

Legislative Assembly of Alberta

Title: **Wednesday, April 24, 1991**

2:30 p.m.

Date: 91/04/24

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

head: **Prayers**

MR. SPEAKER: Let us pray.

Our Father, we thank You for Your abundant blessings to our province, ourselves, and our country.

We ask You to ensure to us Your guidance and the will to follow it.

Amen.

head: **Introduction of Bills**

Bill 28

Hail and Crop Insurance Amendment Act, 1991

MRS. McCLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, I request leave to introduce Bill 28, Hail and Crop Insurance Amendment Act, 1991. This being a money Bill, His Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor, having been informed of the contents of this Bill, recommends the same to the Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, this Bill will provide for the delivery of the revenue insurance option through the Alberta Hail and Crop Insurance Corporation.

[Leave granted; Bill 28 read a first time]

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Mill Woods.

Bill 305

An Act to Amend the Public Service Employee Relations Act

MR. GIBEAULT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I request leave to introduce Bill 305, An Act to Amend the Public Service Employee Relations Act.

If this Bill is passed, it will permit employees of the Legislative Assembly to bargain collectively, just like other workers in the province.

[Leave granted; Bill 305 read a first time]

MR. SPEAKER: Perhaps with the private Bills we could go in order, beginning with Pr. 1 and following in sequence, please. Thank you.

Calgary-Fish Creek.

Bill Pr. 1

Alberta Home Builders Graduate Institute Act

MR. PAYNE: Mr. Speaker, I request leave to introduce Bill Pr. 1, the Alberta Home Builders Graduate Institute Act.

This Bill incorporates a nonprofit institute to provide a continuing education program throughout Alberta for home builders and to administer a certification program and standards for this important industry.

[Leave granted; Bill Pr. 1 read a first time]

Bill Pr. 2

Grande Cache Tourism and Business Development Authority Act

MR. DOYLE: Mr. Speaker, I request leave to introduce Bill Pr. 2, the Grande Cache Tourism and Business Development Authority Act.

This Bill incorporates a nonprofit corporation for the town of Grande Cache to promote tourism, business, and economic development in and around that community.

[Leave granted; Bill Pr. 2 read a first time]

Bill Pr. 3

Lutheran Church-Canada, The Alberta-British Columbia District Corporation Act

MR. DOYLE: Mr. Speaker, I request leave to introduce a Bill being the Lutheran Church-Canada, The Alberta-British Columbia District Corporation Act.

This Bill continues a nonprofit religious corporation under a revamped charter to reflect modern terminology and allow for missionary work beyond Alberta and British Columbia.

[Leave granted; Bill Pr. 3 read a first time]

MR. SPEAKER: Banff-Cochrane.

Bill Pr. 4

An Act to Amend an Ordinance to Incorporate Alberta College

MR. EVANS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I request leave to introduce Bill Pr. 4, being An Act to Amend an Ordinance to Incorporate Alberta College.

Mr. Speaker, this Bill amends the charter of Alberta College by, firstly, deleting historical references to any affiliation with the Methodist Church of Canada and the United Church of Canada and, secondly, updating provisions affecting the appointment of members of the board of governors and the dissolution or winding up of Alberta College.

[Leave granted; Bill Pr. 4 read a first time]

MR. SPEAKER: Calgary-Glenmore.

Bill Pr. 5

An Act to Amend the Calgary Convention Centre Authority Act

MRS. MIROSH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I request leave to introduce Bill Pr. 5, An Act to Amend the Calgary Convention Centre Authority Act.

This Act basically changes the composition of the authority. Thank you.

[Leave granted; Bill Pr. 5 read a first time]

Bill Pr. 6

Charmaine L. Toms Legal Articles Act

MR. CHUMIR: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce Bill Pr. 6, being the Charmaine L. Toms Legal Articles Act.

This Bill allows for admission to the bar after articling with a justice of the Federal Court of Canada, Trial Division, a court

not presently provided for in the Legal Profession Act in order to satisfy articles.

[Leave granted; Bill Pr. 6 read a first time]

MR. SPEAKER: Drumheller.

Bill Pr. 7

The Camrose Lutheran College Corporation Act

MR. SCHUMACHER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I beg leave to introduce Bill Pr. 7, The Camrose Lutheran College Corporation Act.

The purpose of this Bill is to bring the charter of this college up to date. It was originally incorporated in 1913 by an Act of the Legislature, and it was last amended in 1958. This reflects the progress that institution has made in the intervening 33 years.

[Leave granted; Bill Pr. 7 read a first time]

head: **Tabling Returns and Reports**

MR. SPEAKER: The Minister of the Environment.

MR. KLEIN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased today to file with the Legislative Assembly the answers to written questions 183 and 309 and motions for returns 242 and 244.

In addition, I would like to file copies of a report on water quality in the Peace River; the Statement of Interjurisdictional Cooperation on Environmental Matters, approved by the Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment; and a new Alberta Environment publication entitled *The Home We Share*, which is designed for the general public to tell them about the work of Alberta Environment. In addition, I wish to table for all hon. members a new Alberta Environment publication on household waste management called *Saving the World Begins at Home*.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. McINNIS: Mr. Speaker, I wish to file copies of an affidavit by Dr. Terence Carleton, associate professor of forest ecology at the University of Toronto and one of Canada's foremost experts on the boreal forest. It deals with the subject of environmental damage from planned pulp mill logging operations in northern Alberta.

head: **Introduction of Special Guests**

2:40

MR. ISLEY: Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to introduce to you today and through you to members of the Assembly 27 grade 10 students from the Assumption school in Grande Centre. They're accompanied by their teacher Mr. Seb Stang and parents Mr. Cliff Rose and Mr. Dan Piesinger. They're seated in the members' gallery, and I'd ask that they stand and receive the welcome of the Assembly.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure this afternoon to introduce a former colleague of mine and also the Premier's in this Legislature. I'd like to introduce the hon. Fred Colborne. Mr. Colborne was a member of this Legislature from 1944 to 1971. When he came in 1944, he represented the air force as a member of the services in the Legislature at that time, and there were two other members that had similar responsibilities. Their constituencies were those people that served

outside of Canada. Fred took three cabinet responsibilities: Minister without Portfolio, Minister of Public Works, and, as well, Minister of Municipal Affairs. I'm sure that some of the solid foundations upon which we're working today were established during his term of office. One of Mr. Colborne's other interest areas during his term as a member of the Legislature was with the native and the Metis people, and I know he did a number of things that encouraged and enhanced the opportunities for the native people of this province. I'd like Mr. Colborne to stand – Fred, my good friend – to be acknowledged by the Assembly and recognized for his contribution.

MR. MUSGROVE: Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure this afternoon to introduce a group from Rosemary school in the Bow Valley constituency. They are in the city on an educational tour. The students are accompanied by parents Mr. and Mrs. David Blumell – he is also the teacher – Mr. and Mrs. Leonard Dressel, Mr. and Mrs. Reed Crapo, and Mrs. Marg Loewen. They are seated in the members' gallery, and I would ask them to now stand and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

MR. SPEAKER: Calgary-Millican, then Edmonton-Centre.

MR. SHRAKE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm really delighted today to introduce to you and through you to the Legislature 29 bright young men and women who are upgrading their skills at Alberta Vocational Centre in Calgary. They're accompanied by their excellent teachers Mrs. Susan Jolliffe and Ms Hilary Inglis. They're seated in the public gallery, and I'd like them to rise and receive the warm traditional welcome of the Legislature.

REV. ROBERTS: Mr. Speaker, also visiting with us today are eight members of the downtown YMCA's options for adults program. They're with their leaders Mrs. Lois Kathnelson and Mr. Garry Ingram. I'd ask that they please rise in the public gallery and be welcomed by the members here today.

MR. DAY: Mr. Speaker, it's a joy for me to introduce to you today eight bright young people from Red Deer, here to watch democracy in action. They're accompanied by their leader Dan Mulherin. I'll ask them to stand and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

head:

Oral Question Period

Senior Citizens Programs

MS BARRETT: Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Associate Minister of Family and Social Services denied that there was any connection between the secret review of options to reduce seniors benefit programs and what his government has already done to the seniors in this year's budget. Now, I think it's quite obvious that this government is determined to implement the suggestions of what's supposed to be a discussion paper – that's what it's called – which has already resulted in a 20 percent decrease in extended health benefits and changes in the Aids to Daily Living program. It looks like this is the beginning of a long line of program cuts that is basically going to get the seniors to pay, pay, and pay again. I'd like to ask the minister if he's going to outline now what other measures his government is planning to implement or to thrust on seniors and how far they plan to go as a result of this review paper?

MR. BRASSARD: Mr. Speaker, I would really appreciate the interest this member is exhibiting in the welfare of the seniors

of this province if I thought that it was truly concern rather than just political exploitation and was more concerned with facts than distortion. This is a \$1.2 billion operation that we have going on behalf of the seniors, and you don't arrive at decisions affecting a \$1.2 billion program without a great deal of study and consideration. The document that this member is referring to was one of those studies. It has no bearing on the budget, and it is not reflected. In fact, I'd like to point out to the member that we actually spent \$75.4 million more this year than we did last year on this.

MS BARRETT: I think maybe on this side of the House we listen to our constituents, and they're not happy about these cuts. These guys present a phony budget, but from behind closed doors they're going to tighten eligibility criteria, change the health care premium policy, Blue Cross coverage, and increase the cost share of prescription drugs. Mr. Speaker, those are cuts. My question to the minister is this: why won't he admit that these are cuts, whether or not he calls them that in the budget, and tell these Alberta seniors who are living on fixed incomes how they're supposed to pay for them?

MR. BRASSARD: Well, Mr. Speaker, I too speak to seniors in this province, a great deal of them. Actually they're not angry over the budget that this department has presented; they are more over the inaccuracies that are causing a great deal of confusion around there. Yes, there have been changes to programs. Aids to Daily Living, for instance, no longer pays for cane tips, but it does pay for diabetic supplies, something that was drastically requested time and time again. Yes, the minister did cut back a program in home heating and saved \$10.9 million but injected 16 point something million dollars into home health to help people remain in their own homes longer and improve their quality of life demonstrably. I don't see anything wrong with those kinds of judgments.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Highlands.

MS BARRETT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm glad the minister has finally admitted that they have cut programs to seniors, but he's avoiding the question. The secret report, whose recommendations he's already following, suggested that he consult with seniors. My question is this: now that he's admitted that there are cuts under way, even if they weren't in the budget, now that he's admitted he hasn't consulted with the seniors, will he put a hold on these cuts until he consults with the seniors of Alberta about the future cuts he's planning?

MR. BRASSARD: Mr. Speaker, it's not because I'm not listening to the question but rather because the member is not listening to the answers. I've already addressed her concerns. There has been no cutback. We are spending \$75 million more this year on seniors programs than last. I don't know how often we have to say that. We have a more comprehensive coverage of seniors programs in this province than anywhere else in Canada, and she cannot deny that in this House.

I've said it all, Mr. Speaker.

2:50

MS BARRETT: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to designate the second question to the Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place.

Forestry Projects in the North

MR. McINNIS: Mr. Speaker, the proposed logging practices of Daishowa corporation are the subject of a lawsuit by a group of Albertans who are not prepared to allow this government to surrender control over the future of their natural environment. I've tabled the affidavit of Professor Terence Carleton, who is one of the top Canadian experts on the boreal forests, which do, Mr. Premier, extend to more than one province. The document states in part:

Nowhere in the Operating Ground Rules document for timber harvest planning or in the management agreement is there any mention of conformity with environmental assessment processes at the Federal or Provincial level . . . The fact that such assessment procedures have been avoided suggests an admission that neither the environmental impact nor the forest yield will be sustainable.

My question is a simple one. In view of the fact that this is not the first warning about the expanded clear cuts in northern Alberta, will the minister now agree to an open public review of the environmental effects of timber harvesting in northern Alberta?

MR. FJORDBOTTEN: Mr. Speaker, this member is notorious for taking a report from some so-called expert somewhere and trying to make some statements relevant to it. There has been, through the Environment Council of Alberta, a full review of forestry practices in Alberta. There also was an expert panel report done by Dr. Bruce Dancik, which we'll have a response to very shortly. The bottom line is: our forest resources are sustainable, and we are taking all due consideration for the environmental concerns and the wildlife concerns and the social concerns for the future of Alberta.

MR. McINNIS: Mr. Speaker, this has now become a question of trust, and I trust a professor of forest ecology over a Tory politician any day. Dr. Carleton states that the massive size of the clear cuts allowed in Alberta is a recipe for regeneration failure. He says that so-called natural regeneration won't work. He says that the clear cuts are too large. He says that there's no buffer zone. He says that we're facing a recipe for disaster. I just want the minister to explain to Albertans, if he would be so very kind: what gives him the right to make rules in secret which place our forests at risk?

MR. FJORDBOTTEN: Mr. Speaker, this member always tries to come out with some cynical, hypothetical what happens "if" in the future. Our resources and the plan on the harvesting of those resources is public. In addition to that, we've come out with a new public involvement process, and that new public involvement process will allow full opportunity not only for input by Albertans but for review by Albertans of forest policies in this province. You can take other studies, such as this one, The State of Forestry in Canada, which show Alberta as a leader in this country, and we're continually improving. The drivel and nonsense from this member are notorious and consistent and wrong.

MR. McINNIS: Mr. Speaker, I'll tell you how far this is from a public process. The minister has on his desk a document, a report prepared by D. Wentworth and Associates,* forestry consultants, on the environmental effects of forestry development in northern Alberta. He has the report on his desk. My

*This spelling could not be verified at the time of publication.

question is: when will the minister share this report and this vital information with the public?

MR. FJORDBOTTEN: Mr. Speaker, what report and what vital information?

MR. McINNIS: The one that the Tories wouldn't allow me to . . .

Speaker's Ruling Decorum

MR. SPEAKER: Take your place. [interjections] Hon. member, park it.

MR. McINNIS: You can't even hear what's going on.

MR. SPEAKER: It's no wonder anyone can't hear what's going on. Be prepared to waste a lot of your own time, hon. members.

Edmonton-Glengarry, leader of the Liberal Party, please.

Constitutional Reform

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, my questions are to the hon. Premier. From 1987 and for some three years the Premier of Alberta promoted and backed the Meech Lake accord, giving special and distinct powers to the province of Quebec, taking powers from the national government and giving them to Quebec, making them more equal than others. Albertans were opposed to that position. Following in the same foolish way, the Premier has now gone to Quebec and to Ontario and has represented to the governments of those two provinces that the province of Alberta believes in and will be promoting the concept of decentralization. My first question: given that the Premier and his government have established a committee to seek the advice of Albertans to determine what a policy for Alberta should be on the Constitution, by what authority, Mr. Premier, did you go to these two provinces and spell out and state that Albertans are firmly behind decentralization? What authority did you have to make those statements?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is absolutely right. I did make it clear to both Premier Rae and Premier Bourassa that the people of Alberta would be seeking far greater input in national decisions. We are no longer going to be in a position where we will be dictated to from the centre, where the large population areas are. We have a House of Commons dominated by Ontario and Quebec, and therefore the agenda of the House of Commons becomes the agenda for Ontario and Quebec, and we are no longer going to accept that. In any new arrangements for this country I want the hon. member, who I know believes in centralization and having things dictated from Ottawa, to know that we are no longer going to have that. Any arrangement that Alberta is prepared to support will allow those areas throughout the country that do not have the large populations to have a greater input into national decision-making.

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, the Premier refused to consult with Albertans on the Meech Lake accord. He was wrong on that. Albertans were opposed to the position he was taking. Now the Premier is saying: to heck with the Constitution committee; I've made up my mind; this is the way it's going to be. Why go through the charade of having a constitutional

committee, Mr. Premier, if you've already made up your mind? Why do that?

MR. GETTY: First of all, Mr. Speaker, I think the leader of the Liberal Party conveniently forgets in the Meech Lake matter that it was here before this Legislature for six months in what is a very big public hearing. It then went through many, many meetings throughout the province, and then it was unanimously supported in this Legislature. Now, I don't know what happens to his memory when he gets into these kinds of things. I want to say that in terms of speaking to both Premier Rae and Premier Bourassa, I made sure they knew that we were talking in global principles and that the specifics would be coming from our special select committee. As a matter of fact, I found it an excellent chance to acquaint both of them with the makeup of our select committee and the plans that we have for it to get the grass-roots input from people all over Alberta.

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, the hon. Premier is making a mockery of the consultation process. There is no consultation process. This is a charade, and his lieutenant to the right is part of that charade.

My last question to the Premier is this: is the Premier saying that there will be no national standards for education – like Mr. Mazankowski says there should be – no national standards for health care, and no national standards for safety net programs? Is that what the government of Alberta is going to say?

MR. GETTY: I'm always amazed, Mr. Speaker, by the position of the Liberal Party and the former leader, who said: let's have a federal government that will whip provinces into line. I mean, that kind of centralist thinking. The current leader now has the position that if you're elected to a provincial Legislature, you're not clever enough or you're not smart enough or you aren't dedicated enough to make sure that you have high standards for education or high standards for health. What kind of nonsense is that? After all, the Constitution clearly says that health and education are the exclusive jurisdiction of the provincial governments. I don't know where he's been, but I gather that he now wants to amend the Constitution and somehow have the federal government dictate to the provinces again. Well, we're not being dictated to from Ottawa, Mr. Speaker. We're speaking for Albertans, and we're going to make sure . . . This nonsense that just because you're elected federally, you're somehow better at establishing standards for education and health is only a view of the Liberal Party of Alberta.

3:00

MR. SPEAKER: Red Deer-North.

MR. DAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. [interjections]

MR. SPEAKER: Order.
Red Deer-North.

MR. DAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Premier. Over the last couple of weeks my constituents have been expressing agreement with some pretty straight talk that the Premier has been delivering around the province about Quebec needing to make a commitment, a statement on whether they're in Canada or whether they're out, and I'm pleased to see that the Premier maintained that stance in his discussions in

Quebec. Can he tell the Assembly today: was the Premier of Quebec offended with that firm position? Did he respond to it?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, I was generally very pleased with the discussions both with Premier Bourassa and with Premier Rae. One of the very first questions that I did present to Premier Bourassa is the one that I told Albertans I would be asking; that is, does Quebec want Canada as Albertans want Canada? We want Canada because this is our country. We have a love for our country, and we want to have it strong and healthy in the future. The Premier of Quebec said that, yes, despite the rebuffs of 1982, despite the disappointments of 1990, he and his government and the majority of the people of Quebec want Canada and are prepared to work towards a solution to our national constitutional reform that is within Canada. Now, I feel that it's going to be a very difficult, long, tortuous process to reach a new national arrangement in our country, a reconciliation, a restructuring, but as long as we have the spirit of wanting to build our country, not tear it apart, then I think we have a chance. We have a chance to accomplish it.

MR. DAY: Mr. Speaker, Albertans have shown that they solidly endorse our position on a triple E Senate, and they did that overwhelmingly by being the first ones in history to elect a Senator. Can the Premier indicate to us: in discussions with Mr. Rae, has Mr. Rae moved at all, especially in the area of "equal," when it comes to the triple E Senate?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, I should say that I think the first matter I raised with Mr. Rae was that I explained to him our special select committee and the importance we place on it and the fact that it will be obtaining information from the grass roots of Alberta. Also, I explained that to Premier Bourassa. Then we did discuss restructuring of national institutions, such as Senate reform. I'm pleased to say that he is quite happy to discuss Senate reform. He has brought his government certainly to the acceptance of "elected" and "effective" and wants to debate, and I think it's a good healthy debate, how we can reach an agreement on the "equal" concept, the triple E Senate that we believe so strongly in.

I must say that when it came to decentralization, the NDP Premier of Ontario was much more along the lines of the Liberal leader here. He said that he did not feel the same as Alberta does about having decision-making spread throughout the country and not dictated from the centre.

I think that all in all, though, Mr. Speaker, both Premiers were working along a positive point of view, a point of view of: let's build this country; let's work hard to try and find the process and then reach a solution. As long as we're working that way, as I said, it'll be tough, but I do believe we have a chance.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Kingsway.

Economic Development

MR. McEACHERN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are to the Minister of Economic Development and Trade. Last week he filed a statement in the Assembly making some unsubstantiated claims about the percentage of losses that have been incurred by this government under the nonprogram loans, nonprogram loan guarantees, and nonprogram investments. The public accounts tell a different story, and I have the page numbers for anybody that would like to check them. Nonprogram investments lost us 29 percent in the '89-90 fiscal year,

nonprogram direct loans lost 49 percent, nonprogram guarantees and indemnities, 28 percent, for a total of 35 percent on average. The year before it was 31 percent. Will the minister now come clean and admit that the last two years for which we have public accounts show that the government actually lost about one-third of the money that it put into loans, loan guarantees, and investments under the ad hoc program?

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, I am surprised at the lack of knowledge by the hon. member, and that lack of knowledge is exhibited here again, whereby the hon. member should be aware that within the public accounts there's not only our department listed but all the departments of the government as it relates to our exposures. The paper that I released to the hon. member just the other day related only to the programs under our direct administration. As it relates to the public accounts and the public accounts accountability, I would defer to the Provincial Treasurer, because it falls directly under his jurisdiction and he can do a much better job of giving an accounting than I could.

MR. McEACHERN: So you're the genius, and the rest of them are a bunch of bums, and they lost all the money.

MR. JOHNSTON: Who said that, Alex?

MR. McEACHERN: He did.

Well, Mr. Speaker, the accounts are quite clear and quite precise, and our researcher even talked to the people in the auditing department. The way we analyzed those statistics is quite valid for those nonprogram loans, loan guarantees, and investments.

We also released a document yesterday showing a total of \$1.3 billion in losses in these three programs by this government since they came to power. So will the minister quit trying to bamboozle Albertans and own up that in fact you've lost \$1.3 billion in these three programs over the last little while, or are the public accounts all wrong?

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, no, the public accounts are not all wrong. It's the hon. member that is all wrong, as was his leader yesterday in the Assembly. They are spreading, as they do on a consistent basis, a number of falsehoods that create a real disturbance amongst the Alberta population. I don't mind them indicating truthful statements, and we've admitted . . .

MR. McEACHERN: We substantiate ours.

MR. SPEAKER: Order. You asked your questions.

MR. ELZINGA: We've admitted on a consistent basis some of the difficulties we have encountered in making sure that the economy in this province is the number one economy in all of Canada. We acknowledge that there have been some failures as it relates to our backstopping, but the overall success rate is as I have indicated to him. Not only that, one only has to look at the economic well-being of this great province of ours, and we acknowledge that we have been successful. [interjections]

MR. TAYLOR: You've been smoking again.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Gold Bar, if Westlock-Sturgeon is finished.

Senior Citizens Programs

(continued)

MRS. HEWES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last December the Premier wrote a letter to Gladys Ulevog, a Calgary senior who was concerned over possible cuts to seniors programs, and I'll table the letter. At the end of the letter the Premier has penned a nice little handwritten note, and it says, "P.S. I have never suggested seniors should take cutbacks – Never!" Well, we all know what's happened, and it seems to me that this is kind of a curious statement with the recent round of cuts. And cuts they are; we all know that. Even more curious, the Premier wrote that letter in December knowing full well that the government was conducting a report to determine where cuts could be made. No wonder the government's credibility is in question. The conceptual discussion paper on seniors reads:

The data presented . . . are tentative, subject to qualifications, and intended to illustrate options and implications . . . The data will require additional and more thorough analysis.

My question to the Premier is: why didn't the Premier hold off? Why didn't he refuse to allow the cuts and give seniors an opportunity for their own input? Since his own paper says . . .

3:10

MR. SPEAKER: Okay. Thank you, hon. member. You've gone quite long enough.

Speaker's Ruling Tabling Documents

MR. SPEAKER: Forgive me, hon. Premier. There's a question of protocol to the Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar. Did you gain the permission of the parties involved to release that document? Thank you.

Hon. Premier.

MR. GETTY: I don't know whether I should refer to a letter that was a personal letter, but perhaps my hon. friend has established that the individual wants it made public.

Nevertheless, Mr. Speaker, I find it hard to believe that the hon. member is talking about cutbacks to seniors when today we've had the Associate Minister of Family and Social Services lay out already for the Legislature the redistribution of dollars and the increase of some \$75 million for seniors programs. Now, where was the hon. member just a few minutes ago? After all, we're here, we're working in the Legislature, and a question is asked. Surely she should be paying attention to the answer. I find it very disappointing that my hon. friend would totally ignore the answer and try and spread some kind of fear of cutbacks amongst seniors when in fact the hon. associate minister has already dealt with it today.

MRS. HEWES: Mr. Speaker, the seniors are dealing with the reality, and cutbacks there are. The minister has acknowledged that.

I'll ask the Premier, then, if he will now discuss this with his colleagues, put a moratorium on implementing any further recommendations of the discussion paper until seniors can provide their own analysis.

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, the Associate Minister of Family and Social Services also said that in fact there are all kinds of papers presented from the public service. That's their role. We have a fine public service in Alberta, and they present papers.

They presented one not that long ago which tried to encourage the Minister of Forestry, Lands and Wildlife to increase spending a great deal, and it wasn't accepted. There was this paper she's talking about, which suggested other changes, in this case with seniors programs, and they weren't accepted. Those papers are coming out. I mean, how else can you have a good understanding of the various options and results and implications?

I don't understand how the hon. Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar would want decisions made without some kind of an assessment, as the associate minister said. That's just the way it should be done, and that is the way we do it. The key, Mr. Speaker, is the decisions that you make. The decisions are that we're going to spend more money on our seniors programs this year because we want them to be the best in Canada. That's the real key.

Sewage Discharge into North Saskatchewan River

MR. GESELL: To the minister of our environment. During 1989 there were some 17 direct discharges from the city of Edmonton's sanitary and storm sewer system into the North Saskatchewan River. Because of these discharges there was an agreement reached whereby the city would monitor the discharges and the Department of the Environment would monitor the water quality in the North Saskatchewan River during the summer and fall of 1990. Will the minister provide the results of such monitoring, the information on how these discharges impacted the water quality in the North Saskatchewan River?

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, the investigation and the study is ongoing. While data has been collected, it is not yet conclusive. When it is, it will be released, along with recommendations as to what the city of Edmonton should do, and at what cost, to alleviate this problem whereby storm sewerage and sanitary sewerage lines have been tied together and create a tremendous and very serious pollution problem when it rains hard in this city.

I guess, Mr. Speaker, this is a problem that could have been resolved some years ago when the leader of the Liberal Party was the mayor of this city. Unfortunately, no action was taken, and the government has had to step in to work with the city to find a resolution to this situation. [interjections]

MR. SPEAKER: Now that some more water's gone down the river, Clover-Bar.

MR. GESELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It obviously will rain this summer. There is some urgency to deal with this situation. Will the minister take action to avert or at least curtail the dumping of raw sewage into a river system that serves residents and communities downstream as their main water supply.

MR. KLEIN: Well, Mr. Speaker, this is a most unfortunate situation. If we get a severe rainfall this summer, and we're likely to get that kind of a rainfall, we're going to have to give the city of Edmonton a letter of permission to dump raw sewerage, unfortunately and sadly, into the North Saskatchewan river. Otherwise, that sewerage would back up and go into people's basements. The solution, of course, is to correct overall and in a comprehensive way a problem that was not corrected by the previous city administration.

Landlord/Tenant Relations

MR. CHIVERS: Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs has spoken of support in his caucus for a fair balance between the rights of tenants and landlords, but I wonder whether the government's definition of fair will protect Tories. Tenants need security of tenure, and forcing a tenant to go to court to fight an unfair eviction places an unfair disadvantage on a tenant. My question to the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs is: will the minister not agree that the fair thing to do is to get disputes between landlords and tenants out of the courts and into a fair and accessible dispute resolution tribunal process?

MR. ANDERSON: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member raises an interesting point and one which we've reviewed over the past number of months. I would agree in theory with the hon. member that in fact wherever we can have a system of arbitration which allows people easy access and inexpensive process, we should be doing it. In terms of the landlord and tenant area there is also a need for due process of the law and full adherence to that. If he has some particular thoughts on how best we can amalgamate both those needs, we'll be looking forward to suggestions in that regard.

MR. CHIVERS: Mr. Speaker, I certainly intend to convey my thoughts to the minister. There are thousands of tenants in Alberta that don't even have access to landlord and tenant advisory boards.

The return of damage deposits is a serious issue facing tenants which is not going to be solved simply by legislating inspection reports, as proposed by the minister, because landlords can use the damage deposits as operating funds rather than being obliged to put them into a provincial trust fund. This has been a problem in Alberta since 1984, and it's an essential concept in the MacLachlan report. My question to the minister is: given that a residential tenancy commission could be partially funded from the interest from a provincial security deposit fund, how can the minister justify going only halfway in protecting renters by saying that such a commission would be too expensive?

MR. ANDERSON: Mr. Speaker, I could never justify going halfway to protect the rights of any Albertan with regards to any of our responsibilities. I would say to the hon. member that we have a responsibility to be fair and balanced in our approach and to be reasonable. I very much appreciated the MacLachlan committee recommendation with respect to a residential tenancies commission. I thought it was innovative and allowed us to consider possibilities. However, we as a public, as tenants and landlords in the province, must be able to pay for such a commission and be able to have it operate in an effective, fair manner. The process of collecting damage deposits from each tenant and giving them back in a timely way at the various times that people leave their accommodation so that individuals can have their money when they need it is a difficulty I have not been able to solve. I do intend to introduce to the House thoughts with respect to the Landlord and Tenant Act in the not too distant future. I look forward to discussing that and other possibilities with all hon. members at that time.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Belmont, followed by Calgary-Buffalo.

3:20**Safety Code**

MR. SIGURDSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister of Labour. Alberta's Boilers and Pressure Vessels Act is an internationally respected piece of legislation that ensures the safety of Albertans in virtually every school, hospital, shopping centre, gas station; the list goes on. The importance of strict standards in this area could not be more obvious, yet the government intends to repeal the Act and abandon the high quality standards. To the Minister of Labour: I'm wondering why the statutory advisory board was not consulted about the proposed changes affecting power engineers when the process to eliminate the legislation began?

MS McCOY: Well, Mr. Speaker, I completely agree with the member opposite's assessment of the international status of our boilers and pressure vessels, not only our legislation but also those who work in that area in Alberta. It is known far and wide, as far south, in fact, as South America. People come from all over to find out what Alberta is doing so they can copy it.

Now, we are moving forward even further than that. What we intend to do now, taking that base and in essence following the boilers and pressure vessels leadership role, is move into the whole safety area so that we can bring our building codes, our fire codes, our electrical codes, and other administration risk management into the same or a further state of excellence as boilers and pressure vessels. We will be proposing – and the Member for Rocky Mountain House, who chairs the implementation committee, has been of great assistance in pulling this together – a framework statute called the safety codes Act. Under that framework we will be nesting such things as our excellent standards and procedures in the boilers and pressure vessels area. So what we are doing is building. We are taking what we have now, and we are going forward and further with it so that we maintain and exceed our already attained standard . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. [interjection] Thank you.
Supplementary.

MR. SIGURDSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Still, though, the advisory board was not consulted, and it makes no sense at all for one to try and go forward if you're not consulting the most important board with respect to power engineers. So I would ask the Minister of Labour to give a commitment to the Assembly. When first reading of the Act takes place, when we have introduction of the legislation, will the minister undertake after first reading but before we get into second reading to hold public hearings so that the people involved with the advisory board may have input into this building process that the minister speaks of?

MS McCOY: Well, Mr. Speaker, the consultation process on the proposed legislation has been extensive already. We have the implementation committee, as I say, chaired by the Member for Rocky Mountain House, and it has included in it over 50 people, including representatives of the power engineers. There are thousands of power engineers in Alberta, and virtually all of them agree with the direction we are taking. There are some, a very small number, who wish to do nothing to move forward in their area. They are insisting that we simply stay still. They are saying: we do not want to move in any direction; we like where we are; we don't want to change that. All of the other stakeholders are looking forward to the changes. They have had

a major part to play in crafting them. They are particularly looking forward to the new councils in which they themselves will, in fact, take control of their own industries.

MR. SPEAKER: Calgary-Buffalo.

Emery Apparel Canada Inc.

MR. CHUMIR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is a question to the minister whose pen and chequebook should be taken away in the public interest. I know there are six or eight ministers who think I am referring to them.

Despite all the problems that the government has had with its loan guarantee program and despite the statements that it's going to tighten up, we have information that the government has recently committed to provide a \$4 million loan guarantee to assist a clothing manufacturer, Emery Apparel Canada Inc., to obtain bank financing. This company is owned by members of the Starko family, some of whom last year got a \$1.25 million loan from Vencap to finance the purchase and expansion of a portion of the business, Emery Apparel Canada Inc. To the Minister of Economic Development and Trade: I'm wondering whether the minister will tell us whether his government has in fact committed recently to give a loan guarantee to Emery Apparel Canada Inc. in the amount of \$4 million in order to help that company obtain bank financing? If so, why?

MR. ELZINGA: No, Mr. Speaker. The hon. member is totally incorrect. A loan guarantee for \$4 million was not given to Emery Apparel. I'm happy to share with the hon. member, though, that there was a modest – and I'm doing so so that the individual will have the information – export loan guarantee given of some \$900,000 so that we could generate \$6 million worth of sales as it relates to apparel, but no \$4 million was given to this company.

MR. CHUMIR: Well, I'm wondering, then, whether the minister could tell us whether or not the principal shareholder, Mr. Starko, and other shareholders are being required to pledge their own personal assets in support of the guarantee in case there's a loss to the province so that the province doesn't get left holding the bag while the principals walk off in the event that there are problems, as has happened in so many other loan situations in this province?

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member doesn't even have the courtesy to admit that he was totally inaccurate in his first proposition whereby he was willing to slander a company on the basis that they got a \$4 million loan guarantee when they never ever did get the \$4 million. I was open enough to share with the hon. member exactly what the circumstance was: we could generate \$6 million worth of sales from a \$900,000 loan guarantee. Plus yesterday I had the occasion to go through the process one has to follow when it relates to an export loan guarantee, whereby we do it on the basis of the financial data that the lending institutions themselves do offer us. We do not approve an export loan guarantee. The banks approve the lending arrangements, and then we come in and backstop it some 85 percent recognizing . . .

MR. DECORE: Answer the question.

MR. ELZINGA: I just answered the question, to the hon. member.

MR. DECORE: You did not.

Speaker's Ruling Decorum

MR. SPEAKER: Hold it. This is not a shouting match back and forth. I mean, we were through this yesterday, Edmonton-Glengarry. Let's at least remember for 24 hours.

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, *Beauchesne* calls for answers. . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Park it, please.

MR. DECORE: Those answers aren't . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Take your place.
Calgary-Fish Creek.

Landlord and Tenant Policy

MR. PAYNE: Mr. Speaker, there has been some recent public speculation and, to a certain extent, landlord concern that the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs is proposing to change the Landlord and Tenant Act so that landlords will be required to give six-months' notice before raising rents. Is that, in fact, the policy direction that the minister is considering?

MR. ANDERSON: Mr. Speaker, we are considering a number of recommendations to the House, as indicated earlier. Amongst those are some changes which would make more secure the tenant's position; for example, a six-month requirement for an increase in rent. In other words, you could only increase rent twice during the year. However, in terms of the notice period to which the hon. member refers, there is currently a three-month notice period required. That would seem to be a reasonable time period, and I would not intend to make changes in that. That should be clear in the face of the six-month potential requirement for the time that elapses between one rent increase and another.

MR. PAYNE: Mr. Speaker, given the widespread interest in that particular amending intention as well as other changes that have been mooted with respect to the Landlord and Tenant Act, can the minister indicate to the Assembly when he's intending to bring his amending legislation forward?

MR. ANDERSON: Mr. Speaker, I can't be specific with the hon. member. We are now at the stage where we've compiled our recommendations. We are going through the process of legal drafting. As soon as that's complete, the House will see a draft Bill. I would hope that within the next two to three weeks that will be the case. Then we will have a chance to discuss and clarify the specific aspects of the Bill which will be important to Albertans, both landlords and tenants, in terms of making sure there is that fair balance in our marketplace.

Orders of the Day 3:30

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

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed? Carried. Thank you.
Banff-Cochrane.

head: **Introduction of Special Guests**
(*reversion*)

MR. EVANS: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I am delighted today to introduce to you and through you to members of the Assembly two residents of Seoul, South Korea, Mr. and Mrs. Tay Ho Lee,* who are here celebrating their 25th anniversary in the province of Alberta so that they can enjoy the beauty of our province and also investigate some mutually beneficial business and trade opportunities between South Korea and Alberta. As hon. members will be aware, South Korea is our fifth largest trading partner. I'm very pleased to introduce Mr. and Mrs. Lee, and I would ask that they please rise in the members' gallery and receive the warm welcome of the members of this Assembly.

head: **Committee of Supply**

[Mr. Schumacher in the Chair]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Will the committee come to order, please.

head: **Main Estimates 1991-92**

Recreation and Parks

MR. CHAIRMAN: The estimates designated for today commence at page 287 of the main estimates book, with the elements at page 121 in the elements book.

It being less than two hours away from adjournment time, I'll call upon the Minister of Recreation and Parks to introduce these estimates.

DR. WEST: Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Members of the Legislative Assembly. The 1991-92 budget estimates of Alberta Recreation and Parks. This government has made a commitment to balance the budget in 1991-92. Our strategies worked. I know that Alberta Recreation and Parks made a meaningful contribution towards balancing the budget without losing perspective of the importance of our business or compromising the overall quality of our systems. Our major initiatives in looking at how we can do business with fewer resources have been to, one, create an increased sense of ownership and involvement by private-sector citizens and groups in the delivery of our Recreation and Parks programs throughout the province and, two, challenge staff of the department to come up with more innovative ways of delivering our programs which include more cost-efficient design standards and operational procedures for our parks systems.

In saying that, I'd like to recognize the staff that's in the gallery this afternoon and compliment them on the tremendous job that they have done in preparing for this season and also in preparing the budget estimates and contributing in a meaningful way to balancing this budget in 1991-92.

We also wanted to share our financial responsibilities more fairly with our client and user groups and instill a greater sense of personal responsibility in the spending of government dollars.

What have we cut? In absolute terms, we have cut \$6.2 million from the Recreation and Parks budget, which represents 7 percent of the total budget. It's 7 percent in real terms, but if you also look at inflation and the shared amount of increase in manpower dollars that we absorbed, this is probably closer to 15 percent. This cut has been substantially accomplished through several features: one, administrative operational streamlining accounts for approximately 50 percent of the

reductions, with program cuts making up the other half. A 25 percent cut has been made to our financial administration area alone, and upwards of 50 percent of the forms previously utilized in government have been or will be eliminated.

I just want to make a comment on that. When I came in here, I was absolutely amazed at the amount of time spent in our department filling out forms. One of the initiatives of this government was to cut the red tape. The department has done a review and analysis of the forms we use, and we anticipate reducing the number of forms in this department by 50 percent. To date 260 forms have been eliminated in the provincial parks service alone. I estimate that there's probably 1,500 forms out there in Recreation and Parks alone, and I look to cutting some 750.

It is important to understand that downsizing has been undertaken in such a way as to shift our resources to our priority program delivery areas in the field and to improve the effectiveness of our staff in performing necessary functions through organizational and classification adjustments. An example of this is the broadening of the park ranger series, and very shortly we will be putting out some job opportunities in our ranger field to better serve the public in this province. We may be smaller, but our services will be improved.

The parks reconstruction budget has been cut by 50 percent. However, cost savings achieved through new design and construction standards will have a positive effect in terms of allowing us to do more with fewer dollars. Capital development of the Lakeland project has been deferred, but important public consultations, planning, and land management components will continue as they are related to this project.

The 1990s represent a significant decade of change for all of us, and our ability to respond to shifting economic, social, and environmental conditions and the needs of our citizens will be a critical factor in the future successes of Alberta and its role as a leader of change. Let us look at where we are moving in the Department of Recreation and Parks. Over the past two years Recreation and Parks has been a leader in the regionalization of programs and services which can best be delivered in close proximity to our users. This initiative supports economic growth and diversification, which in turn leads to revitalization of rural Alberta due to the breadth of the impact of our programs. For example, the provincial parks service operation has been streamlined from six branches in Edmonton and four regions to five regions only, one of those of course, the fifth, being that of Edmonton. Fifty percent of the staff positions from head office have been transferred to field locations. Provincial parks services reduced the Edmonton complement of staff from 103 to 31, a 70 percent reduction. We have reduced management in Edmonton from 18 managers to five, again a 70 percent reduction.

The recreation development division has moved additional staff to the field and has also opened up a further three regional offices, those being Wainwright, High Level, and Medicine Hat, bringing their total regional offices to 14. I might add that that's been done with a decreased budget of Recreation and Parks. When you combine the parks field operation with that of recreation, 80 percent of the department's staff are located in regional offices throughout the province. We are truly a regionalized and decentralized department.

Introducing more practical and commonsense approaches to doing business has and will result in up to 50 percent savings in planning, design, implementation, and maintenance of programs. It will also improve the delivery of services to the public. A

*This spelling could not be verified at the time of publication.

prime example of this is my department's initiative to provide camping and recreational opportunities throughout Alberta under one umbrella, one set of standards that Alberta can identify with. At this time we are in the process of finalizing the administrative transfer of some 36 recreational sites operated by Alberta Environment and approximately 100 more sites operated by Alberta transportation. I look to the day when Albertans can go out there and see the emblem "Provincial Parks and Recreation Areas" and know they are under one department, efficiently and effectively operated throughout this province.

3:40

Maintaining a strong, accountable overhead will ensure that services provided to our users will be held at the strongest possible level. Involving the private sector in more areas of service delivery will create more economic opportunities within the province and reduce the financial burden of this province. For example, three more provincial parks will be contracted for private-sector operation in 1991, those being Long Lake, Thunder Lake, and Kinbrook Island, with an anticipated annual savings of some \$200,000. A further eight sites will be considered for private-sector operation in 1992. In addition, we are initiating a strategy to make the Blue Lake Leadership Development Centre self-sufficient over a five-year period, thereby saving this government a further \$500,000 a year.

A major priority over the past year has been to rethink our construction standards and lower our costs. For example, this year we anticipate building shower buildings costing approximately \$60,000. This is a far cry from the figure of maximum \$270,000 a few years ago. Double combination vault toilets are now being built for between \$12,000 and \$12,500 compared to a cost as high as \$45,000 from several years ago. Yes, that's right: double vault toilets for \$45,000. No running water, and no power: can you imagine? So despite the capital budget cut of close to \$3 million that we experienced, this year in provincial parks services I expect us to be able to continue to build almost as many buildings as in the previous years while still delivering quality construction. Provincial parks services staff are to be complimented for rising to the challenge to reduce construction costs up to 50 percent.

I would like to ensure that Alberta has and will continue to have one of the finest systems of protected lands in all of Canada. One of the responsibilities of Alberta Recreation and Parks is to be good stewards of those protected areas in the province. As you're aware, the ecological reserve program was created following the enactment of the Wilderness Areas, Ecological Reserves and Natural Areas Act. Through the program areas are set aside as examples of naturally functioning ecosystems representative of the six natural regions of Alberta. The program was also established to protect biological, geographical, and geological features which are rare and have special and unusual characteristics in the beauty of Alberta. The protected areas not only serve to educate Albertans in terms of the environment, but they also provide a base for scientific research and demonstrate how natural processes shape our environment.

There have been 12 ecological reserves established since 1985. Our conservation initiatives are significant in this province both in terms of the number of ecological reserves established and the area of this province that's under protective legislation. Alberta ranks fourth in Canada in the number of reserves established. Alberta ranks third after British Columbia and Manitoba with a total of 61,280 acres or 95.7 square miles

legislated under the program within the 12 ecological reserves. Taking into consideration all areas under some form of legislative protection including provincial parks, wildlife areas, wilderness areas, provincial reserves, and national parks and wildlife areas, Alberta ranks second only to Manitoba in terms of the percentage of the province dedicated to protected areas which do not allow logging, mining, or sport hunting. Alberta has a greater proportion of its area legislated in protective lands than any other province or territory in Canada: 9.4 percent if you consider all the conservation lands, and 8.5 percent if you consider only lands excluded, once again, from logging, mining, and sport hunting. Even if you look only at area, not percentage, there is an exclusive protection given to over 21,750 square miles of this beautiful province, almost as much as second-place province Ontario that has only 22,831 square miles. Furthermore, the protected areas of Alberta inclusive of land under protective notation amount to almost 25 million acres, or 10 acres for every man, woman, and child in this province. This amounts to approximately 15 percent of Alberta's total of 164 million acres, a remarkable record, ladies and gentlemen. On October 9, 1990, we dedicated Alberta's 12th reserve, Rumsey, some 8,500 acres of the province's central aspen parkland and Alberta's second largest reserve.

We are in the business of serving the public and are stewards of the natural resources for future generations. I might announce that our department will be establishing a committee this year charged with the responsibility of developing a client-orientated, practical, departmentwide program designed to improve service to our clients. We will continue to emphasize that we must be on the front lines and serve the grass roots of this province.

The community recreation and cultural program comes to a conclusion on December 31, 1992. We will be discussing this program and reviewing it in the coming year, remembering of course that since its inception it will have delivered some \$240 million to the organizations across this province, most of them driven by those 700,000 volunteers in this province.

After saying what we've just come from, some of it very, very positive, what are some of the concerns, then, as we go forward with this budget? You've certainly heard them. Cutbacks in funding or increases in costs to users will always elicit certain degrees of dissatisfaction among those who use and benefit from our services. One of those is our camping fee in the province, and we, consistent with our user-pay philosophy, raised the fees today to become more consistent with those across Canada. Alberta has and continues to offer some of the highest standards of facilities and some of the lowest user fees in Canada. Offering the cheapest facilities is not the objective of my department, but offering good value for your dollar is. We operate and maintain an outstanding parks system in Alberta for a cost of approximately \$1 per month for every Albertan, and we intend to keep it that way. Increases in fees are expected, and the increased revenue will ensure that the quality of facilities and protection of our lands will continue in the future.

We do have some exceptions in this province still, even though our fees are more consistent and in line across this province. We still do not charge a day-use fee. We still do not charge for firewood in this province, and we have the lowest group-use charges across this country in spite of the fact that we've raised them a considerable bit this year. We will return to Treasury, in the increase of fees across the board in this province, over \$5 million next year. I think that's remarkable, and I'll allude to it later as a percentage of our total operating budget.

Another concern that came up was the Kananaskis Country program cuts. Some concerns were expressed regarding the cuts in the Kananaskis budget. How will it affect the integrity of this wonderland that we have in this province, a million acres of protected resource, some of the best recreation and camping areas in the world? It was a uniquely developed project when we came forth in 1980 from the Heritage Savings Trust Fund. We thought that some budget trimming was necessary and reasonable without compromising the integrity of this fine facility.

For those of you who heard that the environmental education program was being eliminated: this is wrong. I repeat. For those of you who heard or read that the environmental education program was being eliminated: this is wrong. In fact, the environmental education program will be expanding but in a meaningful way at the park delivery level.

3:50

Kananaskis Country continues to be one of the jewels of Alberta, and its reputation as an all-season recreation area continues to grow. There are just a few areas in Kananaskis I'd like to highlight. There will be no golf course fee increases this year. It's one of the true bargains for Albertans, and it continues to run close to capacity. In fact, for some months of the year five out of six phone calls have to be turned away. The Kananaskis Village is fast growing the reputation as the best convention centre in the Canadian Rockies, playing host to some conferences and conventions of provincial, national, international stature. I'm proud to say that it last year included the NATO Nuclear Planning Group conference. We are a strong supporter of NATO. I'm proud of it, and I'm proud of the job that our armed forces did and the fact that they came home safely.

Nakiska enjoyed its best season to date. The ski hill there I think was well used this year. [interjections] It's one of the best family-oriented ski hills.

There seems to be a little noise in the gallery. [interjections] I'm not talking about that gallery; the peanut gallery I mean.

Again, in Kananaskis the Mount Kidd RV Park continues to be a great favourite with Alberta campers. Also, the William Watson Lodge, providing outdoor recreational opportunities to the disabled, continues to be booked to capacity. The William Watson Lodge, again, is a tremendous facility, and someday, as I said before, I would like to see a counterpart of it in northern Alberta.

Finally about Kananaskis, I would like to remind everybody of the 1993 Canadian Boy Scout Jamboree that will be coming. This will contribute greatly to the youth of this province and again will be a highlight across Canada. I challenge all of us to get involved at the local level to make this jamboree one of the best ever.

Kananaskis Country is a true success story. You will note that it has moved from vote 5 to vote 4 in this year's estimates.

Now I would like to take a few minutes to reflect on the two years that I have been Minister of Recreation and Parks. When I came in, I wanted to satisfy myself that the programs and services of my department were as cost efficiently delivered as possible, including a justifiable balance between administration and program delivery to our clients. I also wanted to assure myself that we had targeted to users with the greatest emerging demands: youth, disabled, and developing sport and recreation groups; that the services in my department were in line with government priorities: deficit reduction, economic growth, diversification, environmental awareness, protection, health and

healthier lifestyles, barrier-free access, and revitalization of rural Alberta. In the last two years, I believe, we've accomplished that. We have set out to make a difference. With an approximate 25 percent budget reduction over those two years, including absorbing manpower increases of about 5 percent and inflation of about 10 percent, we have made a significant contribution to deficit reduction while substantially retaining the spending power of the department and improving levels of service to the public. Central Support Services and administration took a big hit, and my department budget is still solid in spite of that.

We have also developed a strong regional program delivery system. We are on the front line to the people of Alberta. The department has regional and district offices in 22 cities and towns throughout the province, and we are directly accountable to communities that we serve. Additional efficiencies and benefits have been and will continue to be achieved through consolidation of Parks and Recreation and Sport Council offices. Four consolidations of those offices have occurred, and two more will occur in the following year.

Alberta's reputation for putting on outstanding sporting and recreational events of local, provincial, national, and international significance has certainly been predominant over the last two years. Up and coming are the Canada Winter Games at Grande Prairie, and I want to invite everybody there a few years ahead and wish the Member for Grande Prairie the best of luck in the challenges that lie ahead. The Canada Winter Games this year were held in Prince Edward Island, and I'm proud to say that because of our rec development and the efforts put through by the Sport Council, we stood third, the best standing that we've ever had at the Canada Winter Games. Our athletes really looked good. I'm sure the parents, the coaches, the volunteers can be very proud of the commitment to the youths through our sport programs.

We're also looking forward to the 1994 Arctic Winter Games. We will be putting out bids for the host city. I look forward to that; it's the first time we ever hosted them. Arctic Games are those north of the 55th parallel in this province, and we look forward to a fine representation from the north at these games. Also, the Summer Games: don't forget them. They're in Stettler this year, and the Seniors Games are in Medicine Hat.

Each one of these events improves our athletes, improves our coaches and officials, brings out a tremendous amount of volunteers, and bonds Albertans as they travel back and forth meeting new people and continuing the friendships developed through these games.

One other thing that has been significant over the years is our international sports exchange programs, and I'm pleased to say that in this budget they will continue. I believe they play a significant role in communication with other countries to bond our friendship and further our economic development. Some people may criticize them that they're there for sports alone, but I believe the better communication through culture and sports and recreation that we have with Japan, Korea, the U.S.S.R., the better our economic development with them in the future, the better the standard of living in both the province of Alberta and those countries that we exchange with.

We also are looking to linkages in the future and co-operation in developing a greater role with other departments. We will be working very closely with Health, Education, Tourism, Environment, and Economic Development and Trade. We make a multibillion-dollar contribution to Alberta's economy each year,

and there is a tremendous amount of room for growth in that area.

Every area of my department has contributed, has retooled, and is giving me constant feedback on how we can improve. We're moving forward, and we'll rise to any challenge in the future.

In closing, I would like to say that we are changing for the better, and the new strength of my department's operation should help offset any public criticism that may be incurred as well as provide greater credibility as we continue to move through a period of eliminating the provincial deficit.

Now I would welcome any questions from the members, and hopefully we can bring forth forthright answers in a meaningful way.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member for West Yellowhead.

MR. DOYLE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd like to congratulate the minister on his plans and ideas in cost cutting throughout his department and his hopes that he can still bring the same line of service that the Department of Recreation and Parks has brought to the people of Alberta for the past years.

Mr. Chairman, it's unfortunate that many people lost their jobs in his very right-wing movement, but I'll trust the minister that most of those people will have found jobs by now and that we will still have the same level of service. It was interesting to note that in the minister's office there were some 30 jobs lost, and every area was cut except the minister's salary and benefits, which in fact had a 2.6 percent increase. The minister perhaps could tell the members of the Legislature: is his job becoming more proactive that he needs these extra funds while at the same time he's cutting jobs and benefits to other people within his department?

Vote 2.3, Community Recreation and Sport, the CRC: those programs have been very beneficial to the municipalities. The municipalities have depended on them since they were brought into existence, and they're waiting to see if the minister is going to bring in another program to replace those very generous programs that benefited and helped the design of many recreation facilities throughout the province.

Vote 2.2, Financial Assistance, Mr. Chairman, the increase of 1.5 percent to \$32,550,000: I would like the minister to describe a little further as to what particular projects that funding would go to.

4:00

Provincial Recreation and Sports has been cut by some 13 percent. I would ask the minister if this would cut any activities in that particular area.

Parks Reconstruction, 3.3, has been cut by some 47 percent. The minister did not elaborate regarding whether they are going to maintain these parks that are in existence or if they're just taking that cut by, as he described, the great savings he's made in washrooms and outhouses. Mr. Chairman, there's more to provincial parks than facilities that are the need of the public.

Parks Construction, the Lakeland park: I'm pleased to see that the minister has taken another look at that. Reading articles from the papers of northeastern Alberta I can see why the minister has put that on hold for some time until he does further consultation. Basically all the municipalities in the area except for the Liberal mayor of Lac La Biche have decided to now support the Lakeland park facility.

Mr. Chairman, the ecological reserves program has not gone far since this minister has taken place. There are many more proposed ecological reserves, and the minister refuses to table in this House the studies which have been done on these reserves to make sure that the ecological reserves of Alberta are protected in the proper way. The wildlife recreation areas have to be extended much farther than this minister has extended them.

I would hope that the minister would get involved in the heritage rivers program. In my memory there is only one heritage river that has been protected under the federal heritage program, and that's in the federal park of Jasper. I would hope that the minister would seriously consider in the upcoming year to be involved with the heritage river program and have some of these rivers designated as heritage rivers, much the same as the minister of culture has designated many mountains and areas throughout this province as protected areas.

Kananaskis Country Management: it appears to me that in the total budget of Recreation and Parks almost 20 percent of the budget goes to Kananaskis Country. I must confess, Mr. Chairman, that I have not visited Kananaskis Country, but many of my friends and colleagues have. I hope to make that my journey this summer. The William Watson Lodge, of course, has been a great asset to many of the handicapped and the seniors of the province, and I appreciate the minister forwarding to me many copies of the brochure on the William Watson Lodge. The people who have received that brochure are very pleased with the experiences that they foresee in the upcoming year in that area.

The Blue Lake Centre, Mr. Chairman, at Hinton: the minister did not clearly say how he was going to make that particular centre self-sufficient and take the burden off the taxpayers of Alberta. It has served the province and the departments that use that facility in a great way.

Mr. Chairman, the study recently put out by the royal commission on national transportation indicates that in Manitoba some 6,557,000 trips are taken within the province, and they say that is consistent with all provinces across Canada. I'm sure more people from Alberta than from other places will be using these campgrounds; as this government has put a 2 percent provincial tax on gasoline, the parks will be used more and more by Albertans. With the increase in the usage of Alberta Recreation and Parks facilities, the burden will be more upon Albertans than on people who are visiting this province. I find it quite hard to understand why golf rates at Kananaskis cannot be increased but the cost of using the parks built by Albertans must be increased some threefold for seniors and about 50 percent for most other usage.

I was very pleased to hear the minister say that he's going to bring all the parks and recreation facilities under his mandate. This is a great step forward, as it's quite confusing to some to find one park under transportation and another under forestry reserve and another under some other department. I'm pleased the minister is taking that step forward. It's beneficial. I think a great assessment can be done of all those parks, and we can see how many of them are serviced properly and what changes can be made in those parks.

The minister last year spoke of William A. Switzer park and the expanded boundaries. I would hope that within the next short term the minister would address that situation and expand the boundaries of the park. In my thought of thoughts, I do not know how William A. Switzer park was built halfway up a lake and not protecting the total lake. The forestry department has

allowed Weldwood an FMA in that area, and they are slowly creeping towards Gregg Lake. I would hope that the minister could protect that area in the near future.

The Auditor General's report, Mr. Chairman, pointed out some deficiencies in the minister's department. He seems to think that it's great to raise some \$5 million in user fees, but he refuses to collect the \$635,000 paid to Kananaskis Village resorts.

The 1988-89 annual report of the Auditor General also indicated that the foundation was contravening the Recreation, Parks and Wildlife Foundation Act by paying travel expenses, subsistence, and remuneration to board members from the foundation's funds. It was also reported that an amendment to the Act which would allow these expenses to be paid from general funds was awaiting legislative approval. The Act was not yet amended in the '89-90 year, and during this period the foundation paid a further \$60,000 to board members. This brings to approximately \$146,000 the amount paid in contravention of the Act since it was first reported by the Auditor General. I would hope that the minister would correct these deficiencies in reporting the finances and properly spending the money of the taxpayers of Alberta.

Of the 10 reservations the Auditor General had, Mr. Chairman, two came under Recreation and Parks: the Alberta Sport Council and the Recreation, Parks and Wildlife Foundation. The minister has been warned of this before by the Auditor General and by the Official Opposition. I would hope that he would correct those errors and that rather than collecting a few dollars from Kananaskis Village he would expedite those returns of tax dollars to the Treasury.

On this, Mr. Chairman, I will give the minister a wish for good luck in the next year. I hope he can encourage the other ministers of his cabinet to go in the direction of cost saving and efficiency that he has shown in the past year in his department.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

4:10

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

MR. MITCHELL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I listened with interest and amusement to the minister's comments. I was hoping I would hear something in his comments that went beyond what has been embodied in his budgetary estimates, what we could derive from his budgetary estimates, and after reviewing his estimates and listening to his comments I'm struck that my comments will resemble closely what I said this time last year, because of course almost nothing has changed.

We have continued cuts in this department, not all bad but certainly not all defensible either, certainly not defensible I think in the way that the minister wants to present them: that somehow cuts are intrinsically good and that this minister wants to establish his tough-nosed, tough-minded image in the minds of his cabinet and caucus colleagues. We have only limited progress, and that I believe quite begrudging progress, in the area of the endangered spaces program. We certainly don't have the minister talking aggressively about that program. We have once again, for the second year in a row, money going to the Sport Council of Alberta despite the fact that in each case in the last two years they have finished the year with millions of dollars of unexpended funds. On one hand, you have a minister who wants to cut, cut, cut; on the other hand, he can't shove enough money at the Alberta Sport Council, it would seem.

What we have here is a parks minister – and I use that term very, very loosely – who has talked about everything from double vault toilets to NATO troops and our contribution, both of which undoubtedly deserve comment but not necessarily in this . . .

DR. WEST: You don't support our troops?

MR. MITCHELL: I certainly do support our troops, but I'm not at all certain that those comments are particularly appropriate in a speech and a presentation by a parks minister when that parks minister has literally neglected to talk about parks, it seems, about some sense of where a visionary parks policy would fit into environmental policy, into recreation policy, into tourism policy in this province.

He has the classic Conservative view of environmental values: that somehow they must only be related and are only of meaning in their relationship to the economy, in their relationship to cost cuts. What we do not see is a minister who has embraced, who has aggressively pursued or plans to pursue some sense of visionary parks policy. In fact, I was thinking as he was talking: wouldn't it be nice if the Treasurer of this province would simply do us all a favour and resign so that we could have this minister apply for that job, get it, and be where he would be most happy? Because what we hear is a presentation, as we did last year, not from a Minister of Recreation and Parks but from a budding Treasurer. How much money can he cut? How many people can he lay off? How many parks can he not establish? Nothing of where we could take parks policy in this province, make it something special, make it a strong contribution, an element of environmental policy, conservation, in this province: none of that, Mr. Chairman.

I would like to raise the issue of the endangered spaces program. This year the status is 12 ecological reserves representing only nine of the 17 ecological regions of this province and not representing adequately at least six of those nine ecological regions. We have eight more to go. We have six more that need to be reflected in areas larger than the areas that have been set aside to this point, areas large enough to be self-sustaining and meaningful.

We have seen delays on proceeding with more ecological reserves, most notably the Middle Sand Hills ecological reserve proposal, which the minister referred to last year as being little more than a massive land grab. He doesn't, of course, stand up and in the same breath say that 69,000 square kilometres of Al-Pac FMA is a massive land grab. We see that in one year Alberta-Pacific will log nine times the area of the two ecological reserves, Crow Lake and Whitemud Falls, which reflect boreal mixed wood forest ecological areas, the boreal mixed wood forest ecological type or region. We see that the Al-Pac FMA is larger at 69,000 square kilometres than all protected areas in Alberta, using the minister's own figures.

Point of Order Relevance

DR. WEST: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The hon. minister is rising on a point of order.

DR. WEST: Could I have a clarification of what estimates are up today?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, I believe the hon. minister knows.

MR. MITCHELL: I guess if the minister doesn't know, that confirms my worst fear, Mr. Chairman. He, in fact, wasn't talking about parks today. He was talking about the defence department nationally; he's been talking about the Treasury Department. He's been talking about any number of things, but I'd glad to see that he has admitted that he didn't know which department we're in fact talking about.

Mr. Chairman, to continue my point that the Alberta-Pacific FMA, one of many huge FMAs, is larger than all the protected areas in this province today.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order please, hon. member.

DR. WEST: Once again, my point before, and I'll make it a little clearer so the hon. member can understand. He's been going on and on about Al-Pac. He's been going on about Forestry, Lands and Wildlife: a relative position on certain things that have no relevance whatsoever right today on these estimates. He also got off track on the Sport Council, and those aren't up here today to be discussed. I would wish the hon. member would get back on track and direct these questions and discussions to Recreation and Parks.

Debate Continued

MR. MITCHELL: Mr. Chairman, we see that the government has set aside, in the minister's own figures, about 9.4 percent – and this government hasn't done that; the federal government's done a good portion – of the province's area to some form of protected region. About 8.5 percent of that is region in which you couldn't do some form of intrusive activity, but 8.2 percentage points of that 8.5 percent is within national parks. I mean, for this minister to brag about his park system must stretch the imagination to a breaking point: 1,365 square kilometres in our provincial parks compared to 50,000 square kilometres of provincial park in British Columbia and in Ontario.

Mr. Chairman, one area where this ministry could make a lasting contribution, could leave a true legacy of value to the people of this province and to future generations is in the ecological reserves program. Alberta is literally blessed with priceless, untracked land that is not being set aside to be preserved in the way that this minister could set it aside to be preserved.

I would like to ask the minister: why is the rate of progress in establishing the remaining ecological reserves – eight areas to be represented – so slow, and why is the progress so slow in establishing larger areas for the six ecological reserves which have been established but which are not large enough to be self-sustaining? Why is it that both the Plateau Mountain and Ross Lake public hearings processes have been completed over a year ago and no action has been taken on establishing those particular ecological reserves? Will the new ecological reserves, if he ever establishes them, be of an adequate size to protect the full diversity of the ecosystem they represent in perpetuity?

4:20

What about the Middle Sand Hills ecological reserve proposal, which was put on hold in January of 1990, apparently because in the minister's estimation it takes so much area? The minister made this decision when he had been in office only two months. Now that the minister has more experience than two months, will he agree that the size of an ecological reserve must be large enough to conserve a full variety of species, and will he put

plans for a 22-square-kilometre reserve in the Middle Sand Hills area back on the front burner? If so, when?

What progress is the minister making in designating other areas that are in urgent need of protection? I would like to mention in particular that the Hand Hills area should be broadened. It simply isn't large enough as it is.

In *Hansard*, November 29, 1990, the Minister of Forestry, Lands and Wildlife said this, and it is relevant to this minister's department:

We are . . . identifying even more natural areas and ecological reserves and wilderness areas that can be established along the Eastern Slopes, and we'll continue . . . to add much more to the protected areas in this province.

I wonder whether the minister could indicate to us: what progress has he made with Forestry, Lands and Wildlife in identifying and designating such areas along the Eastern Slopes? What plans are there to establish more wilderness areas specifically, and what about setting aside some old forest, which is critical to caribou habitat, that goes beyond the two ecological reserves, as small as they are, which have been set aside?

[Mr. Moore in the Chair]

It's interesting to note, Mr. Chairman, that on June 4, 1987, the minister's predecessor at the time, the Hon. Don Sparrow, announced, and I quote:

Several conservation programs that will increase protected land in Alberta to over 21 million acres, which represents over 13% of the province's total area.

By the minister's own figures we are at about 9.4 percent of the total area of this province. When is he going to live up to the commitment made by his predecessor not four years ago that 13 percent of the province's area would be set aside?

The Alberta Wildlife Park, Mr. Chairman: we've yet to be convinced that the government took adequate steps to prevent the failure of that park in the first place. The minister's mandate was to appoint a required number of government members to the board of the foundation that runs that park. He appointed only two members to the board for the last two years, even though a minimum of four was required. In fact, it's interesting to note that one of the members told the government some time ago that there were problems with the board not functioning properly. We'd like to know what steps the minister took in those early stages to do something about heading off the problems which eventually have occurred. We believe also, and I believe that this minister didn't give fair warning to the park, that all of a sudden in his frenzy to out-treasurer the Treasurer he cut them off and didn't give them sufficient time to find alternative funding sources. I guess what we'd like to know is: what was the agenda behind this government's so precipitous action, and is there any relationship between closing this park and straightening out the road that could go through this park as it's been designed to go through Lily Lake? Is there some relationship between those two particular events?

Lakeland park: there's no money for it this year, at least in vote 3.4. I'm wondering whether the minister could explain what its status is, when we can expect to see it under construction, when it will be finished, or is it the case that it was an interesting public relations exercise to announce it in the midst of the Al-Pac controversy, where one of the issues, of course, was that we weren't setting aside enough land to preserve, so that the government may have made this token presentation – an overly small park – and now isn't even prepared to follow through on it? Or is the minister going to follow through on it? Could he

please tell us why there is no money this year under vote 3.4 for it, when will there be, and when will it be completed?

The heritage rivers program is a national program. The minister knows all about it. He has done absolutely nothing to participate in the heritage rivers program. It is a program that has a great deal of merit, that emphasizes not only the conservation of rivers for biological reasons, for strict environmental reasons but also – and this is important – has a component which recognizes the cultural implications, the recreational implications of these kinds of resources for Albertans and for Canadians. When is this minister going to begin to announce Alberta rivers as contributions to the heritage rivers program?

The Capital City parks program. Edmonton is fortunate enough to have a good deal of development out of the Capital City parks program. If the minister has ever been out on a Saturday or Sunday afternoon along that park system with a bicycle or walking, as I was in fact just this last weekend, it is beautiful, truly remarkable. The people of Edmonton are very grateful for that. The fact is that much remains to be done to have that park extended along the rest of the river system in Edmonton, so that that park continues not only to contribute to the recreational opportunities for Edmontonians but also, and I think very importantly and significantly, to ecological and environmental considerations, to allowing to commute more efficiently and effectively with bicycles from the west end. It would be interesting to all of us to know what schedule the minister is putting on the payment of the money under this program and whether or not he can foresee assisting the city more to speed up the construction of that park system.

I would like to mention my concern with the manner in which the minister undertook to decentralize his department. I detect, as I have done since that time with respect to the Agriculture department's decentralization – and this is a strong statement – a profound arrogance in the manner in which this government plays with the lives of families who are settled and established in places like Edmonton and uproots them without particular consideration, I think, of their particular personal circumstances. I believe that the premises upon which some of this has been done have not been proven, studied, nor tested, and I would like to ask this minister: one, what have been the personal costs, family costs, of moving individuals from Edmonton to the regions; two, what has been the cost of relocating their offices; three, can we see the studies which he undertook to prove what those costs would be before he decided to decentralize his department?

Kananaskis park is a wonderful facility. We're now seeing a move to expand the golf course. An environmental impact assessment is under way apparently. Will there be a Natural Resources Conservation Board review, and whether or not it's this minister's decision, what is this minister's position? Is he pushing to get such a review? We have been asking for a long time to know what the profits are of the management company which manages the Kananaskis golf course. We want to know exactly what those profits are so we can determine what it is that they should be charged for the rental of those facilities. It seems that Albertans don't get very much money back for all that we've put into that particular facility.

Mr. Chairman, those are my comments, and I await with interest the minister's response.

4:30

MR. ACTING DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Mr. Minister.

DR. WEST: Yes. I'd like to make a few comments, and any questions I don't directly get to I'm sure the department and I will respond to as we go forward. Starting at the back, the Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark has made some comments, and I'll try to address a few of the questions.

To start with – and I'll go from the back forward, since it's freshest in his memory and he might be able to catch on – he made a statement about the golf course and about wanting to know the profits and various things to do with the management company of the golf course. Well, I have a document here, signed, to the Member for Calgary-Buffalo, who is a member of that caucus, February 19, 1991, from the Kananaskis golf course, the Kan-Alta management company, that answered in detail the questions that the individual wanted to know. Now I would just ask the member to refer to his caucus colleagues and the information that they have achieved.

On the decentralization I would just say that the head of the provincial union had said that as we went forward, if the format used on all decentralizations was like the one used by Recreation and Parks, the union would be very pleased. I would just like to refer you to that. You said some things about arrogance and some other things. I would ask that you go and talk to the head of the Union of Provincial Employees and ask how it did work out in the end and how meaningfully we did go ahead and how sensitively we dealt with the individual lives involved in a decentralization. You asked about the cost of the move in a decentralization program. Let us just say that across the board as we went, we saved 10 percent, including the costs of movement to the regions.

The one other thing in Lakeland that you had brought up is about where it's going ahead. I find it a little bit interesting that the leader of your party goes into the Lakeland area, into Lac La Biche, and takes a strong stand in conversations plus news releases in that area against the development of this park and recreation area, yet you stand up as a member of that caucus and ask why there is no money, why this isn't going ahead, and give us the timetables of the construction development. I find that an amazing thing in this Assembly. We have taken over five forestry campsites as a department, and we're running those this year. We will also be continuing our consultation with the public as to the exact borders of this area and the designation, whether it be provincial park or recreation area. In the meantime, I hope that the thrust of your question will be carried forth in the spirit of your news releases and that you support this initiative rather than going into those areas and spreading negative discussions in that direction.

On the Hand Hills ecological area – and there were questions brought from both members on ecological areas – I would just say that it's one of our larger ecological reserves. It has 5,507 acres in that reserve, and I believe it is one of the larger reserves, looking here at the number of acres involved. You're asking for more land in that reserve. I think that we will be concentrating on some of the other ecological reserves at the present time and concentrating also on good management plans for the ones we have. I think you brought up the Middle Sand Hills ecological reserve. To let you know on that one, we are working with the federal government, the Department of National Defence, to deal with the base that's down there. We find that the grasslands we're looking for, the best ones representative of that area, are within the base that's there, and we will be working with them to see if we can get a carve-out. We're doing that at the present time and will report to you in a short time as to where we're going with that one. I would

also refer you to the sixth annual report – and we'll be bringing out another report – from the advisory committee on ecological reserves. In there they have made their recommendations, and it lists the status of the ecological reserves so far. I think they will be recommending certain ones coming forth in the future, and I'm sure you can read that report.

As far as some of the other questions you asked, I think it was more in the context of a speech that you were making. As I say, I will go over *Hansard* and look to some of the questions, but I know, as in your introduction, it was more of a philosophical bent that you were on in regards to provincial parks and the designation of endangered spaces. I will read those carefully and report to you on any direct questions you may have had in that. I would direct you, too, to Forestry, Lands and Wildlife. Some of your questions were a little off base for this department, but I will discuss those with the Minister of Forestry, Lands and Wildlife as to the designation of natural areas within the Eastern Slopes and perhaps where we're going with some of the wilderness areas in the province.

West Yellowhead brought up a question in regards to the minister's office. You know, I don't like pointing anything out, but if you would do a little homework, you'll find out that the minister's office of Recreation and Parks at \$217,564 is the second lowest minister's office in the government as far as the cost goes, and the 2.6 percent increase was the normal increase in salaries that had been administered last year for my staff and myself. Part of that salary was the increment you took yourself, hon. Member for West Yellowhead.

You asked about the CRC, and as I've said, we have put in \$240 million. I agree with you that it has helped many of our organizations, and we're going to be looking at that. I will be working with the minister responsible for lotteries to look at the community facility enhancement program that was out, a very beneficial program that has delivered \$100 million in infrastructure across this province. We will be looking at that in relationship to the CRC to see what help these volunteer organizations and municipalities need in the future. I thank you for that question.

You asked about vote 3, why it decreased 47 percent. That was directed to new capital construction in our parks. I have indicated to you that we feel that we will be able to deliver a good construction program throughout the province. There was a cut of \$3 million out of that one area, and I, too, share your concerns that we maintain the good infrastructure that we have in the presentation of parks. I can assure you that in that vote, in the other elements, we will be looking after the maintenance of our parks and that this was directly new construction that was cut back.

The heritage rivers program was brought up twice. I would like to indicate to you that that is now under the Minister of the Environment, and I'm certain that he will be working on that. We feel that it's appropriate for the Minister of the Environment to deal with this, and he has a lot of conversations with the federal government, which is involved in our rivers and lakes systems also. Just so you know that he is seriously looking at it and I think his department is reviewing it at the present time: the heritage rivers system in Canada and our role in it as a province.

I appreciate your comments on the William Watson Lodge, certainly a tremendous facility. As I said in my opening remarks, I would certainly like to see some expansion in that area.

The Blue Lake Centre. You said: how are we going to achieve what we said we would achieve? We felt that the Blue

Lake Centre's fees were fairly low. If you notice, they've gone up from \$40 to over \$60 a day. We are going to charge the staff at the Blue Lake Centre along with their management with the challenges of initiating programs that deliver not only to the citizens of Alberta but to some of the private-sector corporations. We will be looking at an innovative way to incorporate perhaps a revolving fund at the Blue Lake Centre to cost recover their expenses as well as continue to deliver the good programs.

There are two ways, of course, as you're trying to balance a budget and deliver health care services and education. You can eliminate programs, or you can go to a user-fee cost recovery and continue the access to these programs of the people of Alberta. In my conversations throughout the province – and you mentioned seniors' fees, so I'll bring it in at the same time – I have talked to seniors and I've talked to people using the Blue Lake Centre, people using the William Watson Lodge. They would rather see nominal fee increases to maintain the fine programs we have in the province of Alberta than continuing in a way so you have to take all the moneys into health care and education and close those facilities because we can't afford to run them. I believe the people of Alberta are willing to address the user-pay philosophy for the fine facilities.

4:40

Seniors' fees did increase, and I answered a question that you brought up before in question period. They increased mostly in the area of those elite campsites where they have running water, electricity, showers, and are usually on a cement pad. They're areas where those fine motor homes and fifth wheels and those can park. Yes, they were reasonable before. They are still reasonable, but they did increase substantially. On the other hand, for seniors that use the rustic campsites, they will find that their rate went down. A thousand campsites in this province dropped their rate for seniors 25 cents from last year. Seniors are treated quite fairly. I have a document here that says that in certain areas like Saskatchewan, any senior citizens over 65 pay full camping fees on the weekends. They do get a break in mid-week, but on the busiest times, when they like to go to these campsites, they're paying full camper fees. They also pay an additional park entry fee. In this province we don't have a park entry fee to date, and yet many provinces still do. Of course, in the national parks, which make up a big percentage of our landscape in parks, the seniors do not get a break.

The Auditor General's report. The Member for West Yellowhead had brought up the Auditor General's remarks in relationship to the KVRA. If you note, it said at the bottom:

In the interim, at the Minister's direction, an annual amount of approximately \$58,000 will be held back from the Department's previously agreed funding contributions to the Association.

In view of this action, I am not repeating my recommendation.

You did bring up the fact that we were not addressing the \$635,000, but I assure you that it's being addressed, and the Auditor General brought it out. If you would re-read page 103, I think you can come to that.

As far as the recommendation on the Recreation, Parks and Wildlife Foundation, I do agree with you that we must address that. It's an accounting position that the Auditor General wants us to correct. In pointing out the expenses that were drawn by the board of the RPW Foundation, I was glad that you pointed out that they were so reasonable over two years. This is one of the few foundations – and I'll repeat it: one of the few foundations – and committees in the province of Alberta that draws no

honorarium. It's a point that the board feels strongly about. They are appointed to that board, and they feel they should direct all the funds they can to serving the people of Alberta, those lottery funds, and they draw no honorarium. The moneys you allude to, and the Auditor General does too, are expenses they incur as they travel down the road to deliver and study the fine projects that go ahead through the RPW Foundation.

I'll stand down and accept some more questions.

MR. ACTING DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Cypress-Redcliff.

MR. HYLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I noted with interest and tried to listen with interest to the comments from the Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark. I know he, and I repeat he, claims to be a true environmentalist and one that believes in recycling. He does believe in recycling, including his speeches, from forestry into Rec and Parks, from last year's Rec and Parks estimates into this year's Rec and Parks. Maybe next year we'll start anew, and we won't be recycling again.

Mr. Chairman, there were questions and comments made regarding ecological areas, and there were comments made regarding small ecological areas. The first ecological area that was officially named and started was in my constituency, called Milk River canyon ecological area. Beside the ecological area, which is somewhere around four or five sections approximately, is a natural area attached to it, which is all part of the same decision; in total, 26 square miles. Now, that's not exactly small in terms of area, an area that's accessible only from one direction, tied against the American border and the Milk River with a 300- to 350-foot-deep canyon throughout that area. One has to come in from the west side to get to this area.

The member asked why things aren't happening faster. Why isn't it in existence? Why aren't we making more ecological areas? The reason why an area such as this is just starting is that they're just finishing the plan, and it's been put together by a local group of people, fish and game officials. The president or vice-president or whatever from the Alberta Wilderness Association has worked with the local group on a committee, giving his services and the services of others to develop an operational plan so that that ecological area, natural area, will work the way it's designed. What would he have the government say? "We don't want to listen to the local people. We know what's best. I'm from Edmonton. I know what's best. I'm going to show you how to do it. Here's how it's going to be done."

Mr. Chairman, this government doesn't believe in that. It believes in involving the local people in the administration of that, and that's what's happening locally throughout the southern part of the province. From as far away as Calgary, people are involved in that. Perhaps before members start criticizing areas and saying this is wrong and that's wrong, maybe they should come down and visit them. They might be surprised at what they see there, instead of believing what one guy told them that another guy told him that another guy told him. Or they may have read in the paper something that is wrong anyway and assumed that that is what's happening. Perhaps they could check.

Mr. Chairman, there was some comment made about the Middle Sand Hills, a proposed ecological area. I can remember speaking last year on the estimates, and again I would have to say that if that's what they're after, the Middle Sand Hills, they're on the wrong side of the river. The Middle Sand Hills are in the Suffield reserve across the river. The ecological area

that was supposed to contain the Middle Sand Hills does not; it's on the other side of the river. What would people have done? Just have the government go in and take that land away from those people who have been looking after it for 30 or 40 years? Just say: "Hey, it's not yours anymore. We're government; we're the big guys. We're taking it away."

AN HON. MEMBER: Just like a Liberal.

MR. HYLAND: Just like a Liberal, somebody said. That could be true.

Mr. Chairman, I was interested, too, in listening to the Member for West Yellowhead when he talked about Kananaskis and some of the comments he made about Kananaskis, yet he said he's never been there and he's going down this summer. Again I find that interesting. One should really go to that area and experience it firsthand, have a look around and see what it's like. Talk to people that are there; talk to people that have been there. Talk to them when they are there; they might find a different view of that area.

I spent a fair amount of time in that area with my family. I must admit my preference has been the prairies. My time limit in the mountains is probably two or three days, and I start to feel closed in. By the time you've spent a week there, you're ready to go home, but it's not because there isn't enough to do. It's because you're used to living where you can see where you're going, you can see what you're doing, whereas in the mountains you do have scenery all right, but you can only see for two or three miles and you see a mountain in front of you, and there's no way to get around it. But I have been there visiting, and also I spent time when the Heritage Savings Trust Fund looked at some of the things we've done in there, looked at William Watson Lodge. I was there before the lodge was added on to; I was there after the lodge had been added on to for more people, to hear what the people who were there using it said, the handicapped people, who said that they have a chance to be with nature. Something that was provided and administered by this department so that the handicapped, those in wheelchairs, can see – they can go there and they can take their trails out amongst the trees, whereas under normal conditions they wouldn't have the opportunity to be out there.

The many other things that happen in that Kananaskis Country. People, before they start looking at it and commenting on it, before they start saying things about the golf course – I'm not a golfer, but I've had many friends that go there. Once they play around that golf course, they start to realize what it's all about and start to feel as if they're part of it. It's their chance to go and play on a world-class golf course at a price that's reasonable, that they can afford.

[Mr. Jonson in the Chair]

With those comments, Mr. Chairman, I'd like to thank the members.

4:50

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The Member for Calgary-Mountain View.

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd like to address a number of comments this afternoon to the Minister of Recreation and Parks. I'd like to begin with some questions

regarding the Kananaskis golf course number 2 that's presently in the planning process.

When approval was given to construct the first golf course in Kananaskis Country, there were certain mitigative effects required to be made on environmentally sensitive land near that first golf course. Now with the second proposal we find that it's being located right smack-dab in the area that had been set aside for the mitigative efforts for the first golf course, and because of this it makes it an especially critical area of the entire Kananaskis Country. I'm told that this particular location for the second golf course is a home and indeed an important thoroughfare for wildlife that cannot simply be moved to other areas in Kananaskis, and for that reason this site was quasi protected by a policy adopted by this government back in 1977 when the first golf course was approved. That document said that no facilities will be located east of the village and golf course, which turns out to be the area where this proposed second golf course is to be located. So there are some serious concerns that have been raised about the appropriateness of this particular development.

The question is raised about when the development is to be approved. Back on January 31 of this year, that was a deadline, the last day that Kan-Alta was accepting questions, comments, and concerns from the public which would be answered by Kan-Alta in writing. Insofar as I know, this was the full extent of the public input hearing process, which seems to me to be a pretty weak type of approach to environmental review. I was told by one of the proponents that once the public's concerns have been met – and I presume what was meant by that was that once the proponents reply to the questions from the public – then they'll go to the Alberta government and proceed with the next step.

What exactly is the next step, Mr. Chairman, to the minister? There are a number of ways that we could go here. The NRCB, the Natural Resources Conservation Board, is not actually up and functioning yet, although the government is in the process of doing so. The question is: is it up to the Minister of the Environment or the Minister of Recreation and Parks to call for an environmental impact assessment? Some have told us that they believe it's up to the minister's discretion to call for an environmental impact assessment. However, if the government accepted the intent of the Natural Resources Conservation Board legislation, it's still discretionary on the part of the parks minister to call for an environmental impact assessment. Given that the history is as I've outlined it and that this particular parcel of land is potentially a critical wildlife area, what steps is the government going to take to ensure that there's a proper environmental impact assessment done before any approvals are given? As well, I understand that Alberta Forestry, Lands and Wildlife enters the picture, that they have some part to play in providing the lease for the land. If the project goes ahead, is there an opportunity for public input when Alberta Forestry, Lands and Wildlife enters the scene?

There are lots of opportunities, if the government is serious here, to take environmental promises and concerns that have been raised, promises that have been made in the past – if they're to take those seriously, there's lots of opportunity for them to call for a proper environmental impact assessment, including a requirement for public hearings. I'd like to know why they're not prepared to do that and what makes them think that the current process for approval is anywhere near adequate. I'd also like to know: what is the time line we're looking at? The project was originally submitted in 1988 and wasn't proceeded with, and then along comes this second proposal, the current

one. I don't know to what extent it's really much different than the first one, but what I'm concerned about is that in this interim period, between the time when there is ministerial discretion over the ability to call an environmental impact assessment and the time before the Natural Resources Conservation Board is up and operating, we're in a hiatus between two sort of policies. I wonder if this golf course is timed to be approved between the two policies in place without any proper evaluation or assessment being done. I'd like the minister to indicate why they're not properly concerned about critical wildlife habitat in Kananaskis Country.

The second area I'd like to touch on has to do with vote 4, Kananaskis Country Management. One of the items in our votes is the Canmore Nordic Centre's request for almost exactly two-thirds of a million dollars, a \$666,900 vote, from this Assembly. Now, I wonder why we're coming to the taxpayers for the support of the Canmore Nordic Centre in the first place. It was my understanding after the conclusion of the 1988 Winter Olympics that it was very successful financially, much to the delight of many of us who initially, when the Olympics were proposed for Calgary, were concerned that they would go deeply into the red. On the contrary, they turned a profit, and a significant one at that. Albertans were told that these surpluses would be turned into endowment funds, trust funds that would be used to help pay the ongoing operating costs of Olympic facilities. We were delighted to know that and to hear that. Canmore Nordic Centre was one of the Olympic facilities, so there's a big question in my mind. Why isn't the Canmore Nordic Centre being supported out of one of the Olympic trust funds that was established after the conclusion of the Winter Olympics? I know that responsibility for the ongoing management of those funds was turned over to the Calgary Olympic Development Association. They're doing a good job, and I'm pleased that they are there and that they are providing the expertise and the people to manage the assets left over from OCO and to manage the physical facilities.

5:00

I've got the most recent financial statements for CODA, June 30, 1990. In the note to the financial statements it talks about the OCO trust fund, and it states in part:

The OCO Trust Fund was established by OCO '88 with the net revenue of the Trust Fund allocated as follows:

- (i) to pay for operations, maintenance and management expenses related to agreements if and when entered into by CODA, in connection with Nakiska and Canmore and in connection with the Park Long-Term Operating Agreement and Legacy Agreement with respect of [Canada Olympic Park].

Well, a provision has been made in the financial statements contemplating an agreement to support the operations, maintenance, and management expenses in part for Canmore. I'd like to ask the minister why those agreements haven't been entered into. Is it because the province of Alberta is dragging its feet, or is it because CODA is dragging its feet? He spent a considerable amount of time in his opening comments talking about saving the taxpayers' money. If we could transfer responsibility for Canmore Nordic Centre to CODA, where a lot of us understood it was to be placed in any event, he could remove responsibility for spending almost two-thirds of a million dollars out of his budget, if that could be supported by the OCO trust funds instead of coming to this Assembly for the vote to support the Canmore Nordic Centre instead. I'd like him to address that question, if he would, please. If it's CODA that's dragging their

feet, could he perhaps tell us what needs to be done in order to get that agreement signed?

I'd also like to raise at this point on behalf of my colleague the Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place a concern that was raised by a constituent of his. I'm told by the Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place that one of his constituents booked a group campsite in a provincial park at the rate of \$35 per night. This was done prior to the provincial budget and was for a date in June of this year. Now, from the time the booking was made to the time that the reservation is to be honoured, there has been a change in camping fees. The economics of the event have been dramatically altered by the increase in fees to \$80 per night plus \$5.60 GST. I'm wondering on behalf of my colleague: is it possible to honour reservations made prior to the budget increase out of fairness to the people involved? It's a common practice in industry and doesn't really have a major impact on the overall budget of the province. It's also good public relations. Would the minister acknowledge that and make provisions to honour reservations at the old rate, when they were made prior to the budget being brought in?

There are also a number of questions regarding the costs of privatization. I think the minister indicated that Long Lake and Thunder Lake were privatized last year. One of the aspects of privatization costs is the monitoring of the service provided by the private-sector operators to ensure that proper standards are maintained. I'd like to know whether the government of Alberta monitors parks to ensure that proper standards are maintained. If they don't do that, why don't they do that? If they do, what do they do if the standards aren't maintained? I'd also like to know: what are the costs involved in the monitoring of the private-sector operators, and how is this cost reflected in the budget for the department?

This minister has implemented lots of increases in fees to the general public, whether it be camping fees or others, that affect the families of Albertans who like to go out and enjoy our natural areas in Alberta. Lots of fee increases for ordinary Albertans, Mr. Chairman, but where are the increased payments from the operators of the Kananaskis golf course? Is there any requirement on them to alter the lease agreement with the Alberta government to have them pay more for the privilege of managing the golf course at Kananaskis? It doesn't seem to me that there's any indication in this budget that those payments from Kan-Alta Golf Management are being increased, and I just wonder why it is that there seems to be one set of increases for ordinary Albertans, and friends of the government who are operating some of these facilities aren't hit with equivalent increases themselves.

Finally, I'd like to ask the minister to use the opportunity in the few minutes left this afternoon, if he cares to, to address a concern that has been raised with me by some individuals in Calgary. Back in August of this past year the *Calgary Herald* ran an article examining the whole question of privatization of provincial parks. Part of the article quoted some individuals, particularly a Doug Morrison in Calgary, who was very critical of how standards at Wyndham-Carseland provincial campground had deteriorated, in his view as a result of a private-sector operator coming in to take over operation of that campsite. Now, the Morrisons were in a position to know about Wyndham-Carseland because they were very dedicated volunteer hosts at Wyndham-Carseland for a number of years.

After that newspaper article was printed, I understand the minister was asked for his reaction. His reaction to this criticism from the Morrisons was something to the effect that it was just

sour grapes from some people who had tried to get a contract for managing Wyndham-Carseland and had failed to get it, and therefore they were sort of being critical of the whole process. Well, by now the minister must be well aware of the fact that he had the Morrisons mixed up with somebody else, because the Morrisons never made such a bid to operate a campground. They never have, and they never intend to. As a result of this comment in the *Herald* the Morrisons were quite embarrassed and, I gather, have sought to have the minister provide some sort of apology for mistaken identity or for certainly stating something about the Morrisons that was untrue. I would hope that the minister would use this opportunity to acknowledge this afternoon that he was mistaken, that he understands he was mistaken, and that he's sorry for whatever embarrassment this might have caused the Morrisons. I think they would very, very much appreciate the minister doing that this afternoon, and I would say on their behalf that I would appreciate it as well.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The hon. minister.

5:10

DR. WEST: Yes, a few comments on the questions, and again I'll go backwards on this, not to take away from the Member for Cypress-Redcliff's initial comments.

Your comments in regard to the article. I shouldn't comment on newspaper articles, but if you will go back to your source on the last topic you were on, you will find out that it has been addressed fully. I would think that you're only bringing it up here for political reasons. Check with your sources and the people involved; it was a long time ago dealt with.

As far as the Kan-Alta golf course and their fees, of course if you write and talk to the Kan-Alta people, they will be quite willing to talk to you in regards to their contract with the government. Theirs is a percentage formula in their contracts, and they are giving more money back to the government every year. To address that and relate those to fees I think is wrong. The private sector is based on providing services to the public, and if they make more in a year, that's all the more to them. Our contracts reflect that, because they're done on a percentage basis, so the better Kan-Alta does, the better the government does.

You had made reference to the fact that group campsites had gone up from \$35 a night. Just to make the Assembly aware, that \$35 is for 10 units in a campsite; that's \$3.50 a unit. They were the lowest in Canada by all means. They did go up, and you're wondering: if they were booked before, why we don't continue to honour them now? As I say, we did a long time ago in our letters and in our contractual relationship with these group fees acknowledge that the camping fees would go up. I have a notice here from Kananaskis Country, which has a tremendous amount of camping opportunities. It says that the group camp fees schedule – and this was put out some time ago – is under review and may be subject to change. Therefore, those individuals that were applying for group sites certainly may complain, but to come back on that, as I say, I think they will appreciate the fact that they still are one of the lowest or the lowest group site fees in all of Canada. I have a schedule here, and I'll send the schedule over to the hon. member to indicate how fortunate we are in Alberta with our fee schedules, in comparison, for group camping.

CODA. You read out some of the mandate, that if and when they enter an agreement with the government, they would take

forth the legacy and use it. I'll just add that they have entered agreements with the government. We have been dealing with CODA, and I'm very proud of their responsibility in delivering our programs and a post-Olympic legacy. We have an agreement with them where last year, on their level, they spent close to \$500,000 to give an opportunity on the Haig Glacier for our Olympic ski teams, cross-country ski teams, and biathlon teams to train. Other athletes from across Canada came to train also. They entered into an agreement, and they have spent a tremendous amount of money on making that opportunity available. They also are committed to building a training centre at the Canmore Nordic Centre area. They will expend some \$1 million-plus and will continue to provide services to the athletes as a legacy.

One of the things with the Canmore Nordic Centre: it serves recreational skiing opportunities to the people of Alberta. It's a \$15 million building. It has some of the best cross-country skiing opportunities in the world, and CODA has a responsibility to bring quality athletes and to train our athletes here, but we as a province also have the responsibility to provide recreational skiing opportunities to the people of Alberta. On balance, the \$666,900 in the maintenance of that \$15 million centre as well as the recreational opportunities that are there I think is value for the dollars, and we'll continue to address it in that way. CODA by no means is abrogating their responsibility, and I wish the hon. member would talk directly to them. If you have the annual report, you can see where they're spending the money. They fund, I think, a million dollars to the oval at the University of Alberta's campus, and on and on and on. So please go and talk to them. I think you have some misinformation there.

It's kind of ironic when you bring up the Evan-Thomas golf course and its location, because when you go back to 1978, this was the original site of the first golf course. Robert Trent Jones, who designed the existing Kananaskis golf course, picked this site first and then decided that the terrain where the existing golf course is was much better. At the time, through the Kananaskis integrated resource management plan and the environmental concerns that were addressed then, there were no concerns with the Evan-Thomas golf course site. The mitigated areas are not on the site itself. The critical wildlife area that you talk about is certainly going to be protected in that area, and an environmental review by the proponents of this golf course certainly will take place. I would like you to again look at history, go back and study the evolution of the Kananaskis golf course 1, and you will see that the Evan-Thomas golf course area was designated in those days as high recreational use, with a golf course as one of its usages. After everything is met – I trust you asked what time – we will put the checks and balances in to make sure the area is protected. I hope that as soon as possible we can get another golf course on the go, because as I said before, we're turning away Albertans from those golfing experiences in Kananaskis, and Kananaskis Country was built for Albertans. We trust that will go ahead. [some applause] I think there's a golfer there.

The hon. Member for Cypress-Redcliff had brought up the Middle Sand Hills. As I indicated before to the Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark, we are looking at the Suffield Block because that is where the Middle Sand Hills ecological reserve is best served. It has the density of the grasslands we're looking for, not the original area projected, so we're going to keep looking at that in a meaningful manner. I hope in a short time in the future we can come to an agreement with the federal

government and get along with the designation of an ecological reserve down in that area.

I wanted to go back for a minute to the Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark, who has brought up a concern about the Wildlife Park. The Wildlife Park certainly has been in our concerns recently because we want to see an Alberta solution to protect these animals and to continue their presence in Alberta for the viewing of the citizens. One of the things I wanted to point out: you had asked if the Lily Lake road had any relationship whatsoever to this wildlife park, and the answer is absolutely, unequivocally no. Please take that up with the MD of Sturgeon.

Second of all, you indicated: where has the government's commitment been to this wildlife park? Since 1979 to 1991 we have in a meaningful way taken, out of taxpayers' dollars and other dollars in the province, \$11,298,114 towards this park. The government did not get involved in this park until 1985. Before that it was a private-sector initiative, started in 1979. It was operated as a private enterprise project by Messrs. Walter Jerram and Bill Cochrane. The start-up funding for their business was through an Alberta Opportunity Company loan of \$2.7 million, a Royal Bank loan of \$1.8 million, and capital grants totaling \$219,000 from the Alberta Recreation, Parks and Wildlife Foundation. During that same period of time a paved access to this wildlife park was undertaken by Alberta Transportation at a cost of \$3.4 million. The operational requirements for the six-year period were met thorough the above referenced loans, gate receipts, direct private-sector donations, and operational grants from the Recreation, Parks and Wildlife Foundation totaling \$450,000. The private-sector support included donations in excess of \$100,000 by Helen Ridgeway, \$60,000 of which was provided through the Recreation, Parks and Wildlife Foundation. Mrs. Ridgeway, whose dedication to this park has been admirable, donated her money in 1978-79 to the private-sector operators to ensure that the protection of Aunt Helen's Petting Zoo would be maintained.

5:20

In 1985 the private operation was financially depleted, and the government of Alberta was asked to form the Alberta Wildlife Park Foundation, a private, nonprofit organization or company through section 9 of the Companies Act. The membership on the board of the foundation consisted of an advisory committee previously established by the private-sector operators, Messrs. Jerram and Cochrane. Upon the turnover of the park to the Alberta Wildlife Park Foundation, the Alberta government forgave the Alberta Opportunity Company loan of \$2.7 million and discharged 50 percent of the Royal Bank loan, \$900,000. Messrs. Jerram and Cochrane assumed responsibility for the repayment of the outstanding balance, some \$900,000, that was attributed to their private operations outside of the park.

This government from that day forward, from '85 when they had forgiven some \$3.6 million in the operation of this park, through the Alberta Wildlife Park Foundation as well as the Department of Recreation and Parks, economic development, and special warrants, funded a further \$2,445,000 to the Alberta Wildlife Park. From the beginning in '85, it was indicated to the foundation that they would have to seek self-sufficiency and that they would go forward seeking donors, gate receipts, and public raising of funds.

You said that we sprung this upon them. In '85 we had told them that they were to seek self-sufficiency, and last October after discussions with the park, we had indicated that we were

willing to put up another \$1.3 million but that they would have to seek self-sufficiency and go out and see if they could put this on track. That \$1.3 million would take them forward over the next year and a half to two years. They have expended some \$668,000 of that money to date, and they are looking at a solution to protect these animals and to keep it in Alberta to the best of their abilities. The foundation is working hard at it, taking criticisms from some areas, but are doing their utmost best to ensure the protection of this park and the protection of Helen Ridgeway's original investment through the private sector of some \$100,000-plus.

I would ask that all members and all individuals involved in this support the foundation in seeking an Alberta solution. They have some eight proposals before them at the present time, and I'm encouraged by the reports I'm getting back. I certainly look to the day when Albertans can be proud again of the Alberta Wildlife Park and its animals. But do not ever indicate – and I ask the hon. member in good faith – that this government has not supported this park. I repeat: the history I just gave you plus the totals of \$11,298,114. If you don't want to include the \$3.4 million that was put forth on the road – and perhaps you don't, but that road would never have been paved if it hadn't been for the Alberta Wildlife Park. Ask the MD of Sturgeon. If you take that off, we have still contributed nearly \$8 million and a lot of time and effort to supporting the Alberta Wildlife Park.

Thank you for your indulgence in that.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Ready for the question?
The Member for Stony Plain.

MR. WOLOSHTYN: I have just one question of the minister. I'm sure he can clarify it for me. In following the Manpower Authorizations from last year to this year, through the three votes there's a very good correlation until you get into the departmental summary, and I find that in last year's the target for full-time equivalents was going to be reduced to some 734 and a half permanent full-time positions down to some 474. I don't have any quarrel with that, but when I look at the summary of manpower authorizations in this year's estimates on page 288, I notice that they start off at some 959 with a reduction to 878 full-time equivalent positions, and for the permanent full-time they start off at 592 and down to 526. I'm sure there must be some explanation for it. I'd like to hear what that explanation is, since throughout all the other votes

everything jives with all the numbers, the manpower included. Just on your summary I'd like to know: why the sudden jump?

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Ready for the question?

HON. MEMBERS: Question.

Agreed to:

1.0.1 – Minister's Office	\$217,564
1.0.2 – Deputy Minister's Office	\$207,678
1.0.3 – Central Support Services	\$2,881,264
Total Vote 1 – Departmental Support Services	\$3,306,506

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

[Motion carried]

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

MR. SPEAKER: The Member for Ponoka-Rimbey.

MR. JONSON: Yes, Mr. Speaker, the report from the committee.

Resolved that a sum not exceeding the following be granted to Her Majesty for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1992, for the department and purposes indicated.

The Department of Recreation and Parks: \$3,306,506 for Departmental Support Services.

The Committee of Supply has had under consideration certain other resolutions, reports the deliberations on the Department of Recreation and Parks, and requests leave to sit again.

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

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed, please say no. The motion carries.
Deputy Government House Leader.

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, the business of the House tomorrow night will be the Department of Health.

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

