

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ALBERTA

Friday, March 9, 1973

[The House met at 1:00 o'clock.]

## PRAYERS

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

MR. DIACHUK:

Mr. Speaker, I wish to take the opportunity today to introduce a first group of youngsters from my constituency, the constituency of Edmonton Beverly. And I am confident that the saints are smiling today, because from the School of St. Jerome, a group of 42 youngsters in Grades 5 and 6, accompanied by staff members, Mrs. E. Baril and Mr. Paul Fairfield are sitting in the members gallery. I would like to ask them to rise and to be recognized by the Assembly.

MR. TAYLOR:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce to you and through you to the hon. members of the Legislature two outstanding young Canadians who are seated in your gallery. I refer to Warrant Officer 2 Robert Caryk of Squadron 570 of the No. 9 Wing in Edmonton. Robert was the top cadet in that Wing last year and consequently won the Gordon Taylor trophy. The hon. Mr. Schmid made this presentation in my absence. I appreciate that very much and also Robert appreciated it. Robert has also won the flying scholarship and he is hoping to continue in the field of aviation. He is a Grade 12 student in Archbishop O'Leary High School.

Along with Robert is Warrant Officer 2 Ken Martin, of Squadron 395, also of the No. 9 Wing. Ken won the flying scholarship. He has 75 hours in the air on Cessna 150s; Robert had 40 hours in the air on Cessna 150s. These two young men are emblematic of the splendid work that is done by the air cadet movement and I am sure the hon. members will welcome them to this Assembly.

MR. CHAMBERS:

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to introduce to you and through you to the members of this Assembly 75 high-spirited Grade 7 students from Rosslyn Junior High School, which is located in the Edmonton Calder constituency. These students are accompanied by their teachers, Mr. Bernard and Mr. Smith and I would like to congratulate them on their interest in coming out here to observe the proceedings. They are all located in the public gallery. I see that they are now standing and I would like the members to recognize them.

## FILING RETURNS AND TABLING REPORTS

MR. HYNDMAN:

Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the 67th Annual Report and Supplement of the Department of Education for the year ending June 30, 1972.

MR. MINIELY:

Mr. Speaker, I have two reports I would like to table. The first is the Alberta Municipal Financing Corporation for the year ending December 31, 1972 and the Report and Accounts of the Alberta Investment Fund for the same period.

MR. FOSTER:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to table the Annual Report of the University of Calgary.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Deputy Attorney General

MR. HENDERSON:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct a question to the Attorney General. I wonder if the Attorney General could advise the House as to whether the Deputy Attorney General has submitted his resignation to the government?

MR. LEITCH:

Yes, Mr. Speaker.

MR. HENDERSON:

Supplementary, has it been accepted by the government, Mr. Speaker?

MR. LEITCH:

Yes, Mr. Speaker.

Provincial Coroner

MR. HENDERSON:

Has the Provincial Coroner submitted his resignation to the Attorney General?

MR. LEITCH:

Not that I'm aware of, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview, followed by the hon. Member for Calgary Millican.

Natural Gas Policy

MR. NOTLEY:

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct this question to the hon. Premier. In view of the statements made yesterday by Mr. Darcy McKeough, an advisor to the Premier of Ontario, with respect to Alberta's natural gas policy, has the government given any consideration to his charge that under the proposed natural gas policy the major beneficiary of the price increase will be the foreign-controlled industry, not the people of Alberta?

MR. LOUGHEED:

Mr. Speaker, I certainly have. Of course, the charge is wrong. I would like, Mr. Speaker, if I could, to take some time to respond to that matter. First of all, I see that we have a warning from eastern Canada with regard to this important matter of natural gas and the non-renewable resources in this province. In fact, what is, of course, happening with previous policy considerations is that the winners, the really big winners with regard to the matter of the non-renewable and depleting natural gas resource in this province, are the foreign-owned corporations in Ontario.

The facts are, Mr. Speaker, that between 1967 and 1971 the increased use of Alberta gas in Ontario for residential uses was only 22 per cent, but the increased use of cheap Alberta gas by the Ontario industrial complex in that period of time was 90 per cent. Now, Mr. Speaker, that situation -- and I would like to develop it further, because of its importance, during my remarks on the budget -- cannot be allowed, for many reasons, to continue. One of the important questions that is raised on this matter is where the benefit will come in terms of the increased prices to Alberta -- as a result of the increased prices for Alberta gas. The benefit will, to a very large extent, be to the people of Alberta in the very substantial majority.

Mr. Speaker, because of its importance I'd like to take a minute, if I could, to deal in three ways with why that is so. The first way is, because it is our intention, as we have expressed, to substantially increase the royalty, tax, or if you like, the revenue returns to the Province of Alberta once the gas price situation, or during the course of the gas price situation -- as it develops. There is no question about that.

The second thing which is equally important is that these resources are owned by the people of Alberta. Not so much at the moment, but a year ago, the circumstances were that because of the price of gas in the neighbourhood of 16 cents to 20 cents per 1,000 cubic feet at the well-head in the deep sour gas fields of the foothills, it simply wasn't economical for drilling activity of any nature to occur, and in fact we were seeing a significant exodus from this province, particularly by major companies to the north. It's important that that asset be proved up, and it's important that there be sufficient incentive, in terms of a reasonable rate of return, for that asset to be proved up for the people of Alberta.

A third factor is critical in what we are doing, and that is that if there is a continuation of the pouring out of gas in this province away below value, a never-to-be-replaced asset, we are going to be in the position that the activity in this province and the jobs in this province in one of our base industries are going to be affected. Fortunately, I think some of the many moves we have made in the past 18 months have reversed that situation. But for that reason, there is no doubt in my mind -- and we hope we have the support of all the people of Alberta -- in this warning that seems to be coming from eastern Canada, that this will be to the benefit to the people of this province in a very profound way.

MR. NOTLEY:

A supplementary question to the hon. Premier, Mr. Speaker. In reassessing the natural gas royalty, will the government be using the tentative revenue plan for petroleum as a guide post, or will the reassessment be taken into view in consideration of our stronger market position this year?

MR. LOUGHEED:

Mr. Speaker, the question is somewhat premature, but I think valid in terms of the general outline of our thinking. The approach we take with oil will have a bearing on our ultimate decision with regard to revenue return for gas. But there are a number of different factors involved -- one the hon. member mentions in his remarks and that is the factor with regard to market -- there is another, there is the cost factor in terms of processing. There's the third, the somewhat different lease situation with regard to the maximum royalty rates.

There are a number of different factors, and for that reason I would say, although it would be a part of our assessment, it certainly would not create a parameter in relation to our final conclusion on the -- and I want to be careful -- the royalty revenue return which could include both royalty and tax.

MR. NOTLEY:

One final supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Can the hon. Premier comment on the government's position on Mr. McKeough's suggestion that we should have a triple-price system in effect in Canada; one price for Alberta consumers, a second price for Canadian consumers, then all the market will bear for export?

MR. LOUGHEED:

Mr. Speaker ...[Not recorded]... subject, and it is one that has been discussed with various people that could be considered. Our concern would be that in such a plan -- if it was developed and agreed upon -- that there was a clear enough recognition of the Alberta position as the owner of the asset.

If such a three-price system -- and essentially, of course, in this province we are talking about a one-price system with a rebate -- but if in such a three-price system, where there was a price for the Alberta people having regard to our rebate, a second price for the balance of the Canadian utilization of our resource, and a third price for export, that the additional revenue that would flow as a result of the third price, that some reasonable portion of that would flow back through to the people of Alberta who own the basic resource in the first place.

Subject to that qualification, I think it is one matter among many options that are available, and will, I am sure, be discussed at many meetings over the course of the next few months.

MR. DIXON:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the hon. Premier a supplementary question. What is the government's reaction to Ontario's suggestion that the National Energy Board be disbanded and that a special Royal Commission be set up to go into Canada's energy policies?

MR. SPEAKER:

Since the hon. Premier has said he is going to deal with this matter at some length during his speech on the budget debate, might this be the last supplementary on this topic.

MR. LOUGHEED:

Mr. Speaker, I think on that particular matter, the Minister of Mines and Minerals intends, during the course of his participation in the budget debate, to deal specifically with that question. That refers also to the recommendations of the Science Council of Canada with regard to a restructuring of the National Energy Board.

MR. DIXON:

Mr. Speaker, I believe I was next on the question period --

MR. SPEAKER:

That is right, followed by the hon. Member for Vermilion-Viking.

MR. DIXON:

My question is to the hon. the Premier. Has the federal government given any indication to your government, hon. Premier, regarding energy policy, that they do not want to make any statement on gas energy in particular until the Arctic and Northwest Territories gas situation is clarified more clearly?

MR. LOUGHEED:

Mr. Speaker, I would have to respond to that in the negative. I do think there are a number of factors going on at the same time in terms of development of national energy policies. Our discussions with the federal authorities certainly involve a question that bothers us a great deal. We want to be in the position that when any gas comes on-stream, that there is no question we are not in a position that Alberta gas is utilized as a cheap source of supply to provide a low-cost Canadian market. In Mackenzie gas, which is under the jurisdiction of federal lands, is utilized on a high-cost basis for a high-cost market. Although that is one aspect, I think I would have to respond in a specific way to the question in the negative in that there isn't a delay related to that factor.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Vermilion-Viking followed by the hon. Member for Drayton Valley.

#### Closure of Grande Prairie School

MR. COOPER:

Mr. Speaker, my question is for the hon. Minister of Education. Has the County of Minburn made any representation to the minister regarding the problems they face which might force them to close a two-room school at Grande Prairie?

MR. HYNDMAN:

Mr. Speaker, I am not personally aware of that. It may have been a communication to my office, but I will certainly look into it right away if the hon. member will provide me with details.

MR. SPEAKER:

The question of the hon. member for Drayton Valley apparently has been answered. The hon. Member for Calgary McCall followed by the hon. Member for Calgary Bow.

Rising Food Prices

MR. HO LEM:

Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the hon. Premier. As your government expressed some concern in the Throne Speech regarding the rising food prices, has it considered the establishment of a royal commission or a select committee of the Legislature to deal with this problem?

MR. LOUGHEED:

Mr. Speaker, it is one of the options that we are considering, but we thought we should give the new Minister of Consumer Affairs an opportunity to make an overview and an assessment, and I would welcome the question perhaps in the fall session. We would hope at that time the minister would have had an overview and could develop whether or not that would be a useful approach for Alberta, either a select committee of the Legislature or some sort of a royal commission on the matter. We have to keep in mind that we have had -- I don't know whether a royal commission is a fair comment but the Batten Report of some four or five years ago was essentially a royal commission done in co-operation with the other provincial governments.

MR. HO LEM:

Mr. Speaker, does the government at the present time have an observer at the Commons Special Committee on Food Prices which is presently meeting in Ottawa?

MR. GETTY:

No, Mr. Speaker, the government hasn't, because the Commons Food Price Committee is going to provide all of the deliberations to any interested party. The government has established that it will be making a presentation before that committee, and subject to some late discussions of the date because of the recent establishment of the Minister responsible for Consumer Affairs, it appears that the government will make that statement before the Commons Committee in the area of the third week of March this year.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. member --

MR. HO LEM:

Supplementary to the Minister of Agriculture. In the meantime, sir, is your department studying the cause and effect of the rising meat prices in Alberta?

DR. HORNER:

Mr. Speaker, we are very much aware of the rising food costs in Alberta and in Canada, and as I mentioned in my remarks to the Speech from the Throne, any suggestion that a freeze should be placed on food prices must be accompanied by a freeze on the cost input of the producer.

I point out to the hon. members that these inputs have been rising substantially as fast or faster than the cost of the food to consumers. We in the department are doing extensive research work in relation to the cost of food, and intend to have a major part of our submission which we will be making to the Commons Food Price Inquiry come from the investigations of the people in my department.

MR. HO LEM:

One final supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Can you explain the variance of meat prices on similar cuts of meat between the retail outlets in Calgary and Edmonton?

DR. HORNER:

Well, Mr. Speaker, I would rather suggest that that's in the nature of competition in the retail meat industry. I am sure everyone is also aware of the varying grades of cuts and quality and that is also substantially different in a variety of areas. I might say, Mr. Speaker, that while we consider the cost of meat fairly substantial in the Province of Alberta today, it is one of the lower prices in the world.

MR. BUCKWELL:

A question, Mr. Speaker, to the hon. Minister. Has the hon. minister made any studies whether at the present prices the farmer's net return is any greater or any less than it was previously?

DR. HORNER:

That is an excellent question, Mr. Speaker, and emphasizes the fact I was talking about. As a matter of fact, the net income to farmers on an average basis has remained static over the last few years in spite of the rising general prices for agriculture. So the remarks that I made initially become very important indeed, that is if we are going to control food costs then we also have to control the other factors that go into food production, primarily the inputs input to agriculture.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Calgary Bow, followed by the hon. Member for Olds-Didsbury.

Jobs for Albertans

MR. WILSON:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to address a question to the hon. Minister of Manpower and Labour. In addition to the Priority Employment Program, is your government seeking jobs for Albertans in areas where there would be no direct cost to the taxpayer?

DR. HOHOL:

Mr. Speaker, that sounds as if it might refer to things like industrial development, and the last part of the question leaves me unable to answer the full import of it. We have the Priority Employment Program, the summer program, that we are beginning now. But how you get jobs without cost to the taxpayer is a little difficult to understand.

MR. WILSON:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Have you or anyone in your department approached the Minister of the Environment to find out why they are land-filling bottles which are needed by Project Recycle?

MR. SPEAKER:

That is scarcely a supplementary. If the hon. Minister of the Environment wishes to answer it, we have some time left.

MR. YURKO:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to answer that question and give the House some indication of how many jobs are, in fact, created by matters involving the environment.

Mr. Speaker, this year on January 9 new standards were issued in regard to all gas plants, which involved a series of static stations and monitoring stations around all the gas plants. This involved hiring of all sorts of technicians --

DR. BUCK:

What's that got to do with glass?

MR. YURKO:

He wanted to know something about employment.

MR. WILSON:

To make it clear, Mr. Speaker, my original question referred to finding jobs for Albertans without direct cost to the taxpayers. Yesterday the minister told us that there was glass being land-filled that is needed by Project Recycle. I'm asking the Minister of Manpower and Labour if he has looked into this -- and we are still talking about jobs in the area of land-fill and glass. That is why it was directed to the hon. Minister of Manpower and Labour.

MR. YURKO:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to make it very clear to the House that Project Recycle can have all the crushed glass it wishes. It doesn't want crushed glass. What it wants is bottles so that it can remove the tops and labels, and as a result there is a possibility of a bottle coming through the bottle depot a second, third and fourth time. That type of organization is not the type of organization that can, in fact, be bonded. So perhaps if the hon. member took some time to understand the intricacies of the situation then he would be enlightened as to just what the facts of the case are.

MR. WILSON:

Mr. Speaker, is the hon. Minister of the Environment suggesting that the operators of Project Recycle and the scrutiny which they undergo by the federal government are not honest?

MR. SPEAKER:

Order please.

MR. WILSON:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker, to the hon. Attorney General. Why is bonding required by the provincial government for some local initiative program funded work projects?

MR. SPEAKER:

I supposed the general topic of the question and the supplementaries is employment, although we seem to be getting off it a bit. Perhaps the hon. member might be allowed this one as a supplementary.

MR. LEITCH:

Mr. Speaker, I will have to get some further information from the hon. member. Is he talking about bonding as a requirement of the provincial government, municipal government, under what legislation? Certainly there is no way during the question period a minister can be expected to know the answer to that kind of question.

MR. WILSON:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker, to the hon. Attorney General. Is there any reason why existing regulations of the Alberta Liquor Control Board could not be modified in order to allow jobs for Albertans at no extra cost to the taxpayer through using Alberta Liquor Control Board empty bottles?

MR. LEITCH:

Mr. Speaker, I suppose that is partially within my department, perhaps partially within the Minister of the Environment's responsibility since he deals with the disposal of bottles. Again, asked in that form, the regulations, Mr. Speaker are capable of being changed, as the hon. member knows, by the Executive Council and are frequently changed whenever there is a proposal put forward that, after examination, indicates there should be a change. If the hon. member has such a proposal in mind, I would suggest that he present it to us and we will certainly examine it.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Clds-Didsbury, followed by the hon. Member for Drumheller.

Malnutrition of Children

MR. CLARK:

My question, Mr. Speaker, is to the Minister of Education. I ask the minister if he or his department are aware of problems of malnutrition among any school children in the province?

MR. HYNDMAN:

I am not personally aware, Mr. Speaker. I think it is a subject, though, in which the department will be becoming more and more involved, insofar as the area in which we are moving as a department is not dealing with children strictly in an educational way, but rather to involve their health, their nutrition, their social and emotional balance, and this type of thing.

Basically, I think many of the social services under the hon. Minister of Health and Social Development relate to that, but there is no question that a child really is not in a position to learn anything if he is in a state of malnutrition, so it's one aspect of education in which we are increasingly becoming involved.

MR. CLARK:

A supplementary question to the Minister of Health and Social Development. Has your department carried out any studies of the problem of malnutrition amongst young people in the province?

MR. CRAWFORD:

Mr. Speaker, I did see the report of the declaration by some authority in Ottawa that there were many parts of Canada in which one of the problems in school related to the inability of the child to cope with each and every school day because of a problem with regard to nutrition. I think that particular statement probably applies regrettably to about every province in the country.

As far as Alberta is concerned, if there are nutritional problems -- and I suppose this would still relate to any area of the country where there are nutritional problems -- in some cases it is just bad management on the part of the parents. It's not related directly to poverty. It's related to their home atmosphere and the way in which people raise their children, and they may well be able to provide better nutrition to the children but fail to do so.

However, the area that comes immediately to mind is one in which the government has taken some action. That relates to the native populations located mainly in settlements in the North where we have recently brought in a program of school lunches. There are between 70 and 85 Metis communities in northern Alberta. We had a discussion in January, I believe it was, with the executive of the Metis Association of Alberta, and, in fact, spoke about the matter at a general meeting of the association, at which representatives were present from all, I believe, of the settlements referred to. We indicated to them at that time that our immediate plans were to institute school lunch programs in about one third of the communities this year, and to consult with them as to which ones they considered to be in most critical need, and that over a period of three years we would phase in all the Metis settlements with school lunch programs.

MR. CLARK:

A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker, to the Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs. In light of the report emanating from Ottawa and the study done there, has your department had any discussions with the federal government regarding a federal or provincial cost-sharing program in view of this question of malnutrition among young people in the province?

MR. GETTY:

No, Mr. Speaker. We have not discussed a cost-sharing program on that basis.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Drumheller, followed by the hon. Member for Clover Bar.



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Propane and Natural Gas Prices

MR. TAYLOR:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. May I direct a question to the hon. Minister of Telephones and Utilities? Is the hon. minister considering bringing the retail price of propane under the control of the board of Public Utility Commissioners?

MR. FARRAN:

Mr. Speaker, I am considering every aspect of gas supplying utilities and this includes propane and natural gas.

MR. TAYLOR:

Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Has the minister decided yet whether there might be legislation introduced at this session with regard to propane, as the cost is rising for many farmers?

MR. FARRAN:

Mr. Speaker, I doubt very much if any legislation can be introduced at this session. I'm not in a position to say when any decision will be made. I'm still assembling facts, reading them and looking at them.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Clover Bar, followed by the hon. Member for Calgary Mountain View.

Reforestation and Timber Harvesting

DR. BUCK:

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to address my question to the hon. Minister of Lands and Forests. It looks like he had a rough airplane ride. But I would like to know if the minister could inform the House why C.B. Schultz of Vancouver was given the contract to evaluate reforestation and timber harvesting rather than an Alberta firm?

DR. WARRACK:

Among the number of proposals that were submitted on a request for proposal on a competition basis, it was selected as the best proposal.

DR. BUCK:

Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Was there not an Alberta firm that could do the job?

DR. WARRACK:

The judgment was, Mr. Speaker, that the very best job had to be done in this critical area of environmental protection in conjunction with resource development, and that selection was made. While I have the opportunity, I'm pleased to report that a very high proportion of the sub-contracting, part of the overall master proposal that was submitted, involves Alberta people.

DR. BUCK:

A final supplementary. Would the minister know how many Alberta firms were involved in bidding for the contract?

DR. WARRACK:

Not off hand, Mr. Speaker, but I'd be pleased to check.

MR. CLARK:

A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Before the final decision was made to award this contract to a firm from out of the province, was the matter discussed with the Alberta Forest Products Association?

DR. WARRACK:

We have a continuing liaison relationship with the Alberta Forest Products Association as a department and, as a matter of fact, I think it is an important component of the total forest industry represented by the Alberta Forest Service. I'm not precisely sure whether those discussions took place or not with respect to the department, but they did not as far as I was concerned.

MR. CLARK:

Would the minister please check it out and refer back to the House?

DR. WARRACK:

Oh sure.

MR. TAYLOR:

Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the hon. minister would advise the House if this company has been required to establish an office in the Province of Alberta, similar to what the Department of Highways does when somebody from outside applies for a contract and gets it here?

DR. HORNER:

Check Evergreen Press.

MR. TAYLOR:

Mr. Speaker, have we touched a tender spot? I would like to have the answer to the question I asked, and then the hon. Minister of Agriculture can ask his question.

DR. HORNER:

Mr. Speaker, obviously the sensitivity is all over there. And for the information of you, sir, Land for Living, a notorious publication, was published by Evergreen Press of Vancouver.

MR. TAYLOR:

Mr. Speaker, possibly the hon. minister would like to answer about some of the signs they had in the last election that were also made in Vancouver.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order please. It appears that the hon. Member for Drumheller may have come close to a 'horner's nest'.

MR. TAYLOR:

Mr. Speaker, I'd like an answer. It's not a difficult question.

DR. WARRACK:

Well, if the hon. member will restrain his temper so I may ask --

MR. CLARK:

You mean the Deputy Premier --

DR. WARRACK:

No, I don't think he will ever be Deputy Premier.

MR. CLARK:

He is now.

DR. WARRACK:

Mr. Speaker, I'm quite sure that, in the interest of good solid progressive private enterprise, if an office is needed to carry the job out effectively the company will establish one.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. member --

DR. BUCK:

Mr. Speaker, a further supplementary --

MR. SPEAKER:

Might this be the last supplementary on this point.

DR. BUCK:

Did the hon. minister say that when the report was completed by this firm he would table the information in the House and make it available to the members, because it is about a nine-month study and should be in the fall possibly.

DR. WARRACK:

No, I did not say that.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Calgary Mountain View, followed by the hon. Member for Highwood.

#### Court Reporters

MR. LUDWIG:

Mr. Speaker, my question is to the hon. the Attorney General. Can he advise whether the court reporters who are being trained in the province at the expense of the taxpayer will be absorbed in services in the courts of Alberta, or will they be at large to seek employment elsewhere?

MR. LEITCH:

Mr. Speaker, there are two groups of court reporters being trained within the province. One group is within the system, and I assume that is not the group the hon. member is referring to, and the other group is being trained through a course at NAIT. I think it is much too early to forecast exactly what employment will be available for them when they graduate. It is, I believe, a two-year course.

But having regard to the growing court reporter needs in the province, not only in the court system but also on such things as hearings of one type or another, and in addition in private industry, I would anticipate one further factor, that we are likely to experience in future years a significant number leaving the court reporter system because of retirement. Taking all these factors into account -- as I say while it is much too early to guess, I would expect there would be a fairly significant demand within the province for the persons who graduate from that course.

MR. HINMAN:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. There are in the province a number of people who have been court reporters and who are available whenever they are needed. And I just wonder why we cannot permit people in examinations for discovery when both parties are agreeable to use these outside reporters. Personally I have been held up for weeks sometimes just because of a reporter. And I see no need for it if both parties are quite willing to use someone whom they know is qualified.

MR. LEITCH:

Mr. Speaker, there are some reporters within the system now who work part-time, are used in that way and there is no prohibition or policy or practice against that. I am not at all sure of any particular cases the hon. member may have in mind. There is, of course, the need for people to meet a certain standard of efficiency or competence in order to be court reporters, because they certify documents that are taken on examinations for discovery as being accurate transcripts and they do become used during the trial action as evidence.

MR. LUDWIG:

A supplementary to the hon. Minister. Could the minister advise why in the Court House, Calgary, it is almost impossible to get a discovery date any sooner than three months? Is that because of the shortage of reporters or some other problem existing in the court-reporting area?

MR. LEITCH:

Mr. Speaker, that is because of the shortage of court reporters, which has existed for some time and, in our view, is a serious delay in the administration of justice in the court system. Last year a special warrant was passed to provide for an additional six court reporters and their supporting staff. Those persons are now coming into the system and I would hope that with those additional numbers, any delay caused by lack of court reporters would soon disappear.

MR. LUDWIG:

A final supplementary. Is the minister contemplating introducing a more sophisticated type of recording system to alleviate the problem perhaps in Calgary?

MR. LEITCH:

Yes, Mr. Speaker, we have been examining the various forms of mechanical recording systems available and being developed. But there are not yet any firm plans for the use of that kind of equipment in the field in which the court reporters are now primarily working.

MR. LUDWIG:

One further supplementary --

MR. SPEAKER:

This is the hon. members' post-final supplementary. Perhaps we can come back to the topic. We are running short of time. The hon. Member for Highwood, followed by the hon. Member for Vermilion-Viking.

#### Application of Municipal Grant

MR. BENOIT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the hon. Minister of Municipal Affairs. Is the proposed 7.5 per cent budgetary limit guideline as placed now on the municipalities of Alberta being applied by the department in dealing with the financial matters of the improvement districts and special areas also?

MR. RUSSELL:

Mr. Speaker, I have indicated to the House that we hope, in conjunction with the two municipal associations, to reach agreement on the details of the regulations as they will apply to that part of the proposed legislation. Certainly it would be the intention to treat improvement districts like any standard municipality. We will be administering the budget according to the guidelines as applied to all municipalities.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Vermilion-Viking, followed by the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview.

#### Security Trust Company

MR. COOPER:

Mr. Speaker, my question is for the hon. Attorney General. Mr. Minister, in what stage of completion are the affairs of the now defunct Security Trust Company?

MR. SPEAKER:

It would appear to be the sort of question that would call for a considerable amount of detail and the Chair would respectfully suggest that it be placed on the Order Paper.

MR. COOPER:

I have a simple question. Have all the depositors of Security Trust been fully reimbursed?

MR. LEITCH:

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to review the report of a liquidator of Security Trust before answering that. I'm virtually certain the answer is no, because there are probably depositors who have purchased certificates that are not yet due. But I say that with some hesitation, because I'd certainly like to check the reports before answering. I'd be happy to do that and provide the information to the hon. member.

MR. WILSON:

Supplementary, Mr. Speaker, to the hon. Attorney General. In regard to Security Trust mortgagors who have mortgages amortized over 25 years, but written for a five-year term, can they renew for an additional five-year term or are you taking the stand that you wish to liquidate as soon as possible?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. member is pursuing the same line of questioning. If the topic is placed on the Order Paper, undoubtedly the hon. Attorney General can deal with that aspect of it as well.

The hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview, followed by the hon. Member for Wainwright.

#### Tenant Representation

MR. NOTLEY:

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct this question to the hon. Minister of Municipal Affairs. Can the minister advise whether there is any provision to guarantee tenant representation on public housing authorities in this province?

MR. RUSSELL:

Mr. Speaker, that's a question a couple of municipalities have put to us for consideration. There is nothing that prohibits it, at present, and neither is there anything that could guarantee it.

For the information of members, of course, the way those public housing authorities are constituted in any municipality is by a nominating committee: one person representing the province, one the federal government, and one the municipal government. Those nominations are then submitted to myself and the necessary order is signed. So it is virtually a three-government nomination route which is used. In that procedure there would be nothing, as I say, to either prohibit or guarantee such a move, but I have had representations that it perhaps should be guaranteed.

MR. NOTLEY:

Mr. Speaker, one supplementary question. In view of the fact that the Province of New Brunswick has already passed legislative guaranteeing representation by tenants' groups, is the government at least considering this as a feasible proposal which would be put before the Legislature in the form of legislation at this session?

MR. RUSSELL:

Mr. Speaker, I don't expect it to come before this session of the Legislature, because there have only been one or two representations for it. Of course, as I said, there is nothing to prevent it from happening. There are some difficulties, of course, when you get into the mandatory aspect of it. In fact, the very term "tenant association" causes some difficulty. But I stress again, there is nothing to prevent it happening.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Wainwright, followed by the hon. Member for Calgary Millican.

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Surface Rights

MR. RUSTE:

Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Agriculture. Do you propose, at this session, to bring in amendments to The Surface Rights Act to cover power lines?

DR. HORNER:

Not at this time, Mr. Speaker. We are looking into the matter of what amendments might be required to The Surface Rights Act. The question of power lines, in my view, is already covered, but the question of off-right-of-way damages is the problem that is giving us considerable concern at the moment. At the present time it requires the consent of both parties before the Surface Rights Board awards compensation with regard to off-right-of-way damages.

There has been a proposal put forward that damages up to a certain amount should be covered by the Surface Rights Board without the consent of either party. We are looking at that proposal at the moment.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Calgary Millican, followed by the hon. Member for Calgary McCall.

Fish Creek Park Access

MR. DIXON:

Mr. Speaker, my question today is directed to the hon. Minister of Lands and Forests. What action has been taken by your department to give the public immediate and unhampered access to the new Fish Creek Park recently purchased by the government in Calgary?

DR. WARRACK:

Mr. Speaker, the intention to establish the new provincial park, which I think is clearly an exciting and new dimension in provincial parks by this government, has been announced as an intent. The idea would be that once the appropriate amount of land acquisition has been accomplished it would be possible then to begin planning, and part of that planning would involve the consideration of access to the park in the future.

At the same time it is important to recognize that in our news release, and as confirmed by the Mayor of Calgary, His Worship Mr. Rod Sykes, this will be, in fact, a provincial park that has public transportation access. I think that is a very important point.

MR. DIXON:

Just for clarification, before I ask the minister a supplementary question, are there any plans for immediate access to the park by the public?

DR. WARRACK:

Well, you can walk there now, Mr. Speaker.

MR. DIXON:

Mr. Speaker, my next question then is: what action has his department taken to have the fences and gates removed that are illegally placed across the Fish Creek river bed between the Macleod Trail and the Sarcee Reserve, covered by the special development restriction order that was passed to protect the park area?

DR. WARRACK:

Mr. Speaker, I certainly hesitate to confirm that there are some objects, as he mentions, that are there illegally. I think that is a question of legality, whether they are legal or not. I don't, of course, know the answer and I think the rest of the supplemental question deals with matters pursuant to whatever that answer is.

MR. DIXON:

A final supplemental question to the minister. I wonder if the minister will bring before the House what action has been taken, because from press reports your department is already working --

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please. The hon. Member for Calgary McCall, and that will complete the time allowed for the question period.

Alberta Passenger Train Services

MR. HO LEM:

Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs. Has the government made submission to the Canadian Transport Commission regarding the suggestion for improvements to passenger train services in Alberta?

MR. GETTY:

Mr. Speaker, it is unfortunate that the Minister of Industry and Commerce, who is responsible for matters of transportation for our government, is not in the House today, because that is a subject he would like to deal with. I would ask the hon. member to hold his question on that particular matter until he returns.

MR. YURKO:

Mr. Speaker, could I be permitted to cast some enlightenment on restricted development areas and what in fact the regulations state?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. minister's proposal indicates a statement that might be made on Orders of the Day. We have exhausted the question period; with unanimous consent we could extend it.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

MR. LOUGHEED:

I am pleased today to announce the appointments of Mr. David Graham and Prof. T.H. Patching to the Grande Cache Public Inquiry Commission, the three man commission headed by Mr. N. R. Crump, as ordered by the Lieutenant Governor in Council under the Public Inquiries Act, to investigate the entire history and circumstances of the development of the new town of Grande Cache.

Mr. Graham is well known in labour circles and is a former executive member of the Alberta Federation of Labour.

Prof. Patching is with the Department of Mining at the University of Alberta and has had considerable research experience in Alberta coal mines.

I am sure, Mr. Speaker, that these two gentlemen, together with Mr. Crump, will make a significant contribution to the inquiry and we are delighted that they were prepared to accept it. Perhaps on Monday we could have a further report from the ministers who made a trip to Grande Cache today -- five of them -- to review the circumstances.

MR. HENDERSON:

Strictly as a point of clarification, Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the Premier would clarify the point specifically as to whether the inquiry is going to deal with the Alberta Resources Railway, or is it strictly the town of Grande Cache?

MR. LOUGHEED:

Well, Mr. Speaker, the terms of reference of the inquiry, from memory would not preclude, if the commissioners saw fit, some consideration of the aspects of the resources railroad. But there was nothing specifically, and I am going from memory, within the terms of reference that related to the Alberta Resources Railway.

MR. DRAIN:

A question to the hon. Premier. Did you contemplate this --

MR. SPEAKER:

I wonder if the hon. member might use the opportunity of Monday's question period to ask this question.

MR. DRAIN:

Well --

[Laughter]

DR. HORNER:

Mr. Speaker, I have a brief announcement of some exciting news for the Peace River country and for the agricultural industry generally.

I am able to announce today the formation of a private company, composed primarily of Edmonton and Grande Prairie businessmen, along with some foreign assistance and a farmers co-op, of Northern Alberta Rapeseed Processors Limited who intend to proceed immediately with the establishment of a rapeseed crushing plant in the town of Sexsmith in the Peace River country.

The total plant cost will be over \$5 million. The number of personnel employed will be between 50 and 60 on a permanent basis. The plant will require 560 metric tons per day of rapeseed. The annual requirement will be in the neighbourhood of some 6.5 million bushels. The foreign investment is limited to a 20 per cent equity shareholding. The farmers, through a farmers co-operative, will own 30 per cent of the plant and the only government financing or involvement will be in guaranteeing the shares of the individual farmers in the co-operative which will own, as I have said, 30 per cent of the plant.

We are particularly pleased that this is a new and different way of establishing a processing plant in Alberta, and we are hopeful that this kind of arrangement will speed up the establishment of these kinds of processing plants in Alberta.

I might say, Mr. Speaker, that the entire production of this plant has been contracted for on a long-term basis in the export market, and therefore will provide not only a market opportunity for the farmers in northern Alberta, but will give substantial revenue to other transportation systems that are of some concern to this Legislature, as well as providing jobs in a meaningful way in the town of Sexsmith.

[Applause]

#### GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

2. Hon. Mr. Miniely moved, seconded by hon. Mr. Dowling.

That this House approves in general the fiscal policies of the government.

[Adjourned debate: Mr. French]

MR. FRENCH:

Mr. Speaker, in rising to take part in this budget debate I would like to join with all other members in their congratulations to you on the efficient way you are guiding the dignity and decorum of this Assembly. I also welcome this opportunity of congratulating the hon. Provincial Treasurer on the presentation of his budget, which was certainly well delivered just a week ago.

I am also pleased at this time to congratulate the hon. Bob Dowling on his elevation to a full cabinet minister in the Department of Consumer Affairs. I have worked with Mr. Dowling on a legislative committee and I am well aware of his capacity to get things done. I want to say that you can't keep a good man down, even if he breaks his ankle. I'm also pleased to extend my congratulations to the congenial Member for Calgary North Hill, the hon. Roy Farran, on his appointment as Minister of Telephones and Utilities. I'm sure the new responsibilities will be most challenging to the new minister.



Now, Mr. Speaker, when I first came into the Legislature some 14 years ago, we generally expected the Provincial Treasurer would bring in a budget which would show a surplus in our operations. I might say at that time, year after year, when the budget was presented to the Legislature, we just took it for granted that the budget would show a surplus in our operations. Now what would that mean to the people? This would mean year after year we would reduce our funded debt to pay for our roads, our bridges, our public buildings and all these things out of general revenue. As a matter of fact, according to the public accounts of March 31, 1972, I find on page 31 that some \$1.75 billion worth of roads, bridges, public buildings, universities, schools and hospitals have all been constructed. It is not my intention, Mr. Speaker, to read the list of the various assets because it is all public knowledge and can be found in public accounts.

It's interesting to note, Mr. Speaker, that our funded debt was reduced year after year until we had an all-time low of some \$10 million in 1967. This year the Provincial Treasurer brought in a budget with a deficit in our operations, which means that we are not able to pay for all our goods and services out of our general revenues.

We have also been introduced to some new terminology. Some years ago when we brought in a surplus budget we called it a surplus; if we brought in a deficit budget we called it a deficit budget. Now this year and last year we had some terminology and this is what is called one of cash requirement. I see no difference because a deficit budget is one that requires some cash. Maybe this is our new terminology.

Last year we had a forecast of \$139 million cash requirement, or when you add the cash requirement for the two years we find that the total will be some \$271 million. I'm taking into account the fact that the Provincial Treasurer did indicate to us that his forecast of last year will be reduced considerably this year. I think I am on safe ground when I say the total cash requirement for last year and the projection for this year will be something in the neighbourhood of \$270 million. We also find when you examine the public accounts again -- of March 31, 1972 -- we find that our net funded debt is \$206 million, or almost double what it was in 1971. In other words, our net funded debt has almost doubled in the last year. We also note that this year the anticipated net funded debt will increase to \$244 million.

Now what does this mean, Mr. Speaker, in the long run? This means that the interest on our public debt will certainly go up. I note, according to the budget speech, that the net funded debt will almost double this last two years. When I look at the public accounts I see that over a number of years we have been paying for our capital construction, and in this particular budget I note that the capital construction at universities has been reduced by some 50 per cent, and at the colleges by some 35 per cent. So, in fact, there will be no major construction at the universities until our enrolment trends improve.

So when I look at the net result of this budget I think we must ask the question, why was it not possible to bring in a budget without a deficit position, especially so when the government is not required to lay out millions of dollars for college and university construction which it has been necessary to lay out for many years?

When I say, Mr. Speaker, we are unable to pay for our goods and services when we have a buoyant economy -- and the budget certainly indicates that we have enjoyed a buoyant economy, as a matter of fact a more buoyant economy than the other provinces in Canada as a whole. Then I say, Mr. Speaker, what in the world are we ever going to do when we are faced with major expenditures for such items as colleges, universities and some of these things, when we can't even bring in a budget today that will pay for our goods and services?

Having said that, Mr. Speaker, I would like to deal very quickly with the Department of Highways. I certainly appreciate the announcement that a section of Highway No. 41 will be completed between Consort and Gooseberry Lake Provincial Park. I am also pleased that the minister in his speech last night indicated that appropriation will be available for our towns and our villages. I believe it includes our villages, to the extent of some \$20,000, and \$20 per capita to improve the streets or sidewalks in these towns.

With the construction on Highway No. 41 in the southern part of the province which will extend down to the American border, I think it is most important to complete the undeveloped portions on Highway No. 41 as quickly as possible. So I trust that next year it will be possible to complete the undeveloped portion on Highway No. 41 between New Bridgen and Highway No. 12.

I might say, Mr. Speaker, that some of these people have lived in this area for well over 40 years, or even 50 years, and they are still waiting for a highway. I really think that Highway No. 41 will really not be the highway it should be until such time as some of these undeveloped portions are developed, at least to a gravel standard.

And although, Mr. Speaker, we are grateful for the oil treatment on Highway No. 36 and Highway No. 41, I think it is correct to say that the oil treatment has certainly improved the driving surface. But as Highway No. 36 and Highway No. 41 are both main highways, I think we certainly must request a continuation of a paving program to bring these roads up to an acceptable standard which anyone would expect on a main highway.

When you look at the map, and look at the enormous amount of traffic that is moving on Highway No. 2 daily, and when you look at a map and find that Highway No. 36 is halfway between the 4th meridian and the 5th meridian -- incidentally the 4th meridian is the Saskatchewan boundary and the 5th meridian goes right through the centre of the City of Calgary -- you realize that Highway No. 36 goes straight through the centre of that part of the province that is midway between the Saskatchewan border and Calgary. It would certainly carry a great deal of traffic from the north to the south, or from the south to the north.

I am also very pleased in this particular budget for the announcement that \$1 million of assistance will be available for a gas delivery system. Without further details, I am unaware of what this program will be, but I want to say, Mr. Speaker, that what we need in this whole area is some form of cheap money or money at low interest rates to assist in the construction of an adequate rural gas distribution system.

When I look at the total appropriation and I see the sum of about \$1 million, my first reaction would be that this sum could be a little niggardly as I am sure we could use the whole appropriation in the special areas in the Municipal Districts of Starland and Acadia Valley of which part of these are in my constituency.

As I said before, Mr. Speaker, although I welcome the program I question that the amount of \$1 million is going to make it available for all of the farmers in the province of Alberta to enjoy natural gas this year. However, as time goes on, and I hope this time is not too long, this service will be available to the people of rural Alberta.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I certainly want to congratulate the government on their decision to open a new diagnostic and treatment centre for the handicapped at the Alberta Childrens Hospital in Calgary, similar to the operation of the Glenrose School Hospital in Edmonton. This will be the first major facility for diagnosing and treating handicapped people under 18 years of age in southern Alberta.

I am also pleased that special focus on this new program will be devoted to diagnosing and treating the speech and hearing handicapped. Although the number of children who may be treated at this centre may be small, although it may only be a small part of our total population, and the cost may be high for the number of cases that will be treated, the value of these services can't be judged in dollars and cents.

I ask you in all sincerity, "What is it worth to start the hearing of just one child so that this child will not be subject to living in a world of deafness later, and his normal life?" I certainly appreciate for the people in southern Alberta the step that the government has taken in this regard.

Now, Mr. Speaker, last year we provided premium-free Medicare for our senior citizens for medical and optional health services. I want to say there is still a great deal of misunderstanding in this whole area. Some of our senior citizens have a medical treatment services card, where they are not required to pay the \$15 deductible. Others pay the \$15 deductible for their drugs under the optional health services. I think we also realize that private and semi-private accommodation in a hospital and ambulance services are not subject to the \$15 deductible.

Now this all adds up, in the minds of our senior citizens, to a great deal of confusion and I would certainly recommend to the minister in charge of this department that very serious consideration be given to the removal of the \$15 deductible from the optional health services for our senior citizens to avoid the misunderstanding and confusion that exists in this group today.

I must also say that many of the people in this area came from other lands in the early days. They find it most difficult to complete forms, they find it most difficult to understand forms in any language, and anything that we can do to reduce the confusion that we have is certainly a step in the right direction. I don't know what the cost will be -- I do know that it would certainly be a step in the right direction, and I would certainly recommend that some consideration be given to it.

Mr. Speaker, having served as a member of a town council for 12 years, and a member of this Legislature for some 14 years, I have come to the conclusion that each level of government has a valuable contribution to make to the people under its jurisdiction.

What I am trying to say, Mr. Speaker, is that we have a municipal form of government, we have a provincial form of government, and we have the federal form of government. Each of these levels should be equal partners in the administration of our affairs.

I well recall, Mr. Speaker, when I served as a member of a town council some years ago we sat around a council table -- as many of the members in this Legislature have in town council -- we sat around the council table for about two nights of the month, and these nights in our particular council were on a Monday night. We sat around that council table from seven-thirty until about 12:00 p.m. every night while we held our meeting. And every act and every move we made was designed to make our town a better place in which to make our living.

At that time we regarded it an honour to serve the people in our area, and we did so without remuneration. We thought we were prudent, we never spent any money unless we were sure we were getting full value for every dollar spent. But if I remember correctly, in those days our mill rate was something like 32 mills, and it stayed there for a number of years. And I also recall, in 1951, we wanted to raise our mill rate a few mills to complete a special project. I just forget whether this project was -- to complete additions to our water services, or just what it was. But I certainly remember the discussion we had, we felt that we had held the mill rate down and that we wanted this money for a particular reason.

That was the year, Mr. Speaker, that the provincial government passed The Municipalities Assistance Act which said the Provincial Treasurer would pay a tax reduction of up to 3 mills if we did not increase our mill rate. And reading from Chapter 54 of the Statutes -- and Mr. Speaker, it is my intention to table a copy of this Act at the conclusion of my remarks so that the members can read about it.

This Act was passed in 1951 and it was called Chapter 54, An Act to Provide For Assistance To Municipalities. And reading from Section 5, it states, "The Provincial Treasurer in each year may pay from the fund to each municipality (a), a tax reduction subsidy, and (b), an unconditional municipal revenue grant."

And coming to Section 9 of the same Act, "The tax reduction subsidy shall be an amount which, in the opinion of the Provincial Treasurer, is equal to the reduction in revenue of the municipality, resulting from any reduction in mill rates below the basic mill rate up to a maximum of 3 mills."

So, Mr. Speaker, what that says is simply this that if a municipality held a mill rate at 32 mills which was the mill rate in our particular case, and didn't go above the 32 mills that the Provincial Treasurer would provide us with 3 mills.

And I want to say, Mr. Speaker, as we sat around that council table, there was a great deal of consternation. We thought we knew more about running our own business than this great big government did in Edmonton about running our own affairs. We sat around the council table and we were sincere in our deliberations. I don't recall a single member of that council who ever made a move that was not designed to improve our town, to make it a better place in which to make a living. And we certainly resented this great big government in Edmonton telling us that they knew more about running our affairs than we did, that they were the government and we had to accept their verdict. In the end, the big government won out and we deferred our municipal project for a few years. And then, a few years later, the government of the day decided it was a mistake to have passed this in the first place. It was in effect for one year; the next year they made some amendments, and the next year they threw the whole thing out. That's why, if the members look at the Statutes today, they have some difficulty in finding it. But if they go back to 1951 it is certainly

recorded in the Statutes that were passed in that particular year. And when we finally completed the project a few years later, we found that the cost of the project had certainly gone up.

Now I say to you, Mr. Speaker, we have a similar situation today. The government says it will provide an incentive grant if the municipality does not increase its mill rate by more than 7.5 per cent. I realize this may be fine. This may be fine for the two major cities where they enjoy a much larger growth in their annual assessment than we do in the smaller centres. I realize that in many of our smaller centres we are fortunate if our mill rate even holds the same as it did the year before. But what I am more concerned about than anything else, Mr. Speaker, is that by doing this act of bringing in this regulation municipalities must not exceed their mill rate by 7.5 per cent or they will lose their incentive grant -- what I am more concerned about is this business of taking our local autonomy away from the municipal councils.

Having served on the council for a number of years, and I know we have many members in this Legislature who have also served on municipal councils, I am sure that we will certainly agree on one point. And that is when you are a member of a local council you feel that you should know more about the affairs of that community than anybody else. You also feel that you should be equal partners with the federal and provincial governments. And when we start to take away local autonomy from municipal councils, I say Mr. Speaker, that no longer are these municipal councils going to be equal partners in the administration of our affairs.

I also want to remind the Legislature that the provincial government tried this in 1951. It didn't work, and then they threw the whole thing out. And as I have stated, I certainly want to table a copy of the Act so that all members in this Legislature will be able to have an opportunity to read the restrictions that were placed on the municipal governments at that time. And in light of this experience, Mr. Speaker, I would hope that the government will certainly reconsider the proposal and take a new approach to these restrictions which have been placed on the autonomy of the municipalities and not repeat the mistakes which were made in 1951.

Now in closing, I would like to make some general observations in view of the restrictions that have been placed on these incentive grants. I would say, Mr. Speaker, that many municipalities may find it expedient this year to raise their mill rate well over that which is required if they find that they are not able to qualify for the incentive grant. Well, let's take an actual case. We will take a case of a municipality. Here is a municipality that through adverse weather conditions for a number of years has held its mill rate. It felt, in its own good judgment, that it was not the right time to replace machinery. It was not the right time to do other things they would like to do.

As a result they held the mill rate, and during these years -- maybe it is only one or two years -- some of this machinery has got into a position where it possibly requires a lot of repair. Now if the same municipality finds that it is not able to qualify for the incentive grant, the logical thing for this municipality to do this year is to raise that mill rate well over what is required for this year's operation, to be sure that they qualify for the incentive grant for next year. Now in so doing I say, Mr. Speaker, they are going to cause a great deal of inflation in their mill rate in that particular municipality.

If the government attempts to control the spending in municipal governments by placing these restrictions on incentive grants, I say in all sincerity that what they are trying to achieve will not be achieved, and in fact, the very opposite may be the case.

Having said this, I realize that the majority of municipal councillors in the province of Alberta are very sensible and very sincere citizens. But if you put them in the position that in order to qualify for an incentive grant, they find they have got to raise their mill rate because they can't qualify for the grant this year as they need some of this extra money -- it's not possible for a municipal government to maintain its operation without proper machinery. It's not possible to do a lot of these things. Under local circumstances it may be necessary to raise some extra money, and if they do, then the incentive is going to be to raise it well above what they do need this year to be sure they qualify for next year, because they don't know what their expenditures are going to be next year. This is a very serious problem.

Now it's true, Mr. Speaker, that I realize some municipalities have been raising their mill rates year after year. They have been replacing machinery. Possibly they've been building up a reserve fund. Maybe these municipalities

can function under the guidelines of this 7.5 per cent. But I want to say, Mr. Speaker, coming back to a municipality, if the municipality, for instance, finds that it's not able to operate under the 7.5 per cent guideline, it finds it has to raise its mill rate, then what are they going to do? They are going to say to the people, "Well the big government in Edmonton said we don't get this incentive grant this year, so we've got to raise our mill rate." Then they'll go to the public and say, "Mr. Public, the government didn't give us our share of revenues this year, so we had to put the mill rate up." So what's going to happen? The Minister of Municipal Affairs is going to have to take the responsibility for putting the mill rate up in these municipalities. I say that that is not the place where the responsibility should be. The responsibility should be at the level of the municipal council, and you shouldn't put restrictions on these municipal councils. When you do, you are taking away the local autonomy from these groups.

Now I say, Mr. Speaker, that in this business of equal partnership between the provincial, federal and municipal governments, the last thing we should do is take away any autonomy from any one of these groups. I know there is no one in this Legislature who would like to see autonomy taken away from this Legislature. I'm sure there is no one in the federal government who would like to see the autonomy taken away from their administration. We operate under the BNA Act, the federal government operates under the BNA Act, the municipalities operate under The Municipal Government Act, and the municipalities receive their authority from our legislation under The Municipal Government Act.

I say, Mr. Speaker, that we, as legislators, face the public from time to time with elections. The federal government faces the public from time to time with elections. The same thing is true with our municipal governments. They face the public every three years the same as we do. If the public is not happy with their decisions, they can take the proper action that they want at the time of the municipal elections. I say, Mr. Speaker, in speaking for our municipal councils in the Province of Alberta, that it's a mistake for the government to insist on staying with the present guidelines. We must return the autonomy to our municipal governments and the sooner the better. I would certainly like the government to take a new look, a new approach, towards whole program and recognize that we have three levels of government in Canada, and that the municipal governments must preserve and maintain their place in our society. I thank you.

MR. CRAWFORD:

Mr. Speaker, in addressing some remarks to the second budget of my colleague, the Provincial Treasurer, and the second budget of this government, I do want to begin in the rather traditional sense of offering the hon. Member for Edmonton Centre my congratulations on a budget which was certainly ably and well presented. Beyond that, knowing the amount of things that had to be considered in bringing it to the final form it was in at the time of presentation, I would also offer my congratulations on the success with which that budgetary process is serving the people of Alberta at the present time, and the very clear sense of direction and good priority setting that is evident in all that is done in regard to fiscal matters by the Provincial Treasurer and by this government.

There are other congratulations in order today too, Mr. Speaker. Other hon. members in their remarks referred to the appointment to a new portfolio of the hon. Member for Edson, Mr. Dowling, and I want to say to him that he has the congratulations -- as I have already conveyed to him privately -- of every one of his colleagues. And certainly he and the rest of us have been pleased to hear similar remarks of good will expressed by some hon. members opposite.

To the hon. Member for Calgary North Hill, as the new Minister of Telephones and Utilities, I extend hearty congratulations on his appointment to the Executive Council. I do hope, now that his very considerable capabilities occupied to such a great extent by other matters, that I haven't lost the quality of advice I have been accustomed to receive from him in regard to the hospital system and the health care facilities for the City of Calgary.

I have to remark, I suppose, that two hon. members of this House advise me from time to time on that matter in particular, and up to this point I have preferred the advice of the hon. Member for Calgary North Hill.

[Interjections]

The hon. gentleman who has just spoken from his seat is the other gentleman I wanted to -- I meant without rising, Mr. Speaker -- offer some congratulations to. Some hon. members, as well as Speakers, are capable of thinking on their feet, and I notice how often the hon. gentlemen opposite think in another

position entirely and speak accordingly. The hon. Member for Wetaskiwin-Leduc was, and is, a distinguished member of the House and I say, in all sincerity, that I do offer my own congratulations to him on his elevation as Leader of the Opposition. Now that I have finished the serious part of my comments I suppose I can make remarks like my hon. colleagues have made and indicate to him that in a sense one might regret that his job is made so difficult, considering all the circumstances at the present time. I don't really wish him any great measure of success, but I know he will carry out all his responsibilities with a great deal of character and apply himself to his responsibilities.

Mr. Speaker, I think one of the interesting things to reflect upon with regard to the last year and a half, that particular period since the time about a year ago when the government's first budget was brought in, is the manner in which our government has claimed to do and has in fact done, one thing that is relevant in particular to a budget debate, as compared with any other debate: that is the matter of priority setting, of selecting those areas in which, according to the feel that the government has of the special needs and requirements of the population, are the matters that must be dealt with ahead of others. Then, through the budgetary process of applying the necessary physical resources of the province to make the funds available to bring about the achievement of the goals in the priority-setting process.

I would just mention in passing that hon. members may have noticed that a year ago when the budget was brought down, five areas of mental health, handicapped persons -- in particular, children -- thirdly, the aged, and then the two areas of civil rights, and lastly, the family farm policy were enunciated as priorities by the government.

They have been made the subject of vigorous and aggressive programs that had been carried out, commenced and put into motion by the government over the last year. Then, in order to see the process in its clearest light, because the first year of any administration of course is in a lot of ways the easiest, the priorities are relatively available or visible to them to identify at that time.

From then on I suppose the program becomes increasingly more difficult and we do find, as the hon. gentleman opposite found, in spite of how hard they might try, the priority setting process after a number of years and in their case decades, in office, is not as easy as it might have been at the beginning.

So you see, the second year of prioritysetting has moved into areas in which the government was doing important preparatory work in the first year and yet was not in a position to come forward and say to the people of Alberta, that along with the five priorities I have mentioned, the other ones, beginning to emerge, were also matters of great consequence to the province; ones that had to be dealt with and would in due course, themselves, become priorities.

I refer, Mr. Speaker, to the period starting about the middle of last summer -- and indeed reaching back into the spring of last year when the government had been in office less than one year -- when the people of Alberta would have begun to note that new priorities were emerging. These are the ones that are reflected in the budget following the Speech from the Throne that opened the session that we are now engaged in.

I refer to matters that relate, for example, to the taxation of crude oil reserves: the reference to natural gas policy in pricing in several ways in regard to the two-price system; in regard to the government's own attitude to export and the consequent effect on pricing, and to areas like the municipal-provincial taxation arrangements, fiscal arrangements; new policies in regard to areas that are my prime concern, the local boards of health, hospitals and municipal public assistance along with provincial.

And in the capable hands of my colleague, the Minister of Municipal Affairs: the administration of a new plan in regard to property tax reduction, and the significance of that in making available to the average homeowner and to the renter in the Province of Alberta -- with the special revisions there are in respect to renters and the aged -- making available to them a portion of some of the resources of the province that have been recovered from the natural gas and oil industry, the resources that form our great, although depleting asset of petroleum and related products in the Province of Alberta.

I thought I would just sketch the first set of priorities and then the ones that have emerged since, for the purpose of saying something that is very important to me and this is that when the first priorities in the scale of things, in the sense of the drama of their introduction as new ideas, when that happens that the first priorities are not forgotten. We know you don't establish a priority in one year and then have it go away the next year and it's

not a priority anymore; that doesn't happen. What happens is that those areas continue, which are of particular concern to me -- I mentioned mental health, handicapped persons and the aged, as well as others, social policies and public health policies in all the various areas -- and in the mind of the government -- as one will see from examining the budget and the Estimates. They continue to retain a high degree of priority on the part of the government, and there will not be any let-up in the endeavours that are made in all of those areas to make sure the people of Alberta are fully and adequately served.

Perhaps by way of some illustration -- and I know how unsatisfactory it is when we are discussing great principles to perhaps revert only to a few statistics -- but I want to show the extent to which some of the thrusts in the areas which were priorities a year ago have been maintained.

The long and short of it is that you will find that the Estimates of this year compared to the projected expenditure of last year in the two commissions that I am responsible for added to the Department of Health and Social Development come to some \$439 million in this year as compared to some \$387 million last year. The increase is being channelled, not only into the necessary growth that comes when any policy has to be maintained over a period of time, but into several new initiatives. In respect to some of those I want to make some remarks today.

I might say that the figures I have just given, which show an increase of just over \$50 million, compare with the figures of a year ago in the Hospital Services Commission, the spending of some \$237 million now anticipated to rise to \$270 million, and in the area of the Department of Health and Social Development, a rise from about \$149 million to \$167 million.

As well, there are more funds being committed to this field through the Alberta Property Tax Reduction Plan itself because of a policy in regard to hospital requisitions and the financing of the local boards of health, and as well, the Alcoholism Commission which, dollar-wise, is a small amount and I don't believe was included in those figures.

Firstly, Mr. Speaker, I want to deal with a few matters that relate primarily to hospitals. I think it is true in most senses that we are not concerned so much that costs will grow, we expect that. But it is the rate of growth, the rate of escalation that is bound to be of concern to those who have responsibility for the program. Of course, the reason the people who have responsibility for the programs are concerned about the rate of growth is that they know there are needs to be met and if money is spent in a way that is not to the best effect, that means waste and then, of course, something that should be done is left undone. That is a misfortune which we try to avert in every way.

A further concern, of course, other than the fact that you want to make sure that what is applied to programs that are important is correctly applied, is that the rate of escalation itself has a direct bearing, because of the figures I have mentioned, on the policies the provincial government must have in regard to the raising of revenue. There isn't any responsible government -- as the hon. Member for Hanna-Oyen was saying a few minutes ago in his thoughtful speech and making the same remark in regard to municipal government -- there isn't any responsible government that wants to tax its people more than is necessary in the circumstances. What is necessary in the circumstances, interpreted to the best of the ability of that government, is to learn the true needs, preferences and priorities of the people themselves and to provide them to the best of the ability of the government, with the means to administer those programs.

Now the sort of thing that is familiar to the hon. members, the rate of escalation of costs in the Province of Alberta, for example, has so far exceeded the growth of the provincial product that there is a considerable gap. This is seen, to some extent, as a reflection of the desire of the population perhaps to spend more than was the case a decade or so ago on providing health and related services. The figure that is often given covers, say, a period of about five years. Over the most recent five years we have the growth rate in cost of hospital services and other health services at about 14 per cent a year, and the growth of the national product and the growth of the provincial product is, of course, much less than that. As long as the gap is there the normal growth of provincial revenues does not cover the escalated rate, and other sources have to be looked for. The question is, how long can that continue? And how long -- and hon. members will know that this is a concern that has also been expressed at the national level -- will it be before some closer relationship between the growth of the economy and the growth of the cost of the health system are brought closer together?

So it becomes a major objective of the government not to reduce the cost of providing health services. With a growing population, a growing economy and inflation that's not possible. The question of concern will be to make sure that the rate of growth, if at all possible, the increase each year, is to some extent brought under control, and brought as close as possible to that other figure of the growth of the economy. Ideally, of course, it would be nice if governments could look to having all of their programs growing at about that rate.

The economic situation in Alberta in the past few years has been such that we have been able to stand this escalation of costs, but I have to say that except for the policies of the new government in regard to revenue from natural resources, it is extremely doubtful whether or not the type of escalation that we have witnessed would have been able to continue without substantial deficit financing for purposes of operating which shouldn't be done and isn't done by this government. It just wouldn't have been possible, without the new policies of this government, to keep the costs within the province's ability to pay.

Now we have, for example, in Alberta for various reasons, the largest inventory of health facilities anywhere in the western world. This does not change the fact that hon. members find that there are unmet needs in their own communities, and I have found that people are not hesitant to come forward and say that there are unmet needs in their municipality, and to make those statements to members in the House and, of course, to me. Yet we have, you might say, the almost defensible position of being able to say that we have more of whatever it is that is asked for than anybody else has. So the upward pressure on expansion of facilities in Alberta does not have the same sort of justification in a lot of ways as it may in some other areas that do not have the same extent of facilities.

And it brings home another truth also, and that is that when you have a widespread and very much expanded system throughout the province the cost of operating it is enormous, and the ability to bring it under control is less than it might have been otherwise.

Now, we have distribution facilities in the province, for example, based partly on historical factors and partly on other factors, say, transportation routes, and population developments in the sense that some areas lose population and other areas receive population. We have as a result of that, areas that were previously well-served, yet the population shrinks and now they are over-served, and still they are frustrated because they are not without some needs. And then we have areas where expansion has been rapid, and in spite of the high average inventory of facilities in the province it becomes necessary to move into those areas so they will be served, and thereby increase again the overall system and the cost of it.

So these are some of the factors and some of the difficulties that present themselves. The government policy is a two-fold approach. We like to see that -- and this relates to the Property Tax Reduction Plan and the new policy in regard to the financing of hospital and other similar services in the municipalities by the province.

We do have the objective of cost-control, control of the rate of escalation that has been the case in the past, but directly related to that is the policy established by the government some time ago, that the total services we are talking about in this case are not services to property which municipal governments are normally responsible for, but are in fact services to people in the social area and should not be charged against property, ideally. Therefore the general revenues of the province are the ones that are hopefully usable for the purpose of supporting this type of system.

Now that is one of the factors of the principal recommendations that have been adopted, what is known as the "Farran Report". I always refer to it as fair and equitable, and I think that it is.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Fair and equitable?

DR. BUCK:

That's your humble opinion.



MR. CRAWFORD:

Yes, that's my humble opinion. I recommend to the hon. gentleman the odd humble opinion. From time to time he would have much reason to have humble opinions.

Mr. Speaker, it may be of interest to members to know that the Prairie Economic Council has instructed the health ministers of the three provinces, and since then we have made, I think, the necessary moves that will result in more consultation with the fourth western province too. But having consulted with the ministers of the other two prairie provinces in regard to means of reducing the cost of health care delivery, active work and active study have been carried out in regard to this in the last few months. And included in the area of study are subjects such as the ratio of hospital beds to population. This is one of the indices that we looked at, and I want to say to hon. members that Alberta with its seven beds per thousand in the active treatment area of hospitals is the highest in the West, and that's ideal. Though this is a guideline which is probably not firm, it is the best judgment that can be made on that at the present time, comparing the seven beds per one thousand of population with the recommended ideal of approximately 4 to 4.5 beds per one thousand of population.

Now, one of the things that is raised, therefore, is that if you are going to have less emphasis on treatment in the sense of active hospital beds, the delivery of alternative methods of care becomes very relevant. I am perfectly aware that people frequently draw this to the attention of the hospitals and to government. But some hospitals are overtaxed as to their resources, and they have long waiting lists in some cases. And, though no case in the province ever came to my attention where emergencies were not dealt with within the existing system. There is still the frustration in particular in ...[Inaudible]... surgeries, where the waiting list is sometimes too long for the patient's comfort and convenience.

But with the high inventory of hospital beds that we have, our desire not to expand the now existing facilities is, of course, something I hope is understandable. But because of things like that, the question of alternate methods of care comes up. And we want to see it always, of course, as a reduction of areas where duplication occurs.

At the present time the Hospital Services Commission is working with my office in regard to the development of a five-year plan for the commission and a five-year budget for the commission. This is directed specifically without going into much detail in regard to it, to the hope, as I mentioned at the outset, that a de-escalation of costs will be possible if we plan over a sufficiently long period of time to show that some alternate services in various communities are going to be adequate to the needs of the patient and that, as a result of that ultimate service, an additional expense of hospital or indeed hospital ward or hospital bed may not be required.

This, of course, is premised upon the assumption that the alternative methods that are considered are, in fact, more economical. I think there are some arguments to be made that some of the proposals in regard to visiting services, day care, day hospitals, outpatient types of services which are put forward as alternatives may not be as much more economical as we think. But it is our belief that they will prove to be economical enough so that when they are included in a five-year plan, we will be able to reduce what might otherwise be the need for construction of active treatment hospitals. And in the course of substituting some care which is not of the emergency nature or a critical nature with this other type of service, an actual cost saving can be made.

When I have discussed the ideas of alternatives, I mentioned the home-care program. At the present time this is not a shareable item with the federal government as hospital operation itself is, but some move in this direction is taking place at the present time in Alberta in the belief that even if it must be funded by the province, its cost will be so economical by comparison that it will be a worthwhile thing to undertake.

Another area that is very relevant to the question of hospital costs is the area of utilization. The manner in which hospitals are used is one of the things that contribute to the degree of dissatisfaction that sometimes does come up in regard to services provided in various communities.

Hospitals are complex. This is a result of their capability for diagnostic and treatment activity and the wealth of professional resources they provide. Complexity dictates that services must be co-ordinated and the resources properly utilized and these efforts must be integrated and made subject to the need for service in the community.

The responsibility for co-ordination of resources rests with the hospital board and the administrative staffs of the hospitals. In order to achieve and maintain optimum utilization of human resources in the hospitals, and of course, there are equipment and material resources, requires the co-operation of medical staff and other staff in the hospitals and this type of co-operation and integration of effort is the sort of thing that we are working towards through the work of the Alberta Hospital Services Commission in the dealings they have with individual boards.

Utilization controls aren't put forward simply as a negative process to contain costs. I mentioned at the outset that proper usage of the facility within the financial resources available is also important for the other reason that the public is going to be best served if the facility they have is being properly utilized. Some of the reasons why a patient who would perhaps have some need for an active bed may not be able to be admitted on a particular occasion, is because the bed is occupied by someone who really need not be there. And it is the patient who need not be there who is causing a wrong utilization of the hospital and barring someone else, even though in the total picture you may well find that your total beds are adequate for what the real needs are. And I suppose we should add that the process we go through in dealing with the boards should be concerned with under-utilization as much as over-utilization. In assistance to the board, the administrators and the medical staff to control utilization, organized medicine has, for a long time, advocated the concept of reviewing utilization of hospital facilities and services for the development and implementation of appropriate controls by the medical professions. Utilization reviews have been conducted on a voluntary basis for some time, and are aimed at providing an educational opportunity for medical staff, as well as the monitoring of the quality of care.

However, voluntary utilization reviews have not been outstandingly successful in continued use, and consequently it appears reasonable that the involvement of the Alberta Hospital Services Commission with individual boards in regard to utilization is necessary and should be on the increase. And I might say that hospitals appear to have the same view, and the medical profession, by and large, along with hospitals and boards, has no objection to developments in that direction. And indeed, from what I've been able to ascertain they seem to welcome that type of intelligent involvement in what is being achieved and what is being attempted in the hospitals.

In order to facilitate the task of medical practitioners and administrative staff in studying utilization, the commission is proposing to supply all hospitals, based on the previous year's experience, with utilization indicators, including length of stay tables for diagnostic groupings, adjusted for age and sex, as well as length of stay tables for specific diagnoses and procedures, and the figures on the rates of admissions per 1,000 population for the district, and specifically in relation to selective diagnostic procedures.

Near the end of last year the Hospital Services Commission published a substantial regulation on the subject, and circulated it to the boards of various hospitals. We look forward to experiencing greater success in the control of utilization than we had in the past.

In speaking about alternatives to active treatment, I know that several other things come to hon. members' minds. It's necessary to consider that where day care, home care, or some visiting service or day hospital type of arrangement, and you do require extended care, the nursing home type of care, that itself -- although it may require the construction of new facilities from time to time if the population growth in a particular area warrants it -- is an effective saving and an effective means of reducing the overall cost of the system. Because the facility that is being added is one that can be operated at less per unit cost than if active hospital beds were used for that purpose.

I have many opinions on how many patients in active hospitals could be in auxiliaries, how many patients in auxiliary hospitals could be in nursing homes, how many patients in nursing homes could be in old folks homes, how many people in old folks homes could be at home, how many people in nursing homes could be looked after through day care, and so on and so forth. As the hon. Member for Drayton Valley was saying to me just the other day, the figure that related to one of the facilities -- I think it was in a nursing home in this particular district, which includes his area -- one-third of the patients probably could be discharged from it if there were a lower-cost type of facility for them to go to. That becomes a matter that does and must receive a great deal of attention on the part of the department and on the part of the commission.

The government, in connection with decisions taken following the Farran task force report, announced a policy of final dollar support for hospitals and

this, of course, relates to the operating budgets of the hospital. The question of the capital budgets of the hospitals is under review by the government at the present time. The relationship of policy regarding operating costs, as it may apply to the question of the bearing of costs for capital purposes, is something that will be dealt with in the near future.

I won't mention in passing something I had a note to mention here in passing, I might, I suppose, just as well leave it unsaid, but there are only three provinces where 100 per cent of the funding for hospital construction is handled by the province. In all other cases there is some contribution by the municipalities. Maybe that is the type of area in which the municipalities would like to join with the hon. Member for Hanna-Cyren and be entirely autonomous, who knows?

I suppose, in passing I would want to say to the hon. member -- I have mentioned already -- that I felt he gave a thoughtful speech. I know the feelings he expressed as to how municipal governments regard their ability to serve the people and their communities. There is no doubt that services of enormous value are contributed at a municipal level as well as at the volunteer level in most communities. I assure hon. members that I would be the last to underestimate the sense of responsibility and the sense of sincerity that is brought to that work by municipal councillors and others who do similar work.

The new policy in regard to the capital construction costs when it is announced, I hope, will cover a new policy which I think will be significant -- and I see the hon. Member for Medicine Hat-Redcliff isn't here at the moment -- but it is our hope that the new capital policy will cover the question of air conditioning in new construction and in major renovations.

I just wanted to say in regard to voluntary hospitals that I have observed the special needs of the voluntary hospitals. Many of them are operated by the Roman Catholic orders and a few are operated by other religious groups in the province. On the whole, although they are in the vast minority of hospitals in the province, they are still numerous and as a general class are referred to as voluntary hospitals as they are not usually, unless by contract, associated with the local district board in the municipality.

I hope that our policy of final dollar support in the operating cost area will result in the voluntary hospitals being able to continue to make the sort of contribution they have over the years in the many communities where they have provided, in some cases, the only service for decades, and in the larger communities, where they have shared, along with municipal hospitals, valuable services to the public that their lot will be made somewhat easier. The voluntary hospitals and all of the good things that can be said in regard to their contribution over the years is something that will be maintained in Alberta and will not be lost.

On that point I would just add for explanation to hon. members who may not know the entire significance of that reference, the municipal hospitals are board hospitals that have had an access, over the years, to the municipal tax base for operating deficits which the voluntary hospitals have not had, unless they were able to make special arrangements by agreement with the municipality, and in some cases that was done.

Now, besides maintaining and adjusting to the best of our ability the hospital system as it is, the government is looking to providing some additional thrusts in the coming year, some of which have already been referred to. But I thought, when I said we had priorities of government as a whole, that were priorities last year and we have still not lost sight of those. They are still priorities this year. We knew that every once in a while with the maintaining of a massive multimillion dollar system like the hospital system is, we still know that priorities are going to say to us, "In spite of the enormous cost of maintaining what you have, you must go into new areas, and you must do things that are important because of the innovation required, because of a service that was not perhaps provided in a particular area in the past", and so on.

So we do have the need to expand. I have mentioned some of the needs before, but in our estimates this year the sum of \$875,000, for example, is being provided to increase the inventory of auxiliary hospital beds in the City of Edmonton, 40 beds in the Aberhart Pavilion of the University Hospital and 10 to 20 similar beds in the Charles Camshell Hospital in Edmonton. And this is part of the necessary expansion of auxiliary hospital beds.

Recently announced and favourably referred to today in debate was our policy in regard to the Alberta Children's Provincial General Hospital in Calgary and the new programs there in regard to handicapped children. This

coming fiscal year, coming that is under discussion, \$.75 million will be made available for new programs there, and a long-term plan is being developed, along with the members of the board of that hospital, that will bring into effect other important developments for the children in that area of southern Alberta and the Children's Hospital.

Now it is of interest that with the graduation of the first students from the Faculty of Medicine at the University of Calgary -- with the particular interest in family practice expressed by them and by the government, as well as the need to maintain graduate programs that have been established at the University of Alberta -- additional sum again of \$.75 million has been provided in support of graduate medical education. I think one could always note that the importance of providing superb short and long-term service for Albertans requiring that type of program, and we regard as important the involvement of Alberta people, that is Alberta graduates, in our services over the years to come. And as far as possible, I certainly want to see that Alberta people are supported in their studies and are used in Alberta to provide the services that are going to be required over the years.

There is something I don't know if I should mention or not. The hon. Member for Lethbridge East can smile at me now because one of the things that we thought was important was the new regional laundry in Lethbridge. There is over \$.5 million available for that, and, of course, all the hon. member and I have got lately has been criticism for the matter in which the awarding of the tender occurred, and -- oh, the hon. Member for Lethbridge West is in the House too.

MR. GRUENWALD:

Me too.

MR. CRAWFORD:

Yes, both of them said that. I suppose I got my directions mixed. I wasn't looking at the right chair, I thought you were out for a moment.

But I did want to say it is on something like this that you will find me cutting down on the side of local autonomy so strongly you won't be able to stand it, because the decision in that case of course, was one of the local board.

Now \$426,000 is a figure that has been added to our estimates this year in support of renal dialysis programs. I had made statements in regard to that in the past.

Another \$170,000 is being provided through this budget for specific research grants, and \$100,000 for improving scanning equipment in hospitals with nuclear medicine departments.

We hope that travelling rehabilitation services to communities in northern Alberta can be provided and we are pursuing, as I have mentioned in my earlier remarks, new forms of care such as day hospital projects in Calgary and Edmonton in support of geriatric programs as well as an experiment in home care in a rural area in Alberta. I make reference to those in summation of this part of my address because we are specifically dealing with the areas that I wanted to highlight as being new areas that we are moving into.

The other areas of the province where additional facilities expect to come into operation this year -- I will mention a few -- are the Bow-Crest Nursing Home in Calgary now under construction which will have an 83 bed addition, as well as 100 beds at Cedar Villa and 100 beds at the Glamorgan Nursing Home in Calgary which should be under construction early in the year. Dr. Angus McGugan Nursing Home and the Southgate Nursing Home in Edmonton will be in operation in a few months time and will bring 450 nursing home beds to the inventory for the City of Edmonton. As well, there is the experimental nursing home combined with a senior citizens' lodge under construction at Blairmore.

Now every once in a while when I get talking to my colleagues about the cost of providing health and hospital services generally and I talk about the large inventory of hospital beds that we have in Alberta, somebody will say, "well, that's fine; we have got a large inventory but how is it that you building more?" I though I would perhaps give you the answer. I have to give them on occasion and that is sometimes it's necessary to make an addition of that type of facility in spite of the ratio because we will have in Alberta areas that have never been served. Because of that we find additions are made. I refer in particular, for example, to the 32 new beds constructed for Redwater. Jasper was increased by 10 beds, and very important, 28 beds at High Level which

had no facilities between there and Fort Vermilion which was a very old facility. This is an extremely important addition considering the population and economic activity in that community at the present time. As well, coming back to the City of Edmonton, the Grandview Auxiliary Hospital, with its 200 beds, will soon be available to take some of the pressure off the existing system in Edmonton.

Now I wanted to say a few words in regard to the Alcoholism and Drug Abuse Commission because last year, if I remember correctly, I indicated that this was an area where we had placed other priorities ahead of it. We had said in regard to mental health and services to the handicapped that with the commitments we had there and with respect to the aged we had not had time to do a full and proper assessment in the area of alcoholism and drug abuse, despite the fact -- admittedly despite the fact -- of its very, very considerable importance. So when you take something of very, very considerable importance and put it alongside something of overwhelming importance, of course you have to opt for the one of overwhelming importance. But I wanted to point out to hon. members that in this year's budget we are looking to an increase of over 30 per cent for the programs of the Alcoholism and Drug Abuse Commission than was the case in the last budget. That is a recognition of the need for a much greater effort in this field than has been the case for a long time.

In mentioning the Alcoholism Commission, hon. members will perhaps be aware of the setting up of the detoxification recovery centres in Calgary and Edmonton. Also the expansion of existing programs, the restructuring of the commission and the new approaches I announced in December for handling the regions throughout the province in regard to former budgeting, administrative controls, research and other ways in which the commission could be made effective from the point at which it does its research and collects its data, right through to where it is actually helping the people who need it. These steps are going to be possible of the leadership of the first full-time chairman of the commission. I think that the necessary degree of leadership is there also the necessary budgeting in order to carry out the programs.

I thought I would like to mention and just put on the record that prior to the appointment this month of the first full-time chairman of the Alcoholism and Drug Abuse Commission, all of the duties, other than staff duties, but the duties of heading up the organization and leading the administration had been in the hands of volunteers and citizens of Alberta. Originally it was a 12 man commission. Maybe you should hear from me the amount of work that they had to do, because of the absence of full-time management and a full-time chairman of the commission, was really commendable. We had people from various parts of the province serving on that commission. The size of the commission has been deliberately reduced now. We propose eight members plus the full-time chairman who is also a member of the commission pursuant to the Act.

During a particularly difficult period of time, much longer than I promised the gentleman it would be, I had the very able services of a distinguished Edmonton doctor, Dr. Don Rees who was acting chairman of the commission. I told him it would only be for a few months, and then left him holding the responsibilities for somewhat longer than that. I thought that if the record of the House would convey my appreciation to him, it is something I would very much like to have done. His work was extremely valuable to the people of Alberta.

Now, Mr. Speaker, in regard to the department itself, the Department of Health and Social Development, I hope hon. members have noticed the new way in which the Estimates of Expenditures are presented, primarily under Appropriations from about 2509 or 2510 through to the next page. These do something which I think it is the duty of the government to do. That is to give a full understanding both to the House and to the public of exactly what is going on in the expenditure of the very, very large items of public assistance. I think I am right in saying that up until last year Appropriation No. 2512 carried, massed together a large variety of types of assistance. I had many questions from people, over and over again, as to why it is that the costs of welfare go up. Part of the difficulty has always been that the critic has a certain stereotype in mind. When he asks, "Why is the cost of welfare going up?" he is really saying, "Why is it that some person who will not occupy himself gainfully, some person who will not work, is getting such a big piece of my tax dollar, and why does it go up every year?" Then I would come back to him and say, "We have looked at the figures. We know that the type of person you speak of is only about 15 per cent of our roll in the granting of assistance, and the mass of the majority of the 85 per cent are people you would want to help because if you saw them you would know they are in need."

I speak of the 85 per cent of recipients who fall under the various classifications of the aged who are also in need. There are some aged, of

course, who are not in need. On the whole though, they have been a group of people in Alberta and in other parts of Canada who have been trapped by inflationary pressures and by rapidly-changing times to the extent that an unfortunately high percentage of aged people are in need in some way. So they form a group of those who receive assistance. The hon. members, all of them, would rise up together at once and say, "Why not? Certainly that is what we want to do."

Large numbers of people who also receive assistance are unable to work. They are disabled in some way. I have seen files. For example, I was curious when I first became minister to look at the lists that come from the computer giving them the numbers under various classifications who are receiving monies in certain ranges of payment. I found there was a certain range that was in excess of \$700 a month, and I thought, by golly, I'm sure going to find out about that. So I picked one out and I asked the department to bring me a report on this particular one that was receiving a lot of money. They brought it back and it said, "Yes, this lady in Calgary is a paraplegic. She is in a wheel chair at home. She still looks after her seven children there and gives them the mothering and guidance that they need. But she needs help in the house to do it." And there are cases like that. They make up some of those cases where people do come to you say, "Where is all the money going?" As I have said, and I know I'm being fair to all hon. members on both sides of the House, not only isn't there a member of this House who wouldn't endorse that type of support, but there probably isn't a single Albertan who wouldn't endorse that type of support.

I have expressed the view that it is the duty of the government, as we are the ones who are presenting the budget, to be able to tell the House and tell the people what the true explanations of some of those categories are, and hon. members will find them on pages 137 and 138.

Because they were done differently last year, the comparative figures for last year have been taken from what was previously one large appropriation, but the breakdown and the comparison is accurate. The various figures that are shown for last year in these Estimates appeared all together as one large figure, I believe of over \$70 million in Appropriation 2512 last year. But the comparisons we have now, starting with No. 2512, we have Public Assistance to the Aged, up 17.3 per cent at \$6.5 million from \$5.5 forecast for last year. And over the page to No. 2513, Public Assistance, persons with dependent children, providing for financial assistance to people with dependent children who are in need. And a large number of the people who are on the rolls of the province, and I've explained this many times, are persons who are in need, and therefore in receipt of assistance, are children.

And, of course, it is in the interests of the public, apart from the interests of humanity itself, to make sure that reasonable support is provided. Without reasonable support, without any waste, of course, of public resources, that is our responsibility in the department to have programs which operate so that the people who need and deserve the support are the ones who, in fact, get it. So public assistance, persons with dependent children are up 14.5 per cent to nearly \$37 million from just over \$32 million. Then we have No. 2514 -- those are cases such as the one I have just mentioned of the lady in Calgary in the wheel chair -- up 11.5 per cent to some \$17.25 million from just over \$15.5 million.

There are others there, the assistance to unemployed employables, which are the accustomed target of people who criticize the whole welfare system. Assistance to unemployed employables is the only other one I'll refer to specifically. All the figures are there, down approximately ten per cent to just over \$9 million from last year's estimate which was in excess of \$10 million. Now I'm not saying that the reason the unemployed employables are down is any other than the changes in the economy to some extent, and to a large extent changes in federal laws in regard to unemployment insurance. The income of a lot of those people would now come from there. But we have been able along with that policy to project a decrease in that area, something that I think would be welcome to many people.

Now coming into the other areas -- the importance that I felt should be attached to the way in which the Estimates were put forward and the more accurate explanation, I think, than has been available before, of what is actually being done in those expenditures. I want to spend just a few more minutes on programs in the department where the thrust of what is being done is meant to break some new ground and create something that we hope leads to better program services, more efficient services, and services in accordance with the priorities outlined in the areas that I have discussed, including mental health.

The first one I want to refer to, the Home Care Project in Edmonton, is a program under the Preventive Social Service provisions of The Preventive Social Service Act. In Edmonton a proposal has come forward for the implementation of a home care project, unique in that it combines the talents and resources of the city's Social Service Department and the Board of Health. In part, its objective is to facilitate care at home to people who otherwise would have to be institutionalized, thereby gaining a more appropriate utilization of other institutional facilities.

In the study referred to in the Edmonton proposal, it was determined that just under 20 per cent of a random sampling of patients discharged from hospitals qualified as likely candidates for home care. One third of these patients might have had their admissions averted if the plan had been in operation, and an additional 38 per cent could have been discharged an average of one to three days earlier. And that is a very interesting set of statistics. I acknowledge at the present time, as I give them to you, that only a small study has been done, but it points in the direction that we feel has some reasonable prospects for success in finding alternatives that are more cost effective than has been the case previously.

The service that I just mentioned will include social work, medical supervision, homemaker services, meals-on-wheels, drugs and dressings, and transportation. Approximately \$100,000 has been set aside to begin this program.

In the home care area of Mental Health and Services for the Handicapped, the approved home program operated by Alberta Hospital, Edmonton, and financed by social development services, will be extended. This pilot project has demonstrated its effectiveness in preventing admissions and re-admissions, and secondly, by permitting patients to be discharged much earlier than would be possible without the program.

At the end of February, 1973, 210 people were served by the approved home program at an average cost of \$160 per month. The hon. members will know that that is a great deal below the cost of institutional care. And those are patients who might otherwise have occupied space in an institution. Total expenditures were in the vicinity of \$.5 million per year at the present rates.

The new approved provincial home program for Mental Health and Services for the Handicapped is in the final drafting stage for implementation later this year. This program will provide treatment services to Alberta Hospitals, Edmonton, and Ponoka, Alberta School Hospital, Red Deer, and Deerhome, Red Deer. The program is designed to act as a substitute to institutional placement, as well as an aid in returning the patient to a useful life in the community.

I think I have said before that it's not just a question of locking at cost and bringing the cost down by having a person outside an institution. It's for his personal enjoyment of life. Fortunately, the same result in that sense can be achieved as well as being more cost effective in that life outside the institution is more meaningful and more full in every sense.

Mr. Speaker, an additional \$670,000 has been budgeted in the Social Development Services Program to finance the extension I have just referred to. Staff support will be provided by the Division of Mental Health and the Division of Services for the Handicapped.

We have mentioned in the Speech from the Throne, speech therapy, \$112,000 has been allocated to develop speech therapy programs throughout health units in Alberta. These services will concentrate on areas currently not served by speech therapists. It's a very important service, and in the areas where it does not exist it has consistently created a hardship on the people in those communities. The only way it could be obtained was to make expensive and all too infrequent visits to Calgary or Edmonton, primarily to Edmonton. So this is a piece of work that we are doing together with the local boards of health units. It is our intention to fund the health units to allow them to retain the services of at least half of the first graduating class on speech therapy in the Province of Alberta. Once again, this is an area where I say half of the class -- those are the ones who are available to us. They are not that numerous, it's a small class, but it includes about seven young Alberta-trained people who will be moving directly into health service programs in the province, and having received their training here they will be going ahead to provide the services in an area where there has been such a lack.

Services provided on a community basis as close as possible to the people in need, such a speech therapy program, will provide the early detection and treatment, the alternative to higher cost of care that comes later in the life

of the child. The sum of \$150,000 has been allocated to develop and operate a mobile dental clinic primarily focused on the needs of northern residents in the province.

It is suggested that in the under-served areas, this requirement of service is essential, and the direction of the early efforts toward school children is something that I know will receive the full accord and support of all hon. members. Services representing preventative thrusts in their nature, of course, are a lower cost alternative and in the end a more effective alternative to later expenditures in life when the difficulties are harder to cure, apart from the unhappiness of the child and the family that persists as long as the handicap persists.

A sum of \$225,000 has been allotted, Mr. Speaker, for increased staffing of health units to provide health unit nursing services to the handicapped and discharged mental hospital patients. I feel that this will provide an important link between the health unit service and the mental health service being developed on a community basis in the province. It is the desire of the government to provide sufficient services within the community to avoid admission or re-admission to high cost intensive care facilities. I have spoken on that principle before.

In passing, I will refer again, Mr. Speaker -- I haven't referred to it previously in these remarks, but I have previously publicly referred to it -- to the community resource centre in Medicine Hat, which is a pilot project. It was conceived in large measure by citizens there and is probably a unique brand of experiment in the area of community health clinics anywhere in Canada. In referring to it, and the government's commitment to fund and evaluate this over a three year study period, I just wanted to say what an effective operation I felt it was to have had the advantage of meeting with the people who, in the community of Medicine Hat, conceived the idea and brought forward the plan in really quite considerable detail for discussion, and then after, following the government's approval of it, those interested citizens are primarily the ones who will be undertaking the continued volunteer involvement in that program. I've said before that the work that is done on a volunteer level in these areas and in others is something that I sometimes think governments can't express enough appreciation for, and in this case it was certainly admirably done.

The hon. Member for Whitecourt got me interested in another type of alternate care. There were needs for medical services in the area of Fox Creek that were not being met. The population density and the total population did not warrant the construction of a hospital. Our discussions then revolved around the possibilities of something like I've been talking about to hon. members this afternoon, and that is, what can we provide that's cost effective, that's a good alternative as far as the cost is concerned, but will still provide fully-adequate services for the people who are requiring them there. As a result, we have arranged for the introduction of a nursing station to Fox Creek at a capital cost of approximately \$65,000. The government is providing, in addition, a sum in excess of \$30,000 for operating costs during the fiscal year 1973-74. This is the type of development the government is going to keep its eye on for its adequacy, which we do believe in. We believe it will be adequate and will serve the community well. We are going to keep our eye on that one in order to see if the same type of alternative might not be used in other cases too.

Mr. Speaker, I know that the length of a speech is often a matter of opinion. In my opinion this one is getting long. I would like to, not apologize to hon. members for speaking so long, but perhaps at least commiserate with them briefly just before I sit down by saying that I know it has been a long speech but I just want to offer one word of encouragement. That is, there is more here that I was going to say, but I will not do that now. We will find other ways of dealing with what should be said in some of the other areas. I do that solely as a result of consulting my watch which is on the desk in front of me. I can't let the opportunity go by to tell the hon. members in closing a story that my old boss, Mr. Diefenbaker, used to tell, and it was always one I enjoyed very much.

It's the story about the speaker who arrived at a meeting and went on, and on and on -- I don't know which hon. member he was trying to emulate, but he got to the point where the speech was far too long. It was so long then even he started to realize it was too long. Of course, this was long after everybody else had come to the same conclusion. He finally gave his apology, once again, two or three times. He was one of these speakers who, when he neared the end of his remarks, would say, "And in conclusion" at regular 15 minute intervals.



The excuse he gave was that he had forgotten his watch and that his custom was to take his watch, so that he wouldn't abuse the people with the length of his speech, and place it on the desk where he could see it. But he said, "You know, as I have explained, having forgotten my watch today, I just thought I would give you that little word of apology". And at that point the fellow in the front row said in a loud, clear voice, "If only you had turned around, there's a calendar right on the wall behind you".

So, Mr. Speaker, before it becomes Monday, with me still speaking, I want to thank the hon. members for their attention and thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. TRYNCHY:

Mr. Speaker, I take pleasure in entering this budget debate and bringing to the House my thoughts on how this budget will help Albertans, but more particularly, the people of the Whitecourt constituency.

First, I would like to congratulate the hon. Treasurer on his excellent performance in presenting a well thought out and sound budget that has taken into consideration all Albertans in every walk of life. I want to point out firstly, that for the man in the street this means no new taxes, no increase in personal income tax and a reduction in property taxes. This has just got to be great.

[Interjections]

DR. BUCK:

How about the interest rate?

MR. TRYNCHY:

I want to go on, Mr. Speaker, and talk about some of the concerns I have in government. I look at the past year and what we can expect in the future. Sitting in my seat and listening to the hon. members opposite over the past year, expounding their concerns for Alberta, has left me somewhat confused.

AN HON. MEMBER:

That's obvious.

MR. TRYNCHY:

On the first hand, they stated that the government has presented good budgets and sound policies. The hon. Member for Olds-Didsbury said that the Provincial Treasurer is doing an excellent job, and that he was pleased with many of the programs. Many of the other hon. members opposite expressed their pleasure in the budget speech, yet they go on to say they are dissatisfied in some areas and talk at great length and say nothing. But not once, Mr. Speaker, yes, not once, have they come up with a constructive alternative.

[Interjections]

Mr. Speaker, I was under the impression that good opposition has to come up with alternatives to government policy. But so far, this has not been the case. All we get from the hon. Opposition House Leader is questions which date back to old 1968 journals, and his only explanation is, well, it worked for them, it might work for us. How ridiculous.

I want to move on, Mr. Speaker, and talk about my concerns and what this budget has in store for the people in my constituency. In agriculture very little needs to be said. The hon. Dr. Hcrner has improved and developed all phases of his department beyond all expectations, with great benefits to the farmers in my area along with all Albertans.

I would just like to mention a few. We have provided a veterinary clinic for the Peers-Edson area, something that we have needed for a long time. The government guaranteed loan has amounted to \$22 million for the Province of Alberta. The amount of loans in my constituency alone total \$1,720,709 and have taken into consideration over 258 farmers in my area. In total, Mr. Speaker, there are 3,517 loans in Alberta, which provide for the purchase of over 81,000 beef cattle, over 5,000 dairy cattle and over 17,000 sheep. This is just one of the many programs that have resulted in increased income to the farmer throughout the province.

The \$5 million in the Agricultural Development Fund will continue to assist many young farmers who go into farming and also keep others in farming. It is a good program. There will be other programs to assist the young farmers, our 12 to 18 year olds, in learning more about our number one industry and in getting involved in farm operations and productions.

We have new crop insurance for all Alberta which is one of the things we stressed for a long time. Hog and cattle prices have never been better, and I could go on and on and on.

Mr. Speaker, an 88 per cent increase over the 1971-72 agricultural budget is a bold step forward, and will be welcomed by all those in the agricultural industry. The 74 per cent increase in provincial expenditures for highways in rural Alberta is something that I have stressed for a long time. The effects of this are quite meaningful in my constituency. It will go a long way to provide market growth roads that we must have in our rural centres. The Whitecourt-Peers road is a vital link to industry, to tourism, and to farmers, and the tie-in of highway 16 and 43 at this point is essential and is expected soon. Market growth roads in Sangudo, Evansburg, Mayerthorpe and the McKay areas are of concern to me, and I expect to meet with the Minister of Highways regularly to keep him informed of these needs. I am pleased that the portion of highway 16, Carrot Creek to Edson, known as 'deathtrap', is scheduled for construction in the near future. I feel that this has got to be the worst section of the Yellowhead road within our boundaries. Work will commence this year on Highway No. 43 from Whitecourt to Fox Creek, and will continue over the next few years, until this section is brought up to primary highway standards.

I am also pleased that the section of the Whitecourt-Swan Hills road is being considered for rebuilding soon, as this is one of the roads I mentioned in my Throne Speech reply last year. This has been a topic of much interest and discussion this past year in Whitecourt, along with Swan Hills which is represented by the hon. Deputy Premier.

I have every confidence in the hon. Minister of Highways, and our past discussions have proved to me that he is concerned with roads in rural Alberta and he is willing to work with the MLAs and accept their advice. This is just one of the things that was not possible in the past --

DR. BUCK:

Ah, come on.

MR. TRYNCHY:

-- especially in my constituency. Mr. Speaker, I might add that maybe it is because the hon. Dr. Horner represented it but we got nowhere with the old government.

MR. GHITTER:

On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, I read distinctly in today's Journal that the hon. Member for Clover Ear promised for three days not to heckle, but I see he's doing it again.

[Laughter]

MR. TRYNCHY:

I want to stop for a moment, Mr. Speaker, and offer my congratulations to the hon. Roy Farran and to the hon. Bob Dowling on their new appointments. I'm sure, Mr. Speaker, we can look forward to their support, something we have grown accustomed to in the last 18 months.

I must say that the reception I have received in the last 18 months from every minister of the government has been tremendous. I am proud to be part of a team of 49 and a servant of my constituency of Whitecourt.

I am very excited about the program that will soon originate in the Whitecourt Fox Creek forest area in which we may expect industry to locate shortly. This will be a real boost to our smaller communities and we all look forward with great anticipation and interest to the public hearings and to the announcements thereafter. This could result in many new jobs in this area, and I understand there could be over 500 new positions with a total population of anywhere from 2,000 to 3,000 people.

MR. BARTON:

Where's that?

MR. TRYNCHY:

Whitecourt. I am pleased, Mr. Speaker, that a policy in lands and forests has made certain that there is timber available for the existing operators throughout this area, and also that timber has been set aside for smaller operators and the needs of the farmer-logger.

We must continue to maintain a supply of timber for smaller operators so that rural Alberta stays alive, and that we can expect the good life in rural Alberta that is second to none.

Our new Minister of Telephones and Utilities is just raring to go to work and I am sure he will perform like a champion. One suggestion I have for him is that we look into extended area services on an expanded program basis and make extended area services available to all areas and not wait until the very costly installations are made. This can be done by taking...[Not recorded]... with a toll-free service. I can see no reason why we have to have this delay if this program is followed. There would be no extra expense to the government and at the same time the people of rural Alberta will get the needed service they have requested for many years.

I look forward to government decentralization and would suggest to all hon. ministers that we welcome this in the Whitecourt constituency. I am sure that the Department of Lands and Forests could look at locating, say, a fish hatchery in Whitecourt constituency, along with expanding the forest services and parks branches.

The Department of Highways, the Department of Agriculture, the Department of Health and many other departments should earnestly consider the Whitecourt constituency for some of their expanding offices and branches.

The Alberta Property Tax Reduction Plan is welcomed by every Albertan. A saving of a maximum \$216 for property owners and up to \$100 for renters will get complete benefit for over 90 per cent of my constituents. This program was set out on an ability to pay, and not for the ones who are well off.

The early childhood education program which will have \$4.9 million and a voluntary program will be available to rural Alberta. This is something that has been requested in my area. I'm really pleased that this has an emphasis on the disadvantaged and handicapped children.

Mr. Speaker, I have two major problems affecting many of my constituents and I want the government to give serious consideration to them.

One is the concern of power installation cost to rural Alberta. If we are to expand agricultural industry in rural Alberta and save the family farm we must give serious consideration to a new program whereby the farmers may obtain power at a reasonable cost. The price of \$4,000, \$5,000 and \$6,000 on installation is unrealistic and cannot be condoned. I suggest we place a maximum on this installation, a figure of say \$2,500 and the rest on a non-interest loan, or grant or a combination of both. Only in this way will we be able to encourage young people to seriously consider the farming business.

My second concern, Mr. Speaker, is the high cost of insurance. I make this plea to the hon. minister -- I see he's not here -- in charge of insurance that he should exert pressure on the insurance trade and find out why insurance rates are so high.

One example is snowmobile insurance and where we have to be covered on a full year premium. I have people in my constituency, Mr. Speaker, who just want to carry out one or two weeks in the winter season to go hunting. Yet they are told, no dice, you have to be covered for the full year at a \$30 minimum and it goes as high as \$60. I suggest we look at some alternatives, either the insurance people get serious or we, as a government, will offer snowmobilers a package of licence and insurance for a nominal fee.

I do not advocate government insurance, but if we set the pace I am sure the insurance trade will fall in line very quickly.

Another point I would like to make, Mr. Speaker, why should a person under 25 pay a much higher insurance premium than myself or anybody else over 25? My personal feeling is that the cost of insurance should be the same for all

persons, whether they are 25 or under. An increase should come only after an accident claim. I see no justice in any person paying a higher rate from age 16 to 25 if their driving habits are excellent. I have no quarrel with a stiff increase in rates, Mr. Speaker, because if an accident happens, well you know, we can justify these rates. But let's not prove everyone guilty before they are.

Mr. Speaker, in conclusion I want to say to the House that it has been an honour to serve my people in the Whitecourt constituency. I have had over the past year over 1500 calls and letters over my desk, and I would like to say at this time that I have been able to resolve most of the problems. I can hardly remember one that isn't resolved, so I think this is something you can relate back to the ministers of this House. I also want my people to keep in mind that my office is open at all times for their suggestions and their comments. I want to stress one point: this is their government and without their help we would not be here. Thank you.

[Mr. J. Miller stood up.]

MR. SPEAKER:

I believe the hon. Member for Calgary Bow claimed the floor first.

MR. WILSON:

Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to adjourn debate.

MR. SPEAKER:

May the hon. member adjourn the debate?

HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

AN HON. MEMBER:

No.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. member's motion to adjourn the debate is carried.

DR. HORNBER:

Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn until Monday at 2:30 o'clock.

MR. SPEAKER:

Having heard the motion for adjournment by the hon. Deputy Premier, do you all agree?

HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER: The House stands adjourned until Monday afternoon at 2:30 o'clock.

[The House rose at 3:55 o'clock.]

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Speaker's Note

Due to malfunctions in the recording system over which Hansard had no control, difficulties were encountered in recording the proceedings of the House during the latter part of the afternoon sitting and during the entire evening sitting on Thursday, March 8, 1973. The problem recurred intermittently during the sitting on Friday afternoon, March 9, 1973.

As a result, a few of the remarks made by Members of the Legislative Assembly were either not recorded or found to be barely audible.

Therefore, the text of Hansard for March 8 and 9, 1973, (Thursday afternoon, Thursday evening and Friday afternoon), must be accepted with caution, subject to errors and omissions, and as being not quite up to the usual standard of accuracy.

The Speaker is most grateful to the transcribing and editorial staff for toiling devotedly in coping with these difficulties.

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