon. Member for Wainwright and myself had the honour of doing the official twinning of Hügelsheim, Germany, with Grand Centre, Alberta.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: We can't hear.

MR. ISLEY: Can you hear me now?

AN HON. MEMBER: No. The system's not working.

MR. ISLEY: Maybe I'll quit using the mike then.
 Mr. Speaker...

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Could I have the indulgence of the member to hold on for a . . . It's working now.
 The hon. Minister of Agriculture.

MR. ISLEY: Mr. Speaker...

MS BARRETT: Try Connie's.

MRS. OSTERMAN: Try this. This one's working.

MR. ISLEY: Thank you, Connie. Mr. Speaker, modern technology tends to break down when you most need it

As I started to indicate, Mr. Speaker, approximately five years ago the hon. Member for Wainwright and myself had the honour of doing the official twinning of Hügelsheim, Germany, with Grand Centre, Alberta, on a trip to Germany. What the two communities have in common is that they both exist in close proximity to a Canadian air force base, Hügelsheim to Baden-Baden, Grand Centre to Cold Lake Forces Base Medley. What

they don't have in common is their age. Grand Centre is 35 years old. Hügelsheim -- and I was presented this book by the bürgermeister this morning -- is 1,200 years old. I would like to introduce to the House the bürgermeister of Hügelsheim, Germany, Dieter Rückle, who is here with 50 members from his community and is being received by His Worship Mayor Ray Coates and his wife, Adelle, of Grand Centre and six of their community members. They're on about a 10-day visit to our province. I trust you will have a good time, and I'd ask that you stand and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

head: ORAL QUESTION PERIOD**Provincial Deficit**

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, to the Treasurer, Deficit Dick. This government has brought Alberta to a point where our current deficit is higher than all the other provincial and territorial governments put together. How did we get here under these so-called business managers? Well, number one, we gave up control of oil prices as they were falling. Number two, we gave away more than the current value of the trust fund to oil companies in seven years. Number three, we've refused to make wealthy individuals and corporations pay their fair share of tax. My question to the Treasurer is this: what kind of fiscal management is this? Give away the store to the corporate sector and have a combined deficit greater than all the provinces in one year -- what kind of management is that?

MR. JOHNSTON: Obviously, Mr. Speaker, they didn't listen to your prayer today when you talked about this bountiful province, strength in the people, strength in the resources, and I guess strength in the government was inferred in that. I think a little lesson here might be timely for the Member for Edmonton-Norwood. He's got an academic background. He knows about statistics. He knows how sometimes these things can be put together in a different fashion. I know yesterday I was puzzled by the StatsCan announcement when they suggested our deficit was of that order, \$2 billion to \$2.2 billion. As I said, I couldn't reconcile that figure. My colleagues here in government were surprised by it

MR. McEACHERN: I can.

MR. JOHNSTON: Well, it's good that the member from wherever it is can reconcile it, because you know what, Mr. Speaker? When I inquired to Stats Canada yesterday, they said: "Do you know what? We can't reconcile that either." So I'd like to read a little letter I just happen to have here today from Stats Canada. They have said: further to the review of the data presented yesterday, we want to revise our estimate of the Alberta government deficit. It "should be revised downward, in the order of \$500 million." Mr. Speaker, a \$500 million revision: the information we've presented in this House has in fact been confirmed by Stats Canada.

You know the rules here, Mr. Speaker. When I quote from something during question period, I have to table it. I guess I have no recourse but to table it to show that Stats Canada made a mistake. What does that mean? [interjections]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order please. I believe if the hon. Treasurer has referred to a letter, he really should table it.

ORDERS OF THE DAY**head: COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY**

[Mr. Jonson in the Chair]

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Would the committee please come to order.

head: Main Estimates 1989-90**Municipal Affairs**

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The Department of Municipal Affairs estimates are in the main estimates book, starting on page 249, vote 1, and in the elements book the department's estimates commence on page 103 with vote 1.

Does the hon. minister have any opening remarks?

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Chairman, thank you very much for the opportunity to stand in my place again on this side of the House after an absence of 18 years plus three months.

What I would like to do today, Mr. Chairman, is four things. First of all, I'd like to make some acknowledgments with regards to my responsibility; secondly, highlight some of the main programs in the Department of Municipal Affairs; raise some highlights in the Alberta Mortgage and Housing Corporation; and then close with some remarks in terms of negotiations that are currently going on between my responsibility as minister for housing and the federal government through the federal minister who is responsible for Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation.

In terms of acknowledgments, Mr. Chairman, I would like to first of all acknowledge and extend my appreciation and thanks to the Premier for requesting that I take on this responsibility for him in this Legislature. I'd have to say that my period of time in opposition for 18 years certainly was a good experience, and I commend it to a number of other parties, not particularly the party in power at the present time.

The Premier asked me in this mandate to take on three basic responsibilities: first of all, to look after the responsibilities of both municipal affairs and the Alberta Mortgage and Housing Corporation; to develop a rural development program and the respective responsibilities that go along with that; and thirdly, to enhance the autonomy of local jurisdictions and municipalities across this province. One of the commitments that goes along with that as a subcommitment is to communicate not only with the councils and the provincial organizations but the individual members who are elected as aldermen or councillors across this province. I initiated that process either by telephone or by letter, contacting them within the first two weeks after taking on this responsibility, and that process is in place and started.

One of the organizations that I was introduced to by accepting my responsibility as a Progressive Conservative member in this Legislature was the caucus in which I participate. I know that when I sat on the other side of the House, I often made various kinds of remarks with regards to caucus operation and how members can participate in that caucus, always indicating that possibly the caucus was not MLA driven but was minister driven. I want to say, as a mark of recognition or as a remark of congratulations to the party in which I'm involved at the present time, that caucus is certainly MLA driven, that ministers are

given their direction through that caucus in a very democratic and a very open and, I would have to say, a bit of a laid-back approach, which I appreciate very, very much. I'd have to say that historically -- and this is the only time that I will reminisce for a moment today. In my historical responsibility some 18 years and three months ago, I found my responsibilities were more minister driven than they were MLA driven within my caucus responsibility. I certainly am impressed by the experience I've had to this point in time and will do all in my power as a minister and a participant in that caucus to continue to enhance that kind of an environment.

In giving recognition today, I think I must give recognition to the bodies of local government that I represent. There are four of them, and often two are forgotten. The Association of MDs and Counties and the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association often get their due recognition in the government process and participate more in government activities in terms of legislation and making recommendations. We appreciate that as a government; I appreciate that as a minister.

Two of the bodies, though, that are out there, that are doing their job, balancing their budgets, have surpluses in their budgets, are the people on our ID advisory councils and those people that represent the Special Areas across this province. They are very quiet administrators doing their job for the people. As you look at those two groups, advisory persons in terms of a group organization, they do their job. At one time historically they had some very significant difficulties in terms of budgeting and supplying services to their constituents. Today they're doing it very adequately. In many cases we find our IDs have funds with which they can assist urban municipalities within their boundaries in terms of them and those elected people taking on their responsibilities. I wanted to highlight that today because I found in my term in this Legislature over the many years that we forget those two bodies of advisory people, very capable people that do a quiet job for us in this province.

I'd like to recognize the members in this Legislature, because it's the first time that I've had the opportunity of speaking, those who have been elected for their first time, those that have been re-elected. I'd like to congratulate them and wish them the best during this Legislature.

I also offer my best wishes to the leaders of the ND Party and the Liberal Party. I recognize in a very objective way the difficulty at times of doing the job of holding government accountable in a very responsible way. My advice to them from my longtime experience is that when the public views what we do in opposition, they look at what we do in terms of presenting some positive alternatives, mixed in sometimes with some issues that we don't like to deal with in terms of personalities. But we shouldn't forget that first responsibility of holding the government accountable in terms of their policy development and delivering services to the people across this province. I also have some sympathy for the two leaders in creating a newsworthy item every day that's blessed with penetrating questions that have to be directed at government, because that is the most difficult task, to create those kinds of issues day after day after day, not only for the benefit of the Assembly but often for the benefit of the media that are looking for those tidbits of variation in this Legislature.

I'd like to offer compliments and thank-yous and certainly words of praise to my office staff, to the staff of the Department of Municipal Affairs, and the staff of the Alberta Mortgage and Housing Corporation. They are very responsible people and are

people of Alberta?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, I absolutely am, yes. And I want the hon. members to know that we will not accept innuendo and allegations by them when they are unable to come up with other matters of policy in the Legislature. I know they are having a bad legislative session, and therefore they switch to personal attacks. [interjections] They may well.

I draw to their attention, Mr. Speaker, this legislation that is already before the House. The hon. member talked about shares; for instance, the Alberta Energy Company. The legislation that has been passed by this Legislature covering the Alberta Energy Company is clear, and I draw to the members' attention what it says, because I think it's a serious matter, and he's raised it, and I think members should know.

The right of a member of the Legislative Assembly to participate in any debate or to vote on any question relating to any matter affecting the [Alberta Energy] Company is not affected by the fact that any voting shares of the Company are held in the name or right of or for the use or benefit of that member.

Mr. Speaker, that legislation was passed in 1980. It was passed after a great deal of thought by the Legislature at the time.

Now, one other thing I want to draw to the hon. leader's attention is that this matter has been raised in the House before in a general way. On June 30 I said that having come back to government and knowing some of the changes that face Members of the Legislative Assembly, I am conducting a review -- I made that commitment to the Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar -- of all the conflict-of-interest rules that we live by. I made that commitment on June 30, I believe. So that is also going on, Mr. Speaker. But I think the members of the opposition do not bring credit to this Assembly when they are unable to debate on matters of policy and therefore . . . [interjections]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order please. Order.

MR. GETTY: . . . try to distract from their inability by casting innuendos on people's reputations. They should be ashamed of themselves.

Sale of Suffield Block Gas Rights

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, the Premier has read the section from the Alberta Energy Company Act which allows cabinet ministers to own AEC shares and which allows them to make decisions at cabinet table that might be very favourable to AEC, to its shareholders, and if they're shareholders, to themselves. Now, two years ago the Alberta cabinet decided to sell gas rights to the rich Suffield Block to AEC for a portion of its actual true value, certainly a significant factor, Mr. Speaker, in the fact that the shares have risen some 37 percent since that time, shares held by five cabinet ministers, five ministers of the Crown, two of whom are sitting here today. Apparently no thought was given to putting those rights up for tender to the highest bidder. My question is to the Premier. Can the Premier tell us why these gas rights were not put out to the open market by cabinet, especially when the government knew that ministers were at the table making decisions which affected both themselves and AEC financially?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member was not clear on which rights and when this happened. Would he just repeat the

timing of his question?

MR. DECORE: There was a sale in 1975, Mr. Premier, for \$54 million and a subsequent agreement that took it to \$105 million to sell off the balance of the rights in the Suffield Block. That's the issue that I'm addressing you to.

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, now I recognize what the hon. member is referring to.

When Alberta Energy Company was first established, there was a policy statement made in the Legislature regarding those assets that would be placed in the hands of Alberta Energy Company, because at the time there was a view, a strong feeling among Albertans, which they have supported very strongly in subsequent years, that they would like to not only be able to participate in the oil and gas industry through their ownership in royalties but rather to also be able to participate through the risk and reward possibilities of owning shares in a uniquely Alberta company. Therefore, the government responded to that feeling of Albertans, and the Alberta Energy Company was created. Shares were sold to Albertans with the knowledge that the various assets would be placed in the company. Then the Alberta government stepped back and allowed management to run the company.

The matter the hon. member is discussing, which is the completion of the sale of the natural gas, was contemplated in 1974-75 because it was unable to place a value on that natural gas. Therefore, a rather unique way of evaluating it was set up, and then it was concluded after a value could be more clearly established. So, Mr. Speaker, those things were all contemplated in 1974-75, and it was merely following through on that commitment.

MR. DECORE: Well, Mr. Premier, you haven't answered my question. Let me try this one. Are you aware, sir, that the market analysts through their newsletters declared that the sale price of that 50 percent, that second portion of the agreement, has a value in their eyes that is several times greater than the government agreed to? Are you aware of that, sir?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, I'm amazed that the hon. member will ask us to accept the recommendations of market analysts. I remember on October 19, not long ago, when they were telling us that this stock market was going up and had the biggest drop in the history of the stock market. Let's not have us making our judgments on the basis of stock market analysts, please.

MR. DECORE: I'm not getting the answers, Mr. Speaker, so I'll try my last one. I'd like to ask the Premier to explain why he defends a highly unusual section of the AEC Act which allows cabinet ministers holding AEC shares to vote, for example, to sell a \$400 million asset -- that's the value that these analysts put on it -- owned by all of the people of Alberta, for just a small fraction of its actual value to AEC and of course to the shareholders, including the ministers who've benefited?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, as I've said earlier in the House today, the Alberta Energy Company Act was not passed by me; it was passed by this Legislature. It is clearly an Act and the law of the province of Alberta, and surely the laws of the province of Alberta are what we should be guided by, not some market analyst's estimate of something. The hon. member should

surely know that the background of the Alberta Energy Company has been a resounding success, a resounding success for Albertans, and has never been matched anywhere in Canada.

Oilfields General Hospital

MR. TANNAS: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the hon. Minister of Health. It's been variously reported in radio, television, and in the daily press in southern Alberta that Oilfields hospital in Black Diamond is closing down: closing down beds, closing down a wing, similar kinds of comments. This is an issue of importance to my constituents in a well-patronized hospital like Oilfields. Surely the Minister of Health is not acting on the Edmonton-Glenarry dictum on rural hospitals. Would the minister assure people in my constituency and this Assembly that beds will not be closed down in Oilfields hospital?

MRS. BETKOWSKI: Mr. Speaker, I can certainly confirm that for the hon. member. What, in fact, is happening is because of a structural difficulty in the hospital, which the Minister of Public Works, Supply and Services may well wish to address.

My interest is in terms of those patients, to move them out of the hospital while improvements are made to the hospital and the hospital is repaired. It applies only to the long-term wing and the 23 patients who are currently there. As of an agreement reached this morning with the hospital board, they will be transferred to the Rockyview hospital in Calgary while the repairs are effected and then returned to the hospital at the end of that time.

MR. TANNAS: Thank you for that assurance.

Hon. minister, is your department making any provision for the inconvenience for long-term care patients, the staff, volunteers, visitors, to minimize the inconvenience at being at some distance from home in a strange building with new care givers?

MRS. BETKOWSKI: Mr. Speaker, it certainly is difficult when patients need to be transferred from one facility to another under circumstances like this, and I think with long-term care patients even more care has to be taken to ensure that those patients and their families are disrupted in the least possible way. I applaud the efforts of both the Oilfields hospital and the Rockyview hospital to try and make the transfer as smooth as possible. As well the patients will be kept virtually intact as a unit once they are moved to the Rockyview hospital. The existing staff in the Oilfields hospital will be transferred along with those patients to the Rockyview hospital, and hopefully the transfer and the stay in the hospital, hopefully as short as possible, will be the least disruptive possible.

MR. TANNAS: Mr. Speaker, then my final supplement I'd like to direct to the hon. Minister of Public Works, Supply and Services. Is this minister's department prepared to offer any assistance, financial or otherwise, to the local board of Oilfields hospital?

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, there has been some background work done on this in recent weeks, and until the actual patients have left the hospital and been relocated, it'll be difficult for us to get a final assessment in terms of what actually must be done. We are working in concert with the Oilfields General hospital board, and as all members know, while responsibility and ownership for the hospitals rests with the hospital

boards throughout the province of Alberta, funding for and compensation and building of hospitals rests with the province of Alberta. The hon. member can be assured that Alberta Public Works, Supply and Services of the government of Alberta will be involved.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Vegreville.

Loans and Loan Guarantees to Peter Pocklington

MR. FOX: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Instead of making a real commitment to long-term job creation and economic diversification in Alberta, this government spends its time using taxpayers' dollars to make secret deals with their wealthy and powerful friends. They've given Peter Pocklington a \$6 million loan to build a plant that the minister of economic development says isn't being built and that the Minister of Agriculture says doesn't need to be built anyway. They don't know where the money's gone, they don't know what it's being used for, and they don't know how to get it back. Mr. Speaker, if ignorance is bliss, these dukes of hazard must be one happy pair. I'd like to ask the minister of economic development why cabinet, on the same day that Peter Pocklington's \$55 million loan guarantee was approved, changed the rules to make it possible to hide both the source and the details of the loan.

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, as usual, the hon. member's facts are incorrect. I'm happy to indicate to him, as I've indicated to him on a consistent basis since he has raised this issue, that the loan and the loan guarantee were for multipurposes, as was indicated in the press release when it was done by the previous minister of economic development. We wanted to make sure that there were proper food processing facilities. We wanted to make sure that they were of a world-class nature so that our farmers would have excellent facilities to sell their products to. In addition to that, we wanted to preserve and increase job creation within this province, two things that we have done, Mr. Speaker. I will repeat it for the hon. member also. In the event that there is any violation of the agreements -- the principals who have taken out the loan guarantee have to sign a declaration indicating that they are living up to the agreement -- the full force of the law will come to bear.

MR. FOX: Mr. Speaker, I'm talking about changes made by cabinet -- and he was there -- to the guarantee and indemnity amendment regulations of the Department of Economic Development and Trade. If they can't bend the rules, they'll amend the rules. I'd like to ask him: why did cabinet feel it was necessary to give Mr. Pocklington in essence a blank cheque for this loan guarantee by changing the regulations only moments before approving these sweetheart deals?

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, I recognize the hon. member has no concern for the farming population and them having proper food processing facilities. I also recognize that the hon. member has no concern for the creation of jobs and the quality of life within this province, but I should point out to the hon. member that it is not a sweetheart deal; it is a commercial agreement with a corporation within the province of Alberta so that we can create jobs so that we can have proper food processing facilities, something that we care about within this province and obviously the hon. member does not.

MR. FOX: Mr. Speaker, if the minister can't start providing some answers to these questions and sort it out, Albertans are going to be left holding the bag, the \$67 million bag.

Can the minister tell us who the government is trying to protect by making these important and unnecessary changes to the rules only moments before approving the loan guarantees to Peter Pocklington? Answer that question.

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, I recognize one cannot say that the hon. member is not telling the truth so I won't say it even though he's doing it. But I should point out, Mr. Speaker, that again the hon. member's facts are incorrect. He indicates \$67 million in one statement when he knows full well that is not a fact. A loan guarantee of some \$55 million has been offered, a draw down . . . [interjections] Mr. Speaker, if they don't wish to have the answers, I'm more than happy to sit down. But I should point out. . . [interjections]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar.

Guidelines for Ministers of the Crown
(continued)

MRS. HEWES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On Friday, June 30, the Premier committed to the House to undertake a review of the conduct of the Minister of Agriculture in relation to grants provided to the Sandy C Ranch. Since that time an interesting new dimension has been added. The minister himself has freely admitted to interfering in the departmental decision-making process to ensure that funding was provided to Sandy C, even though that organization and its project didn't qualify under the department rules. Not innuendo, Mr. Speaker; the minister himself admitted it. It's most astonishing, however, to note the new dimension: the minister conceded that he not only bent the rules to help that ranch but also that he has made it a practice of his to bend the rules whenever he feels like it. My question is to the Premier. In light of the minister's most astonishing and astounding admission that this is a practice and that he believes it is right and appropriate to do so, is the Premier now prepared to fire that minister?

MR. GETTY: No, Mr. Speaker.

MRS. HEWES: Well, Mr. Speaker, the Legislative Assembly Act doesn't cover this kind of activity, and the Premier well knows that

Now, the government clearly believes, through this kind of behavior, that laws and regulations apply only to other people and not to themselves. Can the Premier, then, tell the Assembly what specific guidelines he has in place governing the conduct of ministers of the Crown in adhering to their own regulations. What's in place, Mr. Premier?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, obviously the responsibilities of a minister's cabinet are to serve the government and the people of Alberta to the best of their ability. I might say that the hon. member knows, from having served in public life in decision-making opportunities in the past, and any who have, do as well, that you do not just write something or declare something to be so and then fit all the people of Alberta in or out, black and white. As a matter of fact, members of the opposition have approached me, to say, "Listen; my constituent doesn't quite have

that problem or doesn't quite fit those rules, doesn't quite fit what we hear the policy guidelines are, but surely you're a compassionate government" -- and members have asked me -- "surely you could help a constituent of mine."

Obviously, Mr. Speaker, there has to be a discretion on elected people so they make sure they work for the best interests of the people of Alberta. We could otherwise just hire a bunch of computers, run statistics into them, and feed in the people of Alberta, and they'll get either accepted or kicked out. What kind of nonsense is that? For crying out loud, these are elected people, using judgment and discretion, and surely that's the way to serve the people of Alberta.

MRS. HEWES: We're not talking judgment, discretion here, Mr. Speaker. We're talking about somebody who by his own admission bends the rules.

Mr. Speaker, once more to the Premier. Will the Premier commit today to implement a solid code of ethics which will prevent ministers from being able to ignore their own specific rules and regulations at their whim, without any fear of reprisal or discipline? Will he give us some guidelines that we understand so we have a fair process that works for everybody and not just friends?

MR. GETTY: Actually, Mr. Speaker, we've dealt at some length with this in the Legislature today. As I've told other members and I repeat for the hon. member -- and it may well be that the Minister of Agriculture will want to add to my reply -- we have a very strong set of conflict-of-interest rules, and they are determined by this Legislature. We also have the conflict-of-interest guidelines that the cabinet lives by. At the same time, I must say with due recognition to the hon. member that I have given her a commitment out of respect for her as an honourable friend that we will review, I will review the conflict-of-interest guidelines to make sure that on some regular basis they are always reflecting current needs.

Nevertheless, Mr. Speaker, I would never have a minister of the Crown always able to just say to Members of the Legislative Assembly or to Albertans at large: "No, you don't fit. Forget it. You're out." I want our members to show the compassion, the flexibility, the judgment, and the discretion to work for the people of Alberta. That's what we're going to do. We will review the conflict-of-interest matters to make sure they are up to date, but I ask the hon. members: don't try and cast those kind of innuendos. They don't bring any credit to you.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. Minister of Agriculture, a supplemental?

MR. ISLEY: Mr. Speaker, supplementary information. I would like to share some information with the hon. Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar. The Alberta environment employment program, section E(5) says: "Final authority for project approval is vested in the Minister of Manpower or his delegate." I was simply exercising the guidelines of that program and overruling an interdepartmental recommendation.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Wainwright.

Extradition Procedures

MR. FISCHER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is

related to the petition that I filed two weeks ago on Friday on the extradition of Charles Ng. In view of the fact that Charles Ng has shown or brought forth a policy here in Canada that it's a haven for U.S. criminals, what is our provincial government doing about this?

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I assume your question is directed to the hon. Attorney General. Is it?

MR. FISCHER: I'm sorry.

MR. ROSTAD: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to correct the hon. Member for Wainwright in his allegation that Alberta or anything we do in the justice system makes it a haven for criminals from another location. The matter of extradition is a federal jurisdiction, but perhaps I could clarify that in this particular instance with Mr. Ng, he was incarcerated in Alberta because of being found guilty of an armed robbery in the city of Calgary and on that basis became a resident of one of the institutions of Mr. Fowler, the Solicitor General, and the proceedings went on from there.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Supplementary.

MR. FISCHER: Thank you. I would like to know, then, why can we not as a provincial government make representation to the federal government that criminals will first be returned to their homeland to face charges there before charging them here?

MR. ROSTAD: Mr. Speaker, again the jurisdiction for criminal law is federal. On an extradition basis or intercountry matter again the jurisdiction would be federal. In this particular instance Mr. Ng was incarcerated in Alberta. The application is then made for extradition. We have, of course, the first jurisdiction because of the charge that's in Alberta. The process that is allowed for all of us, and I think a protection for all of us, is a number of appeals or procedures that we can go through. Whether you are incarcerated for a detestable instance or whether it's something that is not, we all have those procedures. I think it's probably a saving grace that we have those procedures to go through. Then the final decision is made by the federal government.

MR. FISCHER: As Charles Ng has been here for going on almost three years now, when can we expect the trial to be completed then?

MR. ROSTAD: Mr. Speaker, as I understand this matter, the final right of Mr. Ng is being heard very shortly. I think before '89 is out, the federal Minister of Justice will be handing down his ruling.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place.

Appointments to Environmental Review Panels

MR. McINNIS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of the Environment. Alberta's cut and paste environmental process took another turn today. I understand the minister considered the appointment of some religious figures but instead came up with a list of four individuals and four al-

ternates for the citizens' review panel on the Mitsubishi/Honshu project. The federal conflict-of-interest guidelines and procedures for members of environmental assessment panels have been published to ensure that the impartiality of panel members is beyond doubt. I wonder if the minister can assure the House that the review board whose members he announced today will meet or exceed the federal standards in terms of conflict of interest and other procedures?

MR. KLEIN: I think, Mr. Speaker, that they're good, thinking, honest individuals who were nominated by their respective municipalities, municipal jurisdictions that were duly elected. I certainly don't question the integrity of any of them. I personally don't know them, other than meeting them for the first time last night. We had before us their background material. All of them came to us as supporters of the community, very involved in the community, concerned about their community. On that basis, the recommendation was taken to cabinet, and my colleagues in cabinet approved the nominations. I think that we have the basis of a very, very good public review panel. With the addition of the federal government representatives -- and those representatives will be of the federal government's choice -- and a chairman to be selected jointly, I think there will be good balance to this review board that will soon, in about four or five weeks, embark on one of the most extensive public review processes relative to a pulp mill project in this province.

MR. McINNIS: Well, the question, with respect, was whether the panel was to meet or exceed the federal guidelines order. Perhaps the minister would like to get to know some of his panelists. One has endorsed the mill.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. McINNIS: Mr. Speaker, everybody wants to wear your robes today. I don't know why.

One's a card-carrying PC, one's already endorsed the mill in an advertisement, and one of the alternates has done the same. Not only that, but some of them stand to benefit financially from a favourable ruling. How can he justify those appointments?

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, a member of the panel is also an Indian chief. My gosh. You know, I didn't go around and ask them to open their wallets and show me their political cards. I mean, maybe it's of importance to Mr. McInnis. I didn't go through advertising flyers to find out if they had taken out an ad some months ago relative to a particular project. Lots of people do lots of tilings at times in their lives that don't necessarily make them wicked or evil people. These are good, thinking, honest, average Albertans. I would think that the NDP opposition should be mighty pleased that we have selected good, thinking, honest, average Albertans.

MR. McINNIS: Well, the question does have to do with financial relationships.

The minister also announced that he's going to withhold any and all funding from the Friends of the Athabasca group, a local environmental group that has some concerns about the project. Given that the minister has decided to use the funding for a personal political vendetta, why doesn't he turn the money over to the Environment Council of Alberta and send the bill to the companies?

MR. KLEIN: Well, you know, you talk, Mr. Speaker, about rudeness and innuendo and very, very shameful kinds of tactics. We have just heard the absolute ultimate, the absolute ultimate. [interjections]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order. Could we please have quiet in the House so the minister can finish his reply and we might get on to the next question?

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, the money under the guidelines was to be given to the municipalities; the municipalities were in turn to provide intervenor funding. I have given an undertaking personally to make sure that the most affected area, the area of Prosperity, would be given intervenor funding. I have been given assurance by the federal government that when they participate in the exercise, they will provide additional intervenor funding. I am not going to give funding to groups that perhaps have environmental concerns to address but perhaps have political concerns to address as well. And where do you draw the line? We can start with Friends of Peace and the Friends of the Wapiti and Friends of the North and the Southern Friends of the North and the east friends of the west and west friends of the east and the friends of John McInnis and the friends of everyone else. I mean, we would go broke.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Westlock-Sturgeon.

Marketing of Milk in Four-Litre Jugs

MR. TAYLOR: Thank you Mr. Speaker. My question today is to the hon. Minister of Agriculture, at least one portion of it. Starting way back in the middle '80s, Holgerson Dairies' Horizon milk have been trying to get permission to market four-litre jugs, and they have had a difficult time. Even I was against them a couple of years ago, but not being a Tory, I was able to see the light and make a proper decision and come out in their support. What's concerning me now is the unholy delay since the past Minister of Agriculture said he was going to recommend to the board that they come out with four-litre jugs. Since the report from the dairy board has been in his hands for over a month now, can the minister come out now and endorse the use of four-litre jugs?

MR. ISLEY: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to see that the Member for Westlock-Sturgeon has recognized that he's done a complete about-face on this issue, from being adamantly opposed to now being adamantly supportive. I think I should share with the hon. member that what we are talking about with the dairy industry in Canada and Alberta is a highly regulated industry where those who produce milk are controlled: where you ship your milk is controlled, the price you get for your milk is set by the Public Utilities Board, the price the processor gets for his milk is set by the board, the minimum price the retailer may charge the consumer is set by the board, and container sizes are set by the board. As the hon. member is aware, this matter went once to the Alberta Dairy Control Board and was rejected. Holgerson Dairies appealed it, and it came forward this spring with a positive recommendation and some expressions of environmental concern that had to be addressed. We are currently addressing those issues, and I'm tempted at this point in time to put forward a recommendation that we proceed with the four-litre jugs and

put them under the Beverage Container Act.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Supplementary question.

MR. TAYLOR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm dumbfounded. [interjections] Obviously Clyde has been talking to Bonnie, and he's going ahead with some answers.

Then why, if that is so, if he's going to recommend the four-litre jugs, has he asked Mr. Holgerson to reconsider the whole four-litre question and ordered some sort of a bribe so that he can get better credit relations?

MR. ISLEY: Mr. Speaker, what the hon. member is suggesting is totally false. Mr. Holgerson has been aware for at least 10 days that I am considering going forward with the four-litre jug and exploring and discussing with Environment the possibility of putting plastic jugs of all sizes under the Beverage Container Act.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The time for question period has expired. May we have unanimous consent to complete this line of questioning?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, I wasn't around to see the conversion of Saul on his way to Tarsus, but this will do just as well.

Could the Minister of Agriculture then tell us when Holgerson will be able to use the four-litre jugs?

MR. ISLEY: The "when" is whenever an order in council is passed.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Before we proceed to the point of order raised by the hon. Leader of the Opposition, could we have unanimous consent to revert to Introduction of Special Guests? I'm sorry, and I must apologize to the hon. Member for Edmonton-Whitemud that I did not see him.

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Whitemud.

head: INTRODUCTION OF SPECIAL GUESTS (reversion)

MR. WICKMAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to introduce to members of the House a very special guest who is visiting our fine city from Switzerland. Her name is Mrs. Flora Bernhardsgrütter. She is visiting this city, and she is specifically visiting with Elizabeth Saad. They are presently in the members' gallery. I would ask that they stand and that they be given the traditional warm welcome of this House.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Leader of the Opposition on a point of order.

MR. MARTIN: Well, Mr. Speaker, seeing that it's the first day back, I'll withdraw my point of order and watch what happens tomorrow.

ORDERS OF THE DAY**head: COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY**

[Mr. Jonson in the Chair]

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Would the committee please come to order.

head: Main Estimates 1989-90**Municipal Affairs**

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The Department of Municipal Affairs estimates are in the main estimates book, starting on page 249, vote 1, and in the elements book the department's estimates commence on page 103 with vote 1.

Does the hon. minister have any opening remarks?

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Chairman, thank you very much for the opportunity to stand in my place again on this side of the House after an absence of 18 years plus three months.

What I would like to do today, Mr. Chairman, is four things. First of all, I'd like to make some acknowledgments with regards to my responsibility; secondly, highlight some of the main programs in the Department of Municipal Affairs; raise some highlights in the Alberta Mortgage and Housing Corporation; and then close with some remarks in terms of negotiations that are currently going on between my responsibility as minister for housing and the federal government through the federal minister who is responsible for Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation.

In terms of acknowledgments, Mr. Chairman, I would like to first of all acknowledge and extend my appreciation and thanks to the Premier for requesting that I take on this responsibility for him in this Legislature. I'd have to say that my period of time in opposition for 18 years certainly was a good experience, and I commend it to a number of other parties, not particularly the party in power at the present time.

The Premier asked me in this mandate to take on three basic responsibilities: first of all, to look after the responsibilities of both municipal affairs and the Alberta Mortgage and Housing Corporation; to develop a rural development program and the respective responsibilities that go along with that; and thirdly, to enhance the autonomy of local jurisdictions and municipalities across this province. One of the commitments that goes along with that as a subcommitment is to communicate not only with the councils and the provincial organizations but the individual members who are elected as aldermen or councillors across this province. I initiated that process either by telephone or by letter, contacting them within the first two weeks after taking on this responsibility, and that process is in place and started.

One of the organizations that I was introduced to by accepting my responsibility as a Progressive Conservative member in this Legislature was the caucus in which I participate. I know that when I sat on the other side of the House, I often made various kinds of remarks with regards to caucus operation and how members can participate in that caucus, always indicating that possibly the caucus was not MLA driven but was minister driven. I want to say, as a mark of recognition or as a remark of congratulations to the party in which I'm involved at the present time, that caucus is certainly MLA driven, that ministers are

given their direction through that caucus in a very democratic and a very open and, I would have to say, a bit of a laid-back approach, which I appreciate very, very much. I'd have to say that historically -- and this is the only time that I will reminisce for a moment today. In my historical responsibility some 18 years and three months ago, I found my responsibilities were more minister driven than they were MLA driven within my caucus responsibility. I certainly am impressed by the experience I've had to this point in time and will do all in my power as a minister and a participant in that caucus to continue to enhance that kind of an environment.

In giving recognition today, I think I must give recognition to the bodies of local government that I represent. There are four of them, and often two are forgotten. The Association of MDs and Counties and the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association often get their due recognition in the government process and participate more in government activities in terms of legislation and making recommendations. We appreciate that as a government; I appreciate that as a minister.

Two of the bodies, though, that are out there, that are doing their job, balancing their budgets, have surpluses in their budgets, are the people on our ID advisory councils and those people that represent the Special Areas across this province. They are very quiet administrators doing their job for the people. As you look at those two groups, advisory persons in terms of a group organization, they do their job. At one time historically they had some very significant difficulties in terms of budgeting and supplying services to their constituents. Today they're doing it very adequately. In many cases we find our IDs have funds with which they can assist urban municipalities within their boundaries in terms of them and those elected people taking on their responsibilities. I wanted to highlight that today because I found in my term in this Legislature over the many years that we forget those two bodies of advisory people, very capable people that do a quiet job for us in this province.

I'd like to recognize the members in this Legislature, because it's the first time that I've had the opportunity of speaking, those who have been elected for their first time, those that have been re-elected. I'd like to congratulate them and wish them the best during this Legislature.

I also offer my best wishes to the leaders of the ND Party and the Liberal Party. I recognize in a very objective way the difficulty at times of doing the job of holding government accountable in a very responsible way. My advice to them from my longtime experience is that when the public views what we do in opposition, they look at what we do in terms of presenting some positive alternatives, mixed in sometimes with some issues that we don't like to deal with in terms of personalities. But we shouldn't forget that first responsibility of holding the government accountable in terms of their policy development and delivering services to the people across this province. I also have some sympathy for the two leaders in creating a newsworthy item every day that's blessed with penetrating questions that have to be directed at government, because that is the most difficult task, to create those kinds of issues day after day after day, not only for the benefit of the Assembly but often for the benefit of the media that are looking for those tidbits of variation in this Legislature.

I'd like to offer compliments and thank-yous and certainly words of praise to my office staff, to the staff of the Department of Municipal Affairs, and the staff of the Alberta Mortgage and Housing Corporation. They are very responsible people and are

committed and dedicated to doing a good job for not only us as the elected personnel in this Legislature but certainly for the people of Alberta.

A thank you to my colleague that shares my portfolio responsibility, the Hon. Ken Rostad, who will speak later with regards to native affairs and that respective area of programs.

I'd like to give a thank you to my colleague the Hon. Dennis Anderson, the former minister of this portfolio. A thank you to him for initiating a number of very interesting and exciting new programs that now I have the responsibility of continuing and enhancing and developing -- I hope with the vision that he had at that time -- particularly the vision 2020 program that he initiated in a very aggressive and positive way. I want to thank him for leaving what I feel is a very quality condition in the Department of Municipal Affairs. I also give credit to his colleague the deputy minister, who in terms of a team kept the harmony and the morale of that department in a very positive way. When I stepped into the portfolio, within a day we were working and on the job and things were going in a positive way rather than walking in to try and look at and clean up any kind of things that were negative. There were none. So thank you to my colleagues.

I finally want to give a thank you to the constituents of Little Bow who have given me the privilege of representing them in this Legislature. I thank them very much for the majority support that they gave me for the eighth time in the last election.

Now, what are some of the highlights of the Department of Municipal Affairs that are in this current budget of some \$690 million? The major thrust that has been taken by the government over the last few years with regards to unconditional grants I think merits a lot of recognition. In this budget under the Alberta partnership transfer program we are going to expend and allocate to the municipalities of this province some \$104.5 million. Now, that is only part of that Alberta partnership transfer program. Two other programs in government, the municipal police assistance grant and the public transit operating assistance grant are the complement that form the bulk cheque that goes out to the municipalities. I know the municipalities appreciate that grant extensively.

The second unconditional grant area is receiving an 18 per cent increase and is paid to the municipalities under a program called the Alberta municipal partnership in local employment program, which was started in 1987 and most likely will have a life to 1994. The government has committed some \$500 million in funds towards that unconditional grant program. And I want to highlight that word "unconditional" again, because we as a government have not put any strings on it. We give an inference to them that whatever projects are created at the local municipal level, those projects should create some type of local employment. I believe, from my short term of experience, there are many examples of projects that have been completed by this new grant program that have created some exceptional employment opportunities.

I want to talk about the complement to this AMPLE program. Back in 1975 -- and I recall this day very well -- in the Legislature the government made a commitment to Alberta municipalities that they would pay from the Heritage Savings Trust Fund and pick up some of the municipal debentured interest debt at that time through a rebate program. I find it very interesting, when I look at the numbers and what has happened, how well the government has met that commitment. To date the government through that program has expended some \$847 mil-

lion. Now, when we project the commitment we've made -- this program will continue through to about the year 2010 -- between now and then we will commit another \$500 million. So what the government is really doing is that rather than meeting its earlier commitment of just a billion-dollar program, it will become by the date of its completion some \$1.4 billion, so we've actually enhanced it by taking on the responsibility of that kind of support. I want to say that I am impressed with that, as the new minister of this department, and certainly impressed that I have the opportunity of maintaining it and administering it to our municipalities along with our unconditional grant program called the Alberta municipal partnership in local employment program. Those two are complementary; as one diminishes, the other increases. And we maintain a high level of unconditional grant for the municipality because of that fact.

The third program or item in the budget I'd like to highlight is the provision of \$100,000 as start-up funding for the municipal liability insurance program in vote 5. This program is the result of a 12-man committee that involved the municipal associations plus the Alberta School Trustees' Association which made a recommendation that we develop a self-insurance pool for various liability responsibilities that local municipalities have in this province. The program I believe will proceed, and it will be known, in terms of the acronym, as ALARIE. It will be called the Alberta local authorities reciprocal insurance exchange. And I know that the municipalities across this province are very supportive of that initiative and that thrust which was assisted by the province of Alberta and specifically the Department of Municipal Affairs.

I mentioned earlier the Vision 2020 program. That program will continue. As a matter of information, some 286 municipalities across the province are involved in that. They're moving through completing their vision statement. We're encouraging them to finalize that in the year 1989 or early in 1990, at which time we will consider whether the program is to continue or not. There are about 17 of the municipalities that are not involved, do not want to proceed; that's about 6 percent. So the percentage of municipalities involved is high. As a minister, the direction that I will give that program is to move from the general Vision 2020 statement to some practical application. I think that will be the next task and responsibility we will have to complete in our partnership between the provincial government and the municipalities.

The other item I wanted to mention in terms of municipal assistance is the continuation of the work on the Municipal Statutes Review Committee. We have \$300,000 in the budget for that committee. Our objective there is to in the years 1990 and 1991 look at legislation that will modernize our approach to local government. I certainly feel that the committee we have and the abilities we have on that committee will be able to achieve that goal. I certainly offer my congratulations to two of our members of this Legislature who are the chairman and the vice-chairman, Mr. Glen Clegg and Ty Lund, who will participate very actively in the objectives as they are achieved.

The second item in terms of Municipal Affairs that I want to mention is the assistance for seniors. I know all members in this Legislative Assembly are impressed and certainly would find it very difficult to be critical of the kinds of programming and expenditures that we have in this province for our senior citizens. I have attended some meetings since becoming minister, and certainly prior to that responsibility, as a member on the other side of the House, talked to many seniors. I don't think there

are very many that are unhappy with the way we are handling things in Alberta. I'm sure, when I hear them talking about their counterparts in other provinces, they are very proud and excited about the kind of conditions we have in this province. But as a government we're not stopping there. During the last election we announced some other improvements to our programs that will only enhance the living conditions and the opportunity for independence of our senior citizens in this province. I'd like to note some of those programs.

First of all, I'd like to note the seniors' emergency medic alert program, in which there is a lot of interest across this province, and give some of the initial detail as to how we will implement that program. As we all know, our commitment was to bring that program on stream as of January 1, 1990. There are three ways that seniors or persons in need in this province can get approved equipment under this program. First of all, they can get it directly through this program, called the seniors' medic alert program. Secondly, they can get it through the program called seniors' independent living, and thirdly, through the home adaptation program in its new form. Our intent is to approve the clients across this province by application. They will submit an application to the department and become approved. By that approval then they can go out to a number of agencies that are approved as well and receive their equipment. After the equipment is received by the client, there's a one-month period of time that the client uses the equipment. If it's satisfactory, a form is signed by the agency and the client and sent to us in the department, at which time funds can be allocated. That's generally the procedure that will take place.

One of the questions that's raised often is: who qualifies; what equipment qualifies under this program? We intend to approve those that will be delivering the equipment. There are three types of approval, basically, that we will be looking at. They come under the initials of DOC, which is criteria under the Department of Communications; CSA approved, which is Canadian Standards Association guidelines; and thirdly, what is called the ULC standards, which refers to the Underwriters' Laboratories of Canada standards that look at equipment like this. Along with that, there is a longer list of criteria that will have to be met by the equipment, such as: does it handle well, can it withstand water, et cetera, et cetera; those kinds of things. The implementation of that program, the procedures, are being put in place now. We're meeting with many groups across the province checking out the details to make sure that they are right and that when we implement on January 1, 1990, we have things well in place.

The second program I'd like to refer to, and I already have, is the seniors' independent living program, which replaces two other programs that we've had in place historically. They're called the SHIP and the SHIP-Ex programs, or in terms of their long names, the senior's home improvement program and the senior's home improvement program extension, which provided benefits to seniors, widows, and widowers to improve their homes. The improvement now will be up to a gross of \$4,000, which is significant. On the basis of various kinds of incomes and amounts that these seniors received from the earlier two programs, it will be determined what portion of that \$4,000 they can receive. The minimum that any senior citizen would receive is \$1,000, so they will have the ability to receive some benefits from this program.

The third one I'd like to mention is the senior citizens' unique home program, which is support for private senior

citizens' homes to assist in operating costs. There are 10 of those that we are assisting as private entities in this province because of the good service they're providing.

The fourth one I'd like to mention is the senior citizens' renters assistance program, which has been in place for some time. Some 51,000 Alberta senior citizens benefit from that program, which is significant. I know that if you have a mother or a grandfather or someone who's a senior citizen, they wait with anticipation every year for that \$1,200 if they are in non-subsidized housing or the \$600 if they're in subsidized housing or the \$1,000 if they're mobile home owners renting land or space for their home. It's well received and much appreciated by our seniors across this province.

The fifth program I would like to mention in terms of benefits to seniors in our department is the additional funding that we're putting into the program called the property tax reduction program. This program is now benefiting some 114,000 senior citizens in their houses. There is an increase of some \$4.6 million in the program expenditure to \$73.1 million, and that's found in vote 3. That property tax reduction program has shielded seniors from the cost of the provincial education tax and has also reduced their municipal tax significantly, and in many cases -- I would say the majority of cases -- to a zero amount of cost to our senior citizens in this province.

The last one I'd like to mention is the garden suite pilot project that we initiated about a month and a half ago in this province. We have \$300,000 in vote 7 for that project. We're testing the concept in Lethbridge and in the county of Parkland. The Lethbridge Housing Authority is taking applications and assisting us in developing the project in that urban centre. In the county of Parkland the Meridian Foundation is carrying out the administrative details for us. We feel that this will provide just another entity, or another avenue, by which the seniors are able to maintain their independence and live close to their families. To this point by the letters, by the indicators that I have, the program is well received and very positive. We intend to go through this pilot project stage before we make any decisions as to whether it becomes a full-blown, broad program across the province of Alberta.

The third area that I'd like to mention in terms of Municipal Affairs and its responsibility is the housing programs for Albertans. The programs that I mention here, in the majority, are those that we announced during the campaign, and now we're fulfilling that commitment. The first one is the Alberta mortgage interest shielding program and our grant payments. We have budgeted some \$35 million in vote 7. I won't go into the detail, because I think all of the members here have the opportunity of reading the detail in a booklet that we provide from the department that explains the program in a very clear and definite way. But I would like to bring you up to date as to what's happening in that program and also the Alberta family first-home program, as to what success we have had to date.

Under the Alberta family first-home program the number of applications we've received is 3,058. The number of \$4,000 interest-free loans advanced -- in other words, where we are paying the interest on \$4,000 -- we have 1,765 approvals to date. Under the Alberta mortgage interest shielding program we have had 12,470 applications as of July 7. The number of approvals, 2,506; billings received for interest under option one, 38,000; the amount of rebates under this program that have been paid -- we've paid out, up to this point, \$263,000. So the uptake has been very good, and we are certainly well on the road to

administering that program to the people of Alberta.

Three other programs that I'd like to mention. The home adaptation program has an increased cost of \$350,000 under vote 7. We've made two changes in criteria there that are significant so that persons can qualify under that program in a more easy manner. First of all, the income level has been increased from \$25,500 to \$30,000. And secondly, eligible expenditures have been expanded from wheelchair users to individuals with severe mobility disabilities that we foresee in the future may become persons who are in need of the wheelchair facility as well.

The next program I'd like to mention is the rural emergency home program. We've increased that from 50 to 85 units, an increase of \$1.3 million under vote 7. The purpose of that program, mainly used in northern Alberta, is to assist rural families and senior citizens in emergency situations. On hand at the present time spread across northern Alberta we have some 1,039 homes already used in this program. We are trying to focus it a little better so that those that get into the home need it because of an emergency. We're finding often that persons take up the emergency home program and then want to stay in the house after they are there, so we are trying to work on that to make sure there is a transition.

Mr. Chairman, those are four of the programs that I wished to mention. The second area that I'd like to cover is with regard to the Alberta Mortgage and Housing Corporation. Do I have a time limit?

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: You have one minute, hon. . . .

MR. R. SPEAKER: Have I got one minute? I've been saving this up for 18 years. I'm only halfway through, and it's all good stuff.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Well, perhaps, hon. minister, you might want to bring on the good stuff in your remarks later on.

MR. R. SPEAKER: What I would like to do in terms of the Alberta Mortgage and Housing Corporation is indicate, in that minute I have, that it's a program that has changed from one of land and building development to more of property management, and we've got a greater emphasis on social housing. Under property management -- I want to say this as a general comment, and possibly I can give more detail in my concluding remarks -- we have sold a significant amount of our property, both land and buildings, and we're hoping that within another year we'll have dealt with a fairly large inventory that was picked up through foreclosures by AMHC.

In our social housing program we have some significant improvements in terms of our self-contained housing, lodge beds, and a new program of regeneration of lodges that were built back in the early '60s. We have a greater emphasis in this area on social housing and certainly an emphasis on housing for those in the inner city. I want to say, Mr. Chairman, that I've had experience with regards to many of those people in the inner city and recognize some of the need that is there. As we move through this year of 1989 into 1990, I certainly hope that we can confront some of those concerns and issues and make life better within the urban surroundings that these people face.

So, Mr. Chairman, I'll stop there and give the detail in my later remarks.

Thank you.

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

MR. EWASIUK: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like right off the top on behalf of this caucus to congratulate the minister on his re-election and his appointment to, I think, the very important portfolio of Municipal Affairs. By his opening comments I note that the marriage is still in the honeymoon stage. He's very pleased and happy, and hopefully for him that's the way it will be. I also would want before I proceed to express my appreciation to the former minister, the Member for Calgary-Currie, who in a short period of time in that portfolio I thought did a tremendous job. I think the kind of work that he initiated in that department is going a long way in developing a good rapport and relationship with municipalities and others throughout the province. I want to thank you for that, sir.

I'm pleased that again the minister indicated that there is an intent to enhance local autonomy in local governments throughout the province. I think that's an excellent idea. Being one that came from a municipal government level, I think I can appreciate the need for that kind of autonomy. Those of us who were elected to municipal government to represent the people at that government level often felt constrained by the conditional grants and kinds of conditions that were imposed on us as municipal officials. I hope that the minister is serious and will continue to work at allowing municipal members to be as autonomous as possible so that they can carry out the responsibility of their mandate, so they can do their planning for their municipality knowing that what they plan will, in fact, become a fact down the road.

I think we have excellent representation at most municipal levels. I think, as the minister indicated, perhaps some aren't as recognized as perhaps they should be. But from the opportunity I've had to meet with many of those organizations and individuals in those organizations, I'm convinced that they are very dedicated people who want to serve their communities and their municipalities to the best of their ability, and I think they're doing that. So it goes hand in hand that I think the autonomy part of it is part of the process. I think they appreciate that.

The two programs, major thrusts, that the minister alluded to: the 2020 program and the Alberta partnership transfer program. Again I want to say that in my opinion, at this moment at least, they are good programs; I think particularly the Alberta partnership transfer program. I don't have any reservations about the 2020 program except that I do want to give it some time to see how it develops and how much activity and involvement there is in the program. Initially, my reaction was that it will possibly be a good program, but I'm prepared to give it some time to ensure that in fact the intent will be carried through to the ultimate.

I then want to maybe just address some of the votes in the estimates. And I again have to make the comment that I think I made last year and the year before: there's really a lack of information that's available to us through this process. I think the information available here really doesn't give us that much value or the opportunity to really dwell into the actual financial operations of the department. Nevertheless, that's what we have.

In vote 1 -- perhaps the minister can explain. I may have some idea what's happening here, but Purchase of Fixed Assets is a substantial increase, really, up 159.4 percent. It's a capital layout apparently. It's suggested there is an increase in staffing there, and that may be as a result of two new programs, the

first-time home buyers and the other program. Perhaps the minister may clarify just why there was such a large increase in that particular program.

I think the seniors programs the minister alluded to by and large are again fulfilling the requirements. There are some deficiencies that come up from time to time, sometimes on an individual basis, but I think by and large the programs for seniors are working quite well. Any difficulties I've had we've managed to be able to resolve, provided they were within the criteria or the requirements within the Act.

I want to skip right over to vote 4, and while it's perhaps not a very significant vote, I think it tells me something that needs to be responded to. Perhaps the minister may want to clarify at least the perception that I have. There's been a reduction in this program both in the '88-89 estimates and again in this year's estimates. This, of course, is the support for community planning services. The way I interpret this and what, perhaps, this suggests to me, is that there is very slow or very little growth occurring, if any, in our communities in terms of planning and development. Obviously, the recessionary situation in the province has something to do with it, but I can't help but think that it's all been compounded by the depopulation that's occurring in our rural communities and in rural Alberta. Again, I believe this depopulation is really being aided and abetted by the government by the kinds of programs they have for rural Alberta. In addition, I think the Tories in Ottawa -- their policies are also not helping to maintain the family farm.

I believe this vote seems to reflect the very limited activities that are occurring in rural Alberta, and as a result you've been cutting, obviously because you don't need it. But it suggests that there's something wrong. It seems to me that the message here is quite clear: that we should be getting more involved in attempting to diversify our economy in this province so that rather than virtually die, as some of them are, these communities should be injected with more vigour and development so that we can still maintain a vigorous rural Alberta and rural families.

In vote 5, again I just have one comment to make here. It's on Assessment Services. I noted in the throne speech that the government is going to encourage municipalities to maintain their assessment on a current basis where the taxpayers can have more knowledgeable judgment as to the fairness of the assessment of their property. I think that's good. I think a more frequent, updated assessment is okay, except -- in discussing this with some people at various levels in Alberta municipalities, while they'd like to be able to do this, there is a financial commitment here for them that they're not sure they're able to undertake. While the city of Edmonton, as I understand, has a computer model developed -- they will be able to keep abreast on a regular basis; I'm not sure if it's annually, but quite regularly -- they will have an update on the assessment. So they have no problems. But I understand that even Calgary has a bit of a problem in that area, and certainly rural municipalities who really don't have access to computer models and so on to be able to do their assessing on that basis. So I think they're saying, "Yes, we'd like to be able to do our regular assessments, but I think we need some financial resources," in order to be able to either hire more staff or, in fact, get the use of a computer program so they can somehow get on some model that would be able to do this for them on a more regular basis.

I want to say that the liability insurance program is a good one. It certainly was a concern to most municipalities -- not only municipalities but I think even community leagues and so

on -- because they were subjected to the possibility of prohibitive insurance costs. I think the combination and establishment of the liability insurance program jointly was a good idea, a good move by the government and the municipalities. I think they should be quite happy with that.

I want to move on to vote 7, again the support program. Perhaps the minister may want to explain the rather substantial increase. It jumps up at you: 103.5 percent. I think, whatever the response is, I'd like the minister to let us know where this money is being spent and what necessitated this large increase. However, I also want to make one other comment that was brought to my attention that I think the minister may want to address.

As I understand it, when the previous interest shielding program was in place in this province, owners of mobile homes did not qualify for the shielding program at that time and, as a result, of course had to pay the high rates of interest that were prevalent at that time. The same people who are now making a request for the first-home program are being told, "Sorry, because you already owned a home previously, which was a mobile home, you don't qualify for the first-home program." These people are being, if I can use the word, shafted twice. First they couldn't get any shielding program on their mobile home, and now that they want to buy a regular home, they are told, "Sorry, you don't qualify on the first-home program because you used to own a mobile home." They were caught both ways. I hope the minister will review this part of the program to see if there's any possibility of rectifying that so that this particular group of individuals who are moving up from a mobile home to a regular house will have the opportunity to participate in these programs.

On to vote 8. With this one I have some concerns. I want to say, however, that I've had the opportunity from time to time, through my constituency office, to be in contact with the staff at the Alberta Mortgage and Housing Corporation, and I want to say that they have been very co-operative and helpful to us. I want to express that appreciation to them. Their help has enabled us to certainly help our constituents, and we're delighted about that. But I know the corporation has been in some major problems of its own over the last little while.

The information I have is that the loss in rental property has amounted to millions of dollars. I thought the minister indicated in his presentation that the corporation will now be looking at making their housing stock available to welfare recipients on subsidized housing programs. I know that up till quite recently that was not available, that rather than rent their property the facility would stay vacant until someone came along to rent it, but it would not be made available to single welfare individuals. I think it was a shame that that was the case, because if anyone needed housing -- these people were quite often living on a very meagre wage or subsistence salary or benefits from social services, and were forced to live in substandard housing.

Therefore I'm pleased, and I hope that this has been expedited and will in fact become a reality very quickly so that the housing stock that is available wherever in this province will be made available to welfare recipients so that they will have proper and adequate housing and that the taxpayers are not sharing the burden of these facilities being empty. As I said, I know there was a great loss of money by the corporation because of that policy they had in place. I think social housing programs are very important in this province. I note the minister suggests that the corporation is taking a sort of different direction now in that they're becoming more property management focused, and

that's good. I'm glad to see that social housing is becoming a priority. I hope that that's in fact a reality, that indeed that's the direction that is taken, because there's no doubt that it's needed.

As I mentioned in question period several weeks ago, there has been identified a crisis almost developing in the need for social housing, particularly for the disabled, and I now understand that there are some things developing in that area. But as the vacancy rate declines in our province, it's going to become more and more difficult for those on low income to secure adequate and proper housing, particularly those who are handicapped who require special needs type of housing. I think that particularly has to be emphasized to ensure that, as the minister said, not only those who are in wheelchairs but those who are on the verge -- who are still attempting to manage without being confined to a wheelchair but need a special needs type of facility -- can still maintain a standard of living that they were accustomed to.

Inner-city housing is also again, I think, a major requirement. In speaking to the various societies who function in inner cities, they can certainly identify and allude to the needs. I was just today saying to the minister that this is a very critical area and that attention to inner-city housing needs to be addressed very quickly.

Those are my comments for the present time, Mr. Chairman. I thank you.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The minister responsible for native programs to make a few remarks, please.

MR. ROSTAD: Mr. Chairman, thank you for the opportunity to share with the Assembly a few comments relating to the native affairs portion of the Department of Municipal Affairs. It is with great pride that I stand here as the minister responsible for native affairs. I think that we have, over the past two and a half years that I've been involved together with colleagues, made significant advances. Certainly by no means can we say that the natives are not still encountering problems. I would also at this time like to acknowledge in the gallery some of the people that I did work with when I was also the Minister of Housing, as well as people I currently work with as minister responsible for native affairs.

The overall program objective of native services within Municipal Affairs is to work with the native representatives and their communities and the various provincial government departments and agencies to ensure that they have full access to the benefits and programs of our government. I should also spell out that perhaps the name is a bit deceiving. We must be clear that the treaty Indians are the responsibility and jurisdiction of the federal government and not the province, although our department does work as a liaison between the treaty Indians and our government to ensure that they have access to our departments where they, as citizens of Alberta, have the right to some of our programs. We continue to work with other native groups to ensure that they also have, but the treaty are specifically federal.

We as a province have taken on the full responsibility and jurisdiction for the Metis population of Alberta, who are located throughout the province but are congregated in eight settlements in northern Alberta as well as general population throughout our province. The native services department consists of the Metis settlements branch, which serves and works with the eight Metis settlements, as I mentioned, and then the Metis services branch,

which is the liaison with the Metis living off-settlement. The special services branch maintains the ongoing communications and liaisons with treaty Indians, and then there's also a policy section which provides research and expertise in support of all our division activities.

Our '89-90 budget requests for native services is \$7.7 million, and of this \$4.6 million is grant funding for a wide range of native organizations and programs. This grant funding includes core funding for the eight settlement associations to provide them with administrative services. There are grants to 16 native friendship centres located in various centres throughout the province, grant support to the Metis Association of Alberta, grants for installation of cistern and septic systems on the settlements, and grant support to the six Metis Association of Alberta regional councils who represent the collective interests of the Metis local residents in a particular geographic area.

I might point out that as was raised in the Assembly on June 20, the members of the eight Metis settlements voted 77.6 in favour of agreement with the province to resolve a long-outstanding litigation and issues revolving around that. That's significant. That, together with the advances we've made in land entitlement claims, although they aren't within Municipal Affairs, are native concerns, and we in Alberta should all stand proud, no matter which side of the House we're on, as being the leaders in Canada in working with and to ensure that our native citizens have their full due, whether they're Indian or Metis.

With that, Mr. Chairman, I thank you for the opportunity to share comments with the Assembly and look forward to any questions they may have relating to vote 5 of the department's estimates.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Member for Edmonton-Whitemud.

MR. WICKMAN: Thank you. Mr. Chairman, through you to the minister. Mr. Minister, I first of all want to congratulate you, as well, on your appointment to the portfolio of Municipal Affairs.

Municipal Affairs is indeed very, very important, and to those of us -- and there are many within this House. I can look amongst our caucus; I can look over there; I can look within the New Democratic caucus: there are many of us who have had experience with local politics or within the civic arena or at the municipal level, and I guess you only appreciate it to that extent if you've been involved with it. But if you were to compare politics to, let's say, the armed forces, it's the municipal politicians who are the ones on the front lines. They're the troops that are in there in the day-to-day type action. They're the ones who are closest to the people. They're the ones who really have an ear to what the concerns of the people are. It's very important that the provincial government recognizes that and treats municipalities as a true partnership, not as a token partnership, not as a partnership in the sense that when the province feels it's to its benefit to recognize municipalities, they do it. It's got to be on a continuous basis. For the province to recognize what the people of Alberta want, they have to heed what elected municipal representatives are saying.

I can commend you right off the bat, Mr. Minister, for sending out a letter to all the elected representatives throughout the province, and there's a good number of them; by my count, approximately 2,200. It was a very good questionnaire. It asked a lot of questions, and I'm sure you're going to get some

responses. There has been an appreciation for that. I would like to know what the minister intends to do with the results; if he's going to bring them forward to the House and share them with the rest of us. I, indeed, would be very interested to see what municipal politicians are saying. So that's a sign that you, as Minister of Municipal Affairs, are willing to consult.

But it has to be done on a serious level, Mr. Minister. On the one hand, we can't simply send out a questionnaire and say, "I want your input," if that input is not going to be heeded. In other words, on the one hand the minister sends out letters, but then on the other hand we have the municipalities objecting, saying that a Senate election is going to be thrust upon us at the same time that the municipal elections take place, which are going to draw away from the municipal elections and those very, very important issues that occur at that time. I recognize, Mr. Minister, that as a matter of fact, the representatives of the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association said, fine, they would go along with it this one time provided there were guarantees that it would not occur again. But they were boxed in. They really had no choice. What could they say? They are still not happy with what appears to be a decision that this government has made. If the government is not prepared to consult, and consult on most or all items where it's deemed necessary, it can indeed be very harmful.

I can recall an instance where a former cabinet minister went to a meeting within a neighbourhood in ward 5, the area I represented as an alderman, and said he was going to come back to this House and push for an additional \$20 million expenditure to allow light rail transit to be developed underground. Now, that statement was made to the community without having gone to consult with the city to see what the desirable option was. It did indeed cause a great deal of difficulties for the elected municipal representatives and also for those communities. In fact, the whole question is still in limbo. So that's an example of a kind of a shotgun approach of consultation.

Also, I would point out that you had made reference to the four bodies that do represent municipalities, districts, and so on throughout the province, and of course the one I'm most familiar with is the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association. Two requests I would make there. One is that regular meetings be held with representatives of those four organizations. Secondly, that when resolutions are passed at annual conventions of those organizations, those resolutions should be looked upon very seriously, particularly when it comes to areas when municipalities are asking the province to pass enabling legislation to allow municipalities to determine what they feel is best for the people within the area they represent; not enabling legislation when it's handy for the provincial government, such as the question of the control of the hours of operation for retail shopping, for example, when this government just passed it on to the municipalities because it was a hot potato and it was a very undesirable piece of enabling legislation. It caused all kinds of problems, and it still continues to cause problems. Had there been proper consultation there, the municipalities would have made it quite clear they don't want enabling legislation to cause conflict between municipalities like Edmonton and St. Albert. They would want legislation that would control the situation on a provincial basis; in other words, equally.

Also, there has to be greater consultation with municipalities when it comes to the question of taxation. I'm going to touch very briefly on the question of taxation for cultural centres, because that particular situation occurred within this House when

this particular Assembly chose to exempt, initially, one cultural centre. I can remember sitting here representing the city of Edmonton and pleading with the members of that committee: don't pass this piece of legislation because it would cause all types of problems for us. But the members of that committee chose not to listen to my presentation, or didn't respect my presentation, and in fact the House passed that piece of legislation which exempted that cultural centre. Two more followed, and we see now what has happened. There again is a question of no consultation or consultation not being done on a serious basis that has led to problems, because the municipalities in that particular situation would have known what was the most desirable method of going.

There was reference made to grants. The shoestring is being undone somewhat, and that's good, Mr. Minister. But it should go to the extent that municipalities are given unconditional grants, and that municipalities should decide: should these dollars be spent for social services, should these dollars be spent for policing, should these dollars be spent for the library system, should these dollars be spent for transit? In other words, don't be afraid to allow the municipalities to make decisions, because as I pointed out earlier, the municipalities are on the front lines. They are ones that are the closest to the people. They're in the best position to gauge what programs are the most important within their own communities, within their own cities, within their own towns, within their own villages. And it's going to vary throughout the province. That's why it's so important to free up, undo those strings totally and allow that flexibility by the various municipalities to determine their own spending priorities.

There are some areas where municipalities right now, Mr. Minister, are crying out for assistance, and the government is not listening. The school foundation levy, the 2.5 percent increase where the government has admitted that it made a slipup -- I won't call it an error. It wasn't really an error. It was a situation, I guess, where there were a number of implications: the by-election, and so on and so forth. But nevertheless, it has placed the municipalities in a very difficult position, and the municipalities have proposed a solution to free them of that problem that was created by this government. But so far this government hasn't listened.

I can look at the CRC grants, where into a fiscal period the government announces a cutback, leaving the municipalities in a tremendous bind where they've made commitments to community groups. That, Mr. Minister, is not the way to develop a partnership with the municipalities. You're not going to gain their respect if those types of decisions are made. I realize that doesn't fall under your particular portfolio. Nevertheless, because of the impact it has on municipalities, it is related to your portfolio. Of course, municipally elected representatives are going to be looking to you for some guidance or direction as to how that is going to be resolved, because I think it is unfair to leave them hanging with that particular problem that has not been created by them.

Also, the Member for Edmonton-Beverly touched on municipal assessments, which was touched upon in the throne speech. Now, there are a number of questions that would arise as a result of that statement in the throne speech. For example, what kind of action is anticipated? When is it going to occur? How current should those assessments be? Who's going to bear the cost? What is the financial responsibility? For the larger municipalities to do annual reassessments, the costs can be ex-

tremely significant.

I also want to point out a number of other areas, Mr. Minister. In the larger urban centres such as Edmonton and Calgary there have been requests in the past for assistance in a number of areas. One is the fear of decay in the downtown. We recognize that in the large urban centres the core is like the heart of a body; the stronger the pulse, the stronger the body. There have been proposals done by both major municipalities in Alberta proposing revitalization of the downtown. Up to now the commitment, the willingness to share in that responsibility, particularly the financial responsibility, has not been that enthusiastic on the part of the government. I thought the government in the past did a good job in the development of the Capital City Park, but we now have an area where the city of Edmonton has called for an extension further west to serve people in constituencies like Edmonton-Whitemud and Edmonton-Meadowlark and so on. In the last couple of years, the information I get tells me that we can't expect to see any funding prior to 1991. Again, it's an area out of your portfolio. Nevertheless, the elected representatives look to you for some guidance in this particular one as well. That's an example of how you as the Minister of Municipal Affairs can work with the municipalities.

The question of cleaning up the water in the two rivers in the two major cities. I think there should be some type of joint commission set up to clean up that water so it becomes usable for recreational purposes the way it used to be. The question of the environment for municipalities throughout Alberta is very important. Encouragement of recycling programs, for example, can be done by the provincial government. The recycling program that was initiated within the city of Edmonton should be initiated in municipalities throughout the entire province.

I want to touch on the AMPLÉ program. The AMPLÉ program increase is 18 percent, and I think that's good. That was a good initiative that was led by the Liberal caucus some years ago, and the government did listen. The government was wise to listen because that is job creation. I do ask, however: how many jobs has it created? How many more jobs will it create?

Mr. Minister, I would also like to touch on a couple of aspects of housing. Now, the question of granny suites or garden suites, as referred to by this government -- it is worthy of being experimented with, particularly in the rural areas. The approach being taken is a pilot project. Yes, that is the way to go. I think it's the only way it could be approached. It's a way of looking for a better quality of life for seniors. But we have to be very, very cautious and recognize the possible implications for municipalities if we get into this type of program on a widespread basis without first exploring the implications. Neighbourhoods, when they are designed, when they are serviced, are serviced for a certain population. When that population increases, then the services that have been put into place can be overtaxed. However, if granny suites are put into neighbourhoods where they were designed for a certain population and because that population has aged and the children have moved on to other neighbourhoods the population has declined, then that's a different situation. So I just ask the minister to be very, very cautious in the whole question of a garden suite pilot project. I recognize the importance it has to seniors, and I recognize that municipalities like the county of Parkland have lobbied this government to put that into effect.

Also in the area of housing, very recently in this House a question was asked about the need for additional housing units for physically disabled persons. The additional money being

provided for renovations, the changes in that criteria: that is good. But it was pointed out to you, Mr. Minister, by representatives of the Handicapped Housing Society of Alberta that there is a desperate need for more wheelchair units or units designed for disabled persons. I would ask you to respond to that. Do you have any initiatives being planned to ensure that those waiting lists there can be eliminated and there can be a sufficient supply of housing for disabled persons within the province?

The question of co-operative housing. Co-operative housing, which was initiated a number of years ago, is a good alternative to housing. It's affordable, it brings together a mix of people, it brings together a spirit of co-operation, and I think that's excellent. In the last couple of years I haven't heard that much about co-operative housing, and I want to know from the minister: is there still a continuing commitment toward co-operative housing, and can we expect that to remain in place for a period of time?

In conclusion, Mr. Minister, I want to say that I'm looking forward to working with you as the Minister of Municipal Affairs and looking forward to developing a good relationship to ensure that municipalities get the best deal possible, because it is my belief that the municipalities are the foundation of this province when it comes to politics and are the frontline troops. On that note I'll close, and I'll eagerly look forward to your comments.

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

MR. NELSON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to deal just for a few minutes . . . The discussion on the area of municipal affairs, of course, has been given a fairly decent airing here. There are certain areas I might like to get into if I have a moment, but I'd like to deal with my favourite subject of Alberta Mortgage and Housing, which I'm sure the minister is fairly aware of. I'd like to start with hoping that the minister will take my comments in the grain they're given instead of suggesting, as was reported by someone in the *Calgary Herald* on April 21, 1988, that the criticisms are inaccurate hogwash. I can assure you that I don't deal in inaccurate hogwash.

Of course, the manner in which we try to deal with estimates and the taxpayers' money of this province by the members of the Legislature, at least on this side of the House, is to be done in an objective fashion to ensure that our taxpayers are getting good value for the dollars they're expending and the needs of the community are first and foremost looked after. There is no suggestion at any time on my part that we shouldn't be looking after those people: the handicapped, senior citizens, and those in some economic or social difficulty that need assistance. I don't think anybody in Alberta or anywhere in Canada would really suggest they shouldn't be looked after in some form.

I have a number of the minister's previous discussions with regard to Alberta Mortgage and Housing before me, Mr. Chairman, which I . . . The minister is smiling because I think he knows where I'm coming from. Anyway, I don't think I'll get into all these totally at the moment, because I don't want to put the minister on the spot too much. But I'm sure he reflects back on some of the comments he's made to the Legislature relevant to the issue of Alberta Mortgage and Housing, both as its current corporation is in place and prior to that as a dual corporation of mortgages and, of course, housing development. Of course, if the minister would like to reflect back to May 25, 1981, and May 5, 1983, and May 23, 1985, and other questions

and/or speeches, I'm certain he will understand where I'm coming from, especially in that it relates to some of the concerns he had in those days and certainly concerns I have not only in the past but in the present and the future.

The first item I'd like to deal with really is Administrative Support, with an increase of 10.5 percent. Prior to asking the question, I guess I'd like to know at this point what is proposed as far as staffing the corporation in the next year, what the staff is at the present time. Maybe we could compare it with the total staffing of the corporations as separate entities prior to their amalgamation some years ago. And why would we be offering or giving this corporation a 10.5 percent increase in their administrative costs when, in fact, it appears we're trying to reduce the amount of inventory they have in the corporation? I know that we're reducing the inventory in the corporation. In my constituency I have a lot of it. I have some of it that's also vacant. I have a tenant in one of our corporation properties given a 90-day notice to vacate because they're going to sell the property under him, and yet they've got vacant property sitting there that isn't on the block for sale. We're willing to unload and dump a person out of their home unless they come up with some purchase money to buy the property at the current market value with a \$750 legal fee. I don't know why they would ask for a \$750 legal fee, because I can assure the minister that I can find a lawyer or someone that will change a mortgage over for a heck of a lot less than 750 bucks.

In any event, I think maybe the minister should examine some way of ensuring that those houses that are vacant are properly placed on the block before those that are presently occupied by tenants or other people. Of course, the minister recently got a letter from me again -- and I know some years ago the Heritage Savings Trust Fund passed a motion of mine, and it went through the Legislature, with regard to the upkeep of these properties. Of course, whether there are tenants in them or not, some of these properties are still not being kept up and they also need to be examined. However, I'm extremely concerned about us throwing people out of their homes when we've got other vacant properties around that possibly could have a "for sale" sign put on them prior to those that have people in them to ensure that we are, as others have said, looking after the social needs of our community.

During the election campaign, of course, there was a mortgage interest shielding program. It's identified in vote 7 under Municipal Affairs. I sometimes wonder why it's put under Municipal Affairs and not under some other area such as social services or housing and mortgage assistance. I guess I go back to the early years when we had these mortgage assistance programs prior to the economic difficulties we had in the province, where we assisted people in purchasing homes. And I want to make it very clear that many people who had assistance in purchasing homes have continued in those homes or have continued in a viable way in selling that home and upgrading themselves to a different home, and they are very thankful for that opportunity. But there are many people that we hurt through these programs. When I say "we hurt," we as government and they as homeowners hurt themselves by getting into homes they really can't afford. I'm concerned continually.

I know the Treasurer has very extensively indicated that the economic circumstances in the province of Alberta are second to none in Canada and a rosy picture is flowering down the road. Yet in 1979, Mr. Chairman, I made the public statement in the council chambers of the city of Calgary when I was an alderman

that "Look out, boys and girls, we're going to have a problem." I suggested that developers stop expanding their horizons and spending their money like it was water and various other things. Of course, I don't have a long degree in economics, so I wasn't overly listened to at that point in time, and yet in 1981 we had a crash. So some of us without these great economic degrees aren't so stupid after all, as some might suggest. I'm not suggesting today that there's going to be a great big, long economic disaster in the province of Alberta, and I pray to God there won't. But I want to ensure that any program devised by government is examined in such a fashion that if the situation were to happen on the bad side of it again, we wouldn't have the same economic circumstance of throwing people on the streets because of foreclosures or various other things because they couldn't afford the house or the home we provided them through subsidies.

Mr. Chairman, I'd like to ask a couple of questions in addition to the one with regard to the administrative increase of 10.5 percent, and I'd like that explained to me very definitively. It may be that the minister will have to take it under notice, to provide me with a written response, because I have a real problem in trying to assess how a 10.5 percent increase in administrative support -- or program support as identified in here, but it's an administrative cost -- is in this program when we're talking about restraint. A \$1.5 billion deficit being budgeted for 1989-90, and here's a corporation that has cost the taxpayers of this province some nearly \$600 million over the years and will continue to cost the taxpayers of this province many millions of dollars if we keep increasing their administrative costs. I'm concerned about that.

I'm also concerned, Mr. Chairman, with regard to the continual financial assistance and operating deficit of the mobile home and industrial parks in Fort McMurray. I wonder if the same consideration is being given to other mobile homes and what have you. I'd like an explanation as to how they are to receive something in the order of \$3.5 million this year in the operation of a mobile home park and industrial parks. Again, it may mean that you will have to take that on notice, to get back to me. I'm not sure you would have this very definitive information available.

I'm just wondering additionally -- of course, the Auditor General still has some concerns about the operation of the corporation, and some of its information systems and various other activities and controls the Auditor General occasionally requests. Of course, he still has concerns about the reporting of the activities, especially those areas of finances that relate to the actual value of the properties and what have you that are held by the corporation. I'd like to know if the minister has any long-term objective as to what the direction of the corporation will be or is perceived to be -- his thoughts on the long-term direction of this corporation. Maybe I should just reiterate what mine are. I certainly could refer the minister to my speech in the House here which one of my colleagues, my colleague from Calgary-Fish Creek, helped me out with during that period of time when I couldn't get it all in. But on Thursday, or I think it would be Wednesday or Tuesday on April 19 or 20 of 1988, it was suggested by somebody that I was full of hogwash. Well, I get sick and tired of hearing that too. It's time the MLAs, especially over here in the private members, were listened to because we do have some knowledge of what goes on in our communities.

I'd also like to ask the minister if he would consider the appointment of a committee of members of the Legislature and the

public, with judiciary powers, to objectively -- and I suggest objectively -- examine the complete structure of the corporation. Of course, I would certainly like to recommend the most objective chairman to such a committee. That would be myself. Then that would really enlighten the whole thing. Hopefully all my yelling and screaming would be found to be somewhat...

AN HON. MEMBER: Hogwash.

MR. NELSON: ... somewhere maybe a little out of line, but I don't think so.

Mr. Chairman, I also took the opportunity to, as best I could through information I was able to gather, suggest there was some hanky-panky going on inside the corporation, and it was shuffled off as being another MLA twitch. I get some difficulties with all that stuff, because there are so many things an MLA gets when you have so much of this housing product. I might add I have no senior citizen housing, so I can't praise or complain about that, although we're trying hard to get some senior citizen housing in my constituency. Most constituencies usually have a little bit here and there, but seeing mine was subdivided, I lost the piece that had that in. Believe me, the seniors are a welcome part to our community.

In any event, because of the age of the population in McCall and in the northeast side of Calgary and, I guess, some other areas such as Mill Woods here in Edmonton, there are opportunities to try and assess some of the circumstances we put our citizens into, or our citizens help themselves into in many cases. I don't want to suggest that government or the mortgage corporation is forcing people into accepting the terms and conditions that are made available to them through the legislation or the policies of the government. At the same time, I think we need to assess and ensure that those people who are trying to better their lives are given all the facts. In fact, the corporation is taking into consideration that these facts that are given are assessed properly so they can make a decision that is going to be good for the taxpaying public of the province of Alberta. So they're not going to continue to build up debts. Money's going into the corporation -- as I said, \$600 million; they're just on \$600 million -- over the next number of years. I think it is unfair for the taxpayers of this province to continue to dig deeper and deeper into their pockets for something we maybe should not be in. I have some thoughts on how we can deal with that in a positive way and using the private sector, certainly with government assistance in some other fashion.

However, I hope we do continue to examine the area of the handicapped and help those people, our seniors, who built this province originally, to ensure they have a comfortable life, to provide for their longevity, and to ensure they have the opportunities of those of us who are still young and not handicapped. I would just ask that the minister have an open mind to ensure that our colleagues in the House are listened to in some respect, at least those of us on this side of the House who have some knowledge, unlike my Commie friends across the way here. I knew you were waiting for me to get that in.

Some of these people who are being booted out of their homes because of sales should be left alone for a while until such time as the empty stock out there, the inventory, is removed from the marketplace by the corporation. Allow for these people to enjoy their lives without threat. I think it's a terrible situation we get ourselves into. It is also my hope that the corporation will move further to allow people to use rental

payments as a rent-to-purchase program so they can ultimately own their own homes and the corporation can get the full value of that property back that they have on the books.

I would certainly like to know the true value of all the property the corporation holds rather than its book value. I don't know that that's an unreasonable request. It may be at this point in time, considering the amount of work that may be needed and my concerns about the increased administrative costs that we've suggested here today.

In any event, Mr. Chairman, as one member said, "I thought you'd be a little harder." I don't want to be too hard on the new minister this year. We'll see what happens next year, and then maybe we'll pound the table a little bit and even make a few quotes on some of the items the minister has said in the past, maybe give him a little rough time. But hopefully in the next year the minister will perform admirably -- I expect he will -- and some of these thoughts he has put on paper in the past will come to fruition and he will seek the assistance of some of the members who have a specific interest in this corporation, as I do.

I'm not going to get into the whole area of dismantling it or anything like that. I think I'll just leave that alone for the time being. But at the same time, I know there are members in the Legislature here who would suggest that the ultimate goal would be to dismantle the corporation. I certainly would not be opposed to that, with the exception, as I've already identified, of senior citizen and handicapped housing in particular. I think if the corporation has a 15-year mandate to do whatever, maybe we should examine that for certain, because all we do is create careers out there for something we don't need to do. Maybe the corporation has served its purpose in its present form. I don't know. But I'd certainly like to follow the suggestion of creating a committee that has judiciary powers to inquire into the corporation and seal everything up so it can be looked at in a positive and objective fashion, and maybe we can ultimately save the taxpayers of this province a lot of money and provide for those people in need. These are the two ultimate goals we as legislators must have as a priority: the taxpayer of the province and those who need our assistance. If we can save money and provide that assistance in a concerned, feeling way, then I think we're all winners, especially those people who receive the help and the taxpayer who pays the bill.

Thank you.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Member for Edmonton-Highlands.

MS BARRETT: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, and thank you to the minister for allowing me to make a few comments briefly.

First of all, I'd like to thank the minister wholeheartedly for complying with a written request that was on the Order Paper several weeks ago. I know his office staff really went out of their way to try to accommodate that request for information, to make a deadline when the federal Housing minister was going to be in town. I might tell the minister at this point that by the high tech of fax machines we got it over to the people just in time to get on the board for consideration by the federal minister.

However, I'd like to note with some distress that the contents of the information was not as encouraging as I hoped it would be. I realize the minister is new to this portfolio, but amongst the information I had sought from that written question was how

many inner-city unit projects would be either in progress or planned for this year or next year to help with the really serious, chronic problem we have with the inner city of Edmonton, the poorest district in the entire province. I was sorry to see the minister's information showed that none are planned and none are in progress.

So I'd like to use this opportunity to make a pitch to the minister. I know he takes his responsibilities seriously. I'd like to remind the minister that the tenements that are currently available in the inner city of Edmonton in the first instance often are very, very unsafe for their tenants; secondly, many of them are so filthy and so in a state of disrepair that even if they were not safe in the first instance, they are certainly not what one would call an inviting environment for habitation of any description. On that basis, I plead with the minister to please come up with, probably a policy would be the best thing, to help alleviate the problem in the inner city of Edmonton, which of course is one of the areas I represent.

[Mr. Moore in the Chair]

It's pretty clear that the slumlords aren't going to do it on their own, and they're not going to participate in potential investment schemes; they haven't got the vested interest. But as has been demonstrated in the past, where projects can be initiated which give usually the poorest people in our society a chance to live in a clean environment, one they have some control over, they will respect that environment, do a lot of good to maintain it, and work co-operatively. I suspect that's the only means by which we're going to get the slumlords out of business and start to revitalize the inner city in a way that will make it habitable not only for yuppies, who may want to live in the inner city at some point, but also for the lowest income segments of our society, who very often are ignored. So again, kudos especially to the minister for such a speedy response for that information. But also to be heard in our ongoing request: even if he doesn't come up with a project this year, if this minister would come up with a plan for replacement of shambling inner-city houses on a 10-year plan, he would be doing the inner city and all of Edmonton a great service. I know I can make the same case for the inner city in Calgary.

Just two more points I'd like to make, Mr. Chairman. One relates to some correspondence between myself and the minister regarding the government's removal of the purchase or repair of appliances from the seniors' home improvement program and the seniors' home improvement program extension. Up until two years ago, under this program seniors could apply for reimbursement for aging or completely broken-down appliances. I believe the rule was one every 10 years; it was a 10-year replacement program. Now, some individuals managed to keep up their houses with very cheap sources, whether it's labour -- sometimes they can do it themselves -- or materials. Some of them are very good at finding scrap materials that serve the purpose that is really intended, I believe, overall by this program. In that case, if there is a ceiling, which there is, on the amount they can claim under the program, I'd like to make a pitch one more time to the minister to consider reinstating this.

Now, he didn't state this in his response to me, but I do know from dialogue with staff in the minister's department that there have been instances of abuse, and I acknowledge that. No matter what the system, whether it's Gainers or whether it's a seniors' program, it doesn't matter; there is always going to be

abuse. I acknowledge that, but perhaps the minister could refine the guidelines so that those who really need access to this appliance replacement could have it.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, I'm a little bit curious about vote 8.3, and I believe the Member for Calgary-McCall raised it. I, too, and I know my colleague from Edmonton-Beverly would love to know the significance of the program relative to, specifically, Fort McMurray; that's the Mobile Home and Industrial Parks vote. It's intriguing to say the least, Mr. Chairman. We'd love to hear that.

I guess one final comment. I'm glad to hear the Member for Calgary-McCall finally coming around on the issue of AMHC foreclosures. He might well in one of his remarks have been quoting from speeches by Grant Notley in 1983 when Mr. Notley said, "Gee, why throw these people out of their houses? Why don't you rent them back on a rent-to-own system so that you can, first of all, stabilize the market value of the housing and, secondly, not throw people into the streets." So I'm very glad to hear that the Member for Calgary-McCall has been looking up Grant Notley's speeches, and I welcome his support for that notion.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. ACTING DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The Member for West Yellowhead, please.

MR. DOYLE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to firstly congratulate the minister on his appointment to Municipal Affairs. It's a great pleasure to come to this Legislature with so many other previously elected officials on both sides of the House. I would hope that the minister will follow through on his suggestions that he will work with local municipalities, local councillors, and especially the elected people from cities and towns, also with the members of the AUMA, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, but most importantly, I would hope that the minister works much more closely with the MDs, counties, and improvement districts.

In a recent meeting yesterday afternoon with the improvement district of Yellowhead, they again enforced their position that it should be absolutely necessary that the powers of the improvement districts should be the same as those of the elected officials in towns and major cities in the province of Alberta. They feel, and I feel, Mr. Chairman, that it's very unfair that local people elected to serve the people of those local areas make decisions and then have to be checked up by people in the Municipal Affairs department, and they make the final decision.

Vision 2020. In my maiden speech I mentioned it. My colleague from Edmonton-Beverly preferred not to mention Vision 2020. I had the opportunity with several other municipalities last year to sit in on the performance in the town of Whitecourt to draw up a plan for Vision 2020, and I felt, Mr. Minister, that it was a total waste of taxpayers' money, both locally and provincially. The other municipalities confirmed that same feeling, and a letter was sent to the minister at that time.

In vote 7, Mr. Minister, you have the rural and native mortgage program. It was a good increase, yet on the Metis housing there was quite a decrease. I wonder if the minister could clarify the reasons for that. I know that in some areas of my municipality where people own their own homes, they -- natives especially -- cannot get funding to get power installations, water and sewer installations.

I'm very pleased that the minister has put housing for seniors

as a priority and good funding towards it. I'm sure that in the total of Alberta many seniors and handicapped will benefit from those programs.

Mr. Chairman, I'm sure the minister is well aware of the great hardships of the ID and municipalities of West Yellowhead, also the county of Parkland, with the newly formed MD of Brazeau. I would hope that money will be found to assist those municipalities, especially as it has caused great increases to the taxes of those towns all along the route.

As the Member for Edmonton-Whitemud suggested, Mr. Chairman, I think it would be disastrous to hold these Senate elections, regardless of whether we support them or not, on the same day as the municipal elections. I think it would be better off on a separate day completely so as not to confuse the people who are voting in these local municipalities.

Mr. Chairman, I listened very carefully to the minister as he spoke, and I would like to allow him the time that he lost in his final comments to answer the questions of those who have spoken before me. I would also hope that the minister through the next short term would work very closely with the Minister of Education to make sure the requisitions for the school boards are in before the tax levies of all the municipalities have to go out. In fact, in many cases in the province of Alberta school board requisitions are in excess of those of local municipalities. Perhaps the minister would like to meet some day with me, and we could chat over the possibility of the school boards collecting their own taxes rather than putting that burden on the local councillors and aldermen. I hope the Minister of Education will realize it's time now that school board members be held as accountable as all the other elected officials in this province.

[Mr. Jonson in the Chair]

On that, Mr. Minister, I'll allow the extra time for you to respond.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Hon. minister.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I'll try and answer as many questions as I can. Then what I don't answer, I'll send the answers by letter.

To the number of issues raised by the hon. Member for Edmonton-Beverly. I'm able to appreciate his comments with regards to Vision 2020. The lack of information -- possibly there's a way I could handle that in budget study in terms of program material for the hon. member in assisting him. Possibly the critic from the Liberal Party -- if there are some program areas you'd like more details on, we certainly have that available to you.

In terms of vote 4 and the growth in the planning and development, there is a slight reduction there with regards to planning. It is not our intent to reduce the planning service or that facility across the province. We have been supporting planning; the percentage is about 60 percent provincial, 40 percent local. That ratio has been maintained in terms of our dollars.

The comments with regards to rural depopulation and that we're not dealing with that. As I mentioned earlier, there is a concern with regards to that, and we're doing a number of things within government. I won't enumerate them, but it's one of my intents in the spring session to outline a program to deal with rural population and rural development, at that point. That's my assignment between now and that period of time. We

have a number of programs to try and see that rural people have facilities just as we have in the urban sectors. Example: distance learning, which has been enhanced and expanded, and very acceptable to rural people -- it's keeping more families out in the country than before. So that's just one of those kinds of things we're doing. The minister of economic development introduced a program this year that would assist local small communities financially so they could look at a plan by which they could encourage economic development and maintenance of their population base. That's just a couple of things, but more certainly has to be done. But it is not our intent to eradicate or eliminate or reduce the effectiveness of planning in this province as such.

Maintaining assessments on a current basis is our intent. We recognize some of the difficulties of Calgary. I'll most likely be having some discussions with them to bring them right up to par in terms of assessment throughout the city. There is a lot of work to be done in Calgary, a major amount of work, a major assignment there. We recognize that.

In terms of bringing all up to current-value assessment, it'll take us a few years to do that. We intend to move along as quickly as we can, but our intent is to have a program in this province of current assessment. Now, that could be up to three years in terms of age, but that's not very old when you look at the system as it is at the present time. Once we get into more technology, better use of computers, I think we can keep assessments quite current and much better in many ways for the taxpayer and also in terms of equity in the application of taxation.

Liability insurance. I appreciate your comments there.

In vote 7, the 103.5 percent program support increase -- I believe that is the new housing programs that are introduced. That's where the major increase is, and I covered those in my opening remarks, the new programs that are taking effect. That's where the money is, for those new programs. That's why the increase. Okay?

You are quite right in terms of the mobile home. If they have purchased a mobile home within the last five years, then they're not eligible for that family first-time homeowner grant. You've made the presentation to me; I'll have a look at it. Okay? I don't know what can be done, but I'll certainly have a look at that.

In vote 8, in terms of low-income persons there is no element of discrimination, of saying that welfare recipients cannot rent our accommodation. They're as eligible as anyone else. If I can just leave it at that -- I can give you more detail with regards to that as well, but they do have access to our foreclosed housing that we have out on the rental market.

There are some other questions. To the hon. Member for Edmonton-Beverly. I'll review the *Hansard*, provide that for him.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Whitemud raised a number of concerns as well. I believe the presentation that you made with regards to adequate consultation and real consultation is a good remark. As a minister you can move along and do what you think is right or as you please without consultation. It is my intent to consult with the four levels of governments out there: the counties, the MDs, the city governments, the IDs, and the special areas. I've tried to do that up to this point in time.

You raised some examples with me about consultation; for example, the matter of the cultural centres being taxed, that we are going to come ahead with permissive legislation whereby municipalities can provide some forgiveness. I have discussed

that with the municipalities, with their associations, and they've given me approval to proceed with that particular amendment. I think your comment is well taken, and it's certainly my responsibility to consult in the best manner possible.

One of the things I thought about while you were making your remarks is that as a minister when I see some new ideas or some new directions that we may be taking as a government, I should see that those -- possibly through the means of a resolution of presentation, I could clear them through the annual convention of these respective associations. That might be one of the ways of doing it. I'll try and do that in an improved manner, possibly different than has been done in the past.

I think the matter with regards to the current situation, where some of our grants were changed and some of the responsibilities with regards to funding changed with local municipalities -- we were concerned about the process, but under the circumstances there was little option. It's not the intent of the government to do that kind of thing. Adequate notice certainly will be given.

The matter of the municipal assessments. I think I've made some comment on that. I will be more specific because a few of the questions of the hon. Member for Edmonton-Whitemud were more specific, and I'll attempt to answer those by letter in terms of when, how current, and the financial responsibility we'll take with regards to that. My job as I see it, and I agree with you, is to protect the municipalities in terms of their autonomy and their decision-making and to support them in that, and that's what I would certainly do.

Your note to be cautious with regards to the garden suites. I would be very, very disappointed if we developed a garden suite program that became kind of back alley slum residences or a blight on a community. I think that's a good note of caution. The commitment I will take with regards to this is that when we have moved a fair distance through the pilot project and I have an interim report or a final report, what I will do is bring those findings to the Legislature here and table them so that we can discuss them in the Legislature, maybe by resolution or informally, before I proceed to the next step. So I'll make that as a commitment so that we have some kind of safeguard, that it just isn't the minister moving on the program, that we do it through this Legislative body.

Housing units for disabled persons. I certainly have a commitment to that. There are some units and moneys available through the budget to meet that commitment, and I'll give you that information in a more specific sense by letter. But the rent supplement program is certainly one we'd like to proceed with to assist there if possible.

The home adaptation program. We hope that will help there. Some of the units that we have foreclosed on and have in AMHC we hope to make available to the handicapped people as well. There are a number of those units. As you know, we did open some in Edmonton already, and they have meet with quite good reception in terms of the recipients that are using them. But it'll be my intent to put some substance into that program and do all we can to meet the need that's there.

As I've indicated earlier, some of the other matters that you have raised I'll answer directly by letter.

To the Member for Calgary-McCall. In AMHC, under Administrative Support, the significant increase that's there -- without debating the matter, I can give the specific reason for it, and then we can have the discussion later possibly. The regular salary increase -- the cost of living adjustment awarded to management and the bargaining unit was \$617,000. There is \$60,000

budgeted for consulting fees for the system study that's currently under way, and that's to try and improve the systems that were used. The Auditor raised that particular question. The other part of it is a reduction in the recoveries of some \$864,000 that's due to a shift from marketing of single-family properties to marketing of multi-unit properties. Those are the reasons for it. I'll leave that with you without debate, and we can follow that issue up possibly in private discussion or otherwise, if the member so wishes.

The concern you raised with regards to putting people out of their homes when there are vacancies *up and down the street*. I think that's a good one, and I'd like to follow that up and assure myself that that isn't happening. I hope it isn't. If there are examples, we'll certainly deal with it.

The matter of the legislative and public committee. I'd like to have a look at that as I move along and talk further with the member with regards to that.

I appreciate the two objectives that the member establishes. First of all, we've got to save taxpayers' money. I agree with that. And we have to help those in need.

I will give the member the details with regard to the true value of property.

One of the other items, raised was with regards to the number of people on AMHC staffing. In 1983 AHC and AHMC had a staff of about 685. In 1989 there are 440 persons on staff. So there's been a reduction of 240 persons since 1983.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Highlands. I do have some detail in terms of programs, but I think the suggestion that we look a t . . .

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Pardon me, Mr. Minister. Perhaps I could call on the Deputy Government House Leader. My apologies, but let's proceed.

MR. R. SPEAKER: If I can just end this way, Mr. Chairman: I will answer all these other concerns by letter and make it available fairly quickly.

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. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order please. We must resume our proper attire f o r . . .

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 request of the hon. member, is the House agreed? All those in favour, say aye.

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

MR. GOGO: The government business for tomorrow evening will be Committee of Supply again.

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