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Public Accounts Committee
Legislative Assembly

April 26, 1978
8:30 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. Taylor

MR. CHAIRMAN: Will Public Accounts come to order, please. You have the minutes. Are there any corrections? Otherwise a motion that they be received would be in order. Moved by Mr. Butler that the minutes be received. All in favor? Against, if any? Carried. The last meeting we had a query from Mr. Clark regarding information from public accounts yet to be tabled. We agreed at that time that this would be discussed at this particular meeting. Is anybody ready to make a comment?

MR. McCRAE: Mr. Chairman, if I might, I looked into that area. It is our conclusion that the public accounts that have not yet been published, the only proper approach to getting that type of information is through the Assembly as a whole, by notice of motion. I think that has been the traditional practice, and I don't see any reason we should depart from that. There are some very obvious reasons why that is the right approach. Unless the member wants to debate the matter, I would simply suggest we follow that practice in future.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Chairman, I take it the government, in their usual manner, have decided that they're going to take the position that until public accounts -- which are 18 months behind, and getting longer all the time -- come out, that information will only be able to be acquired by motion for a return here in the Assembly. Mr. McCrae, I point out to you, sir, that in the past the Provincial Auditor has been the person responsible for the preparation and also the making public of the public accounts. We're now moving to a situation where an employee of the Provincial Treasurer's department, the provincial Controller, will basically have that responsibility. That's a completely different situation, sir, from an employee of the Provincial Treasurer having that responsibility, as opposed to an employee of the provincial Legislature -- the Provincial Auditor. That's why I raised the question last week. I think that's a factor that the government would be very wise to reconsider. Because up until now the Provincial Auditor has been a very responsible person, and has had the responsibility also of preparing the accounts and giving them to the Provincial Treasurer. Then he and the Auditor -- and Mr. Rogers, you correct me if I'm wrong -- at a mutually agreeable date release the public accounts. That situation has now changed, Mr. McCrae, to the point where the Controller, who this Legislature has no control over at all and who is an employee of the Provincial Treasurer's department, will have that responsibility. That's why, in my judgment, it was appropriate to raise the issue. From what the hon. member has said, the government has decided that the route we'll go is by means of motion for a return here in the Assembly. I think that's a regrettable decision the government has made, and I'd ask the hon.

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minister to elaborate on some of the reasons he referred to. Because the basic difference to me is that we move from a situation where an employee of this Assembly has had that responsibility to an employee within the Provincial Treasurer's department. That's a completely different situation, under the new Financial Administration Act.

MR. McCRAE: Mr. Chairman, could I respond by saying the problem with trying to present information that is not yet made available through public accounts is that the matter has not been finalized and completed yet. So we are in effect asking for information which will cause a full inquiry, investigation, and review, and may in fact not be adequate and complete when it is presented. I recognize the difference in procedures that will follow with the appointment of an Auditor General for Alberta. I still feel, Mr. Chairman, the appropriate approach for information that is not generally available is through the Legislature as a whole; that is, the motion-for-return procedure. I think the hon. member will find that is a satisfactory means of proceeding with gathering that information. If it isn't, Mr. Chairman, I would suggest the proper place to debate that issue would be in the Legislature, not this committee. I just recommend to the hon. member that he perhaps put it on the Order Paper on private members' day for debate. (interjections) I think we can air the matter fully then.

MR. CLARK: They'd just speak it out.

MR. McCRAE: No, no. I think we've indicated many, many times if there is merit to a proposal and if the arguments are well presented, which isn't often the case, the government will listen. In any event, it is my recommendation to the Assembly that the matter be dealt with by a motion for a return, as it always has been.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Any further discussion? At this time I would rule that . . .

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Chairman, one comment to the hon. member. The committee here is responsible to itself, can make decisions as to the kind of information it wants or doesn't want. I just don't see this idea of moving it over to the the Legislature . . .

MR. CLARK: Stonewall.

MR. R. SPEAKER: . . . and giving that kind of attitude. That's just not the mechanics we've followed for years and is precedent in many legislatures. We're autonomous with regard to issues such as this, relative to public accounts. I just can't agree with that nonsense.

MR. YOUNG: Mr. Chairman, at the risk of not fully understanding the issue, because I was out for a moment, I believe the issue to be whether or not we can obtain requests of the Auditor, information prior to the public appearance of the accounts for that year. I would submit, Mr. Chairman, that if we go the route that prior to the publication of the accounts for a given fiscal year we go the route of making those public in bits and pieces, it would in principle be possible for any member or for any member with the support of this committee to ask for portions of the public accounts, until in effect all the public accounts are available prior to the publication. I will admit that's an unlikely event. But it is a possibility.

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The second point, that I think is more to the point, is that advance request from the Auditor of a portion of the public accounts presumes that the Auditor has completed the public accounts to the degree that he can be satisfied that on total completion of the public accounts there would not be any change in the portion which is released. I submit that that is the key issue at hand. I submit that that would be an unfair request to the Auditor. I think there is no way the Auditor could in fact be assured that prior to total completion of the public accounts and total completion of his audit, he could be 100 per cent certain that the information on a small portion of the accounts could be 100 per cent accurate.

I think it's a different matter, by way of order for a return, information which may be contained in the public accounts; that is, through a minister. I would submit that's the route that ought to be taken. I think when the public accounts are made public they should be made public in a general way to everybody. As the hon. member and Leader of the Opposition knows, there is quite a bit of information available through ministers. Their credibility rides on the correctness of that information. So they have to do their utmost to assure that the information they submit is in fact correct, when they respond to an order for a return.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Chairman, I'm reluctant to get into this debate, but I'm being sorely tempted. First of all, I don't think there's much doubt that it would be much better for all of us if we had the completed public accounts. But, as has been said, the accounts are now on the average of about 18 months behind. It seems to me that in that sort of situation it's clearly the prerogative of this committee, and not the Legislature as a whole, to decide whether or not we wish to obtain additional information. Now, if that information is not available -- in fact, if the Auditor is not 100 per cent sure, as the member from Jasper Place has indicated -- then it would appear improper for him to release that information. But that is surely a decision the Auditor can make.

The question as to whether or not as members of the committee we can seek that information is surely something that is our purview, as the Public Accounts Committee. That's the sort of thing we as a committee have a right to pursue if the function of a Public Accounts Committee is to be relevant at all to our legislative system. If we have to go back to the Legislature in total and put motions for returns on the Order Paper, then we know what the batting average is on motions for returns when it comes to anything that's controversial.

But I think it really comes back, Mr. Chairman, if I may, to the important question of what is the role of a Public Accounts Committee. Everything from the fact that the chairman of the Public Accounts Committee is someone from the opposition side of the House, that the precedent has been established over the years, the fact that as a committee we are here as watchdogs, the issue in my view is who should ask for that information where. It seems to me totally proper that as members of the committee if we find that there are gaps we would like to fill out, then the place to ask for that information is in the committee, not to go back to the Assembly and battle it out there. If that information isn't available, fair ball, it isn't available. But I don't think that the proper investigations carried out by this committee should be in any way inhibited by having to go back to the Legislature and put into the partisan political realm questions that should properly be discussed and debated in this committee.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Members of the committee, four points stand out in my mind in regard to this item. First of all, the committee does not meet until after the public accounts are tabled by the Treasurer. Secondly, we have a responsibility to study the written or published public accounts. I haven't seen anywhere where we have a responsibility to study those that are not published. Thirdly, I question very much whether the Provincial Auditor has any authority to issue this information at this time before they're published. Fourthly, I would suggest that a committee cannot take onto itself duties that were not assigned to it by the Legislature. So in view of that, I would rule at this time that we confine ourselves to the published accounts.

MR. CLARK: With all due respect, sir, to you making a ruling, it seems to me the more appropriate way is that this committee should propose a motion, and we should go that route. In light of the time constraints we have this morning, how would it be if we hold this item over until the next meeting of Public Accounts, which will be next week, when we've got a bit more flexibility as far as time is concerned and we wouldn't have the gentlemen from AGT having the experience. Well, at least we could have them a half hour later so we could perhaps resolve this matter first, so we wouldn't waste their valuable time. We wouldn't want them to feel there's any cross-subsidization here. (interjections)

MR. McCRAE: It seems to me that everything that needs to be said has been said today. Rather than redebate the thing next week we might well pursue it today. I don't know who is going to be here next week. I would assume it would be the honorable gentlemen over yonder, or Alberta Disaster Services in their place. Whatever, there will be witnesses over there. Whoever they are, I would suggest we conclude the matter right now. (interjections) I think you've summed it up very well indeed. The four points you mentioned certainly are compelling logic to me. I would be happy to see the committee make a decision on it this morning, rather than rehashing it one week from today. I can't imagine why they want to postpone it. It's been deferred two weeks already, and I think we all have our minds reasonably made up as to what the function or responsibility of this committee is and what the responsibility of the Legislature is. They are quite clear to me.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, does the committee want to make a motion?

AN HON. MEMBER: No.

MR. LYSONS: I move that we settle this today.

AN HON. MEMBER: You're acting like a spoiled brat. (interjections)

MR. CLARK: Strong member from Viking.

MR. CHAIRMAN: We have a motion that we settle it today. Are you ready for the question? All in favor? Against, if any? The motion is carried.

MR. YOUNG: Mr. Chairman, this is going to be reaching. But perhaps this motion will resolve the matter: "that the material that can be requested of the Auditor by this

committee be limited to that time frame which has been contained in the reports made public in the public accounts by the Auditor".

MR. CHAIRMAN: Moved by Mr. Young that the study be confined to the public accounts that are published. Any discussion?

MR. CLARK: Mr. Chairman, I simply can't vote for that motion. I'm sure that doesn't surprise members of the committee. I think there are four points that have to be made. First of all, traditionally in this Assembly, until a few years ago the public accounts were available to members of the Legislature in October, sometimes September, at the very latest November. The public accounts of the province have grown now to the point -- and this is no reflection on the Auditor at all, Mr. Auditor -- so that MLAs don't get that information until January or February. In this case it was March this year, I believe. I could stand corrected there, but certainly after the first of the year. That's the first point.

Secondly, Mr. Chairman, the decision we're making here this morning just relates to the present Provincial Auditor or the acting Auditor General for a short period of time. Because later on the provincial Controller takes on much of the responsibility; that is, an employee of the Provincial Treasurer's department and not an employee of the Legislature. That is a very, very major difference as far as I'm concerned. That's why I believe the government would be very wise to reconsider this matter. Because I listened carefully this morning, and the acting Government House Leader, Mr. McCrae in this case, made no reference to that very major difference as I see it. I just make the point to the members once again: Mr. Rogers is an employee of the Legislative Assembly. Under the new Financial Administration Act, in the future public accounts presentation as I understand it will basically become the responsibility of the Controller in the Provincial Treasurer's department. That is a very major difference, gentlemen. I think this committee should reckon very carefully what it's suggesting here this morning.

Two other points. The point that was made, if the information was requested before the Auditor was 100 per cent complete -- certainly I have the greatest confidence in this Auditor. I'm sure no Controller would make information available to any MLAs if he didn't feel the information was 100 per cent complete. But you see, the kind of information one wants . . . Let's take a very specific example. Let's assume a consulting firm -- take one of many consulting firms -- have had a tradition of doing a sizable amount of work for the government yearly. Public accounts are now some 18 months behind. There's no way we can get the information as to how much, let's say, the XYZ consulting firm has done if the House isn't in session at all. It isn't a matter of trying to get everything in the public accounts prior to the public accounts being released, but it's that kind of specific information. Now, it can be a consulting firm; it can be a variety of other areas. That's the kind of flexibility we're not going to have as a result of this motion. That's why I'd like to ask the government members to ponder this thing for a week, to see if there isn't some other mechanism that can be established. I'm positive that if we could work out an arrangement where we could go to the Controller for this kind of information, or the Auditor General if that's the route the committee decides is most appropriate, copies go to the Provincial Treasurer or to all members, if we want, of information that they would feel is 100 per cent complete. It isn't a matter of trying to get the public accounts information before. But it's that kind of specific information

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that we're now getting to the point is about 18 months behind. That's why I ask the hon. member who moved the matter to take it back and consider it, if you would.

MR. McCRAE: May I just make two points, Mr. Chairman. One is that certainly this committee is a committee that makes its own rules. There's no doubt about that. We have in the past departed in different directions and have asked for information that we wanted in a specific case. The other point I would make is that the usual route of getting information that is not yet published is through the motion-for-return process. The difficulty we're having with the hon. Leader of the Opposition is we're trying to set a pattern of conduct or rules in the future when we don't know specifically what it is he's asking for. That is the difficulty with the whole debate.

I thought your summation of the situation was very, very accurate, Mr. Chairman. I really think the proper way to deal with this is when any member, not particularly the Leader of the Opposition, has specific information they want through the Public Accounts Committee they should make the request to the committee and we'll deal with it as a specific question, rather than to set future rules on a very general area that we don't quite understand the ramifications of. So, Mr. Chairman, I simply suggest that we've had a good discussion on the matter. The usual route for getting information that is not yet published is through the motion-for-return route. If there is specific information that this committee or members thereof want, then they should bring it to this committee as a specific question, ask the question; we can debate and agree or not agree to the specific question. I think that's where we should leave it, Mr. Chairman.

MR. NOTLEY: I'd like to have the motion read again. It seems to me what we're doing here is we are ruling out that being a practical alternative. But I'd like to have Mr. Young's motion read again. Because it seems to me that what the motion in a sense says is that we're going to confine our discussion and any debate or investigation to the published material. If there are questions, as Mr. McCrae indicated, that in fact would, as I interpret Mr. Young's motion -- I could be corrected, and I'd be interested in having the thing read again -- foreclose us raising questions in this committee and seeking additional information if the motion is passed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Any further discussion? Are you ready for the question?

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Chairman, I wonder if we could read the motion again. If what we're doing is foreclosing additional questions, I think that's a rather important question. As I interpreted Mr. Young's motion, it struck me that it was fairly clear what the intent was. So, I'd like the motion read, if that's possible.

MR. CHAIRMAN: "That the material that is requested of the Auditor by this committee be limited to that time frame which has been contained in the published accounts."

MR. NOTLEY: There was some qualifier, unless "is requested by the committee" is one possibility. But as things stand now, what we're talking about quite clearly is the time frame within the published accounts. Therefore it would foreclose the very point that Mr. McCrae was making. We really couldn't be asking questions about additional information. We've just passed a motion saying we're going to restrict our discussion to published accounts.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The exact wording as taken down by the secretary: "moved by Mr. Young that the material that is requested of the Auditor by this committee be limited to that time frame which has been contained in the reports made public in the public accounts by the Auditor".

MR. YOUNG: Mr. Chairman, I'd like to speak to the matter again, if I may. I'd like to make it clear that I find myself, in making that motion, somewhat in a dilemma. I say that because it does two things: it clarifies, but it clarifies in a limiting manner. Now, if I am forced to vote, if I am forced to make a decision today, then that's the route I personally want to go. Because I see the basic issue being whether it is possible for this committee or members to request of the Auditor or someone in the capacity of attesting to the Legislative Assembly the correctness in total of all of the public accounts -- of any member of the Legislature requesting from such an official a portion of his work, if you will, or a portion of the accounts which he may have reviewed and may have reviewed in part only, prior to the publication of those accounts for the public in general. I think that's an unfair request to make. The information which would be contained in that request could, I believe, be obtained through a motion for a return in the usual fashion. So it would not, however, have the attestation or the verification of the Auditor on it. It would have the ministerial commitment which comes with a response to the House.

Mr. Chairman, if we are changing our system of control and auditing procedure to the Legislative Assembly, and are just embarking on that change now, I think it would be unfortunate for this committee to make this kind of decision today.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. YOUNG: But I think that the issue raised, if Her Majesty's Opposition on the committee insists upon it being settled, is either going to have to accept this position today, as far as I'm personally concerned, or else should take the matter to the House. Because it may be that it involves a larger issue, and one which there may be some uncertainty surrounding, and which all Members of the Legislative Assembly -- because I think it may affect all members -- should be a party to making. So, Mr. Chairman, in closing I would say that I would be happy to have the matter dropped completely from this committee if everyone is willing. If that's the case, I'll not stand in the way of a request to me to withdraw the motion. But if we have to make a motion, then this is the kind of motion that I personally am going to support and urge all other members to support. So in closing, Mr. Chairman, I leave it to the committee either to forget the whole thing or let's get on and vote on this motion.

MR. NOTLEY: I wonder if I could move that the motion be tabled until next week, so we have sufficient time to consider the implications of it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The motion to table is not debatable. Those in favor of tabling the motion? Opposed? The motion is carried.

MR. McCRAE: I don't know what you want to talk about, Bob.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. We have with us today the hon. Dr. Warrack; Mr. Gordon Ades, the President of AGT; Mr. C.L. Keatly, Vice-President of Administration; J.A. Barnes, Vice-President of Operations; J.C.D. Mallet-Paret, Vice-President of Corporate Planning and Development; A.J. Halhead, Vice-President of Finance; and H.J. Childs, Vice-President of Engineering. I would ask the hon. Dr. Warrack if he wants to make an opening statement at this time.

DR. WARRACK: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Very quickly, because we want to maximize the time available to the committee. Two points: first of all, the additional information on breakdown of AGT personnel by location and job function has been provided to you as chairman and, as I understand it, has been circulated to all members of the committee. The one question that did come up I'd like to clarify; that is, the numbers that are there are those numbers that pertain to the end of the calendar year, December 31, 1977. Members will note that the total employee compilation, 10,357, corresponds to the employee total that is in the 1977 annual report. That's the first point.

The second point: an extremely important matter has been under way by review not only within Alberta but across Canada, and work was ongoing at the time we last met two weeks ago. Some important developments have taken place since. That's on the question of interconnection, particularly systems interconnection which is different and much more important than the question of terminal interconnection. But work on systems interconnection had been discussed in some detail by provinces at the communications ministers' meeting. I believe I mentioned that in my remarks two weeks ago, that meeting having taken place the last week in March in Prince Edward Island. Since that time there has been a review of that subject at the western premiers' meeting in Yorkton. An important part of the communique from that meeting relates to the concerns about the possibility of systems interconnection being granted by CRTC in an application before it. Moreover, just yesterday in Ottawa AGT took part in the hearings on that subject. I thought this was an important enough matter and is of major financial consequence, whichever way that decision ends up going, that it should be brought to the committee's attention as an important development since we last met two weeks ago. That was the second point, and all I contemplate saying so as to maximize the time of the committee with respect to comments and questions, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Chairman, I wonder, before I get involved in the first question, if I could ask Dr. Warrack: in the information you provided us this morning, how many employees would I find in an organization like Altel Data?

DR. WARRACK: Mr. Keatley, I believe you were compiling this information for us. Perhaps you have that additional detail in hand.

MR. KEATLEY: Mr. Chairman, I don't have that information on hand. I think the information that was supplied here was the information we were asked for. If we want a further breakdown than this, I think we'd have to go back and check our records further. I couldn't give you a breakdown of the number of people we have in every department at the present time. I might add for the information, Mr. Chairman, that Altel Data is included in the figures for the business communications. I think it's fourth from the bottom.

MR. CLARK: Also, Mr. Chairman, to Dr. Warrack or perhaps Mr. Keatley. Mr. Keatley, could you give us a breakdown in general terms -- I appreciate you might not have the information today -- what portion of the staff of AGT are involved in non-competitive ventures that are regulated by the Public Utilities Board and what portion of the staff would be in the competitive area that is not regulated by the Public Utilities Board?

DR. WARRACK: I'm not sure -- and I'll ask advice on this by way of detail -- whether there is any reason to set up numbers or a compilation on a basis other than providing the services or telecommunications functions to people within Alberta. My understanding is the compilation is done on the basis of the kinds of functions that are provided. In terms of breakdowns such as that, which may very well be something the Public Utilities Board is or has been looking at, I'm not sure that that's a breakdown there is any reason for other than perhaps in the interests of the committee if they wanted that special analysis done. Mr. Keatley would probably be able to add for us.

MR. BARNES: Mr. Chairman, perhaps I could answer that for Mr. Keatley. I think the information that Mr. Clark really is looking for is a little difficult to assess. If he would specify the types of services he's really interested in and the locations, I would do my best to go back and go through the staff and apportion time for the different employees who work on more than one function. Because it's not quite like the corner grocery store. We don't have them split off so they're that easy to identify. However, if it's essential for his purposes, I'd be pleased to try to provide him with the details of that.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Chairman, that would be extremely helpful, Mr. Barnes. I relate to the comments you, sir, made before the Public Utilities Board when you indicated earlier, with regard to this question of cross-subsidization, that AGT was in the process -- and I hope I'm accurate here; I'm sure you'll correct me if I'm not -- of getting its accounting situation in such a way so that you could tell what the situation was as far as competitive and non-competitive portions of AGT's operation. I'm sure if you're doing that, I'm sure you'd be able to give us some information as to the number of man-years, or that kind of information, that are involved in the areas that are regulated by the Public Utilities Board, and the number of man-years that operate in the areas which are not regulated by the Public Utilities Board.

MR. BARNES: We are indeed in the process in the telephone industry of adjusting our accounting procedures. I think the time frame to get them into a situation where we would have some type of accurate assessment of this situation is probably on the order of five years. So the information I will be providing will be on an allocated basis. There will be considerable judgment involved in it. I will also identify the types of services for Mr. Clark.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Barnes, I would appreciate that information very much. How long will that take? I wouldn't want to think it might be five years. Seriously though, are we looking at something we could possibly have sometime in May, or is it something we should not expect until, let's say, October when the House may be sitting again?

DR. WARRACK: Mr. Chairman, if I could just interject: we would try in every way we can to accommodate the committee. But I might say this too: there are some areas in AGT operations that we're working very hard on right now, a main one of these in fact being the efforts to have further improvements in extended flat rate calls. I think all members will appreciate that if you put a crash program of time into one area you have to hold up the others. It might be that we'd have to hold up the others. It might be that we'd have to hold up the analysis that's necessary to get the EFRC improvements available further across rural Alberta, if we have to rush the preparation of certain tasks. (interjections) So I just thought I'd mention this now. The hon. members can moan and groan like usual, but it's a fact. I think it's a fact that should be put to the committee.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Chairman, I resist . . .

MR. R. SPEAKER: Don't even react to that.

MR. CLARK: . . . the temptation to comment on the minister's comment there, for this kind of information to hold back the effort for the re-election of the Conservatives program is ridiculous. I would just simply ask Mr. Barnes one last question. I don't want to put Mr. Barnes on the spot with the minister here. But can we expect this information in all likelihood by the fall? Or can we have it within a relatively short period of time, Mr. Minister? Because your own people have indicated they're working on this before the Public Utilities Board. Those comments were made last summer, so it would seem to me the information would be pretty readily available; it wouldn't be a matter of having to stop the program you're talking about.

DR. WARRACK: The hon. leader must not have been listening to the answer, but I was. My understanding is that it's quite correct that the accounting alignments, which are not only a question of what makes sense for AGT operations and, moreover, meets the requirements of the Public Utilities Board insofar as the regulation of Alberta Government Telephones is concerned, but also consistency among telephone companies across Canada. Now this summer, as the hon. member correctly points out, it was mentioned during the course of the discussions of the Public Utilities Board that this work was going on. But the Vice-President of Operations also indicated that this was a kind of five-year time frame process. It hardly seems from that that you can draw the conclusion that it ought to be readily available at hand without a crash program of effort. Now, if the committee wants us to in fact undertake a crash program in order to try to have this available in 60 or 90 days, we're at the pleasure of the committee and will do so. I'm simply pointing out that there may be some other important work to members and their constituents that may have to be held up while we do it.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd like to ask the committee: I see in your annual report that you have \$2.8 million common shares in Telesat. I was wondering if you could give us some kind of idea of just what was the idea in purchasing these shares, and what is the benefit to AGT from being involved in Telesat? That's the satellite that goes around.

DR. WARRACK: That is an important question, because Telesat provides a capability within Canada of telecommunications messages being transferred by satellite. Incidentally, there

is also a federal Crown corporation called Telglobe, formerly Canadian Overseas Telecommunications Corporation, that handles the Canadian side of that sort of operation internationally. But the Telesat matter is an important one to the future development of Canada. As I understand it, all telephone companies in Canada are in a share-holding position, though it is primarily a federal Crown corporation. There is that sort of consortium nature about it. Perhaps Mr. Halhead, Vice-President of Finance, might be able to elaborate for us.

MR. HALHEAD: Thank you, Dr. Warrack. Mr. Chairman, I don't know whether I can comment too much beyond that we have shares, as do the other common carriers including CN and CP and the federal government, in Telesat. Telesat was set up to pioneer -- and I use the word "pioneer" -- satellite communications in Canada. Our portion that was assigned and agreed to was the equivalent to that \$2,799,000. Now, perhaps Mr. Mallet-Paret or Mr. Ades, who have had more involvement with Telesat, might be able to describe the functions. But that amount represents shares that we hold. They were allocated on a prescribed basis, in relation to the number of companies participating. Does that cover that question?

MR. ADES: Mr. Chairman, the investment in Telesat, as you know, is something that all common carriers have done in order to get the bird in the air. We have also just recently brought Telesat people into the Trans-Canada Telephone System for the benefit of the communications system. The satellite, gentlemen, is no different than a microwave link across the country, except that there is only one repeater and that's in the air. The circuits we use on there are of course allotted across the country to the different locations to the different companies. They're used for toll circuits right now, and undoubtedly they will be used for a great number of other products later on. We all have invested in the satellite to make sure that it flies.

MR. MALLET-PARET: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I haven't got too much further to add, other than to say that when Telesat Canada first launched its satellite a few years ago, it was deemed by the telecommunications companies across Canada, including our friends CN-CP, that this was a national issue. It was important, mostly from a point of view of parking spaces in space for satellites. There are only a certain number of spaces in the orbit around the earth where satellites can be placed, which will service Canada. It was very important from the point of view that Canada get a satellite into one of those spaces and get squatter's rights, if you wish, to put the satellite up there.

It was that historical background that caused the decision to be made that it was a national issue, and that the telecommunications companies in total in Canada should arrange to do this. Now the federal government, through their arrangements, financed part of the operation and they asked that telecommunications companies in Canada also contribute to the financing of putting that satellite in space. That's basically how and why it got there. I think, considering the fact that Canada was the first country in the world to have a national satellite operation -- there were others, of course, that worked internationally; the U.S.A., for example, has got a number of them since. That may be some helpful background.

From that, of course, we have developed to the stage where now the Telesat Canada is a part of the Trans-Canada Telephone System. Our plans there are that its facilities, which were pointed out were nothing more than similar facilities to any terrestrial facilities, will be completely integrated into the networks of the Trans-Canada in total and will

provide us with additional types of facilities we can use in the most economical manner. For example, they're very useful for television transmission at great distances. It will give us jointly, telecommunications in Canada, that opportunity to use that technology to the benefit of Canadians. And AGT is playing its relative part with respect to that.

MR. THOMPSON: Thanks, Mr. Chairman. I wonder, could you people give us some idea of what Telesat has coming up in the future? Obviously the program has been fairly successful. Is there going to be another satellite coming up, or have they got anything lined up in this way -- new technology in satellites? I was wondering just what's coming on in the future in this program.

DR. WARRACK: Mr. Chairman, I had commented for about 20 seconds on this subject and I said all I know. So I'll quickly turn the matter over to Vice-President of Engineering Jack Childs.

MR. CHILDS: Mr. Chairman, there is a program for the development of the satellite system by Telesat for the participation by Trans-Canada Telephone companies for services to other parts of the telecommunications industry. The present operation is based on a capacity of 960 channels per transponder. In the present system there are two satellites in the air and there are 12 transponders in each satellite. They need two transponders for a channel. On a single access it's possible to get 960 voice circuits per pair of transponders. It's also possible to have one video channel also transmitted in one direction, and is in fact used today for the transmission of the CBC circuits into Huggett, southwest of Edmonton, and to other locations across the country. The program for Telesat is to fly a new bird by the end of 1979, where they come to what they call the Anik B and the Anik C. They have the Anik A bird up there now. The Anik B will be a combined system, partially using the new part of the frequency band. The present birds use the four gigahertz to six gigahertz -- that's the four thousand megahertz and six thousand megahertz channels -- one in one direction, one in the other. The new frequencies will be in the 12 to 14 megahertz. Then they have greater capacity, having 1,340 voice channels per radio channel. The prospects on the development of the satellites are large and exciting, and they should bring to bear eventual cost savings which we could not otherwise derive without being involved in having a Canadian system in action.

MR. STROMBERG: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. To the minister: it seems like over the years periodically there has been discussion with Edmonton Telephones for a takeover or perhaps buying them out. The question I have, to the minister: has there been thought or discussion in the past year toward a combination of Edmonton Telephones and AGT?

DR. WARRACK: Mr. Chairman, the answer is no. I think it would be fair to put the situation this way: it is after all the telephone system that belongs to the city and to the people of Edmonton. Should Edmonton wish to enter into some sort of arrangements that differ from the present arrangement, they might wish to make a proposal to AGT, and it would be considered. But there is no intention on the part of AGT to make a proposal to Edmonton Telephones or the city of Edmonton at this time.

I might say that it seems to me that the way to look at it in the future would not really be on a takeover basis -- one taking over the other or vice versa, although I guess

it's hard to imagine Edmonton Telephones taking over the province's system elsewhere -- but more in terms of whether it would make sense in serving the citizens throughout Alberta, including Edmonton, for it to be a merged or integrated system. That would be the kind of possibility that might develop somewhere down the road in the future, rather than a sort of takeover concept. But in any case the answer is no. There is no intention of AGT to take an initiative with Edmonton Telephones. At the same time, if they wanted to take an initiative with us, we'd certainly be prepared to look at it.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Chairman, to the minister: last day I raised the question with regard to non-basic services supplementing basic services. Mr. Ades indicated that non-basic services do supplement the basic services, implying that in cases such as that cross-subsidization would be used. I'd like to ask the minister, in view of that statement: what is the policy of the Department of Utilities and Telephones regarding cross-subsidization? That is distinct from what we discussed last day with regard to rate-averaging. I understand that particular policy. But it's the other one that I would like the comment of the minister on. Do you agree with Mr. Ades's statement or not?

DR. WARRACK: First of all, I agree with Mr. Ades's statement. Secondly, at this point, and I know I had made this point two weeks ago and I guess in the opening comments I really should say that any discussion involved here in comments by myself or the people accompanying me today is intended on a without-prejudice basis. Because, as the committee knows, the matter being raised by the hon. member is before the courts. Second to that, I did indicate two weeks ago and would do so again now that I am not using the term "cross-subsidy" -- "alleged cross-subsidy" I guess would be what one could use -- without any concern about prejudice in the case before the courts now. I'm not in any way, shape, or form wanting to take a chance on biasing that case before the courts by accepting what the hon. member may have in mind by "cross-subsidy" with the representations I know they have been receiving.

But the specific question is: do I agree with the president of AGT. The answer is yes.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Chairman, I would like to raise the question with regard to the reverse situation with regard to basic services, whether we use the word "subsidization" or "cross-subsidization" or not. But do basic services at certain periods of time supplement the income or needed capital for non-basic services, just the reverse situation?

DR. WARRACK: I'll ask President Ades to elaborate on that matter. He's obviously a good bit more familiar with it than I am. It may be that there would be an additional comment he would solicit from one or more of the vice-presidents as well. I'm just a little concerned that there could be some confusion in the interpretation of "supplement". "Supplement" usually means add to, rather than substitute for. So there would be concern about just what is intended with respect to that terminology. If you're looking at the revenues of AGT as an operating enterprise, then non-basic service, for example, supplementing basic would mean adding net revenue in total across the gamut of non-basic services to the revenues of basic. So just with that sort of outlook or perspective, I'd ask President Ades to elaborate.

MR. ADES: Mr. Chairman, as I said the last time we were together, the non-basic services in total help to keep the normal telephone rates down in Alberta. That's why we're in the business. A lot of people wonder why we're in the business, but we're there primarily to keep the rates as low as possible for the Mrs. Joneses and Mrs. Smiths in the country.

Some services, as Mr. Barnes explained well, in the start-up basis can be looked at as a losing proposition. But they really aren't, gentlemen, or we wouldn't be in there. A great number of them are together. You have to put them together as a service offering. But I would suggest, Mr. Chairman, that the implication that the basic services are being charged something to supplement the other non-basic services is incorrect. I might ask Mr. Barnes if he would expound a little further on it.

MR. BARNES: Mr. Chairman, further to what Mr. Ades said and probably further to what was said before the Public Utilities Board in the process of our rate hearings, they agreed with the approach that a no-burden test on the non-basic services be provided to them. As our regulator, they want to be satisfied that we are not in fact, as perhaps some people have suggested we are doing, taking money from our basic service to assist us in the other ventures. I believe we satisfied the Public Utilities Board, and I would anticipate that in the future as we go down this road the non-basic services, with the growth in data transmission, will indeed provide additional revenues to the system to assist us in maintaining the rates for local services.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Chairman, I'd like to ask a question with regard to interconnection and interconnection policies. Let's take Calgary Power for example. As a consumer or home-owner a person can buy his own refrigerator, stove, et cetera, connect his appliances into Calgary Power, and they bring it up to the consumer premise. With regard to that, AGT is different in that they have a complete monopoly on what type of phone is used, and no private entrepreneur can bring in their facility, whatever it is -- data processing, a little telephone -- and plug it in, from the private sector. I was wondering if the minister could clarify that whole policy with regard to interconnections and sort of the general objective the department may have at this time.

DR. WARRACK: Mr. Chairman, that is an important indeed. The description just given by the hon. member describes well the question of what's normally termed "terminal interconnection"; that is, the arrangements that are available to the public for connecting into the end point of the telephone line. I suppose you could say, plugging in whatever you want, in relation to an analogy with an electric plug, I suppose. But as it stands now, the telephones one gets need to be obtained from the telephone company.

There is considerable discussion going on now across Canada, particularly in Ontario, as to whether the time might be ripe where it would be reasonable to allow people to go to a hardware store or wherever I guess you'd go, and buy whatever kind of telephone you like and hook it in. In some sense it would be more practical now with the kind of phone jack installations that are being undertaken by AGT, and I believe being begun just recently by Edmonton Telephones.

There is a major problem with it, though. Maybe there's more than one, but one major problem with it for sure is the problem of whether this could and should lead to involving a two-way message communication with such devices so attached, so there could in fact be a kind of use of the telephone system for more than the normal kind of telephone operation. There are arguments pro and con to it. As I say, discussions are going on in some detail

in Ontario with respect to Bell Canada on this matter. We're of course interested in not only the outcome of that, but the observations of members on it.

Not to take too much time, but the major item I mentioned that involved AGT in Ottawa yesterday and the week before in the discussion of the western premiers at Yorkton was not on terminal interconnection. Rather it was on system interconnection which would involve connecting the one part of the telephone system in one geographic location, connection to it elsewhere and, against the will of the telephone company, for them to be forced to make the connection in those geographically separated points. What would happen then would be in the large market centres for large company users there would be the capacity to cream-skim what is otherwise long-distance revenue.

I'm sure all members are aware of the fact that long-distance revenues subsidize basic exchange rates on the kind of rate-averaging concept we talked about two weeks ago, to provide good, reliable, what's often in utilities these days called "lifeline service" to ordinary citizens. That's subsidized by the long-distance revenues. If some of the long-distance revenues are cream-skimmed off, those revenues are no longer available. The only place they could then come from would be by increasing the rates on the ordinary citizen. We as a province and as Alberta Government Telephones have been resisting that. I believe we're now in a position where nine of the 10 provincial governments have taken a position of resisting that as being adverse to the public interest, particularly to the ordinary citizen. We're hopeful that the decision will come out in a manner that we think is sensible and reasonable; that is, to not have systems interconnection. I regret that's a bit of a digression from the terminal interconnection question that was initially posed. By way of being fair to the hon. member, I should get some additional help from Mr. Mallet-Paret, Vice-President of Corporate Planning, on further comments specifically to the question itself. But I was anxious to bring out the system interconnection problem, because it's a major problem for all the people we in this House represent, in that if it's granted the kind of numbers that look like they would apply means that it would be a fairly consequential increase in rates for the ordinary citizen.

MR. MALLET-PARET: Mr. Chairman, I think Dr. Warrack covered quite a number of issues there. First, with respect to interconnection itself, getting back to your original question, there are of course two issues: terminal interconnection and system interconnection. I just returned from Ottawa last night after more time than I care to mention -- three or four weeks -- down there on the systems interconnection issue.

But the terminal interconnection issue, our position is this: we and we alone have the responsibility of providing a communications network to the citizens. That network includes providing an end-to-end service that a person can transmit data, can talk, transmit video signals, and so forth, over the entire system. Of course that includes the terminal devices. It also includes the signalling devices that are used to actuate the system to cause the switching to take place, and so forth. That is an important part of the system. Our interconnection policies are as broad as any in Canada; in fact I would say they're all more or less identical, with very minor changes in it. We do allow terminal interconnection of customer-owned equipment, as we call it, in a number of ways. We allow a customer to connect anything he wants to a private line, because that obviously doesn't affect the public switch network. He has a private line, he can put things on it, and if the stuff at the other end doesn't work then he's the only person at the other end of the private line who is going to suffer. It's not going to affect the public. So that's a common policy.

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We will also allow any number of devices to be owned by the customer attached to the public switch network that receive only, electronic secretaries being an example. In other words, we do not allow devices that signal the network. In other words, when you dial the telephone that does activate the switches in the network. That is an important function we are still guarding as a public responsibility. So there are those areas where interconnection of terminal devices is very broadly provided; however, we still don't allow the customers to own the device that does the signalling and supervisory control of the network itself. I think that covers most of the aspects Dr. Warrack mentioned. He did mention the business of setting rates. I don't think I'll comment on that. That's a bit off your question.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Chairman, to the gentlemen, with regard to the signal device: is the reason AGT doesn't allow the signal device to be owned by the customer or to be freely put into the terminal at his business because of the fact that sometimes the signal device does not meet certain mechanical standards, or because of economic reasons; in other words, AGT finds that it's more viable or could make more money by continuing the ownership of the signal device? Is it because of the mechanical or technical reasons, or because of monetary reasons?

MR. MALLET-PARET: Mr. Chairman, it's a number of those reasons to a certain degree. With respect to the technical aspects, first of all, if a customer does provide a device we usually have a connecting device between their device and the network to protect the network, mostly from electrical harm, the levels of signals going back and forward, and so forth. We have to keep them within certain limits, otherwise it will cause transmission problems. It's really to protect the signalling functions. One of the areas that is being looked at now by the federal government is type approval of equipment. Now, if we can get some forms of type approval, then within the act we could have the opportunity of allowing certain type-approved equipment to go onto that network. But that process is still being developed. However, the type approval of equipment by the federal government is still only limited to non-network-signalling devices. So even if we did use the type approval route, that still limits us to that. I think we are more concerned with the protection of the operation of the network than, for example, financial considerations. We're selling a service; we're not selling bits and pieces of a service.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Chairman, I'd like to move on to the question of an overview of AGT's tendering practices, particularly with regard to two areas: one is the tendering practice AGT follows as far as construction work is concerned. Perhaps I could just take one minute and say that my concern really arises from what I believe to be a change in AGT's policy in the last couple of years; that is, to do more of its construction work by AGT crews themselves and AGT-acquired equipment on this regional basis you've gone to, as opposed to tendering out your work to small contractors. So I'd like, Mr. Minister, if I could, some indication of the practice in that area as far as construction is concerned. I raise the question because of concern raised to me by a number of people who used to do AGT construction work for them, and who are now finding that more of the work is being done by AGT's own crews, your own construction people, as opposed to tendering it out in an area where certainly the capacity is there in the private sector.

DR. WARRACK: What was the second question?

MR. CLARK: I'll get to the second one.

DR. WARRACK: I'm sorry, Mr. Chairman. The hon. member mentioned he had two related questions, but apparently the second one is quite different from the first. So I'd ask Mr. Barnes to comment on the construction question and the tendering practices underway in AGT at the present time.

MR. BARNES: Mr. Chairman, Mr. Clark must be privy to information I don't have. But I'm not aware that we've changed our tendering practices. I am aware that we have a fairly sizable construction force and have had for some time. I hope he is not suggesting that I should be contracting to the private sector and not doing any of the work with the staff I presently have. I don't think that's really his intention. From my position I don't see all the contracts that go out, but I do see several of the tenders and the final contract. From my point of view the private sector is still doing a considerable amount of the type of construction work he referred to. So unless he has some detailed and specific information, I'm afraid I can only say that our practices haven't changed.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Chairman, to Mr. Barnes. Mr. Barnes, are you telling me that as much of AGT's construction work from a percentage point of view is being done outside AGT as was done previously? Because that becomes the real issue. Secondly, Mr. Barnes, would it be possible for you or the minister to get for us a ballpark figure of the amount of money AGT is spending on construction equipment itself -- the amount of equipment, Mr. Minister, that AGT has acquired over the past, let's say, five years as far as construction equipment is concerned? The area of my concern, Mr. Barnes, is that a higher portion of AGT's construction work is being done internally by AGT, as opposed to being done outside.

DR. WARRACK: Mr. Chairman, I'll certainly let Mr. Barnes respond. But I want to say that I didn't hear the answer now interpreted by the hon. Leader of the Opposition as being the answer given by Mr. Barnes. It seems to me that it would be in doubtful public interest for the citizens of Alberta and subscribers to AGT to have a rule which put you in the position of the same percentage of tendering outside as compared with work being done inside by AGT crews year after year regardless of the economic circumstances. The reason I make that point is that everyone knows that there has been a very rapid kind of economic growth and level of economic activity within Alberta. That means that the tendering process can in some years, as I think can accurately be described for recent years, be a comparably more expensive process than it might be in normal years and certainly than what it would be in years that were of slack economic times. I certainly would think that if you're using a consistent procedure over the years, that consistent procedure would yield different percentage amounts year by year, and in the public interest it should. Particularly, that I would contemplate that that same consistent procedure through the years that Mr. Barnes referred to would normally lead you to do more work internally in years of high economic activity where everybody is busy already, and not nearly as much competition in the tendering process as compared with the normal years and in particular compared with slack years where people would be competing very strongly for the work. My point is that those would be differing percentages over the years, Mr.

Chairman, using the same consistent procedure. I'd ask Mr. Barnes to comment further, relative to that.

But I would plead with the committee, in the interests of the citizens and subscribers to AGT, not to put us in the position of having to follow some X per cent year after year. Because there can be no doubt that that would increase costs and therefore increase rates. I'd ask Mr. Barnes to elaborate, if he would. I suspect that the question of construction equipment dollars over the last five years would probably be something we would have to follow up on and provide that information to the committee.

MR. BARNES: Further to what Dr. Warrack has said, Mr. Chairman, I think probably for the benefit of this committee the policy of Alberta Government Telephones in all areas, including construction, is to attempt to do it in the most economic manner we possibly can. As far as construction equipment is concerned, yes, we do buy construction equipment. We buy all types of equipment and considerable amounts of it. The only thing I don't quite have in my mind is: is it additional equipment we're interested in, is it existing equipment that we're replacing, or just what the required information is?

MR. CLARK: Perhaps I could answer that question for Mr. Barnes, I hope very straightforwardly, and then get on to the next of the two items. Mr. Barnes, if you were to provide for us simply the amount of money AGT has spent in construction equipment over the past five years. Sir, by your own admission the tendering practices have stayed the same. If we apply a simple bit of arithmetic ourselves to that, we know what's happened through inflation, and we can then look at AGT's construction program over the past five years and get an indication of what's happened. I'm pretty sure each member can draw his own conclusions there. So, Mr. Barnes, if you could just give us the amount of money AGT has spent in construction equipment in the past five years and, in light of your comment about tendering practices staying the same, I don't see any problem there at all.

Mr. Chairman, the second area I wanted to raise deals with the tendering practices with regard to very large contracts in the electronic area. I'm sure we won't be able to deal with this area today. But perhaps, Mr. Minister, when you come back next time you could have your people armed in that area somewhat. Could I start by asking: about what portion of AGT's electronics contracts would be awarded to firms such as Bell or Northern Telecommunications, as opposed to electronics firms here in the province of Alberta?

DR. WARRACK: I'll ask Mr. Childs to comment on the detail of the matter. But I thought I should say that I doubt if it's my prerogative, nor one member's prerogative, to predict how many times we'll be here. I do believe the other members of the committee have some rights as well. But in any case I'd ask Mr. Childs to comment to the extent he can from the information he has now, with respect to the tendering practices in the electronics equipment area.

MR. CHILDS: Mr. Chairman, the electronic switching systems as they became available for operating companies to purchase -- they didn't all become available at the same time -- we went for budget prices and from time to time we go for competitive prices from the various manufacturers of the central office electronic switching systems. We have to recognize that going to detailed quotations for electronic switching systems involves a large amount of work by traffic engineering and equipment engineering groups, because all the systems vary. In order to get suitable responses we have to do a fairly heavily detailed

investigation of the different systems. The first electronic system we bought in Alberta was from Northern Telecom. We have bought a fair number of those systems since that first item. We have bought three or four systems from Automatic Electric. We have bought one large system, which is presently installed, from ITT. These purchases are initially as a result of competitive tenders, with subsequent adherence to the selection at that time, because either the suppliers of that size of office are the only suppliers or are obviously the only ones with the best price. From time to time we have gone back for further review of the supplier situation, the prices that are available, to see if there are any changes. We have consistently, we believe, maintained a competitive attitude by all the suppliers. And I'm sure we have derived some advantages from that.

With respect to buying systems from local suppliers or small suppliers, they're just not available and not suitable for our purposes. So it is really the large manufacturers that are the people who we are able to deal with in order to expand our system in a manner that is compatible with what exists, and in order to meet the large, extraordinary requirements a telephone system the size of AGT requires.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Chairman, just to follow that along. Might I say that the point has been made to me, and I must say I'm sympathetic to the point of view expressed by a number of people in the electronics industry in Alberta, that if AGT were to say to their engineers, break these systems down somewhat, admittedly it would cost AGT engineeringwise additional expertise. But going the route we're going now, Mr. Childs, and I'm certainly no expert in the field as I'm sure you gathered two weeks ago, let alone today, we never are going to develop that kind of industry here in the province of Alberta. So my question to you, sir: is it engineeringly possible to break the systems down to the point where we wouldn't have to look to ITT and Bell and so on, but that we could find at least an ever-increasing portion of AGT's electronics purchases being able to be acquired from Alberta firms here in the province of Alberta? Is it engineeringly possible, sir?

DR. WARRACK: I just want to make the one comment, by way of interjection, then ask Mr. Childs to continue. I'm the guy who has been under the pressure of major rate increases for a variety of utilities, including telephones. So I do want to say that a red flag pops up in my head every time I hear a suggestion by someone that would raise costs and therefore raise rates further. It's been difficult to justify to people the cost-based rates that are the present case for AGT, let alone to handle any contemplations that would in fact increase it further. So I wanted to make that point. As a matter of fact, I could ask the hon. Leader of the Opposition to agree or not with whether he would be prepared to see AGT costs and rates go up in order to promote the sort of thing he is suggesting.

MR. CLARK: What about the diversification of the economy that the government talks about?

DR. WARRACK: I ask the Leader of the Opposition: will you accept increased telephone rates as a price to pay for that?

MR. NOTLEY: Let's find out if it's technically possible. (interjections)

DR. WARRACK: Okay, Mr. Chairman. It's clear that it isn't information and policy discussion, but games we're into. The fact is that it's technically possible, of course.

It's the economics of the question. You could have a thousand telephone companies if you'd like the price. No problem at all. That really isn't the question at all; it's a question of what the economics are. That's really what the question is.

I might also point out that at the present time -- and this is a government matter, as distinct from an AGT matter -- we're very concerned about the kinds of barriers that exist between provinces that also hurt Alberta manufacturers and businesses. We would like to see a non-barrier position as a matter of government policy across Canada to not balkanize Canada in the way that it presently is and, in some cases, is worsening. But, as a matter of fact, if it continues to have a disadvantage for Albertans it may then be necessary to match that disadvantage as far as other provinces are concerned. But I would like to ask Mr. Childs if he would elaborate on the question of the electronic matter. Perhaps it's the magnitude of additional costs and therefore rates that might be involved.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I think, Dr. Warrack, we'll have to hold off Mr. Childs's comments, because another committee is due to take place here right now. So I would suggest that we ask AGT to come back on May 10. They're not available on May 3. On May 3 Disaster Services will come before the committee.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Chairman, I wonder if I could just . . . I won't move a motion. I've consulted with the members here and they say they'd prefer if we went the route of requesting AGT to provide to the members of the committee the names of AGT's activities which are not regulated by the Public Utilities Board, along with the number of employees in each respective area. If we could get the minister to agree to that kind of information, that would be very helpful, Mr. Chairman.

DR. WARRACK: Mr. Chairman, I want to be sure that we have a firm handle on the question, and also to determine whether or not in fact that lineup of activities hasn't already been ruled on by the Public Utilities Board, and in fact be in the information I've already provided to the office of the hon. Leader of the Opposition. Adding again also that these are matters that of course are being challenged in the courts now, as to whether the ruling of the Public Utilities Board should stand or, in the allegation of the courts, be thrown out. Perhaps in relation to the exact question involved, because I don't want to get into a position where there's any misunderstanding and then get the usual stuff about the government won't respond and all of that, so I want to be sure of two things: exactly what the question is that the hon. leader wishes in preparation for two weeks from today; secondly, to have the opportunity to make the determination of whether he already has it.

MR. CLARK: What we want is the information for the committee. What we request is that AGT provide us with the specific names of AGT's activities which are not regulated by the Public Utilities Board, along with the numbers of employees in each respective area. We'd like that information for the committee. I got the impression earlier that Mr. Barnes could make the information available. I simply raise it now so we have assurance that the information will be coming back to us.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I think we can't debate this further now. We're over time. There is another committee waiting to come in, and they have guests. Again, we ask AGT to come back on May 10, and Disaster Services on May 3. A motion to adjourn would now be in order. Moved by Mr. Butler. All in favor? The meeting stands adjourned.

(The meeting adjourned at 10:04 a.m.)

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