

## Legislative Assembly of Alberta

Title: **Friday, May 3, 1991**

10:00 a.m.

Date: 91/05/03

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

head: **Prayers**

MR. SPEAKER: Let us pray.

Our divine Father, as we conclude for this week our work in this Assembly, we renew our thanks and ask that we may continue our work under Your guidance.

Amen.

head: **Introduction of Special Guests**

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce to you and through you to the Legislature today some 83 grade 6 students from the Stettler elementary school. The students are in both the members' gallery and the public gallery. I've had a chance to talk to them. They certainly are eager to see the Legislature Building and the Assembly. They are accompanied by parents and teachers. There is quite a list so I won't go through them all, but I would like them to stand and have the Assembly recognize them in the normal way.

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Speaker, it's my privilege to introduce to you and through you to Members of the Legislative Assembly a group of 26 grade 6 students from St. Boniface school in the heart of Edmonton-Whitemud. They are accompanied today by their teacher Mrs. Betty Brownlee and one parent, Mrs. Judy Kuspira. They are seated in the public gallery. If they would please stand and receive the warm welcome of this House.

MR. McINNIS: Mr. Speaker, I have great pleasure in introducing a group of students from the Holy Cross school in Edmonton-Jasper Place. There are 33 students here today in the members' gallery, accompanied by their teacher Mrs. Manuela Ferrante and parent Mrs. Geri Limoges. I'd like them to rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly, please.

MR. SEVERTSON: Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure to rise today to introduce to you and through you to members of the Assembly 42 grade 6 and grade 12 students from the Grandview school in Bowden. They are accompanied by their teachers Mr. André, Mrs. Cunningham, and Mr. Reeve. They are sitting in the members' gallery and the public gallery and, I understand, in the visitor services room. I'd like them to rise now and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

head: **Oral Question Period**

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Highlands.

### Economic Policy

MS BARRETT: Thank you. Mr. Speaker, I know the Premier doesn't like to use the R word, and I also know his millionaire friends might not be feeling the pinch of what's going on in Alberta's economy, but I can tell you Alberta's seniors, students, and workers certainly are. Now, business bankruptcies are up 60 percent from over a year ago, the unemployment rate is up, and there are 20,000 more Albertans out of work today than there were one year ago. In light of those figures, I'd like to ask the Premier how it is that he can continue to deny the pain, the hurt

that this government's policies are causing people who are out of work and looking for answers.

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, I'm really amazed by the hon. member wishing to get into this kind of discussion when she knows that we have a recession in North America and, except for one province, a recession in all of Canada. There is only one province that is strong and healthy and growing. We're able to absorb the immigration of some 20,000 people who have looked across the country and said, "Where do we want to place our future?" They want to place their future in Alberta, and they're pouring into this province. At the same time, we're generating some 20,000 new jobs this year. We have the lowest unemployment in Canada. We have the highest per capita retail sales. We have the lowest taxes. We have more people working now than in the history of Alberta. It's the lowest taxation; therefore they have the greatest take-home pay. We have a strong, healthy province and a diversified economy.

Obviously, there are problems in agriculture and there are problems in the energy area. So why is Alberta so strong? It isn't luck. It's because the government's policies have paid off. Perhaps later in the day the minister of economic development may be able to reflect on additional strengths in our economy.

MS BARRETT: Mr. Speaker, we're not talking about jobs that just aren't being replaced; we're talking about layoffs, real lost jobs. Quite frankly, Mr. Premier, we're also talking about: Alberta is going to be suffering from the recession that is embracing this province and this country. I'd like to ask the Premier how it is that he can continue to ignore the growing reality of high unemployment, more business failures, and do nothing about it strategically.

MR. GETTY: How can the hon. member say that when the government has created some 107,000 jobs over the last four years? That has been performance. I pointed out that people are choosing to come here. We have a strong, healthy housing market. We have new companies being formed, a record, I think, for the number of new corporations formed last year. The government's diversification efforts are paying off. We have investment pouring into the province. We have – and the hon. Member for Athabasca-Lac La Biche was making the point just the other day – \$1.3 billion of investment that just commenced this week and that's going to provide spin-off jobs all over our province.

It is true that we have problems facing us, because you do have the problems of provinces like Ontario putting tremendous stress on the financial situation in Canada. There it appears that they're just going to spend, spend, spend and layer it on the future of their children, but here we have a balanced budget. We have a strong economy, and it's a strong, healthy province.

MS BARRETT: Mr. Speaker, this is like watching Peter Lougheed 10 years ago, when he failed to recognize the significance of the changes that were occurring right in front of his government's nose. He didn't come up with a strategy, and Alberta was swirled into the worst recession since the 1930s.

Mr. Speaker, why won't the Premier realize and act upon the overwhelming indicators that unemployment is growing and this government has failed to respond and continues to fail to respond to the people who need work?

MR. GETTY: I'm not sure if the member asked a question in that. It was just a comment, I guess.

I just want to point out again that the Alberta economy is experiencing real growth in the only province in Canada that is. Canada as a whole is losing 200,000 jobs. Alberta is creating jobs, absorbing the in-migration, and people who are coming out of the companies when they restructure are able to find other employment. That's why we have the lowest unemployment in Canada. I don't know why the hon. member can't seem to grasp that.

MR. SPEAKER: Second main question.

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

#### 10:10 Drug Assistance Program

MR. EWASIUK: Mr. Speaker, this government is placing additional financial burdens on individual seniors by cutting back the benefits available to them: higher costs for heating their homes, higher costs for dental and optical services, coinsurance fees for Aids to Daily Living. There's more. On July 1 this government plans to remove most of the over-the-counter drugs used by seniors from Blue Cross coverage. My question is to the Minister of Education. Will the minister now admit that the result of cuts to the Blue Cross coverage may force many seniors to approach their physicians and request alternative drugs because they cannot afford the squeeze put on their limited budgets?

MR. SPEAKER: Minister of Health, I assume.

MS BETKOWSKI: I'm assuming he's referring to my former portfolio, and I'll answer it in my present.

Mr. Speaker, we are certainly looking at the \$200 million Blue Cross benefits that we pay in our province in total, plus all the premiums that we pay on behalf of seniors. We are moving that coverage under that Blue Cross plan to be more consistent with other drug plans across the country, including setting up a defined benefit list. The impact of that is on all Albertans, as we will not be covering the over-the-counter drugs which are available without a prescription in order that we can continue to cover prescription drugs and those over-the-counter drugs which are deemed to be necessary because of certain medical conditions. I believe it's an appropriate way to proceed on our drug plan. Certainly it will be a more accountable benefit. Interestingly, when I reviewed the Ontario budget, they are making some significant changes with respect to their drug plan, as well, along the same lines.

MR. EWASIUK: Mr. Speaker, this minister and the government seem to be ignoring the fact that half the seniors in this province have incomes less than \$12,000. No doctor who is the least bit compassionate is going to refuse such a request as they would be making to them. My question, then, to the minister: why is this government placing both the seniors and the doctors in such an untenable position?

MS BETKOWSKI: Mr. Speaker, I don't understand the question. Let's look at the facts. We pay and will continue to pay and have paid in the past all the premiums for Blue Cross for our seniors. Then there's a sharing of cost, as there always has been, as there is under the plan. However, when we look at the new drugs that are coming on the market, the extremely expensive drugs coming on the market, in order to ensure that

that drug plan is accountable to Albertans, in order to ensure that we can continue to add on those expensive prescription drugs so they will be available to Albertans fairly, we have made the decision to take the over-the-counter drugs, some of which are able to be dealt with not with a drug but with life-style changes, diet changes, that kind of thing – and we believe it's a very appropriate move. Let me assure the hon. member that it is consistent with the rest of Canada, and seniors will not pay any premium for that excellent drug assistance plan.

MR. EWASIUK: Mr. Speaker, the drugs to be removed on July 1 include things like calcium supplements, nonprescription pain relievers, antacids, laxatives, and others in an effort to supposedly save this government \$7 million. Why is it that this government has chosen to ignore the concerns of those, including the Alberta Pharmaceutical Association, that have indicated that the result of such a move may very well be that physicians will replace cheap over-the-counter drugs with more expensive prescription drugs, thereby resulting in higher and not lower costs to the Alberta health care system?

MS BETKOWSKI: Well, Mr. Speaker, the issue is not one of satisfying the Pharmaceutical Association or satisfying individual physicians or satisfying individual programs or hospitals. The issue is about creating a health budget that is for everyone in this province. There was extensive consultation and there will continue to be extensive consultation with the Alberta Pharmaceutical Association, with the managers of Blue Cross, but to suggest that people are going to go to a doctor in order to get a prescription drug instead of an over-the-counter drug, which will be much less expensive over-the-counter than it was when it was charged with the pharmacist's fees . . . The reality of what we're facing is that we have to make sure that drug plan is consistent with other plans across Canada. We are doing that, and we believe the moves we've made not just in drugs, not just in home care, not just for seniors, not just for babies in the neonatal intensive care unit across the river, but for all Albertans, for health, are the right moves for this province and this government. I know the opposition would like to take everything and go back to the status quo or pay more money in, and we don't think that's right. We believe we owe it to Albertans to make sure their health system is accountable and fair, and believe me, it is both of those things.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Gold Bar.

#### Health Care System

MRS. HEWES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We've all watched the situation with increasing fear: the pattern of layoffs and bed closures in our major urban hospitals due to the government's determination to restrain health care regardless of consequences. The irony is that the Premier speaks about progress while we're destroying health care. Now we find the problem has spread throughout the province as well to extended care. The case in point is the situation at Medicine Hat general, which will be forced to lay off nurses in long-term care, jeopardizing patient care and staff morale. These nurses are protesting such moves on behalf of their patients and their community. My questions are to the Minister of Health. Is this minister, who must be aware that the layoffs of nurses have now reached beyond acute care, going to do anything at all about this most serious situation?

MS BETKOWSKI: Mr. Speaker, we're doing an awful lot in this province and being noted across the country because of changes they're making in their own health care systems, including long-term care, for looking at the mix of services we have when we provide patient care. I make no bones or no apology to Albertans that the transformation and the reform that's under way in the long-term care system is to exhaust all community alternatives before institutionalization occurs. Single point of entry, the patient classification system, the excellent recommendations of the Mirosh report, and the consultation with Albertans in order to get there are part of this reform. Once you get into the institutional sector, however, if the hon. member is suggesting that we do nothing, that we just say, "Once you're in there, that's it," we don't happen to agree with that. We're looking at the mix of services. How many nurses do you need, how many LPNs do you need, how many care givers do you need, and what is the best mix for the level of severity of the illness of those people? It's very progressive, and interestingly the Ontario government has now written to us to say that they are starting to institute the same kind of single point of entry which was crafted right here in Alberta.

MRS. HEWES: Fine; great, Mr. Speaker. In the meantime, in the transition we put people at risk. It's a ridiculous situation.

My supplementary question to the minister is: will the minister tell this House at what point she deems the layoff situation in Alberta hospitals to be critical and at what point she'll intervene? What is the benchmark of safety for this minister? How many more staff can be terminated in the system that we're now trying to maintain at all costs?

MS BETKOWSKI: Mr. Speaker, let's look at the issue of providing the mix of services. Is the first purpose of our health care system to create jobs in health? It's a very important part of the delivery of health services, but our first and foremost responsibility constitutionally is that we provide reasonable access to health services for all Albertans. That is the issue. As well, in terms of the future of our health system, we believe that we have to be able to ensure that we can afford it in the future. So one of the other reforms that's going on in acute care is to look again at the mix. We've really got the role model that we learned from long-term care; we're now bringing it into acute care, looking at the mix of services we have in there. It may well result in some layoffs, which I regret, but our first purpose must be to deliver the services as best we can to individual Albertans who need them. That is the most important issue.

10:20

MRS. HEWES: Mr. Speaker, my last question is to the Deputy Premier: will the Deputy Premier undertake to meet with the health care professionals in Medicine Hat this weekend to determine what steps need to be taken to protect extended care in that community?

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, that clearly relates to my responsibilities as a member of the Legislature and not to my responsibilities as a minister.

MR. SPEAKER: That's right. That's absolutely right. Thank you.

### Economic Outlook

MRS. MIROSH: Mr. Speaker, there is good news in Alberta today as Stats Canada released figures that prove Alberta has the

highest economic growth in Canada. This growth is at 7.2 percent, the highest rate of any province, and at 10.4 percent in corporate profits. This just doesn't happen. It takes good management by the province and the private sector. Considering that the rest of Canada is in a recession, can the Minister of Economic Development and Trade comment as to whether or not this strong economic performance will continue?

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, when the Provincial Treasurer introduced his budget, he indicated some projections as they relate to the future. We're delighted that last year we led in economic growth, but we're more delighted that the future looks very bright for this province. It looks very bright for this province because of the economic direction this government has steered it in. One only has to look at the third-party endorsements of what we are doing. We've just seen Stats Canada indicate how positive this province is going to do. We saw just a few short days ago the Toronto Dominion Bank – and we can go through a long list of groups and financial institutions that have indicated our province is going to continue to lead economic growth in Canada. That is a direct result of the economic thrust this government has participated in in making sure we have jobs for Albertans.

MRS. MIROSH: Mr. Speaker, Stats Canada also shows figures that indicate Alberta leads in new housing starts, and this is shown at a 17.1 percent increase. Can the minister tell this Assembly and the people of Alberta what his department is doing to help continue this growth in 1991?

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, we've been very conscious of creating a climate whereby we do have an advantage within the province of Alberta so that we can attract business investment. If one reviews our investment climate, as the Premier indicated, we have the highest per capita investment of any province. We've got in excess of \$20 billion worth of projects either on stream or coming on stream, in turn again creating jobs for Albertans.

When we look toward 2000, we want to involve ourselves also in having further public input so we have the people of Alberta involved directly in the direction we go as a province. We've gone through a number of stages as it relates to our economic development. The majority of the jobs that have been created over the last couple of years have been outside our traditional sectors of agriculture and energy, thus adding to the further diversification of our province, but we want to make sure people have direct input as to the direction we go. That is the purpose of our Toward 2000 conference this fall.

### Daishowa Logging Practices

MR. McINNIS: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Forestry, Lands and Wildlife. The superintendent of Wood Buffalo national park has stated what the Cree people in the Wood Buffalo region have known for some time: the Athabasca delta is dying, a combination of the W.A.C. Bennett dam and the clear-cut logging by Daishowa, some of it five miles wide in scope.

AN HON. MEMBER: Aw, it's three miles.

MR. McINNIS: You have a problem with that?

I would like to ask the minister, in view of the fact that it was him and this government that brought Daishowa to the province,

if he can tell us what discussions he's had with Daishowa regarding the continued application of these dangerous logging practices in Wood Buffalo park?

MR. FJORDBOTEN: Mr. Speaker, I've made it clear in this House before that Wood Buffalo national park is under the responsibility of the federal government. The federal government would have discussions with respect to that area. There has been logging taking place there for some time, a long time prior to Daishowa coming to Alberta. I've had no discussions with Daishowa. Discussions with that company or on the logging practices there would take place with the federal government.

MR. McINNIS: Well, Mr. Speaker, Chief Johnson Sewepagaham, who represents the Cree people of that area, says there's nothing left but debris and destruction. I think this minister who brought Daishowa in here has some obligation to talk to his buddies over there and ask them if they will at least look at the federal offer of some \$30 million to buy out those clear-cuts before they destroy the whole area.

MR. FJORDBOTEN: Mr. Speaker, I don't believe for one minute that it's full of destruction, and secondly, those discussions that would take place between the federal government and the company are their responsibility. I have offered before, and the offer still stands, that as a province we would provide any assistance we can technically to make sure the forest practices that are practised by the federal government are equal to what we have in Alberta. Frankly, they're not now.

#### **Police Contract**

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Speaker, about two weeks ago the Solicitor General returned from a meeting with his counterparts in Toronto to discuss the continued provision of RCMP services in this province and other provinces in Canada. To date this government has remained relatively silent on the impact the federal offer for RCMP services would have on the municipalities throughout Alberta. Estimates within the minister's own department state that the additional cost to municipalities could range anywhere from 8.7 to 25.1 percent. To the Solicitor General: will the minister give us his assurance that he will do everything possible to assure that he does not cave in to the feds like we saw this government do with other issues like the GST, the transfer payments?

MR. FOWLER: Mr. Speaker, if caving in is abiding by the laws of the country in respect to GST, I'm afraid that's what we had to do, as everybody else had to do in order to abide by the laws of the country. I wasn't aware that we were being negotiated with when the federal government unilaterally cut back on their transfer payments.

However, with respect to the RCMP and the contract, yes, we did meet in Toronto two weeks ago with all the Solicitor Generals and ministers responsible for policing from Canada, two weeks ago yesterday as a matter of fact, and mapped out a counterproposal to the federal government which would have protected to a very large degree the municipalities of this province, which is one of my very great concerns because certainly there was a gigantic increase asked for. Unfortunately, before we could get that proposal to the minister, the Hon. Pierre Cadieux, a cabinet shuffle in Ottawa replaced him, and we are now dealing with a new minister and waiting for him to come to speed.

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Speaker, is the Solicitor General prepared to offer financial assistance to those municipalities if he is not successful to offset this blatant federal off-loading to the municipalities?

MR. FOWLER: Well, Mr. Speaker, I think the hon. Member for Edmonton-Whitemud is fully aware that we've already put in many millions of dollars to offset the policing costs of municipalities. Where a purely municipal force exists, non-RCMP, we have an \$18 per capita contribution, and where the RCMP are doing the municipal policing the contribution is \$12 per capita, which is many millions of dollars, and we have no intention of cutting back on that at this time.

MR. SPEAKER: Drayton Valley.

#### **Highway Cleanup Program**

MR. THURBER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question today is to the Acting Minister of Transportation and Utilities. Knowing that the annual highway cleanup campaign is scheduled for tomorrow, May 4, I wonder if the minister would indicate the benefits to the province of this very important program.

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, it was 15 years ago that the government of Alberta initiated an annual highway cleanup program. I think over those 15 years essentially there have been a number of benefits that have captured the imagination of a large number of people in this province. We anticipate that tomorrow, Saturday, May 4, when we have our 15th annual highway cleanup, approximately 11,000 children and 5,000 adult supervisors representing some 6,000 clubs will clean up approximately 9,300 kilometres of highway in the province of Alberta. Last year the volume of material they picked up filled 64,000 litter bags. The province anticipates compensating these young people and their groups approximately \$205,000 for this program tomorrow.

**10:30**

The real benefits, Mr. Speaker, flow through the vision that this government has always had with respect to the importance of the environment and the cleaning up of the environment. Fifteen years ago when we initiated this program, it was out of concern for the environment, and today, in 1991, that concern is every bit as important as it ever has been. A second benefit, I think, is that it promotes good citizenship. It allows all these young people, 11,000-plus, to participate in the governance of their province, and of course it also affords them as volunteers an opportunity to raise some very useful dollars.

MR. THURBER: Mr. Speaker, knowing that the safety of these young people that are involved in this program has to be of top priority, could you indicate: are there any extra steps being taken this year to provide this safety for these young people?

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, over those 15 years we've had several tragedies, and tomorrow we would certainly hope that all citizens in this province who are traveling will recognize that the annual highway cleanup is under way. We have ensured over the years that for any group that wants to participate, the adult supervisors who are part of the group would have to have some training that's provided by Alberta Transportation and Utilities and Alberta Agriculture. Secondly, no child under the age of 10 years will be participating, and

there has to be one adult supervisor for, essentially, two of the young people working.

In addition to that, all the people who are involved will be wearing a very clearly identifiable vest; the bags that will be used will be orange bags, not black bags as in the past. We've asked the RCMP to advise their officers to assist in patrolling, and the real Minister of Transportation and Utilities will be on the radio today and tomorrow advising all citizens of the annual cleanup. We've also had a television message as well. Safety, without any doubt, is the most important parameter of it, and we sincerely hope that tomorrow will be very successful.

I might point out that if there is inclement weather in a particular part of Alberta on May 4, the cleanup will go on the following Saturday, May 11. I sincerely hope that anybody traveling in Alberta tomorrow will drive slowly when they see these young people along the highway. In fact, it would be very nice if the motorists even stopped to say: "Hey, you're doing a great job; keep it up. Can we help you?"

MR. SPEAKER: Vegreville.

#### Farm Income

MR. FOX: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When the government announced initially that they would not participate in the net income stabilization account program, better known as NISA, I agreed with their position, recognizing that it is, in practical terms, nothing more than a government-subsidized savings account for farmers with money to spare. Frankly, I don't know many farmers with money to spare. Most are wondering how the heck they're going to come up with enough money to put the crop in the ground this year. I'd like to ask the associate minister: given that any benefits that may accrue to farmers through the GRIP program won't be available to them until at least well into the next crop year, why hasn't this government lobbied for and agreed to participate in a deficiency payment for grain producers ASAP?

MRS. McCLELLAN: Well, I think the member is probably making an assumption there that is not easily substantiated. The Minister of Agriculture and the Associate Minister of Agriculture and all members of this House have worked very hard with our counterparts in other provinces to ensure that our farmers have a stabilization program in place, and I think we've been very successful at that. Also, under the leadership of the Premier, we have made a commitment to the producers to assist our farmers on input costs, and we have done that.

As I've said before in this House, the assistance that our producers receive in Alberta is unprecedented in any province in Canada. We have assisted them on farm fuel, on their fertilizer inputs, on credit, and our producers in Alberta do enjoy an advantage over producers in most of Canada. To say that we have not worked to assure that our farmers have the opportunity for cash flow for putting their crops in is entirely wrong. The program that is in place under the revenue insurance option gives them an assured income off their grains and oilseeds acreage that they can take to their bank when they are making their financial plans for the year and use that as security. So I think we have responded.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, hon. minister.

Supplementary.

MR. FOX: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I hope the minister has objected in the strongest possible terms to the attempts by the federal government to blackmail the province and producers into participation in NISA by tying some interim short-term aid to involvement in that program. I'd like to ask the minister: will she now work to convince her federal cousins to free up that money committed to the NISA program and make it part of a generally available deficiency payment for farmers?

MRS. McCLELLAN: Well, Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Agriculture and I work very closely with our counterparts in all provinces and federally on all farm programs and are discussing them with them at all times.

The assistance that the member is speaking of is a federal program and will be delivered how they wish it to be delivered. That was very clear in the third line of defence paper that was put out some months ago by the federal government.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Avonmore.

#### Human Rights Commission

MS M. LAING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are to the minister responsible for human rights. The chief commissioner of the Human Rights Commission has announced a major change in the operations of the commission. Instead of staff providing education services, he is now going to pay the appointed commissioners to provide public education. Commissioners are appointed to reflect the current community understanding of human rights issues, rather than to act as leaders. My question to the minister: how, then, will the minister ensure that sensitive issues such as sexual harassment are accurately and adequately presented so that they raise consciousness instead of reinforcing the status quo?

MS McCOY: Mr. Speaker, the commissioners on the Human Rights Commission are charged as one of the major pieces of their mandate to educate and to promote the values of tolerance and understanding and generosity of spirit. I don't see anything wrong with the promotion of those values. This commission and the very members of it are probably more aware of and are probably helping more to spread the understanding and awareness of what sexual harassment is than any other single group in Alberta.

MS M. LAING: Mr. Speaker, these commissioners are people who had to debate whether the Aryan Nations are a protected group by human rights laws of this province. These are the people who came to an impasse over the issue of pay equity legislation. Surely these people who do education on human rights have to have an understanding of human rights legislation, which in fact was not demonstrated by this commission in these instances. Will the minister now stop the nonsense of having appointed commissioners add to their honoraria by doing education and act to ensure that progressive human rights education is provided by staff hired to do the job?

MS McCOY: Mr. Speaker, I'm somewhat astounded. This commission has been more proactive; this commission has pushed the frontiers of understanding some of the values and principles of human rights in this province far beyond any former commission. The members of the commission are responsible for policy, the members of the commission are responsible for setting directions, and the members of this

commission have indeed been leading it in those directions and have been in fact providing that kind of leadership in Alberta and all around Alberta. I fail to understand the member's apoplexy, other than perhaps she sees only staffers, junior people in the organization, as people she wants to entrust policy to. That I disagree with.

MR. SPEAKER: Calgary-McKnight.

### Pay Equity

MRS. GAGNON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There's a major national conference on pay and work equity at the University of Calgary this weekend. It will be an opportunity for many groups, including minorities, the disabled, women, labour, and legal groups, to come together to discuss wage fairness, to eliminate work ghettos, and to reduce the disparity between men's and women's wages. To the Minister of Labour, who is also responsible for women's issues: since the minister has indicated that she cannot attend, will she commit herself to sending representatives to this conference and to reading the papers presented by the many experts who will be there?

### Speaker's Ruling Anticipation

MR. SPEAKER: No. I'm sorry, hon. member. The question's out of order. It can be raised in estimates later this morning. Thank you. Let's move on.

Pincher Creek-Crowsnest.

10:40

### Native Film Festival

MR. BRADLEY: Mr. Speaker, for the last five years the community of Pincher Creek has hosted the Indian Summer World Festival of Aboriginal Motion Pictures, and aboriginal filmmakers from around the world have attended this event, putting Pincher Creek and Alberta on the world map. This year a very active committee of citizens of Pincher Creek and the Peigan Nation have been anxiously awaiting a decision from the Department of Culture and Multiculturalism regarding funding from the department for this year's event. To the Minister of Culture and Multiculturalism: could he advise the Assembly of the status of the Pincher Creek committee's request for funding this year?

MR. MAIN: The member is quite right. There has been for the last several years a very interesting festival of aboriginal films that has been hosted in the Pincher Creek area. The funding commitment was made by a previous minister, and lottery funds were made available. The lottery licence for those funds expired, as did other licences, at the end of March just past. Mr. Speaker, in the subsequent weeks we've had a competing application for yet another type of aboriginal festival, and I have asked an independent committee to jury the two applications and provide me with a recommendation as to which festival should be funded.

MR. BRADLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary to the minister: as time is running out and this festival is scheduled to be held this September, could the minister advise as to when the committee from Pincher Creek can expect a decision?

MR. MAIN: Mr. Speaker, it's very important that those volunteer organizations that mount exhibitions or projects such as this get knowledge about their funding as quickly as possible.

I have conveyed that message to the committee that's reviewing these studies, and I hope to have an answer by the middle of May.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Centre, followed by Calgary-North West.

### Bangladesh Disaster

REV. ROBERTS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As we continue to raise issues of direct concern to Albertans, it is also true that all Albertans are concerned about global problems and needs and that we in fact are deeply saddened by the reports of the devastation and tremendous loss of life, the tens of thousands of lives, of the people of Bangladesh this past week after the cyclone. Also, requests are coming internationally about the horrendous relief effort that is now needed to assist in the distribution of food and medicines for the prevention of outbreaks of disease among the survivors after the cyclone and the floods. Given these urgent human needs, what immediate directions has the minister responsible for the Alberta Agency for International Development given to mobilize all available Alberta resources to contribute to this vital relief effort for the people of Bangladesh?

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member is aware, international aid and international support is a federal jurisdiction. We have within our department the Alberta international agency that does supplement support from both the federal government and our Alberta residents of some \$2 million. The hon. member suggested some time ago that we involve ourselves in the Persian Gulf with the Kurdish people, which we did through the Red Cross. We're working hand in hand with the Red Cross as it relates to the circumstances the hon. member has raised, and we're going to continue to work hand in hand with the Red Cross because we feel that our support, both on behalf of the residents of the province of Alberta and the direct support that we have through our international aid program, is best through an efficient international agency such as the Red Cross.

REV. ROBERTS: Well, I appreciate the minister's outline of those mechanisms and the work of the Red Cross and the federal government and others, but as the minister and all Albertans know, every minute of delay means the continued risk of loss of hundreds of thousands of lives in Bangladesh. Given the government's means and ways of announcing programs and letting Albertans know of how they can contribute, will the minister use every means at his disposal today and over the weekend to announce by Monday a fully publicized program with details of where and how the maximum contributions of Albertans to the Bangladesh relief effort can be forthcoming?

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is underestimating and he shouldn't underestimate the good work that the nongovernmental organizations in this province do. They are very much aware of how one can access these funds.

We're going to work, as I indicated to him, with a key organization within the nongovernmental organizations, the Red Cross. We are working hand in hand with them presently. The organizations are doing excellent work, and we're there to supplement that work. As we have done in the past, we're going to make sure we do live up to our obligations as they relate to international aid, recognizing that it is a federal responsibility

but also recognizing that Albertans wish to see us involved in these areas of international concern. Because of that, we're going to continue as we have done in the past, and we're going to do it in a very forthright manner in this case, also working hand in hand with the Red Cross.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.  
Calgary-North West.

### Pension Liability

MR. BRUSEKER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Liberal caucus has long been concerned about this government's huge \$9 billion unfunded pension liability. In a meeting in December 1990 with the Calgary Chamber of Commerce the Premier said that the stakeholders should really get together and look at resolving the problem and doing something about it. I'm pleased to see that the Premier and the government are finally responding to the absolutely massive pressure that was put on by the teachers of the province and also the Liberal caucus. [interjections] Well, they're finally responding, so that's good news. My question to the Premier is: will the Premier and the government arrange similar meetings between similar stakeholders – such as AUPE, the local authorities, the university faculty, the special forces, and the public service management group – that also have similar concerns?

MR. GETTY: Yes, Mr. Speaker.

MR. BRUSEKER: Well, that's promising. I'm glad to see a nice, short answer. He obviously hasn't been taking speaking lessons from the Treasurer.

Just in following up on that, then, I've received hundreds of letters from teachers that were really concerned about their pensions. Will the Premier commit to making sure that those other meetings he said he would be sure to hold will in fact go ahead without those groups having to mount a similar massive undertaking like the teachers had to do?

MR. GETTY: The discussions have already commenced with the teachers, Mr. Speaker. The others will go ahead as soon as possible.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.  
Red Deer-North.

### Housing Market

MR. DAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Municipal Affairs. In light of the recent very strong indicators from Stats Canada about the health of our economy, one of the litmus tests is what's happening in the housing market. I'm wondering if the minister has got any stats right here locally that can bear any reflection on this?

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, I certainly appreciate very much that question. This morning I took the opportunity of doing some very in-depth research on this subject so that I would be right up to date. What I did was turn to one of my longtime friends and old research assistants from when I was sitting over in the opposition by the name of Allan Bolstead, staff writer for the *Edmonton Sun*. At that time much of my information and questions came from that source, and now I find no reason why as a minister I shouldn't be able to use the same material to respond to this very appropriate question.

What I find from the research this young fellow has done is that in his interview with Mr. Clark, president of the Edmonton Real Estate Board, some very interesting things have happened here in the city of Edmonton. It's due to the good economic climate we have in the province of Alberta that these statistics are so revealing. First of all, the single-family homes in Edmonton jumped a whopping \$7,409, 6.6 percent, to \$119,613 last month in comparison to some \$114,000 a year ago, a very significant increase which shows . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, hon. minister. Your answers are about as short as were your questions in the opposition sometimes.

AN HON. MEMBER: Same researcher.

MR. SPEAKER: Same researcher.  
Supplementary.

MR. DAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleasantly surprised at the anticipation of the minister in already being on this.

I'd like to further ask: some people in the business community, especially related to housing, have expressed a concern to me about possible intervention on the government side in a market that is very healthy, and I'm wondering if the minister has any intentions in this particular area.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, no.

MR. SPEAKER: We have one point of order to be dealt with, but first might we revert to Introduction of Special Guests?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed? Carried. Thank you.  
The Member for Stettler again, please.

head: **Introduction of Special Guests**  
10:50 (reversion)

MR. GETTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The members' and public galleries were both quite full today, and it was necessary for Stettler students to participate in the second half of the question period in the gallery. So I would like now to recognize them. There are 83 grade 6 students from the Stettler elementary school. They are accompanied by parents and teachers, some 10 adults with them. I had an opportunity to talk to them and tell them a little bit about the Legislature and requested that they keep in touch with me in the future. I would like the Stettler guests who are in the members' gallery and the public gallery to now stand and be recognized by the Assembly.

MR. SPEAKER: Clover Bar.

MR. GESELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure today to introduce to you and to the members of the House 19 grade 10 students from the John Paul II high school in Fort Saskatchewan in the Clover Bar constituency. I'm not sure if I've had the opportunity to visit this particular class at their school, but I'm looking forward to meeting with them later on today. The students are accompanied by Mr. Woelfle, their teacher. They're seated in the public gallery. I would ask them now to rise, and I would ask the members to extend the cordial welcome.

**Point of Order****Tabling a Cited Document**

MR. SPEAKER: Red Deer-North, point of order.

MR. DAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The member for Calgary-Glenmore tossed out some statistics today which appeared to surprise and even shock some members, especially those of the opposition. Citing *Beauchesne* 405, I would like to request that those statistics be tabled so that all members could avail themselves of those stats, please.

MR. SPEAKER: No point of order, but I'm sure members can file at the normal place in the course of our business.

head: **Orders of the Day**

head: **Committee of Supply**

[Mr. Schumacher in the Chair]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order in the committee, please. For the benefit of the people in the gallery who may be here for the first time, the Assembly has resolved itself into Committee of Supply. The Committee of Supply is to study the government's spending estimates for the year. Today we are dealing with the estimates of Executive Council, which is a very broad-ranging subject indeed. Many, many government ministers and members are involved in explaining these estimates, but when we're in committee the routine of the Chamber is less formal than when the Speaker is in the Chair.

head: **Main Estimates 1991-92**

**Executive Council**

MR. CHAIRMAN: With those few introductory remarks, the Chair will ask the hon. the Premier to introduce the estimates.

MR. GETTY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I won't take too long in introducing the estimates today. As you point out, the Executive Council area covers such a broad scope of government responsibilities, and I know that members will want to ask questions or make comments as well.

What I would like to do is ask each of the members of the Legislature who are responsible for the 15 responsibilities here to give a short summary of their accomplishments, their plans, and perhaps problems they face and solutions they are seeking so that the House can be aware of the various responsibilities within Executive Council and how they will be developed in the year. That seemed to be effective and helpful last year, and therefore I have asked my colleagues who have responsibilities within the Executive Council vote to each give a short summary. I'm sure it will help the members. Following that, I'd certainly be pleased to respond to any questions or comments, and I'm sure other members who have responsibilities would be too.

Mr. Chairman, the only thing that perhaps I would lead off with is to add to the comments I made in question period which were relatively restricted with regard to my visit to Quebec and Ontario on the matter of national unity. I know all members in this Legislature care very much about our country, and in a question-and-answer period you aren't able to go into the kind of details that might be helpful to members.

I think members recall that before leaving for Quebec and Ontario, I said that one of the things we needed to know from

the people of Quebec that perhaps only the Premier of Quebec could tell us was whether they really wanted to pursue a continued relationship with Canada and that they should declare and they should establish that they wanted Canada, wanted Canada the way Alberta wants Canada. Alberta doesn't belong to Canada because there's some financial advantage. Alberta doesn't belong to Canada because we need Ontario or we need another province or we need a market. Alberta belongs to Canada because we want Canada. It is our country and we love it. We are full-time Canadians. That was the kind of thing I was looking for from the Premier of Quebec.

I must say that I was very pleased. I said before going down that an answer like that might not come in one day; it might come in weeks or months. But he was very forthcoming. He said to me and then said immediately in public as well that he and his government and the majority of the people of Quebec want Canada. They want to come to a new Canadian arrangement, and when I say that I mean an arrangement that is new for Alberta, British Columbia, Ontario, the maritimes, all parts of Canada, that we should be working on a restructuring and a new arrangement for Canada, not just zeroing in on Quebec. He pointed out that his government and his people had been disappointed in 1982 and again in 1990, yet they still would seek to follow along and find a solution within Canada. I'm very pleased about that.

Now, there is a problem with process. Having talked to Premier Bourassa and having talked to Premier Rae and the Prime Minister, I still do not see at this stage a clear vision of the process of how we will be able to work out this new arrangement for Canada. When I was in Quebec the Premier said that he hadn't made up his mind yet about the Premiers' Conference, which will be held in British Columbia this year, but I noted that yesterday, in questioning from Mr. Parizeau in his National Assembly, he did say that he would not be attending the Premiers' Conference. I think that's a disappointment, because if we aren't able to come together and talk as leaders of all the provinces and the federal government, it's going to be difficult to devise the process under which we'll be able to come up with this new arrangement for our country.

**11:00**

In talking to Premier Rae, I clearly feel that he's a very strong Canadian. He is looking to be generous from Ontario's point of view in trying to accommodate the needs of all parts of the country, and I believe I and Albertans and other Canadians will be able to work with Premier Rae as a strong Canadian. We may have differences in philosophical beliefs, but in terms of his strength of feeling about the country I don't think we have any differences at all.

Premier Bourassa expressed to me that he would try to get across the country. I invited him to Alberta, and he is coming within the next six to eight weeks. Meeting various Premiers and perhaps talking to groups across the country may be able to keep a dialogue going. I hope that is going to be effective. He will be coming here. He will be coming to British Columbia and Saskatchewan. I think he is waiting until after the planned elections in both of those provinces, and I think that's probably wise. He will be meeting with Premier Rae, Premier McKenna in the near future.

One of the things I explained to both Premiers is the Alberta government's select special all-party committee, and that in none of my discussions with them would I be able to deal in any specifics regarding a new constitutional arrangement because the select special committee would be going throughout our

province, would be hearing from Albertans when our Legislature breaks to allow that process to take place. I explained to them that we would then have the committee report, have a debate in our Legislature, and be able then to develop the details of the Alberta position.

Both of them have had studies or reports of one kind or another, and Premier Bourassa pointed out that one thing he had moved to change in the Allaire report, which was done for his Liberal Party at a convention, was where they said that they recommended abolishing the Senate. He knew that that was not going to be something that western Canadians and particularly Albertans would be pleased with, so he changed that report to: abolish the current Senate, and let's build a new one. I think Albertans would agree with that.

I must say that I raised the Senate matter with Premier Rae, and I was pleased that he was so quick to move from the position, I think, of his federal party, which is to abolish the Senate, and to say that he supported and his government supported an elected Senate, an effective Senate and that he would like to participate in the debates regarding the equal or equitable Senate for the third E. Well, I think that's a real breakthrough, and let's hope that we can make sure we convince him about the needs for the equal Senate as well.

I expressed to them as well, Mr. Chairman, that I would be going to the Western Premiers' Conference, traveling there on, I believe, May 11 for meetings on the 12th and 13th. Premier Devine is the host of the Western Premiers' Conference in Nipawin, Saskatchewan, this year, and has provided me with an agenda, and he certainly is looking forward to a discussion on Canadian unity. I think it's important that we have the input from the Premiers of Ontario and Quebec that I can provide my fellow Premiers in Nipawin in the next 10 days. The agenda items are: National Unity and the Future of Canada; obviously, that will be our opportunity to see what we can do to work to try and hold our country together and come up with a new arrangement for Canada. The next item is: Financing the Future. This item in the Western Premiers' Conference will be centred around a report that we have asked our finance ministers and treasurers to come up with, and that report provides an update on issues such as the federal cutback in transfer payments, new taxation proposals, and other federal/provincial fiscal matters. As you know, we feel that if the federal government is going to withdraw from transfer payments, then we think we should establish the responsibilities, if we're responsible for them, to have tax points passed to the provinces, so that we could fulfill that responsibility rather than having these transfer payments eroded.

The third item on the agenda for the Western Premiers' Conference is: Western Canada and the Global Marketplace. In this we will of course be talking about the potential improvements that we can make in the GATT negotiations so that our farmers will be able to sell their grains without having the huge subsidy war between the European Economic Community and the United States; of course, our trade report on how our trade arrangements with the United States have benefited western Canada and the potential for the trade arrangement with Mexico, Canada, and the United States; and then the various markets that we're able to find throughout the world.

So I'm looking forward to this Western Premiers' Conference in Nipawin. As a slight change, Premier Devine has invited the two territorial leaders to attend and participate in the Western Premiers' Conference. That hasn't been done before, and we'll see whether this provides a unique opportunity to pull our northern friends closer into the Canadian family. Another thing

we're doing is inviting governors from the western United States to attend our international trade discussions, and I think that should help us as well. With our new free trade agreement with the United States, there is a great deal of trade north and south and potential for improving that. I'm looking forward to seeing how the governors can work with us in making sure that those markets are available to us, making sure that we have markets available to them, and that we can work in the spirit of co-operation with our best friend and neighbour.

Mr. Chairman, when I return from the Western Premiers' Conference, I'll certainly be pleased to give the House copies of any matters that we issue, any of our statements we make from the Western Premiers' Conference, and then answer any questions and provide any other details as to decisions or recommendations that we make at that conference. As you know, we have a new Premier in B.C., whom I have not met although I have spoken to, and I'm looking forward, as well, to meeting her.

Mr. Chairman, those are just some comments. I'll conclude on this matter of national unity by saying that it would be helpful, once we have had a summary of the various responsibilities within Executive Council, if any members could express their views and ideas about the process that we might follow in trying to work out a new arrangement for Canada.

When I talk about the process, it would have to be a process that would allow dialogue with Quebec, yet recognizing that they aren't going to be participating in first ministers' meetings on unity and the Constitution, as to just how they would see this process work so that we could put together a package for all of us, with our select committee, with the Quebec Belanger-Campeau report, with the Spicer report, with the Edwards report - of course, our own committees will be very important to us - how all of this might be put together and how we might be able to be working throughout the rest of this year to reach a stronger, healthier, confident country rather than having it faced with the concerns and problems that we currently face in holding our nation together.

I've appreciated this chance, Mr. Chairman, to discuss just a few of the things that I am involved with as chairman of the Executive Council. I look forward to the comments any members may want to make. I would now ask the members of my government who are responsible for the other items to give a very short and brief summary of their responsibilities.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

The hon. Member for Grande Prairie.

11:10

DR. ELLIOTT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It's my pleasure to report again on the Northern Alberta Development Council, which comes under the vote of Executive Council. Checking the *Hansard* from one year ago, I notice that I gave a relatively broad review of the makeup of the council, its main functions, the area that it serves, and some of its objectives. So I'll just briefly touch on some of the highlights that we can report on from the last year to give an indication of some of the things we've done.

I pointed out before that the Northern Alberta Development Council holds public meetings throughout the north. We held five this past year and received a total of 144 briefs, in which concerns and opinions of northerners were expressed to this government. Those briefs are used to develop research programs, and from the research we develop publications and reports to various parts of the province and to specific depart-

ments and their ministers to take into consideration in their programs. In our research reports I think the highlights would be our study on mental health services in northern Alberta, and that report was tabled here in the Assembly, along with a Northern Alberta Development Council position paper on mental health services, with recommendations to the minister. We also developed and tabled a handbook on community fund-raising. Those are the highlights there.

In the area of co-ordination, Mr. Chairman, we provided technical assistance to what we call the health care connection, which is working with the Alberta Hospital Association in hiring medical and health care workers for northern Alberta.

One of the real bright gems in our crown is the Northern Alberta Development Council bursary. This past year we awarded \$583,000 to 135 students; about one in four qualified or were selected to receive these bursaries. In addition to that, we awarded 47 awards under the medical elective grants program to students who would practise as locums in the north as part of their medical training. This is all part of trying to get professionals to get to know the north, work in the north, and come and work with northerners, and thus northerners receive some of the advantages and services available through these professionals.

We also held a major conference in 1990. It was called the Northern Perspectives Conference. We hold a major conference like that about once every 10 years, and it brings the movers and doers throughout the north together. We had over 300 delegates, and these people had an opportunity to compare notes and hear some lead speakers on what some of the major issues are and how to resolve them through an area like the north.

Some of our ongoing work, some examples. Tourism is becoming a major industry in northern Alberta, and our Northern Alberta Development Council is providing a leadership position there. In fact, this month there is a seminar on tourism marketing being held in Slave Lake, and some of you might want to get more information on that. The Peace Arch project is the name of a project we have that's geared directly to training and providing employment for the native community, plus others, relative to resource development, starting with the gas and oil energy sector, but it will apply, of course, to other sectors too. We're taking a long, hard look at our student bursary program, which I just mentioned, to try to make sure that it is fitting the needs of students and the needs of northerners in the development of the north today, because the picture is changing, Mr. Chairman, and we want to make sure that we are constantly up to date.

We are developing a position paper on the environment and the economy throughout northern Alberta, because we happen to be responsible for or associated with an area in this world that is still relatively clean but can rapidly, you might say, have hazards imposed upon it as development takes place. Our council is watching and monitoring these activities carefully, and the position paper will identify some of these items. We are reviewing our position with respect to family and community support services throughout northern Alberta, where we have less than 10 percent of the population of this province scattered over 60 percent of the area of this province, which means we are very thin on the ground. Yet we have people who are working and enhancing the economic development of this province and the general good nature and good wealth of the area, and these people require services. That's why we're looking at where we are going with family and community support programs.

Mr. Chairman, I think I'll just leave those as my introductory comments about the Northern Alberta Development Council.

I'll just close by again thanking the Premier for asking me to chair this council – it's been an extremely interesting and challenging activity – and the minister, the Hon. Al Boomer Adair, who is responsible for northern development; Rick Sloan, our executive director and his staff at Peace River; and particularly our council members, eight of whom are public, and two of us are MLAs, the Member for Lesser Slave Lake and myself.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The hon. Minister of Energy for vote 3.

MR. ORMAN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First, you have to accept my apologies for my voice. I know that I sound like the Minister of Family and Social Services does all the time. My five-year-old daughter asked me where my voice went, and I said, "I don't know." She paused for a moment, and she said, "Well, it probably went to somebody that doesn't have one."

I just want to make a few comments, obviously, about the Energy Resources Conservation Board, and I don't think much has to be said. It is a very fine and well-respected institution in this province and copied elsewhere around the world. There is one significant aspect, Mr. Chairman, and that is that they have some 15,000 applications through the course of a year, and only about 35 to 40 go to a full hearing. That is an extremely important point to make because it shows the fine job that the board does between proponents and intervenors on initiatives relative to energy development.

As you know, Mr. Chairman, Mr. Gerry DeSorcy has left the ERCB on an interim basis to go to the NRCB, and it will run in his absence very well. We have two very capable individuals who will be handling the co-chairmanship of the board.

The board is funded equally 50 percent by government and industry, and their budget is \$19,500,000. There will be some services that the NRCB will require from the ERCB, and they will be billing them on a cost-of-service basis.

With regard to the Natural Resources Conservation Board, my colleague the hon. Minister of the Environment is not here, and it is his responsibility. Just let me say a few comments while I'm on my feet. It was a privilege for me to sponsor that legislation. The Minister of the Environment is now working through the regulatory framework that is required to make it work in a very fine and forthright way. Mr. Chairman, the development of that legislation was very interesting for me, and I took the responsibility very seriously. I'd like to thank the Environmental Law Centre, the Canadian Bar Association, the Environmental Resource Centre, and the Pembina Institute for the input that was both thoughtful and constructive.

11:20

Mr. DeSorcy, as I've indicated, has now been over with the board, the NRCB. They will be housed in the ERCB offices in Calgary on an interim basis. They are now working on the rules of practice and the regulations, matters relative to intervenor funding, and will be taking their time – however, under pressure – to remove and review non energy related projects. I won't reiterate those, Mr. Chairman, because they're well defined in the legislation. As is indicated in the legislation, the purpose is to examine social, economic, and environmental effects of non energy developments and to determine which proposals are in the public interest.

Mr. Chairman, those are the comments. The budget to date has not been fully fleshed out because of the lateness of its

establishment in our budget process, but we will fully report the details of that budget in the next fiscal year.

Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

The hon. Minister of Labour for vote 4.

MS McCOY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I welcome the chance to make a few remarks about vote 4, Co-ordination and Advice Respecting Women's Issues. As you can see from the estimates, the vote covers the Women's Secretariat and the Advisory Council on Women's Issues. What you don't read in the estimates is what this vote is really all about. It's really about justice and equality for women and men.

Ideally, the vote shouldn't exist. Ideally, women and men should already enjoy complete equality with each other. There are a few people who suggest that equality already exists, but all you have to do is pick up any newspaper on almost any day and read headlines like Gender Still Top Cause of Human Rights Employment Complaints, and Woman Killed After Leaving Shelter. When you read those sorts of headlines, you know in your heart that full equality still remains a goal. The Women's Secretariat and the Advisory Council on Women's Issues exist to make that goal a given.

Sometimes I wonder why the goal is so elusive. Could it be that some people misunderstand what we mean by equality of women and men? Perhaps they think it means women taking power from men, or women becoming like men, or women and men becoming enemies. Or could it be that some people understand all too well what we mean by equality? What we're really talking about is a revolution of the human spirit, a revolution that frees us from the concepts of superior/inferior or subjugation and domination, a revolution that frees us to enjoy the rewards of mutual respect, mutual gain, mutual strength. In short, a partnership of hearts, a joining of minds, a communion of spirits; a partnership in which gender discrimination makes no sense, in which women don't need to seek shelter from the men who are supposed to love them more than life itself.

Perhaps it would be more accurate to say that the Women's Secretariat and the advisory council exist to help create a society of partners: women and men of all ages, all races, all creeds, and all colours. Certainly the two organizations, the secretariat and the council, practise partnership. The advisory council is a living partnership of 15 women from throughout Alberta, who each in turn has formed partnerships with women and men in organizations in her community. The advisory council enables the Alberta government to be a partner with the women of this province as they work for complete equality.

The Alberta Plan for Action for Women, which is co-ordinated by the Women's Secretariat, is partnership in action. It's radio stations and grocery stores and women's groups contributing time and effort to a campaign against family violence. It's women aircraft mechanics and policewomen and carpenters volunteering time to tell school children about their jobs. It's the women's institutes of Alberta doing their part for rural child care. It's the government, the advisory council, community groups, women's groups, and women and men working together in partnership to create a partnership world. So yes, maybe it would be more accurate to say that the Women's Secretariat and the council are about creating and exemplifying the partnership way of life.

I want to address one more point before answering any questions that may come up later, and that's the apparent 18.3

percent decrease over last year in the Women's Secretariat's budget. Last year the secretariat received special one-time funding for two public awareness campaigns. One was called Alberta Women: Making it Happen, and that was showing the important roles women have in society and the diversity that exists in their roles. The other was the Family Violence is a Crime campaign. Also, the secretariat received extra funds to finance expansion of the Stepping Stones program. Now, as this was all one-time funding, the secretariat budget has been reduced accordingly this year, but this will not impede its operation. In fact, its base operating budget for this year is up by 20 percent over '89-90 expenditures. Members will also note a healthy 12.4 percent increase in the advisory council budget, which I'm sure all members will agree is a welcome and deserved development. It also reflects this government's commitment to the partnership way.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member for Rocky Mountain House.

MR. LUND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It certainly gives me a great deal of pleasure this morning to rise and make a few comments on vote 5, the Water Resources Advisory Services. As one of two members from the Legislative Assembly who sit on the Water Resources Commission, I really do have great pleasure in making this presentation. The other member of the Assembly who is part of the commission is our chairman, the Member for Cypress-Redcliff, Alan Hyland. The commission also has four members at large, and the assistant deputy ministers of five departments: Agriculture; Economic Development and Trade; Environment; Forestry, Lands and Wildlife; and Municipal Affairs. We are extremely fortunate to have a very efficient staff at the Water Resources Commission, headed by a very capable person as the executive director, Dr. Alfred Birch.

The mandate under vote 5 is to provide the government with some broad water management policies, and the commission does this through the economic planning committee of cabinet. Last year probably the most important undertaking that the Water Resources Commission entered into was the issuing of a draft wetlands policy. Some 3,600 copies of that went out to Albertans, and then the follow-up to that was the holding of some public workshops and meetings in 14 locations throughout the province. Now, about 470 people attended those workshops and came up with some 5,000 ideas, a very useful and worthwhile exercise I thought. The follow-up to that was the tabling in the Legislature of a document called Wetland Management in the Settled Area of Alberta: Summary of Public Comments. The work on this, of course, is not completed and will carry forward in the '91-92 fiscal year with the continuation of compiling what the public has said and finally, probably in the fall of '91, coming forward with a recommendation to the provincial government on the wetlands policy for the province.

You'll notice in the vote that there's a 7.7 percent decrease. Of course, we're trying to pull our weight, along with many other departments, to have a balanced budget, as that is extremely important. But we are going to continue with another very important initiative, and that's the one dealing with the rewriting of the Water Resources Act.

11:30

Along with that, I want to just mention three or four other rather important ongoing projects. One is the on-farm water

management study. The objective of this particular study is using groups of controlled flow and uncontrolled flow case studies to evaluate and demonstrate alternative farm water management and conservation techniques. Another one is the wetlands management and conservation policy review. This project has addressed the need for a co-ordinated government policy regarding wetlands through a comprehensive review of the existing policies and issues and a proposed policy and implementation strategy. Another one: instream flow needs study. Minimum instream flows are essential to safeguard fisheries, recreation, and water quality. This project is determining minimum and preferred instream flow through a process of advanced physical, chemical, and biological modeling and public consultation. Another study: the special areas water supply study. This is a feasibility study of a scheme to divert a limited quantity of water from the Red Deer River to the water deficient east central area of the province for domestic and stock water, recreation, wildlife, and supplemental irrigation of forages.

By far the most extensive study we will be doing in this fiscal year is the rewrite of the Water Resources Act, and the commission has agreed to play an active and supportive participatory role with Alberta Environment in the review of this Act. The commission will assist with public workshops and will provide an independent evaluation of the water policy for legislative recommendations. It's planned that we will be holding, I believe, 15 or 16 public meetings throughout the province to deal with this very important issue. I really believe that this is a very important Act that we must look at, as parts of that Act are a hundred years old already. I believe there are a number of specific areas that we need to look at: the situation with river basins that are fully allocated, the mechanism for river basin planning; the need for integrated management of water quality and quantity; the status of the riparian rights in the province of Alberta; and the whole issue of groundwater regulations: the need to protect for domestic users, allocation priorities of groundwater, and generally a groundwater policy. Then, of course, we need to look at the whole issue of incentives to conserve water.

With those comments, Mr. Chairman, I will be only too happy to answer any questions.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

The hon. Minister of Municipal Affairs for vote 6.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Chairman, I will make some skeletal remarks in terms of this new responsibility that I have.

I'd like to first of all thank the Premier for what I believe is a very important challenge in terms of the responsibility in public safety services. I think it's very seldom that a minister receives a responsibility where he can be called the minister for disasters and be complimented at the same time. There isn't an occasion too often such as that. [interjection] Just wait.

I would also like to congratulate and thank Mark Egener, the managing director of public safety services, for his leadership. He has done just an excellent job. He is now in the gallery here today observing this process.

As well, I'd like to extend congratulations to my predecessor the Hon. Ken Kowalski for building a very solid base upon which I can proceed to take my responsibilities. I noted two things this minister was able to do during that period of time:

(a) set some precedents and a foundation; also, we all know that he has a great propensity for communication, and in this instance and in this responsibility there is no exception.

I'd just like to relate one incident. One of the responsibilities this portfolio has is to be on alert 24 hours a day, no matter where you are, to any emergency or any disaster that may occur in the province. A communication system is set up so that I can be contacted on very short notice. The first instance has already occurred, and it occurred in the middle of the Premier's dinner in Calgary. In the middle of that dinner a note came to the chairman that Ray Speaker was asked to leave because there was an emergency. There was an emergency. I went to the telephone, and this is the interesting part, and it also relates to the precedent for communication that my predecessor established. The person at the other end indicated there was a disaster just south of Fort McMurray, a serious one. I want to comment on it in a serious vein, but I also want to look at this issue in another vein as well. The comment outlined what the disaster was and notified me that it was happening. Then the question came. The person at the other end of the phone said: "What would you like to do, Mr. Minister? There's this major truck on fire; there's a major gas spill. What would you like to do? Would you like us to put out the fire, or would you like us to wait until you come so you can have your picture taken?" Now, those were the old rules. We've established new ones: we will wait and have the picture taken.

There are some serious responsibilities in this portfolio. Under public safety services there are two Acts that a minister is responsible for. The first one is the Public Safety Services Act and the other Act is the Transportation of Dangerous Goods Control Act, which is five years old and has performed very well in this province.

Under those two Acts are two major responsibilities: the disaster preparedness planning and response program which helps individuals, municipalities, industry, and government to be ready in terms of emergencies and disasters; and secondly, there's the dangerous goods control program which ensures that millions of tonnes of dangerous goods move as safely as possible across our transportation systems in this province. We also have a very close working network with the other provinces of Canada so that if they're moving goods through our province, we're fully alerted and prepared to work with the provinces to look after the safety of our citizens and as well assist those people in the transportation of goods through our highway system.

During a year, and it's very interesting, some 9 million tonnes of dangerous and hazardous goods are transported through our province. That is some 330,000 individual shipments. If you look at the few, the very few numbers of disasters or incidents that occur, our record is very, very excellent. Also, I think I should make comment that those that are shipping the goods through our province or within our province are very careful as well and are recognizing the type of quality that we expect when people are using our public transportation systems. Those, though, that do not live up to our standards are brought to court, and our success rate in terms of convictions is very, very high; 80 percent of those taken to court are convicted. That's the highest rate in Canada and very impressive in terms of enforcing and upholding the regulations and the rules under the Acts that we're responsible for.

11:40

We have a 24-hour service at public safety services where people can call in in terms of dangerous goods information or some spill or some incident, so that we can react very, very quickly. During the year we received 15,000 calls, and the purposes of the calls are an assortment of reasons.

Other information that I'd like to leave in these few moments is that our budget this year is \$9.2 million, up 35 percent from \$6.8 million. That's because of some major disaster programs that are now in place. These programs are administered by 88 full-time employees. I want to just alert the House at this time that most likely there will be some special warrants in this area in terms of additional funding required. Under the Financial Administration Act, if we all look at that, there's a section in there that says that a special warrant is issued because of emergency circumstances. I would think that if there's any typical circumstance whereby a special warrant is necessary, it is certainly under the responsibilities of these two pieces of legislation.

Three other highlights. We have reacted very quickly during the last two to three years on some disaster areas: the Calgary flood, the Slave Lake flood, the west central Alberta flood, the northwestern Alberta flood, the western Alberta flood. Some 8,712 persons have been supported through difficult times created by a variety of disasters. The amount of money already in the pockets of those people is close to \$120 million, so that people could quickly recover from the effects of some disaster.

Two other items that I'd like to mention. We are now establishing an emergency preparedness program on Indian reserves; 44 Indian bands have signed up for the program. We're progressing very, very well, and we're impressed with their co-operation and participation. The other item that's been asked about is the 911 study. A study is being done by Oldham Engineering, and that will be completed in the fall of 1991. We believe that that system could be very beneficial to the province.

My commitment to this responsibility is to move on emergency and cause no disasters.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The hon. Attorney General for vote 7.

MR. ROSTAD: Mr. Chairman, I'll forgo making any comments and answer any questions as we respond.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Vote 8, the hon. Member for Calgary-Glenmore.

MRS. MIROSH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will make some brief comments.

Thank you, Mr. Premier, for this challenge in being the chairman of the Professions and Occupations Bureau. It is indeed a pleasure to work with the Solicitor General in helping deal with all the professionals' legislative statutes.

The bureau's mandate is basically to represent public interests and develop and evaluate policies and laws that are related to professionals' statutes. There are many areas of policy that are currently being reviewed, especially with adopting in this Legislative Assembly just last spring our new policy and principles governing professions and occupations. The most important and most significant change, of course, is the public representation on each of these professional statutes.

Another area that I think is significant to mention is the task force on recognizing foreign qualifications. The public is looking forward to our document regarding credentialing of foreign professions. This particular task force has already met or is currently meeting with a number of groups throughout the province: organizations, representatives of various services, immigration, immigrants, and other professional organizations, the Human Rights Commission, and so on. This task force is made up of interdepartmental people who have done a lot of

work and spent a lot of time. Hopefully, that document will be available very shortly.

Without going into a lot of detail with regards to the bureau and its responsibilities, certainly feel free to ask any questions with regards to the bureau.

Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The hon. Minister of Culture and Multiculturalism on vote 9.

MR. MAIN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I was recently given responsibility for the Public Affairs Bureau, and I am very appreciative of the opportunity to be involved with all the professionals there.

I guess the best known function of the bureau is to provide communication services to various government departments, but there are some other items that fall under this responsibility of vote 9 that I would like to highlight for just a couple of seconds. One is the RITE operator system, the RITE phone system. We had more than 6 million calls handled through 36 centres over the last year, Mr. Chairman. We lend out more than 8,000 films in the film library. We have a couple of book stores that provide about a million dollars in revenue to the government through the sales of various publications and so on.

Mr. Chairman, while the budget for the PAB is approximately \$12 million - and it shows a slight increase this year that is virtually all increases in manpower costs - it does provide the co-ordination services for the spending of nearly \$35 million in other purchases on behalf of government in terms of advertising, printing, artwork concepts, layouts, exhibits, and the like. Our budget is approximately 78 percent manpower: 223 positions in the current fiscal year before us. We have reduced that allocation of individuals by four permanent positions in order to meet a very tight budget target in order to make a contribution to the balanced budget of which we are so proud.

Mr. Chairman, I'll just stop there and, of course, agree to answer any questions that any members may have with respect to the work done by the Public Affairs Bureau, a very important component of government in getting information to the people of Alberta about what the government is doing.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member for Red Deer-North on vote 10.

MR. DAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm pleased to make some brief comments regarding the Premier's council regarding support of Alberta families. I want to first acknowledge the Premier for his insight and initiative in this area. It's one thing for an elected person to make comments about the importance of the family. It's another thing to actually go ahead and do something, and indeed the Premier has done something very significant in terms of mandating that this council be formed, and that goes along with all of the other programs the government does have in terms of working with and for Alberta families. That list is very lengthy. One of the things we've done through the council offices is to get from every department an indication of what programs they have that affect families, and that list is very encouraging and very significant.

Also with the acknowledgements to the Premier, I'd like to acknowledge the co-operation of the Minister of Family and Social Services under whose umbrella this council falls. The minister is very open in terms of saying that the mandate of the council being to advise government, then feel free to give that advice, freely, openly, and without concern about what his

particular reaction may be. That is also the Premier's concern: that the advice that comes back is arm's length from the government and comes back from this group of individuals who have analyzed particular situations of a program and are freely giving that advice back to the government. With that I can also acknowledge the participation of another MLA on this council, the Member for Lesser Slave Lake. Her input there is invaluable and very positive.

The council members themselves – and I don't have the time to list each one. Their own credentials represent an intricate cross section of diversity of experience and of learning from across the province; a very exciting group to meet with. Virtually any issue can be covered by this group through themselves and through the networks they represent. It goes without saying, of course, that the staff at the council are doing an incredible job under the leadership of Sally Huemmert as executive director, and are absolutely invaluable in terms of the support they are providing.

I'd like to say that problems which face families – we hear it all the time in terms of the complexity, the multidimensional aspect, et cetera. Just to give an example of that: for family difficulties, families in difficulty, one thing that is easy to point to is the area of poverty and the effect of poverty on families. To show the complexity of an issue like that, it is important when you look at the research – and just as an overview I'll share this with the House.

Renowned criminologist Dr. Douglas A. Smith and Dr. G. Roger Jarjoura in their item called *Social Structure and Criminal Victimization: Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency*, a 1988 study of 11,000 families from a cross section geographically and strata in terms of economic availability and capacity, both take a critical look at theories that attribute criminal difficulties, juvenile delinquency, et cetera, in families directly to poverty. Their quote here is that when the family structure is taken into account, the effect of poverty on crime rates in families becomes insignificant and slightly negative. It's very important that we recognize we can't simply paint with a brush a problem and say, "Here's the problem," because family structure is the single most important item.

**11:50**

A distressing item further on in their report was that the percentage of single-parent households with children between the ages of 12 and 20 is significantly associated with rates of both violent crime and burglary. That must send an alarm to us and also wave a flag to show the areas of our family situations that need the support of the community, that need the resources of the community, the encouragement at their disposal to work with both in an acute measure: working with families in acute stress but also in a preventative capacity to try and mitigate some of the effects of dysfunction that happen not just in single-parent families but in families with two parents.

Stats Canada show that here again 11,000 wife abuse incidents were investigated. It's very significant that one in 18 separated women were assaulted compared with one in 56 divorced women and one in 500 married women. Those show the grievous and tragic results of dysfunction within families. Families can be dysfunctional, as I've said, whether there is a single parent or whether there are two parents, but it shows that the needs are there, and they need to be addressed.

With those needs being before us, under our mandate, very quickly some of the things we have done. We didn't feel it was correct for us as a council to come blasting out of the chute with a vision that said, "This is the vision of the council." So what

we've done: we've taken the eight themes that came from the Lieutenant Governor's conference on the family, we have used those as a guideline for discussion policies, and we have now organized across the province a number of geographically dispersed community consultation forums which will be taking place involving all members of the community, in terms of the community looking at those eight themes and then telling us what they feel are the impacts of those issues and what should be done in their communities.

I'm happy to report to you, Mr. Chairman, and to the Premier and others, that this first forum actually took place last Saturday in Youngstown, a very encouraging group of folks there. They had taken the time beforehand to train their own facilitators. They met in discussion groups throughout the day, albeit they were faced with a blizzard out there, which cut down some of the more eastern representation. They just did an excellent job of looking at how they view these particular themes and what they say are the needs of Alberta families. That's the first of over a dozen of those forums that will be taking place in the near future. From that we'll pull together the concerns from around the province.

We've developed and initiated family service awards. What a society or a family or a company rewards shows what they put priority on. So next Family Day you will see the distribution of family service awards to agencies, businesses, or individuals who have done things in their community to significantly strengthen families and family life. We've worked at pulling together all of the nongovernment organizations in the province, or at least a significant part of them, so for the first time seeing them being pulled together and forming a network among themselves to feed back to us what they say the concerns are. In likewise fashion we are obviously in communication with the FCSS groups that are around the province.

In terms of the advisory role, we have dealt with a number of issues as a council, looked into them in depth and advised the government back in different areas. We are also almost deluged, actually, with individuals and organizations bringing to us promotions, programs, innovative approaches to strengthening Alberta families. So we are working with those groups in an advisory way.

I could go on at some length, Mr. Chairman. As you know, I'm very excited about the potential that is found within this type of initiative. I'm also very excited about the strength of Alberta families today. There is strength that they need, but Alberta families in such a large way are in strong shape and have much to offer. I'm encouraged about that and also the initiatives ahead.

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** The hon. Premier on vote 11.

**MR. GETTY:** Thanks, Mr. Chairman. The Minister of Education, who has this responsibility, is not able to be here. Just to say for members briefly that they'll recall this council was established as a follow-up to, I think, the emotion and the need to continue the work of Rick Hansen as a result of his worldwide tour. We're very, very pleased that with that stimulus we have the group we now have. They have a wonderful chairman in Gary McPherson. They do a fine job in advising the government and making the people of Alberta aware of the way in which persons with disabilities can participate fully in the opportunities and society and life in our province.

After a meeting with all interested parties in the province, the council came up with a mission statement. They then worked very hard on an action plan that would allow them to

succeed in that mission statement. Shortly, the Minister of Education and myself will be able to meet with the council and provide them with how the government will implement within the government – and hopefully, then it will flow across Alberta – the action plan that the council has presented us with. It's taken some time to assess it. It's very comprehensive. They've done a wonderful job, and I'm really looking forward to seeing their action plan implemented.

I'd just say one thing about the council. I think they are the largest single reason why this year the government saw the need and was able to provide the dollars to increase the home care program, to extend it, to provide home care for persons with disabilities under the age of 65. The council is extremely pleased about that, and we're pleased that with their good advice we've been able to provide an additional service in our province that has been needed.

Mr. Chairman, I know members will want to participate. We do not want to take any longer; I'll leave it at that and see what questions are asked.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

The hon. Solicitor General on vote 14.

MR. FOWLER: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Before getting into the matter of native affairs, I wish to acknowledge with deep appreciation the Premier's move in placing this division or department under the care of myself as Solicitor General or of myself personally. I tremendously look forward to working in this extremely important area at this time in Canada's history, when, generally speaking, the acknowledgement of our responsibility to Canada's native peoples is increasing every day. The challenges that are before us I by no means downplay, because they are great indeed. They will require much wisdom on the part of all governments in this country, provincial as well as federal, much dedication by our leaders, and much patience, maybe more patience than any governments have ever had to display in the history of our country.

In respect to this particular legislation on the Metis Settlements Accord, Mr. Chairman, I want it on the record today that nowhere in Canada and in fact nowhere in North America has any leader of government – Premier, Prime Minister, governor, or president south of the border – brought about legislation which can and will be as much benefit to our native peoples as is the case in the four pieces of legislation I will be administering. What occurred on July 1, 1989, at a Metis settlement in this province of Alberta where our Premier executed an agreement with the Metis colonies and settlements of this province will be long remembered, and I do not believe, Mr. Chairman, that it is overstating the facts to say that it will be remembered just as the completion of the CPR will be remembered as time goes by.

12:00

There were four pieces of legislation, probably the most complex and important legislation ever passed by this Assembly, that were proclaimed on November 1 last year. These were the Metis Settlements Accord Implementation Act, the Metis Settlements Act, the Metis Settlements Land Protection Act, and the Constitution of Alberta Amendment Act, 1990. Members here will recall that the legislation was a direct result of the Metis Settlements Accord, which I indicated was signed by the Premier and Mr. Randy Hardy, the president of the Alberta Federation of Metis Settlement Associations, on July 1, 1989. I was at the settlement after the Premier departed that day, and the air was electrified at that particular settlement by what had just occurred. The people knew so well what the possibilities and potential of the agreement that was executed were.

The principles on which the discussions were held were based on Resolution 18, which was passed unanimously by this House on June 3, 1985. The Metis Settlements Transition Commission was established by the Metis Settlements Accord Implementation Act. The intent is that this will transfer local government responsibility from the province of Alberta to the eight Metis settlements in this province. In accordance with the principles stated in the Metis Settlements Accord Implementation Act, the transition commission will carry out its responsibilities through the provision of advice and assistance to the Metis settlements and provincial agencies in a spirit of co-operation so as to develop and establish an effective and comfortable long-term relationship between both levels of government.

Both the Metis settlements and the provincial government agreed that a mechanism would be required to assist the government and the settlements through the transition to the new system. It was felt that a commission type of organization would be best able to fulfill the roles and responsibilities required. The transition commission has a legislated mandate only to foresee the seven-year transition period as laid out in the accord. Over this seven-year period the commission will gradually be phased out as its responsibilities and functions are ended or transferred to the general council, to the individual settlements, or to the province.

Commenting shortly on the role of the commission, one of its primary functions will be to provide the necessary expertise and guidance to assist the settlements in developing and operating effective local governments. The new legislative package is the cornerstone for a new system of local government for Metis settlements. The commission will facilitate the effective delivery of provincial program benefits to the Metis settlements and settlement residents. Mr. Chairman, we have with us today in the members' gallery the gentleman who has been appointed to this very difficult and sensitive position, and I'm pleased to recognize Mr. Dennis Surrendi, the chief commissioner of the commission.

The role of commissioner as defined in the Metis Settlements Accord Implementation Act is to oversee the orderly achievement of local government and economic self-sufficiency in the eight Metis settlements in Alberta. The commissioner is to provide guidance to the Metis Settlements General Council on matters which pertain to the collective local needs and interests of settlements, and they will also receive policy and program direction from the general council and individual settlement councils. Communication and information will flow in both directions between the commission, the general council, and the settlements as the circumstances require. The transition commission is in its early stages of implementation, and it is expected to be mobilized by midsummer to 1991. The transition period, Mr. Chairman, is April 1, 1990, to March 1, 1997, and along with the land title the accord provides \$310 million to be shared among the Metis settlements during a 17-year transition period. The Metis Settlements Accord Implementation Act commits to pay to the settlements through the commission \$30 million for seven years, from 1990 to 1997.

Mr. Chairman, I believe I will leave my comments at that at this point. Most wholeheartedly, though, I wish to stress again and again and again that this is the only province, the only jurisdiction that I know of that has had the leadership in its Premier to bring about an arrangement, pieces of legislation, which is going to bring true local government, true independence to a large sector of the native people of this province.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

Members of the committee, there's one item left to report. The hon. Member for Lacombe, on regulatory reform.

MR. MOORE: Thanks, Mr. Chairman. First of all, I'd just like to make a general comment on the estimates before us today. I have to compliment our Premier, who is a member of the Executive Council and the man in charge of it, for the outline and the dollars that we're approving here today. I note that in this time of economic restraint, when he is bringing in a very responsible budget, a reduction of 22.5 percent, he's setting the example for the whole province. It's very, very unfortunate that they haven't got a responsible person like that in Ontario for the Ontario citizens.

However, on regulatory reform . . .

MS BARRETT: You jumped the queue, so get to regulatory reform.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order please. The Chair did recognize the hon. member to speak on his responsibility with Executive Council.

MR. MOORE: I fully realize that, Mr. Chairman. For a moment I got carried away, when I looked down at a 22.5 percent reduction.

Regulatory reform. A lot of people, and maybe some people right in this Assembly, do not realize the importance of regulatory reform. We in this government have the program there so that wherever the individual citizens of Alberta, the chambers of commerce, businesses, municipal jurisdictions see an overlap or overregulation, they can have a direct line to have that addressed. Where there is overregulation, where it impacts negatively on their business, their life-style, we address it through regulatory reform. That's a unique program across Canada. Very few citizens outside Alberta have the opportunity to go through regulatory reform to have these areas where they are impacted by overgovernment – and that's something we all have to fight in every jurisdiction across Canada, the trend to overgovern people. We are doing something about it, and it's addressed right here in these estimates through regulatory reform. I tell you, Mr. Chairman, it's working, and it's working well, and the people out there appreciate it very much.

#### **Chairman's Ruling Speaking Time**

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you, hon. member.

The Chair wishes to commend the committee for the expeditious way it's proceeded so far. There are presently six members on the list who have indicated a desire to question these estimates. The Chair would suggest, looking at the clock, that members should govern themselves accordingly to allow all of them on the list to get on.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Highlands.

#### **Debate Continued**

MS BARRETT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I, too, agree that the members of the Executive Council were very responsible in not overspeaking in introducing their components of these estimates. I have a note from the Premier as well saying that he's asked everybody to speed themselves up, and I thank the Premier.

On the other hand, I think the queue-jumping by the Member for Lacombe, at the written request to which I agreed, was not only unnecessary but was merely a platform by which he could utter nonsense. I'd like to point out for the member's benefit

that regulations are something that are delegated legislation, and there's probably no government in Canada that abuses that delegated legislation power more than this Alberta government. He ought to keep that in mind. There's nothing special about the regulatory reform that we have in Alberta. Anybody in any province in any jurisdiction can seek out changes to regulations. They are cabinet decisions, Mr. Chairman, and I resent him jumping queue just to make a couple of partisan and sometimes sycophantic comments.

#### **12:10**

Now, Mr. Chairman, I would like to respond to the Premier's comments on interprovincial relations. I was sorry to hear that it is, at least for now, the intention of Mr. Bourassa to not attend the next Premiers' Conference. I extend on behalf of the Official Opposition and our leader, Ray Martin, our encouragement for anything the Premier and this government can do to keep negotiations and discussions ongoing and open. I point out that one of the grave problems related to the failed Meech Lake accord was that it was the creature of a very few people. Even though those very few people have been democratically elected to the positions they occupy – and no one questions the importance or legitimacy with which they hold those positions – the fact of the matter is that many people felt left out. I don't know if Premier Bourassa has in mind to just have the Premiers renegotiate a new deal for Canada, whatever that might be. I would encourage the Premier to remind Premier Bourassa that Canada is an important country for all of us, as the Premier said, and that if that means an alternative process to hammering out a future deal for Canada, we would encourage the Premier of Quebec to participate to the extent that he possibly can. One recognizes the political difficulties, of course, that Premier Bourassa faces with respect to the Parti Québécois and also with respect to the results of both the Allaire and Belanger-Campeau commission reports.

I would like to just sort the Premier out on one item, and that is when he referred to Premier Rae sort of coming around to the western version of what to do with the Senate. I would like to point out for the record, Mr. Chairman, that the position of the New Democrats, one with which at least 16 of us are thoroughly familiar, has been for many years, yes, abolish the Senate, because it is appointed and because we consider it a playground for the party hacks and flacks of the two parties that have hitherto governed Canada, but not to not replace it. I think the Premier will remember from his days of working with Grant Notley, the late leader of the Alberta New Democrats, that we offered as one alternative, for example, a House of the provinces that would have equal representation from each province – this is long before triple E was ever even a catchphrase; it hadn't even been thought of at that point – and it would deal almost exclusively with matters of either silent or overlapping jurisdictions between the federal House of Commons and provincial Legislatures. So I want to set the record straight. The New Democrats have always believed that a replacement of some sort would be inevitable. What we want is something that's fair and responsive and not just a trough for the feeding and watering of flacks, hacks, and other political hangers-on.

I do hope that in the comments the Premier made with respect to transfer payments and the federal government basically sitting on our money position, with which I fully agree – that is, I agree with our perspective that they should not have the right to arbitrarily withdraw funding or reduce funding in the transfer payment programs, which they did by legislation because there was no other mechanism for them to do it. But I do hope that when the Premier says, "Well, you know, we're going to

have to look at getting tax points transferred back to the provinces in lieu," that's not just part of an agenda that has been predetermined by the Conservative government when it comes to the public hearing process that will soon be under way with the Select Special Committee on Constitutional Reform, of which I am but one member. I for one and the New Democrats would like to see this process totally open, totally without preconceived conclusions. I look forward to the commitment of the Premier that that's the case, because if I get any indication at all that that's not the case, I for one am putting on running shoes. I'm not playing charades. I think Meech Lake taught a lot about charades.

Mr. Chairman, I'd like to ask one or two questions related to the Premier's budget and a couple of others and then get off my feet so that everybody else can have a chance to speak. I noticed that the Premier's office budget is up again by 5.6 percent, and I want to ask the Premier what I asked him today in question period: does he not understand that it is unfair to be padding our own accounts while thousands of people are being laid off, including in the hospital system? The hospital system did not get and neither did the education or postsecondary education systems get funding that would even meet the rate of inflation. Neither did the municipalities. Local boards of health are being strangled by this policy. How can the Premier justify an increase to his own office of 5.6 percent under these circumstances or an increase of 11.7 percent for his General Administration for Executive Council? I know what the answer is. The answer is: his office is busier; it is demand driven. My point then is: does he not understand that so is the health care system, so is the education system, so are municipal services? They have to be the priority with the government.

Jumping quickly to vote 9, if it's all right, Mr. Chairman – I'm on my second-last question here – I'd like to ask the minister sponsoring those elements, the Minister of Culture and Multiculturalism, just how many dollars of his advertising budget have been allocated to the advertising campaign trying to elicit popular support, which by the way will not occur, for the so-called balanced budget. I'd like to know how much was allocated to advertise a budget that didn't have enough money to look after the real needs of people. I'd also like to hear an explanation of how it can be justified that of the 20 percent increase to the Alberta Communications Network under this budget item, this includes things like photocopying and sending out through the ACN the Premier's speech to a Conservative convention, which is not government business.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, vote 14, the Metis Settlements Accord. To the best of my knowledge this transition is working quite successfully. My one question to that minister, or whoever else chooses to answer, is: when can they report similar success or at least progress towards settling land claims, most pressing of all the Lubicon land claim? Let's get on with it, folks. Stop patting yourselves on the back for the job that has been done; let's keep our eyes on what needs to be done.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Vote 2, the hon. Member for Athabasca-Lac La Biche.

MR. CARDINAL: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I, too, would like to just be brief and try to cover all areas I want to cover here. I do have initially a few comments to make, and I have two or three questions I'd like to ask of the chairperson.

First of all, as an aboriginal member of this Assembly, I'd like to take a moment to commend our Premier. Working under his

leadership in the last two years, I as a native person could never, ever have had a better leader for dealing with some of the objectives as to why I'm here today, and that is to deal with poverty in northern Alberta. I believe we are leaders in dealing with poverty, especially in the native areas in the north, and again I would stress that that is because we have a leader that cares for native people, cares to eliminate poverty down the road.

One example of this, of course, is his continued support and leadership in organizations like the Northern Alberta Development Council. The Northern Alberta Development Council plays a major role in the northern half of our province in dealing with social-economic issues. In the long term we can hopefully eliminate poverty through that. Although we continue to face poverty in Alberta, and specifically in the north, I believe we are working towards changing this. The change I look forward to, of course, is in the way this government is moving to diversify our economy in the province and build industries and create jobs where they're most needed, where the people are. Again I commend this government for that.

#### 12:20

It's been a long road in the last 35 years or so. Personally, in my one community, I lost about 45 friends, and that's basically through unemployment, poverty, and welfare. That's not very pleasant. This past winter alone I lost about four friends in my community, and that's not pleasant either. But I think with the way things are moving forward, with the leadership we have in this government, building the economy, the job training, the major welfare reforms – which is a major issue with the native population these days. People are sick of welfare. They want changes. Our government is creating the jobs where they're needed and putting in necessary reforms and training programs that are going to assist our people to make the necessary transition, and I commend this government for that. There's very strong native participation in various municipal government native organizations across Alberta, and it's only this government's workings that allow that to happen. We have major infrastructure programs across the north: new schools, community economic plans, municipal plans, and so on. Again, this government has done that, and I commend them for that.

As an individual member from the north, I do have a couple of concerns. I believe we can be a bit stronger in the bursary program. I'm glad that it is being reviewed. I hope we can come up with some innovative methods of making the transition a bit faster for our younger people that are ready to go to postsecondary education. One of the issues I've always mentioned is the possibility of the development of a family bursary program, matching dollars with families, because when you're dealing with native people, families tend to move forward together rather than one person moving forward on their own. We need to look at innovative ideas like that.

Government policies. Sometimes we tend to develop government policies right across the province, and I find that policies that work in the north may not work in southern Alberta and vice versa. We need to look at that, I think, very closely. When we develop government policies, let's try and develop them site specific. You know, if we need policies for the north, let's develop them for the north; if we need policies for the south, let's develop policies for the south. I would hope that we can do that.

The location of some of the offices. For an example, the Northern Development Council's office is situated in Peace River and deals with situations in northeast Alberta, and I think

we need to look at that very closely. We may need a part of that office in northeast Alberta. That also goes for Career Development and Employment, that is situated in Peace River and dealing with issues as far back as Conklin, Janvier, Fort Chipewyan, and the Lac La Biche region. We need to look at that, possibly, and readjust some of our movements in government.

The other area is the Northland School Division, which does a very effective job in education, with 25 or 26 school boards in northern Alberta. The majority of the school board members are native people, but we have again one superintendent to cover the whole one-third of the province. We need to look at this time at a more effective and efficient system for dealing with the education issues. I would recommend that we closely look at maybe the establishment of two or up to four school divisions in the north with a superintendent in each school division so we can deal with the education issues more directly and effectively.

With that, Mr. Chairman, I'd like to thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Avonmore on vote 4.

MS M. LAING: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I welcome the increase to the women's council. The women's council has done excellent work. I certainly complained last year about the cut to the council while there was an increase to the secretariat. My concern is that overall there is a decrease of 11.8 percent in this vote, and I have some concern that this doesn't demonstrate a real commitment to women in this province. So I would also say that I would welcome the government getting into place and acting on the recommendations that have been made by the council, because they have made excellent, innovative, far-reaching, and forward-looking recommendations.

Because I have spoken very briefly and most members are taking about five minutes to speak, I'd like to address my remarks to the Premier's council on the family. Mr. Chairman, I have looked at the budget estimates over the past three years, the years in which this council has existed, and I am appalled by the estimates and then the spending. In 1989-90 there were estimates of \$236,000, and the actual spending from public accounts we find was \$351,000, half again as much as had been estimated. In 1990-91 estimates were \$238,000; the actual revised is \$621,000, so that is almost three times what was estimated. It would appear to me that the spending by this council is out of control. In fact, there seems to be no relationship between what is estimated and what is spent, and it's not clear where the money is coming from. This is a very serious concern in regard to the council on the family.

Mr. Chairman, I note that the Member for Red Deer-North made some very provocative comments about families, and I would suggest they not be worthy of comment but will be judged in the realm of public opinion as they would have been judged by the presenters at the family conference in 1990.

I have to ask the purpose of this council: \$1.6 million to advise the government on how to treat families, yet I don't see any evidence that this government has been sensitive to the needs of families. The whole decentralization initiative was terribly insensitive to what families in this day and age are all about. I don't know if the government consulted with the council or if in fact they ignored their advice if they did consult with the council before bringing in this policy of decentralization. I have to be deeply concerned when I think of Hilltop House, which at one time was a transition house for women with mental health problems, single women who had been battered.

Somebody said to me that to go in there is to witness obscenity in terms of the opulence that is there, the lavish surroundings for a staff of five. So one has to be very distressed about the spending of this council. Again we have to say: what is the image of the family that they're trying to promote, and how are they supporting family life as it lived today in Alberta?

I haven't seen any legislation that is forward-looking. In 1986 the Premier was at an interprovincial Premiers' council meeting which brought forward the same kind of rhetoric that is presented in the 1991 Family Times. So I have to say: what, what, what has this council contributed to family life in Alberta?

I will close now, but when vote 14 gets up, I have many more remarks.

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

MRS. HEWES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In the interests of time I'll try to curb the editorial comments and read into the record a number of questions that I have on votes 4 and 10.

Mr. Chairman, I am pleased to see that we now have achieved a better balance between the Women's Secretariat and the women's advisory council as far as funding is concerned. I've raised that at former times, and I'm pleased to see that that's coming into balance. I do have some questions about the secretariat for the minister. Will the minister instruct the secretariat to bring in an annual report? I'd like to see that.

I am concerned about the \$182,000 TV ad campaign of last year to promote respect for Alberta women, six 30-second spots intended to boost the public's appreciation for the varied roles played by women. I wonder if the minister has determined what effect that commercial had. It was very expensive. Did it in fact add to respect for Alberta women in any quarter of this province or elsewhere? I'd like to ask the minister if any consideration is being given to commit an equal amount of funding to provide counseling and treatment for victims of family violence, women who are in desperate need of some respect. The same thing applies to the current campaign on family violence and sexual harassment. What evaluation, if any, is done to determine whether or not these programs are having any effect and are causing a decrease in the tragic situation we face?

12:30

Mr. Chairman, the action plan for women, given to us last year, listed 11 somewhat vague initiatives costing a total of \$3 million to present concrete steps the government will take to achieve equality. There are several areas that I think these initiatives overlooked. No mention of poverty; why not? What about benefits to part-time workers? Will the minister now commit to amend the Employment Standards Code, because 72 percent of all part-time workers are women? What has been done with regard to pensions, if anything, especially for homemakers and changes to the widows' pension, which I consider to be discriminatory? Why is there no action with regard to pay equity? The 1990-91 plan proposed to give immigrant women an information brochure in her native language on wife abuse. My question to the minister is: what good will this be if there are no community programs available, particularly with trained counselors who are fluent in that woman's language? What good is it to tell her what she can do if no one can deal with it?

The '89-90 initiative promises a comprehensive review of government reproductive health policies. Has that been concluded, and will that review be made public? There is no mention of the women's health centre in Edmonton. A credible proposal has been before the government on this one, Mr.

Chairman, since 1989. Has the minister made any decision in regard to that? Has the mechanism been established to investigate pension options? If so, what is the mechanism and has that investigation begun? I would like to know what evaluative techniques, measurement techniques, the minister is using – action, research, or otherwise – to determine if these initiatives in fact are having any effect. Is there a research component?

Three questions, Mr. Chairman, on the Advisory Council on Women's Issues. I'd like to know what new areas and issues will be studied by the council during this budget year. Is it anticipated that the funding increase will allow for more staff? How is that to be used? Since its inception, the council has conducted numerous studies. I should say that I am really impressed with the work that the council is currently doing and the kinds of reports they have given us in recent months. The council has made substantial recommendations that would undoubtedly improve the status, conditions, and opportunities for women. Will the minister finally provide a comprehensive status report and the ministry's official position with respect to all of the past recommendations of the council?

Mr. Chairman, if I can just go on quickly to vote 10, the Premier's Council in Support of Alberta Families. We still haven't had a really comprehensive report about what's happened as a result of the report from the Lieutenant Governor's council. The appendix of the conference listed a number of possible strategies that could be used to tackle issues affecting Alberta families. I question where these are now. If we could have a detailed action report – the member has commented on the forums that are currently being held. What about the other strategies that were suggested; where are they? What and where are the recommendations made by that council that are supposed to encourage partnership among public, private, and voluntary organizations? He spoke of the reward system. I'd like more information on that. Will the member please detail the advice that has been given by the council on how proposed government initiatives may impact on families? For instance, was the council giving advice on how the social assistance reforms would affect families? Were they asked, and did they give advice? If not, why not?

How about the cut in transportation and recreation allowances for those on social assistance? What about the day care changes, Mr. Chairman? Did the council advise the minister on that? Did the council intervene and point out how many families would have to pull out of formal day care because they lost their subsidy? Has the council taken a position on after school care and its relationship to FCSS, which I believe should be reviewed? Has the council submitted any suggestions on the mental health programs for children, on the new foster care model, on school nutrition, on Head Start programs, on benefits to part-time workers?

Mr. Chairman, finally, I am concerned about the Family Day holiday and the situation of part-time workers, the majority of whom are women. Because of the nature of their work they do not get the day off. Will the council be making a recommendation in regard to this and how it can be made more fair?

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Strathcona on votes 7 and 8.

MR. CHIVERS: Mr. Chairman, thank you. I'm pleased that both the minister responsible for the Labour Relations Board and the minister responsible for the Public Service Employee

Relations Board are present for this discussion, because my question relates to those two boards.

We all know that this government is very concerned about the efficient, economical, and effective delivery of government services. I'm wondering in this context if it makes any sense to have these two boards that in a sense have an overlapping of jurisdiction. They both deal with the labour relations jurisdiction. I'm wondering why the government persists in continuing the operation of two tribunals rather than merging the tribunals into a single system, into a single jurisdiction, which presumably would save a good deal of taxpayers' money. The cost of the PSERB is projected to be \$550,000 this year, but its caseload is only a fraction, a tiny fraction for that matter, of the caseload of the Labour Relations Board. It seems to me that a board that spends close to 30 percent of the budget of the Labour Relations Board and is delivering services which are a tiny fraction of the services provided by the Labour Relations Board – it would make good economic sense to merge those two tribunals into a single jurisdiction to deliver services in the labour relations area. I'm wondering if perhaps both of the ministers would comment on that.

With respect to vote 8 in the area of professions and occupations, we all know that there's a plethora of legislation in the province of Alberta dealing with professions and occupations. I'm wondering if the member responsible for professions and occupations has considered or would be prepared to consider some kind of a uniform code to deal with professions and occupations in Alberta which would bring all of the bodies under the scope of the jurisdiction of a single legislative enactment which would standardize the provisions and would alleviate, in my view, much of the difficulty that arises in dealing with professions and occupations. Further in that area, I'm wondering if the member responsible for professions and occupations would consider making that kind of legislation, or if not that kind of legislation, the existing legislation in the area, subject to the Administrative Procedures Act. There's a need for a process that is subject to the Administrative Procedures Act, and it seems to me that that would be a simple amendment to the existing legislation.

Those are my comments with respect to those two votes.

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

12:40

MR. WICKMAN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just very briefly on vote 9 and vote 11. Vote 9, Public Affairs: I just want to point out there that it's an area that I've had a concern with in the past. We now have a different minister responsible, and I would hope that this department is conducted in such a way that we don't see a reoccurrence of some of the events that have happened previously. I refer specifically to what I term some of the pork-barreling that has occurred in that particular division of his responsibilities.

On vote 11, Mr. Chairman, I direct these questions to the Premier. We are very, very appreciative of the extension of the home care program to include those between the ages of 18 and 65. That was extremely vital, and that gives me some faith that maybe some great things will come out of the Premier's Council on the Status of Persons with Disabilities. In addition to that home care, we have to ensure that there are other support services in the community to allow persons with disabilities to function in the community and not have to live in institutions. We have to have an overall program. The Premier made

reference to the government response to the Action Plan, and that's very, very important, that total response to co-ordinate what the different departments are doing in addressing some of the different areas.

Some of the areas, Mr. Chairman, I feel are of extreme importance and have to be addressed. Training – and training goes along with employment. I hold a philosophy in life that all of us want to be productive. All of us want to be contributing members of society. None of us wants to just sit at home or sit in an institution receiving a government cheque. We'd feel much better going out, doing it our way, making our own way, knowing that we have made a contribution. It's not always possible, but we have to provide the tools to ensure that as many people as possible can do that. That becomes very important: training, retraining, educational possibilities, and of course employment possibilities.

Transportation. We see the need for additional transportation requirements, particularly in some of the smaller centres within Alberta. The larger centres have coped with it to a pretty good degree.

Accessibility. This is quite ironic. I can go back a number of years ago when we set up what we called the subcommittee on accessibility. The very first meeting that was held was called by the Minister of Labour, at that time the Hon. Neil Crawford, and an oversight on everyone's part, including my own: it was booked in Government House. We couldn't get into Government House at that time because it was not accessible, but within two weeks it was accessible. Another instance of accessibility that I can recall that was quite ironic was during the renaming of the Peter Lougheed multicultural centre, which was held at the Italian centre, and the Premier, who was then running for the leadership of the Conservative Party, pulled me up those stairs. He assured me that if he was elected, that place would be made accessible. Well, it was made accessible, Mr. Premier, and I thank you for that.

A couple of other points that I want to point out that should be addressed in the Action Plan. The question of the assured income. I am not satisfied with the amount of increases that were given. It has not increased to a level that is sufficient to allow those persons that are totally dependent on it to live in a dignified life-style; \$735 a month simply does not do the trick. That has to again be reviewed, and that has to have a provision in there that it's automatically increased each year to reflect the cost of living once it's at a suitable base. Some of those people living on AISH have to pay property taxes, for example, and we don't have a program like B.C. does, where not only seniors are exempted from the first \$1,000 but those with disabilities are as well. We don't have that here in Alberta.

I understand the minister of public works will be coming forward with a piece of legislation dealing with handicapped parking, some enforcement. I'm glad to see that that's going to occur.

The last point I would make, that possibly the Minister of Culture and Multiculturalism could respond to later this morning or in the government's response to the Action Plan, is a pet peeve of mine. That's the Jubilee auditoriums in Edmonton and Calgary that have still not been refitted with the infrasound system to allow those with hearing impairment to fully enjoy those two fine facilities.

On that note I'll conclude to allow the next member, the Member for Edmonton-Calder, to have her say.

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

MS MJOLSNESS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm pleased to make a few remarks on vote 11, the Premier's Council on the Status of Persons with Disabilities. Some comments have been made just previously about the Action Plan. I would like to make the point, though, that as of this morning there has been no formal endorsement of the Action Plan from the government or from the Premier, unless he did so in his remarks earlier and I didn't catch them, and I apologize for that if he has done so. I think it's very important that if he has formally endorsed the Action Plan in his remarks, he let the council know.

AN HON. MEMBER: They know.

MS MJOLSNESS: They know? Well, as of this morning they didn't know, Mr. Chairman. Also, people across the province with disabilities need to know. I think this is very important.

I'm not going to go through the recommendations in the Action Plan. There are many recommendations, and they cross over many of the departments within this government: training, employment, education, recreation, transportation, housing, and on and on, very good recommendations contained in the Action Plan. One of the concerns I have, Mr. Chairman, however, is that we've had lots of reports and action plans in the past. What we really need from the government is a commitment to make these recommendations a reality.

We heard from the Premier that they have brought in home care for people under 65. I think this was a very good move to make. But in the throne speech from this government they stated that they were going to implement some of the recommendations. They were very vague in the throne speech, and I think the people in this province deserve more than that from this government. What's happening is that many organizations that have concerns or have initiatives they'd like to see implemented and try to go to the government are told that they should take their concerns to this Premier's council. The Premier's council, in turn, came up with an Action Plan nearly two years ago, and still we're waiting on many of the recommendations to be implemented.

I think what we need are some specifics on what recommendations are going to be implemented and the time lines that we're looking at. We need target dates. We need specifics on these, Mr. Chairman. It's not good enough for the government to state in the throne speech that they are going to implement some of the recommendations, because really what does that mean? That means nothing. So I would ask the Premier to comment on that and if in fact he can give us specifics in terms of recommendations and time lines when those recommendations will be implemented.

Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Avonmore has one further or a few comments.

MS M. LAING: Just a couple of minutes. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My question is to the Premier. What purpose has the \$1.6 million that will be spent on the council on the family served? Certainly the council's family conference a year ago indicated that poverty is a serious problem. Has anything been done to reduce the number of families living in poverty? The council talked about violence in the family, and we see a \$40,000 request for treatment for batterers, which would serve a hundred batterers in a year, turned down. We see shelters getting a paltry \$200,000 increase when the council last year got \$383,000 from who knows where. My question is: how does this council

serve families in this province? We haven't seen progressive legislation, we haven't seen progressive funding, and we haven't seen progressive initiatives. I have to ask the Premier: how does he justify spending \$1.6 million on what appears to be a useless council?

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Chairman, on vote 15, three questions to read into the record dealing with the Natural Resources Conservation Board. Number one, can we be given assurances that the Natural Resources Conservation Board will be required to review the Kananaskis golf course expansion and the Three Sisters golf course project? Number two, assurances that the NRCB will be required to review the Swan Hills waste treatment plan expansion. Number three, assurances that the NRCB will review the proposed Sunpine wood treatment plant in the Rocky Mountain House area.

Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The hon. Premier.

**12:50**

MR. GETTY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There have been some very thoughtful, legitimate comments and questions. Obviously, they cover the whole area of Executive Council responsibility here, and I thank the hon. members for their participation. Some are arguments, I guess, and could lead to debate, and perhaps we will do that at future opportunities. But what I'd suggest is that because there are quite a lot of questions, rather than having individual members here pop up to answer some of them specifically, I'd like to make the commitment to everybody who has asked a question or made a comment that requires a reply that I will see to it that every one of them receives a reply, as an answer to a question or as an answer to a comment that would at least give our side of the argument, if it's an argument.

If the members find that acceptable, then I would just conclude by saying, Mr. Chairman, that I neglected to say earlier that the Lieutenant Governor's office is in this vote. We have had an opportunity to express publicly the fact that Helen

Hunley has left that office, but I don't think I've had an opportunity to say how pleased I am with the new Lieutenant Governor. He is an outstanding Albertan, and as I get to know him more and more, I think he will in his own way become an outstanding Lieutenant Governor as well.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. STEWART: Mr. Chairman, I move that the committee now rise, report progress, and request leave to sit again.

[Motion carried]

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

MR. SPEAKER: The Member for Drumheller.

MR. SCHUMACHER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Committee of Supply has had under consideration certain resolutions of Executive Council, reports progress thereon, and requests leave to sit again.

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

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed, please say no. Carried.  
Deputy Government House Leader.

MR. STEWART: Mr. Speaker, by way of advice to the members of the Assembly concerning the business of the Assembly for Monday, I would advise that certain government Bills and orders will be considered for second reading in the afternoon, followed by Committee of the Whole if there is time. In the evening the estimates of the Department of Municipal Affairs will be considered by the Committee of Supply.

[At 12:53 p.m. the Assembly adjourned to Monday at 2:30 p.m.]

