

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ALBERTA

Title: **Friday, July 14, 1989 10:00 a.m.**

Date: 89/07/14

[The House met at 10 a.m.]

[Mr. Deputy Speaker in the Chair]

PRAYERS

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Let us pray.

In our mind's eye let us see the awesome grandeur of the Rockies, the denseness of our forests, the fertility of our farmland, the splendour of our rivers, the richness of our resources.

Then, O Lord, let us rededicate ourselves as wise stewards of such bounty on behalf of all Albertans.

Amen.

head: TABLING RETURNS AND REPORTS

MR. ANDERSON: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to table the 37th annual Public Contributions Act report for the year 1988.

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to table with the Assembly this morning the annual report for 1988-89 of the Association of Professional Engineers, Geologists, and Geophysicists of Alberta.

MR. ROSTAD: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to table Question 201 from our last session.

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, I would like to table the annual report of the Environment Council of Alberta.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Public Works, Supply and Services.

head: INTRODUCTION OF SPECIAL GUESTS

MR. KOWALSKI: Thank you very much. Today, Mr. Speaker, in the Assembly are two visitors from Montreal who are taking an opportunity to visit our beautiful province of Alberta: Mr. Dimitri Nowostawsky with his wife, Helen. Also accompanying them are their son Ihor here of the city of Edmonton and a trusted employee of the Legislative Assembly of the province of Alberta, Kathy Bruce-Kavanagh. I would ask them to rise and receive the warm welcome of the House.

head: ORAL QUESTION PERIOD**Department of Health Act**

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct my question to the Minister of Health. The minister has claimed on a number of occasions that the sweeping new powers contained in Bill 5 are needed to transfer four facilities to local boards. As you know, we've maintained that these facilities could be transferred with the wording of the previous departments of the Act. The

references to sell or lease "to any person or organization" are not needed. Now, the president of the Alberta Hospital Association has said that its own legal review clearly said that there are some ambiguities that need to be cleared up. Also, the senior vice-president of the Hospital Association has told our office that their legal opinion shows that the minister's stated intention to transfer four facilities could be achieved using the wording that appeared in previous departmental Acts. My question to the minister is this: will the minister now finally admit that section 11 of Bill 5 goes far beyond her stated intentions, and will she now tell us that she is going to either amend this section or withdraw it for the time being?

MRS. BETKOWSKI: No, I won't, Mr. Speaker.

MR. MARTIN: Well, Mr. Speaker, the Alberta Hospital Association has clearly come out against what this minister has said, and she sits in this House and says she will not withdraw it. My question is to the minister. Is her intention, then, to go further than her stated intentions? That's the only thing that we can come from, Mr. Speaker.

MRS. BETKOWSKI: That's a very different question, Mr. Speaker. I stated in this House on June 19 that I would review government's intention and the wording in the Act and that I would report back to this House at the appropriate time with respect to the decision of the government in that matter. The Bill will be open for second reading -- it's on the Order Paper -- whenever it comes up, and committee will follow. The response to exactly that question and the results of that review will be made at that time.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, that's precisely the worry that we have. It may be too late.

Given that this minister handled the School Act I think in a very sensible way and allowed people to have time and came back with a different Act, why is she being so stubborn with this Act, and why doesn't she do the same thing?

MRS. BETKOWSKI: Mr. Speaker, it's not my intent to be stubborn. I simply believe that the review has to take place. The intent of government was clearly enunciated on June 19, and the response will come at the appropriate time. It may not be the appropriate time in the eyes of the Leader of the Opposition, but it will be the appropriate time for the sponsor of the Bill.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, we'll see.

Gainers Properties Inc.

MR. MARTIN: My next question is to the minister of economic development. I have in front of me the press release of March 3, 1988, when the government announced a \$55 million loan guarantee and a \$12 million loan to Gainers Properties Inc., and I quote what they said at that time.

The financing will enable Gainers to develop two significant capital projects -- a hog slaughter plant in southern Alberta and an upgraded and modernized beef and pork processing plant in Edmonton. The projects are expected to create approximately 400 direct jobs and 1,200 indirect employment opportunities within the province.

Mr. Speaker, in there there's no mention of maintaining jobs, which the minister talked about yesterday. We know that \$6 million has already been loaned to Gainers Properties Inc. In view of the fact that this money has not been used for what it's supposed to have been used, Albertans want to know this very simple question: what is that money being used for?

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, I've indicated on a number of occasions in this Legislative Assembly what the money is being used for, and I will quote, as the hon. Leader of the New Democratic Party has quoted, that it is to upgrade and modernize the "beef and pork processing plant in Edmonton." The hon. member just quoted that. Well, if that's not maintaining jobs in the city of Edmonton, I don't know what is maintaining jobs in the city of Edmonton.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, again he evades the question. It was meant to increase jobs, and it says in the press release.

But, Mr. Speaker, given that the government-lent money went to Gainers Properties Inc., which the president of Gainers says is a completely separate company from Gainers itself and he doesn't know where the money has gone, I want to ask this minister: how can the minister know that the money that has been loaned out is being used to benefit Gainers at all and it's not being used for some other venture by Mr. Pocklington?

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, let me indicate to the hon. member that he shouldn't twist the statements by the president of Gainers, Mr. Beben, because I understand that yesterday -- and I saw it on television -- Mr. Beben indicated that some money had gone to the upgrading of the facility in Edmonton. So the hon. member should not indicate something contrary or twist statements that have been said by others. I only go by what I saw. I would offer the suggestions to the hon. member that he not twist other statements.

In addition to that, I should indicate to the hon. member that the administration, the declaration, and whatnot, as I indicated to the hon. Member for Vegreville, falls under the Provincial Treasurer. So in the event that there are questions as it relates to the follow-up and the usage, the policing of that falls to the Provincial Treasurer.

But I am happy to indicate again, as I have done in the past, that the agreement indicated that a plant would start construction prior to June of 1989 in southern Alberta. An extension was granted to them at their request to put that date forward to September '89. In the event that construction has not started at that date, I've left the House with the assurance that the additional \$2 million on the draw down of the \$12 million loan that has been offered will not be forthcoming. We will exercise the full force of the law to make sure that the terms of that agreement will be lived up to.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, this company is in serious financial difficulty. His department does administer the loans, and that money is gone. We're not talking about the loans in October. The people want to know, and you should know, Mr. Speaker where has that money gone? Tell us now in this Legislature.

MR. ELZINGA: I'm happy to indicate to the hon. member, as was indicated by the previous minister of economic development, that securities are given. We have securities in place for

both the loan guarantee and the loan. For the information of the hon. member, in the event that there is some type of forfeit, there are securities that will be in place so that the people of this province are protected.

MR. DECORE: I'd like my question assigned to my colleague the Member for Calgary-North West.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Calgary-North West.

Assistance for Business Enterprises

MR. BRUSEKER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The people of Alberta are up to their eyebrows with this Pocklington empire, and it shows signs of faltering, and it seems we're having some difficulty getting legitimate answers to very legitimate questions. We're on the hook to Mr. Pocklington for about \$120 million in loans and grants and guarantees, and he has another open door for another \$50 million or so. The issue is bigger than just Mr. Pocklington. There's been a number of guarantees to quite a number of businesses across a variety of industries for billions of dollars. We need answers, and we need some now. I want to go back to the minister of economic development. He just said, "We have securities." My question is to the minister. Do we have 100 percent assurance that all of Mr. Pocklington's assets, including his personal assets, are on the line so that if this company fails, the people of Alberta are not going to be left holding the bag for Mr. Pocklington's financial responsibilities?

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, I'm delighted that the hon. Member for Calgary-North West has indicated that we have participated with other companies. It appears as if the two opposition parties are attempting to centre in on one specific company that's involved in the food processing sector that we've offered help to. We've offered help to a number of companies. We don't apologize for that help, but what we have to find out . . .

MR. McEACHERN: The big oil companies and your friends. Who else?

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order please.

MR. ELZINGA: We've helped a number of companies, recognizing the importance that those companies play to the job creation, to the diversification, to the enhancement of our food processing sector, to the enhancement of the agricultural community, and we're going to continue to offer that hope on a sound economic basis. The agricultural community, as has the energy community, has gone through some difficult times. In the last number of years we've involved ourselves in the economy in an aggressive way so that we could sustain job creation within this province. We've been successful in that. Admittedly at times there are going to be failures, but overall we've been very successful in creating jobs for Albertans, and we're going to continue that thrust.

MR. BRUSEKER: My second question is directed to the Minister of Agriculture. Another one of Mr. Pocklington's empires is Palm Dairies. My question is: can the Minister of Agriculture assure us that Palm Dairies is not going to go under or is not in financial difficulty, as Gainers appears to be in? Are we not

going to lose money there?

MR. ISLEY: Mr. Speaker, I can assure the House that Alberta Agriculture is in no way involved with Palm Dairies as far as its financing is concerned. As far as I know, it is continuing to accept the milk allocation from the Dairy Control Board and is continuing to process milk and milk products.

MR. BRUSEKER: My final question, then, is directed to the Premier. Does the Premier not see how unacceptable it is to withhold information and hide information about the use of public funds, as has been happening with the Pocklington empire?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, quite the contrary. There's been no holding back of public information. As a matter of fact, this government's statement has been made over a period of some time now, and it has been this: the government recognizing the problems facing this province when we had an economy that was based too heavily on agriculture and energy. We're going to get into a fistfight to diversify this economy. The government was going to spread economic opportunities throughout the province, and the government was recognizing that a lot of people have talked about it before, but we're making it happen, and we're doing it with all the strength at our command. It is happening, and the reason that it's happening all across this province is the efforts of this government. And I must tell the House and the people of Alberta that because diversification is happening in such a dramatic way, because unemployment is falling, because there's confidence and investment in this province, the opposition parties don't like it. They're the blues boys over there.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Bow Valley.

Medicine Hat College at Brooks

MR. MUSGROVE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Advanced Education, and it concerns the Brooks campus of the Medicine Hat College. In the throne speech on February 17 this year it was stated that the Brooks campus would be proceeded with. In discussions that I've had with the chairman of the Medicine Hat College board, who by the way is one of my constituents, he says that it's not possible to proceed with this project with the budget commitment that was made to it. Could the minister tell us what the present status of this project is?

MR. GOGO: Well, Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is correct. The government is committed to and honours its commitments of expansion of the Medicine Hat College with regard to the Brooks campus. Now, the government has in the budget this year \$93 million in Advanced Education for capital projects, a very, very aggressive capital budget. The chairman and the board of Medicine Hat College have been informed that they can go ahead with planning purposes at the Brooks campus, and they can utilize the funds which have been accumulated in the endowment and incentive fund.

MR. MUSGROVE: Mr. Speaker, if they were to proceed with the construction of Brooks campus through funds from some of their own reserves, could they be guaranteed that this money would be returned to the reserves at a later date?

MR. GOGO: Well, Mr. Speaker, the government is of the view that the reserves at any public college are in many ways reserves accumulated from the taxpayers of Alberta, and it's the position of the department that it's not unreasonable to request that these public institutions give consideration to using some of their accumulated reserves for the actual construction of the projects.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Next supplementary.

MR. MUSGROVE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Is it a policy of Advanced Education that when they're committed to a building project of this type, they should use at least a portion of their reserves before they get funding from Advanced Education under capital projects?

MR. GOGO: Obviously, Mr. Speaker, each project has to be looked at on its own. The department and the government are very proud of what they've been able to do to date with regard to the building of capital projects. The department is of the view that it's not unreasonable where a public institution such as Medicine Hat College, which has through good management, frugal management, accumulated these reserves . . . Nonetheless, to a great degree they are the taxpayers' dollars of the province, and the department asks these institutions to seriously consider their participation through these reserves in capital projects. So I don't think it's unreasonable on behalf of the department or the government to follow this course of action. In a nutshell the policy is one that I as minister think is effective and works, and hopefully the co-operation of the institutions will see that these educational opportunities continue to exist for all Albertans.

Advisory Panel for Al-Pac Project

MR. McINNIS: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of the Environment. One of the minister's appointees to the citizens' advisory panel has already resigned. Mr. Dave McArthur of Lac La Biche cites a conflict of interest arising from the fact that he may do business with the pulp mill. I say again: arising from the fact that he may do business with the pulp mill. What passes for an environmental impact assessment from the Mitsubishi/Honshu corporation cites their purchase of 125 logging trucks, 10 small trucks, 90 pickup trucks, 200 cars a year, 2,000 heavy tires, 500 light tires a year. I wonder if the minister has had discussions with any other appointees to determine from them if they may be in the same position as Mr. McArthur.

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, I doubt it very much. I don't think there's a local dealership selling that kind of equipment anywhere these days, but if there were, I think all the better for the economy of Alberta.

MR. McINNIS: I'm sure Mr. Hunter will be insulted that you don't think you can buy a pickup truck or a car from him.

In any case, in view of the fact that there is no process surrounding this panel, placing panel members in a fairly awkward position assessing what their status is vis-a-vis the process, will the minister at least produce terms of reference for the panel, including conflict-of-interest guidelines, before he tries to ram ahead with it?

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, the panel, once the federal govern-

ment representatives are put in place, will be given the flexibility to develop terms of reference. This is an entirely new process, an entirely new model for environmental impact assessments in this province and indeed in this country.

Mr. Speaker, you know, the opposition wanted public hearings. We've got public hearings that will stretch from Athabasca to the Northwest Territories. They wanted intervenor funding. They've got intervenor funding. They wanted the cumulative impact of all pulp mills, present in and the future. That is going to be done. They wanted federal government involvement. That is going to be done. You know, I think they expect me to perform miracles from time to time, and I'm sure that if the NDP saw me walk on water, they would issue a press release saying Klein can't swim.

MR. McINNIS: He can't protect the environment; that's for sure.

It's interesting the minister should mention the federal government. Even though it's not perfect, there are federal guidelines that cover these things, and I want to know if he will withdraw the ultimatum which his executive assistant says he faxed to Ottawa this morning and develop a joint federal/provincial strategy on this thing before he goes ahead with it and not try to make it up after the fact.

MR. KLEIN: Well, Mr. Speaker, there was no ultimatum. There was a communication that will lead to a co-operative situation whereby the federal government will serve with us to put in place an environmental impact assessment that will determine and prove out the highest environmental standards in the world.

MR. MITCHELL: It's interesting that the minister would be taking credit for federal participation when he's been dragged kicking and screaming to have them do that.

Mr. Speaker, it's now absolutely clear that the newly appointed Al-Pac environmental review board is a complete disaster. The process of appointments in providing intervenor funding is clearly biased. If it's biased, it will be without credibility. To the Minister of the Environment. Since the county of Athabasca has already shown its clear bias by granting Al-Pac a permit to begin construction without environmental approval, how could this minister rely upon the county of Athabasca to make impartial recommendations for board membership and for funding public intervenors?

MR. KLEIN: Here we go; you know, Mr. Speaker, the Chip an' Dale of the environmental world. [interjections]

AN HON. MEMBER: You stayed up all night on that one, didn't you?

MR. KLEIN: Oh, yeah; for sure.
What was the question? [interjections]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order please. In the interests of all members of the Assembly, I know everybody's enjoying themselves, but I think there are quite a few members who would like to get on this morning and this week. So if the hon. member could quickly repeat his question.

MR. MITCHELL: My preferred response to the Chip an' Dale comment, Mr. Speaker, would be completely and utterly

unparliamentary.

Since the county of Athabasca has already shown its bias by granting Al-Pac a permit to begin construction without environmental approvals, how could this minister rely upon the county of Athabasca to make impartial recommendations for board memberships and for funding public intervenors? That's my first question.

MR. KLEIN: My understanding, Mr. Speaker, is that the development appeal board or the planning jurisdiction in the county of Athabasca granted a development permit. I understand that there's an appeal process relative to that permit. This is strictly a matter of municipal jurisdiction, and I've indicated to the proponents, Alberta-Pacific, that if indeed they are successful in getting their development permit and if they proceed with earthwork, they do so entirely at their own risk.

MR. MITCHELL: Since Mr. McArthur has, rightly so, disqualified himself -- and he should be congratulated for that -- over concern with conflict of interest, could this minister please explain how he can possibly allow Mr. Hunter to remain on the board when his auto dealership will clearly benefit economically from the construction of this mill? How could he possibly be impartial in this process?

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, I assume everyone in the area will benefit; everyone in the area including this area will benefit. At this point there is a wild assumption that he is in some way going to sell a car or something else to this company. That is an assumption at this point. With respect to the other gentleman, the gentleman who declined to sit on the board, he felt that indeed as a member of a consulting company that he would be doing business with a business that in turn would be doing business with the pulp mill company. I think there is a vast difference.

MR. MITCHELL: Mr. Speaker, the minister has identified the problem exactly: all of these people will benefit economically from that process and, therefore, cannot be impartial. In light of that I'd like to ask this question: is the minister aware of the Ontario environmental review board process, comprised of 12 highly qualified, impartial experts in the business, law, science, and administration of the environment, who do not have local interest in given projects, and if they do, they disqualify themselves?

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, this is a made-in-Alberta program. This is a made-in-Alberta program involving the federal government, involving people from across this country, involving people in the Northwest Territories, involving ordinary Albertans, involving experts. I think this will serve as probably the best model, not only in Alberta but across this country.

Thank you.

Stampede Breakfast Invitations

MRS. B. LAING: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct my question to the Premier. The first annual Premier's Stampede breakfast, in which Alberta agricultural products were featured, was held in Calgary on July 10, 1989. In spite of the rainfall it was a great success. There has been some question as to whether or not the opposition members of the Legislature were invited to the

breakfast. Mr. Premier, could you please answer that question? Were the opposition MLAs invited?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, everybody was invited to the breakfast. I must say that there was a tremendous turnout of Albertans, southern Albertans in the majority but Albertans from all other parts as well. The breakfast was a huge success. It was a difficult weather day, but nevertheless. There were no special invitations sent to any particular person. Everybody was invited. There's nobody I would've rather fed food to than members of the opposition.

MRS. B. LAING: Supplemental. Mr. Premier, just to be very clear, were there special mailed invitations only for the breakfast or was there a very general invitation?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, there were no specific mailed invitations. Rather, it was a public announcement that everybody was invited. I know the members of the opposition now and then like to deal in rumours. Well, the rumour is that because it was a 7 a.m. function, they just couldn't get up that early to come to it. If we'd had an evening cocktail party, you'd have to beat them away with a stick.

MR. WICKMAN: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Guidelines for Ministers of the Crown

MS BARRETT: Mr. Speaker, yesterday I asked the Premier if he would immediately start forbidding cabinet ministers who have financial interests in companies from taking part in any cabinet discussions or decisions related to those companies as a first step in resolving conflict-of-interest problems in his government. He replied, and I quote from the Blues, "Mr. Speaker, that happens now." Now, that's not what the technology minister says. That's not what the forestry minister says. It's not what the Tourism minister says. So I'd like to ask the Premier this: will he tell us who's telling the truth and who's lying?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, there is nobody lying, and the hon. member shouldn't try and draw that allegation.

MS BARRETT: That's fine then, Mr. Speaker. If the Premier is so adamant that he prohibits conflict of interest in cabinet meetings, will he produce and table a list of the ministers whom he forced to absent themselves from cabinet discussions, what those cabinet discussions related to during the last six months?

MR. GETTY: Obviously, Mr. Speaker, all hon. members know that cabinet discussions are all private.

MS BARRETT: Mr. Speaker, that's no way to get out of misleading this House. The Premier said yesterday he already does it. Will he tell us which ministers he sends out of cabinet and under what circumstances, broadly or narrowly defined, he does that to keep them out of the conflict of interest that they're mired in?

MR. GETTY: First of all, Mr. Speaker, the member carries within her own question false allegations, so really it's a question that is so filled with negative dunking on such a wonderful

summer day in Alberta. I'm afraid she'll have to take her reply from my second answer to her, and that is that obviously it has been a tradition, and continues now, that cabinet discussions are private.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar, followed by Calgary-Fish Creek.

Work on Sabbath Day

MRS. HEWES: Thank you. Mr. Speaker, presently many Albertans are forced to work on their Sabbath day even though many of those same people don't want to do so, preferring instead to be with their families. Even the Family Day legislation does nothing to accommodate similar needs. Yesterday the Minister of Labour indicated to the House that nothing would be done to ensure that mothers, fathers, children are free to practise their Sabbath without reprisals in their employment. Incredibly, the minister finds it acceptable that people are forced to juggle employment opportunities to make special arrangements in order to practise their Sabbath. Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, there are thousands of Alberta workers who don't have the luxury of being able to do that. My question: is the Premier prepared to reconsider his position and to direct the minister to change legislation to stop people from being forced to work on their Sabbath if they desire?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, the hon. Minister of Labour dealt with this matter last night. The House had the chance under Committee of the Whole to vote on it, and they voted in the affirmative. When the hon. minister returns, if the Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar would like to renew her questioning on it, she should take the opportunity to do so.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: First supplementary.

MRS. HEWES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The question was to the Premier and related to his position in directing the minister. However, let me continue. Is the Premier prepared now to include in his Family Day Act legislation that mothers, fathers, or children will not be compelled to work on that day if they don't want to?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, the Family Day legislation is proceeding through the House, first and second reading. It will be up for committee study. The hon. member should take her argument to the House in the normal way and see if she can carry the day with her arguments.

MRS. HEWES: Well, Mr. Speaker, this just seems to me to be on the edge of hypocrisy. How can the Premier, then, propose Family Day as a means to strengthen families while denying them at the same time the right to a protected Sabbath?

AN HON. MEMBER: Propose an amendment then.

MRS. HEWES: I intend to.

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, it's really strange. I know the hon. members have a rookie leader who doesn't know what he's doing in here, but frankly there is a process for legislation in this House, and the legislation proceeds. I say it again for him and

others: it's the first, second, and third reading, plus committee study and Royal Assent. Members have all the opportunity that has been given over years of tradition in our parliamentary system, and they should avail themselves of it. If they have the ability to convince the House, then the changes are made. It's a challenge for them. All they have to do is take the challenge on and see if they are up to the job. See if they are up to the job, Mr. Speaker.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Calgary-Fish Creek.

Calgary Land Titles Office

MR. PAYNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The past year has seen a great erosion in service levels at the Land Titles Office in Calgary and infuriating delays in processing and registering documents. Even though user fees have dramatically increased at the Land Titles Office in the past year, it's now not unusual for document registration to take up to 10 or even 14 days, a process that used to take one or two days. In view of the fact that each single day adds to the costs of interim financing, can the Attorney General advise what he's prepared to do to improve the Land Titles Office situation for the thousands of Calgary home buyers and sellers using that facility every year?

MR. ROSTAD: Mr. Speaker, the hon. Member for Calgary-Fish Creek is correct in the fact that the service level has deteriorated. I might explain that there are two main reasons for that. There was a period of restraint that resulted in some management changes at Land Titles. It was also the institution of the ALTA project, which is a computerization project, and with the combination of those two initiatives there has been a decrease in the level of service. But I might indicate that the people presently employed at Land Titles are doing yeoman service in working overtime. I've had numerous meetings with my department officials over the past number of weeks, devising a system whereby we can move personnel from other sections of our department into Land Titles to attempt to correct this. Also, when the ALTA project is in place, there will be a significant improvement.

MR. PAYNE: Mr. Speaker, I wonder if I could just add a supplementary question to the reference the Attorney General made to a system. I'm assuming that's an automated system of some sort. Could the Attorney General share with the Assembly today his expectations in any specific way as to the intended benefits of that automated system?

MR. ROSTAD: Mr. Speaker, the automated system is certainly going to make it easier to process the numerous pieces of paper that flow through Land Titles. I don't think anybody should go away with the expectations that this computerized system is going to result in automatic turnaround times. But I might share with the member that the Calgary office had two teams under the present system of processing, and they processed approximately 600 titles in one day, and the new system, under the electronic system, with fewer people, processed 500-odd titles in one day. So it does show that there should be some improvement through that system, but it won't be the be-all and end-all.

MR. PAYNE: Well, finally, Mr. Speaker, given the Attorney

General's less than enthusiastic expectations of the new system, would he be prepared to speak to the Premier and the Provincial Treasurer and make representations on behalf of all those Calgarians that in fact are paying an indirect tax through those inefficiencies and get the additional manpower that's needed there?

MR. ROSTAD: Mr. Speaker, I'm more than happy to not only speak to the Premier and the Treasurer but to take a plan of action before Treasury board that will hopefully result in lessening this burden on people who are transferring their property.

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

Unsatisfied Judgment Fund

MR. WRIGHT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Solicitor General and concerns a serious accident that occurred in 1986, the driver being a chap called Kevin Konkolus. One of the very badly injured victims of that accident, the Solicitor General will recall, is a little girl now six called, I believe, Melissa Schmitz. Her family has had difficulty getting reasonable advances from the unsatisfied judgment fund, which it seems is picking up the tab here for the rehabilitation of this little girl. I wonder whether the Solicitor General can assure us that he will instruct his department to interpret the relevant section, which I think is number 20, of the motor vehicle accident indemnity Act, interpret it in a reasonable fashion so that the maximum benefit can be got for this little girl.

MR. FOWLER: I thank the hon. Member for Edmonton-Strathcona for raising this matter, because it does highlight a tragic situation in respect to drinking and driving and in this particular family, that has now moved to Manitoba. I would advise the hon. member that we have already contributed, on an interim basis only, amounts up to \$4,000 for items of convenience for this tragic victim that exists.

I'm sure the hon. member recognizes, though, as I do, both being of the same profession, that under this particular unsatisfied judgment fund legislation there are conditions which must be met before payment can be made of any significant amounts in any event, and at this time there is a fierce battle going on between two insurance companies. Now, I recognize, as does my hon. colleague in the opposition, that unfortunately the victims at times suffer the results of these court battles that go on between large bodies. I will, however, assure the hon. member in opposition that I will review this case within the next seven days.

MR. WRIGHT: Mr. Speaker, I wonder whether the Solicitor General will also review the section itself and propose any amendments to this House that may be reasonable to remove what on the face of it do appear to be undue restrictions on the advance of money.

MR. FOWLER: Again, we fortunately are a society of law, and we're guided by laws, Mr. Speaker. But I think we have to keep in mind, as all of us want to do, that these laws are for the benefit and protection of all people in society. Where that does not appear to be the case and if there is one particular section, as is being suggested, of an Act which is preventing that, I am more than willing to review the section itself.

MR. WRIGHT: On the wider picture, Mr. Speaker, the limit is \$200,000 arising out of any one accident -- the maximum limit in the motor vehicle accident indemnity Act, the minimum limit for insurance. Perhaps the Solicitor General can undertake to us that he will have a look at that bigger picture now and see whether the time has not come to raise those limits.

MR. FOWLER: I think, Mr. Speaker, when we refer to limits in legislation such as this, we must be prepared to look at the feasibility of that limit equaling what we perceive a justified court award would be made, because they are, after all, for the purposes of rehabilitation and the loss of expectations and what-not. Inflation defeats the limits that become set. I think in that regard it should be reviewed as well.

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

Disease in Federal Buffalo Herd

MR. TAYLOR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question today is to the Minister of Agriculture. The minister I'm sure is quite aware that domestic cattle and buffalo herds are as close as 60 kilometres here in northern Alberta to a very infected herd at the federal Wood Buffalo National Park, that has brucellosis and tuberculosis both. Also, if the minister's not already aware of it, I think we have 3.7 million head of cattle in Alberta, both in beef and milk, and an industry of \$2.5 billion annually. A large part of the value of that is the fact that Alberta, Canada, has been able to maintain a reputation of being brucellosis and tuberculosis -- brucellosis particularly -- free. So it's a very real concern that something be done about this herd in northern Alberta. Can the minister report whether there have been any talks with the federal officials as to a solution that they've come up with or a deadline that they've come up with?

MR. ISLEY: Mr. Speaker, I must say that I am impressed that the hon. Member for Westlock-Sturgeon is doing some research and starting to get some correct numbers and trying to convince the House that he has some knowledge about this industry. I would say that we on this side of the House and in Alberta Agriculture certainly share the concern about keeping the Alberta cattle herd brucellosis free. Keeping in mind that the buffalo he is making reference to are on federal park territories, we've got ongoing discussions with the federal government to attempt to come to a resolution of this problem.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, a lot of dancing around, and I did keep the numbers low so he wouldn't have to take his shoes off to count.

But I think what we want from the minister is a deadline. Has he given the federal government a deadline? Because we can't sit here and let our herds be jeopardized by this number going on and on and on and deciding what to do. It's an inbred herd anyhow; it's not a pure buffalo herd. Has he given the federal government a deadline by which we want a decision made?

MR. ISLEY: Mr. Speaker, I think we should all be aware that the herd that is being discussed here has been infected for years and years. One solution is maintaining the separation between the buffalo and the cattle herds. Granted, with the expansion of agriculture into the north the distance is getting closer, but I sup-

pose one possible solution may be fencing the park area. But that's only one of the solutions being discussed with the federal government. Another possible solution may be destroying that herd.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, we're trying to move this through to culmination. While this minister and the federal minister fiddle, the cattle industry could burn. This is one of the things that I'm trying to move him through to a decision.

Let's move on just a step further, although I know he's maybe not responsible for native affairs.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Perhaps to the question.

MR. TAYLOR: A great deal of the natives depend on some of the buffalo herd, diseased as it is, for food. The Metis in this area are a provincial responsibility. Has the minister looked into the possibility that if the herd is destroyed, just what we're going to do for food to tide over until the new herd comes in?

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The time for question period has expired. Might there be unanimous consent to allow the minister to respond to the question?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. ISLEY: While I was listening carefully to those introductory remarks to try to detect what the question was, as near as I can determine the question was: have we looked into the possibility of what the natives and/or Metis, who would be a provincial responsibility, would do for food if we destroyed that herd? I would have to answer no, we haven't extensively, but we do raise a lot of Alberta beef, so that might be a possible alternative.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Whitemud has a point of order.

MR. WICKMAN: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, I refer to *Beauchesne* 408(1). On looking at this reference, I must point out that question period is a very important and essential part of the whole parliamentary process. It's to be taken very seriously because it's the opportunity for members of the opposition parties in particular to ask questions of urgent matters that require immediate responses. My point of order is directed as a result of a question asked by the hon. Member for Calgary-Bow. In referring to 408(1)

such questions should:

- (a) be asked only in respect of matters of sufficient urgency and importance as to require an immediate answer.

Now, puffball questions are one thing, Mr. Speaker, but when the Premier of the province is asked how many pancakes did Tory MLAs flip-flop at a breakfast, that's not of any urgency to me, and it doesn't require any answer, period. It should be ruled out of order. In addition, I wouldn't mind a written response as to what is considered to be a question of importance as compared to puffball questions.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Well, hon. members, I feel that the hon. Member for Edmonton-Whitemud has a point, and I am sorry for not interrupting earlier. But I would say on the other

hand that the Chair has certainly had many occasions of a sense of déjà vu since last Wednesday when we resumed on many of the questions that have been asked. Those rules of repetition also apply in the Chamber, you know. When a question has been asked once on one day, it shouldn't necessarily have the same question practically word for word the next day. But I do accept the hon. member's comments about the sense of urgency and the importance of question period, and I would refer the hon. Member for Calgary-Bow to those comments.

MR. WICKMAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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**

Recreation and Parks

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: This morning we are considering the estimates of Alberta Recreation and Parks. These are located in the estimates book commencing on page 285 and in the elements book commencing with page 123.

Does the hon. minister have opening remarks?

DR. WEST: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It's a privilege -- and I stated "a privilege" -- to be able on behalf of the people of Alberta to present the estimates of Recreation and Parks in the Legislative Assembly. To have the responsibility, with the Department of Recreation and Parks, of delivering programs with the funds that belong to the people of Alberta is certainly a humbling experience. As new Minister of Recreation and Parks I know I bring new philosophies and ideas to the head of this department, and that in itself brings trials and tribulations to the staff and the management team that I work with. I want to thank them for the fine work they have done in initiating me to this department, and I look forward to working with them in the future. No doubt Alberta Recreation and Parks will play a very leading role in the future of this province, because it will be a key player in the stresses and problems that we see in our society as it moves to a highly technical and progressive world.

The purpose of my opening remarks today, Mr. Chairman, is to provide you with an overview of the budget and to demonstrate how we are meeting the challenge of fiscal management while at the same time maximizing the use of Albertans' tax dollars. I have placed fiscal management and responsibility at the top of the priorities of my department. I will insist that that responsibility is met.

As a ministry of the provincial government the Alberta Recreation and Parks mandate is focused on improving the quality of life of Albertans and strengthening the economy of Alberta through the development of sport, recreational services and programs and by planning, developing, and managing provincial parks for people to enjoy in the future. Mr. Chairman, this mandate is not met in isolation. It is pursued with the full realization of the importance we have as a department in working towards

the overall government goals. We support the goal of enhancing family units. We foster the concept of building partnerships among governments, communities, and associations. We encourage our partnership role with the private sector through the franchising of our provincial campgrounds and contracting various maintenance, operational, and construction activities in our provincial parks. This partnership with the private sector serves to enhance private-sector opportunities and diversify the provincial economy.

In the future one of the things I would like to see followed through in greater intensity is the interfacing with other departments in this government. Recreation and Parks at the present time is working with health care and Tourism to that end. Other departments will be economic development and social services. As I said, we are working in a very stressful, highly technical world, and all of those departments will have to interface with Recreation and Parks in the future.

I would like first before I start, Mr. Chairman, to give a brief overview of the various areas we will be discussing in estimates. It's comprised of four units of operation. Vote 2, the Recreation Development division. This operates under the authority of two pieces of legislation: the Department of Recreation and Parks Act and the Recreation Development Act. Today we are looking at a budget estimate of \$43,617,086, of which 83 percent is grants.

Vote 3 is the Provincial Parks services. It operates under three pieces of legislation: the Department of Recreation and Parks Act, the Provincial Parks Act, and the Wilderness Areas, Ecological Reserves and Natural Areas Act. We are looking at a vote today of \$31,979,387.

Vote 4, which you will see in the estimates book, was the support to the successful XV Olympic Winter Games. There are no funds in that vote but will follow through for one year in the estimate book.

Vote 5, Kananaskis Country, is a multi-use, four-season recreation area operated by a managing director reporting directly to the minister. Kananaskis Country has a budget estimate today of \$13,847,988.

Then corporate services division, or vote 1, provides support planning, overall co-ordination and communication, information and human resource services for all of the department. Corporate services division has a budget today of \$3,673,656. Also under this ministry are two Crown corporations: the Alberta Sport Council and the Recreation, Parks and Wildlife Foundation. They are funded through lottery funds and are not for discussion. I repeat: they are not for discussion today under these estimates.

The total, then, of this department that's to be voted on today is \$93,118,117. This represents a 6.3 percent decrease from last year's budget.

Now, that roughly \$93 million generates a tremendous amount to the economy in this province, and it makes a noteworthy contribution to each and every one of Albertans' lives. We did a survey in the Department of Recreation and Parks in 1986 in regards to what contribution economically all of the areas of Recreation and Parks contribute. For the purpose of this, a leisure industry study was done, and it's defined as including all aspects relating to free-time activity in the areas of recreation, culture, and sports. The Burton study demonstrated approximately \$5.9 billion of direct spending is related to leisure life-style. Family and leisure life spending of \$4.3 billion accounted for the single largest type of expenditure. Spending by

the Alberta government in this area totaled \$326 million. The private sector and the people of Alberta spend a tremendous amount of their disposable income in areas of this department. Since 1986 approximately 45 percent annually of the ministry's expenditures were made on grants. These moneys provided significant impetus to the municipalities and sport and recreation associations for the development of leisure facilities and services in Alberta. Alberta at the present time has some 370 arena complexes and recreation facilities along with 220 pools, and that does not include the other recreation and community facilities such as curling rinks and community halls: just a tremendous contribution to the infrastructure of this province, mostly directed through this department.

Alberta provincial parks and recreation areas managed by this ministry provide facilities used by about 6 million individuals or visitors annually. Spending attributable to provincial park and recreation area users is approximately \$95 million into this provincial leisure economy. In terms of the overall economy of Alberta, it is estimated in 1988 approximately \$45 million of direct spending by provincial parks services and Kananaskis Country. A contribution of \$60 million to the provincial household income will demonstrate some \$92 million to the provincial gross domestic product, resulting in some 2,234 person-years of employment. Kananaskis Country alone -- and I was looking at some figures recently given to me by the managing director Mr. Ed Marshall -- contributes to the employment intensity of this province by roughly 1,247 individuals and, at peak times, up to 1,267. It is quite evident that this department, through its various service directions, is a major player in the economy of Alberta.

Mr. Chairman, what I would like to do now is look directly at each vote for a short time to just show some of the intensity in areas where we play a role in the province. I'll start with vote 2, the recreation development division. It's called the recreation development division for a reason. The name is derived from its mandate to promote, encourage, and co-ordinate the orderly development of recreational activities and facilities in the province. As I have indicated, close to 83 percent of this budget is directed in the form of grants. I would like to for a second just look at some of those major grants.

One that has been a bit controversial in the last while is the community recreation/cultural grant program, which delivers this year \$24,640,000 on a per capita based grant to the communities throughout the province. I probably have received the most amount of mail on this subject since being minister. I would just like to explain that while formulating budget directions and looking at priorities in the province, we had to make some tough decisions. It was decided that we roll back \$2 per capita from the \$12 range this year and extend the program an extra two years. This would take some \$4.9 million out of the program this year and extend it through to the 1992-93 year. The concern I apologize for was that we had announced previously the \$12 level and then on June 8 retracted and came at a \$10 level to flow through to the communities. Unfortunately, because of the late start of the Legislature and the budget coming out on June 8, we were unable to inform the various municipalities of this change. Nonetheless, \$24.64 million flows through this year to help many, many of the associations and municipalities throughout this province.

In another area of grant programs that have been very successful, we look at the municipal recreation/tourism areas. Forty-one constituencies in the province of Alberta have en-

joyed the ability to access \$100,000 grants at a time that carry an operational component of \$20,000 for 25 years. These are used to develop local recreational facilities that not only attract a great deal of volunteer input from the various municipalities but also work in the future to attract tourism and economic development in regional areas. At the present time, we have some 162 of these throughout the province, everything from small parks to some major tourism development along our major transportation routes. Over the years we have committed some \$10 million to this program, and just recently an extra \$2.3 million was committed to bring the total amount that will be allocated to the end of next year to \$12.3 million.

The counterbalance to the MRTA, which was the wisdom of this government back in 1980, is the urban parks system. No doubt living in our urban areas today makes it impossible for a lot of people to access certain areas of greenbelt on a day-to-day basis and the outdoor experience and the conservation and, I guess, environmental atmosphere that might be associated with parks that are many miles away. As a result, phase 1 of the urban parks contributed some \$86 million to development of urban parks in five communities throughout the province of Alberta. These parks also enjoy the fact that with them comes 30 years of operating money. At the present time, that level is at 5 percent of the total capital cost of each park. For example, in the city of Edmonton this year, Capital City Park enjoys an operating grant of \$2.2 million -- very significant in the high cost today of running some of our municipalities.

Phase 2 of the urban parks system, committed to in the throne speech, will be \$82 million spread over a 10-year period. I'm pleased this year to see a million dollars in this budget that will address design and consultation costs for the 11 new communities that will be included in the urban parks program over the next 10 years.

One significant change this year that you'll notice in the budget, of course, is a commitment to serve the regions with recreational consultants to help each and every municipality access the programs and perhaps help and assist them with delivery of them also. We are opening three regional offices that were closed in 1986. These will be at Medicine Hat, Wainwright, and High Level. I would say that I firmly believe we have to take services out to the grass roots of Alberta, and we'll make every attempt over the next few years to ensure that our programs are delivered away from the centre, with proper staff and consultants out in the field. This here, the establishment of these three regional offices, is in that direction.

One of the things I had the pleasure of recently as Minister of Recreation and Parks was hosting a delegation from Korea. We have established over the last few years sports exchanges with three countries. The province of Heilongjiang in China -- very unfortunately, we've had to put the exchanges or any communication with them on hold at the present time due to the very, very sad set of circumstances in that country. Nonetheless, we do have exchanges ongoing with Kangwon province of Korea -- and as I said, a delegation was here recently, and I look forward to visiting them over the next few years -- and, of course, with our sister province of Hokkaido in Japan. I was pleased the other night to be out to Canmore when the town of Canmore twinned itself with the province of Hokkaido in Japan. It was a very nice ceremony right on the edge of the beautiful Kananaskis park, and I had a chance to see the Canmore Nordic Centre also, a fine facility built following the Olympics in 1988.

Other areas that rec development works in are with our ama-

teur athletes. We all look forward this summer to the summer games in Brooks, and I would invite each and every one of you to take those in between August 9 and 13. If we can just cut down the length of some of our speeches and get on with the work of this House, we'll certainly have a chance to do that. Also, this year we are sending 347 athletes and coaches and managers to the Canada Games in Saskatoon between August 13 and 28. Our department continues, through some of our grant programs, to help in the competitive opportunities for Alberta amateur athletes. You'll find that that's part of the rec development's mandate and direction, and some of the grants we have help in developing these new athletes.

Vote 3: provincial park service. The name of the provincial park division changed to provincial park service. It carries the connotation that I like better service to the people. Parks in the future, I think, shall be built for people, and we shall go to the people at the grass-roots level and ask them what they think parks should look like. In that light, we will then design parks that are better utilized and give better exposure for all Albertans to our beautiful resources throughout the province. We have 61 provincial parks, 44 recreational areas, three wilderness areas, and 11 ecological reserves in this province at the present time that are under this division. Our parks are renowned throughout Canada and the world for their great cross section of resource bases all the way from those situated in Kananaskis Country to those that show great cultural and heritage backgrounds, such as Dinosaur Provincial Park, Writing-on-Stone, and Cypress Hills Provincial Park.

Parks are instructed with three mandates, if you want to look at them in that sense. The conservation and management of the flora and fauna would be the primary one; second, the preservation of specified areas and objects therein that are geological, cultural, ecological, and other scientific interests. I believe we've addressed that requirement very well through the development of the 11 ecological areas and the preservation of the wilderness areas in this province. As I said before, parks obviously are for people, and to that mandate we are going to work extremely hard to ensure that's the case.

We have continually made efforts to upgrade our provincial park system, and if you will notice in the votes, we are spending \$6 million this year on capital improvements. These are significant improvements to the infrastructure and to the design of some of our older parks. Specifically, those being upgraded this year will be Aspen Beach, Wabamun Lake, Police Outpost, Kinbrook Island, Cypress Hills, Writing-on-Stone, William A. Switzer, Park Lake, Gregoire Lake, Thunder Lake, and Miquelon Lake -- as you can see, a good cross section throughout this province to deliver services on a regional basis.

One of the things that's a good news story in the provincial parks system is its ability to incorporate the private sector. We enhance and improve the delivery of services, I think, by using some of the private-sector contracts. That's not to say that the civil service and those putting on the services by the department don't do a good job, but I believe that after we've established a resource and have it in place, the private sector has a role in carrying out the service from then on. This year we have five provincial park campgrounds that are privatized, two ski hills and approximately 34 concessions and miscellaneous other contracts in grass cutting and garbage collection and what have you. Also, over the last while we have turned 27 recreational areas over to operating authorities or municipalities, and I think this stands well for the efforts to ensure there's a good delivery of

services but at the private-sector level.

We've had some great achievements in the parks system, but I believe, Mr. Chairman, we can do a better job in the future. I think we need to reassess the building costs and better address the efficient use of Alberta's tax dollars. To that end I have asked for an in-depth review of our building design and construction and the costs involved in that area. I'm very pleased the department is working in that light. We look forward in the future to saving considerable costs in reconstruction and building designs, and we will flow those dollars back through to better services to the people of Alberta.

One of the things I also would like to look at in the future is upgrading some of our international destination sites, such as Writing-on-Stone Provincial Park and Cypress Hills Provincial Park as well as Dinosaur Provincial Park, which in 1979 was designated as a World Heritage Site. I believe that our parks system will play a huge role in attaining that tourism goal of \$10 billion by industry by the year 2000. But in order to do that, we cannot rest on our laurels. We must be proactive in the development of what I would call our flagship parks, and those are three named at that level.

We do need more in this province also. I was looking the other day where there was a tremendous amount of new parkland in British Columbia that just came on stream. It makes them the largest park jurisdiction in North America at the present time. They have the most number of acres in parks.

I think we have to realize the potential in the future of the northern lakes, particularly in the Lakeland area east of Lac La Biche, which in my view provides countless opportunities to attract tourism provincially, nationally, and internationally. To that end, I believe we will be reviewing the detailed information we do have on this area to look to some new developments in the future. [interjection] I heard the hon. Member for Bonnyville piping up there. He's well aware that he has made representation on Cold Lake, but I understand he has a good development started there already.

We can do much more in the parks business, and all I will leave it with is that we will plan parks in the future. We are not going to sit at a status quo level. We will plan those parks for people, and we will try to use common sense to address the rising costs of our construction within them.

Kananaskis Country. I don't think there are many individuals in this Assembly that need a great introduction to Kananaskis Country. I had the opportunity of traveling it recently with the managing director, Mr. Ed Marshall. I am absolutely amazed at the size of this great resource we have, some 1,640 square miles entailing 80 recreational areas, three provincial parks, a tremendous amount of recreational activities such as golfing and skiing and one of the best laid out camping facilities I've seen in my travels. In light of that, in 1988 the park was close to a saturation level with 450,000 camper-nights. At peak times when the good season's on, you literally cannot get a spot in that size, 1,640 square miles. You literally cannot get a camping site, and 80 percent of those people entering are Albertans. That speaks highly of the operation in view of some of the criticisms leveled years ago that there wouldn't be the average Albertan accessing this site.

The golf course last year had its largest year ever, and I know they turned away . . . I was talking to the managing director of the golf course, and he said that at peak seasons he turns away five out of six people that phone. I think that in the future certainly there would be areas for discussion to look at adding

some opportunities for Albertans to access that area for those purposes. Nakiska/Mount Allan enjoyed its first meaningful year. It had a tough go at the start. Following the Olympics the private operators had to come on stream, and they say they had their first meaningful year last year. We look forward to many, many Albertans accessing that facility.

In 1989-90 in Kananaskis Country it's projected that 4 million facility user days will be achieved, and that's just another unbelievable statistic. Eighty percent of those will be Albertans traveling to one of the highest utilized areas in the province at the present time. With that, we need to continually upgrade. Kananaskis Country is in its 11th year. Things do start to wear down, and there needs to be maintenance and upgrading. As I see, the increase in this budget of 16.1 percent actually represents, if you like, a hold-the-line budget for administration. There are certain areas we have to reconstruct, and there are certain facilities that have to be provided for the large numbers that access this area in order to protect the environment and to ensure conservation of the area -- for example, beside some of the paths and that which people are using. I will trust you will consider the great value of Kananaskis Country and acknowledge that a 6.1 percent increase is required.

I had the opportunity for the first time in my life to visit William Watson Lodge in Kananaskis Country. It's in Peter Lougheed Provincial Park. It is a place where disabled individuals as well as senior citizens in this province can have the opportunity to visit Kananaskis Country in a meaningful way. I have never in my life seen a facility so well adapted to handicapped or to people that have certain disabilities and still deliver them a natural, direct exposure to this park. The only thing I can say is that I believe that with its ability to handle approximately 100 guests, that is inadequate in the province of Alberta and we should have another such development somewhere else in this province. I think we will discuss that in the future.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Just one comment before proceeding. The interparty subcommittee meetings are getting a little noisy. If you could tone them down a bit, please.

The Member for West Yellowhead.

MR. DOYLE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I tell you I'm pleased to rise as the critic of Recreation and Parks. First, I'd like to congratulate Dr. West on his appointment as the Minister of Recreation and Parks. As a new member of this Legislature representing the people of West Yellowhead, it was indeed a pleasure to meet with Dr. West shortly after his appointment. He treated me in a very honest and open fashion, Mr. Chairman, and I would hope he would treat every other member of this House in the same way. Your staff, sir, were hasty in sending me maps I requested and some backup information on provincial parks. I look forward to that same co-operation in the future.

As a former mayor and councillor, Mr. Chairman, I'm very pleased today to assess the estimates of the 1989-90 budget for this department. Parks are very dear to me, to my friends, and I'm sure to most Albertans. Recreation is, I'm sure, the most popular aspect of life today and surely will be more popular in the future as the demand for better health through exercise in these recreation areas arises. On the estimates, may I congratulate the minister on behalf of all Albertans on holding the line in his office estimates in vote 1 when we all know there's a large

demand on this particular department.

Vote 2, Mr. Chairman, is a different question. The cuts in the community recreation/cultural grant system -- a very popular, necessary program to municipalities to aid volunteer community groups in municipalities in the provision of recreation/cultural services with local input -- was virtually devastating to every municipality in the province of Alberta. I appreciate the minister's apology in this House on June 2, '89, to the municipalities for the timing of the estimates, because I surely know that under the Municipal Government Act their requirements are for June 1 for their budget year, yet yours was a bit later. I think it was necessary that the minister should have advised those boards prior to the budget that those budget cuts would have taken place. They now have a shortfall of some \$4.9 million across the total province. I truly believe the minister could and should implement the proposals put forward by the municipalities and leave the formula at \$12 per capita this year, reduce it to \$7 next year, \$7 the following year, and \$6 in the final year. This is a most necessary grant for these municipalities. This, Mr. Chairman, would allow municipal leaders across this province the opportunity to plan their budget estimates more accurately as we all strive to hold the line and bring this provincial deficit under control.

In vote 2 there's an increase of 24.7 percent in Regional Recreation Services. I would like to ask the minister in what areas this money will be spent. Or can this be transferred to those projects that were planned and approved under the CRC grants in all Alberta municipalities?

In vote 2.4 the Blue Lake Centre has an increase of 7.3 percent. Could the minister advise the House what projects at the Blue Lake Centre this money will be spent on?

In vote 3, Provincial Parks, the very key to property development in the future of the province of Alberta. If ever there is funding available for projects, Mr. Minister, you will surely have the support of this MLA to spend very prudently for the establishment of more provincial parks to preserve the ecology and the beauty of this province while we still have a few trees not yet disrupted and lakes that may not yet be polluted.

Vote 3.3.3, parks replacement, has been cut by 67.9 percent. Can the minister inform the House as to the reasons for this large cut?

Vote 3.4, construction and redevelopment. This is a large cut of funds for the Cypress Hills area of 96.7 percent. Perhaps, Mr. Minister, this would lead us to believe that that park is finished. Could you clear that for me, please?

I wasn't quite clear exactly what the minister's views were on future park developments. Perhaps you could elaborate on that a little bit further and, as far as that goes, the plan for future parks throughout the province. Surely the government must realize there are key areas other than Kananaskis that must be preserved. One key area, of course, is the Emerson Lakes region in the Edson-Hinton area, where clear-cutting is now approaching that area. If this area is disrupted, it would be a disaster to the area's beauty, particularly to the hoodoos and the seven small but clear lakes that you can view from those very well-preserved hoodoos. I hope we can work together, Mr. Minister, with the municipalities, the private sector, and industry in this area to establish at least a 10-kilometre-square provincial park.

Vote 4, Mr. Chairman, is very explanatory for a very successful Olympics last year. But vote 5, the Kananaskis Country -- it's astounding to me that the taxpayers of Alberta are sub-

sidizing this massive park for the rich to the tune of \$13,847,988. This year's increase, as the minister indicated of course, is 6.1 percent. Redevelopment and major maintenance is up an outlandish 52.2 percent in this new park. I don't know, Mr. Chairman, how it possibly could need that much of an increase in a park that's virtually only about four years old. The newly developed area needs an increase of approximately three-quarters of a million dollars.

Very clearly, Mr. Minister, the 1987-88 Auditor General's report shows \$1.526 million over three years ended March 31, 1988, or a payment in excess of \$635,000 more than the amount that was required to be paid. Furthermore, the Auditor General recommended that the Department of Recreation and Parks take steps to recover moneys paid to Kananaskis Village Resort Association in excess of the contractual obligations. Has the department or the minister taken these steps? Can the minister assure the Legislature that these moneys will be recovered? They could surely be used in northern Alberta for developing more notable parks that truly show the beauty that exists in all the wilderness of northern Alberta. If the minister does not follow the Auditor General's recommendation, then I recommend the minister remove the \$635,000 from vote 1; thereby it should reduce that budget to \$3,038,656. How can we go on handling grants and loans and not make any attempt to recover the \$635,000 of Alberta taxpayers' moneys? Could you tell me, Mr. Minister, exactly what are the future policies for the Kananaskis area in development and otherwise, following through on a good financial base?

The Kan-Alta golf deal to construct buildings. In both '85 and '87 the department did not report its income and expenditure in the usual manner in respect to Kan-Alta Golf Management Ltd. The minister's department did not report the gross amount of expenditure; therefore, the public accounts do not show the true financial picture of how much the government spent on the golf course buildings. Furthermore, these expenditures were not approved by this Legislature. The details do not show up in this year's estimates either. Will the minister now commit to providing full information to this Assembly about the Kan-Alta deal?

Mr. Chairman, I was very pleased to hear the minister speak that he's going in a direction of privatizing many parts of the parks. I'm sure it will be a benefit to all Albertans, and I look forward in the years to come to working with the minister. Thank you.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Does the hon. minister wish to reply?

DR. WEST: Yes, I thought I would just take a moment or two to address some of the comments made by the Member for West Yellowhead. I will get back with written reports for some of the areas, but if I leave some of them here, there might be a misunderstanding.

First of all, vote 2, the CRC grant, as you commented and I had acknowledged, was a tough decision in addressing the concerns we had. I just lay out one thing to the people of Alberta and even to you that you can take back to your constituents, that we in the province of Alberta had to make some priorities, priorities on very, very strong issues. I heard, and I hear over and over again: our health care is the most sacred thing we have in this province. The education of our children and our education system is sacred. We have a lot of people less fortunate

than others for reasons beyond their own control, and our social services is definitely sacred also.

I hear from this side continuously: "What are you doing in social services to help individuals? More education and better health care services throughout the province." Those three departments add up to \$7.4 billion, and in them health care had a 5 percent increase this year; education, 5.5 percent; and social services, in spite of a decrease in unemployment of 6.5 percent from two and a half years ago, seems to stay constant at \$1.3 billion. The municipalities also in their municipal grants got a 5 percent increase today. When you say "devastating," a 16.7 percent or \$2 per capita devastating effect to the people of Alberta because of a cut in the CRC, I say no. In fact, it means we have taken a fiscal management position that was asked for by the people of Alberta. I apologize for the timing of these announcements because some had made arrangements, but these are recreation/cultural grants, and we all have to share in the responsibility of balancing the budget in this province, at the same time keeping a commitment to those three departments that have strongly been emphasized not only by members of the opposition but are shared with members of the government also: health care, social services, and education.

I will get back to you on the Blue Lake Centre, the 7.3 percent. Those increases were for purchases needed at that fine facility in the areas of kayaks, canoes, table saws, tuition fees, and normal salary increases. I will get you the specific sums on those. I have them here today, but you would like that in writing, I'm sure, and I'll make sure you get that. We are certainly looking at, as I said in my preamble, the potential for new parks and innovative directions in the province. We will continue to upgrade these parks systems, and I would ask that the individual come forward with his suggestions and recommendations for his area. I can assure you that our department will take a leading position in conservation and environmental issues.

When you talk about having some of the private sector infringing perhaps on some of the areas you would like targeted, such as the hoodoos in your area, I will certainly work with you to ensure that we can not only accommodate the private sector, which provides jobs for people so that they can have resource income afterwards so they can enjoy the parks -- so what we do is make sure the private sector has a position and protect our environment and conservation at the same time. Please come forward with your suggestions in the future. I will listen to each and every member of the Legislative Assembly and the people of Alberta in that area.

Kananaskis Country is 11 years old, not four. The redevelopment costs in it have been, as I said before, needed because some of the areas downgrade. I know there's \$100,000 going into the upgrading of a path structure at Mount Kidd so that people can access that area properly without spilling over into the environment, if you like, and that has to be upgraded. One of the problems in our capital programs was that they needed updating of the golf course equipment. It didn't outdate, but one of the companies in the United States went broke and put us in a very bad position in getting equipment and servicing it, and we have to do an upgrading. So that makes up some of the large 52 percent that's going in there this year.

One of the sensitive areas you highlighted -- and I want to acknowledge to the Assembly that the Auditor General did highlight an overpayment of \$635,000 that was paid to the Kananaskis Village Resort Association. That is an association of the private operators of the golf course and of the ski hills and of the

various services in that area. They look after a common area as well as the promotion and advertising of that block in the Kananaskis Village complex. It was deemed a technical overpayment, but nonetheless it was an overpayment as dictated by the Auditor General and by accountants who were looking at the agreement. The agreement had been made so that expenses from one year could not flow through into another year, so at the end of each fiscal year if you hadn't taken the money and spent it in that year specifically for accounting purposes, you had to give it back. So often we don't reward good management in this country. That's typical, I guess, of government contracts, in that if you are making a decision not to spend it all in one year, you're penalized not to take it forward in the next year to where you could spend it properly.

Nonetheless, I have, in concert with the Kananaskis Village Resort Association and my department, developed and worked out an agreement where repayment will be made to the people of Alberta over a period of years, and the \$635,000 will be coming back to the province of Alberta. I am sorry I cannot take that out of vote 1. I would have a lot of distraught people there who are responsible for doing a great job in planning and supervision of this whole department. I'm sure you wouldn't want to jeopardize those municipalities any further by taking away some of the administrative moneys from this department.

I thank the member for his comments, and there are some other areas you brought up that I'll get back to you on.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark.

MR. MITCHELL: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I rise to speak to this minister's budget estimates. I too would like to congratulate him on his appointment to this particular portfolio, and I'd like to congratulate him on the vigour with which he has embraced this portfolio. I remember very vividly his appearing on the front page of one of the newspapers in this city exercising. I've noticed that since this time last year he seems to have trimmed down nicely, or else he's buying bigger clothes. I would like to give him the benefit of that doubt and suggest that he's continued to exercise, and it seems to be suiting him very, very well.

I would like to begin by addressing a number of this department's estimates at perhaps a philosophical level, or a level of the basis of premise upon which parks policy is designed. The ministry, to its credit, has given a great deal of thought to what its role should be, where parks should fit, how recreation should be pursued. I'm referring to the 1986 policy statement for the Ministry of Recreation and Parks. This policy statement, I believe, addresses and tries to come to some conclusion about the dichotomy that's involved in the pursuit, for example, of provincial parks policy. On the one hand, there is a need to promote recreational use of lands in this province. On the other hand, there is also that important requirement to utilize parks policy as a way of conserving our environment, of preserving certain heritage resources in this province. I believe that the government's decision in setting priorities between these two objectives has probably emphasized the former; that is, the pursuit of recreational opportunities. That's not bad or wrong in and of itself. But I would like to take a moment to caution the minister, or at least to elevate the other side of that equation, the side of conservation and of heritage resource protection, that particular mandate of this department.

In doing that, I refer the minister to a paper presented by Dr. Guy Swinnerton, professor and associate chairman of the Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies at the University of Alberta and, I might add, a constituent of Edmonton-Meadowlark. He presented this paper in May of 1987 to a convention in Dalhousie University. It relates to a study he has done on visitor reaction or visitor response to the services provided in our parks system, and it may in fact be not inconsistent with the study the minister just mentioned his department has undertaken. I don't know whether you have been in touch with Dr. Swinnerton, but certainly his findings are very relevant to the study the minister is proposing. I quote from this paper, page 34:

Visitor responses indicated that users of provincial parks and recreation areas [in this province] overwhelmingly support the heritage resource protection mandate provided through the Provincial Parks Act

A corollary of that statement is this:

Facilities with the possible exception of rental facilities involving horse rental and boat/canoe rentals

should be provided by the provincial government, and that they have some concerns about private business providing certain kinds of services.

A third statement out of this study that should be emphasized is:

Facility development should not be of the type which would commercialize and urbanize the predominantly natural environment of parks areas. The development of facilities and services of an extrinsic nature which would detract the visitor from the intrinsic value of parks was not considered to be compatible with the preservation and conservation role of parks.

This is the conclusion of his study into visitor responses.

So visitors in our parks are placing a great deal of emphasis on the heritage mandate of this department, on the use of parks policy as a way of preserving, conserving, and emphasizing the value of our natural heritage for future generations. This particular finding, I believe, has a great number of implications for things the department has been doing, could be doing, and I would like to discuss some of these things in the context of those findings.

First of all, the size of our provincial park areas or designation of provincial parks in this province is quite low compared to other provinces. I believe it's about 1 percent, augmented to about 3 percent if you consider wilderness areas. Eight percent of our land area is national parks, and that compensates to some extent. However, Alberta has always prided itself in being aggressive about managing its own affairs, and it is inconsistent with that particular approach that we would place more of that emphasis or responsibility with the federal government. Certainly 1 percent of our landmass being provincial parks is extremely low. Three percent is better -- still low but to some extent mitigated by certain concerns individuals in the public have about the manner in which wilderness areas, in fact, have been administered and have been protected. There is some suggestion that the commitment to preserve wilderness areas has, from time to time, been eroded.

In light of the relatively small commitment to provincial parks and provincial parks development, I would like to raise a concern with vote 3. Provincial parks development this year has been cut by a total of 4.4 percent, belying any overriding commitment by this minister to pursue provincial parks policy and expansion of provincial parks areas aggressively and progressively. At the same time, the Kananaskis park budget has been

increased by -- I think it's about 6 percent. So it may say something about the minister's priorities. It isn't enough simply to pursue Kananaskis, which has been noted for its commercial development, to the detriment of pursuing the broadening of parks policy, parks development, elsewhere in this province. The importance of parks policy to conservation, I believe, is heightened by the following observations that I'm going to mention to the minister.

First of all, there is very little natural prairie habitat left in this province. About 20 percent of it remains. Secondly, almost all the tallgrass prairie is gone. Ninety percent of the fescue grassland has been plowed. The remaining 10 percent has been significantly modified by livestock grazing and haying. And I can go on. More than one-third of the birds and mammals designated on the 1988 list of the Committee of the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada are from the prairie provinces. Quality prairie habitat has consistently gone to agriculture, and much of what is left is marginal. I think that places a tremendous onus on the minister in developing future provincial parks to look to these kinds of areas that need preservation, that need conservation, and to utilize his parks policy as an extension of environmental policy, as a contribution to the conservation strategy of this province. There are many other areas of wildlife habitat and so on that could become the focus of his parks policy. However, I mention these prairie grasses because I think they are unique, of course, in many respects to Alberta.

Consistent with this idea is the Tofield bird observatory. I would like to emphasize that undertaking for a number of reasons. Tofield had the foresight to set aside, I believe, a thousand acres of land as a bird observatory and sanctuary, because it has received international recognition as being an important reserve and area for the attraction of a variety of species of birds. To this point there's been very, very little development of that area. In spite of that fact, I should point out that a nonprofit bird banding organization has been instrumental in developing observatory structures consistent with the environment there. They have worked closely with the community, and they are to be congratulated. And in spite of the fact that there has been reasonably limited development there, if I'm not mistaken, last year 1,500 tourists visited that area, supplementing the economy of the town of Tofield, which I believe has a population not as large as that.

Now the tourist department, to its credit, I hope, has undertaken a study, I believe, of \$60,000 to look into what to do with that area. My concern would be that the emphasis or the onus could be on commercializing that area. I believe that if we are to develop tourism in our province successfully, there has to be a place for developing noncommercial kinds of tourist pursuits that in fact utilize the emphasis of the environment as the attraction. Tofield is a classic case, and I would like to congratulate the . . .

MR. FOX: The Member for Vegreville.

MR. MITCHELL: . . . the Member for Vegreville.

I would like to congratulate the government for its tremendous success with the Dinosaur park, Tyrrell museum and the Head-Smashed-In Buffalo Jump museum. Those are state-of-the-art, world-class facilities. I would like to encourage the minister to see that a similar kind of facility is done in the Tofield area -- state of the art, world class -- that would address the particular wildlife issue indigenous to that Tofield area with-

out placing an emphasis on undue commercialization. In that way the minister could pursue the mandate of heritage resource preservation, of tourist development that promotes, doesn't denigrate, the environmental resources we have in a given area.

Another issue that follows from Dr. Swinnerton's observation, the need for heritage preservation, that I would like to raise is the White Goat Wilderness Area that has been opened as of May 2, 1989, to mining for ice cubes. Apparently, there's an entrepreneurial effort to mine ice cubes from a glacier in that area because they are heavier than yuppie drinks in the States. These ice cubes can be sold because they sink to the bottom of the glass. It seems to me that that is a very, very shortsighted use of our wilderness resource. I notice the minister finding that to be enjoyable. I would hope he would respond by telling us that he would be taking initiatives to ensure that that kind of economic development simply isn't allowed by this government.

The Canadian Heritage Rivers System program. Alberta some years ago endorsed that program, but since that time they have not moved to do anything about it. It generally would fall under the mandate of the Minister of the Environment. However, that ministry has not moved to participate actively in the Canadian Heritage Rivers System program. Alberta has some beautiful rivers. It has some rivers that are renowned for a variety of reasons, one of which, for example in the case of the Bow River, is its outstanding fly fishing. It is a resource both in the sense of an environmental resource and also in the sense of promoting wise tourist development that would not denigrate the environment but in fact, again, would utilize the environment as the attraction.

There are other rivers, in fact. The north fork of the Raven River has earned -- and I quote a statement made by my colleague from Calgary-Buffalo last year -- "a faithful following amongst hundreds of American anglers as well." I could go on. The Bow River between Calgary and the Carseland irrigation weir, as I've mentioned, is renowned for its fly fishing capability. I believe that if we do not move quickly to set aside some of these features of our river systems under the Canadian Heritage Rivers System, then we will lose the opportunity to do that forever. If it is that, and I believe the minister can make the case for taking a role in that by building provincial parks around some of these areas, I would encourage him to do so and ask that he comment on plans and ideas that his ministry has been developing in that regard.

[Mr. Moore in the Chair]

Privatization, as I mentioned briefly earlier, is an important and significant issue for the development of provincial parks. I would ask, again in light of Dr. Swinnerton's findings, that the minister proceed carefully in that regard. Visitor response indicated that boat rentals, for example, were something that would apply well to privatization. But the provision of other services might not be applied so well to privatization. Boat rentals, I might point out as an aside, should be canoes, row-boats, not inflicting motorized watercraft on our parks.

Further to the idea of developing the tourist potential of our land resources through the parks system, I would like to address the matter of Eastern Slopes development and how that impinges or can be used to complement policy and issues in the national parks. I believe very strongly that the national parks should be viewed largely as wilderness recreational opportunities, that we should not pursue further commercial develop-

ment in those areas -- and I will address the Sunshine development in a minute. The way to do that successfully, to the extent that we must undertake commercial tourist developments, is to develop those outside the national parks with care and with caution. I believe that the Eastern Slopes provide many opportunities, not just for commercialized downhill skiing -- although that could be done in certain areas of the Eastern Slopes, I understand -- but also other forms of less commercialized development that require personal commitment, physical commitment, to exercise; for example, cross-country trails; in concert with the tourist department perhaps a series of bed-and-breakfast establishments that could be utilized to expand the tourist and recreational opportunities along the Eastern Slopes and take the pressure off the development for commercial purposes of our national parks.

Sunshine. I believe and I hope that the minister learned a lesson about Sunshine. He was surrounded by strong advocates of commercial development in the Banff National Park, surrounded by those advocates in his cabinet. It is questionable as to whether or not the Minister of Tourism for our government, the Alberta government, should be advocating commercial development one way or another in the national parks. But to the extent that he undertook to do that, I believe there is a responsibility on the part of the Minister of Recreation and Parks to advocate otherwise and to ensure that expansion of a facility like Sunshine simply isn't allowed to go ahead. Again the respondents to Dr. Swinnerton's study strongly argue that that kind of development wouldn't be appropriate for national parks, certainly wouldn't be appropriate for provincial parks.

I'd like to move from parks policy and the expansion of provincial parks to a specific issue that affects the west end of Edmonton, and that's the Capital City Park initiative. About, I believe, half of that is complete, and if the minister has ever -- and I'm sure he has -- been able to utilize and enjoy that park system, he will find it to be outstanding. The network of trails for biking and jogging and walking along the riverbanks of Edmonton, particularly from central Edmonton throughout the east end, are truly an accomplishment. The rest of the Capital City Park development remains to be done; there's about \$46 million in development remaining to be done. I know from living in the west end and from speaking to people in that end how much that development would be appreciated.

I also can appreciate that \$46 million is a lot of money for this department to spend in one fell swoop. However, I believe it wouldn't be unreasonable for this minister to make a commitment to, say, 10 percent extension of the Capital City Park in Edmonton each year for 10 years. That would be \$4.6 million a year. It wouldn't be money that would come completely from his department, because it would be cost shared with the municipal government. It would create jobs, it would provide recreational opportunities for families in the west end in the long run, and it would simply serve to enhance the recreational facilities that are available in this city. In the long term, to put it in conservative terms, that would have economic development implications, because it would make Edmonton, as attractive a city as it is to live in, an even more attractive city to live in and to raise a family. I would ask that the minister consider that proposal: 10 percent of the outstanding \$46 million of required construction per year for 10 years, emphasizing the job-creation potential, the capital investment potential, the family resource development potential, and emphasizing the need for balance between the east end and the west end of the city of Edmonton.

MR. TAYLOR: Ship them to Calgary for a good time.

MR. MITCHELL: There is a great deal of development in Calgary that we feel hasn't been balanced by similar development in Edmonton, and we'd of course like to see that balance addressed by this minister in particular.

The ministry's draft policy statement addresses the issue of leisure education, and I believe that's an extremely important feature of recreational development and its positive implications for people in this province. We all know of the success of Participation. We all know of the success of the Blue Lake Centre, an outstanding program, one that I'm certain -- although I don't know, but I would expect -- is probably oversubscribed and would argue that more such programs should be available. I would ask that the minister comment on his commitment to development of these kinds of educational opportunities.

I notice that Leisure Lifestyle and Fitness programs, under vote 2.4.6, have in fact been decreased, although to the minister's credit Blue Lake has been increased. Could the minister indicate what plans he has for future development of leisure educational activities and opportunities in this province, and could he point out to the Legislature whether he has been working and in what manner he has been working with the Minister of Education to emphasize this kind of educational program through the schools?

My final point, Mr. Chairman, addresses the issue of CRC grants. Much has been said about it, and most of that has been focused on the reduction in those grants. I have said before and I will say again that I believe that program to be an extremely good and worthwhile program for a number of reasons. One is that it is capital intensive; it creates jobs. Not only does it create jobs in and of itself, but it has a leveraged effect, because the ministry, the provincial government, puts up only 50 percent, and those funds must be matched. Therefore, it places an incentive on community groups to find money. It also places an incentive upon community groups to provide their own volunteer activities. Both of those things are very consistent with this Conservative government's initiatives of recent years: emphasis on the voluntary sector, emphasis on private- and voluntary-sector fund-raising. This program is a program that I believe, simply from an economic point of view, from the point of view of creating jobs, of providing economic opportunities in areas such as Edmonton but around this province, is extremely beneficial, and I would ask that he consider not cutting the funding to that particular program.

In Edmonton I would point out that the program will be cut from what was expected, \$6.9 million, to an actual this year of \$5.7 million. In 1990 originally expected was \$5.7 million; it will be cut to \$4.6 million. It has a big impact. I should point out that for a riding like Edmonton-Meadowlark -- and I'm certain that there are many ridings around the province that would have a similar profile -- a riding with many, many new areas, this creates a great irony. It is these new areas that of course attract young families who have a particular need for community facilities: playgrounds, arenas, playground structures, community halls, those kinds of facilities. But, of course, new communities have more difficulty in having not had the time to raise the money to accumulate the funds to proceed with these kinds of facilities. At exactly the time when families require those facilities in many new areas, the resources are very difficult to find to provide the facilities and to meet that need. This program has been able to address that particular irony, and it is dis-

turbing to see, given its economic benefits, its job-creation benefits, that the government would be moving to cut back on a program of that nature at this time.

I guess a third point that I would like to make about the CRC program is an administrative matter and the fact that communities and municipalities, led to believe that funding would be at a given level this year, began to make commitments, began to gear up their planning program on that presumed level of funding, only to find that that wouldn't be the case. While certainly one can never believe it until you see it in writing, I think the minister is to be criticized to some extent for the manner in which that program was administered and handled, and he has to take responsibility for creating some duress in the planning and administration of that program at the municipal level.

It is with some regret, Mr. Chairman, but also with a responsibility to make this point strongly that I am proposing, in light of our concerns in particular with the CRC program, an amendment to the minister's budget that would call for the minister's salary and benefits to be reduced to \$1 per annum until such time as his ministry has been able to address the issue of the CRC program adequately and properly and until he has taken full account of the economic, social, community, and family benefits of that program and the detrimental effects of his draft budget proposal to reduce that program, until he has taken account of the detrimental effects of that initiative in these important areas. So I move the amendment:

That Recreation and Parks 1989-90 estimates vote 1.0.1, in reference to the minister's salary and benefits, be reduced to \$1.

MR. ACTING DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The Member for Bow Valley.

MR. MUSGROVE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I was delighted when our present minister was appointed to Recreation and Parks. I find that I like his philosophy and his enthusiasm.

MR. ACTING DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Just wait a moment until we get these amendments distributed. You'll be speaking to the amendment, by the way, hon. Member for Bow Valley. Did you want to speak to the estimates or to the amendment? We'll retain your name on the speaking order if you didn't want to speak to the amendment.

MR. MUSGROVE: I wish to speak to the amendment, Mr. Chairman, when I get a copy of the amendment.

MR. ACTING DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The Hon. Member for Bow Valley.

MR. MUSGROVE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Speaking to the amendment . . . [The timer sounded] I believe that the amendment really only requires that long a speech.

To carry on, as I said, I was delighted when this minister was appointed. I like his philosophy and his enthusiasm towards this department. I certainly don't agree with the amendment. He has done a lot for the department at this point. Just to point out some of the things I'm looking forward to working with him in the future, I would be remiss if I didn't mention the Alberta Summer Games that are taking place in Brooks, Alberta, August 9 to 13. Our minister is certainly going to be part of that process of those games, and I'm looking forward to my taking part in

them also. As a matter of fact, we give a personal invitation to everyone in this House to attend the Summer Games in Brooks. At the risk of having rumours started, I'm also including the Official Opposition and the Liberal Party so that they won't feel that they haven't been invited.

Mr. Chairman, our minister has done a great job in his portfolio at this time. I would have to mention the municipal recreation areas that have been approved recently. One of them, of course, is in my constituency. In the Bow Valley constituency previously we had the Crawling Valley recreation area, which now is being improved on by the irrigation district. The proposal now is that in addition to their municipal recreation area, there will be a tourist destination that is second to none in Alberta. We have the Bow City park, which was previously funded by the Department of Recreation and Parks. Stafford Lake urban municipal recreation area, within the town of Brooks, is in the process of planning, and recently there has been one in Empress. Empress is a small village a long way from any other centre. It has a paved secondary road to it and is certainly a great place to put in a park for people to go into a remote area and enjoy a holiday.

There are some things that I would like to mention to the minister, such as privatization in some of our parks. I understand the policy of avoiding privatization. I know that it's a sensitive issue within the parks department. But this year at Kinbrook Island park and at Dinosaur Provincial Park there is no food concession, for the simple reason that we have a policy where people are required to bid on these concession areas. The person who held the one in Dinosaur park last year said that he lost money, and the one in Kinbrook Island said that for financial reasons he wasn't going to bid on it either. Somewhere we have to have a policy that is flexible enough to allow these types of services in the parks for the enjoyment of the people who are there, without infringing on the parks' policy on privatization.

[Mr. Jonson in the Chair]

I am reminded of our policy a few years ago where there was firewood rationing within the park. Now, everyone goes to the park. They like to have a little bonfire in the evening so that they can enjoy themselves. With the rationing of wood the park was generally out of their weekly supply of wood by Tuesday. I had a neighbour and friend of mine who offered to supply wood for the park at a cost to the user of the park, and of course that was against the park policy, so he was not even allowed to sell them some wood so that they could carry on with their holiday.

In Dinosaur Provincial Park, which is in my constituency, there's a great need for some improvements. It's a world heritage site, and the overnight camping areas are a real problem. There's a shortage of overnight camping. On a long weekend the overnight camping area is generally full by Thursday night, and the overflow parking is full before the weekend starts. The parks department does have enough land now to improve the overnight parking area to accommodate probably four times what it presently accommodates.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Excuse me, hon. member. I would just like to make the comment that we are on the amendment, and while an amendment of this nature allows quite broad debate in terms of the policies and performance of the department and its minister, specific requests for the constituency, I think, are beyond the scope of the amendment.

MR. MUSGROVE: I was only making the point, Mr. Chairman, that our present minister is doing a good job in that he's looking at these requests, and therefore his salary should stay the same as it is. In that respect, Mr. Chairman, I would like to see our present minister stay on as the minister so that we can work through these programs and accomplish our objectives. I'm quite sure that if we were to reduce the minister's salary to a dollar, he wouldn't be able to afford or have the incentive to carry on and do the job we're expecting him to do.

To carry on with what I was saying, Mr. Chairman, I would hope that the minister, if he is able to carry on because of his funding, would recognize that Dinosaur Provincial Park is very much in need of some additional overnight parking areas and, of course, the amenities that are needed to carry on a park, for the simple reason that people go to the Drumheller museum. They see fossils that came out of Dinosaur Provincial Park -- and most of them did -- and then they would like to see the source of these fossils. So they go to Dinosaur park, and of course they don't have the ability to handle a large influx of people visiting the park.

I bring these things to your attention, Mr. Chairman, because I feel that our minister is a very important part of our government, and I think, we should keep him on good terms and enthusiastic towards working for the improvements of all the parks in Alberta. Thank you very much.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Speaking on the amendment, the Member for Taber-Warner.

MR. BOGLE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd like to rise and address the amendment as put forward by the Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark and speak strongly against this particular amendment. We have a hardworking minister. We have a man who is dedicated to improvements in his department, dedicated to efficiency and a commonsense approach, and dedicated to Albertans. If anything, we should be proposing an amendment to give the proper recognition which is so rightfully deserved.

When I've seen some of the examples of how this minister is operating in his department -- one of his first tasks was to go out and visit provincial parks across this province and look to see what services are available, how we're meeting the public, how we're responding to needs, and how the dollars are being invested, both in terms of new capital improvements as well as the maintenance of what we have. I was so impressed, in a private discussion with the minister, to hear that he did have some questions and concerns about our construction costs, about the way we are using those dollars. He did have a desire and does have a desire to see more efficiency built into the system. A specific example. We've just completed a new maintenance shop in the Writing-on-Stone Provincial Park in my constituency. The minister came back and said, "I don't think we need cedar shingles on the roof," and I applaud him for that. Yeah, I note the Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark has now left his place.

MR. MARTIN: Order, order. Withdraw.

MR. BOGLE: That's right. The hon. Leader of the Opposition is very correct. I withdraw that remark.

And that's very true. Why do we need cedar shingles on a maintenance shed roof? The minister has picked up on those ideas. He wants to involve local people who live around a park,

who have an interest and a desire in seeing that park flourish and develop, who want to ensure that when visitors come, they are not only well treated, but they go back to their own communities with a good feeling about that area. He's questioning some of the signage, and I've seen that. He wants to ensure that people understand and that where we've got a small outlet -- we don't have one at the park I just mentioned -- a concession stand or the like, that it's clearly enough marked so people know what services are available there. Again, I compliment the minister for taking that kind of action.

The bottom line is that he's bringing common sense to the department. He's questioning his officials. That's what every minister should do. Ministers are appointed not for their professional expertise in a department; they are appointed because they have come up from the grass roots through the elected process. The leader of the party in office then selects members from his team to be members of Executive Council. One of their first tasks is to go out and learn and, yes, to question: to question the officials, to ask, "Why are we doing things in this particular way?" You know, because we've done it for 20 years isn't good enough. You've got to respond to the needs today. This minister is doing that, and he deserves the full credit from this Assembly for taking that approach.

I was so pleased to hear the hon. member's comments about William Watson Lodge. For members of the opposition who are cackling away, if they haven't yet visited, they should. They'll see what a marvelous example we have of a facility that was developed in Kananaskis Country to help Albertans who are less fortunate than those of us in this Assembly, to help them to ensure that they can enjoy the benefits in that particular area and in the park. For the minister to say that he would like to see that facility expanded is going to be welcome news, not only to the seniors who use it but to the handicapped, because it is well used; it's well booked.

The municipal recreation/tourism areas: again, the leadership shown by this minister in working with members of the Assembly, whether they happen to sit on the government side or the opposition side. Hon. members know that, and I challenge them to deny that they haven't had involvement, because they have. The minister is trying to respond. What a marvelous way of working with volunteers and local governments in developing services and facilities across this province and rural Alberta in the areas that haven't benefited from facilities like Capital City Park or Fish Creek Provincial Park so that we can get some services developed and we can provide some operating funds to them. The minister is doing that in a responsive and a caring way.

The Tyrrell museum. While the museum falls under the Department of Culture and Multiculturalism -- and I must say from a personal experience, my wife and our four children and I visited the museum this past weekend -- the museum is located within a provincial park. We took the hour-and-15-minute walk. A park attendant was our guide, and there were probably 25 or 30 people within the group. About two-thirds of the people were from various parts of Alberta; the others were from Saskatchewan, British Columbia, Montana. There was one couple from New York State. The walk through nature, the experience -- and I could tell from the way the guide handled herself that she took a great deal of pride in what she was doing. Now, that comes through the department, and we are appreciative of that.

The community recreation/cultural grant program: that's the

reason for this amendment; that's the reason the hon. Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark has put forward the amendment. The minister has stood in his place and apologized for the inconvenience. Does the hon. Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark think any of us like that reduction in the program? You know, I for one have met with recreation directors in Taber and Coaldale. I've met with council members in smaller communities like Warner and Coutts and Milk River, and we've talked about it. It's tough; it's a difficult decision. But as the minister has said: would you rather we cut health or social services, or would you rather we look at education? No, of course not. It's so easy for the hon. member to complain, to criticize. Let him come up with a constructive idea. Oh no, he's not going to do that. No, he'd much rather sit back and pick away and complain. [interjection] Oh, it's nice to see the hon. member is back. It's so good to see you back.

Well, very clearly, this minister is doing an admirable job, and he deserves the full support of this Assembly. I hope we'll defeat this motion in the soundest possible way.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Edmonton-Jasper Place.

MR. McINNIS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to say a few words on this latest Liberal initiative. This all began, as I recall, with praise for the minister's appointment and congratulations or words of that sort. It went on to a very lengthy list of things that the minister should accomplish over the next year or up to 10 years and then proceeded with a motion to reduce the salary to \$1. I would like to address that motion briefly if I may.

I agree very much with the minister that parks and outdoor recreation experience is an increasingly valuable thing in our modern world. I would like to see this minister work closely with the Minister of Health, because I think the experience people have in outdoor recreation of all kinds, and indoor recreation as well, is one of the more positive things we can do to reduce health expenditures and to have a healthier society. I appreciate that the minister has at least made himself available to promote that notion.

I'm involved myself to some degree in adult recreational programs. It does seem that if you look at what this department is doing, an awful lot of the funding, an awful lot of the direction of the department is oriented towards elite athletic performance by kids basically. I mean, we're striving towards the Olympics and that type of event, and it seems to me that the kind of person in our society who participates on a lifetime basis more and more has to pay out of pocket, not just for outdoor recreational experiences but for health care as well. You'll find a lot of treatment of recreational/athletic types of injuries is off the health care system. People who have a healthier lifestyle have to pay for more of their health care than people who don't. If you smoke two packs of cigarettes a day and drink a whole lot of alcohol, you're going to have all your costs paid by the health care system, whereas if you suffer, let's say, an athletic injury, you probably have to pay the rehabilitation of that out of your pocket in fair measure. I hope this minister will focus his attention on lifelong recreational opportunities, not that we don't need to fund and support elite athletes competing internationally, but I think we do need to support the type of lifelong endeavour that most people can take advantage of.

I agree with the Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark about the urgency of extending the Capital City Park to the west end

of the city. It is a matter of balance, it is a matter, I think, of economic potential, but it's also a matter that is not likely to be dealt with very quickly at the pace outlined by the hon. minister. He referred to \$1 million available in this budget for the entire province for the expansion of urban parks, which I think simple arithmetic indicates is not going to do an awful lot to extend the Capital City Park westward. There is a cost of some \$50 million associated with that, and I think we need a little tighter notion of what the time frame for that is.

In our parks and recreation system we have not only something that's valuable in terms of the health and well-being of people in our province, but we do have a world-class resource. Increasingly there are people who will travel to our province from all over the world because they don't have the type of outdoor wilderness recreation experience that can be had in Alberta. I think we should be careful not to pat ourselves on the back too much about this, because at the present time the total land mass of all provincial parks and all wilderness areas in Alberta is 2,328 square kilometres, or .4 percent of the land mass of the province. It's a very modest amount of our territory which enjoys the protection of provincial parks and wilderness areas. If you add Willmore park and all of the natural areas in the province, that's another 4,786 square kilometres, or .7 percent of the province. So all the provincially protected lands -- parks, wilderness areas, Willmore park, and natural areas -- the sum total of it all is just over 7,000 square kilometres, just a shade over 1 percent of the land mass of the province.

Now, compare that with one forest management agreement which is currently under negotiation by the minister of forests. Alberta-Pacific has been allocated 100,000 square kilometres in support of their pulp mill operations compared with 7,000 square kilometres, which is the sum total of our provincially protected lands in the province. I think it's fair to point out that we do benefit from a very excellent national parks system in our province, which absolutely dwarfs the provincial parks system by comparison. There are some 63,000 square kilometres in federally controlled protected lands compared with the total of 7,000 provincially protected. But the province still has an awful long way to go.

The minister mentioned very briefly the Lakeland region as potential for recreation and park development. I think he's on to something there, and I hope he delves an awful lot deeper. This is an area of the province which contains more than 44 percent of the province's total accessible classes 1, 2, and 3 recreational shoreline. Almost 70 percent of the class 1 shoreline in the province is within that Lakeland district. If he looks at the map and looks at what the forestry department is doing with Alberta-Pacific, he will see that a major proportion -- I believe it's almost half of the Lakeland study area -- is within the forest management agreement proposed for the Alberta-Pacific project. It really does call into question what we as a province and what this government are doing allocating that whole northern zone of the province to the forest companies, saying that the purpose of these lands is to provide fibre for bleached kraft pulp mills serving a dwindling market around the world. What we might be giving up in the way of recreational opportunities for our people but also in terms of a world-class wilderness recreation type of experience or even a variety of other outdoor experiences: I don't believe these two things have been weighed off properly.

My understanding is that since the 1960s this Lakeland region has been recognized as having excellent potential. It does

seem that the work on this project stalled sometime after the 1976 parks policy statement, for reasons of fiscal restraint or lack of funds or whatever, so we don't have clear proposals for parkland or any other type of provincially designated recreation development and wilderness protection. Meanwhile, along comes a Japanese consortium, and all of a sudden this land is freely made available to them and negotiations are under way. I think you've got to move on this thing quickly, this 3,200 square kilometre block of land north of Highway 28, or else we may find that it's somewhat too late.

So I hope that in the next year for sure the minister gets a move on that. I think we have to have this thing sorted out before that forest management agreement is signed, and I'll tell you the reason. You look at a forest management agreement and one of the things it says is that if the government decides to withdraw land, which they have the right to do under the agreement, they have to compensate the companies for anything more than 2 percent of the forest management agreement that is withdrawn. I would hate to see us giving away this land to a forest company for free and then turning around and having to pay them in some fashion to get it back for recreation and parks development, assuming that it hasn't been desolated in the interim. I suspect there may be others throughout the entire region -- Daishowa, Alberta Energy, Alberta-Pacific, Weldwood, Procter & Gamble -- where we have the same problem. It really gets down to: why is this government prepared to alienate all of that land, put it under the control of forest companies, and dedicate it primarily to the use of basically mowing it down and running it through a mill and sending it off to Japan and the United States? We have a very modest park system, and I think we have to move, especially on the Lakeland region, but I think in the rest of that northern area.

I also want to refer to a specific matter of an ecological reserve, the Middle Sand Hills ecological reserve in the southern part of the province. The Middle Sand Hills ecological reserve would be located on the east bank of the South Saskatchewan River across from the Suffield Block and includes some 2,273 hectares of prairie. The Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark referred in a general way to the importance of protecting what little prairie wildland presently exists. This is a very excellent area for protection, and I understand the minister's department had moved a fair way along the path of establishing an ecological reserve in this area.

There were public meetings that were planned, one for June 26 in Hilda, Alberta. The secretary of the parks department Advisory Committee on Wilderness Areas and Ecological Reserves, Larry Duchesne, announced, I believe it was in the early part of June, that that meeting was canceled because the chairman of the panel, Donn Cline, was ill. Then the minister comes along and tells the newspaper in Medicine Hat that the meeting was actually canceled because he needs time to review the management of ecological reserves. I wonder if the government could get its story straight about why the meeting on the Middle Sand Hills was canceled and in particular why there's no other date set for this thing.

It seems to me that the management of an ecological reserve is not that big a problem, given that nature kind of takes care of ecological reserves. You leave them that way, and you have natural things happen. I wonder why it is that when we're talking about protecting the environment, there's no end of delay; there are all kinds of reasons why we have to review management plans. We cancel meetings, and we don't seem to get

anywhere. Whereas when the Minister of the Environment wants to put through a development which may compromise the environment, all of a sudden it doesn't matter if we have agreement on things or terms of reference or anything. You just start appointing people and start having processes and meetings.

Now, a lot of people in the Medicine Hat area believe that the MLA for Cypress-Redcliff intervened with the minister to seek an end to this thing. There are some people in the local area who feel this river valley would be better flooded for irrigation purposes rather than protected under the status of an ecological reserve. I mean, if this is case -- people have all kinds of different ideas about land use in our province -- why don't the people who want to dam the river and flood these lands come to the meetings and state their case, rather than having some side access to the minister, in which they have the whole process crash and nothing further happens? This is a concern that an awful lot of people have, that you had a process set up to deal with a very serious proposal to protect one of the few remaining prairie regions; the process was ready to go. All of a sudden at the eleventh hour it's over with, and there is no further date set. In fact, the correspondence has stated that the meeting was canceled to a further date rather than postponed, and there are those who wonder why the use of the word "canceled," rather than the word "postponed." I repeat: why are we so cautious when we're protecting the environment, when we're so reckless when we're potentially compromising the environment?

So I wonder if the minister could address those doubts. Depending on how he does that, we'll be deciding how to vote on this Liberal amendment.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Speaking on the amendment, the Member for Clover Bar.

MR. GESELL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to confine my remarks to the amendment, unlike some of the previous speakers.

MR. DAY: Agreed.

MR. GESELL: Thank you.

Mr. Chairman, I would want to reinforce the comments that have been made by the Member for Taber-Warner. I speak very strongly against the amendment. This minister is a breath of fresh air to this portfolio. I believe he brings a sensitivity, a commitment, and a competency to this portfolio that I think provides me with the assurance that he will do an excellent job. He has done an excellent job so far, and he will continue to do an excellent job. That assurance arises from the visits he has made to my constituency and the sensitivity and genuine concern he's shown for the areas that provide recreational and parks potential in my constituency of Clover Bar -- the Blackfoot grazing reserve, Elk Island park, the Ministik bird sanctuary, and other areas that are critical to that area, not only to Clover Bar but to all Alberta. That sensitivity is very well expressed by that minister.

Now, it appears to me that the amendment is prompted by the CRC discussion, the community recreation/cultural grant program discussion. I would want to reinforce and make this as a public statement. That commitment by this government and by this minister of \$240 million towards that program has not been reduced. There seems to be some misconception here. The term of the program has been elongated, and the amount

that's allocated on a per capita basis to individuals within municipalities is now \$10.

I also would want to stress here in this House that it was the Liberal Party and the members of that Liberal Party who were clamouring for fiscal responsibility. Now, when the minister shows that fiscal responsibility by making judicious cuts to a particular program -- and I'll explain that in a minute to the members -- all of a sudden we have an uprising. There seems to be no consistency here by these members, on one hand requesting fiscal responsibility and then, when it is shown, being abusive and making unwarranted amendments to particular items that are in front of us.

Now, in respect to the CRC grants, I would want to indicate to members of this House who may not be aware that I have personal knowledge of certain municipalities that are in fact banking some of these funds that are being provided. Now, that is not the intent of that program. I think those funds that are banked probably should be utilized in a more appropriate fashion. I think the minister in his decision with respect to that particular program has in fact made the right decision. Obviously, the Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark either does not want to hear these comments or he doesn't care, which is worse.

Now, Mr. Chairman, I really encourage that responsibility that has been shown by this particular minister. I am assured that Recreation and Parks, under the guidance of this minister, will be of benefit and provide opportunities to all Albertans and those people that come from other countries and visit Alberta. I feel this minister truly serves the public.

Thank you very much.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Are you ready for the question?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The Member for Vegreville.

MR. FOX: Thank you. Speaking on the amendment. I'm glad I do have an opportunity to speak because I was concerned that when the Member for Taber-Warner was addressing his remarks on the amendment, he was painting all opposition members with the same brush, assuming that members of the Official Opposition would support the motion. We're keeping an open mind. We want to see what the minister has to say in response and consider all the comments made before deciding whether or not we want to contribute to reducing his salary to a dollar.

I would just like to say that unlike some others, my contact with the former minister was always very positive, and I appreciated the work he did in Recreation and Parks. My contact with the minister so far in his new portfolio has been very positive. I sense someone who's eager to work on behalf of Albertans, do some things in Recreation and Parks that need to be done, and I think he deserves support in that regard. I share the concern of hon. members, however, about the cutbacks in the CRC grants. It may be that you could view it as something that was fiscally responsible and needed to be done. I mean, if we don't cut back on the CRC grants, then we have to take food out of the mouths of hungry children or school books away from kids that are trying to learn: that's the kind of scenario you may want to paint.

I would point out to hon. members on the government side that there are lots of expenditures this government approves that don't do anything to help average Albertans. Certainly \$6 mil-

lion out of the Economic Development and Trade budget to provide a loan for someone at 9.6 percent to pay light bills and taxes and whatever other operating expenses apparently are now being paid by the loan to Mr. Pocklington -- I mean, there are other sources that could be used to make sure the commitment the government made to municipalities, and through the municipalities to many worthwhile groups in Alberta, would be maintained, and that was to fund the CRC program at a specific level for this coming year. There's a number of municipalities that made commitments to these groups and that now are in a position where they have to go around and apologize for the government decision and take the heat for this cost-cutting decision.

It has, I submit, created a bit of a credibility gap there. People are wondering: "I mean, they told us it was going to be a certain value. They told us it was going to be \$10 this year, and we made commitments based on that level. Now it isn't going to be." Was it \$10, or was it \$12 and \$10? It was supposed to be \$12, and now it's \$10. So they're wondering: is the minister's commitment that it be \$8 next year and \$6 the year after or whatever something that they can count on? I understand that this minister wasn't in place to make the \$12 commitment.

I think it fair to note that there are a number of budget complications Albertans are having to cope with now, not only in terms of cutbacks in CRC grants. The municipalities either have to deny these worthy groups the funds they were promised or come up with it through their general revenue funds. There's the case of the education grants that the minister was a little late on. Calgary in particular I think had \$900,000 or something of extra unanticipated expenditures. Their tax notices had already gone out. All of these tilings occurred, I submit, because we didn't get a budget when we were supposed to get a budget, and that was prior to the end of March, 1989.

The only reason we didn't get a budget prior to March 1989 is because these guys had a political agenda that superceded their economic agenda. They called an election when an election wasn't needed, and if calling an election when it wasn't needed wasn't bad enough, Mr. Chairman, then we had to have an unnecessary by-election. The whole business of running the province, the business of being accountable, the business of providing the municipalities, the hard working burghers of the towns and villages and counties of the province with the information they needed to communicate with and work on behalf of their people was put on hold. The need to run this province, you know, the way it should be run was put on hold so we could have a by-election in Stettler. The Legislature, for pete's sake, didn't resume until . . . So there are budget complications that this minister is having to defend. I don't think it was his idea, but he's having to defend them because of the Stettler by-election and all of the political considerations that backed up the economic agenda, the economic needs of the people of the province of Alberta.

So I have real concerns about the way the CRC thing was handled. There's a number of communities that made commitments to groups and now have had to either break those commitments or deny some other programs they're funding by taking revenue from these programs to honour their CRC commitments. So I share that concern, and I submit that the reasons are purely political and not economic. It's a result of poor planning on the part of the Premier. Sometime we should sit down as an Assembly and total up the cost to Albertans of programs denied or mishandled as a result of the Stettler by-election. I think it

would be very revealing to total those things some day.

Anyway, in terms of this motion I await the minister's response to decide whether or not I'll support it, because I think in the main -- no pun intended there, Minister of Culture and Multiculturalism -- his performance as a rookie minister has been very acceptable. He's done a good job. He's taken action on a project that I've been urging action on for a number of years, and that is an MRTA program grant to the Tofield area to begin to develop the potential at Beaverhill Lake, a very unique site in Alberta. The bird watching potential, the tourism potential, the recreation potential of the Tofield area is enormous. I think people can take some encouragement from the fact that this minister has acknowledged that and has made some commitment to the area to try and help develop that potential in a sensitive way that will not disrupt the ecology of the area, that will not disrupt the resource but will allow Albertans the opportunity to enjoy it. I hope what we're moving to is, perhaps, a major development in the area that will highlight bird watching, perhaps a bird museum that educates people, lets them know the variety of birds that visit the area, what we can see in Alberta. [interjection] Bird watching a major tourism potential there, hon. member. In Point Pélee National Park they spend a million dollars per year on film just to take pictures of birds.

Tofield is an area with a lot of potential. This minister has recognized it, and I'm pleased with that. I don't think I'll vote in favour of reducing his salary to a dollar.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Are you ready for the question?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

[Motion on amendment lost]

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Hon. minister.

DR. WEST: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I enjoyed the debate to a degree. With four children heavily involved in recreational facilities throughout this province, I can't afford a dollar salary, so I'm very pleased to be back on the payroll. I acknowledge, as I did before, the problem with the CRC, and I would ask that all members share with me their thoughts in the future as we move to the end of that program so that we can better deliver these funds through to the grass roots, to those who use the facilities.

I made an off-the-cuff statement about having four children.

They are involved in figure skating and hockey and swimming, and the costs are enormous. I don't know how people with families today, especially the larger families, can afford to put all their children in these recreational facilities. We have spent a tremendous amount of time over the years building them -- they are beautiful -- but we have to address the utilization costs and make sure that our families, those who enjoy family togetherness with their children, can afford to access these facilities and programs. I want everyone here to work with me to try, as we approach the end of some of these programs, to bring out innovative new programs that address not the capital construction but perhaps the utilization of these facilities now that we have them built.

At this point, because the hour is getting late, I would like to present these estimates to the Assembly and have a vote on them. I would ask that you consider the some \$93 million in these votes. I think they are very beneficial to the people of Alberta. Let's get on with the job of building this fine province and delivering these services.

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

[Motion carried]

[Mr. Deputy Speaker in the Chair]

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

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Having heard the report, would those in favour please say aye.

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, it is the intent of the government on Monday next to deal with second readings of government Bills on the Order Paper. Monday evening the intent is to be in Committee of Supply with the Department of the Solicitor General.

[At 12:59 p.m. the House adjourned to Monday at 2:30 p.m.]

