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[Mr. Tannas in the chair]

Subcom.B: Community Development

Subcommittee B – Community Development

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THE CHAIRMAN: I'd like to call subcommittee B to order. This evening we have the estimates for the Department of Community Development. If we could begin the evening by asking the minister to make a few opening comments, and then we'll ask Calgary-Buffalo to begin questions, and then we'll proceed.

All right, I'd call on the hon. Minister of Community Development to begin.

MRS. McCLELLAN: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I hope you can all hear me okay. We're going to debate the '98-99 estimates and our three-year business plan tonight. I would just like to tell you that the theme of our budget and business plan is: building on our strengths and confronting our challenges.

First, I'd like to just make a few comments on building on our strengths, if I might. I think one of the main focuses and strengths of Community Development of course is its community focus, its responsiveness to client needs, its continued search for administrative efficiency. I hope we can show you some examples of that tonight, its ongoing planning for the future.

Probably, if I had to choose the most important part, I would pick community focus. One of the very important elements of community focus is a new program that's introduced in my ministry this year, and that is the community lottery board program. That's \$50 million in video lottery terminal moneys that will go to communities in the province. I believe it's quite a unique granting program. Maybe one of the things that's so unique about this program is that the design of it is exactly what communities told us through very a major consultation process. We were told by people they wanted to see the gaming revenues working in their communities. We also heard concerns that government-managed gaming as well as private, big-ticket dream home style lotteries were threatening some of the fund-raising activities of the small communities. The community lottery board program therefore is designed to that feedback. This is designed to help small community groups, those who might want or need \$500 to buy some furniture for their community hall or \$2,500 to send a ringette team to a tournament or a group who needs maybe \$1,500 for new uniforms. So you can see that this is a very diverse, very flexible program. It is not designed to fund new facilities or major undertakings. We do have grant programs for those, and I would refer you to CFEP, for example.

I know that there have been some concerns expressed about this program, most of them from municipal councillors. I think we've made great strides in the last months to address those concerns. Amazingly, despite some of the concerns that have been raised and the newness of the program, boards have been established in every corner of the province, and I'm pleased to tell you that as of the latest count we have today there are 53 community boards

already formed. We anticipate something just over 80 when we complete the formation of those boards. I read a quote in a rural paper where a newly appointed member to their board said: I think the program is going to benefit the whole country, and I'm very enthusiastic. So as minister I'm enthusiastic when the people in the communities are enthusiastic, because it's that kind of community spirit that makes these programs work.

Another focus that we will have this year that I think is worth mentioning, I believe, is a major happening in our province and a major coup for this province to attract, and that's the international conference on volunteerism, which will be in Edmonton from August 23 to 27. This is the 15th biennial conference of the International Association for Volunteer Effort, and the Wild Rose Foundation is a proud cosponsor along with Volunteer Canada. We expect to attract up to 2,500 visitors from over 100 countries. This will certainly offer our volunteer community the opportunity to learn from other volunteer communities worldwide. We expect that it will also generate, incidentally, about \$2 million in local economic activity, which is always welcome. I should tell you that we won this bid in a bid process submitted. We're quite proud of the fact, as you see, that the reputation of volunteerism in Canada and, in particular, in Alberta assisted us in getting that.

Seniors' programs. I think we've come a long way in the last couple of years in addressing some of our seniors' concerns and addressing the pressure points in our income support programs. This budget reflects that continuing focus. There is a funding adjustment in it, you will see, to reflect an expected volume increase in the area of health care premium subsidies under the Alberta seniors' benefit. Based on our analysis of program demand, we expect that volume increase to be about 2.8 percent. So we have added \$1.1 million to address that. We expect most of this volume increase to come from middle-income seniors, not lower income seniors.

In 1996 you would recall that the reinvestment broadened the base of seniors eligible for this benefit to include about 34,000 middle-income seniors. We are finding that people who have turned 65 recently tend to have a higher retirement income than those older seniors that are already on the program. That is why the budgetary adjustment has been made on the premium subsidy side rather than the monthly benefit side.

As well, we've adjusted the budget for the special-needs assistance program by \$2 million to \$7 million in Budget '98. This is not new money, but it is reallocated from the Alberta seniors' benefit allocation. We expect to spend about \$10 million on special needs by the time 1997-98 ends. That's twice the money that we had allocated in our '97 budget, but this demand is likely due to the fact that this was the first full year of the expanded program. Certainly in this first full year we played some catch-up, helping seniors who had not previously been eligible for the program.

We've helped about 3,600 seniors this year with special-needs

grants so they could meet onetime emergency costs. The average grant has been about \$2,400, and I believe this program has gone a long way to fill the cracks in the Alberta seniors' benefit program. We expect that demand to drop somewhat in 1998-99 because, of course, onetime emergencies are not expected to happen on a regular basis, but I can assure you all that we will continue to monitor this program very carefully to make sure that it is properly funded at all times. In my view, in the evaluation of that program, it has been extremely successful. It has done exactly what we asked it to do; it meets those emergent needs of seniors. I can assure you that no senior who qualifies for that program will go without because of a lack of funds in that program.

The Alberta Foundation for the Arts will be introducing a new funding formula for small professional performing arts organizations. This change is being made following concerns that were expressed by smaller groups that the old funding formula was in fact punishing these groups for budgetary savings. We believe that this adjustment will keep funding levels predictable for some 40 organizations and still take into account the local community support and administrative efficiency that they achieve.

Another client focus feature is a \$221,000 increase in AADAC's budget for research, information, and monitoring. AADAC will use those additional resources to enhance its research work, which should result in improved services to clients as well as improve knowledge on the nature of addictions, which in turn contributes to program development.

Administrative efficiency is again another focus. We're currently finalizing our major project of amalgamating the administrative functions of our four granting foundations. So far this amalgamation has resulted in over \$1.1 million in annual savings, savings which are put right back into community programs and grants to community groups. I remain optimistic that we will complete this process and achieve our ultimate goal of \$1.5 million in savings through administrative efficiencies.

The other one of course that has been a fair challenge on the administrative side is the community lottery board program. I would like to say that the expertise and hard work of our field services branch under the helpful guidance of the Member for Lacombe-Stettler has resulted in a lean, effective administrative team that is making this program a reality. As you know, we budgeted 2 percent of the actual program budget to administration. We feel that the administrative costs could have been much higher, up to 5 percent, had we not done a centralized administrative function.

8:18

We've developed guidebooks and a handbook, and the Member for Edmonton-Centre – out of the House it's hard to remember constituencies – had asked for a copy of that guidebook. I can tell her that I received the first one tonight, and I will see that she gets one right away. So these are prepared and available for consultative services to the boards as they come onstream. We've produced brochures, posters, and advertisements to help boards publicize themselves.

The other area that I know some of the members are quite interested in is the amalgamation of the human rights branch and the citizenship services branch into one single branch called the human rights and citizenship branch. This will be completed in 1998. This will not result in a reduction in service. Quite the opposite will occur. The amalgamation will make more staff and resources available to the Human Rights and Citizenship Commission when extra help is needed. At the same time, it reduces the administrative overlap between the two branches. I am pleased to say that from a human resources perspective the individual staff

members affected by this merger will not be left unemployed. I expect that all affected individuals will fill appropriate vacancies elsewhere in the department if necessary, if they wish to.

The business plan outlines a plan for the future of the department, talks about our multiyear preservation evaluation to look at upcoming preservation priorities and risks and to recommend corrective actions. We need to know the state of our facilities, where preservation work is required most urgently and what resources are going to be needed to maintain that quality.

Probably the most significant example of planning for the future is the launch of the major review and analysis of the impact of an aging population on our provincial programs and services for seniors. We know that in the coming years and decades a higher and higher percentage of our population will be seniors. Today about 9.6 percent of all of Alberta's population are seniors. We expect that by 2006 that will be 11.1 percent. By 2016 it will be 14.1 percent. So, interestingly enough, we should be prepared. We need to know what that impact will be as a government and as a society. We have to be prepared to meet the challenges this trend towards aging poses.

I think the programs at all levels of government, from health care to housing to income support, will be affected, and you would know that the Minister of Health, because of the urgency of the long-term care review, has already launched that review. That will be certainly fed into the whole process. We will be announcing the membership of a very broad-based committee to lead that review shortly. Certainly one of the goals will be to ensure that we hear the views of all Albertans, and that process will reflect that. We expect this work to take up to two years, but we think that when it's done, we'll have an accurate, detailed analysis of the challenges and the opportunities that our aging population presents.

One of the other areas that we are really concentrating on is youth, especially youth at risk. I once heard someone say: if a youth is in trouble, don't give him a lecture; give him a basketball. I believe in that. I think that if we can provide youth with many opportunities to take part in sports, recreation, other activities that will help them develop social skills, self-esteem, and the tools to cope, we'll continue to have a wonderful group of young people in this province.

Shortly we'll be launching our active living strategy. That's a multipronged program to inform Albertans about the benefits of physical fitness and to develop opportunities for youth to get involved. We can meld this well with our sports and recreation programs for youth, such as leaders in action and the Alberta future leaders programs. We could also give our youth a paintbrush or a clarinet through writing camps, arts camps, and so on. AADAC is also enhancing its services to youth, especially those who will have to make decisions about their gambling behaviour now and in the future.

We've heard a lot of statistics tossed about recently concerning the incidence of problem gambling in Alberta. I want to take a moment to place on the record the information AADAC has concerning problem gambling among youth. Based on data collected in a study completed in May of 1996, AADAC estimates that 33 percent of youth aged 12 to 17 do not gamble, that 44 percent gamble without problems, that 15 percent are at risk of developing problems, and 8 percent probably have a problem.

Gambling is a problem for some youths, so AADAC has targeted youth programs as a productive way to use much of the \$754,000 increase in problem gambling funding. Some of those include the development of an educational CD-ROM as well as an educational theatre project that will tour schools to raise awareness, also curriculum-based educational materials for schools, age-

specific treatment and counseling programs, inpatient/outpatient services, and funding for community projects. When we talk about youth gambling, I want to remind you that we are talking about betting on sporting events, cards, and board games as much as lottery tickets or other government-controlled gambling opportunities, most of which you must be 18 to participate in.

The other area that AADAC is playing a leadership role in is the fetal alcohol syndrome work, and they are working with other departments in that area.

The last area I want to just quickly touch on is libraries, a very important part of my department. Our budget calls for a \$1.9 million increase in funding to libraries. Of that, about \$640,000 will be used to adjust municipal library budgets to 1997 population figures. As you know, we've been using 1991 population figures as the basis for per capita library fund allocations. Obviously our population has grown since '91, and Budget '98 will allow us to reflect population increases.

Of our 245 municipal boards 18 are in areas where the population has decreased since 1991. That would have meant that allocations to libraries in those areas would have decreased. We were not prepared to inflict operating grant decreases on those boards in one fell swoop. Therefore, I have informed the libraries in those areas that their budgets will be maintained at 1997-98 levels in fiscal '98-99 and that the population adjustment will be made in '99-2000. That gives them another year to prepare for that impact, and because of some of the other areas that we were able to improve in libraries, such as the completion of the systems, we hope that that impact on those libraries will be very small.

The electronic library hookup of course is very important, and this year is the second installment of the \$1.2 million investment on a four-year plan. I can tell you that this year a great deal has been completed on phase 1. This has involved getting the large urban libraries and the seven regional library systems on board. In '98-99 our attention will shift to integrating the smaller rural libraries. When completed, this network of approximately 300 libraries will allow Albertans to access resource materials on a provincewide basis as well as materials from across the globe via the information superhighway.

To wrap up, I want to stress that '98-99 will be a big year for our ministry. I know that my ministry staff and those who work with our associated foundations and agencies join with me in looking forward to the new year and the opportunities it presents. I think this budget provides a sound framework for us to achieve our goals, to build on our strengths, and confront our challenges.

With that, I look forward to your questions. I should say there are a number of my staff here – I will just say my deputy, Julian Nowicki, and a number of other staff from AADAC and the ministry – if I get into trouble and need some help in answering your questions.

Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: I'd call on the hon. Member for Calgary-Buffalo, followed by Calgary-West.

8:28

MS BLAKEMAN: Thank you very much. We have a number of questions that we would like to get asked tonight, and in economizing the time, we would be happy to receive any of the answers in written form if the minister doesn't have time to answer them at the end of the session. Having said that, I will start in.

I'm very pleased to hear that the minister is satisfied and excited with how the department is coming along. I share in her delight in some of the programs. But I'm here to ask questions

on behalf of the community, and she will not be surprised when many of the questions I have are about the concerns. I'll leave the happy celebrations – we know which ones those are – and I'll move into the ones where concerns have been expressed.

I have three major concerns: one, the level of funding for the arts and also for sports and recreation has steadily eroded given inflation and the rising costs of material and supplies; two, no perceptible programs for women when so much needs to be done; three, concerns around the community lottery boards.

The funding boards for arts and culture. These levels have not changed since they were frozen in 1983. There was a cash injection in the late '80s, but as far as I've been able to trace, not very much. So, essentially, the pie is shrinking due to inflation, and the pieces keep getting cut smaller to accommodate any new companies that are coming into the fund or any companies that are growing. Overall this does preclude and discourage growth by the companies that are in. At one time arts companies were to receive 25 percent of eligible funds, and that's eligible funds based on either expenses or revenues. It's gone back and forth over the years. The groups have never got this 25 percent, because there was simply not enough money in the pot. At one time they were getting 18 percent, then 16 percent; now they're getting 12 percent.

Funding for festivals is in even worse shape. Festivals are eligible or were eligible for 25 percent of eligible expenses, but they were capped at \$40,000 max since 1986. By way of example, for a company like the Fringe theatre festival this means they were receiving only 13 percent of what they were eligible for. They should have gotten almost \$300,000; they got \$40,000. This year the larger festivals are taking a \$5,000 cut, or 20 percent of what they were receiving. The smaller festivals are taking a 33 percent cut.

I have watched arts and cultural groups and sports and recreation groups getting smaller, leaner, meaner, and more efficient and, finally, starting to cut programming and key staff. For example again, theatres in Edmonton regularly produced six plays a year 10 years ago, then five, then four, and many can only do three now.

Arts groups are pouring all of their money into the art, the product. At this point many cannot afford to even market and publicize their work, so few people know that they are doing it. Money for subscription brochures and annual programming for art galleries, et cetera, is almost nonexistent. Presenter series and touring series are pretty much gone. Some time back there were so many groups that needed the money that the series was oversubscribed. Again, shrinking pot, pie pieces getting cut smaller and smaller. Each group got less and less until they dropped their programs because they couldn't afford to do them. Now the two series are undersubscribed. Very few can afford to present or to tour, and this most affects the smaller cities, the rural centres in the region in that we're having difficulty getting arts and culture to tour around out to them. I give credit to the dedication of the artists that keep it going. They're volunteering almost as many hours as they're being paid for these days.

In particular – and it's caused me great concern – I have watched almost three dozen professional actors leave Edmonton this season alone. I know of a dozen more who are seriously considering moving out of province. These are our natural resources. They were born here, educated here. They were bringing up their families and paying taxes here. But they can't get enough work to stay. Most of them have gone to Toronto and a few to Vancouver.

During the past year thousands of volunteer hours were put in by members of the arts community to design a new funding

formula. Agreement was reached at one point, and the foundation seemed reluctant to implement it. We have a formula now that many feel is biased towards a commercial production. The companies producing new Alberta work believe that they will suffer the most. I believe the truth is that we are simply rearranging deck chairs on the *Titanic*. The Edmonton arts groups in particular will be hit hardest by the new formula. I realize that there is a difference of opinion between Calgary and Edmonton about which formula works best. Basically, we have two different types of work going on, and I don't want to see either sector disadvantaged.

The first question I have for the minister is: can the minister explain how all of the above is reflective of a mandate to support the development of arts and culture as fundamental assets of Alberta's quality of life?

Moving on to women's programs. Has the minister considered instituting a gender analysis for all government programs? Since the Advisory Council on Women's Issues was shut down, we have no agency putting women first, doing research on how programs and policies affect women, and government policy shows this. Women are suffering disproportionately in Alberta. To clarify that, I'm aware of the women's policy and programs branch, but that is not arm's length. I don't believe they have a gender analysis program, but I'd love to hear if there was one.

In particular, women's programs, human rights, and multiculturalism are all rolled together in one line item. What exactly is the budget for women's policies and programs? What is the breakdown of staff and administrative costs? What is the amount of money going to policy review and development? What is the amount of money spent directly on programming for women?

Community lottery boards. I'd like to bring to the minister's attention that I noticed that the task force report on prostitution directed that money from the community lottery board fund be used to support the new child prostitution program. I'm wondering what exactly the expectation is of how money will be spent in the different sectors who are eligible to apply. Will the minister monitor how the community lottery boards distribute money? Will any directives be given on how money is to be distributed between sectors? What will the minister do if a disproportionately small amount of money goes to support any one area? I am particularly concerned about arts and culture and sports and recreation. Who is accountable for this money? I don't believe there is an appeal mechanism set out for the community lottery boards. To whom do the groups go if they feel the will of the community or the goals of the Growth Summit or whatever other policy has been set out have not been fulfilled?

I'm going to move on to the key performance measurements that are used by the department. Those are found on pages 80 and 81 of the government estimates document.

The level of community self-reliance. I'm wondering what data prompted the department to set a volunteer participation target of 40 percent. Who was being surveyed when the department determined that there was 97 percent community satisfaction with the assistance received, and what questions were asked during this survey?

Number 2, the level of support for arts, culture, sport, and recreation activities. I will point out that I don't believe these performance measurements reflect the success of our artistic ventures, nor do they measure the success of government support for the arts nor the success of or improvement of accessibility to participation in events. Why did the department change the performance measurement for arts and culture from one which measured volunteer participation in the arts and culture? This was the only sector that was able to supply data on this participation rate.

Would the minister consider having a performance measurement of how many new Albertans are employed in cultural, artistic, and recreational activities? Why is there not a performance measurement of how many outside investment dollars came to Alberta as a result of cultural and/or artistic endeavours by Albertans? An example there would be the dollar amount of investment in movies that were based in Alberta. I think we should also take a look at the amount of federal grant money that comes into Alberta which is brought in through the various arts and cultural companies, sports, and recreation.

My colleague from Calgary-Buffalo will be continuing after me with questions about human rights, so I will go on to performance measurement 5: Appreciation of Alberta's Diverse Natural, Historical and Cultural Resources. How did the minister arrive at the conclusion that 450 community-based heritage preservation projects assisted in a year is an appropriate number and target for her department? I'm just wondering if there is a particular reason why it was 450 rather than 400 rather than 500. Why is the number of people visiting historical sites and museums declining in Alberta? Does the minister have an answer? I noticed there was reference to it in one of the budget documents I've read recently. I'm wondering what the solution is to make those numbers increase again.

Performance measurement 6: Achieving Freedom from the Abuse of Alcohol, Other Drugs and Gambling. This performance measurement is based only on service effectiveness three months following treatment. I'm wondering if the minister has considered including a follow-up of a longer period, a six-month, one-year, two-year, or five-year follow-up.

8:38

On to specific questions about estimated expenditures. Program 1, ministry support services. These can be found on pages 69 to 95 in the government and lottery fund estimates. Overall estimated expenditures for this program are slated to increase from \$4.38 million to \$5.45 million, and I believe this program was also forecasted to go \$177,000 over the budget that was indicated for the '97-98 fiscal year.

MRS. McCLELLAN: What page was that?

MS BLAKEMAN: Oh, between 69 and 95. Sorry; I don't have it any more specific than that. I can get it more specific for you.

MRS. McCLELLAN: Well, it could be hard to follow your rapid pace if you don't give me the page number.

MS BLAKEMAN: I expected that you would be giving this in writing afterwards. I didn't expect you to roll with me now.

MRS. McCLELLAN: I was hoping to answer all your questions.

MS BLAKEMAN: I'm sure you could if you set your mind to it, Madam Minister.

MRS. McCLELLAN: I know I could. Just give me that last one again. Maybe I've caught up to you here.

MS BLAKEMAN: I notice there's an estimated increase in expenditure, going from \$4.38 million from last year . . .

MRS. McCLELLAN: In which program?

MS BLAKEMAN: Ministry support services.

MRS. McCLELLAN: Okay.

MS BLAKEMAN: . . . to \$5.45 million. I also note at the same time that the forecasted final in that same area looks as though it's expected to be \$177,000 over the original budget for the '97-98 fiscal year; in other words, the year we're just finishing. Two budgetary cycles ago this ministry support services was at \$3.9 million, so it's obviously increasing. I'm a little confused on this one, because I know the minister has repeatedly said that administrative costs were being cut to channel more money into the program spending and support for the nonprofits. So I'm wondering why there's been such an increase in finance and administration, and there it is. Specifically we're at 1.0.3.

MRS. McCLELLAN: Got it.

MS BLAKEMAN: Thank you.

Why was there an increase in the communications budget of about 30 percent? What new projects and programs are Alberta citizens getting for this?

Under community and citizenship services . . .

MRS. McCLELLAN: And that is on . . .

MS BLAKEMAN: The next page – that's program 2 – page 72. Expenditures for this program are slated to increase from \$23.19 million to \$74.6 million. This is including the \$50 million for community lottery boards, and I believe the 2 percent, which is another million dollars, was in there as part of the administrative fee, but I would like clarification on that.

A few points I'd like to make here about arts groups being funded from lottery funds. When Alberta first got involved with the lotteries in the '70s, as far back as I have been able trace it, it was under the understanding that the money would be used to support and augment programs for quality of life, specifically arts and multicultural programs and sports and recreation programs. Since 1983 the funding has been frozen and reduced and the funding was transferred from the department through to the lottery fund. I'd like to point out that groups receiving the grants and having them transferred over to them coming a hundred percent from lottery money were never consulted about whether they wanted their funding to come from lottery proceeds, and in fact I know some that protested at the time that they wanted to continue to receive money from the GRF and not from lottery dollars.

The support from the department has continued to shrink, and therefore lottery grant money has had to be used now for administration of programs that used to be run by the department. We've talked about this before, where the line item budget for a program was transferred to a PASO or a community organization, but the administrative costs of the staff, supplies, computer software, et cetera, that were support from the department – that money did not go along with the program. Therefore, the groups are now having to go out of their grants to pay for the admin support on that.

The community lottery board money did originally include, I understand, 2 percent to cover administration costs for the municipalities administering the boards. This money was taken back by the department when it was going to cut the cheques. A million dollars is a lot of money to cut cheques. I'm sure the minister can explain that. A question: why did the department choose to do this when the public was told that all money from VLTs was going directly into the funding pot? I'm looking for where the extra 2 percent went, the extra \$1 million. If the

money has gone into the department, will the minister commit to returning this money to the municipalities to cover the cost of administering this grant program?

Now, I understand I'm out of time.

THE CHAIRMAN: You have 10 minutes.

MS BLAKEMAN: Great. I'll keep going.

A few comments on the Alberta performing arts stabilization fund. I notice that there was a quote – I think it was in the annual report – talking about the Alberta performing arts stabilization fund ensuring the viability of the performing arts community. I do need to underline that to date very few groups have actually received money through this, specifically only one of the 12 flagship organizations that qualified for the stabilization fund. Out of those original 12, we're down to 11, and only one of them has actually got bucks in hand.

The second part of that stabilization fund money was the \$25,000 one time only project grant that the smaller organizations could apply for. At this point it's uncertain as to whether these groups can apply for them more than once. My question is: how does the department justify downloading responsibility for the viability of the performing arts community to an organization which to date has distributed a fraction of the money? I think it's quite well known that they haven't raised all the money that's necessary in the pot. So there are real concerns about that.

Expenditures on sport and recreation, reference 2.1.5, are slated to increase from \$1.06 million to \$1.7 million. I'm wondering how much of this increase is going directly into nonprofit programming or into the groups that are under that program.

MRS. McCLELLAN: What number was that again?

MS BLAKEMAN: Reference 2.1.5. Most of it's off page 72.

How much is going to support games programs and staff, such as the Alberta Winter Games? Recreation groups were really concerned that they took a 15, then a 10, then a 5 percent cut over three years and were told at the time that that money was needed to support games staff and programming. They're wondering why as a recreation group they would be required to give up funds to support games programming? So if I could get an answer for that, I'd appreciate it.

Volunteer services, reference 2.1.6, is slated for an increase from \$219,000 to \$652,000. I'm assuming that this is around the International Association for Volunteer Effort conference, but I'm just wondering what the increase is specifically and exactly where this new money will be spent.

I also note that the municipal recreation and tourism areas operating grants, reference 2.2.2, have been continued but are now being funded through the Sports, Recreation, Parks and Wildlife Foundation. Were these new dollars provided, or were dollars transferred from other sports and recreation programs or from other areas in the department? If so, exactly where did the money come from?

How much money was saved from merging the administration of the four lottery foundations? Which grant programs received the savings from this merger? Exactly how much money was transferred into direct programming for nonprofit organizations?

A little happy break in here. Library operating grants, reference 2.2.4, will increase from \$12.3 million to \$14.2 million. Yes. Yippee. A long overdue increase. Congratulations. Thank you.

8:48

MRS. McCLELLAN: I'm only going to answer a very few of your questions, and then we'll go on to Calgary-Buffalo. We'll give you a full answer. I'll start at the bottom.

I did mention in my opening comments that \$1.5 million in savings in administration was going back. That was the target; \$1.1 million has been directed back to the communities in the administration of those foundations. We expect to have the complete \$1.5 million going back this year. So it was a very significant savings, and those dollars are already going back to the communities.

The MRTA moneys are out of Alberta Sport, Recreation, Parks and Wildlife's accumulated surplus, not out of their regular grant, and they agreed to use some of those surpluses that they had to fund that very important community program.

The International Association for Volunteer Effort. Hosting assistance from the Wild Rose Foundation is in the amount of \$500,000, and that is for initiating, getting up and running the conference.

The arts stabilization fund. I think eight, actually, have applied. Two are funded. To get you up to date, four have qualified and the chair expects that all the money will be disbursed. I think that program is one that is very positive and is working very well in the arts community that I talk to. The groups who are utilizing it are very pleased with it, and you must remember that this program is to provide stabilization and it is to ensure that arts groups which have not previously had the opportunity to have good financial management systems in place now have that, and that will give them the stability and security that they probably would like.

The community lottery boards' 2 percent. I'd like to clarify this one more time. The 2 percent for administration that is available was never intended for anything other than what is being done. It is over and above the \$50 million. It is not out of the pot, and it will carry about 75 percent of the administrative costs. The brochures have been developed for all the groups, the posters, the handbooks which I mentioned. We have brochures, posters which every community can use. They're generic. I suppose even in committee you're not supposed to do this, are you? So I'll lay it flat on my desk and hope somebody can spy what it is. You can look at them after. I wouldn't hold anything up, Mr. Chairman, knowing that that's against the rules of the House.

The administration costs. If the hon. member wants, I can get you the exact cost of cutting a cheque, but I can tell you that it's much cheaper for us to cut the cheques where we are already doing it for four foundations and have all the mechanisms in place. We asked the municipalities, and they said it was too costly. They didn't want to do that part of the program. They also said they didn't want to do the part of the program which was the accountability part, which was tracking to see whether the money had indeed been spent. So we are doing all of that.

Really the community lottery boards will accept applications. The forms are provided to them. They're quite simple. They will accept those applications. They will review them. They will decide on community priorities. They will. And, no, the minister will not be checking to see if they've spent that money correctly. This is a community-based program. We have guidelines for that program. They're fairly broad. It can be for arts; it can be for sports; it can be for something in the health area. It can be what that community deems important. What it shouldn't be is for major building projects but for enhancements. It can go to Boy Scouts. It can go to Girl Guides. It can go to cadets. But,

no, this minister is not going to call them and say: I don't think you've decided on a program that's good for your community.

I don't think I'm in a position to do that. That's why we have community lottery boards, which are made up of people from the communities who will decide those priorities, forward them to a regional office who will check them to make sure that there are no questions not answered and that they meet the guidelines. They will forward them to Edmonton, and our function will be to cut the cheque. Each lottery board will be registered as a nonprofit society, and we will carry the cost for that. It is \$50 an application, or if we're required to do a name search - which I'm not sure why we would; I think this is quite a new name, if we call them community lottery boards 1, 2, 3 - it's \$75. We will do that for the boards and make sure they get set up.

So I want to clarify that. There was never, ever by this government, by this minister, money offered to any municipality or anyone else for the administration of this program. We think that this should be somewhat of a partnership. For example, the city of Calgary, where they're getting over \$14 million, to ask them to provide a meeting room, perhaps a phone, and some space for their community lottery board is not a large request. However, if they decide they don't wish to do that, that's their prerogative. The city of Medicine Hat is going to receive just under a million dollars for their citizenry. They have suggested it will cost them \$1,000 to assist the lottery board, and they're quite prepared and happy to do that. I could name you quite a few others that are in the same way.

The other area: women's programs. We do have a women's policy branch; you are aware of that. Marie Riddle heads that up and does very fine work. I can tell you that at the national and provincial levels we meet twice a year. We're working on programs and on sharing resources among the provinces, and we have adopted some work from Saskatchewan's program on violence. Rather than each one of us inventing our own, we're working together on this and sharing data, knowledge, and resources. We're working with our federal minister to see if we can get some assistance on national collection of information, which certainly to me makes sense. I think you saw the paper that was provided after our last ministers' meeting on gender-specific issues such as social issues, pay equity, et cetera. I think there's a lot of progress being made in a good way. Women are citizens, as everyone else is, and I hope we treat them that way in our province at least.

I'm surprised to hear your comments about the arts funding. I've met with a lot of arts groups, and while they all admit that it's tough, they're all very appreciative that they didn't lose funding. In fact, when many areas lost 20 percent, their money was maintained and stable. But contrary to what you say, new groups are forming, and that is putting pressures on. So it's not that we're losing groups; we are having new groups forming, which tells me we have a vibrant arts area in our province.

The private sector is involved in this quite significantly, and I think that's appropriate. We are focusing on youth development. We think that is our area. We are not concentrating as much on the area of professional arts groups as we perhaps were, but I think that if you make choices in this area, the opportunity for young people to develop their talents and opportunities is perhaps more where a government should be focusing their attention.

Now, I think the new funding formula that we have will be good. In fact, this afternoon I had Theatre Alberta in. Contrary also to what I think I heard you say, they tell me that their touring programs are very busy, that they're out there doing workshops, that 60-some percent of their work is in rural Alberta. They're totally enthused with the number of programs there are in small

cities, small communities and in fact were asking me what the theatre group in my community of New Brigiden, which has seven people in it, are performing this year. I was pleased to tell them that *Oklahoma* is going on next week. We appreciate very much the help they give us. So I think that we do have a vibrant arts community.

I can't touch on all the areas. AADAC: I wanted to mention the one thing on the three months following treatment. Frankly, it's very, very costly to try and follow at six months or a year. If a person is still successful after three months, it's a very good chance that they will be successful. AADAC prefers to put their resources into programs rather than into tracking. If they saw some evidence from anywhere that this would be beneficial, they would probably do it, but there is no data that shows us that tracking beyond that is a good, efficient use of resources. I have to take their word and their expertise for it.

I'll think I'll write to you about preservation. We're doing a preservation audit right now. The decline in numbers at our sites in the last year isn't just an Alberta phenomenon; it's a world phenomenon. We expect that to change somewhat, but we are doing things about it. I think you received a copy or saw a copy of the Alberta-Montana Discovery Guide, which has already shown significant success in attracting visitors to our province.

I think we'll stop there and deal with some of the others in a written form.

8:58

THE CHAIRMAN: Okay. Thank you, Madam Minister.

The hon. Member for Calgary-West.

MS KRYCZKA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Madam Minister, I like title 2: Supporting the Independence and Well-Being of Seniors. I think that's really appropriate for this government's approach to seniors. I have a few questions to ask tonight. My first question is: when you review special-needs assistance grants to identify common areas of financial hardship for seniors, will you be taking action to address these needs? Do you want me to go on to the next one?

MRS. McCLELLAN: Maybe just give me an example under special needs.

MS KRYCZKA: Special needs assistance, for instance, in order to maintain them in their homes: if they need to replace a furnace, something like that, that's very basic to their existence and the maintenance of their home.

MRS. McCLELLAN: Go ahead. Go on, and I'll take them all.

MS KRYCZKA: Okay. The next question is basically rather three-pronged. How do you intend to review the impact of the aging population? I know you referred to that. How will you incorporate the views of seniors? How would this particular review help address immediate housing needs and pressures for seniors, that we seem to be hearing more about from different areas of the province in particular?

MRS. McCLELLAN: Okay. The special-needs program I think has been very successful, especially with the changes that have been made to it over the last year, and has become far more responsive to seniors. It's like any new program: as the program develops, you learn more about the program and how you can accommodate seniors' needs through it. We want to make sure that the program does retain its integrity. It is a special-needs

program, which means it isn't meant for ongoing maintenance and so on, but we do recognize that seniors, as all of us, can have emergencies happen, like a furnace quit, like ruptured water pipes, like a roof that leaks, something in that line that they can't budget for or just don't have the money for, and we can respond. That's primarily where it's happened.

I have to share with you that when I was talking about this program with my department, I asked them what would happen if a senior had a furnace quit on December 21 at 5 o'clock in the afternoon and it was 40 below. I said that I didn't think saying, "Send in an application, and in six weeks we'll tell you what we can do for you," was a very good answer. Well, we were able to change that program. But the really remarkable thing is that almost exactly that thing happened. It was almost exactly the way I'd outlined. It did happen, and within about two hours we responded to that senior's needs. That tells me that this program is designed to work.

We are also looking at the reflection of unusual, say, drug costs, something that is extraordinary, beyond what is covered through Health. That can happen as well. I think we're on track with that. What helps us is if any and all of you share information that you have on that with us.

The review of the impact on aging population is something that we expect to take place over a couple of years. It's to look into the long term. We are going to make sure that we have the voice of seniors in it. One of the reasons that changes to our programs were successful is because we did consult with seniors through the Seniors Advisory Council of course. They did a review of the programs and reviewed what we were doing. We also worked closely with the Interagency Council, and we are still working with them. We will work with them on how to incorporate the views of seniors. They have offered to be communicators with seniors groups across the province, and of course through the Seniors Advisory Council we have a good communication plan.

Your question: how do you answer immediate housing needs? Obviously Municipal Affairs, because they have a great deal of responsibility for housing for seniors, will be a part of this. Whether they have to look at something for the immediate or shorter term rather than just for the long term, which is what this study is intended to be, could very well be. I have had some discussions with the minister on the issue of housing. We have some difficulties. People in our lodges are aging; I mean, the average age has increased. The average age of people in our lodges now is somewhere in the range of 85 years. That's very high. I mean, a few years ago it was 75. So obviously their needs are changing too, and we are looking at that and discussing that.

MS KRYCZKA: A second supplemental. How are you planning to measure the effectiveness of the Protection for Persons in Care Act?

MRS. McCLELLAN: Well, that act of course is just in place. We do have an interdepartmental committee that is evaluating that as we move along. We'll be keeping a very close watch on the information we get. Social Services are involved with that, Health and ourselves and Justice. So far, we've had quite a few calls. I haven't had an update just recently to the line. Probably about 50 percent of them were appropriate for that line, and some of them had to be directed elsewhere. It appears that it is, at least at the outset, doing what it was intended to do. We were quite encouraged by the number of people who were aware of the line and the ability to call in to that line on such a short notice. We'll monitor it and review it, and if there are any changes that need to

be made, we'll bring them back to the Legislature, where the act was put in.

THE CHAIRMAN: Have you concluded your questions and your answers?

MS KRYCZKA: Yes. Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: I'd call on the hon. Member for Calgary-Buffalo, followed by Red Deer-South.

MR. DICKSON: Thanks very much, Mr. Chairman. Good evening, Madam Minister. Just a couple of questions that my colleague for Edmonton-Centre didn't get an opportunity to complete. [interjection] We marvel at the stamina of our new colleagues, Madam Minister, the sort of standard that the veterans have to work hard to match.

There's a concern with respect to annual reports. You'll appreciate, Madam Minister, that with the breadth of your department, normally you would be responsible for tabling a whole series of annual reports from an assortment of foundations, all of this pursuant to statutory obligation. It appears that the reports are now meshed together in the Community Development annual report, but what one finds when Albertans look at it is considerably less detail than used to exist, and I think Albertans might well say: we appreciate the economy on paper if it can be consolidated in a single report. We know you're clearly one of the most forthcoming members of cabinet. We know you wouldn't be wanting to withhold information. So we're wondering if you can ensure that the same standard that applied with the individual reports will at least be met; in other words, that the threshold won't be changed, the same degree of detail. We're thinking particularly of expense breakdown, which doesn't seem to be available anymore in the consolidated report. So we've gone not only from cutting down less trees, but we also find significantly less detail. I know the minister would be anxious that Albertans still have the same degree of access to information that they had before, when the reports were filed severally. So that's the question I wanted to ask.

9:08

I very much appreciated, Madam Minister, the opportunity to attend the managing diversity conference at the Westin in Calgary in 1997. I understood that was actually the eighth conference. It was an eye-opener to see all these large resource companies, large corporations, large employers in the city of Calgary and other parts of the province talking about very sophisticated employment equity programs, a number of things that they had done to target barriers to full employment and then concrete steps to dismantle it. The only thing I thought a bit odd about that is that we had people from the city of Calgary, Mr. Cresswell and others, that could speak about the employment equity program that exists in the city of Calgary, but the only large organization represented at that conference that didn't have an employment program was our own provincial government.

I've raised this in the past, and, Madam Minister, I think that at some point it simply isn't enough to encourage corporations to do it. I think genuine leadership starts with the provincial government, and it just seems to me that if all these resource companies in Calgary can have such sophisticated, aggressive programs in terms of moving to full employment, surely we have smart enough people in our provincial government and in the Department of Community Development to champion and develop a similar program. So thanks for the opportunity to find out how

much further ahead the private sector is moving than the public sector is.

Now, you indicated, with the amalgamation in terms of human rights and the two different divisions or sections within your department, that in 1998 you anticipate completing the amalgamation. I had, I guess foolishly, thought the amalgamation was completed, so what I'm hopeful you'll do is detail what's outstanding. What has yet to be done, Madam Minister, to complete the integration?

Now, I'm bouncing around a little bit, but if one looks at your ministry plan and specifically your key performance measures, you have one that relates to human rights, and this is the one on page 80 of the estimates book entitled Satisfaction of Albertans with Human Rights Protection. We continue to rely on arguably the most unsatisfactory, least helpful factor I can imagine; that is, the "Percentage of Albertans who believe human rights are fairly well or very well protected in Alberta."

I see the Minister of Justice sitting across from me. One of the things his department does as a key performance measurement is go to a number of other agencies that they provide services for and ask those agencies: "What kind of job are we doing? Is it satisfactory? Unsatisfactory?" Now, I'd like to see the Human Rights Commission adopt the same approach. Why wouldn't we provide a process so that everybody who files a complaint in fact is solicited? Whether they choose to respond or not is something else. Let's find out from the consumer of a service whether the service is working or not. Madam Minister, I think I've raised that before. I'm disappointed to see the same performance measure there, because I find that it's not very helpful, and I think we could do a lot better. I know you can do a lot better.

With respect to numbers, math has never been my strong suit, but I see that we've got a reduction of what I see as \$511,000 on the operating side. We had been at \$2.69 million; now we're down to \$2.18 million. So there's that reduction in operating, but there's a bit of a bump-up in terms of the fund. The fund I mean, of course, is the human rights, citizenship, and multiculturalism fund. It looks like we go from \$1.01 million to \$1.18 million. There's been a bit of an increase there, so your net reduction, if you take the fund and the operating costs, would be \$341,000. If my math is incorrect, I'm sure somebody will correct me. If it's accurate, Madam Minister, then would you particularize for me what's been cut and how that works its way through in terms of the system. Do we have fewer staff? Have we got fewer resources? Just how does that work its way through the system?

Now, as I say, I'm bopping around a little bit here. The commission provides a quarterly publication. I talked to a lot of people who are pretty knowledgeable in the human rights area, many of whom don't get it or aren't aware of it. What's the circulation? How broadly is that distributed on a quarterly basis? I suspect we could do better there, but I just don't know how many of those you send out on a regular basis, Madam Minister, and I'd like to know that.

Incidentally, I neglected to mention when I talked about the managing diversity conference that there was an absolutely scintillating speech by William Pentney, who was general counsel to the Canadian Human Rights Commission. I don't recall whether you were there for that, but my suggestion is that you get copies of the speech and provide it to every person that works in the Human Rights Commission in this province. If people wonder why they're doing this work, I thought he provided a very inspiring commentary in terms of why that should be the case.

The other thing is – the minister will remember that there had been a concern a number of years ago when the committed education budget for the Alberta Human Rights Commission was

a mere \$15,000. I know Mr. Macintosh was quick to point out that there were other education items; it's just that they weren't earmarked. I'm wondering if you can particularize for us the amount that's now committed to education.

Now, I want to ask some operational detail about the way the commission and the human rights panels are working. Since the July 1996 amendments to the Human Rights, Citizenship and Multiculturalism Act, you and I have had some correspondence, Madam Minister, and at one point – I guess it was November of 1997 – you advised me that 24 panels had been appointed. Then you gave me a breakdown, which was very helpful: 20 by the secretariat, four after appeal to the chief commissioner, so that made up the aggregate of 24. Then you went on to say that five panels had been held, three decisions provided, two pending. Six had been settled prior to the panel hearing and two decisions pending. So I'd like an update, please, in terms of what's happened since early November.

It's been a while since I visited the commission web site, and there had been some promise that two things would be posted to the web site that didn't used to be. One was the schedule of human rights panels, and the second was decisions of the human rights panels. So if you can advise me if, in fact, those things are now on the web site, and if not, when they will be.

Speaking of the web site, you may have been in the House the other night when I raised a concern that some provincial government departments actually require Albertans to accept a magic cookie and disclose some personal information as the cost or the price to be able to access a government of Alberta web site. I'd mentioned some examples. This is apparent for people that are using older software, not the current stuff. I'd like you to confirm that there's no attempt by the Alberta Human Rights Commission that when you visit the web site, you have to accept the magic cookie and have to disclose personal information to be able to get that. I think that's important.

9:18

Getting back to the settlements, I'd like to ask the minister: how many settlements achieved through the Human Rights Commission have involved a nondisclosure covenant? Madam Minister, I think you know my concern there. You provided me with one settlement where, in fact, there was not a nondisclosure confidentiality provision. But that, I guess, piques my interest because that suggests to me that maybe that's exceptional and that was why it was so easy to identify. What I'm trying to find out, for the reason I've explained to you before, is: is that a feature in virtually every settlement that's brokered by the commission? Then, I guess, I'd like to know how many settlements involved rehiring of employees if employment was the area of the discrimination. How many involved a cash settlement, whether it's a periodic payment or a lump sum payment?

Then what would be helpful to know in terms of the range of settlements – and presumably this would be readily available to you. How many would involve a cash settlement to a complainant of \$500 or less, how many between – and these are just arbitrary breakdowns; if there are more appropriate categories, let me know – \$501 and \$999, between \$1,000 and \$4,999, and then how many for \$5,000 and more? The Minister of Health thinks I'm picking on you, Madam Minister, but you know that there aren't that many. It's not nearly as much work as your colleague thinks I'm piling on.

If we turn for a moment to the human rights, citizenship, and multiculturalism fund – and I'm glad to see the Member for Calgary-Cross here, who may have some good information for us as well. Before the amalgamation how much was spent on

programs and services provided by the citizenship services branch as opposed to money that went out in grants to organizations, institutions, community groups? When I look back in material from the commission and/or community development, they talk about the two different groups.

Madam Minister, in November of 1997 we learned that the Calgary Police Service was maintaining a list of hate crimes against racial groups, and what was of concern is that they found that 34 crimes were determined by the police to be motivated by racial hatred. Sexual orientation – in other words, gay bashing – was targeted in 10 crimes, six of them ranging in severity from hospitalization to some kicks and so on. So in all we've got 61 crimes simply in the city of Calgary. This is as it's reported. I don't have the report in front of me, but this is what I was advised by the Police Service: 61 crimes in that city motivated in whole or in part by hatred directed against a group.

Now, I'd like to know – and I know the Justice minister will be anxious to help you after this meeting is over – whether that's tracked by the other police services. I think this is an important statistic. I understand that it is in Edmonton. My question would be: what's specifically being done in this respect to . . . [interjection] It was magic cookie, not magic mushroom. It's great to have so much help. We're going to get through this real fast. This is a very serious concern, and I'm interested in what the response is of our Human Rights Commission. What kinds of creative, innovative ideas has the commission developed to deal with people being beaten up because of their sexual orientation, people being beaten up because they're non-Caucasian?

I'm really interested in getting that information, and I'm going to suggest that you might work with the Minister of Justice to look at what between the commission and the Justice department and at least the major city police departments has to be done in terms of resources, in terms of sharing experiences to address it. So far it looks like it's a kind of ad hoc thing that's dealt with by different police services in their own way, and the Calgary Police Service, an award-winning police service, may be doing a great job, but we're not sure the same thing is going on in all other communities. So let's see if we can pull that together, Madam Minister, please.

MR. HAVELOCK: This is the last time, Madam Minister, I sit near the Member for Calgary-Buffalo.

MR. DICKSON: Well, I've always listened to this government talk about one-stop shopping, and I'm pleased, Mr. Chairman, that right here this evening all these ministers are here to help an MLA with some questions.

Okay. The other question I had. Your office had kindly provided me with grant listings of people who had benefited from the fund chaired by the Member for Calgary-Cross. Very interesting proposals; for example, the Highwood Business Development Corporation, the \$11,200 that was provided. There are probably some darn good reports that come from these groups. What I'm interested in is: what happens to those reports? Ought they not to be filed in the Legislature Library for those people that are interested in pursuing them? I mean, if any group is getting money to develop some kind of educational program, I'm confident that your department or the fund committee would require some sort of report, an assessment of whether it's working so that it could be replicated in another community.

I respectfully suggest that if it's not already being done, the reports from groups like the Spirit Rock Family Healing Society or the Hunting Hills High School Support Society be made available for not just curious MLAs but Albertans who would be

interested in finding out what's going on. It's not just an accountability issue. I think we've got lots of creative Albertans, and if some of those ideas can be shared more widely and given broader distribution, why wouldn't we be keen on doing that?

Finally, I'm very interested in the Cultural Diversity Institute, which has received I think one of the largest grants from the fund. I think it is the largest. This sounds like a pretty ambitious plan. It seems to me it was staged over a number of years and so on. Specifically, I'm interested in reports from that Cultural Diversity Institute, and I'd like to see that information brought into the forum that we all work in so we can learn what useful lessons there are from that. Maybe that can help us direct some funding and policy in Justice and some other areas. So I'm specifically interested in that kind of report, Madam Minister.

We'll leave it at that. Thanks very much, Madam Minister.

THE CHAIRMAN: Okay. Hon. minister, do you wish to answer those or let some other questions come?

9:28

MRS. McCLELLAN: I'll just answer a couple, and then I think I'll ask the Member for Calgary-Cross to talk a little bit about the human rights, citizenship, and multiculturalism education fund.

The annual reports. Certainly if there's any area that we can improve on in our annual reports, we will. I think they're quite complete. Our budget breakdowns for all agencies and foundations are available in volume 2 of the annual report. So I think that's there. We do have our quarterly reports, and again, I won't hold up the *Connections* magazine that is put out by my department. It has a very wide distribution to a variety of volunteer groups and agencies and is sort of made available as much as possible. If we can improve our distribution on that, we will. We could talk about that.

The managing diversity conference was an excellent conference, and yes, I was able to stay for almost all of Mr. Pentney's speech. If we can get a copy of it, I certainly would share it with my colleagues. It was excellent. It was really a very factual speech on why you not only should but must address these issues. I think it's very commendable that the private sector has really taken up this challenge, and I hope you will agree that the government should have some credit for this area, because we do promote these conferences and support them. We think this is an area of importance.

The human rights satisfaction measure. I certainly will talk to my colleague from Justice to see if we can utilize their performance measures. I must say that some of the ones we do have we got from Justice because, as I recall, when the business plans and performance measures were being formulated in the first place, Justice had one of the best models there was. So many of us borrowed from Justice, and I don't mind doing that again. I will get you the information, hon. member, on the number of panels and so on. Obviously, we can't deal with that.

The web site. As far as I know, there is no personal information sought on our web site by the commissioner or the department. I do understand – and I don't understand this lingo – that visitors to a web site can sometimes send cookies like viruses, and perhaps that could have happened. I'll direct certainly our IT area to ensure that no such device has been placed on our web site. We don't want personal information. That's not our objective.

So I'll give you all those stats that you want. I'd like the Member for Calgary-Cross to talk a little bit about the human rights education fund and give you some information there, because I think it has had quite a successful beginning. I'm quite pleased with the quality of the projects that have been brought forward.

THE CHAIRMAN: Calgary-Cross.

MRS. FRITZ: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Madam Minister. In regards to your question about the amount of moneys allocated to programs and grants in previous years, I'd like to bring that information back to you so that the dollar amounts are exact. Currently this year, though, I can tell you that \$399,000 has been allocated to the program side, which you would have seen through the managing diversity program that you had attended. The remaining dollars of the \$1.23 million are allocated to grants and to administrative costs, which are kept very low.

As you referred to the Cultural Diversity Institute and the \$250,000 which will be contributed over a period of approximately five years, what's hoped is that the Cultural Diversity Institute will take on the program side of what has been funded originally under the human rights, citizenship, and education fund, and that would free up more moneys for grants. Certainly I think your suggestion that the information from the Cultural Diversity Institute come back to MLAs and to other community organizations and agencies is worth while. Once it is up and running, I'm sure they'll do that.

You did ask a question on hate/bias crimes, though, and what has been allocated through our fund for hate/bias crimes. As you know, it is the Alberta community that brings forward the issues, and then we review those issues and allocate funds that we think are appropriate in assisting them. The Calgary Police Service has received several thousands of dollars over the past two to three years to assist with hate/bias crimes. I think this year it's a \$10,000 grant, and my understanding is that it's for the education of members so that they, in dealing with the issue, will be more cognizant of how to deal with it.

But also, more importantly, when I say that it should come from the community, it's not necessarily the police services that are applying for this particular grant. I know we have a grant that's coming in here within the next couple of weeks from Richard Gregory at Mount Royal who, I'm not sure if you know, who has also brought forward the whole issue of gay bashing that you had referred to. As I said, it has to come from the community as to what they see are the solutions, and we'll be addressing that in the near future.

I hope that helps with what you've asked.

MR. DICKSON: Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

The hon. Member for Red Deer-South, followed by Edmonton-Glengarry.

MR. DOERKSEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Minister of Justice has advised me to take 20 minutes. One of the goals I have from being in the Legislature is to one day be able to speak for 20 minutes. Unfortunately, I'm not gifted at that, and today will not likely be that day.

I do want to thank the minister on behalf of Red Deer. The Alberta Winter Games are fresh in our memory, of course. The Alberta Sport, Recreation, Parks and Wildlife Foundation has not only a financial support in that whole endeavour. They also provide expertise and direction to the volunteers and the board that runs it on behalf of the community, and I think we can't underestimate that either. It was very, very well received in Red Deer. I know the minister in her closing comments at the games indicated that that support would continue for the Winter Games. It's beneficial not only to the male and female athletes; it's also beneficial to the community, because it's very much a community

builder. It brings people together. It helps them to work toward a common goal, a common objective. It just promotes excellence within the community. I just wanted to make that comment on the Winter Games.

I'd also ask for your comments on the work that you are doing to support the motion that was passed in the House – I think it was this springtime – to help plan the development of trails with Alberta Trailnet. I know there have been a number of consultations going on in the province during this past few months. I don't believe there's any budgetary item directly related to that, but I know there is support being given toward that initiative from your department. I believe there was some work done on a paper to help develop those trails. I would appreciate your comments on that. I would not wish to see that initiative flounder, because as we've seen recently, Albertans and Canadians love to walk and use trails. It's something we should pursue.

I appreciate your comments, Madam Minister, on the community lottery boards. I don't want to dwell on that at length, other than just to make a comment that from the constituency of Red Deer-South we have had what I guess I would best describe as an irritant with the administration, and I think you're aware of those situations. I'm confident we can get over those and that it will all work out fine in the end.

You made some comments earlier on with respect to a new funding mechanism or formula. I believe it was to do with grants out of the Alberta Foundation for the Arts. We've had some discussions over time relating to the odd grant that goes against community standards. I'm wondering in this new formula whether that particular aspect of how we can meet community standards will be addressed or if there is consideration under that new funding formula.

The Member for Edmonton-Centre raised a question that I was going to raise, and that was to do with the visits to museums. I think the funding for that comes under the Alberta Historical Resources Foundation. It wasn't clear to me how we are making out with visits to those facilities, whether they are in fact on an increase and also the success we may or may not be having with using entrance fees as a way to raise revenue to help maintain and expand and improve on those facilities or whether that has become a barrier to access. So you may wish to comment further. I think the Member for Edmonton-Centre would like those questions as well.

9:38

I do have a number of questions to ask under AADAC, and maybe the chair of AADAC would like to respond. The first one – and I'm not sure how to address this, but it's always kind of been a bee in my bonnet. This is on page 197 of the budget document, where it talks about cost-effectiveness. We're comparing our expenditures per capita in Alberta to expenditures per capita in Manitoba, and we could compare favourably. That's one measure. Having said that, we have more admissions per 100,000 people than in the province of Manitoba. To put that in a measure could defeat the purpose, because if you make that a measure, to reduce the number per 100,000, then you may be denying access to people who in fact need the service. Yet at the same time I would hope we would move to a situation where there's less need for such a service. So how you measure that, Madam Minister, is something I would just ask you to consider in future business plans. I think the ultimate goal here is to reduce the need for people to have to access services AADAC offers.

The Minister of Family and Social Services, if I recall his business plan correctly, has identified some resources that are going to address fetal alcohol syndrome. I don't know if he has

consulted with AADAC on that initiative, because obviously that initiative will target mothers who have problems with addictions and alcohol abuse. So I would appreciate some clarification from the chair as to whether AADAC is involved in that and how they might help.

MRS. BURGNER: I couldn't hear it. I'm sorry.

MR. DOERKSEN: You got the part about fetal alcohol syndrome?

MRS. BURGNER: That was the part at the very end that I didn't hear.

MR. DOERKSEN: If you could explain if you have any link with the Minister of Family and Social Services in addressing that issue and what your role would be in that.

I don't think AADAC deals with smoking addictions, but I'll make an editorial comment here. Even with the latest release of all the initiatives to prevent smoking among young people – we targeted the businesses and the people that sell them and said, "You can't sell to minors," but we neglected to make what I would consider one simple, fundamental change, and that is: make it illegal for minors to be in possession of cigarettes. We do that with alcohol. We put age restrictions on driving. Why we don't do it for cigarettes, if we're really serious about that issue, is beyond me. But that's nothing to do with this. That's an editorial comment.

I will now relinquish the floor.

THE CHAIRMAN: Okay.

Madam Minister, and then your chairman.

MRS. McCLELLAN: I'll do the first, and then while the chairman of AADAC is getting her . . .

MRS. BURGNER: I'm ready.

MRS. McCLELLAN: Are you ready?

MRS. BURGNER: Go.

MRS. McCLELLAN: Okay. I'll be really quick.

The Winter Games. I have to say to the members from central Alberta who took part in helping host that with the community of Red Deer that they did an absolutely outstanding job. It was interesting to me that the arena facilities at Innisfail were used for hockey, and they were totally sold out for every game, which tells me there's a huge amount of interest. But more importantly, as I said in the Legislature, the quality of the competition and the young people's activities and behaviour were something we should all be extremely, extremely proud of, and certainly hats off to the huge volunteer community that supported those games, Tom Ganger and his army of volunteers. It's amazing how they keep coming back after just hosting other major events, such as the junior hockey and the Brier, and rise to the challenge each time.

MR. DOERKSEN: Something that's noted is that the number of athletes that came to Red Deer and community for the Winter Games is larger than the number that go to the Olympics. That's an amazing fact.

MRS. McCLELLAN: Over 2,500. So it is an amazing statistic and an amazing weekend. I wish that more of my colleagues had

been there. I attended events from early morning till late in the evening, and the enthusiasm was wonderful to see. To have games with that many young people and not a negative incident I think speaks volumes about the quality of our youth and their coaches and their volunteers.

I want to just take one moment to talk to you about the development of trails, because I know that's of interest to a number of members. Our department is working with the Trailnet group on putting together their information. We're not at this point anticipating funding trail development; I will say that. But we are working with other departments such as Transportation, Municipal Affairs, Agriculture – I think those are the main ones – to look at mitigating any concerns that arise around the use of trails. So we're working closely with the other departments on that. I expect to meet with the trails group probably in the next month, when the information they've gathered will be compiled and put with what we have, and have some more information for you.

I think you will also see that reflected in the active living strategy. It's interesting, ladies and gentlemen. We don't have to think that active living is expensive. The last survey we did from our department shows the same thing as the one before, that walking is still the most popular form of activity for the majority of Albertans that were surveyed, so probably the least expensive.

The new funding mechanisms for the Alberta Foundation for the Arts will indeed reflect community standards to some extent, because the grants will be calculated at a maximum of 20 percent of an organization's community-derived revenue, not including government grants. So obviously there is going to be more impetus for the arts community to produce activities that the community wants to attend.

With that, I will turn it over to my colleague – I'll write you a note on visitations and what's happening there – the chairman of AADAC.

THE CHAIRMAN: Calgary-Currie.

MRS. BURGNER: Sure. Thanks for your comments, Victor. The interesting thing about Manitoba is that one of the reasons we use them for comparisons is because they have probably the most comparable addiction system. It speaks well for AADAC in that we have a longer history of this type of program, so the research we have in order to actually make good comparable data is with the province, and that's why we use it. The statistics are in front of you. I think what you're asking is: is there a more appropriate way for measurement? In just talking with our executive, we are working in order to develop better national/international information, and one of the reasons AADAC shares funding with the federal government and belongs to different national and international agencies is that we can get the data we need.

That brings it closer to home though. We still have a significant number of people who have addiction issues, and we've seen those. Some of our performance measures would suggest that they're dropping, but we still have increases in the area that you focused on, tobacco. I'd be more than happy to work with the Justice minister on any initiative to make it illegal for youth to be in possession of cigarettes. Clearly, while there is a downward trend with adults, there is not under track tobacco consumption control. The proportion of adult Albertans aged 15 and plus who identify themselves as smokers has gradually declined, but the increase for females aged 15 to 24 is up to 48 percent in 1996 compared with 31 percent of Canadian women the same age before. I'll put this together in a factual answer so that you have all the details.

You're right about AADAC's mandate. It was not specifically identified as one of our opportunities under the performance review, but we do work in conjunction with Health. Community Development recently had some initiatives on youth, and this would be one that we would partnership with as well.

9:48

I have a full fact sheet for you on tobacco consumption. That is an interesting initiative. We had the young people in the Legislature just yesterday who had basically worked with Community Development to launch their own program, and quite frankly, peer pressure in young people is a serious issue. If making it illegal were a solution, I think we could try to deal with it, but it's much better if the young people themselves are coming forward, and we will certainly support them.

From an efficiency point of view, the fetal alcohol syndrome is one of two major initiatives in the way AADAC is looking at being preventative. We have transition to birth as one major initiative, and the other is transition to adolescence. We're dealing with the fetal alcohol syndrome in conjunction with the children's initiative that Pearl is working with and Family and Social Services. We've got some significant work to do on this. We know that the young people who are born into this world with this problem are a health concern to us. Sometimes the effects of fetal alcohol are not even manifested, and as the children move into school systems, they're not diagnosed. So the focus on this we believe will be significant in reducing some of the social and health related costs as the children age. We are working with Health, as I said, and with the minister, and we've taken the lead actually in helping co-ordinate the business plans.

In terms of the budget discussion, one of the things that is really important in the co-ordination of not just children's services but the ministries that are involved is that when we're working on initiatives that partnership be identified. In fact, David Steeves, who is working with Pearl, is assisting us so that when we bring forward . . .

THE CHAIRMAN: Hon. member, it's been several times here. I think I might just remind you. I know it's rather folksy. Several times you've referred to hon. members by – you can just refer to them as hon. member or hon. minister or name their portfolio or name their seat.

MRS. BURGNER: You're right. I'm sorry. Thank you. My mistake. I thought I was still at SPC. I appreciate the direction, Mr. Chairman.

The point I wanted to make is that we have to be consistent in our business planning process so that each department that's working on these types of shared initiatives, their priorities come forward in a collective model. That is something that we're working with the children's initiative on. So I think not only will you see very good strength to the fetal alcohol program; you'll see a model for future planning. I hope that answers your question, and I'll submit the transcripts on the tobacco control for you.

Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Glengarry, and we would remind you of the time. Perhaps shortly before 10 you could move that the committee do rise and report progress.

MR. BONNER: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I would like to start by thanking the hon. Justice minister for my name tag. They're much appreciated.

MR. HAVELOCK: It was my pleasure.

MR. BONNER: Hon. minister in charge of seniors, if you could give me written replies to the answers, it will give us time. If those are in the form of basketballs, they will be deeply appreciated as well.

All righty. I'd like to address the issue of Alberta seniors, and I loved your slogan: building on our strengths. Alberta's seniors certainly are the strengths of this province, and it's through their vast wealth of experience and knowledge that this province is the desirable place to live in Canada.

In looking at this, I get many views from seniors in the province that show me the other side, that they have deep concerns. Some of these are reflected in just what's happened to them since 1993. Since 1993 aggregate spending on seniors has dropped from about \$1.1 billion to about \$1 billion in 1996-97, and over the same period of time the population has aged. There were about 240,000 senior citizens in the province in 1992, and today we have about 290,000. The per senior expenditure in 1992 was \$4,583, and in 1999 this expenditure is expected to be \$3,436. So there's been quite a decrease here.

Of course, one of the things we have to look at is our growing seniors population, and all these figures reflect it. As well, when I look at the figures put out by Stats Canada, of all the provinces in Canada, Alberta has the lowest percentage of seniors, so it is a challenge, I think, that we can address. It is a challenge that we have to address, particularly when I look at the departments of Health, Family and Social Services, Municipal Affairs. They've had many of their programs since 1993 reduced or eliminated. These are people that planned for their retirement, but the rules have drastically shifted, so the comments I am going to make are certainly going to reflect the views of these people that have been hit with these cuts.

Our seniors population is increasing by approximately 9,000 per year, roughly a 3 percent increase. This is sort of one of those situations like running a race and you're always second. No matter how hard you work, you're not going to catch up, but it's something you have to do. So without any further preamble, because we're running short of time, I'll run through a few of my questions here.

My first question is: why is the growth in the financial assistance portion of the Alberta seniors' benefit, which is 0.3 percent this year, not keeping pace with the growth in the seniors population, which is approximately 3 percent, nor with inflation of 2.1 percent?

My second question: how are seniors to find the money for increased user fees, property taxes, drug costs, and utility increases when they are on fixed incomes?

Third question: why are administration costs increasing by 29.5 percent this year over last while financial assistance to seniors is being increased by only 0.3 percent? Have we considered a cap on administration costs so that more money can be put directly to

the use of the seniors. Given that \$10 million was required for the special needs assistance program in 1997-98, why is this program being cut back to \$7 million for this fiscal year? Does it mean that we are not getting the money to the seniors that really need it? My next questions will probably help you answer these.

Could you please provide an update of the number of special needs assistance applications that you've had, the number accepted, the number rejected, the average award for accepted applications? What percentage of the requests did these awards make up? Is there any breakdown by constituencies, municipalities, or health region in these statistics? When will income threshold levels and assistance amounts of the Alberta seniors' benefit be altered so that the separate SNA bureaucracy is unnecessary, given the reference to a review of seniors' plight in the throne speech continues and their sons and daughters expect an update of the excellent 1992 publication, *Older Albertans*?

Perhaps it's time we had an impartial, comprehensive, quantitative survey of how seniors are faring in Alberta with respect to demographics, income, health, and accommodation. What are the estimates of in-migration of seniors to Alberta from other provinces? We do expect that to increase as . . .

MRS. McCLELLAN: Because it's such a good place for seniors to come. We have the best programs in Canada. That's why we had 1,200, four times any other province.

9:58

MR. BONNER: Well, they're coming with their families. It's good for their families.

Madam Minister, we have been using Treasury's projections of the growth of the seniors population through aging of about 9,000 per year. Have you any more current projections? Is the \$60,000 for capital investment going to be enough this year, especially in light that over half a million dollars was taken from seniors for computer equipment? Again, wouldn't this money have been better spent going directly to the seniors rather than for this equipment? What adjustments are being made in the ASB or the SNA programs to acknowledge skyrocketing rental rates in places like Fort McMurray, Grande Prairie, and Calgary?

I would now, Mr. Chairman, suggest that we adjourn so we can rise and report. Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Glengarry has moved that the subcommittee do now rise and report progress. All those in support of this motion, please say aye.

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

THE CHAIRMAN: Opposed, please say no. Carried.

[The subcommittee adjourned at 10:01 p.m.]

