

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ALBERTA

Tuesday Evening, May 7, 1974

[Mr. Diachuk resumed the Chair at 8:00 o'clock.]

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY (CONT.)

MR. CHAIRMAN:

The Committee of Supply will come to order.

LegislationAppropriation 1902 General Administration

MR. RUSTE:

Mr. Chairman, there are just a couple of comments I would like to make here. Part of it goes back to Hansard as well. It deals with the availability of the completed Hansard and the index prior to the next full session. I realize we had a third session this last year in December.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Mr. Ruste, I believe Hansard is a separate appropriation.

MR. RUSTE:

Well, it ties in here ...

MR. CHAIRMAN:

1914.

MR. RUSTE:

... with the journals though. That is why I referred to it in that way. It goes back to the journals as well from the previous session. I would like to see steps taken so that we have those before we start our next session, whatever one that might be. As I mentioned I realize that with the three there is a difficulty. But I was just wondering if there is some way that we could have the journals, the Hansard and the indexes completed before the next full sitting?

MR. APPLEBY:

Mr. Chairman, actually as you suggested a few minutes ago, this does tie in with Hansard. As far as the journals are concerned I think the direction is that these should be completed, if all goes well, before the next sitting.

While I am speaking about General Administration, Appropriation 1902, I would like to point out to the hon. members that this one also ties in with 1909. You will notice there are some considerable changes from last year's estimates. The additional estimates have been taken out of General Administration and included in the new section, Legislative

Committees, in order that a closer comprehensive review can be given when you come to 1909, and a better picture of what actually has been spent on Legislative Committees over the year.

As far as Hansard is concerned, that is a separate section which will be dealt with by one of the other members of the committee. As far as the journals are concerned, I would like to assure the hon. Member for Wainwright that this is being looked at and we hope that this will come about.

MR. RUSTE:

Just a further one to that. It goes back to the printing of bills in particular, and I am thinking of government reports. Now I realize there is more call for certain bills than others, and that certain government reports are more called for than others. I am just thinking of the one we dealt with this afternoon on the resolution on occupations and professions. In the first edition there were quite a few available, but the second edition was somewhat limited.

I am just wondering if we can do our work as legislators or representatives of people if we can't get sufficient copies to send out to the people we represent. I realize there is a difficulty here because with one report there may be calls for several hundred while with the next one there may be a limited number. I am just wondering if there is some way that can be worked out. If you send [them] out - and I think there was reference in the debate this afternoon to sending out copies of these - maybe you will get a reaction. Maybe if you don't get a reaction all is well. But maybe if you don't send them and you don't get a reaction, you are not in the position to represent.

MR. APPLEBY:

Mr. Chairman, I think this is a valid suggestion and one that has come before the Members' Services Committee. We have discussed this. The thing is, as the hon. Member for Wainwright suggested, that you never know what the demand is going to be when you come out with a report or a copy of a bill or anything like that. If he has some suggestion of how this should be handled, I would be very pleased if he would pass that suggestion along to the members, Mr. Ashton and Mr. Clark, [who are] on the committee and we would be glad to work on it, I'm sure. But it is a continuing problem and nobody has come up with an ideal solution to it yet.

Appropriation 1902 agreed to: \$399,465

Agreed to:

<u>Appropriation 1903</u>	Sessional	\$1,140,700
<u>Appropriation 1904</u>	Library	\$206,545

Appropriation 1905 Auditor's Office

MR. STROM:

Mr. Chairman, is any consideration being given by the government to a change in the role of the auditor or to a different approach than is presently being used?

MR. HYNDMAN:

Mr. Chairman, the hon. Provincial Treasurer is expected at any moment. I wonder if we could hold those two votes until he comes. He is prepared to answer questions and take them through the House. Perhaps we could move to Page 114, 1909, Legislative Committees on the understanding that we'll come back to the auditor.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Agreed?

HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

Appropriation 1909 Legislative Committees

MR. RUSTE:

Is this for Legislative Committees where you get committees from both sides of the House?

MR. HANSEN:

That's right, that's your \$40-a-day committees.

Appropriation 1909 agreed to: \$91,180

Agreed to:

Appropriation 1910 Leader of the Opposition \$84,023

Appropriation 1911 Ombudsman

MR. LUDWIG:

Mr. Chairman, I'd like to make a few comments concerning this appropriation.

I was absent when the appointment of the ombudsman was debated. I'd like to extend my congratulations to the committee which appears to have selected an outstanding man. He certainly has a tough act to follow. In most cases of this type I feel the best time to make laudatory remarks is in retrospect. I believe the previous ombudsman laid the groundwork for a great complaints procedure, a great complaint system in this province. I believe also the government's continuance of this office is a mark of approval of the manner in which this office was developed from day one and in the manner in which Ombudsman McClellan discharged his responsibilities until he retired.

I'd like to make the comment that we have in this province grown very rapidly in other areas of government responsibility, not necessarily the provincial government responsibility. I believe that the budget of the City of Edmonton is almost as large as the provincial budget was just several years ago. It is our responsibility. Since all the municipalities, all the other forms of government get their legislation, their power and their responsibilities from us, it is up to us to look and see if we ought not to provide the same kind of service for complaints procedures as we have for the provincial government.

I am not going to give you a spiel in support of the municipal ombudsman, but the new ombudsman has indicated in a speech in public that he favours a municipal ombudsman. I believe that is a step in the right direction, and while the previous ombudsman had the responsibility of establishing the office, laying the ground rules and blazing the trail as it were, I think we have now reached a position where we should be looking at reform in this area to see if people under other governments created by this government - and I'm saying "created" because every power, every authority and every responsibility that the local governments have was created by this body. We've set up the procedure. We've given governments, other governments, powers over property and privileges over other people, more so than this government exercises itself. So we have a responsibility to see that there is reform in the field of the office of ombudsman to extend these services in a meaningful way to other jurisdictions.

I have had some exchange with a lot of the local authorities on this issue and I can say quite honestly that those who understand it tend to favour it. I feel that if we can use the present office of ombudsman to bring in some meaningful reform, now is the time to do it. We have a new man who doesn't have to break new ground. He is walking into a set-up office, and although I'm sure he'll do as good a job as anyone, I will be looking for more reform in this field from this ombudsman than from Ombudsman McClellan because of the responsibilities which he had when he started.

I also believe we should see to it that this ombudsman has sufficient staff. It's no use overburdening a man who is expected to do a good job. If he is conscientious he is going to want to discharge all his responsibilities and he will find himself hard pressed,

and as time goes by his services will have to deteriorate. It is like the judicial system. If you haven't got enough judges either you get a backlog or tend to want to push cases through. I don't think we ought to allow that.

But I think that as the province grows bigger, as we create other jurisdictions which are growing bigger, as we have more and more government involvement and more and more people with delegated authority to deal with problems of individuals, then to that extent we have to provide additional complaints services, complaints procedure. I am hoping that we will look at the provision of sufficient staff, good staff, and that we do not overlook the issue of reform in this field from now on.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. BUCKWELL:

Mr. Chairman, I would like to say a word or two on the ombudsman.

I've never had the need in my constituency to use him too often. Some of the cases that have come before the ombudsman could just as well have been a letter written to the minister. I understand from the Premier that his office has a heavy lot of mail. What concerns me is, here's an office that has not been in operation much more than eight or nine years and we are now up to a staff of 17. Is it going to be, say, in five more years that you're going to have a staff of 30 and half a million dollars. Where does it end?

I'm quite often concerned that if a constituent writes a letter to the ombudsman and hasn't contacted his MLA or hasn't contacted, say, one of the members of the Executive Council, then are we not just increasing the load for the ombudsman? Surely there should be some criteria so that the ombudsman should ask the questions, have you written, have you tried to go through normal channels? Quite a number of times people have not tried to go through normal channels. They have been dissatisfied so they immediately write to the ombudsman which adds to his load.

I think it's one of those positions that is very worthy, but I think that if we're not careful it can get out of hand. It could be one of those things that, as I say, in a few years could get so it's costing us half a million dollars.

MR. CLARK:

Mr. Chairman, perhaps just a word to the members.

The various members of the Members' Services Committee have agreed to, shall I say, shepherd various estimates through the House. It falls as my responsibility to perhaps make some comments as far as 1911 is concerned, the ombudsman's office.

I think the only comment I'd make in reply to what the Member for Macleod has said is that the one additional staff included in the estimates this year is a person who would be an administrative officer. Until this particular time the ombudsman personally has been looking after the purchase of supplies, the budgeting and staff administration. Given the growth of the office to which the member refers, it was deemed rather appropriate that we should or that an administrative officer should be added to the ombudsman's office at this particular time. That's the only addition in staff this year.

MR. DIXON:

I was wondering if the government is taking any action on the suggestion of the ombudsman as to what he should do with the files. I am a person who is firmly convinced that once the case has been dealt with the file should be disposed of. Because a lot of this is very confidential and very personal, in particular where cases have been satisfied to the satisfaction of both parties involved. I'm just wondering if the government has taken any action.

I'm also of the opinion that we should look very seriously before we allow research on the files. I can understand why the original ombudsman is anxious to maintain his files, because he was the worst - pardon me, not the worst - the first and probably the best ombudsman of his time, but in particular he was the first ombudsman in the western hemisphere. I believe that we would lose the value of the ombudsman if it became known that the files can be researched after a thing and rehashed. I'm just wondering if we wouldn't be wise as a Legislature to look seriously at the situation and make a firm ruling on the matter as guidance to the ombudsman.

MR. HYNDMAN:

Mr. Chairman, perhaps I can offer some comments on that.

Certainly we are aware of the recommendation of the ombudsman in his most recent report regarding the care and safe-keeping in opportunities for research of his papers. I

think we would be guided by the recommendation of the Members' Services Committee. I believe that the Speaker has made a number of recommendations and will be suggesting further recommendations to perhaps change The Ombudsman Act with a view to covering the situation where the retiring ombudsman's papers are in existence. There must be on the one hand protection of confidentiality, but on the other hand they can provide a very rich lode for research in future years. So I think we would look forward to getting a recommendation from the Members' Services Committee on that.

MR. RUSTE:

Mr. Chairman, following along the lines of the hon. Member for Macleod in the initial contact, I know that the act provides for a written protest or a written comment or a written concern, whatever it might be, but I still get back to the fact that we have zenith numbers for income tax and for many, many other information procedures. I would suggest that it would be well worth while looking into having a zenith number to the ombudsman's office whereby a person who feels he is aggrieved or has some concern could phone. I realize there are a lot of people who maybe can speak better than they can write in some of these cases. This may steer away some of these individual cases that may, just in this phone call, be referred to other places where a case can be dealt with, without going through the ombudsman's office and all the correspondence involved there. I would ask the committee to look at that.

MR. HENDERSON:

Mr. Chairman, I hate to stand up and oppose such a proposition. I cannot think it would be a very good idea to have the ombudsman running a telephone answering service for every crank caller in Alberta. I find it hard to believe that if a person's got a problem big enough, if it's that big a problem, he can't sit down and write a letter, slap an eight cents stamp on it, think it out and send it in.

I don't know how the other members find it. I find I get an irate constituent who is really chewing me out over the phone and I say, well, that sounds good but could you give me the details in writing, and I think there is only about one in twenty I ever hear from. These other guys are just wanting to get something off their chests. I really don't look at the ombudsman as being the father confessor for everybody who has a complaint in the province of Alberta.

MR. CLARK:

Mr. Chairman, the only additional comment that I would make, and I make this comment to any member of the Assembly, is that if members have ideas or things they think should be looked at as far as the ombudsman is concerned, it would seem to me it would be helpful if they made their thoughts known to the Members' Services Committee. They should do this, it would seem to me, rather soon because it isn't very long until the government starts the budget process all over again. Any additional services or changes would have to be included in the budget so that members on both sides of the House who have any suggestions, if they make them available or known to the members on the Members' Services Committee, they can be dealt with in that manner and rather included or not in the budget.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

MR. RUSTE:

Mr. Chairman, further to what the hon. Member for Wetaskiwin-Leduc mentioned, certainly if there is only one case that was solved by this extra method I think it would be well worth the inconvenience which may be passed on to some of the other people.

MR. DIXON:

I wonder if I could ask a question of one of the members of the committee or one of the hon. ministers. Where does the Farmer's Advocate fit in now? As I go over a lot of this many of the complaints as I read them could fit into that category as well. Maybe there has been a saw-off now between the ombudsman and the Farmer's Advocate, but my question is along the lines of the hon. Member for Macleod. If we are looking to save the taxpayers some money, is there some way that we could get more cooperation between the two departments?

I understand that the ombudsman's office helped set up the files for the office of the Farmer's Advocate, and there is some cooperation there. I was wondering if there was further cooperation planned, without any interference of course, in the jurisdiction of the ombudsman. If that happens of course the whole thing breaks down. I was wondering if the Farmer's Advocate will be instrumental in relieving the ombudsman of a lot of his work.

MR. HYNDMAN:

Well, Mr. Chairman, I don't know what the situation is. I would imagine there is certainly a degree of cooperation between those two offices. I would think perhaps if that question was posed to the hon. Minister of Agriculture he might be able to offer some assistance.

Certainly they are two different positions in the sense that one is a servant to the Legislature and the other an employee of the government, but I would certainly agree that there has to be a balance between and an avoidance of duplication between the two offices. Perhaps if the hon. member could put the question to the Minister of Agriculture at the appropriate time he could shed more light on it.

Appropriation 1911 agreed to: \$228,029

Agreed to:

Appropriation 1912 Office of Mr. Speaker and Deputy Speaker \$51,824

Appropriation 1914 Hansard

MR. RUSTE:

Mr. Chairman, on this I noticed there is a reduction and I understand that the cost of printing has gone up. Are their economies served in one way and then you pay it out on additional printing costs?

MR. COOKSON:

The actual [estimate] for 1972-1973 was \$162,794. The estimate for 1974-1975 is [\$165,620]. I am not quite sure why it should be a negative. In my mathematical mind it should be a positive. I haven't got 1973-1974 here I guess.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Do you want some help?

MR. COOKSON:

No, I don't have any problem, do you? I am at a loss to explain the difference. I'd have to check through the individual listings to find out the reason for the decrease.

MR. APPLEBY:

On that appropriation, the forecast for 1973-1974 is actually only a forecast. It's not complete yet, but if that figure should hold up then the estimate would be a negative.

MR. RUSTE:

Mr. Chairman, maybe the member who is in charge of the committee will let me have the explanation for this later.

MR. YOUNG:

Mr. Chairman, just a question. I wonder if the Members' Services Committee, in looking at this particular appropriation, has considered the possibility of the effect on the term of sitting, if only the first 40 days of the session were recorded each year by Hansard. When the money ran out at the end of 40 days the record ran out.

MR. BUCKWELL:

If the hon. Member for Jasper Place would say that he wouldn't speak for 40 days, it would be all right.

MR. RUSTE:

Mr. Chairman, is the hon. member suggesting that we don't ask more questions on this side on the agriculture estimates than they did on the government side?

Appropriation 1914 agreed to: \$165,620

Appropriation 1916 Election Act

MR. STROM:

... [Inaudible] ... this reflects a true and accurate estimate of the cost for the coming year?

MR. HYNDMAN:

As clear an estimate as possible at this point in time.

MR. LUDWIG:

Mr. Chairman, that was about as true and accurate an answer as we usually get from the government.

Dealing with The Election Act, one item that has not been raised recently is that it has been several years since we had the big to-do about cities getting bigger and the representation not getting any greater. I understand that each city grew by maybe 40,000 or 50,000 since the last redistribution. It may be premature to raise this, but have there been any areas in Alberta in which, as a result of any government programs, there has been an influx of population into the smaller areas in the province. I don't mean Calgary, Edmonton, Lethbridge and Red Deer, I mean the cities' growth. Has there been any marked increase in population in some areas where one might have to look at perhaps a division of a constituency or perhaps an additional constituency?

MR. HYNDMAN:

Mr. Chairman, I think statements have been made in the House that the traditional flow of people from the rural areas into the metropolitan areas has been stopped and in fact is starting to reverse. However, I think that we all have to be cognizant of the Act by which the last redistribution took place which, if memory serves me, provides that an automatic procedure redistribution of seats occurs after two elections, but not before, unless of course the Assembly would wish to make a change in that Act. But at the moment that would mean, I think, that the present boundaries of the various constituencies would certainly remain until after another election but that automatically after the next provincial election that boundaries commission would be required to be set up again. The membership again being as set forth in the Act, comprised of appointed people and elected politicians which I think is a good balance. So I think at the moment the Legislature is bound by that Act, but I suppose that members would have to be cognizant of population growth. That Act though would have to be changed before anything could be done.

MR. LUDWIG:

Mr. Chairman, the hon. minister indicated that the influx of people from the rural areas to the urban areas has been slowed down or halted. I'm not commenting on that, but would the growth of Calgary and Edmonton be primarily due to an influx of people from beyond the province or is there still some indication of people leaving their homes in smaller areas and trekking off to the cities?

MR. HYNDMAN:

I don't have details of that quite frankly, Mr. Chairman. I wonder if the question could be posed to the hon. Minister of Industry and Commerce who may well have more detailed figures as to immigration and emigration within the province and nationally into Alberta.

MR. DIXON:

Looking ahead, Mr. Chairman, to when this money may be spent in the coming election, I was wondering if the government is giving any consideration, seeing it's going to have \$900 million it doesn't know what to do with, to helping other candidates, helping to get them out of office by way of financial assistance.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Out of office or in office?

MR. DIXON:

Out of office. What do you think?

MR. NOTLEY:

I don't intend to discuss election reform, which I think Mr. Dixon is driving at there. We have a bill that can deal with that. We also have a resolution on the Order Paper calling for election reform changes.

I did want to ask the minister what decision the government has made to date with respect to the legislative committee which tabled its report on The Election Act, I think in '72 or '73. I wondered if we could perhaps be brought up to date as to what the government proposes to do with that report.

MR. HYNDMAN:

Yes, the report was brought in, I believe, under the chairmanship of the hon. Member for Stony Plain, Mr. Purdy. In our view it had many sound observations and we're at the moment in the final stages of completion of a review of the recommendations. It may well be that selected recommendations will be brought before the House sometime within the next year.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

MR. BENOIT:

The amount that is stated in here, is that strictly for provincial work or does the province get involved in conjunction with municipal elections too, with regard to by-elections and option plebiscites and so on in this amount?

MR. APPLEBY:

Well, Mr. Chairman, the appropriation referred to here deals strictly with The Legislative Assembly Act and the election of members to this Assembly. You will notice perhaps there a slight increase - well, it's almost doubled from what it was in the previous appropriation.

There will be some preliminary work done probably in the matter of instruction of returning officers. They may have to have some meetings this year and so on in case there should be an election within the next couple of years. The same thing will apply to possibly printing some preliminary materials and so on.

Dealing with the question that Mr. Strom raised, whether there was any indication here of how an election might be financed if one is called, I think he's quite familiar with the fact that that's done under a special warrant.

MR. STROM:

No more of that.

MR. APPLEBY:

It is traditional that it should be done under a special warrant. As far as Mr. Dixon's comments were concerned, I'm not too sure what he meant by helping the "other" members when he made his remarks.

MR. DIXON:

... quite easily. The other members will need a few more extra members to take over. Those are the ones I was concerned about. Every day we get letters from people who are anxious to run for office and they are concerned with the high cost of getting elected in Canada, at whatever level it may be. So I think that all governments in Canada are going to have to take a serious look at assisting in particular all people, but the ones I have in mind are the ordinary individuals who would like to run for office in Canada.

It was a serious question that I asked the government. And I think there is no more opportune time. If we're going to have this \$900 million, we can't cry poverty, that we can't afford to do it. So I think this is the time the government opposite should give

serious consideration to giving individual Albertans who have ambitions to run for office some help.

MR. KOZIAK:

It's an interesting proposition. I'd like to hear more about how the money would be dealt with. Would it be limited to recognized candidates of recognized parties or would it be available to anybody who had an inkling to run?

MR. DIXON:

Well, of course the nicest thing that could happen is that it would help everyone who had a desire to run. But that may not be possible.

MR. KOZIAK:

That would use up the whole \$900 million, wouldn't it?

MR. DIXON:

I didn't get the question. What was it?

MR. KOZIAK:

That would use up the whole \$900 million.

MR. DIXON:

Well, if it got the government out it might be worth it.

MR. KOZIAK:

It cost a lot less to get the previous government out.

MR. DIXON:

Seriously, Mr. Chairman and hon. members, I think we should at least make a start. If we start with the recognized parties, that's fine with me. But if we can work out a scheme that can bring in everyone who may have his own party or group that wants to run - maybe Mayor Sykes might want his candidates to run, I don't know. I'm very fair, I welcome everyone.

MR. MOORE:

Mr. Chairman, just on that point. It disturbs me a little bit that the member of the Opposition would raise the point of the province, through government funds, supplying funds for people to run for office. Now surely, for thirty-six years the members opposite had it their way by threatening people who had government contracts and other ways into supplying funds for provincial election campaigns. And that happened, Mr. Chairman.

[Interjections]

Now, Mr. Chairman, that we've had 49 very capable people who went out across this province of their own free will, with their own funds and those funds that they could raise ...

MR. HENDERSON:

On a point of order, the hon. member has clearly levied a very serious allegation against the members of this side of the House who were part of the previous government. I think it's incumbent upon the member, as a matter of privilege of this House, to stand up and produce the evidence and back up the statement he's made - with evidence, not just the statement of the member.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Order.

MR. HENDERSON:

Order yourself, Mr. Chairman. He's in contempt of the House.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Order.

MR. MOORE:

Mr. Chairman ...

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Order, Mr. Moore.

MR. MOORE:

... if I may continue. What I wanted to say was, I don't think now is the time after 49 members have gone out and formed a government in this province, with the backing of some people who were very concerned about the direction that was being taken in this province, to stand up and say in the Legislature that we should provide government funds for candidates to go out and seek election.

Clearly, Mr. Chairman, politics in this province is not in the situation now where it takes such a vast amount of funds to get elected that one should have to seek public funds to do that. Anyone who has some spirit of going out and doing something for his fellow man and doing something in this province that's right to do should surely have enough gumption to go out and visit all of the people in his constituency and make himself known and have a reputation that would propel him into office without any question.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Hear, hear.

MR. MOORE:

I don't see any ... [Inaudible] ... Mr. Chairman, in the suggestion that we should use public funds, which could well be used by the Minister of Highways and others in the development of this province, to get people elected to office. Really, for a member of the Opposition who had his way for some 36 years to come out with that kind of suggestion, to me is absolutely absurd.

AN HON. MEMBER:

I believe you're right.

MR. HENDERSON:

Before this committee proceeds further and before it's going to go any further, the hon. Member for Smoky River is going to withdraw the allegations he made against the members on this side of the House. I happen to sit on this side of the House and it's a matter of principle that when a member stands up and makes allegations like that, they are not going to go unchallenged no matter where I sit. I think it's incumbent upon the member to stand up and withdraw the charges or produce the evidence. It's a case of put up or shut up, or the affairs of this committee are not going to go any further. It's as simple as that. He's in contempt of the Legislature.

MR. STROM:

I think we've listened to a lot of rubbish and I suggest that the member either put up or shut up. We don't need to take that kind of thing and I have no intention of sitting on this side of the House and accepting it. If the member has some information, let him produce it; otherwise let him sit in his place and be quiet.

MR. MOORE:

Mr. Chairman, I would go so far as to say that my remarks were no reflection on any sitting member of the Opposition in this Legislature.

MR. STROM:

Mr. Chairman, if I heard the hon. member correctly, and I would like to read it in Hansard again just to make sure, he said that we had 36 years when we could sit in this House, as the government, and force contractors to provide moneys for us. And there was no sense [in] us coming along now and trying to bring in a suggestion that was being made by the hon. Member for Calgary Millican. All I say is, if the hon. member has some information let him produce it or otherwise be quiet.

MR. LUDWIG:

Mr. Chairman, I believe that in the matter of contracts by governments this province, under the Department of Public Works, has developed one of the most honest and most acceptable forms of contracting. Many contractors who came to this province from other

provinces made statements in public that this is one province they appreciated working in because you don't have to buy a contract. Conversely, some of our contractors would go to another province and have to tip somebody, or when they were through the bag man came around. That did not happen in this province - not within knowledge.

Now the Deputy Premier who professes to be a freewheeling type of politician and makes no bones about it, perhaps would approve of something like that. But we never did. If something like that happened, nobody knew about it. Nobody in the government ever found out because if they found out that man was finished. Any minister who would accept any kind of contribution from a contractor because he got a contract - if anybody found out I would be quite certain that neither the contractor nor the minister would be in business. He would be out of business, out of office immediately.

The Conservatives have a tendency to treat this thing lightly. The hon. Member for Smoky River makes an allegation which is an insult, a reflection on a government that established a reputation for integrity that this government never will. This government never will because they have a tendency to treat these questions of accuracy, of honesty in office, of integrity, differently than we did. There seems to be a tendency to treat matters of integrity lightly. When we can have the hon. Premier or anyone else taking credit for things prematurely, trying to grasp credit for things they didn't do, then you have to watch an outfit like that.

It ill behoves any member on that other side, without any proof, [to] make an allegation that has a tendency to smear a previous government. I believe the people in this province know that when Social Credit was defeated in this province there was a clean record and an example of integrity in government to all the provinces in this great country. I am quite certain that if anyone - any civil servant - who had been found having accepted any kind of benefit, or if anyone in the government had accepted any kind of benefit from a contractor and we found out, that man would never last to be in his office the next day.

I see the hon. Minister of Municipal Affairs has a sort of indifferent look on his face, which is one of his natural looks. He sort of feels, well, let the other side stand up. If an allegation like this is made, facts are important. It isn't enough to just stand up and say, well, you people perpetuated yourself in office by accepting donations, accepting money from contractors. I believe that when they raise this kind of thing we ought to be alerted, because I am not happy with the way some of the hon. ministers here behave at the present time. Instead of trying to cast a reflection on a government whose hands, as everybody knows and most Conservatives know, were clean - they were in 36 years - I am saying that we perhaps would be very pleased if the Conservative government ended up with hands as clean after 36 months.

I am of this opinion: if the hon. Member for Smoky River cannot produce the facts, Mr. Chairman, you've got yourself a real problem. He has to stand up and produce facts, or it's best if he apologized and withdrew his statement. If the Deputy Premier wants to get involved in this, then we will go through every department. We will go through every department one by one to see just what they mean, to see whether there is absolute integrity in government. I already have some reasons to believe that the affairs of this province, in some of the contracting work, are not handled honestly, according to my opinion.

[Interjections]

Now watch them howl. They want me to prove it now. I can prove it, Mr. Chairman, but they can't prove ...

DR. MCCRIMMON:

Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. There has been one question asked already on this, and another allegation has been made. Let him produce the proof or keep his mouth shut.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

I wonder if the hon. members would attempt to debate Appropriation 1916, the Election Act.

MR. CLARK:

Mr. Chairman, just so you have no false illusions, we are not going to leave this issue that quickly. We're not going to monkey around and just move on to the next appropriation like that ...

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Mr. Clark, as Chairman of this committee I would only beg that the members continue debating the question of Appropriation 1916, the Election Act. I'm not restricting the area that you want to debate ...

MR. CLARK:

The point that I'm making, Mr. Chairman, is in light of the statement made by the Member for Smoky River. We are going to pursue this matter. We're not going to get back onto the appropriation, in light of the comments the hon. member has made, unless the hon. member wants to withdraw his statement.

MR. COOKSON:

Mr. Chairman, would it be in order to ask for an increase in the estimates for Hansard at this time?

MR. HENDERSON:

I move the Chairman do now leave the Chair.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Why?

MR. HENDERSON:

We wish to bring a matter of privilege before the Speaker at the earliest opportunity as per the rules of the House.

DR. HORNER:

Well, that's all very well for the hon. member. I would like to speak on a point of order, Mr. Chairman.

MR. LUDWIG:

Mr. Chairman, the motion that you do now leave the Chair is not debatable.

DR. HORNER:

I'm on a point of order, Mr. Chairman. You can put the motion of course, but I'd like to deal with the point of order.

MR. HENDERSON:

Mr. Chairman, I've made the motion - it's not a point of order - that the Chairman do now leave the Chair. Debate ends at that point, and that's it.

DR. HORNER:

Surely there are [some] who have a right to stand up and mouth off - and like the Member for Wetaskiwin-Leduc, without any cause - but on occasion there are others in this chamber as well. He is not what he might think he might be. Mr. Chairman, surely each of us representing a riding in this province has a right to be heard. That isn't precluded by either the hon. Member for Calgary Mountain View or my honourable friend who is the Independent Member for Wetaskiwin-Leduc. I think that in due fairness each of us has that kind of right in this Legislature.

You know, my honourable friend has been casting aspersions around very lightly without any regard to the truth, and I'm quite willing to give him chapter and verse, and give dates.

MR. HENDERSON:

Mr. Chairman, I have a motion before the Chair. Under Rule 54.(1) of our rules it states very clearly - and the minister is just trying to fight a big delaying and diversion tactic - [and] I will read to the House rule 54.1 which says, "A motion that the Chairman leave the Chair (a) is always...

DR. HORNER:

It's a point of order and I don't really think the hon. member...

MR. HENDERSON:

... in order, (b) takes precedence of any other motion, and (c) is not debatable."

DR. HORNER:

I'm not debating [the] motion.

MR. HENDERSON:

Sit down and shut up.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Order.

MR. HENDERSON:

I'm amazed that a man who knows as much about public life takes the accusations that have been made by the Member for Smoky River as lightly and casually as the Deputy Premier does.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

May I have order here? I have a motion before me.

MR. HENDERSON:

There is a motion before the Chair.

DR. HORNER:

I'm on a point of order, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

I appreciate that, but my understanding is that I have a motion that I now leave the Chair and it is not debatable.

DR. HORNER:

I'm on a point of order.

[Interjections]

The point of order is simply this: the motion made by the hon. member is not in order because, you know, there are no grounds for it. If he wants to be heard immediately, fine, put his motion and we'll deal with it. But to suggest for a moment that he has a reasonable motion is to make a mockery of the legislative process.

MR. HENDERSON:

Mr. Chairman, the rules do not require that any reason be given for a motion for the Chairman to leave the Chair. Again this is the type of nonsense Deputy Premier revels in.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Order. The Chair accepts the motion. The question has been called.

[The motion was lost.]

DR. HORNER:

Mr. Chairman, I do want to give to my honourable friend chapter and verse. On August 17, 1971, an order in council was passed by the previous government giving to the community of Elk Point, for no real good reason or under [no] policy except that of re-electing or trying to re-elect the former Minister of Manpower and Labour, a substantial sum of money under no policy or anything else. This order in council can be produced. It's a matter of record. That's one of the things. They were apparently quite concerned about that particular constituency.

Indeed I am sure we can provide people from the highways department who moved off a contract in another area to move an entire crew in the middle of August 1971, again to try to build a road in a very quick time because things were slipping, Mr. Chairman. So for my hon. friends to suggest that ...

AN HON. MEMBER:

Point of order.

MR. BUCKWELL:

The hon. Minister of Agriculture is reciting cases that it was the government itself. The hon. Member for Smoky River did not recite any cases. He recited, or made the allegation, that there were kickbacks from contractors to the then government side for election funds.

The two things are totally different.

MR. MOORE:

Mr. Chairman, on a point of order, I never at any time said there were kickbacks from contractors to the former government of this province in respect of getting candidates re-elected.

MR. LUDWIG:

The meaning was there.

AN HON. MEMBER:

What did you say?

MR. MOORE:

Never at any time did I say that.

AN HON. MEMBER:

What did you say?

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Order. Mr. Minister, continue.

DR. HORNER:

If my honourable friends want more chapters and verses, my hobby is collecting these kinds of chapters and verses ...

[Laughter]

I have a number of them, Mr. Chairman, and I could relate the number of miles and the other things that have been done - the indirect kind of things going on in Municipal Affairs in relation to the grants to various municipalities. You want chapter and verse? I'll give it to you, both barrels. And it's a sad reflection on modern government.

MR. DIXON:

Let's hear that.

DR. HORNER:

Well, my hon. friend ...

MR. DIXON:

Let's hear that. You've made the accusation ...

DR. HORNER:

Yeah, I've made the accusation and I don't make accusations I can't back up.

AN HON. MEMBER:

You sure do. You just made one.

DR. HORNER:

Fine ...

[Interjections]

... and I have lots of times. I'm saying ...

MR. HENDERSON:

... [Inaudible] ... appoint a committee to inquire into it [for] all the answers, the evidence. Let's lay it before the House.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Order. Order.

DR. HORNER:

My hon. friend, I have the floor. He's been spouting off ...

MR. HENDERSON:

The hon. minister doesn't have the floor. He thinks he can have the floor in here any time he wants. He has no more prerogative in here than any other member.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Order, Mr. Henderson.

MR. HENDERSON:

I'm on a point of order, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Sorry. You did not raise a point. If you have a point of order, raise your point.

MR. HENDERSON:

This has nothing whatsoever to do with the accusations raised by the Member for Smoky River.

... [Inaudible] ... now the minister is off on a subject that's out before a commission set up by the government. Yet he stands up here and says he's got all this evidence. For months we heard the Minister of Municipal Affairs say there was no such evidence. Now let the Deputy Premier stand up and produce the evidence. He makes those accusations. Let's hear them now and be done with them. Let's have them, Mr. Chairman, because he's in the same ballpark as the Member for Smoky River.

AN HON. MEMBER:

They've been in the same bed for a long time.

MR. HENDERSON:

Oh, it's great fun and games you know. None of this is of any consequence. You guys go through the motions just because you think it's a lot of fun. Well then, produce the evidence, Mr. Chairman, or shut up, Mr. Minister.

DR. HORNER:

Mr. Chairman, I'm quite willing to produce that order in council that was passed on August 17, 1971.

MR. HENDERSON:

We've got all the Municipal Affairs evidence. We've got that one out. Let's have the rest of the scandal from Municipal Affairs.

DR. HORNER:

Mr. Chairman, I'm quite willing, if necessary, to put a motion for a return to show what has happened in the past with regard to municipal grants.

MR. HENDERSON:

Mr. Chairman, we don't want any nonsense motion for a return. Let the minister lay it out now. He's got all the other answers.

DR. HORNER:

I wouldn't want my honourable friend to think that I was concocting any figures. Therefore I would put it as a motion for a return to show the hon. member, you know, that the order in council is there for the Elk Point arena.

MR. HENDERSON:

A point of order then, Mr. Chairman. Does the member intend to provide this evidence to the committee that's now looking into the affairs of the Department of Municipal Affairs?

MR. MOORE:

Mr. Chairman, I believe what I did say was that certain contractors in this province were threatened with not having their contracts renewed if they didn't, in fact, support the candidate of the choice of the previous government in this province.

I do not intend in any way, shape or form, without having first contacted those people and received their consent, to name anybody in this Legislature who has threatened in that manner.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Oh, oh.

MR. MOORE:

Furthermore, Mr. Chairman, I say that the accusations I make are not directed towards sitting members of this Legislature in the Opposition. They are directed towards certain people who were purported to be representing individuals seeking re-election. And I say once again, Mr. Chairman, in no way, shape or form are the members of the Opposition going to suggest that I'm going to stand here and name those contractors who are - mind you, have been doing an excellent job for many years in this province in providing services to government.

MR. STROM:

Mr. Chairman, the hon. member says that he is not reflecting on any sitting member. May I suggest to him that there is no way he can exclude me, much as he would like to do it at this time. There is no way that I can be excluded from that kind of statement as Premier of the province for the period of time that I was. I want to say, Mr. Chairman, that if he can produce any evidence I would like to see it. There has never been any suggestion from myself or indirectly from myself to any cabinet minister that the point made by the hon. member was one that should be followed, and I challenge him, I challenge him to prove his statement.

MR. MOORE:

Mr. Chairman, if it is the desire of the Chair and will expedite the business of the House, due to the fact that there is no possible way that I am going to reveal the names of the individuals I am talking about, I am perfectly willing to withdraw the remarks that I made relative to my earlier statement about people who were threatened as to not receiving further contracts.

MR. TAYLOR:

Mr. Chairman, I think that since I was the Minister of Highways for 21 years, I should make a statement at this time. During that 21 years I did have contractors come to me and suggest that if they could get certain contracts it would be worth my while, and I made it very clear immediately that they were to leave the office and never return if that was the way they wanted to talk. I also had a contractor say, when he didn't get the contract, that he had made a contribution to the Social Credit party. I said, well, that's fine but that has nothing whatsoever to do with this contract.

I also want to make it very, very clear that never at any time did I accept any money from any contractor. I made it very, very clear to contractors that the business of the Department of Highways was going to be done on a level that was satisfactory to the people of the province and that there would be no contracts let simply because they made a contribution to the party.

As a matter of fact, I have told some contractors who spoke to me about this that as far as I was concerned contributions to the party had no bearing whatsoever on getting contracts or not getting contracts. They would be let to the lowest tender or they would be let on the basis of the contract, and I want to make that abundantly clear. I don't think you can put that in the same category as the point raised by the hon. Deputy

Premier about orders in council. Things done by orders in council are public information. They have to come to the Legislature for affirmation and if the Government made a mistake or didn't make a mistake by doing it by order in council it was certainly doing it above the table, whatever it happened to be. Whether the judgment was poor or good, it was not being done behind the scenes.

I want to make it very, very clear that there was no one in my department, when I was in the Department of Highways, who had any authority to say to any contractor that their work depended on what they contributed to the Social Credit party. As a matter of fact the very reverse was true. I insisted that our men stay completely out of politics and not even discuss such things with the contractors.

As far as moving road equipment, if this was done by an engineer it may have been done for a number of reasons. Every year there are times when you move equipment. I suppose in an election year equipment is moved too. But I have to say that to my knowledge no equipment was moved on the understanding to indicate to people that work was going to be done which we didn't intend to do. I just wanted to make those points clear, Mr. Chairman.

I want to finish by saying this. I don't think any government or any individual has any monopoly on honesty or integrity. I think we have to respect each person and try to assist him in doing the job in the most honest way. I'm sure there is no hon. member of this Legislature who would support kickbacks or a payment for jobs which are done with public money. I'm hoping some of this type of thing can be avoided through the debate that was referred to by the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview on election funds, the conduct of elections and so on. Certainly we can go a long way towards improving that, maybe in all of our constituencies, but as far as I'm concerned, and I suppose every hon. member can say this, every one of us endeavoured to live up to The Election Act during elections.

I want to again make it abundantly clear - and I do it because of the high calibre of men we had in the Department of Highways and Transport and who I think are still there - that no money was taken, no contract was given on the understanding that someone would get a contract because they made a contribution to the Social Credit party. I would have no stock or trade with that type of thing whatsoever, despite who asked for it. If that had been requested of me by anybody, I would have resigned from the position.

MR. LUDWIG:

Mr. Chairman, during the discussion and the exchange in this House just now the question of grants was raised. I believe it would be sufficient if we looked at the number of grants in the budget this year, if you are going to look to grants as being something that is of a political nature. When you give somebody a nice big fat juicy grant, that might be political.

Let's compare the amount of grants in all the votes in this year's budget with all the grants in the budget of the previous government before it was defeated. Let's make a comparison to see whether there is a bit of political hay to be made here. We are not saying that grants are not desirable. Somebody will stand up and say, which one would you eliminate? You could reduce a lot and you could increase a lot and make it appear as if this is in the best interests of the public, but the grants in the overall budget today are higher, I believe, on a percentage basis than anywhere else in Canada. There has never been such a freewheeling dispensation of grants to people throughout the province as there is right now. So let's not start raising the question of grants.

I suppose if we want to look and see where equipment is moved, let's take a good look at the constituency of the Minister of Highways and Transport and see whether there isn't a preponderance of construction. I am not saying it isn't necessary, but if we are going to set up things like that and if it looks suspicious and it is wrong, let's do the whole thing right. And so I am saying let's not, because grants were made. I'm not accusing anyone of being dishonest because grants are being made, but there is a limit beyond which you can't go without it appearing suspicious, Mr. Chairman.

MR. HENDERSON:

Mr. Chairman, I'd like to ask the Provincial Treasurer a question on appropriation 1903. He wasn't here when the appropriation was dealt with.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

For Mr. Henderson's benefit, we are going to return to the other appropriation.

MR. CLARK:

Certainly, as far as we on this side are concerned, we accept the apology for the comments made by the member for Smoky River, Mr. Moore. But I would ask the Deputy

Premier and Minister of Agriculture to table in the House the order in council he alluded to and also table in the House the grants from the Department of Municipal Affairs which he alluded to.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Yes, agreed.

MR. DIXON:

Mr. Chairman, we were sidetracked a bit from the original question that I started this debate with. So I'd like to get back to it.

Before doing so I would like to answer the hon. Member for Smoky River. I don't know where he's been in the last years but it's a well known fact that assistance is given in campaigns, maybe not to individual candidates, but to the general candidates running. For example, in Edmonton the City of Edmonton provides free halls for candidates who are running, taken out of public funds and things like that. The federal government has had committees set up to see how it could expedite voting and make it easier for the ordinary individual to run for public office.

I'm sorry that the hon. Member for Smoky River lost his cool because I thought he learned his lesson early when he first came to this House, when he was complaining about his grandfather who was a member of this House and who I happened to know and had respect for. He complained because his grandfather lost a nomination. It was the Social Credit government's fault. It was the people in the constituency who didn't vote for him. He didn't carry the convention. That was the problem. I thought that would be one lesson he would remember and he wouldn't be making the remarks that he made tonight.

There are people here who have served faithfully and one or two have already spoken, and I'm sorry and I wish that the hon. member would think out some of the statements he makes. Of course he isn't helped too much by his boss, the hon. the Deputy Premier, and the statements he makes. Everybody in this country isn't a Cadillac conservative and I'd like to see us encourage the ordinary fellow to run. We should look at it and see what we can do. If we can't do anything and the government can give me a good reason why they can't, well, I'll accept it. Until that time let's see what we can do about it.

Mr. Chairman, the whole thing is a situation, to me, that should be given serious consideration. That's all I'm asking the government to do. If they have any plans, and as the hon. Minister of Education has pointed out they are looking at some of the reports that are in, maybe something will be done. But I think this is the time to bring the point up. A lot of people have come to me and I'm sure every other hon. member in the House and [said], I'd like to run in elections but they cost too much money. How can we either control the expenses - maybe this is what we can do rather than have the government get into it. Maybe we can come up with suggestions for controlling election expenses so that the ordinary individual will be able to run in an election. That is my concern, Mr. Chairman.

MR. NOTLEY:

I think one good thing has come out of the exchange we've had over the last hour or so. That is, I'm sure that after the next provincial election has taken place there will be a large number of people who will be very carefully reviewing the orders in council.

The comment I'd like to make is with respect to Mr. Moore's statement, not as it related to the Opposition but as it related to the substance of his remarks. I have to say I'm a little concerned quite frankly, Mr. Chairman, that one of the cabinet ministers hasn't got up and at least disassociated the government from that sort of Charles Dickens mentality which we see in the member's remarks. You know, this idea that somehow public financing of election campaigns is way out and impossible is really a remarkable statement coming from a conservative. If the hon. member had followed at all what has been going on in this country, he would realize that the second province in Canada to bring in a form of public subsidy for candidates was the Province of Nova Scotia under the Hon. Robert Stanfield. That was one of their major achievements and a very good achievement. I think they should be patted on the back for that.

Other provinces have moved in this area. Quebec, Manitoba and Saskatchewan have moved in this area. We've got the federal government now with a bill which goes into effect on July 15. Part of that bill, as the members should know, is public subsidy. People running for public office can receive a rebate of, I think, somewhere in the neighbourhood of \$8,000 from the public treasury. So the whole question of election reform and public funding of candidates is something which is widely accepted and widely accepted, Mr. Chairman, among people of all political parties. As a matter of fact, even in the United States Richard Nixon is talking about election reform, public funding of candidates.

So I have to express some real surprise that we seem to have at least some members across the way who are totally at variance with what seems to be the position of the national leader of the Tory party and the position of people in every political party in this country. I think the Member for Calgary Millican made some good points, that if you're going to have a democratic system you've got to make the opportunity to run available to everyone, and that means we have to take a look. That's all we ask for, the government taking a look at the question of election financing. I was encouraged when I listened to the Minister of Education before, but I would hope that the comments made by the Member for Smoky River are his views, and his views alone, and don't represent the consensus of the government.

MR. MOORE:

On that point, I want to concede first of all that I for one am quite willing to look at and take under consideration certain election reforms, election reforms that might have to do with the size of donations to political campaigns, whether or not those donations come from so-called big business within Alberta, or whether or not they come from United States-based unions to support certain political parties. But the one thing, Mr. Chairman, that I will not accept at this time, and I don't think I will in the future, is that we should use funds that are raised publicly in this province for purposes of the government spending money to improve the situation of individuals, to put forth to persons who want to get elected.

Quite frankly, Mr. Chairman, I was elected on the basis of money that was derived from the sale of memberships throughout my constituency at \$3 a piece. Frankly, I can say that I think I was the only one in my constituency who restricted as much as I did the cost of an election campaign to money that came from within that constituency. Others did, I will say, fairly well.

I don't think we've reached a point in a democratic society in this province yet where we have to contribute substantial funds from government revenues for people to go out and get elected. If we have, Mr. Chairman, and if it is the desire of this Assembly, the government or the Opposition to go in that direction, I believe I will stand up as I am standing tonight and suggest that that is not the proper direction to go.

I want to conclude by saying once again, the other area about the size of the donations, whether or not they come from big business in Alberta or whether or not they come from U.S.-controlled unions, is a different matter. I have some reservations about whether or not we in Alberta should be accepting donations from unions that are controlled in the United States for certain political parties. I'm not sure whether the Conservative party or the official Opposition got any of those funds - they might have, but I doubt it.

MR. WILSON:

Mr. Chairman, the indignant member for Smoky River should read some of the press releases put out by the Minister of Education. I recall that the Minister of Education is going to use \$40,000 worth of provincial government funds to promote school elections this fall in Alberta. The Member for Smoky River should take cognizance of that.

And then just to answer, in my opinion anyway, one of the comments from the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview, when he registered dismay at the attitude of the hon. Member for Smoky River and some others across the way, Mr. Chairman, I don't think he should exercise any great dismay because I've found that the Tory government in Alberta takes the attitude that they know best. If they don't think of it first it's no good and they pooh-pooh anybody's idea if they didn't think of it first. So I don't think there is any great need to be surprised, to the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview.

The Tory government is spending money on school board elections and they are giving away money in all kinds of grants and make-work projects, trying to dream up ways to give away money daily to all classes of people it seems. Some of them are worthy projects, that's for sure. But when asked if they had considered making student temporary employment funds or approving working on municipal election campaigns for students, oh, that's a terrible idea. That's a crazy idea. Everybody got highly indignant. They didn't think of it first, so they got their noses out of joint, Mr. Chairman. So did the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview. Don't be too dismayed. Just relax. Some time or other, I'm sure that the hon. members across the way will take a more mature approach to the whole affair.

MR. YOUNG:

Mr. Chairman, I think it behooves all of us to have regard for one point and to state publicly and do our best to express the fact that, in fact, it does not require for many offices, including the office of MLA in this province, a tremendous amount of funds. We ought to be promoting that point of view as well. It isn't necessary to be funded by

unions, by big business or by what have you. Some of us from the last election know it, and I am sure some who are here from the previous elections know it as well.

I think we do a disservice to the office of member of the Alberta Legislature and to many other public offices by forever crying about the large amount of money it takes when, in fact, for many individuals and many campaigns it does not take that. It takes some hard work. It takes volunteers. It takes some good organization. But I think that instead of crying about the need for electoral reform - and I don't deny that there may be a place [for it] and perhaps the Assembly here at some point in time should give consideration to limitations or to assisting with public funds - the point I'm trying to make is that that isn't the be-all, that isn't the end-all and that isn't the beginning of getting people interested in public office. I would like that point to be on record.

Appropriation 1916 agreed to:

\$22,500

Appropriation 1903 Sessional

MR. HENDERSON:

I would like to ask the Provincial Treasurer [a question] relative to Appropriation 1903.

Just in case some of the members feel a little bit afflicted by me, I've got an ongoing battle with the federal income tax department relative to some of the revenues that are forthcoming to members of the Legislature under Appropriation 1903 on the question of the living allowance while the House is in session.

I would like to ask the Provincial Treasurer if, in his interpretation - and since the Speaker isn't here it's a matter of opinion I want to get out of him - the \$30-a-day allowance were changed to an expense account up to a maximum of \$30 a day, would the income tax laws then make the expenses deductible?

I think the main objection to the federal government's action is not that the \$30-a-day [allowance] is taxable, but that the expenses to be claimed against it are not allowed. I quite frankly feel that I am paid 12 months of the year. I don't report to this Legislature or anybody in it. I don't spend most of my time here. I spend most of it in my constituency. I am at a loss to follow the interpretation that is placed upon it. I am seriously considering appealing it to the appropriate authority in the federal income tax department; another argument I might lose, but that's neither here nor there.

First, is there the possibility that expenses would be tax deductible if we're on an expense allowance basis as opposed to a per diem indemnity?

MR. MINIELY:

Mr. Chairman, I wonder if I can review basically what has transpired in this whole matter, which I think is of concern to all members of the Legislature. Might I first of all say that I would like leave of all members to allow me to express my personal views and to say that those may bear no resemblance to the law or the interpretation of the law.

First, I think it has been a well-accepted and established practice, relative to members of provincial assemblies and federal assemblies, that during the time in which the Legislature or, in the case of the federal House, the House of Commons, was in session, they were able to deduct their expenses while they were in session. Those members were from out of the capital city.

I think that basically it's an unfortunate situation where a legal person sits in the Department of National Revenue and interprets the provision legalistically. I would have to agree that if you put a certain interpretation on the law in a legal sense they could say that members' expenses while in the Legislature are not deductible.

So what has happened to MLAs in Alberta and in all provincial Legislatures, in fact in all Legislatures in Canada, is something they have been allowed to deduct for many, many years is no longer allowed.

When this came to my attention - and it came to my attention from the government members who had been advised they were going to be reassessed - I made two things clear, and I hope that all hon. members and the members on the other side will also accept this. First, while I can advise members from my own personal views and my own experience in income tax, these matters are a question of law, and in the final analysis, of course, would be determined by the Income Tax Appeal Board and perhaps in the Supreme Court of Canada. For members on our side, I advise that they work through their individual

accountants, because I cannot be, nor should I be, the individual advisor to every member of the Legislature in their personal income tax matters.

However, I have had conversations with the Minister of Finance, John Turner, because I feel that it is just not fair. Now that's a personal opinion, that's not law, but I just don't think it's fair. For a member who lives out of town and comes into the capital and has to take up temporary residence and pay expenses, certainly I can see that the allowance paid to him by the government should be included in income, but then they should be able to deduct their actual expenses.

The Minister of Finance's initial reaction to me was, I agree, it is a problem I have with all provincial legislatures. Let me look into it and I'll get back to you. Of course, the timing of this was not too good in relation to the pressures the Minister of Finance in Ottawa has had recently. I am still working with the Minister of Finance and the Minister of National Revenue on the matter.

In the meantime I should again advise hon. members that they talk to their accountants or their lawyers. To protect their own rights they, of course, can file a notice of objection under the Income Tax Act. That must be filed within a prescribed time period after receiving notice of reassessment. That should be done if you wish to protect your rights.

The second part of the question is that if the Minister of Finance and the Minister of National Revenue do not come back to me indicating that they are going to allow the expenses of the MLAs while they are in during the legislative sitting, it is my intention to alter the manner in which we pay members of the Legislative Assembly, subject to discussion with members on both sides of the House. I think we could work through our House Leader on this side and the hon. Leader of the Opposition on that side, if you agree, to revise the method of payment for expenses in a manner which will at least achieve the best income tax situation.

Your suggestion, Mr. Henderson, is one that unfortunately would put us in the position where we would have to go, if we are not successful on the other route I'm working on now, to the claiming of actual living expenses only - in other words, no allowance and members claim their actual living expenses. I think that's what you were suggesting and that's the route that I could see as the solution. But I wouldn't want to do it without members having some input on both sides of the House.

MR. HENDERSON:

In harking back to the earlier debate on contributions, if any member wants to contribute to my income tax appeal fund, feel free to do so.

Appropriation 1903 agreed to:

\$1,140,700

Appropriation 1905 Auditor's Office

MR. STROM:

Mr. Chairman, I raised a question earlier before the Provincial Treasurer was in. I was wondering whether the government was giving any consideration to changing the format of the Auditor's Office. I'm thinking of pre-audit versus any other system.

MR. MINIELY:

Certainly Mr. Chairman, this is a matter which I have had some thought about. There has been some discussion about it, and as the hon. member Mr. Strom knows, it has had some brief preliminary discussion in the Public Accounts Committee. I'd like to say that there are arguments on both sides relative to the pre-audit/post-audit or the provincial auditor versus the auditor-general concept. It has been my feeling that we should not make any policy decision. I think that inherently it is also tied in to the matter of program budgeting which is on the Order Paper as Government Motion No. 2 at the present time. I believe, Mr. House Leader, we intend calling during this spring sitting of the Legislature Government Motion No.2 and the debate on program budgeting. I hope to hear all hon. members' views relevant to that.

But the two can be inherently related in the longer term. The short answer to your question is that it's still an open subject. It's not one that I think we should move on in any fast or rapid manner. It's tied into several other things which are going on at the present time.

MR. STROM:

Mr. Chairman, I appreciate the Provincial Treasurer's answer. I am aware of some of the problems that arise, particularly within some departments. As a matter of fact, I've had some private discussions with the Provincial Treasurer in this regard. I realise that it's very difficult under the pre-audit system to handle it - for example, in the Medicare area, one where we had some problems. There are other areas as well.

I appreciate, too, that there is some further consideration needed in regard to a change if we were to look at program budgeting.

The only point that I would want to make this evening, Mr. Chairman, is that in my view I would certainly suggest to the government that they not make any wholesale change, but if they were to consider change that it be tried maybe in one or two areas that are creating problems under the present system.

Having had some experience in government, I can only say that governments are spared a considerable amount of embarrassment by the pre-audit system. Maybe it is shifting the responsibility to some extent to another individual, but that individual has a responsibility to carry out. In the years I was associated with government I never had any feeling of regret that the arrangements were as they were. I know there were times when it created problems, but nevertheless, the problems created were far outweighed by the protection given to government under the system we operate in.

I simply wanted to place that on record, Mr. Chairman.

MR. MINIELY:

I would like, Mr. Chairman, to assure the hon. member Mr. Strom and all members of the House, I think in private conversation and also in my statements in this House that it is not an area that I intend making any precipitous action in without a great deal of thought. As the hon. member stated as an example on program budgeting - the opportunity for all members to participate and to provide their views. I think that, on the question of pre-audit and post-audit - and I have had conversations with many professionals in the field and as hon. members know it's my background as well - my view is that the system Alberta has had has served it well. While I like to think that I have made some substantial improvements in financial management, nevertheless that does not take away from the fact that the basic system Alberta has had historically serves it well.

I think before you change and alter a system which has served the province well, we should be sure it represents an improvement or that it better meets our day and age. What may have been suitable yesterday might not be suitable tomorrow. Those factors we can certainly take into account.

I would like to say though, so we don't totally blend the two issues but realise they are interrelated, that Government Motion No. 2 on program budgeting is, I think, a different matter. It's a matter of how we as governments communicate expenditures to the citizens who elect us. I would hope to have and would ask for the hon. leader's comments from the other side of the House on this particular item which I think is important to all of us as legislators and to citizens who judge how we're spending government funds.

Appropriation 1905 agreed to:

\$1,809,044

Appropriation 1908 Data Processing Centre

MR. STROM:

Mr. Chairman, I want to ask a question which may have been dealt with in committee, and I wouldn't ask the minister to give a long answer to it. Is the government coordinating all of the data processing of various departments under the government set-up which we have in the data centre?

MR. MINIELY:

Mr. Chairman, hon. members will probably recall that in last year's estimates we spent about an additional \$5 million to increase what in the field is termed hardware, computer hardware.

Our policy, Mr. Chairman, through you to the hon. member, is to coordinate all data processing services for government departments within a priority system generally for government, in terms of government priorities in processing and data processing. As well, we provide some services on a straight service contract basis, for instance a special job for the university. But basically, we are now operating three eight-hour shifts, twenty-

four hours a day, utilizing the computer pretty well to maximum capacity just pursuing government needs in terms of data processing.

Clearly we are discouraging the development of data processing capacity in government departments per se. We have made substantial progress, particularly in the last year, in terms of remote terminals. Rather than having another data processing centre or expensive hardware outside the central computer, we are installing remote centres which feed into the central computer. This is the direction we are going in data processing.

MR. CLARK:

Could I just follow along and ask the Provincial Treasurer, in the data processing field how closely are you working with the universities? I know that The University of Alberta has done a great deal of work in this area. The University of Calgary, NAIT, SAIT and the college system were developing some sort of coordinated approach. Recognizing that all the money comes really from the Legislature, what kind of coordination have you, not in great detail but in general?

MR. MINIELY:

Well, Mr. Chairman, the hon. Leader of the Opposition has asked a question which has bothered me for the last two and a half years I guess, because we have a committee, which I have the privilege to chair, on computer rationalization in government services and we have been attempting to rationalize the data capacity of The University of Alberta, the Alberta Government Telephones and our own computer in the Data Processing Centre. I should say that it is a problem. It is not one which we have been able to make substantial progress on, partly, I guess, because of the autonomous view of the university, and of course of Alberta Government Telephones, which I think is a valid view. They operate in a more autonomous environment and sort of at arm's length from government, but nevertheless it remains one of our concerns that either government proper or quasi-government should make the best attempt possible to rationalize the computer hardware we have available in view of its usage, and we're trying to do the best we can in that area. I don't want you to feel we are making rapid substantial progress though, because it's one that we're sort of pecking away at.

MR. RUSTE:

Mr. Chairman, the minister referred to remote centres. How far is it practical to go from the main one in the city of Edmonton for that purpose?

MR. MINIELY:

I would have to check this, Mr. Chairman, but I believe there is no limit in Alberta. We can cover the entire province. As a matter of fact, in modern-day telecommunications we could have a remote centre in Ottawa which could feed into the central data computer of Alberta. Basically the philosophy is that we have a substantial investment in the central computer, but we can decentralize. As an example, a lot of our paper in offices in our rural communities now no longer has to come to Edmonton because it's simply punched through a remote keypunch centre in the particular town or community. We could cover the whole province through remote centres, where it is feasible to have one.

MR. RUSTE:

Just for an example, to the minister, will the crop insurance corporation being located outside of Calgary fit into that?

MR. MINIELY:

That topic is timely, because the crop insurance corporation came to the data centre - into my office to see whether or not they could install their own computer facilities. Our answer to them was that it was not our policy to develop more basic computer hardware, that we could provide them with everything they needed through a remote centre which would feed into a central computer. That's the solution we came up with for the hail and crop insurance board. They are very happy with that. I have a letter on file in my office [which says] that they worked it out with the data centre and are very happy. They are getting the service they need through a remote centre. We have avoided the need for them to duplicate any kind of computer capacity.

MR. YOUNG:

How many keypunch centres do we have outside the Edmonton area now with line-feeds to the key centre? How many will we have anticipated by the end of the 1974-1975 budget?

MR. MINIELY:

Mr. Chairman, I would have to get that figure exactly. What I would say I guess, off the top of my head, would be a number that may be away off. I would have to get that information exactly with respect to what it is now, and what it might be in how long a period?

MR. YOUNG:

This budget year.

MR. MINIELY:

In the current budget year, what's projected within it. I'd have to get that.

Appropriation 1908 agreed to: \$4,684,115

Appropriation 1981 Equipment for Data Centre agreed to: \$150,000
(Capital Account)

Total Income Account

MR. HYNDMAN:

Mr. Chairman, I move that a sum not exceeding \$8,883,095 be granted to Her Majesty for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1975, for Vote 19, Legislation.

[The motion was carried.]

Total Income Account agreed to: \$8,883,095

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Before we move on to the other department, could I have leave of the committee for an introduction of guests by Mr. Taylor?

HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS (CONT.)

MR. TAYLOR:

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Thank you hon. members. I would like to introduce to you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and to the hon. members of the House, Detective C. Sproule. A while ago I thought we were going to need his services. Detective C. Sproule of the Edmonton City Police, Mrs. Sproule and their daughter Celma. Mr. and Mrs. Sproule are the parents of one of our fine pages, David Sproule.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

For the benefit of the Philadelphia fans and the Boston fans, the final score for tonight's game was 3 - 2 for Boston.

MR. J. MILLER:

If I may be permitted, what is the benefit to the Philadelphia fans?

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY (CONT.)Department of Public Works

MR. LUDWIG:

Mr. Chairman, before we proceed are we going to be dealing with Appropriations 2682 and 2683 for all the departments, because some of the things we asked for during committee were not provided to us. These are two of the major items in capital expenditures and the hon. minister provided us with an ...

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Mr. Ludwig, that is under capital. If the committee so wishes we can take them right after we have finished the estimates and we will take 2682 and 2683 individually. Is that agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Any questions on the motion on Department of Public Works?

MR. BENOIT:

Further with regard to the 2626, Grants To Municipalities in Lieu of Taxes. Are the grants always made in all municipalities to the equivalent of what the tax would be or do they vary from municipality to municipality?

DR. BACKUS:

The grants in lieu of taxes are based on the taxation which would normally be charged by that municipality to that particular bit of real estate operated by the government in that municipality. So it's not on a equalized assessment but it's on the assessment of that municipality.

MR. LUDWIG:

Mr. Chairman, will you be dealing with DPW item by item or ...

MR. CHAIRMAN:

We haven't done that, Mr. Ludwig, in the previous departments with the exception of Legislation. Therefore the discussion has been general.

MR. LUDWIG:

All right, then I want to deal with Appropriation No. 2602, General Administration. I had asked the hon. minister certain questions during the committee, particularly dealing with leases and the number of new lease renewals. I would like to have that before we actually complete this vote for the Alberta Department of Public Works. I believe that is relevant.

I also asked a question of the hon. Solicitor General with regard to the remand centre. I believe that she may have intended to communicate with the Minister of Public Works. Has that been done? I asked for some details about the remand centre in Calgary as to the date of engagement of the architects, the completion of the plans, all these details that I wanted, in a series of questions given, I believe, to the hon. Solicitor General. I have not received that information. It deals with Appropriation No. 2682, I believe.

DR. BACKUS:

Mr. Chairman, I have the list of the questions as we got it.

With regard to the first one Mr. Ludwig referred to of the leases, new completed space increases and cost per square foot, we'll be quite willing to put that together. In fact, the department has begun to put that together but this is an extremely long job. The

department feels they're just unable to put it together in time for the Estimates. We could, however, table this at some later date if this is satisfactory.

I don't have the question on the remand centre. Either this was missed in the subcommittee where I thought I got all the questions that were put ...

MR. LUDWIG:

Mr. Chairman, I have the facts related to that question to the hon. Solicitor General in some detail. I was given the understanding by the hon. minister that I would get the answer and I actually expected the answer to come from the public works department.

MR. YOUNG:

Mr. Chairman, as chairman of the subcommittee, the question was asked with respect to Appropriation No. 342, as I recollect according to my notes, and was asked of the Solicitor General. To date I haven't received the material from the Solicitor General but I will check into it and find out if we can have it.

MR. LUDWIG:

With regard to my request for the different lease requirements of the government, this is for purposes of comparison to see how much more we're paying for space. It was, I believe, a valid question. I appreciate the fact that a lot of material has to be gathered and put together. I would sooner have it right than in a hurry. I'm quite prepared to wait as long as we get it later on in the session. It's of a personal interest and a matter of knowledge of the government's business to all hon. members.

I'm also concerned about whether the government has, through this department, arranged with any of the contractors to have buildings constructed with some commitment as to space to be leased. I'm concerned, there's no reflection on anyone whether this has been done or not, but I'm wondering whether some of the new buildings going up in the vicinity have any kind of commitment for space from the government prior to the commencement of the building.

As I stated I'm not making any allegation that this might be right or not, but I would just like to know whether some of the long-term leasing requirements of the government are not provided for by way of an indication to a contractor - perhaps by a letter of intent or some arrangement, that we might need 20 or 30 or 40,000 square feet of space and the contractor will say, well, if I can get that kind of a contract, I could build. I would like to know if there are any like this, and if there are, I would like specifics in each instance.

MR. BACKUS:

Mr. Chairman, we have adopted a new policy as part of our encouragement to try to get local developers to develop in communities, whereby we have, in fact, invited expressions of interest to build developments in which we would be prepared to lease space. Now, we've done it on the basis of first inviting proposals or expressions of interest. Then from those expressing interest, we have ultimately ended up with a form of completely competitive and open tendering whereby various developers bid for building a development in which space will be provided to the government.

Now in this sense we have given a precommitment to a developer, but after public tendering, a commitment that we will lease space before the building is put up.

To the best of my knowledge, no other written commitment - in fact we've been very careful to make it quite clear that we can't make a commitment to a developer that we will take space in his building because he comes to us and asks us to commit it before the building is built. The only route we will accept in a precommitment is if we are able to tender it publicly and give everybody the opportunity to bid on that space requirement in an area, in which case we take the lowest or best bid we can get on a particular project. This is the only route we will accept with private developers.

MR. LUDWIG:

Well, Mr. Chairman, I was merely concerned about the fact that it doesn't matter what route you actually take, as long as there is some element of competition. The concern I've had on the attempts made in the past on the department, is where someone would come in and say, I could put up a building but I need financing. If I had some commitment that you would like 20,000 square feet, I could move. We avoided that, not because it would not perhaps have provided competitive space, but because it was unfair to other people who could not get that kind of arrangement. They would use a commitment, naturally, for credit.

I'd certainly be interested - I know the attitude of the department, and I don't think that this kind of thing would be recommended. But I know that when the government needs space, somehow they must have it. Somebody wants to know whether there is any hope of getting space leased to the government. Everyone who has surplus space knows the government is always a good tenant.

But that is not my concern. My concern is to see if there has been any advantage granted to anybody, any developer, to state that I can get 100,000 square feet from the government, I've got it made sort of thing - if you get a ten-year lease. But I'm quite certain that I have no doubt and no reason to question your statement, Mr. Minister.

One explanation I'd like to get from the hon. minister, Mr. Chairman: have there been any changes, since the hon. minister took office, in the tendering procedure for letting contracts under the Department of Public Works? I'm raising this question in order not to later on give supplementary questions to cover the time of announcement of invitation to tender or advertising for tender to the completion of a contract dealing with inspection services.

I note from the information I received from the hon. minister that the question of extras has been kept at a very, very low level. I am not saying that extras are not necessary, but it has been known in the commercial world, in other jurisdictions and in this one that contractors will sort of rely on getting more than the necessary amount of extras. My attitude was that unless it was established that we just simply must have it, the presumption was that you can't get one unless you make a good case for one. I generally relied on the recommendation of the professional people, and not always at that, for extras.

I note from the information that extras and inspection must have been very strictly carried out because these extras are very low. I think it's commendable because generally many contractors - I'm not saying ours are dishonest but they are in business - sometimes feel the government might be a soft touch. There are jurisdictions in which this has happened. I believe DPW has the kind of staff who are oriented to be alert to all of these problems.

I am concerned about the final inspection. I would like the hon. minister to tell us, with regard to the remand centre in Calgary - I am not sure whether the building has been accepted as completed, but apparently the first rainstorm they got fell right through the roof onto the equipment and onto the building. I know the hon. Minister of Municipal Affairs, who had much to do with the centennial project in Calgary, knows what it is like to have a big hole in the roof. But in the case of the remand centre, I would like the hon. minister to explain whether the contractor is liable in every instance of defective roofing.

DR. BACKUS:

With regard to the first question raised - the question of any change in the putting out of tenders - as I explained to members yesterday, we are being forced, to some extent, into slight modification of it. That is, we normally, and have always in the past, follow the routine of putting out the total specifications and tendering. This process has had to be modified by the fact that with buildings which are going to take more than six months to build, it becomes very hard for contractors to come in with competitive bids on them because they have no idea what steel and other materials or labour costs are going to be two years down the line, if it's a large building.

We therefore have been looking at alternative methods by which we may tender, such as project management, contract management and construction management. Again, the federal government and Ontario have had fair experience with this method of tendering.

There has certainly been no change in our attitude about all our tendering being as open and competitive as possible. But sometimes we have had to break the job down into stages and tender it by stages in order to fit in with the situation today, with the rapidly rising cost of building and the need to get reasonable bids in at today's cost without the contractor bidding excessively high because he doesn't know what the price is going to be two years down the line.

As I also explained, we are stockpiling certain materials, such as steel, that we see likely to be in short supply, or where the time it takes to order it is liable to affect our tenders, in which case we will put out the tenders which will include the supply at cost of these particular materials.

Certainly I would say with regard to the remand centre that the builder would be responsible for any defects in the roof until a period after the final inspection while the holdback is still being held back. I'll just get you the information as quickly as I can with regard to when the final inspection will be and what the deficiencies are. Normally our inspectors are pretty good about noting deficiencies of this type such as

leaky roofs or weaknesses, defects in the construction at the time of final inspection. But I'll get the facts on the remand centre for you as quickly as I can.

MR. LUDWIG:

Mr. Chairman, that will be satisfactory to me.

I'm also concerned whether there has been any change in the procedure of public opening of tenders. I'd like to ask the minister if he found that system of tendering to be satisfactory for the safeguarding of the integrity of the department and fair play among contractors who are interested.

DR. BACKUS:

No, there has been no change in that public opening of tenders. Not only have I found this satisfactory, but in fact the method of tendering used by DPW is recognized by everybody in the construction industry as being most satisfactory to everybody concerned. The construction industry would, in fact, like every other client to copy Alberta Department of Public Works in this regard.

MR. LUDWIG:

Mr. Chairman, I'd like to make some comments concerning the proposed addition to the Calgary Court House, if I may at this time.

My concern about that courthouse in Calgary is that it was designed a great number of years ago. It was obvious almost at the time of completion that it would not be adequate for the future for too many years. It turned out to be true that at that time Calgary was growing in population and in the early sixties and the next 12 or 13 years the city virtually doubled in size. It grew very, very rapidly.

My biggest concern is that I believe the government is making a mistake in adding four floors to this present courthouse under the circumstances, because the city is growing very rapidly. Its jurisdiction is quite wide. The changes in the ways of handling criminal cases, legal aid, et cetera, have really increased the volume of work that has to go through the courthouse in Calgary. I believe that with the advent of more commerce, fairly extensive real estate trading and a lot of litigation the volume is increasing rather rapidly. It's my opinion that that court house will not be adequate ten years from now. It's just my opinion. I believe it's a calculated risk in making this statement, but all projections tend to underestimate the potential of growth of Calgary and Edmonton. So I think that spending all that money - I'm not sure, I believe it's \$5 or \$6 million - to add these four floors without any permanency about the adequacy of the space is a mistake, that we're going to spend a lot of money and ten years from now we are going to be looking for space to build a courthouse for Calgary.

Now Calgary does deserve a fine courthouse. I'm not saying we have to build one as magnificent as the one in Edmonton, but the time to make that decision is now. We might have rented four, five or six courtrooms elsewhere for emergency situations or even accommodated some courtrooms in other buildings, but to have designed and provided a courthouse which would be adequate for 25 or 30 years. I believe the courthouse in Edmonton has to be looked upon as being adequate, with perhaps some modification in the future, for another 25 or 30 years at least.

And so that same line of reasoning should have been followed in Calgary. That courthouse at best will be a big, but the design will not be much different than it was 12 years ago. Maybe it was 15 years ago when it was designed. I'm not just sure what the date was. That city will require a lot more space ten years from now than those four floors are going to provide. It's crowded now. It will expand almost immediately to take up the space that will be provided with the exception of additional courtrooms.

The Department of the Attorney General has been making requests for additional judges from time to time so the space will be used adequately. The judges' private offices are entirely inadequate, the library space is inadequate, the administrative offices are inadequate right now and the cafeteria provisions are entirely inadequate. So when the new courthouse is finished, it's my opinion that we will expand into the entire space almost immediately. Then for ten years they're going to keep cramming more and more personnel into that courthouse until they will be screaming for additional space.

If this courthouse will be finished two years from now, as the hon. minister has indicated, within eight years of completion there will be rumblings from Calgary that we need more space. Six million dollars may not be that much money in this day and age. At the same time, it is a lot of money.

It is my opinion that the government should have looked seriously at designing an alternate courthouse at an alternate site. There's no obligation that the courthouse has to be at that particular site at all. It could be built any place within eight or even

ten blocks. The legal profession is now scattered all over downtown Calgary and whether it's closer to Eaton's or closer to some other building is immaterial. There appears to be considerable space for commercial buildings in Calgary. Therefore the government should have provided a site for a new courthouse. I'm stating that if they can - this government has been in office for going on three years now - and if they were able to accommodate the present courtroom requirements in Calgary up till now they might have, with the provision of four or five additional courtrooms elsewhere, stalled the whole situation another two or three years.

It's also my opinion that you could build a new courthouse, a magnificent courthouse, in two years, which is the time estimated for renovating this courthouse.

Now I'd like the hon. minister to advise whether this other alternative was considered and why the decision was made as it was. I understand that some of the judiciary would perhaps have preferred to bide their time in this courthouse with the view of having a modern, larger building which would last and serve the city of Calgary for maybe 25 or 30 years.

DR. BACKUS:

Mr. Chairman, I can assure the hon. Member for Calgary Mountain View that this alternative was given very careful consideration and that we were in consultation with the people in Calgary as well as the Attorney General's department. Very careful thought was put into the decision. Certainly from a construction point of view it is much easier to clear a site and build a new building than it is to extend the floors on the present one.

I believe, as I say again, we are a service department which provides the facilities that are required by the client departments. I believe that it was the feeling of the Attorney General's department and the judiciary that the expansion of this courthouse would probably suffice for the service of the court in central Calgary for a sufficient period of time, but the expansion of Calgary would quite likely necessitate a second courthouse in Calgary which might be established in one of the other areas. This alternative was considered, that it should be centralized for the time being with the possibility of there being a satellite court, if you like, at some later date. But for the immediate needs and for the needs for the foreseeable future - which is 10 to 15 years - this expansion will suffice for Calgary.

MR. ZANDER:

Mr. Chairman, I have listened very intently for a half hour since the minister and the hon. Member for Calgary Mountain View continually kept on a complete dialogue without consideration for other members of the House, and I would like to ask ...

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Mr. Zander, it is the Chair's apology. You sort of blended into the background and I couldn't see you.

MR. ZANDER:

I would wish then you'd move the hon. member over there too. My question to the minister is on Appropriation 2603 regarding the Architectural Design Branch. Will that branch be designing the proposed 12 senior citizens' lodges which are contemplated in various parts of the province, and will they look after the construction and the architectural design as the buildings progress? Is that coming under this appropriation?

DR. BACKUS:

No, senior citizens' lodges now come under Alberta Housing which handles the construction and the engaging of consultants in architecture. In fact, the whole job of building senior citizens' lodges is now out of the hands of DPW and although our architectural branch may be used from time to time for consultant work by Alberta Housing for the checking of plans, DPW is not actually directly involved with senior citizens' lodges.

MR. ZANDER:

I have just one more question. This appropriation then deals primarily with the design of wholly government-owned buildings, construction in the planning stages and also in the completion, as to inspection and everything else?

DR. BACKUS:

Well actually, the Architectural Design branch under 2603 is primarily involved in our architectural input. Now normally we do virtually nothing or very little as far as in-house design is concerned. There would be input from this department in the conceptual

planning of buildings and in an inspection of plans capacity, that is, they would review plans which were drawn by private architects and recommend alterations where indicated or where they were attempting to provide a more satisfactory design for the client department. Actually very little in-house design is done by the department but as far as the construction, supervision and inspection, this comes under Construction Supervision Branch 2605.

MR. DIXON:

Three questions to the hon. minister. I am quite interested in the activities of the Department of Public Works in Airdrie, Alberta - I mentioned this in the committee - and I was just wondering if the minister could outline to the House just what activity is going on there.

What land has the government purchased in Airdrie? What are the plans for the area that they have acquired? I realize, Mr. Minister, that you are going to be building the Department of Highways shops and maintenance there. I'm wondering what other things we are doing. Also I am quite interested how the services there are going to be handled. I understand that is part of the hon. Minister of the Environment's [department] but you are probably working closely enough together so that you could include that in your remarks. If you can't, of course, we can ask it when the estimates of the environment department are up.

The other question I would like to ask is with regard to the Federal Building in Edmonton. Are we making any headway in the purchasing of the Federal Building in Edmonton?

My final point, Mr. Chairman, to the minister is, last evening the hon. minister mentioned that \$1,600,000 was paid to the Edmonton Telephones system for telephone services for the Government of Alberta and about \$895,000 for AGT I was wondering, do we get any consideration as a government with any special rates, or do we pay the full rate to the City of Edmonton? What is the contract? The fact [is] that the government [is] by far the largest user of the Edmonton Telephones system, so is there a special contract? Do we get a special concession because of the fact that we are so big?

While I am on my feet, I was wondering if any research is done by the department where you may postpone the building of certain installations if there is already quite a bit of pressure in a particular area of Alberta for construction. In other words, we are not all competing at the same time with private enterprise and with public funds in construction. I have in mind the fact that if there is pressure by the private sector to get a lot of building done in a certain area, we could postpone our particular projects. Is there any research done? I hope I have made myself clear on that point.

DR. BACKUS:

With regard to the Federal Building, we have agreement with them that when they are ready to move out we will purchase the building, that is we have the first refusal at the present time. They have been talking off and on about moving out, but they haven't as yet been able to find themselves a site or in fact haven't reached the point where they have developed plans for the building of a new federal building. When they do get a site and allocate the money from the federal government for building their building, I think it will be a matter of three years before, in fact, they move out of the present building. So actually we are continuing to show our interest in the purchase of that building to them all the time, so they won't make any deals with anybody else and, in fact, have a commitment on their part that we will get the deal. It is probably three or four years down the line before that happens.

I don't believe we have a special government contract as such with Edmonton Telephones. I think we have the type of contract that major industry or major business can have with Edmonton Telephones. I will look into that though and check. But I believe that our contract with Edmonton Telephones is just similar to what a major user's contract would be with them.

With regard to your competition question, we do certainly look at this. We are fairly constantly in touch with the Alberta Construction Association ...

AN HON. MEMBER:

Mr. Chairman, I'm having difficulty hearing the hon. minister ...

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Can we have some order in the Assembly, please?

DR. BACKUS:

We are in constant touch with the Alberta Construction Association. They have been advising us very much on the amount of construction they anticipate and the areas of major construction they anticipate so we can plan our programs a little bit according to that.

The other thing we are trying to do is: we know private construction normally goes on in a major [way] during the summer months. We are trying to balance this by increasing, where possible, our winter construction so employment normally tied up during the summer by the private sector and unemployed during the winter months will be picked up by us and thus will level off the employment situation a little bit in this regard.

The third factor that does come into play is, of course, when we do put a place out for tender we very quickly know if the private sector is very busy, because either very few bids come in or they come in excessively high, in which case we shut it down and don't accept any of them and then retender at a later date when we think the opportunity will be better.

Yes, I've just had confirmation that we have no special contract with Edmonton Telephones, and I know we don't have any special contract with AGT.

MR. DIXON:

What about Airdrie?

DR. BACKUS:

Oh, Airdrie. The history of that was that when we were proposing to sell some space in the [Department of] Highways garage at Airdrie at the time it came under [the Department of] Public Works. In fact, [the Department of] Public Works was negotiating for land in the area when we discovered that Alberta Housing was looking at an area right by Airdrie with the object of developing an industrial park there. Alberta Housing was able to get its land on a much better deal, at much greater savings, and we, therefore, went in on the Alberta Housing site in the industrial park that they were proposing and took land for our construction of the [Department of] Highways garage. There will also be two agricultural, at least combined agricultural, buildings, a veterinary service - and I've just forgotten what the other service is - but we'll be building an agricultural building there too. The rest of that area will be developed by Alberta Housing for additional housing plus an industrial park. We hope that private industry will move into that area as well.

With regard to the utilities, as you say, we are working in close liaison with [the Department of the] Environment in this matter. In the present situation it appears that we are working towards getting a pipeline from the Red Deer River near Olds. The water will be piped from there and will provide service for Olds and Didsbury and all the communities between there and Airdrie. The water will come from the north to that area. As this will take a little time to develop, in the meantime there is sufficient water available in wells which have been dug to provide the immediate needs of the highways building and the agriculture building. This will suffice for the immediate future until that pipeline can be hooked up.

With regard to the sewage, we are looking at the development of a lagoon system right in the area in connection with a slough which is there. I believe what is being attempted by the Department of the Environment is an experimental type of what I'd call a sewage farm concept, whereby you get irrigation from the lagoon being used in the area for providing water for a farm type of operation. This is something which we are researching in the area because we're quite concerned with the simple, sort of secondary-only sewage treatment which is then tipped into - I've forgotten the name of that creek that runs down there - Bear Creek, or something like that. It won't be emptied into that. That will be handled entirely in an irrigation farming type of operation.

MR. LUDWIG:

Mr. Chairman, I would like to ask the minister, what is the present status of the Edmonton Remand Centre, and why all the delay in getting started? Was the site that was intended for the remand centre to begin with disposed of or has the government other plans for it? When can we expect this building to go to contract - I believe it is designed. Will it be comparable to or considerably larger than the remand centre in Calgary? What are the estimates for the total cost of the remand centre? Particularly I'd like to know why the site intended for it was not proceeded with? It was acquired at very great expense.

DR. BACKUS:

The reasons the original site was not used are several.

First, it was a site next to the present law courts, in fact all were in the same block practically, and it was considered by the people actually in the department that this would produce too high a concentration of buildings and people in a relatively small area, particularly in relationship to the private sector which had plans for building in that same area.

The second factor that came into it was that the City of Edmonton itself asked us not to build on that area because the city planners also recognized the fact that this would create too concentrated an amount of building in a relatively small area.

The site has been retained by us, and in fact a much smaller building ultimately will go in there which will provide for the transfer of the public lands building.

The new site which was necessary for the remand centre was selected to the north and east of the courthouse with a block in between. In fact, we are in the process of, and have almost completed, the acquiring of the land necessary for this. The City of Edmonton which actually owned quite a section of this land has been handling its acquisition. This is a practice, as you know, which has often been done in the past by Alberta Public Works to acquire land. The city is putting the land together for us and is then going to sell it to us.

However, the planning has gone on in spite of the land not yet being completely taken over. There should be no delay in the start once the land is acquired. Therefore we anticipate that, in fact, construction will begin on it this summer. Actually the plans are presently in the working drawing stage.

We have in the budget \$2 million to commence this year. It's going to be a different type of building than the Calgary Remand Centre in that the provincial court part of it and the remand part of it, although they will be integrated, will actually be more or less modular in development, so that there will be some separation of the two functions of the building. But they will be so arranged that, in fact, transfer of prisoners back and forth will be quite easy and will create no problems.

I think I would be foolish to say if we did that we wouldn't learn by the construction of the Calgary one. Probably the Edmonton one will correct any deficiencies that we may have discovered in the Calgary Remand Centre. On the other hand, it is anticipated that it will be of about the same size. Of course, it will cost a bit more because the price has gone up since the Calgary one was built, but otherwise there will be a comparable price allowing for the normal escalation.

MR. LUDWIG:

What was the cost of the original site that was abandoned and that I believe the hon. minister referred to as the intended land titles office or some public land building? Is that what it was for? What is the cost of a new site?

DR. BACKUS:

I will have to take both of those on advisement. We've not abandoned any land as yet. In fact the land titles office site, at present, is going to be tied up in the total deal because the City of Edmonton is quite anxious to have that, so it's going to be a land exchange situation rather than an abandonment of a site. The site where the land titles office is going is the site that we now own which was considered, at one time, for the remand centre.

MR. LUDWIG:

Mr. Chairman, further to this remand centre. I am rather surprised that anyone should object to the concentration of buildings. It appears that ultimately the same concentration will be there, either by government buildings or by private commercial buildings.

The other surprise I have is that the whole project was permitted to proceed as far as it did. Everybody was aware that there was an exchange of property between Woodward's and the courthouse. It was all known. All of a sudden there is a change of plans which, in my opinion, will be very costly to the government.

I believe that the courthouse, the law courts, and perhaps the government did not want to take anything away from that magnificent building. That was the prime reason why this decision was made. Because otherwise I don't think the government had to move. The government had the building. They had the authority to build where they had intended to. Everybody knew and everybody planned. That was expensive land.

There was a great move afoot to have these things in the vicinity of each other for convenience so that prisoners would probably be able to march, walk by underground passageway. I presume the same will be done now with the new remand centre. Perhaps

there will be an underground connection between the law courts and the provincial judge's court.

But it will be interesting to know the details of why the government was permitted to go as far as it did and all of a sudden there was a change of heart within the government. I'm not convinced at all, Mr. Chairman, that the government had to follow the recommendations made at a later date, even though when you look back now it may be as good a choice, if not better.

But the location was, I believe, objected to primarily by the government on grounds that if you had another magnificent building, beautiful building, beside the law courts, it would detract from a sort of focal point in that part of town. I wonder whether that was not the prime reason, because cost has to be a factor. There is a limit, I believe, as to how far the government can go to accommodate people's wishes to merely provide that they feel they would prefer some commercial building in that area, or near there, which would not detract as much from the building.

I'm also concerned, Mr. Chairman, whether the provision is being made for adequate park areas. I don't mean parking for cars, but areas of parkland around these magnificent government buildings which are being put up, for the purpose of beautifying the buildings and enhancing the value of these buildings in the years to come. There is nothing more depressing than to see six or seven \$10 million buildings shoulder to shoulder with nothing between but perhaps parking lots and parking structures.

I believe that it is a serious defect in planning, and I think the government ought to take a lead. Although land is expensive, it's plentiful. There is no shortage of land in this country. I'm surprised that the planners in Calgary did not take the lead of the government in insisting on some form of adequate landscaping. I believe The Calgary Herald has a very little bit. They didn't have enough space in the mini-park by the courthouse. Although it was expensive it was a worth-while effort. But are we now providing this kind of landscaping for government buildings which does in fact enhance the value of the buildings?

DR. BACKUS:

Well, Mr. Chairman, I certainly agree that that is a reason, but I don't think it was the prime reason for not building there. I think your arguments are diametrically opposed in that you sort of say, why didn't we get on and put the building up there and cram two major buildings together on a site that would leave virtually nothing in the way of park or landscaping? Then you say, why aren't we taking land to do a little landscaping? This, in fact, is what we're doing.

The building ultimately proposed for that site could only occupy a small portion of the site compared with what the court and remand centre were going to occupy in the original proposal. It will be a smaller building and will leave land that can be preserved and developed. In fact it is planned for landscaping so that it will do just what you suggested in your final statement on landscaping. We are very conscious of this need for landscaping and for the development of parks and open spaces - as I was explaining to them yesterday of the proposals we have for the government centre area here, to develop this as a park and landscaped area with the type of open area that you were speaking about. I think, too, that there are some very real modern thoughts on just what we should be looking at in the way of mini-parks in the middle of cities. That is, there's a feeling nowadays - I'm no expert on town planning so I'm merely quoting those who are - that in fact we shouldn't be looking for wide open spaces in the middle of cities. If you want your wide open spaces you go out into the country for them. What we should be looking at is mini-park types of developments where one has an opportunity to stand in a relatively small open area, but one that permits vistas of the city around you rather than a sort of Central Park in New York where right in the middle of the city you get into a large wilderness area.

I think this type of development is something that we should be and are working towards. I think combined with this are the facilities of major urban parks, which is another matter altogether. This, too, we're certainly looking at.

MR. HYNDMAN:

Mr. Chairman, I beg leave to adjourn the debate.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Is it agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

MR. HYNDMAN:

Mr. Chairman, before moving the committee rise, with regard to the Legislation estimates I inadvertently omitted to move a resolution for the capital portion.

The capital portion of the Legislation estimates was considered and approved by this committee. It is Vote 1981. It's for equipment for the data centre and I'm sure hon. members would not want that to come to a grinding halt.

Accordingly, I would move that a sum not exceeding \$150,000, being capital, be granted to Her Majesty for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1975, for Vote 1981, Legislation.

[The motion was carried.]

MR. HYNDMAN:

I move the resolutions be reported.

[The motion was carried.]

MR. HYNDMAN:

I move the committee rise, report progress and beg leave to sit again.

[The motion was carried.]

[Mr. Diachuk left the Chair.]

* * * * *

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair.]

MR. DIACHUK:

Mr. Speaker, the Committee of Supply has had under consideration certain estimates, reports progress and begs leave to sit again.

MR. SPEAKER:

Having heard the report and the request for leave to sit again, do you all agree?

HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

MR. HYNDMAN:

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

MR. SPEAKER:

Having heard the motion for adjournment by the hon. Government House Leader, do you all agree?

HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER:

The House stands adjourned until tomorrow afternoon at 2:30 o'clock.

[The House rose at 10:31 o'clock.]