

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ALBERTA

Title: **Tuesday, May 4, 1976 2:30 p.m.**

[The House met at 2:30 p.m.]

PRAYERS

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

head: **READING AND
RECEIVING PETITIONS**

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the following petitions be now received:

An act respecting a certain agreement between the City of Edmonton and Northern Alberta Natural Gas Development Company Limited, and dated the 16th day of November 1915;
An Act to amend The Mennonite Mutual Relief Insurance Company Act;
An act to incorporate the Certified General Accountants Association in Alberta;
An act, being The Real Estate Association Act.

head: **INTRODUCTION OF BILLS**

**Bill 50
The Racing Commission
Amendment Act, 1976**

MR. FARRAN: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce Bill 50, The Racing Commission Amendment Act, 1976. The purpose of this bill is to ensure that the Racing Commission has the power to delegate its powers to the stewards and judges on the race track.

[Leave granted; Bill 50 introduced and read a first time]

**Bill 207
An Act to Amend
The Landlord and Tenant Act**

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce Bill 207, An Act to Amend The Landlord and Tenant Act. This act contains a number of provisions: a standard lease to cover all tenancies, the rights of tenants to organize, and a provision dealing with the size of damage deposits which can be asked by landlords.

[Leave granted; Bill 207 introduced and read a first time]

**Bill 48
The Co-operative
Associations Amendment Act, 1976**

MR. COOKSON: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce a bill known as The Co-operative Associations Amendment Act. The main purpose of Bill 48 is to

make provision for rural electrification associations to levy a special amount on owners of inactive power lines. There is also a very important provision in the bill for removal of these requirements if a line is not in service, and an alternative in the event the owner wants to retain the materials.

[Leave granted; Bill 48 introduced and read a first time]

**Bill 46
The Credit and Loan
Agreements Amendment Act, 1976**

MRS. CHICHAK: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce Bill No. 46, The Credit and Loan Agreements Amendment Act, 1976. The purpose of this bill is basically to codify good business practices for lenders, to require greater disclosure for tax discount firms, and to identify credit grantors with greater clarity. The passage of this bill will require credit grantors to retain records in Alberta for a period of three years.

[Leave granted; Bill 46 introduced and read a first time]

MR. HYNDMAN: Mr. Speaker, I move that the following two bills be placed on the Order Paper under Government Bills and Orders: Bill No. 48, The Co-operative Associations Amendment Act, 1976; and Bill No. 46, The Credit and Loan Agreements Amendment Act, 1976.

[Motion carried]

head: **INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS**

MISS HUNLEY: Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure today to introduce to you, and through you to members of this Assembly, some 90 of the beautiful people from Rocky Mountain House. They are in both galleries. I would like them to stand and receive the recognition of the Assembly.

DR. McCRIMMON: Mr. Speaker, it's a real privilege for me today to introduce to you, and through you to members of the Assembly, 33 members of the Ponoka Drop-In Centre. Many old friends of mine are amongst them. We're delighted they could come and watch the proceedings of the Assembly today. They are seated in the public gallery. I'd ask that they stand and receive the welcome of the House.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, it's a real honor today to introduce to you, and through you to hon. members of the Legislature, a young man who lives in Edmonton and has been very active in the Air Cadet movement for some five years. He is presently a student at Mount Royal College where he is continuing his career in aviation. I would ask Mr. Robert Caryk, who is in the members gallery, to stand and be recognized by the Assembly.

head: **TABLING RETURNS AND REPORTS**

MR. YURKO: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to table the reply to Motion for a Return No. 138, being copies of all studies commissioned by the government relating to the proposed pilot project for downtown redevelopment of Peace River.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to table a letter that I sent today with a number of attachments to the Mayor of Edmonton, with copies to the various aldermen. The attachments are the Mill Woods land banking agreement, the storm and sanitary sewer system funding agreement of July 5, 1972 between the Alberta Housing Corporation and the city of Edmonton, the recent policy of the Alberta Housing Corporation on land banked by the corporation, and a copy of some of the pamphlets on the provincial government's lending programs.

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to file a copy of each of the 10 Syncrude project agreements that were signed on Friday, plus certain letters that were exchanged in the course of coming to agreement on these documents. I appreciate the fact that there is considerable interest in the documents; that's why I'm filing them today. I have not yet had an opportunity to make an additional copy to be able to file the normal two copies.

The documents are: the Syncrude Project Alberta Crown Agreement, Syncrude Project Ownership and Management Agreement, the letters I mentioned, the Syncrude Project Agreement of Supercedence, Syncrude Project Alberta Energy Option Agreement, Syncrude Project Trust Agreement Bechtel Prime Contract, Syncrude Project After Acquired Rights Agreement, Syncrude Project Utilities Plant Construction Management Agreement, Syncrude Project Utilities Plant Operating Agreement, Syncrude Project Utilities Plant Energy Sales Agreement, Syncrude Project Pipeline Throughput and Deficiency Agreement.

I'm tempted to say, Mr. Speaker, that the people who will probably make the most money out of these agreements are going to be [those] in the legal profession.

MR. CLARK: That's what we're afraid of.

MR. HARLE: I beg leave to file the annual report of the Department of Consumer and Corporate Affairs.

head: **ORAL QUESTION PERIOD**

Heart Surgery

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct the first question to the Minister of Hospitals, and ask if he's had discussions with the appropriate officials of the Holy Cross Hospital in Calgary and the University Hospital in Edmonton with regard to waiting lists in the area of open-heart surgery.

MR. MINIELY: Mr. Speaker, I would like to give a full report to the House on that matter, which I agree is very important to the citizens of Alberta. I would ask that the House provide me with a certain latitude to do so.

Mr. Speaker, I could not understand the comments as reported today, because in meetings with the hospital boards prior to the actual allocation of budgets I had raised the specific matter of cardiac care and cardiovascular surgery as one that the province would consider specifically of high priority. The response I specifically received from the hospital boards was that, in terms of allocating their total budget, they were definitely going to maintain and in fact expand their cardiac and cardiovascular programs with the 11 per cent and additional money we were providing to the hospitals in question.

Mr. Speaker, the hospitals in Alberta which provide major cardiovascular programs are the University Hospital in Edmonton and the Holy Cross Hospital in Calgary. The specific items which were reported today were first raised with me at 11 o'clock last night by the writer of the article. I would like to table the letter, because last night I responded specifically to the matter and to the allegations raised by unknown surgeons.

I indicated that, in an area which I agreed was of major importance to the citizens of Alberta, I felt the seriousness of the alleged statements by unknown surgeons should be checked to ensure that the facts were accurate and valid. I indicated that I had received nothing in writing from any of the surgeons mentioned. I had received nothing in writing from the representative bodies of the medical profession in Alberta, namely the College of Physicians and Surgeons and the Alberta Medical Association.

I indicated that, in an area which required a great deal of exercise of responsibility in terms of assessing the actual facts, I encouraged that the hospital boards which have responsibility for allocating priorities, in this case the University Hospital and the Holy Cross Hospital, the College of Physicians and Surgeons, the Alberta Medical Association, and the individual surgeons in question who remain unnamed, should be consulted and should exercise their responsibility in the matter.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, last night at 11 o'clock I indicated to the writer of the article that, upon determination of the facts, I would wish all Albertans to know that I consider this matter very important and will follow up in full what is submitted in writing to me.

Since that time, Mr. Speaker, I have contacted both hospitals. I would like to pass on to the members of the Legislature what the hospitals advised me. They will be following this up in written form by letter to me, which I will subsequently table in the House.

Firstly with respect to the University of Alberta Hospital, there is no dramatic increase in the waiting list for cardiac cardiovascular surgery, but they are double-checking it. They are doing eight open-heart surgeries per week, Mr. Speaker; last year it was five. It is possible that there can be some waiting for surgery, but frequently the diagnosis procedure may indicate that a person is not a suitable candidate for very complex cardiovascular surgery.

In conclusion with respect to the University Hospital, they indicate that the cardiovascular surgery program at the hospital has not been reduced but is in fact expanding, which is consistent with my meetings with them a couple of months ago. The 11 per cent expenditure increase is in fact allowing them to expand somewhat their cardiovascular surgery

program at the University Hospital.

In a telephone call to Mr. Fred Lamb, the executive director of the Holy Cross Hospital, which maintains a cardiovascular program in Calgary, he indicates there has been no reduction in cardiovascular surgery at the Holy Cross Hospital. The hospital is maintaining its previous program of four surgeries per week.

I had the pleasure to open the new catheterization lab a while back. They are in the process of training people, which is not applicable — the funds are being provided, but the support staff must be adequately trained before they can expand both the diagnostic and cardiovascular surgery at the Holy Cross.

If a patient needs emergency cardiovascular surgery at the Holy Cross they have no problem in handling it, according to their executive director.

He did indicate that a medical judgment is made regarding which patients are put on a waiting list. So the ones with highest priority receive surgery first. They repeat what the University Hospital said: that frequently a judgment must be made whether or not the patient is a suitable risk for cardiovascular surgery.

Mr. Speaker, that is the information I have to date on the matter. I will be getting letters from both hospitals and the boards of both hospitals, which I will table in the next day or two for members of the Assembly.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct a supplementary question to the minister. As a result of the discussions the minister has had this morning, is he in a position to indicate the waiting period at the Holy Cross in Calgary and the University Hospital in Edmonton? Once the necessary and appropriate medical examinations have been completed, what is the waiting period?

MR. MINIELY: Mr. Speaker, I'm obtaining that in the information I'm asking for from both hospitals. But I would indicate to the hon. leader that the waiting list will require some categorization because, as the hospitals have indicated to me, some people on the waiting list should not in fact go forward to surgery because of age or substantial risk of major surgery, in the professional judgment of the individual doctor.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, one further supplementary question to the minister. In the course of the minister's discussions with officials from the two hospitals this morning, did the hospitals indicate that there are people now waiting for open-heart surgery who are not able to proceed with the operation?

MR. MINIELY: Mr. Speaker, I can only repeat, because I'm passing on what the hospital has said, which I'm going to be obtaining in writing, the indication by the Holy Cross that anyone who needs cardiovascular surgery immediately, to quote: they have no problem in handling it.

In the case of the University of Alberta Hospital, their program is in fact expanding over last year from five to eight. Depending on the diagnosis for immediate surgery, the situation is proceeding satisfactorily and is unaffected by current policy.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the hon. minister. Can the minister advise the

House whether it's true that the facilities at the University Hospital in Edmonton provide for as many as 10 operations a week? The minister mentioned an increase from five to eight, but is it not true that they can do as many as 10?

MR. MINIELY: Mr. Speaker, I would again point out that, as is the case with Holy Cross, some of it is a matter of support staff and the adequate training of staff to expand the program, and the gradual expansion of a cardiovascular surgery program. I can only repeat that in my meetings with the boards I indicated that the province would consider this a high priority area.

The boards responded that it was in application of their total budget, and they determine the priorities. It was their intent to treat this area as high priority, unaffected by the 11 per cent budgetary increase or the additional dollars we are spending in the hospital system generally, but also the additional dollars we're spending this year over last year in the specific area of cardiovascular surgery as it is applied by the individual hospital boards.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the hon. minister. In his discussions with the officials of the University Hospital, the minister mentioned there was no dramatic increase in the number of people on the waiting list.

Can the minister advise the Assembly whether there is an increase? One can get into the argument of the definition of "dramatic", but is there not, in fact, an increase?

MR. MINIELY: No, Mr. Speaker, the medical director of the University of Alberta Hospital indicated to me that he wanted to double-check it. His initial impression was that there was relatively no increase. That also had to be tempered by the fact that the waiting list can include patients for whom the judgment relative to the surgery risk is not yet completed by the assessment committee.

MR. NOTLEY: I have one final supplementary question. Can the minister tell the Assembly where matters now stand on the proposed western Canadian heart institute, which was initiated by the former government and then abandoned by the present one?

MR. MINIELY: Mr. Speaker, we can talk about names, but I think we have indicated that in examining Alberta medical research we see that cardiovascular surgery and its expansion has potential. We are examining the possibility of heritage savings funds being utilized in areas of medical research.

Mr. Speaker, in relationship to what is going on in the rest of Canada, our cardiovascular surgery programs in Alberta are acknowledged, both now and in terms of our intent to expand these programs on a manageable and reasonable basis in the longer term, [to be] excellent.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, a further supplementary question for clarification. Did the minister indicate to the two hospital boards mentioned that the government was prepared to give priority support above the 11 per cent spending guideline in the area of open-heart surgery or cardiovascular surgery? Could

I also ask the minister if there are any other areas within the hospital operation which the government has told hospital boards should get the same kind of priority from the government?

MR. MINIELY: Basically, Mr. Speaker, I have to respond to that in two ways. In the meeting prior to the actual finalization of the budgets, the hospital boards in question indicated to me that they could attach priority to the maintenance and gradual expansion of the cardiovascular programs in the hospitals within the 11 per cent guideline. They would reduce in areas which they felt were of lower priority.

In fact, the information they have given me today would confirm they have pursued that. They are saying that there are other areas of the hospital of less priority, that they are able to maintain and, in fact, expand the cardiovascular programs in the individual hospitals on a gradual and manageable basis.

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary to the minister. In view of the seriousness of the claims made by certain surgeons and the fact that the minister's inquiry to the hospitals appears to prove they're without foundation, would the minister undertake to inquire of the hospital boards the names of those surgeons and report them to this Assembly?

AN HON. MEMBER: Big brother.

MR. MINIELY: Mr. Speaker, in my letter which I am tabling today I asked that the surgeons write to me with respect to the responsibility for the statements as they are reported. I think that's what I would say, that at this time there is the need for the exercise of responsibility to ensure that the facts are accurate and valid when people are making statements in an area very important to Albertans.

MR. TAYLOR: In view of the information given by the minister and the concern created by stories of this nature among heart patients and their loved ones, is the hon. minister going to contact the editor of the paper that published this story?

MR. MINIELY: Mr. Speaker, I think the important matter is that today I've attempted to answer the question factually — and the expression of the boards of the hospitals, who, I have said many times in the Legislature, are the people directly accountable for the individual programs and priorities within a hospital, and how they are assigned.

MR. NOTLEY: Might I ask a supplementary question . . .

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. member indicated a previous supplementary to be the last one. I don't think we should start another round on this question.

Oil Sands Policy

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct my second question to the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, and ask if it's the government's plan to continue making plant-by-plant decisions on future oil sands plants. Or will the government be coming

forward with an overall oil sands policy? I ask the question in light of the announcement by Shell today that they've decided to defer their plant.

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, it would be the government's intention to continue to assess each project plant by plant. To refresh members' minds on the matter, the policy is that those who have a project in mind make application to the Energy Resources Conservation Board, which assesses the project and then makes a recommendation to the Executive Council. At that stage, the applicants have an opportunity to discuss with the government commercial terms under which they would go ahead with the project and certain other conditions that might also be part of the agreement. We feel this is the best way for us to maintain the necessary flexibility when we have such a rapidly changing energy picture in Canada and the world today.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the minister, then, so there's no misunderstanding on the matter. The government does not plan to come forward with an oil sands position? I ask the question in light of some of the comments attributed to responsible officials in the industry who say they've been waiting for a policy statement by the government.

MR. LOUGHEED: Tell them to read *Hansard*.

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, I saw the comments and I am puzzled by them, as a matter of fact. I've had discussions with the three companies which have applications approved by the Energy Resources Conservation Board. I think I made it clear to them that the government's prepared to discuss commercial terms. They have had some problems with financing.

I've always felt it should be left to the ingenuity of the companies, and that those who wish to develop the sands get together with those who wish to consume the production from the sands, and that we should be clear that the development of the oil sands would benefit other parts of Canada to a great degree. Alberta is self-sufficient. I think that the companies, along with those who would be the consumers, should get together, use whatever ingenuity they possess, and propose projects to the government.

MR. CLARK: A further supplementary question to the minister with regard to the decision Shell has made. Did the Shell project get to the point where there were discussions between Shell and the government regarding the "commercial terms", the term used by the minister? Did the negotiations get to that stage?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, only on a very preliminary basis. They wished to know whether the existing commercial terms, one set with Syncrude and another set with GCOS, were a model they should follow in either case. I said to them, no. There was nothing about either of those projects that they should feel they must be exactly the same as either one. If they wished, they could try to work out a completely different set. Beyond that — and expressing to us their concern about the difficulties of financing when inflation has caused the investment

to grow to such a large amount — we did not get into any further details.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask one further supplementary question of the minister. Is the minister in a position to indicate the present status of Shell's interest in the *in situ* process at Peace River?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, I would have to check that to make it a current status report for the hon. member. I do know that Shell has been talking to the Alberta Oil Sands Technology and Research Authority about that project. I haven't reviewed it recently with the Authority.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the hon. minister. In light of the hon. minister's comments about the companies getting together with the potential consumers of oil in Canada to arrange "commercial terms", is the government in a position to advise the Assembly at this point what the position of Alberta is with respect to future joint venture arrangements in the oil sands?

MR. GETTY: No, Mr. Speaker. As I pointed out, we would be prepared to consider projects individually and with an open mind.

I might say, Mr. Speaker, I did not say the companies should talk to the consumers to arrange terms. What I suggest they should do is get together and then propose terms to the Government of Alberta which would then negotiate an arrangement which we feel would be in the best interests of Albertans.

MR. SPEAKER: Might this be the last supplementary on this topic.

MR. NOTLEY: A supplementary question to the hon. Premier. In light of the upcoming first ministers' conference, is it the Premier's intention to raise the question of oil sands development, particularly as it relates to possible financial participation by other provinces in the development of future oil sands projects?

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Speaker, it would not be my intention to raise that matter. It may be that some of the other provinces and the federal government which are concerned about future supply would raise the matter. If they do, we'll respond in the way the hon. minister has in the House today.

Edmonton Municipal Airport

MR. CHAMBERS: Mr. Speaker, my question concerns the tragedy yesterday when the light plane crashed in the Kensington Shopping Centre located in the heart of the Edmonton Calder constituency. In view of this and previous mishaps resulting from Municipal Airport traffic, I'd like to ask the minister if the government has any plans which might minimize the risk of similar accidents in the future.

DR. HORNER: Mr. Speaker, I think this emphasizes the need for the satellite airport at Villeneuve. We'll be working in conjunction with the federal MOT to try to have that satellite airport open at the earliest opportunity. This should take a lot of light planes out

of circulation at the Edmonton Municipal and enhance the safety of planes flying in and out of there.

Volunteer Organizations

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the minister responsible for Calgary affairs. This past Saturday the minister made indications in Calgary with regard to the government's restraint program and funding of volunteer organizations.

My question is: would the minister confirm that government policy is that governments have assumed a measure of responsibility in areas previously occupied by volunteers?

MR. McCRAE: Mr. Speaker, I think I could answer that by saying if the hon. member would read the estimates very closely he would see where the government has in fact assumed considerable responsibility in areas that were previously not occupied by governmental spending.

DR. BUCK: For that you get \$30,000?

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, that's a little unfortunate.

A supplementary question. Does the minister support the view as indicated that those on welfare who do volunteer work should be finding jobs?

MR. McCRAE: Mr. Speaker, I understand that to be a request for an expression of my personal viewpoint. I don't think that's what the question period is all about.

MR. R. SPEAKER: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, the indications were that it was part of government policy.

Calgary Stampede — Food Concessions

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the minister. What steps has the minister taken to support the volunteer agencies of Calgary in securing food concessions at the Calgary Stampede, this being one of their sources of volunteer revenue?

MR. McCRAE: Mr. Speaker, I've taken no action to ensure that volunteer agencies will continue the booths at the Stampede. In fact, I have had no representation or request from them to do that. But if the member is requesting on their behalf that I should intervene with the Stampede board as a private citizen and as a representative of the Calgary area, I'd certainly be more than happy to undertake that upon his request.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, supplementary to the minister. Could the minister confirm or investigate whether all volunteer agencies of Calgary that wish to have food concessions on the Stampede grounds must purchase their food supplies from one of the members of the Stampede board?

MR. McCRAE: Mr. Speaker, might I suggest to the hon. member that he direct that question to the Stampede board.

MR. SPEAKER: Might I suggest further that a question with such serious implications for the reputations of individuals should be put on the Order Paper on notice.

Shock Therapy

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the hon. Minister of Social Services and Community Health. Is the consent of the patient or, alternatively, of the next of kin required in provincial hospitals before electric-shock treatment is given?

MISS HUNLEY: I'd like to check that with the College of Physicians and Surgeons, Mr. Speaker, because I'm not aware of all the implications of the regulations the various hospitals have. I do recall some discussions on it, and I believe they are required to give permission, and the effects of electric-shock treatment are explained to them prior to receiving it.

MR. TAYLOR: A supplementary. I wonder if the hon. minister could also check with the College of Physicians and Surgeons to ascertain whether the consent of any patient in other hospitals is required before electric-shock treatment is given.

Policy on Railroads

MR. ZANDER: Mr. Speaker, this question is addressed to the Minister of Transportation. Some time ago I posed the same question, and that was whether the Minister of Transportation is in negotiation with the CPR on the abandonment [of the] railroad south of Breton to Hoadley, whether the negotiations have been completed, and if consideration has been given to the question of recovering the mineral rights in that right of way.

DR. HORNER: Mr. Speaker, we have been negotiating with both railways, relative to a policy on the right of way. I can report to the Legislature that the Canadian National has been quite willing to negotiate and allow the province first right of refusal. The Canadian Pacific took a different view. Because of that, a week ago the cabinet passed two orders in council under The Public Works Act, in which we placed a caveat upon the particular land that the hon. member refers to and the other section scheduled for abandonment. The province will have a caveat on that land for future use either as a transportation corridor or such other use as may be deemed desirable by the people of Alberta.

The question of mineral rights will vary, Mr. Speaker, depending on when and how the particular railway acquired the land. My understanding of the section in the Breton area is that in fact the mineral rights belong to the Crown on that particular stretch of right of way, but that would vary, depending on when the land was acquired for railway purposes in the historical sense.

MR. KING: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. In light of the hon. minister's statement that negotiations are

under way between the government and the railways, I wonder if the government has an opinion as to whether the Canadian Pacific corporation continues to honor the spirit or the letter of commitments which it made to the people of Canada, including Albertans, when it received massive financial assistance, including land grants.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. member may perhaps be familiar with that certain portion of 171 of *Beauchesne* which refers to asking the government for its opinion rather than its policy.

MR. KING: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question. Has the government commissioned or completed any studies to determine whether or not the Canadian Pacific corporation might be deemed legally to be maintaining the spirit or the letter of its commitments?

DR. HORNER: Well, Mr. Speaker, I could go on at some length, though I think that the best answer would be to refer the hon. member to the presentation that the Government of Alberta made in some detail to the Hall Commission, relative to our position and that of both railways. I might add, in a broader sense, the policy relative to right of way has to be that the province has control of those corridors. That's why we moved by order in council when we couldn't get the co-operation of Canadian Pacific Railways.

MR. KING: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Has the government given any further consideration to an extended study of a proposal made by a former Minister of Industry and Commerce that the province take over the ownership, maintenance, and extension of rail lines and road beds in the province?

DR. HORNER: Well, Mr. Speaker, we continue to press the federal government to have a look at that proposition put forward by the former Minister of Industry and Commerce, which was endorsed by all the western provinces at the Western Economic Opportunities Conference and re-endorsed at the recent meeting of western premiers at Medicine Hat. So we continue to press the federal government at least to assess the proposition that the federal government should in fact buy the road beds for all the railways in Canada. This may have an important impact indeed upon the question of rail passenger extensions or re-organization. As my colleague, the minister in Manitoba, recently put before the CTC in the opening discussions, the CTC in fact should have a look at the question of road bed ownership relative to rail passenger costs.

MR. KING: One final supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Would the minister consider recommending to the investment committee of cabinet that some portion of the Alberta heritage trust fund should be used to purchase railroad road beds in this province or, alternately, that it might be loaned to Manitoba in order that it could achieve this same end?

MR. CLARK: After the approval of the Legislature.

DR. HORNER: Mr. Speaker, surely we're talking about a national transportation system. There are

some responsibilities for the federal government, even though it doesn't accept them all the time.

MR. TAYLOR: A supplementary to the hon. Deputy Premier. In view of the recent court decision and the success we are having with PWA, is the government considering taking over the CPR?

DR. HORNER: Not at this time, Mr. Speaker.

MR. ZANDER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary to the Minister of Transportation. In view of the fact that you're making every effort to obtain this right of way, I think it's a very good asset for the constituency of Drayton Valley since, if they're going to take the elevators out of there, it provides an excellent link for the transportation of grain.

MR. SPEAKER: I was unable to detect the question mark at the end of that question.

VS Services Contract

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct this question to the hon. Minister of Social Services and Community Health. It concerns the contract with VS Services which was tabled yesterday, and which appears to be a cost-plus type of arrangement.

Mr. Speaker, in view of the fact that, in reading it over, there doesn't appear to be either a cost ceiling or for that matter any penalty clause, is the minister in a position to advise the Assembly by what means the government can give the assurance that there will be an almost \$1 million saving in the costs of operating ASH/Deerhome?

MISS HUNLEY: Mr. Speaker, we're quite assured that with the contract we have we will be able to have the substantial savings we've been discussing. As the hon. member has noticed — and he's talking about a cost plus, it might indeed be a cost minus if you wanted to take the other side. If the anti-inflation guides work, the cost may go down, and even more than we have indicated.

We have a very good monitoring system in the department. We have the cost base of what we've been paying and what we know our estimates were originally when they were prepared for this fiscal year. In addition, we have a 60-day termination clause which we believe is a very strong clause in our favor.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the hon. minister. The contract provides for certain utensils, equipment, vehicles, and operating costs [being] turned over to VS Services without cost.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister advise whether this involves only existing equipment, or will there be any new equipment or renovations under this particular clause of the contract?

MISS HUNLEY: Our intention in the contract is certainly to make available equipment that's being used at the present time. It would be ludicrous indeed to require that to be put into storage while someone purchased new equipment to use on the site.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the hon. minister. Is the minister in a position to advise the House whether it's a government intention to provide or authorize expenditure for any new equipment or facilities and, if so, whether there will be any ceiling on the amount of new equipment?

MISS HUNLEY: To my knowledge, we have nothing in the estimates for new equipment. As for any capital improvements, those would be handled by Public Works and are not required as part of the terms of the agreement with VS Services. We expect them to operate in the same environment as in the past, but in an improved situation.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, one final supplementary question to the hon. minister. Is the minister in a position to explain to the House the reasons for Section 8 of the contract, which bans the Alberta government from hiring certain employees of VS Services for six months after the termination of the contract?

MISS HUNLEY: Yes. That's not an unusual term in any business agreement. Rather, it's what you refer to as good will. I think it's standard in most contracts that I've had anything to do with in business life.

The idea behind it is that, if the contract is not renewed at the end of 23 months or if for any reason it's terminated, the government cannot then turn around and hire away from VS Services some of their valued employees. I don't think that's too unusual a clause to have included in any agreement.

Foreign Students

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to address my question to the hon. Minister of Advanced Education. I'd like to know if the minister has instructed the Department of Advanced Education to gather figures on the number of foreign students and landed immigrants attending universities in Alberta.

DR. HOHOL: Yes, we are doing this and are getting excellent co-operation from the institutions in compiling figures as accurately as we can.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, can the minister indicate when this information will be available, and if it will be tabled in the Legislature?

DR. HOHOL: It's working information, and unless it were in the context of a study — and this is not — it's simply information for us to see the nature of the population in the institutions. It can well be public information, but it's not in the nature of a study. It's just a compilation of students, both under visa and with immigrant status.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary to the minister. Has the minister personally contacted the presidents of the Alberta universities to indicate to them the policy decision of the government on foreign students?

DR. HOHOL: Not in that literal sense, but we have discussed this in the most open forum in the province, here on the floor of the House during the

question period and in my estimates.

Last October I spoke on several matters with presidents of public colleges of Alberta. This is one of the things I talked about to them as we looked at things down the road. We talked about student fees. I said to them that inevitably in speaking of student fees we will have to look at the global notion of student fees which would include the possibility of a different fee for foreign students.

In a meeting with chancellors, presidents, and chairmen of boards of governors, we also talked about many things not on the agenda. There was no formal agenda. We simply talked of things as we would work together in the months to come. One of those was student fees, and in that context I mentioned things like foreign students and foreign academics.

MR. SPEAKER: Might this be the last supplementary on this topic.

DR. BUCK: A supplementary to the minister. In that short answer, did the minister indicate that he has not personally given the presidents of the universities this policy decision of the government? They've had to find it out in the media? He has not formally given the decision of the government on that?

DR. HOHOL: The hon. Member for Clover Bar is asking for pretty specific information eminently suitable for the Order Paper. I'd be prepared to deal with it over there. [interjections]

I have just indicated that I personally spoke to the three heads of the universities in the context of looking at problems that we will have to work on together. This was one of them. If you're asking whether we had formal kinds of consultation with an exchange of papers and documents and so on, clearly not. For the record, clearly not.

DR. BUCK: That's terrible.

Rent Regulations — Evictions

MR. MANDEVILLE: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the hon. Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs. Has the minister received any complaints where agents of landlords rather than landlords themselves have served notice of termination of tenancy in order to get around the section of the act which previously stated that a tenancy could not be terminated because the tenant made a complaint under the act?

MR. HARLE: Mr. Speaker, I'd have to ask the hon. member to repeat that rather long question. Primarily, as I understand it, it relates to an agent of a landlord. Am I correct in that?

MR. MANDEVILLE: Yes, Mr. Speaker, that's right. I'm referring to the agent of the landlord serving notice of termination of tenancy, rather than the landlord himself, which is under Section 38 of the rent regulations act.

MR. HARLE: Mr. Speaker, I believe we have, but I would like to check that for sure. I will look at *Hansard* and see whether I can respond any differently.

MR. MANDEVILLE: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Have any convictions been obtained under the rent regulations act to date?

MR. HARLE: Not as yet, Mr. Speaker.

Power Generation

DR. PAPROSKI: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Utilities and Telephones regarding effective use of energy, coal versus natural gas. It's a follow-up to a question I asked the other day.

I wonder if the minister would indicate to the House the policy regarding the use of coal for future power plants at Edmonton — namely, Clover Bar — after the present plants are completed, recognizing that clean fuel like natural gas should be reserved for home fuel.

DR. WARRACK: Mr. Speaker, I would understand that the hon. member intends to include Clover Bar No. 4 that's now at the design stage in the present configuration of power plants designed by the city of Edmonton. My understanding is that at the time the question was addressed with respect to natural gas versus coal, the city of Edmonton made representation to have the opportunity to complete the plants it was then contemplating, which includes Clover Bar No. 4. At that time, this was agreed to. In addition, it was indicated that in future coal would be the preferred fuel for generating electricity by Edmonton Power. That's how the matter stands now, although there might be other alternatives such as the city of Edmonton purchasing blocks of power and this kind of thing as it plans electricity continuity in the future.

DR. PAPROSKI: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. I wonder if the minister would indicate to the House whether this policy applies to future power plants across the province.

Will a penalty or sanction be imposed if they don't follow that course?

DR. WARRACK: The second part of the question would go further than anything I have contemplated at all, or to my knowledge, the government itself prior to my involvement. The way it stands now is that the preferred fuel for generating electricity in Alberta for base-load purposes is contemplated to be coal, having regard to the fact that the hydro developments so far have been the most economic ones. This is where the matter would stand.

Hearing Aids

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Social Services and Community Health. I'd like to ask the minister if she's considering changing the senior citizen's extended benefits program to require that senior citizens consult a medical doctor before acquiring hearing aid assistance.

MISS HUNLEY: No, I'm not at the present time, Mr. Speaker, although it is a matter I'll be discussing with the Hearing Aid Advisory Board as soon as I have the opportunity to meet with them.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the minister. Has the minister had representations from officials of the Alberta Medical Association with regard to that aspect of the program?

MISS HUNLEY: I've had a number of submissions from various people. Some senior citizens would be very reluctant to see that happen. We feel it would increase the costs. Of course we want to make the most effective use of a very valuable program. I think it will need to be looked at carefully. I'm prepared to do that.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask whom the minister consulted prior to the raising of the prepaid services for the Alberta hearing aid association?

The minister will recall that the price went up from \$200 to \$220 for hearing aids for senior citizens. That amount is simply for the fitting of the hearing aid itself, not for the actual mechanism.

MISS HUNLEY: That discussion would not take place with me but by negotiations within the department, because it's part of an agreement for service. We have a number of those. I have not yet personally discussed this matter with the various groups, although I wish to do so and am planning a schedule of meetings early this summer to discuss this very matter, because it is quite difficult.

We were the first province to institute such a program, Mr. Speaker. We had nothing to go by. We're attempting to design the most effective program for hearing aids that we have. So far I'm convinced it's been a very worth-while effort.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the minister.

MR. SPEAKER: Might this be the last supplementary. We've run over our time.

MR. CLARK: No one is quarreling with the program. The real concern is that in some situations people on social assistance and some people under 18 years of age are getting two hearing aids. Rather than getting \$200 or \$220 for the fitting of the hearing aid, under the new regulations the people supplying the mechanism are now getting \$400 or \$440 simply for supplying two hearing aids of the same type. The real concern has to be about how . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Is the hon. leader leading up to a question?

MR. CLARK: The real concern has to be the manner in which public money is being spent. The question is: is the minister prepared to sit down with the medical association and other concerned groups to see that public funds are being well spent in this area and to prevent a rip-off, if that's the case?

MISS HUNLEY: Yes, I'm as interested as the hon. Leader of the Opposition in assuring there is no rip-off. Certainly I'm prepared to meet with the various groups. I would prefer probably that my Deputy Minister of Health, who is very knowledgeable in this matter, do a lot of the meeting and advise me,

but I also am prepared to meet with them, and I've so indicated to many of them.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

head: WRITTEN QUESTIONS

179. Mr. Notley asked the government the following question:

- (1) Does the government have a policy concerning the citizenship of senior civil servants? If so, what is it?
- (2) Have any guidelines regarding citizenship been given to departmental selection committees? If so, what are they?
- (3) Have any senior civil servants been advised by the Public Service Commission, or any other agency, to change their citizenship? If so, in how many instances did this take place in the last three fiscal years?

MR. FOSTER: Mr. Speaker, I move that Question 183 stand and retain its place on the Order Paper.

[Motion carried]

head: MOTIONS FOR RETURNS

MR. FOSTER: Mr. Speaker, I move that the following motions for returns stand and retain their place on the Order Paper: 175, 181, 185, and 186.

[Motion carried]

176. Dr. Buck proposed the following motion to the Assembly:

That an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing:

Copies of all studies prepared by or for the Department of the Environment with respect to the water quality of Baptiste Lake, County of Athabasca, which were completed between the dates January 1, 1971, and April 30, 1975.

[Motion carried]

182. Mr. Mandeville proposed the following motion to the Assembly:

That an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing:

A copy of correspondence, with attachments, dated December 30, 1971, between D.J. Russell and B.R. Orysiuk, with respect to legal counsel for the Alberta Housing Corporation.

MR. YURKO: Mr. Speaker, it's not my intention to make a long speech on this motion, because the hon. member knows full well that this is interdepartmental correspondence, that the attachment to the correspondence is part of such correspondence. The only reason I can deduce as to why he put it on the Order Paper is to bring something to my attention.

DR. BUCK: You're just assuming that.

MR. YURKO: Well, he certainly has brought the matter to my attention. Nevertheless, I'm sure this Legislature can't under any circumstance entertain a motion of this sort, because this is interdepartmental correspondence and it would necessarily set a precedent in this regard. So I would ask that the Legislature, without paying too much additional attention to this motion, categorically reject it.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, taking part in the debate on Motion for a Return 182, I too will be very brief. We found most interesting the comments by the Minister of Public Works with regard to the placement of legal work by the Alberta Housing Corporation, I think it was 10 days or two weeks ago. We had hoped that on this motion the government would be prepared to show a new openness in this area and, pretty frankly, to level with the Legislature as to who is doing the work and under whose direction.

MR. SPEAKER: May the hon. member conclude the debate?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. MANDEVILLE: Mr. Speaker, the reason I wanted to get this information — I did get some of the information that became available. As the leader indicated before, the minister did indicate that he gives the Housing Corporation a free hand in getting the legal profession to do the work. I would just like briefly to read the information I did get, Mr. Speaker. It was dated December 30, 1971.

The Government wishes to rotate the services required by the Alberta Housing Corporation insofar as legal firms throughout the Province are concerned.

The attached list deals with the legal firms the Government wishes the Alberta Housing Corporation to use in the Cities of Calgary and Edmonton. For your assistance and guidance the name of the particular partner in each firm is listed and also a suggested percentage of the annual volume of work that might be diverted to each firm.

Will you kindly see that the attached information is distributed to the appropriate officers of the Alberta Housing Corporation at your earliest convenience.

Mr. Speaker, we were just wondering if any other information was available in this area. This is why we asked for this motion for a return.

MR. RUSSELL: Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the hon. member would permit a question.

MR. MANDEVILLE: Yes.

MR. RUSSELL: Is the hon. member aware that the list referred to in the letter was voluntarily tabled in this Legislature along with a similar one which had been prepared by the hon. Mr. Ludwig, the former Minister of Public Works, some two and a half years ago?

MR. CLARK: So what?

MR. RUSSELL: So both lists have been public for some time.

MR. CLARK: Why don't you give them to us?

MR. MANDEVILLE: This is the point, Mr. Speaker. We thought if there was any further information we could possibly get it tabled again at this time.

AN HON. MEMBER: That's right.

AN HON. MEMBER: Why stonewall it now?

AN HON. MEMBER: You'll try again.

AN HON. MEMBER: Did you lose your copy?

[Motion lost]

DR. BUCK: Open government again.

184. Mr. Clark proposed the following motion to the Assembly:

That an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing:

- (1) the names of the contractors who were asked to submit tenders for the primary construction of the proposed Wardair hangar to be located at the Edmonton International Airport;
- (2) the amounts of the tenders referred to in (1);
- (3) the name of the contractor who was awarded the contract for the primary construction of the proposed Wardair hangar to be located at the Edmonton International Airport.

[Motion carried]

head: **GOVERNMENT DESIGNATED BUSINESS**

head: **GOVERNMENT BILLS AND ORDERS**
(Second Reading)

Bill 28

The Planning Amendment Act, 1976

MR. COOKSON: Mr. Speaker, in rising for second reading of The Planning Amendment Act, I could just briefly add to what I said at the outset about the purpose of the amendment. For some time there has been a method of circumventing the actual subdivision and transfer regulations in The Planning Act, and it has been done through the courts by means of what is known as the partitions act. The purpose of the amendment to The Planning Act is primarily to in effect plug that hole, if I may say it in that way, and prevent this from happening.

The provision is there that, until approval of this bill, any provision to circumvent The Planning Act and the subdivision and transfer regulations as they now exist would be null and void. The amendment would require that it come through the proper channels.

Now, it doesn't roll back any provisions that have happened in the past under the old partitions act. I think those must stay. They are registered. So there is no intent in the amendment to roll back that situation. But by proclamation of this bill any that are

pending, before the various planning commissions and councils or municipalities, or are in the process of circumventing these regulations would not be possible.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, I'd just like to ask the member sponsoring the bill one or two things. First of all, we're concerned, and we'd like to know when the new planning act is going to be coming before this Legislature.

Some of the areas of concern, of course, are the really long delays in trying to get some decisions on planning. Of course we know there are some problems in trying to process some of these things, et cetera. But the main concern, of course, is that we hope, when the new planning act does come in, many of these problems will be resolved. At least the people outside are hoping some of these things will be resolved, because many people get very, very frustrated when they have to wait sometimes up to a year to have a large lot divided into two small ones, which should seem almost automatic.

So we'll be looking forward to the new planning act, and at that time we will certainly be discussing the area more fully.

[Motion carried; Bill 28 read a second time]

Bill 31

The Marketing of Agricultural Products Amendment Act, 1976

MR. SCHMIDT: Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of Bill 31, The Marketing of Agricultural Products Amendment Act, 1976.

Mr. Speaker, the act basically provides for control of the production of poultry and eggs. It provides for the operation of indemnity funds. It changes some of the administrative operation in the calling of meetings, and openly defines the system of appeal.

Mr. Speaker, in regard to control of the production of poultry and eggs, the act itself, without the amendment, controls both the numbers and the production of poultry and eggs throughout the province under the agreements this province is involved in, both federally and with the Alberta boards. At the present time, it controls numbers. Each commercial producer has a quota, and it is a basic number.

The amendment to the first part of Bill 31 goes direct to the factory and controls the hen. For all those commercial producers, over 250 in number, the control will be by number only. The reason for doing this, Mr. Speaker, [has] really three aspects. You have a better utilization of the capital facilities that exist for the commercial breeders and producers. It's easier to control because you count numbers. Thirdly, it doesn't penalize a top producer. You establish the number of hens that each commercial producer can have, and you guarantee that the production from the number given to him is available as his production.

The second aspect involved is the operation of indemnity funds. The funds are covered in Section 9(3) in two areas. The first is the establishment of a fund, if a producer board so wishes, to indemnify the producers against the damage or loss of a regulated product. At the present time such a fund is established by the hog marketing board which, in turn,

guarantees to the producer the safe transportation, in this case of hogs, to the board and to the market.

The second aspect provides for the financial loss. In other words, a producer board may establish a fund to cover the financial loss suffered by each producer. Mr. Speaker, basically producer boards have the responsibility for the marketing of the product. At present the hog marketing board deals in every pig marketed in this province. It deals with a number of purchasers. There is a delay from the time the hogs are shipped to the producers across, in some cases through, the province itself to packers in British Columbia. The return — in other words, the actual payment for the pigs — could be three to five days and, I suppose, in some cases a week.

If at any time the purchaser of hogs were to go into a state of bankruptcy, the board itself may be short on behalf of the producers for the payment of the hogs entrusted to them for sale. This provides the boards the opportunity for the producer to pay per head to indemnify each and every producer for financial loss in this case. But I must point out, Mr. Speaker, that the producer has the right to make an application to the producer board to be exempt.

So 9(3), in the amendments to the act, provides the guarantee of financial loss on a voluntary basis to all members of producer boards.

The last part of the amendments, Mr. Speaker, provides for a clarification of the holding of meetings of marketing boards. It also clarifies the situation of appeals. I think the appeal procedure and the administrative procedures outlined in the bill itself, Mr. Speaker, are self-explanatory.

MR. MANDEVILLE: Mr. Speaker, making a few comments on Bill 31, I would like to say I do support the bill. However, I have some reservations. I do approve of expanding to grass seeds and vegetables. But the reservation I have about the bill, Mr. Speaker, is putting more controls on production. I think we should keep the controls as much as we can in the area of marketing, and not get into the production area. As the hon. member who introduced the bill indicated, it's especially going to be on poultry and eggs. The concern I have is for some of our smaller producers who want to have some hens and get involved in supplementing their farming operations. They're restricted by having to be licensed and to go through the marketing board to market on a small scale. This is one concern I have.

The one area I certainly agree with is the indemnity fund to compensate for some of the bad examples we've had in the past, where producers have lost money selling to individuals or packing plants that went broke, and so on. This is a good portion of the bill, I think. It's good to set up an indemnity fund, which the hog marketing board is doing at this time.

I myself have more support for the commissions than for the marketing boards. One concern I have in the bill [is that] the commissions can direct a specific product to a specific packing plant or market, if I understand the bill right. Under the marketing boards at the present time, I know we have to have a vote by the people before we set up the marketing boards. However, with the commissions it's not compulsory that we go to the people. I'm pleased the Minister of Agriculture has agreed to go to plebiscite now as far as the bee commission is concerned. So I do have

some concern about the commission being able to direct a product to a specific market.

One suggestion I would like to make to the hon. member who introduced the bill is on appeals. At the present time, appeals are handled by the boards and the commission. I see in the act that appeals can be heard by the court. If the member would look at the possibility of these appeals being heard by the Public Utilities Board, I think they would be able to handle these appeals much better than they're now handled.

[Motion carried; Bill 31 read a second time]

Bill 34
The Pharmaceutical
Association Amendment Act, 1976

MISS HUNLEY: Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill 34, The Pharmaceutical Association Amendment Act, 1976, be read a second time.

Mr. Speaker, the principle involved in this bill is very simple. Hon. members will recall that in the fall session last year we passed amendments to The Pharmaceutical Act whereby there was a date change, and it related to a federal statute. That statute was intended to be amended so that it would become effective July 1, 1976. However, the federal government subsequently found that that date was premature, so they are now in the process of amending their act to make the repeal date April 1, 1977. Our legislation will give us the capacity to proclaim our consequent amendment whenever it's appropriate, and thus would take care of any future eventualities of amending our act because of some change in the federal government's legislation.

[Motion carried; Bill 34 read a second time]

Bill 37
The Public Works
Amendment Act, 1976

MR. SHABEN: Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of Bill No. 37, The Public Works Amendment Act, 1976.

[Motion carried; Bill 37 read a second time]

Bill 45
The Ground Water
Control Amendment Act, 1976

MR. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to move second reading of Bill 45, The Ground Water Control Amendment Act, 1976. As I indicated in the first reading, the purpose of The Ground Water Control Amendment Act is to provide the legislative base necessary for the optimum development of Alberta's ground water. The Department of the Environment, and formerly the Department of Agriculture, through The Ground Water Control Act and The Water Resources Act, is responsible for inventory, development, and allocation of Alberta's ground water. The proposed Ground Water Control Amendment Act and its subsequent regulations will more clearly define the water well drilling industry's responsibilities in the development of water supplies.

Regulations necessary for inventory and protection of the resource are: qualification criteria for drillers;

well construction standards; notification by the driller to the controller of non-domestic wells; submission of reports by drilling firms; and surety to guarantee proper drilling and abandonment of dry holes and wells. This bill extends the scope of existing legislation included in The Ground Water Control Act, now administered by the Minister of the Environment, to meet the needs of the consumer, the water well contractor, and The Water Resources Act.

MR. ZANDER: Mr. Speaker, at this time I may have to bring to the attention of the Legislature that although I believe the act will somehow clarify some of the problems we have in our area, [there is] the problem of water injection for industrial purposes in the oil-bearing strata in my constituency that is still using the fresh ground water for repressurizing the fields. I've had a petition. I've also had a number of letters from the farmers in the community within the oilfield objecting to fresh water being used for injections into the oil strata. They probably have rightfully pointed out that taking some of the surface water either from the North Saskatchewan River or the Pembina River in that area would be a much better plan. It would also utilize the ever-increasing rainfall, the water generated by snowfall, rainfall or whatever means, and also from the Rocky Mountain watershed.

Mr. Speaker, it is extremely difficult at this time to measure the degree of harm that is or will be created by using fresh ground water for the injection repressurizing of these fields. However, the farmers in my area claim the water table has been dropping, although we know that some of the wells used for water injection are taken from a much lower level. We do not have a control whereby we can measure whether the upper strata of the water are flowing into the lower part of the formation they are now taking it from. But in my estimation we must decide one thing: the use of fresh water to repressurize the fields when there is sufficient water from either of the two rivers I mentioned or from ponding by creating smaller dams on some creeks.

I would certainly hope that the minister or the people in control of our fresh ground water supply in the farming community would take some type of measurement. They tell me they are doing it by having some wells in the area drilled for that purpose, to find out the depletion of the water in that area. From past experience, Mr. Speaker, I can only say that in the town of Drayton Valley, with a population of almost 5,000, they had to go to the North Saskatchewan River for the water supply, although they had an adequate supply of water from 14 wells drilled in the area.

I'm hoping the minister or those people in control are advising the oil industry — or for whatever else fresh ground water will be used — that we will not endanger the supply of fresh water to the people living in that area.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, I don't want to delay the debate, but one principle in the act worries me somewhat. That is the rights of ownership of land, where a person is not permitted to drill a well on his own land unless he does it with a drilling machine owned by him. I find this a little difficult to understand. It seems to me it shouldn't make any difference who does the drilling as long as the man who

owns the land wants to have the well drilled. To put on another restriction, that a man can't drill a well on his own land unless he owns the equipment — I can't understand what the object is or what we're trying to achieve.

I believe there should be control of ground water. We should be making sure we don't waste ground water, and that we make the best use of ground water. There are many places where it's not available at all. I don't even object to a holder of a subsisting licence drilling a well with a drilling machine in respect of which a permit has been issued. I think that's fine. But when a man owns land and wants to drill a well on his own, surely he can hire somebody to drill the well and not be forced to buy the drilling equipment. I can't follow what we're trying to get at in connection with that item. I would appreciate some elaboration on that by the mover of the bill when he's closing the debate.

MR. MANDEVILLE: In making a few comments very briefly, Mr. Speaker, I also am concerned with the item the hon. Member for Drumheller brings up, controlling an individual drilling a well on his own property. Many times one doesn't really have to have equipment to drill a well. He can put in a well without drilling. Mr. Speaker, what I'm saying is, in a case like this, do they need a licence or a permit if they're going to dig a well on their land? Sometimes we can get water at shallow depth that can provide for livestock and for any other use. It does give me concern. We're getting these regulations, moving out into the individual's private property, and putting on these regulations. For example, we have another bill here where they're going to have to have controllers or inspectors for sewage. I think we've got to be a little careful in getting too much of this type of legislation in here. We're controlling.

AN HON. MEMBER: Agreed.

MR. MANDEVILLE: Especially the ranchers and the farmers in these particular areas. I would like the hon. member who introduced the bill, if he could, to outline this in the area where it indicates that one's got to hire a drilling rig and get a licence to drill on his own land.

MR. SPEAKER: May the hon. member conclude the debate?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, when I first read this bill I was confused too. But let me assure the House that no one has to get a permit to drill a well on his own land. This business of licences and permits has to do directly with well drillers themselves. I would explain: "licence" is somewhat like a driver's licence when you drive a car. You use that licence to use the highways. You need a licence to drill for water in Alberta. A permit is to do with the individual drilling rig. It's so the government has more control over who is drilling wells on private land. But as for the landowner himself having to get a permit to drill a well, this is not in this act.

Another thing was brought up. Say you want to clean out a spring or drill a shallow well. This doesn't

have anything to do with this at all. It was in the old act. It's not in this act at all.

[Motion carried; Bill 45 read a second time]

Bill 38
The Highway Traffic
Amendment Act, 1976

DR. HORNER: Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of Bill 38, The Highway Traffic Amendment Act, 1976.

In effect, Mr. Speaker, this puts back into legislation those things that were in the former act and were omitted in the question of peace officers' powers of arrest and seizure with regard to offences under The Highway Traffic Act. It's a question of finalizing the separation relative to the two departments and the change in the departmental responsibilities. There is nothing new in the bill that wasn't in the older Highway Traffic Act prior to the change in the administration relative to the two departments.

[Motion carried; Bill 38 read a second time]

Bill 39
The Occupational
Health and Safety Act

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, I take pleasure in moving second reading of Bill 39, The Occupational Health and Safety Act.

I think all hon. members would expect me to observe at this time that the bill now before the House is one of the most important areas in which the government could be moving at this time. It's one of the priorities set out in the Speech from the Throne, one of the five priorities for this session outlined by the government. The presentation of this bill was and is timely, Mr. Speaker.

It's important to reflect just for a moment upon the background of the bill and how it was made the subject of broad consultation. In the past I've made reference in the House to the recommendations of the Gale commission and the substance of those recommendations having been put into the language of the bill as it has been presented to the House.

It is with some hope for the future, Mr. Speaker, and some real feeling of the significance of the reading of this legislation, that I note that having had an outstanding report, much public debate, and declarations of interest and support from various sectors of Alberta society, we're now moving beyond all those stages. We're now moving into the area of positive and useful action in regard to occupational health and safety.

It's embedded deeply in the principle and the entire philosophy of the bill that there will be a balanced approach to the question of health and safety at the worksite. The work that has been done until the present time in the area of occupational health has been very useful in Alberta. In most respects, it has been contemporary; and in some respects, I would suggest, right at the forefront of the type of work being done by other jurisdictions in the country. In saying that we're moving ahead, there is no implied criticism of the excellent work done in the past by Dr.

May and no doubt by his predecessors, and certainly by his successor, Dr. Buchwald.

The important provision of the bill that brings the accident prevention branch of The Workers' Compensation Act into a combined thrust within a special division of the Department of Labour is the other side of the important equation to the worker and to the employer. For the worker who is injured or ill, it's all the same. He may lose his health or his life as a result of an insidious type of condition which may take years to develop and which may be, as the example is so often used, a respiratory ailment or the like; or he may have his injury or his potential loss of life in a very sudden and tragic way in an accident. So you can't choose between them. They have to be balanced and placed in the proper perspective, both of them. That is what the bill in its philosophy and its main thrust intends to do, Mr. Speaker: to put a full balanced forward-looking emphasis on the concerns in both areas.

It would be wrong if in this day and age the bill didn't propose to try to grapple with those issues by dealing with the possibility of preventing them. So much of what is proposed in regard to, say, data collection, monitoring, or reporting systems that may be provided by the act or by regulations referred to in the act — all these things are meant to identify the areas of concern in health, the areas of danger, and to move to make the possibility of injury or illness that much less.

It is critical to the whole of what is proposed to note that the responsibility is joint. Somebody looking at it from the employers' point of view has coined the phrase, safety is good business. There's no question about that. However, it would be cynical to come forward and say that would be the reason for proceeding in this way. All it does is show that whatever the benefit to the worker, the employer himself is not without benefit if he has a safe work place.

Now in promoting the concept that it's the responsibility of both the employer and the employee to see to the safety and potential safe working environment of the worker, it's [simply] dealing with the matter in a very practical and realistic way. After all, the worker has to have responsibility in regard to safety at the worksite, because he is there. He is the one who is present. He knows the procedures to be followed and knows the type of equipment or tool to be used. So he has a responsibility.

Then you look at it from the employer's point of view. He's the one who manages, who directs. Presumably, he is the one who buys or rents equipment which is used, buys or rents a type of machine that may be used with a particular process. Maybe that process is very noisy, and causes hearing loss. In that type of example we would be looking at the same time to both the employer and employee to understand that the problem they have is not the problem of only one, but both. The injury may be to the employee; the responsibility is upon both employer and employee to identify that as a problem and to see to the correction of it.

Now what is the role of government if you have the employer and employee working together in what I am satisfied will be almost always a co-operative atmosphere at the worksite? The responsibility of government is to provide the framework in which that

system will work best, because there's no possibility of any government ever having an inspection service large enough, expensive enough, skilled enough, far-flung or widespread enough throughout the province to be sure that each day on each of the tens of thousands of worksites, employers large and small are operating according to the rules. That's why the focus is on joint responsibility and the important input of both employer and employee at the worksite.

The government has a special interest, of course, in the small businessman. Government doesn't have any desire to impose upon the small businessman expensive, difficult requirements that will only lead to frustration and punishment of that small employer. We're far more interested in a much more positive approach than that.

It is our hope that the relationship between government and small employers throughout the province — and of course the majority of our worksites are small employers — it is our hope that the relationship there will be such that, in the beginning, the government can provide the necessary instruction and guidance as to whether or not that particular type and size of industry may require a joint worksite committee, whether the particular type of procedure the small employer may be carrying out with greater or less experience in the hands of the small operator is or is not dangerous, and basically to motivate both the small employer and the employee to work jointly and enter into joint problem-solving.

We think the type of approach which will cause people to generate a co-operative atmosphere around the potentially dangerous situation is vastly superior to a system where stringent regulations are suddenly sprung upon the entire economy and the government marches its horde — if that is a way of describing it — of inspectors out to start serving summonses. We have much higher hopes for this legislation than that.

Mr. Speaker, I have emphasized — I hope not too much — the desire we have to see this legislation well received by industry, large and small, and by labor, organized and unorganized.

What more useful thing could be undertaken than to try to reduce injury and death? Any government is very concerned about the area of general safety for the entire population. Without going into the other areas, because it wouldn't be appropriate now, we worry about accidents in the home. We worry about accidents on the farm. We worry about accidents on the highway. We worry about accidents relative to specific causes; for example, alcoholism and the like, absence of training, unsafe equipment, all these things.

I suggest what we're looking at in this bill, Mr. Speaker, is the opportunity to do two things. One is to upgrade the safety awareness of the population as a whole through positive action on the part of the government directed — because after all, your activities have to be directed to a specific purpose — in this case to the worksite itself. So that's the first objective: to increase the general awareness in the population through the use of the work force and of course, the employers. The other is to achieve the more specific and perhaps narrower result that has been the subject of my remarks this afternoon, and that is the individual worker at the worksite.

Mr. Speaker, I mentioned that the thrust is a joint and co-operative objective. The benefits are certainly

mutual. The only other thing I would want to say about the hopes we have for the success of what are in fact far-reaching changes being proposed in this area of legislation, is that we recognize that the full benefits will only take place over a period of time.

I can't conceive that the new thrust can do other than to make perhaps a small beginning this year, and add to that next year. In a current work force of some .75 million in Alberta, there will be many many people to be communicated with; many many programs to be outlined; many tests to contemplate and to begin to take; much more information to give; much consulting with individuals as well as groups; and so on. So it can't be that all of a sudden everything will turn around and the passing of the legislation will achieve wonders. However, it will give us a practical vehicle to achieve a great deal. My confidence is based on the belief that that can be achieved and that that will happen.

Having said that the progress I would be happy with would be much better and much more sure if it can be slow but sure, I recognize that at the same time we need continuing consultation. I know that at the time of first reading and now at the time of second reading, some people have already made their comments known and have said, don't you think you might have provided a little differently in the bill in this respect, couldn't some change be made? I'll make more remarks about that at committee stage, of course. But I did want to say that as the principles of the bill are the subject of the debate this afternoon, then of course we're willing to discuss and look at whether they can be improved. If changes in any detail are to be made, of course we'd be willing to look at that. We don't want to have it happen that any employer or any representative of the employees, be it organized or unorganized labor, should say that this is the final word and government has so decreed. We have not. We're in a learning process. All the people of Alberta are in a learning process in regard to this interesting and promising type of legislation. We have the enthusiasm. We just want the opportunity of working along with both labor and management in this respect. As a result of that, I'm sure, Mr. Speaker, we will achieve many very, very useful results.

Thank you.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, first of all I certainly applaud the government's decision to move in this very important area. I intend to support Bill 39 on second reading. The minister, I think, chose very fitting words when he talked about a practical vehicle. That's all legislation in fact can be.

I want to make some comments with respect to some of the principles contained within the bill. Bill 39 is certainly an excellent place to start. I'm sure all members of the House will support it.

There can be no doubt, Mr. Speaker, as we look to the diversification of the economy of this province, that we have to place a very high priority on industrial health and safety. I think one can talk endlessly about the need for employment opportunities. But equal to those opportunities is the ongoing vigilance on the part of government, workers, and employers that we have the safest possible standards.

The minister mentioned several examples. All one has to do is look at the tragic problems in Ontario

with some of the miners or the steel workers who find, as a result of inadequate precautions taken a number of years ago, that their lives are coming to an unfortunate and early end. Clearly, Mr. Speaker, the need to proceed in this area is, in my judgment, basic to any sort of industrial strategy in Alberta. The corresponding commitment to the best set out and most stringent standards for health and safety is a prerequisite to our future moves in diversifying the Alberta economy.

Having said that, Mr. Speaker, let me look at four or five principles which, in my view, should be discussed during second reading. I know that the minister would prefer to see these matters raised during committee stage, but it seems to me they do have a bearing on the principle of the act. I would ask him to respond when he concludes debate on second reading.

The minister is obviously aware of the concern expressed by many people in the trade union movement that the act sets up the joint health and safety committees on a discretionary basis. The act says "may" set up health and safety committees. The position the Alberta Federation of Labour takes is that this should be mandatory. This is also the position, as I understand it, recommended by the Gale report on industrial safety in the province of Alberta.

Mr. Speaker, it seems to me we should take a second look at this question and not just see it as something to be frightened of or annoyed at because the Alberta Federation of Labour has raised it. The reason is that when we're dealing with strong organized unions — the minister will be well aware of this — there won't be any major problems in making sure that there health and safety committees are established. I have no doubt that in the various shops and plants bargained for by the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers [International Union], for example, health and safety committees will be established. No doubt about that at all. I have no doubt that in those jurisdictions represented by the United Steelworkers, health and safety committees will be established.

But it seems to me, Mr. Speaker, the concern I have about the word "may" is that, in the very substantial portion of industry in this province which is not organized, where there is no strong union to go to bat for the workers, these are the very plants or shops where health and safety committees won't be established. Mr. Speaker, I could see the argument against health and safety committees being established if we were looking at huge expenditures. But as the minister quite properly pointed out, the purpose of this bill is to facilitate co-operation on the job sites so that we could maximize health and safety within the province. It would seem to me that it would be something an employer would desire. An on-site health and safety committee would, in my view, pay dividends over the long run. Even in the short run, as the minister knows and as members know, workers' compensation rates are related to accident records. If the number of accidents dropped, that will show up in rates charged to industry by the Workers' Compensation Board.

It seems to me there is a strong argument for this being a mandatory provision. The whole concept of a co-operative approach and the fact that increasing safety in a given shop over the long run will reduce Workers' Compensation Board rates to the employer

seem to me to add up to a pretty compelling argument that these health and safety committees should be established by legislation.

Again this is not going to be a problem with respect to the shops where the workers are already represented by strong unions. That will be part of the collective bargaining in any event, and woe betide any employer who wouldn't move on this particular provision. I raise it because it seems to me this is more of a concern for unorganized workers. While any employer might be tempted to say, this is something I don't want to get into at this point in time, surely the long-term merits of a lower accident claim by workers in his shop are that, at the very least, the rates of the Workers' Compensation Board would go down.

The second point to which I'd like to address a few comments, Mr. Speaker, is with respect to the overall health and safety council. In reading the act, I notice that a council will be established, but there is no specific provision, as I understand the act, that half the members will come from the trade union movement. It seems to me there's a pretty strong argument that if you're going to maximize co-operation, half the representatives should come from management and half should come from labor. Similarly, the trade union movement is somewhat concerned that during the job site inspections there be employee representation.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, when he concludes the debate I would like the minister to give us some indication whether there's going to be any change in philosophy as to the payment of the costs of operating health and safety in Alberta. Quite clearly the historical position has been that workers' compensation is a charge against the employer. In Alberta we have modified that to a certain extent because the province, through the provincial government, has assumed that portion of old pensions, bringing older pensions up to more reasonable levels. The basic philosophy of the Workers' Compensation Board still remains that it is a legitimate charge on industry. As I understand it, by transferring the accident prevention branch of the Workers' Compensation Board to the new health and safety division, we would be transferring from the WCB, where the financing comes from industry, to a department where the financing would come from the provincial government 100 per cent.

So I think it would be worth while, Mr. Speaker, if the minister in concluding debate would advise us whether he sees moving forward in this area as primarily a function of the taxpayer; that is, financing the division of government. Obviously there are going to be certain expenses at the job site. Obviously the changes in equipment and what have you, and improving industrial health and safety in the plant or the shop, are going to be the obligations of the employer. But I am raising this question as it relates to the administration of the supervision of health and safety in Alberta. Had this been left under the Workers' Compensation Board, given the present philosophy of financing that board, we would have had that in large part as a charge against the employer.

Mr. Speaker, notwithstanding those four questions, I certainly believe Bill No. 39 is an excellent start. I have no doubt that health and safety is going

to be an area that will be part of the collective bargaining process, even more so than it has been in the past. I have no doubt that many unions will look upon this as the basic minimum, as a starting-off point, and that in collective bargaining with their employers they will want to go somewhat beyond the terms of Bill 39. But I think the argument can be made legitimately about the impact on the unorganized. In my view, this bill goes somewhat along the road to providing sensible and reasonable standards with what seems to me to be a pretty impressive inspection system. For that reason, I think it's worthy of support and is probably one of the more important bills we'll be debating at this session of the Legislature.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, I would like to make a few comments on The Occupational Health and Safety Act. Since health and safety are being moved from the jurisdiction of the Workers' Compensation Board to the Department of Labour, it would appear this would be a good time to assess the safety work done in the past by the Workers' Compensation Board.

Generally speaking, I believe the board has an excellent record in regard to safety work. There is some concern that some of that machinery set up to deal with safety insofar as accidents are concerned may be lost in the shuffle. I want to speak for just a few moments on that aspect.

When an accident has taken place in the province, the Workers' Compensation Board has been very diligent in checking the site — particularly if it is a serious accident or a fatality — to see what could be done to prevent a similar accident from happening. Inspectors appeared at that site almost immediately and checked it very carefully. There have also been periodic checks by inspectors of the Workers' Compensation Board in regard to safety at mines, factories, lumber camps, et cetera. While we will never know for sure, undoubtedly a great number of injuries have been avoided because of these preventive acts by the Workers' Compensation Board over the years.

Since this will now be moved to the Department of Labour, the method of checking may be a little more difficult. I hope there will be very close liaison between the Department of Labour and the Workers' Compensation Board, which must pay for injuries with money from the employers, from industry. If that close liaison is worked up, it may be that even better inspection can be carried out. It appears the act is based a great deal on safety, proper inspections and so on, and I think . . .

MR. SPEAKER: I hesitate to interrupt the hon. member. Perhaps he would like to wind up his present thought in a sentence or two. We've run slightly over the allotted time for the designated business.

MR. TAYLOR: I beg leave to adjourn the debate.

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

head: **MOTIONS OTHER THAN
GOVERNMENT MOTIONS**

1. Mr. Kidd proposed the following motion to the Assembly:
Be it resolved that the report of the Alberta Land Use Forum be received.

[Adjourned debate: Mr. Cookson]

MR. COOKSON. Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure to have an opportunity to say a few words about this very worth-while Forum authorized by the government of the province basically to review our land-use policies and, I presume, to make recommendations and indicate directions in which it felt government should move.

The Land Use Forum cost a fair amount of money, something in the neighborhood of \$.5 million. I suppose we can stand up in the Assembly and talk all we like about the important recommendations in the report. I don't think that would be of much value if some of the recommendations weren't initiated by government in reasonable time. I suppose what I'm saying is, I hope we'll be able to act in a positive manner on some of the recommendations. We're not going to agree totally with all the recommendations. We're all individuals who have our own opinions. But I think sometimes we have to rise a little above the pros and cons and pluses and minuses to look at the overall benefit to the province of initiating programs. [This] supersedes all the arguments you can pose for and against any issue that comes before the Assembly.

I just want to refer to a very important part of the condensed version of the Forum. It says:

"The objective of the government is to enable individual . . . singularly or in association with each other, to have land to grow food and trees, build shelters and factories, establish recreational areas and such other . . . activities as the ingenuity of man may design, according to their . . . desires and resources, within law that prohibits gross misuse of the land itself as well as uses which affect adversely the welfare of others or which lessen unduly the options of future generations."

Mr. Speaker, I think if the Forum — and I think they have — followed through on the various recommendations on the basis of those particular objectives, and if we can follow through in this Assembly as a government on those objectives, I don't think we can go very far wrong here in Alberta.

I would be the first to say that I think our land-use policies in the past have been pretty darn good. I think some of the other members who have spoken have referred to this, that we haven't done too badly. On occasion I commend former governments. I'll commend the former government for maintaining some of the good policies recommended from time to time.

However, we are faced with a new era and a new situation. We have an extremely fast growing province, now one of the fastest in Canada. We have two of the fastest growing urban centres in Canada. We are now attracting people not only from other parts of Canada but from other parts of the world. We are faced with pressures that perhaps haven't been faced before. We should be able to do anything we can to

alleviate these pressures. All we have to do is review what's happened in other countries and some of the problems they have run into because of major growth. If we can follow through on the recommendations given here, based on their travels, experience, studies, and hearings throughout the world, we should be able to chart a pretty good course for the province.

Now I'd just like to touch on a few things. The Member for Banff reviewed the Forum excellently. I scanned some of the speeches given in the Assembly. It pretty well sums up some of the things I intended to say, so I'll try to touch on a few areas that won't be repetitive.

There was some brief mention of the recommendation for a land-use secretariat, something that could be directly responsible to the cabinet or one of the cabinet committees. In government, we have a tendency to set up hundreds of stops and checks to try to solve the political problems without their being referred directly to the politician responsible in the first place. Maybe this is another attempt to expand the role of [the] civil service in order to establish these stops and checks, in order to take the heat off us. I guess that's what I'm saying. So I have some questions about the recommendation.

The policy laid down through this secretariat would be to assist the cabinet, where requested to do so, to prepare policy guidelines, develop long- and short-term strategy, and so on. It goes on to cover this. I'd just make the remark that all of us, as MLAs representing large groups of people, have this responsibility all the time in the Legislature, if we're carrying out our responsibilities, to make recommendations to the government and carry them out. So I'm not sure whether the idea of a secretariat may be just a repetition of what we are already trying to do.

It would set up task force committees on an *ad hoc* basis from within the government to study and give recommendations. We, this government, have set up very successful task forces on occasion. There's nothing wrong with the concept. I think it particularly gives those people who aren't in the cabinet extra responsibilities and extra involvement in government in terms of the political climate. There is nothing wrong with that. After all, we are branded as politicians, so on occasion I suppose we have to act like politicians. These task forces have been set up, and I think they've made excellent recommendations to government on occasion.

It also says the secretariat would set up a task force to investigate, hold hearings, and [make] recommendations with regard to annexation and changes in municipal boundaries. Well, we have these quasi-judicial boards at the present time. We have the Local Authorities Board, which deals with boundaries and other issues. At the present time, we have the Boundaries Commission responsible for dealing with boundary problems. So some of these things may be just a duplication of what we are actually doing at the present time.

They pose a problem with regard to urban sprawl. I must say I have mixed feelings about this. I think one of the members gave the figure that 80 per cent of the population of Alberta covers only about .25 per cent of the total land in Alberta. I presume that's a pretty reasonable figure. If you look at it in those terms, you come to the conclusion that sprawl by

urban growth is maybe not that serious. Yet on the other side of the coin, for example, I know just recently the city of Red Deer, with the approval of the planning commission, purchased probably one of the highest assessed quarters in that area for residential use. This really gives me great cause for concern.

One of the remarkable things about all this is that farmers themselves seem to be more concerned about sprawl by residences and so on than any other group of people. It seems strange in this respect, because many farmers derive some considerable benefit from rezoning and resale of their land for uses other than agricultural. So I think the consumers and other bodies, professional and so on, in the province should be aware of this concern of farm people. I suppose it's because of their agrarian background and because they are basically interested in conservation. They are basically interested in providing food — I must confess, some of the cheapest food in the world for the consumer.

At least at the present time, they don't seem to look at the increased value of land in terms of making a fast dollar in inflationary times. In that respect, they are more concerned with the actual use of the land, when it is converted from agricultural use to other purposes. I know they must just cringe to see this black soil piled up in huge mounds to be later spread out over lawns which will in turn be fertilized by high-priced fertilizer, clipped every second or third day, and in between the water poured on them, they could grow. It just seems like an inconsistent use of a resource.

The Forum recommends that authority to approve subdivision be given to the local government of all rural and urban municipalities. I guess this is done to a certain extent now. In the new planning act we hope to bring in this spring, this and the procedure for speeding up this process will be laid out. There is a problem in leaving it to local government in that each government seems to develop its own philosophy about how land should be used. A bordering municipality may have an entirely different concept from the one next to it as to how the land should be used. This tends to cause some conflict. I suppose, in general terms, one should argue that the province lay down the basic rules under which municipalities should operate, and they in turn could set down their own rules and guidelines within the gamut of those basic rules.

The Forum refers to the issue of parks. They are of the opinion that the need for major parks should be established by the province. I would just like to commend the government in initiating the two major parks for the city of Calgary and for the city of Edmonton, [and] including those people who are not part of the cities. To say the least, it's unfortunate that the province had to initiate at tremendous cost something that should have been done before.

I can't help but remember in the early '50s and late '40s, when I attended university here, there was a huge area of land, now circled by the city, which was the university farm for agricultural students, with some excellent soil, probably top-quality soil. Slowly the city fathers seemed to see fit to close in on this area, and today it's confined to a very small area. That seems rather a tragedy and a lack of foresight and of planning. I think the provincial government has to have and exert authority to protect any of these

areas. We're talking now about rail line abandonment and, I understand, abandonment of rails within cities and so on. Let's make sure that we reserve that, because we don't know how important those corridors may be down the road. If we let everything pile up and then try to reverse the direction, the cost is phenomenal.

I'd like to commend the government and the Department of the Environment, which for some time has initiated the practice of purchasing land throughout the province for various recreational uses. I'm thinking in particular of my area, where land has been and is being purchased around the limited areas of lakes. We have only so many lakes in the province. We have a lot in the north, but in our major population areas they are pretty well limited. Far be it from us to start constructing artificial lakes to any great degree, because of the expenditure and so on. Let's try to protect as much as possible the habitat around the few natural lakes we have. I say few; I'm referring to the populated areas.

This is important for a number of reasons. First of all it's important for the public in general. If we let it all fall into private hands, we end up with all the frontage, land bordering the lakes, totally controlled by a very small number of people. I really don't think this is good for Alberta. There is going to be a large number of people, more as time continues, who will never have an opportunity to have access to a lake with their families, unless we can continue to reserve and work against the pressures we're faced with to protect that frontage around the lakes. There are other areas of aesthetic value that are not necessarily lakes, other recreational areas throughout the province. I think when the opportunity lends itself we should be continually purchasing frontage along rivers and so on, and holding those for some future recreational use.

There are several other things I'd like to refer to. There's one recommendation, that if federal action cannot be secured regarding capital gains, the province consider the possibility of levying an unearned increment tax on land sales. I think this is in addition to the capital gains tax. I remember one time negotiating salaries for a professional group. In the due course of the negotiations, and this person was very positive about this, they had to have more money because they were paying more income tax. Now if you relate that to this situation, and if we tack another tax on top of a tax, do we get the same kind of mental block, reaction, or whatever you might call it, to the value of land? Do we not end up with the person who is trying to make a fast dollar, or even a slow dollar for that matter, tacking onto the price of the land not only the capital gains tax, but also the increment tax? I leave that with you. I'm not sure whether the Member for Spirit River-Fairview was quite interested in this possibility, but I think we should look at it very carefully before we initiate it. I'm not saying it's wrong, but again I think we should consider all the ramifications of extra tax.

With regard to foreign buyers, I've had a number of discussions with people in my constituency about foreign ownership. It's always the person selling his land to someone outside who doesn't want us to do anything with legislation. Then there's the other fellow not selling his land to anyone outside who wants us to do something. Mr. Speaker, I don't think

we should panic because of considerable pressure to reactions against foreign ownership. The one point I'd like to make, and I think I've said it before, is that where you have absentee foreign ownership, you have not a good situation. It doesn't matter whether it's in the area of ownership of land or whatever. We've said this about corporations and we've taken steps to improve the identification and so on of foreign ownership of our corporations. So it's not all bad.

We should have a good look at legislation that would require anyone who owns land here in Alberta to reside in the province. This could result in some retaliation, because I know situations in my own area where a number of people go to the States in the wintertime. They own homes in Arizona and various other recreational areas down there, at least for the winters. I think we should weigh this very carefully before we overreact on it. But I think it should be considered, and I would like to see the government act on that segment of foreign ownership; that is, absentee foreign ownership.

In the little time I have left I'd like to refer to the article on the importance of wildlife and protection. You can see what's happened because of income tax, Mr. Speaker. Again this is manipulation by government. The government said that if you cleared land we would exempt you from tax on the cost of clearing the land. So everybody ran out and started clearing the land. Now the brush, et cetera, is all gone, and we have a problem with wildlife habitat. I brought in a private resolution some time ago, asking the province and the government to look at funding, perhaps from the heritage trust fund, and set at a municipal level in such a way that it could be administered and would encourage the farm people to preserve wildlife habitat. Some do it without any encouragement. Others don't see any value in it, because they're basically looking at the dollar. It could be done in a number of ways, either through the heritage trust fund or by means of a reverse effect of income tax. In other words, tax someone for clearing his land, or some compromise of that type.

To me, this would be a very important and worth-while contribution to the province, because the wildlife have a problem in trying to maintain their numbers. We're now going to spend a few million dollars establishing pheasants in the province, and maybe we could accomplish just about as much in terms of priority if we used some recommendation here in this Forum.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I again pose the question, again on foreign ownership, why money is coming in here. One of the reasons is that we've got one of the few places left in the world with good stable government and not torn internally by revolutions, dictatorships, communism, and so on. Therefore we're going to be continually faced with pressures from outside foreign investment, in Canada and in this province in particular. I think we have to address ourselves to this. I know a landowner who was offered the best part of \$1 million for his property just the other day. I think he takes the attitude that the land means more to him than the money. The sooner we take this attitude, I think, the better off we'll all be.

Mr. Speaker, I notice that when a very large number of the people who have immigrated here in

recent years from other countries in the world eventually own a piece of land, it stays in their ownership. They're not looking for that fast dollar. Maybe second- and third-generation Canadians who haven't been confronted with this problem better address themselves to it too. They don't have to sell the land. Land in some of the older countries goes from generation to generation to generation within the family. There's nothing wrong with it.

I'd like to see some recommendations in the Land Use Forum report carried out in the not-too-distant future. Absentee foreign ownership would be one I would like to see some action on.

DR. WEBBER: Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure for me to take part in the debate on the Land Use Forum report. First of all, I'd like to compliment the Member for Banff for remarks he made in introducing the motion. It was a very thoughtful and interesting speech, in my opinion.

I've had the opportunity to make a few remarks during the throne speech debate, but at this time, as a member of the caucus land-use committee, I would like to make some more remarks about the Forum report. The report is a most comprehensive document and covers a broad spectrum of uses of land. In addition to some of my general remarks, I would like to restrict them to basically four areas: one, the objectives of land use in Alberta; secondly, the role of government with respect to those objectives; thirdly, urban land use and housing.

The Forum's report limited its discussion to objectives and principles, with limited treatment of management-oriented responsibilities. It was the Forum's view that once a principle or objective was put forth, it could be discussed by government. If the government agreed with the concept, they could work out the management details of operation. The report contains specific recommendations so we could accept, modify, or even reject them. An example of a specific recommendation, of course, was the speculator tax.

In preparing the report, the Forum first established an objective for the use of land as a base from which they could work. The objective they developed conformed with the views of the majority of the public responses received by the Forum. While the Forum found a strong concern for the preservation of agricultural land and proper use of land in Alberta, there was also a strong view that the individual should have as much freedom as possible to own and manage the land. In other words, Mr. Speaker, the majority of the public wants the government to set the bounds but give the private sector freedom to operate within those bounds.

The Forum recommends that the Legislature consider putting the objective into legislation. The objective was read earlier by the hon. Member for Lacombe. I'm sure you will see upon studying this objective that it allows freedom for the individual Albertan to pursue whatever objective he may have, whether it is buying a lot in order to build a house or buying a farm.

The Forum outlined a series of more precise objectives for specific uses of land, such as the urban use of land. In order to provide policies and programs which will enable Albertans to realize their objectives for land use, the Forum indicates that all levels of

government will be required to provide a framework of regulations and broad outlines. The Forum maintains the government should concentrate its efforts on decision-making and leave the doing to outside managements which can pursue their goals once the government has decided what should be done and within what parameters.

As the Forum points out, the present laws governing land use in Alberta are probably the most comprehensive of any jurisdiction in North America, but are not so far advanced in comparison to some of the European countries. However, as the Forum points out, the complexity of existing laws and the responsibility the government has assumed have resulted first in a degree of confusion as to who is responsible for what between the provincial and the municipal jurisdictions; and secondly, in some lack of co-ordination within the departments of provincial government and slowing of the decision-making process. This is a common complaint of land developers. The total structure becoming rule-bound obviously increases costs and decreases efficiency.

The Forum outlines five areas of responsibility for the provincial government. These are listed in the report. One of those responsibilities, referred to as its allocation role, indicates that the provincial government is responsible for the preparation of land-use inventories, which should be co-ordinated and supervised by a central agency. The chief reason for the existence of that agency is to make land-use policy and recommend guidelines to cabinet.

The Forum also outlines recommendations regarding the planning process and clarifies the role of the various levels of government and planning agencies. They point out that policy planning is virtually ignored in the present Planning Act. I'm sure the new planning act, to be brought in by the Minister of Municipal Affairs this session, will correct this deficiency. When the new planning act is introduced, elected members and the public will have an opportunity to study that along with the recommendations of the Land Use Forum report.

Mr. Speaker, I would like now to discuss two specific areas of concern to my constituents; namely, the urban use of land, and housing. In a recent survey in my riding, the urban use of land and housing were of top concern to them, along with inflation. With regard to the urban use of land, the Forum claims that the total amount in Alberta is small, only .22 per cent of the total area of the province. They conclude that urban growth in itself is not a problem, and that the amount of urban land used in Alberta is small in comparison to the land taken up by roads and highways. But considering that approximately 17 per cent of the land in Alberta is suitable for the growing of agricultural crops — in other words, 17 per cent of the area is class 1, 2, and 3 soils — and considering as well that the urban areas are primarily located in the better agricultural soil classes, urban land takes up 1.3 per cent of the agricultural land. However, translating this into square miles, 1.3 per cent becomes 562 square miles of urban land in number 1, 2, and 3 soils, which would be a chunk of land approximately 20 miles by 28 miles. However, 562 compared with a little over 10,000 square miles for roads and highways doesn't seem that much.

I agree with the recommendation of the Forum that

where alternatives exist, urban expansion should be directed to the lands of lower agricultural quality. According to the Forum's public hearings, the primary public concerns regarding urban use of land were the urban expansion into the good agricultural area and, secondly, the urban sprawl and need for increased density and the limiting of single-family home development. Another concern was the problem of deterioration of the central core areas of the larger cities. Another concern, although little mention was made of it at the hearings, was the cost of urban land for housing. Well, the Forum realizes that it is an issue of significant concern.

The major land-use categories in the cities are residential and transportation, each occupying about 30 per cent of the total urban land area. The Forum claims that in urban areas the demand for land for transportation systems appears to increase with the size of the urban centre. With low-density urban expansion, the proportion of urban land required for transportation tends to increase with the population of that urban centre.

Related to this statement are, I think, two very important statements in the land-use report that I would like to bring to your attention, Mr. Speaker. They appear to me to be contradictory. The first one, on page 184, says, "In recent times, the per capita demand for urban land has increased". They indicate a number of reasons why this is so; for example, the increased minimum size of a residential lot, wider streets because of increased use of the automobile, the desire of urban dwellers for more open space and recreation space, and larger shopping centres with larger parking lots.

So the statement I've just read, along with the fact that our cities are getting bigger in population, implies that the more people who move into our cities, the more land each person seems to need.

A little later in the report, Mr. Speaker, on page 190, they indicate that "as urban areas increase in population, they tend to become more densely developed", or the land use per capita tends to decrease. It seems to me, Mr. Speaker, that this statement is in contradiction to the first one I referred to, and this apparent contradiction makes the validity of some of the other statements in the report questionable. For example, they state that "arguments condemning the sprawl of Edmonton and Calgary for their land-consumption patterns, as opposed to the same sort of development in the smaller centres of Alberta, then, lose validity."

Mr. Speaker, the 1972 Task Force on Urbanization and the Future studied aspects of urbanization which were of concern to the people of Alberta. In their publication, which is entitled *Choices For Metropolitan Growth*, they claim:

A review of the form that growth has taken in the past suggests that there are implicit in present civic development policies the following commitments: first, a commitment to and deliberate encouragement of growth of the city at the maximum obtainable rate; a commitment to private transport and the motor vehicle as a means of moving throughout the city; and, thirdly, a commitment to the present form of growth of continuous outward expansion.

They're referring to the city of Calgary.

They go on to say, Mr. Speaker, that what is now

needed as a first priority is a detailed economic review of the costs involved in the present form of growth prescribed by artificial boundaries relative to other forms of growth, including the possibility of satellite communities.

Mr. Speaker, to my knowledge such a review has not occurred to date. It appears the city of Calgary continues to believe that adding a thin layer of growth around the city centre is our only option.

Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased with a recent document I received. It's put out by the Calgary Regional Planning Commission. It's entitled *The Planning of the Future of Calgary Region: Proposals for the Next Fifteen Years*. This came out on April 21 of this year. It doesn't contain the detailed policies of a regional plan, nor is it a general plan, but simply a list of recommendations for managing growth; recommendations that could form the basis of a regional plan. Their objectives guiding the recommendations I think include the recommendations the Land Use Forum states with regard to the urban use of land.

In this document they recommend that we direct a greater proportion of growth to selected existing towns and villages around Calgary, such as Airdrie or Okotoks. This agrees with statements from the land-use report. However, the Forum does indicate that government should not subsidize the industries or businesses that move into the smaller communities around the city.

Mr. Speaker, even with the encouragement for growth outside the cities in our province, I think it's unreasonable for us to expect that the cities will not grow. They're going to grow. In fact, I think they will probably take the largest share of the growth.

The second recommendation I'd like to refer to in the Calgary Regional Planning Commission report states that regional town centres and local centres should be developed as balanced communities with housing services and job opportunities. In other words, Mr. Speaker, they recommend that they not be bedroom communities or dormitory communities. In fact, the Forum recommends a similar sort of thing.

The third recommendation I want to point out here is the recommendation to develop communities in the region of higher densities than currently exist.

Mr. Speaker, they go on with other recommendations which I think are important and certainly fit in with the Land Use Forum report. These statements from the Calgary Regional Planning Commission, and the previous remarks I have stated from the task force, indicate to me that the city of Calgary and the Calgary Regional Planning Commission are at odds with each other in their philosophies regarding Calgary's growth.

Mr. Speaker, the Forum recommends that the management of urban growth, including the future expansion of Edmonton and Calgary, be a provincial responsibility, with the province outlining overall growth policies for the province and the regional planning commission managing regional growth. Our metropolitan governments would then manage the form of their internal land-use patterns.

Although it's important to note that the Forum points out local municipalities do not at this time have funding or the financial capacity to carry out that responsibility, the Forum states the origin of many issues perceived as urban growth problems lie in that fact.

Mr. Speaker, the citizens of my constituency recognize that Calgary has to grow, but they are concerned with the form that growth is taking. They feel alternatives to the present form of growth need to be considered.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to make a few remarks with regard to housing in our urban areas, as the Forum devotes one chapter to that topic. My constituents are primarily concerned with the increased cost of buying a home. The reasons given for these increasing costs are many.

The mayor of Calgary reportedly says the problem is scarcity of serviced land, along with government regulations and controls. Recently the president of Carma Developers reportedly blamed citizen participation for delays as well as the development approval process. It was also reported recently that the Member of Parliament for Calgary Centre laid some blame on government programs resulting in a money supply increase. Members in this House have pointed out that the real estate business may be to blame for some of the increased costs. Consumers blame land speculators. They blame a possible monopoly and vertical integration in the development industry, as well as the low-density subdivision in our cities.

Another reason given, Mr. Speaker, and I think it's an important one to note, is the high expectations of many Albertans regarding the quality of their housing. I think many Albertans feel it's their right to have a single-family detached house — not a house with the basic necessities, but a house with a fireplace, attached garage, and a family room. The housing development industry, of course, heeds the demands of the public. Thus the market selection available to those citizens with lower incomes is drastically reduced. However, the expectations of many families with lower incomes may be out of line.

The Forum deals with many of these issues I've referred to and points out that the consumer, the developer, and the mortgage lenders are preoccupied with single-family housing, which is the most expensive form of housing. The Forum makes several recommendations for some of these issues. One is that more alternate forms of housing and multi-family housing be emphasized in the new low-density subdivisions. They recommend a simplification of the subdivision process to reduce the developers' holding time, as well as more flexibility in the application of standards and regulation in subdivision design.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, they recommend that government support programs should be diverted towards multi-family development both in the new and older areas of our cities. I think these are all good recommendations.

Mr. Speaker, remarks have already been made during the debate about the control of land in the urban fringe which is planned to be used for country residential purposes. In his address, the Member for Banff made five good points with respect to the use of this land.

With respect to capital gains tax, Mr. Speaker, as other members have pointed out, the Forum recommends a capital gains tax on speculation profits on land as a method of reducing costs of housing. This approach is questioned on the basis of making land assembly less competitive and encourages developers to hide their land profits in the total development

costs. Also, as we've heard in this House, the results of that tax in Ontario indicate that housing costs were not significantly reduced as a result of it.

To reduce housing costs, one alternative raised by the Land Use Forum was to simply expropriate land at values established by government. This was referred to by the Forum as well as by the report of the Alberta mission to Europe. They refer to land-use control surrounding new towns in some of the European countries, and they say:

However, in Alberta, where land is still considered by many as a commodity and where private ownership is more actively pursued, the active adoption of some of their effective controls of zoning, price setting, and expropriation would pose numerous legal, economic, social as well as political problems.

Thus, Mr. Speaker, the problems of urban land use and housing are obviously extremely complex and are going to be difficult to solve. I think it's important for us to examine the recommendations of the land-use report and to examine how other provinces and countries have tried to solve their land-use problems. However, Mr. Speaker, in the end Alberta will have to co-ordinate its efforts to ensure the integration of our resource development and the use of land in order that Albertans continue to enjoy the quality of life we have grown to expect.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, I had hoped I could get into this debate regarding the Land Use Forum, since it indeed has so many ramifications for the legislation we are proposing. My comments today were going to be directed towards some of the peripheral concerns addressed by the Land Use Forum, particularly in the area of urban form, the question of regional government versus unitary forms of government. Indeed, this is one of the major issues facing us generally, and specifically I think will come to be one of the major problems in Alberta in the near term.

In the two or three minutes I have left, I might make just a couple of quick comments in reaction to some of the comments made today by the speakers who really concentrated on the area of urban form.

The comments of the hon. Member for Calgary Bow may have been taken out of relative proportions when he quoted the substantial number of agricultural acres being eaten up by urban development. This fear has been expressed and maybe somewhat overstated with the impinging problems of food supply, but in my own mind it seems to be misplaced for three reasons, and I'll merely briefly mention these.

First of all, if we allow the concentration of metropolitan growth to take place in the three areas, and we have 10 people per acre, you would find that this would constitute approximately 1 per cent of the total arable land in Canada. Secondly, it's not the cities that absorb land but the people themselves. Therefore, if we have metropolitan growth not in large urban areas but in smaller urban areas, obviously more land will have to be taken out of agricultural production. Finally, I think we have to remember that urban areas are not really concrete jungles, but indeed there are open spaces and free spaces which are really the result of good planning.

I would pause at that point, Mr. Speaker, and adjourn debate.

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. HYNDMAN: Mr. Speaker, perhaps insofar as the Assembly will be proceeding to Committee of Supply at 8 o'clock, we might on your suggestion move to committee at this time and expedite matters.

MR. SPEAKER: Do hon. members agree that when they assemble at 8 o'clock they will be in Committee of Supply?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER: The Assembly stands adjourned until the Committee of Supply rises and reports.

[The House adjourned at 5:29 p.m.]

[The Committee of Supply met at 8 p.m.]

head: **GOVERNMENT MOTIONS** (Committee of Supply)

[Dr. McCrimmon in the Chair]

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Committee of Supply will come to order.

Department of Government Services

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Minister, do you have any opening remarks?

MR. SCHMID: Yes, Mr. Chairman. In introducing the Department of Government Services, I should just like to make a few remarks regarding the value and the input of this department to the overall operations of the government.

First, all hon. members may know that the Deputy Minister, Mr. Jack Kyle, had vast years of experience as Deputy Minister of Public Works in the province of Saskatchewan. He then was city commissioner in the city of Winnipeg. He was at the University of Victoria awhile, and last June we were able to acquire his great capabilities to be Deputy Minister of Government Services.

Mr. Chairman, I think the fine standards of building operations and maintenance set by the previous government and continued under the last minister responsible for this division under public works, Dr. Winston Backus, are well known. Having seen many public buildings in the rest of Canada and in other parts of the world, I can say that the standards being set, from the janitors' [work] right up to the craftsmanship of the people working in this department, are just outstanding. In fact, we are fortunate to have craftsmen with these unbelievable skills, second to none as far as I am concerned. I would call them artists. One has only to look at the renovations in Government House, and look around here at how this building is being kept up to standard, to know what I'm talking about. This division of the department,

building operations and maintenance, is in the capable hands of our Assistant Deputy Minister, Mr. Bill Davies.

Our director of purchasing, Mr. McClean, has had and will have some very sensitive decisions to make. But to realize the value of this purchasing officer, one has to remember that out of the tenders received, the difference between the highest and lowest for the acquisition of goods and supplies for the government was \$21 million in the last fiscal year alone.

In our public affairs department, Mr. Bill Payne handles the sensitive responsibilities in a most effective and, again, tax-saving manner. I can only state that under his direction last year, all the contracts for the government's Xerox machines were combined into one contract. The saving to the taxpayers of Alberta alone was about \$200,000.

We have gone into print procurement. In the cities of Edmonton and Calgary, we put out weekly the printing done for government on tender. Considering the rates set nationally for printing, that alone has saved us approximately \$792,000.

The quick print centres which have been established — and so far we have three — have resulted in a saving so far of about \$300,000. When one considers the proliferation of printing machines in different departments before, which are now being centralized and run by one, two, or three employees instead of tens of them, one can well imagine the savings that have occurred thanks to the capable management of the people in Government Services.

Let me mention just one more program in public affairs, the RITE system. One can say again to the taxpayers of Alberta that the long-distance charges being saved on calls made by civil servants to other parts of Alberta, or from other parts to the capital city, are approximately \$270,000 a month. I think the former government can also be congratulated on thinking early of the installation of a computing system which was at the time developed by our now Auditor, Mr. Bill Rogers, and continued by a wizard of utilization and application, our Assistant Deputy Minister, Mr. Bob Gehmlich. The amount of work, buildings, general computer work being done in the government — if I knew the hon. members would like to know, I'd be glad to supply them with more information. But all I can say is, this system is being utilized 24 hours a day, seven days a week with over 442 terminals distributed throughout the government.

Mr. Wakal, who has run the surplus disposal division which came to the department not very long ago, is going to retire. On behalf of all the people of Alberta, we would like to wish him well for the excellent job he has done in running this division of the provincial government. In the future, I think the thrust in that division will be to make it more of a marketing agency, as it has been in the past, to get the most for goods to be disposed of, and again of course, the desired saving for the taxpayer in this province.

Last but not least, maybe I should mention our courier service during the last mail strike. I think they did a really immense job in delivering the mail, not only for government departments, but to make sure all the cheques for so many people in Alberta went out to the different branches where they were being picked up on time. Again, all these people in the

entire department deserve a great deal of credit, and I would like to thank them publicly.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CLARK: Perhaps I might start off, Mr. Chairman, by simply saying that from a quick review of the estimates, the guidelines have been exceeded in programs 1 and 2. They're offset by decreases in program 3 and only modest increases in programs 5 and 6. However, the decreases in program 3 and the modest increases in program 6 are artificial in nature and only temporary, as they result primarily this year from a decrease in purchase of provincial assets and so on. Perhaps the minister might start by telling us why programs 1 and 2 are well above the guidelines.

MR. SCHMID: Mr. Chairman, of course we have tried to stay within the guidelines in the overall program budgeting of the department. Accordingly, we have made adjustments to make sure the overall increase, which in this case is 8.5 per cent over '75-76, would not be exceeded, since the general guideline was 11 per cent. As one can well imagine, in combining divisions from several departments into one major department and trying to give the best service possible to the other government departments, in helping them to centralize and 'unitize' and thereby again cause savings for the entire government operation, certain operations of administration had to be adjusted, a certain number of staff had to be reassigned — were transferred in fact from other appropriations of the department to the administration budget. I think the major increase can be explained in that manner. This is really what happened as far as administration of the department budget is concerned.

AN HON. MEMBER: Did you get that, Bob?

MR. CLARK: No, I didn't. Mr. Chairman, one of the members back here asked if I got it, and I'm sorry, I didn't.

Let's start with the first program, Departmental Support Services. I see about a 20 per cent increase. Can you be a bit more specific, Mr. Minister, and tell us — I see primarily accounting and personnel — the major increases there.

MR. SCHMID: Yes, Mr. Chairman, I'd be pleased to do so. The hon. member of the opposition is referring to Departmental Support Services. There, as I explained before, we transferred some positions from other portions of the department. For instance, the director of personnel and the secretary were transferred from Administrative Services. Again, three personnel positions were transferred from Public Affairs to Departmental Support Services. One personnel officer was from Housing and Public Works, and one personnel position was transferred from Computing and Systems into Departmental Support Services, more or less to streamline the administration of the department.

Then there was an increase in rentals for the duplicating equipment which amounted to — well, it might not sound like much — in this case about \$4,000. I also understand that the greater amount in this case, for instance, is \$80,000, because of the

transfer in positions in this department from other divisions within the department.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Chairman, may I ask the minister a question or two. This has to do with cars.

MR. KUSHNER: Easy, Walter. Easy.

DR. BUCK: Just wait till we get started, John.

I think this is a question the hon. Member for Calgary Mountain View should be asking himself, because he was the one who really brought up how many cars we own and whether there is any directive as to how large the cars should be.

I would really like to know, Mr. Minister, if it is true that, because there is a ceiling on the amount of wages we can pay, some people have received cars in lieu of an increase in salary. I just want to know if that's a fact now.

MR. SCHMID: Mr. Chairman, it's not quite within the jurisdiction of Government Services, because I think the hon. member was really referring to the cars for deputy ministers. The deputy ministers were given the choice of either having a salary increase of \$2,000, if I'm not mistaken, or being able to acquire a car for their use for a period of three years. Having made that choice, the deputy ministers have now been supplied or are now being supplied with cars from Government Services. That's about the jurisdiction for Government Services, which is charged with supplying cars for the deputy ministers, if I can explain it that way.

Oh, my apologies. Yes, it's for the deputy ministers, of course. It's also for members of boards and agencies. The salary ranges that have been established through Orders in Council 4, 5, and 6 are eligible to have either a car at their disposal or, at the time, a salary increase of \$2,000.

As far as other government cars are concerned, Mr. Chairman, to give you an example, a great number of cars and trucks came over from the former Ministry of Lands and Forests and probably are now divided into Recreation, Parks and Wildlife, and Energy and Natural Resources. They have a great number of cars and trucks. So does the department of highways. But, of course, that's within their jurisdiction, and it would be within their budget to provide for these cars.

Government Services does not have any budgetary provision for the servicing or otherwise of these cars unless, as could happen, Government Services has a garage in a certain district in which these cars happen to be. Then they would probably service these cars but charge that service to the respective department.

DR. BUCK: How many vehicles are you responsible for in this department, then, Mr. Minister, and what is the price range for the cars that we provide the deputy ministers?

MR. SCHMID: Mr. Chairman, if I'm not mistaken, the maximum price deputy ministers could buy their cars for is \$6,500. The number of cars that Government Services is actually responsible for, Mr. Chairman, is very small compared to the trucks being used for the

government courier service, delivering goods and mail and so on throughout the province of Alberta.

DR. BUCK: I wish the minister would just slow down and answer some of the questions, and never mind the speeches. How many cars is the minister responsible for in his department? That's the question, not in relation to how many trucks — we've got so many trucks — just how many cars?

MR. SCHMID: Mr. Chairman, I'll look that up in a minute. As soon as I have that information, I will communicate it to the hon. member.

DR. BUCK: At the same time the minister is looking that up, can he indicate to the committee what kind of tender system we go to? How do we buy our cars? At the same time, can he indicate to us who insures the government fleet and how that process is arrived at?

MR. SCHMID: Mr. Chairman, the tendering system for cars is handled by our director of purchasing, who publishes that a certain number of cars are being acquired, or a car, whatever it is, is being acquired. The different car dealerships then quote their respective prices and, as it usually says, the lowest tender is not necessarily accepted, but usually is. That person is then awarded the purchase contract for the cars.

Of course, it sometimes happens that cars are bought not in the city of Edmonton, but in other places in Alberta. There again, the lowest tender is usually accepted, but not necessarily. But to my knowledge that's the way it has been done in the past, and that is presently the order of the day.

As far as insurance is concerned, Mr. Chairman, I think the hon. Provincial Treasurer would have more information on that because it's in his jurisdiction.

MR. KUSHNER: Mr. Chairman, I wonder if I can direct a question to the minister, not in regard to small cars at this point. I wonder if the minister would make it quite clear which elected people in fact qualify for government cars. I was told that some MLAs are given cars. I haven't seen them yet, but I wonder if the minister would clarify that. I'm serious about it.

MR. SCHMID: Well, Mr. Chairman, maybe I could answer this. Which elected people? The members of the Executive Council are provided with a car. Taking myself as an example, since I go to work in the morning and come home about midnight, I would hardly ever have time to use my car for any personal use. The provision of cars of course is also there, I suppose, when the minister goes out of town and visits the rest of the province. This has been the custom for quite some time. That's about the most I can tell the hon. member.

May I just reply to the hon. Member for Clover Bar. The vehicles owned by Alberta Government Services are: cars and station wagons permanently held, 20; trucks and vans up to one ton, 65; larger trucks and buses, which includes eight fire engines, 24; trailers, 11; and special vehicles, which could be something like a snowmobile, 7. Then we also have what we call a rental fleet. There we have 36 cars or station wagons; 153 trucks and vans up to one ton; about 21 larger trucks; one trailer; and two special vehicles, for

a total of 340 vehicles in the Department of Government Services.

MR. KUSHNER: Mr. Chairman, again I wonder if the minister could clarify if at any point in time the government in fact has considered using smaller cars — the compact cars.

MR. SCHMID: Well, Mr. Chairman, I think they are not considered to be safe, because some of the hon. members who use those cars have to travel to places outside the normal highways. In fact, sometimes the normal highways are more dangerous than the byways. I think for the safety of members of the Executive Council, and not only that, but also the security one would need — a compact car would probably be more difficult to drive down the highway more safely — since most of the time the minister is driving himself — than having a compact car and being in a collision, which we all know would be very tragic.

MR. KUSHNER: Mr. Chairman, to the minister. I strongly disagree with you, sir, that a Volkswagen, Datsun, or any of these cars are what you'd call unsafe or a hazard on the highway. I really do. I don't think it's the car. It's usually the nut behind the wheel who is the cause of most accidents.

MR. SCHMID: Mr. Chairman, in this case I can only say I am the living example of a car which thankfully was not a compact or a smaller car. I have not said these cars are unsafe. But I happened to be standing behind my own car, and someone who was inebriated and happened to go at a bit of a clip didn't know there was a car standing rather than driving on the side of the highway and drove right into me. Now if I had been standing behind a Volkswagen or what you call a compact car, I'm afraid I would probably not be around anymore, at least would not be able to stand on my own two feet. But because my car had a collapsible bumper, that bumper really did collapse and thereby saved my legs. I am eternally grateful for a company which discovered and patented this kind of system, because otherwise I would be a cripple today and, by the way, without any coverage for that matter by anyone else.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Chairman, that's a very eloquent defence of large cars. With words like that I'm sure there won't be an Albertan anymore who will take a Volkswagen or a Fiat, even if they can't afford a large car.

Anyway, Mr. Chairman, I wonder if the minister would give us a little bit of information on the choices the deputy ministers finally made. He said there was an option, either a salary increase of \$2,000 a year or a car. I would be interested to see the breakdown, what the choice was, whether they opted for the car or the salary.

MR. SCHMID: Mr. Chairman, about three or four persons, I should say, rather than deputy ministers, in classifications 4, 5 and 6, opted for an increase in salary; the rest opted for the purchase of a car.

MR. NOTLEY: Is the minister in a position to give us any information in terms of the tendering on the cars

for deputy ministers and people working for boards, commissions, or what have you, what the reduction would be as a result of tendering for purchase of 10, 15, or however many cars there were. There would be a substantial deduction over and above what an individual could obtain by going in and putting down money. If you're dealing with 10 cars you can obviously get a much better deal than for one. So is the minister in a position to give us some indication of what the bulk purchasing of cars has meant, beyond the normal discount an individual purchaser could obtain for cash?

MR. SCHMID: Well, Mr. Chairman, of course if someone, even in private life, should try to get the best terms possible for a car, as one well knows one could go from dealer to dealer and try to obtain the best price through dealing and everything else, and therefore to say how much more advantage was there to have the cars purchased through the tendering system than someone else would have obtained, it is very difficult to answer. I can only state this much, that the deputy ministers did have the choice of type of car they wanted to obtain. The tenders were then sent out, the lowest tender was accepted, and the cars were purchased.

If the hon. member is interested in the difference in pricing and so forth, I would have to get the answer for him, but that would take some time and might even best be a question for the Order Paper, because I wouldn't be able to get information that fast.

MR. NOTLEY: So at this stage you don't have any ballpark figures as to the average discounts we can obtain from the list price. It would be substantially more than 25 per cent, I would think. But you don't have any precise figures at this stage?

MR. SCHMID: No, Mr. Chairman, because as the hon. member may know, depending on what time of year one buys the car, also what kind of agency one buys the car from — all these things really come into a list price, and the [discount] comes from the list price and so forth. Again I would provide it for the hon. member as soon as possible, but I would not be able to do so today.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Chairman, to follow that up. What is the policy with respect to the purchasing of government vehicles? Do we wait till we need a certain specified number and then have tenders? Is there any geographical tendering, or do we deal with one or two dealers? What is the policy generally?

While I'm on my feet, the minister talked about 340 cars coming under Government Services, either owned or leased. What is the total fleet of the Alberta government, considering all the departments?

MR. SCHMID: Well, Mr. Chairman, first of all I would have to say that when cars or trucks are needed by government — it could be, for instance, that maybe 10 of them may come up for tender at a time, and the next time maybe 20, but there also might be a requisition for only one truck — again they are put out for tender and then purchased at the lowest possible price.

It does happen sometimes that a department or a person may need a car in another geographic area of

the province. Then what the government tries to do — considering the policy of decentralization — is to place the tenders in the particular municipality or district and get at least, let's say, three tenders from that area, in order that the tender may be fair, or at least as fair as possible. Hopefully, the tender may then be awarded to that area, rather than having every tender concentrated in the cities of Edmonton and Calgary.

As for the vehicles owned by Government Services, Mr. Chairman, maybe I should say that includes trucks, vans, and all those other kinds of things. The overall number in government I would not be able to quote because, of course, each department does have a different number of cars. But I understand the former Department of Lands and Forests had about 1,000 vehicles, including snowmobiles, motor boats, and so on and so forth.

Again that might be a better question for the Order Paper, because I'm only informed of course about the number of vehicles we have in our own department.

MR. NOTLEY: To pursue that, Mr. Chairman, would there be any merit, any savings, in having one department, the Department of Government Services, deal with the acquisition or leasing of vehicles for the entire department for all the fleets, in other words, co-ordinating the total purchases or rentals under one division of government?

MR. SCHMID: This of course is one of the major reasons the Department of Government Services was established: to co-ordinate as many as possible — should I say branches, or utilizations is probably a better word — of government for the services that government provides.

The director of purchasing of course and the purchasing division [provide] a typical example. All purchases over the amount of \$25 have to be placed through the director of purchasing who, if it's over a certain amount, then puts it out for tendering.

As far as the disposal is concerned, Mr. Chairman, there again, as I mentioned in my introductory remarks, the surplus disposal division is within Government Services. Any item to be disposed of by government is placed within that division, which then tries to market that item at the best possible price. By the way, Mr. Chairman, again cars are usually sold through a tendering system.

May I just add that probably the discount of cars being purchased again, in the overall amount, may not be as large as one would consider. And I can't see where we get a 25 per cent discount, because then one would really consider the markup quite high [compared to] what other people would have to pay.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Chairman, if I may just ask one final question. The minister answered a number of points, but didn't specifically answer the question I posed about the Department of Government Services being responsible, or some agency in government. But obviously the Department of Government Services would be responsible for all the acquisitions of cars for the entire government fleet: Department of Recreation, Parks and Wildlife; Tourism; Energy; Agriculture; the whole bit.

Has there been any study or assessment of any savings that could in fact be gained by having one

department responsible for all? We're dealing with a fleet of what, perhaps 4,000, 5,000, 6,000 vehicles, I suppose. I would imagine that as we need vehicles, if we had one department doing it, we might be tendering on a larger number of vehicles, and that should bring down the bids.

MR. SCHMID: Mr. Chairman, yes, certainly. As I said before, any purchase over the amount of \$25 has to be acquired through the director of purchasing. That of course would include all vehicles.

In my introductory remarks I mentioned that, considering the low tender and the highest tender, the difference last year alone was \$21 million for government purchases because of the tendering system.

MR. KUSHNER: Mr. Minister, I wonder if you'd clarify. [For the] cars that are supplied to the ministers, is the insurance paid by the government?

MR. SCHMID: Yes, Mr. Chairman. The insurance is paid by government.

MR. KUSHNER: Is the maintenance also included?

MR. SCHMID: Yes, Mr. Chairman, the maintenance is also included.

MR. KUSHNER: Is the licence included as well?

MR. SCHMID: Yes, Mr. Chairman, the licence is included as well.

MR. BATIUK: Mr. Chairman, listening to the debate about the cars, I'm not a minister, and I've always lived on a modest income, but I drive a \$6,500 car. I feel I should at least have the privilege of driving in a comfortable car. I sure wouldn't expect to see a minister driving a Volkswagen.

When I look at the Prime Minister of Belgium who was here yesterday, I think it would have looked very awkward if the Minister of Government Services or the Premier had asked him to sit in a Volkswagen to drive to Government House.

Mr. Chairman, I just wonder whether the minister could tell us what kind of cars the ministers drive in the poor province of Saskatchewan or the one to the west of us.

AN HON. MEMBER: Cadillacs.

MR. BATIUK: I know just a few years ago a minister in British Columbia drove a team of horses, but that was because he lost his operator's licence. But I'm just wondering what kind of cars they drive.

MR. SCHMID: Mr. Chairman, I appreciate the remarks of the hon. Member for Vegreville. All I can say is that since I have had the privilege of discussing and meeting with some of the very outstanding ministers in the provinces of Saskatchewan and British Columbia, the former government and of the government now there, I can only say that their cars are in a little higher range than I guess what would be called a Volkswagen type.

MR. MUSGREAVE: Mr. Chairman, I'd like to get off the car bit for a minute. I didn't quite grasp what the minister had to say about printing. But what does concern me: is he addressing himself to what I consider is a serious problem, that is the multiplicity of reports put out by various departments in all shapes, sizes, colors, quality of paper? You know, all we need to do is look around our desks here and see this thing.

I'd like to know if the government has a long-range objective of making a uniform approach to our printing. Is he conscious of the fact that large companies are now getting away from expensive, colorful annual reports because they are just too expensive?

I'd like to know — for example, we had the Land Use Forum report. I assume the government paid the bill. It cost us over \$600,000 to have the study done, and my report fell apart. So I'd like to have good reports, but I would suggest that they at least stay together while we're reading them. Would the minister like to comment on that?

The other consideration: is any attempt being made by the government to assess many of these reports, other than those required by statutory regulation or requirement but many that in effect are pure propaganda? Hopefully it's true propaganda, but it is still propaganda. Is it the kind of material the people want, or is it just there because the department wants to blow its own horn?

MR. SCHMID: Mr. Chairman, one of the main reasons the division of public affairs, or the Public Affairs Bureau, was established, which is now with the Department of Government Services, is really exactly what the hon. member is asking; in other words, to centralize the printing services of government. As I mentioned before, there was hardly a government office or maybe even a major office that didn't have its own Xerox machine. There was sometimes hardly a floor of a government department that didn't have its own printing equipment.

What the Department of Government Services, and in this case not a division of public affairs, has done so well is to consolidate these printing units from different departments, three or four departments sometimes, put them into what they now call a quick print centre, and thereby, as I mentioned before, achieve a saving of some unbelievable proportions. I understand that the average monthly savings on the combination of the Xerox equipment alone is about \$108,000.

The net profit of the quick print centres, for instance — just to give an idea — while it may not sound like much, in one month it was \$8,200, where before this money would of course have been distributed, because the expense would have been with a different department, and now it's done by one centre alone.

First of all, I think we have to remember that the tendering — for instance before, if there was a printing job to be done it was usually sent out to the printer who probably said, I can do it the fastest. Or maybe it was awarded to a printer because he was closest. We now tender our printing in Calgary and Edmonton, where printers can come from all over the province and tender on certain printing. As I mentioned before, that alone has saved our government \$792,000 since the tendering system was establish-

ed. This is, of course, quite a major amount.

As far as the annual reports are concerned, Mr. Chairman, you may know that, I think for two years now, the annual reports of government are no longer being printed as such, but are being run off on — well, I have to use a trademark — Gestetner equipment and are probably not bound as well as one would hope, but at least well enough to hold together until they have been read by interested persons.

In general, I think it would be quite difficult to have material which is really not needed in the department, because that's a budgetary provision. If one can see that a department is printing material which it really does not need and is using the budgetary funds in that way, then of course their priorities may be off base. Maybe the respective minister would then have to be asked, because what Government Services really does is take the order from the departments for the printing, and then tender the printing to the printers of Alberta. But they themselves do not decide what should or should not be printed. That is really the jurisdiction of the minister of the respective department.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Chairman, I would like to ask a few questions of the hon. minister in connection with cars. The first question is: what criteria are used when a civil servant is hired who must do some driving, in regard to whether he gets a government car or whether he is paid mileage on his own car?

MR. SCHMID: Mr. Chairman, I'm not quite sure if it was done under the last government or under this government, but I think the trend really was, rather than have civil servants use government vehicles, they would claim expenses for their mileage. These rates have been adjusted according to the established expenses including, let's say, the cost of insurance, repairs, and gasoline over the year. I don't know. I think up to about 19 cents per mile under certain conditions is now being paid to a civil servant for using his or her car on government business.

MR. TAYLOR: I thought the rate was 18. Has it been raised to 19 cents a mile?

MR. SCHMID: Mr. Chairman, I said I'm not quite sure. It could be 18, but I could find out. Again, that is something which is not really under the jurisdiction of Government Services.

MR. TAYLOR: Well, what I was endeavoring to secure is: what criteria are used to decide whether a person uses his own car and collects mileage or is given the privilege of driving a government car? Are some criteria used, is it the choice of the deputy minister, or how is it handled?

MR. SCHMID: In general, Mr. Chairman, my understanding is that even the last government had discouraged the acquisition of cars for its civil servants. But if it's a forest ranger, for instance, who is really on government business just about 24 hours a day; or if it's a repairman in Government Services using, let's say, a plumbing truck, of course these cars are then used by the civil servants. But in the case of a plumbing truck, that truck would be picked up at the shop in the morning and returned in the evening

before that person goes home. He would not be allowed to take, let's say, the vehicle home to his residence so it could be used for other uses. For that matter, it would not be allowed out of the shop area overnight.

MR. TAYLOR: Well, Mr. Chairman, what I'm endeavoring to ascertain is: who makes the decision whether the civil servant must use his own car or is given a government car? Is it the number of miles he drives, is it the type of position, or is it classified? How is it classified?

MR. SCHMID: Mr. Chairman, for instance, within Government Services it would definitely be a policy decision — I suppose by the minister — which would then be carried out by the deputy minister regarding the use of vehicles which belong to the government. I'm quite sure this is the way it would be in any other government department, be it Recreation, Parks and Wildlife, Transportation, and so forth. In fact I'm quite sure the policy established by the former most capable minister of highways is still in effect in the Department of Transportation.

MR. TAYLOR: Well, formerly it was left to the minister of each department. Such a variety of decisions was being made that that was stopped, and I was given the responsibility of working on that particular problem. I know some of the problems involved. But at that time civil servants who were just going to drive casually were expected to use their own cars. That was a condition of employment, and they received mileage. If somebody was going to be on the road half or more than half of their time, a government car was provided. I'm trying to ascertain if there is a similar policy now, or is it simply left with the minister of every department?

MR. SCHMID: Well, Mr. Chairman, then that's probably where the policy came from, because this sounds very much like a policy we're still using and in fact, to my knowledge, is still in effect, at least in the Department of Government Services as well as Alberta Culture. I'm aware the same reasoning exists in other government departments as far as the position of cars for civil servants is concerned.

MR. TAYLOR: Then I'd like to deal briefly with both classes. In connection with government cars at a rate of 18 cents per mile, it seems to me this is pretty generous treatment. A person can make money on his car by driving 18 cents a mile. I see some ministers shaking their heads, but I've kept a very close tab on it myself and I could get by on 11 cents a mile and split even. Maybe some people can't, but every time I've estimated it, it looks pretty generous. However, a person is using his own car for government service, and I suppose there has to be some margin in there. I'm not arguing about that particularly right now, although I think it's a generous item.

But what I'm trying to deal with right now is: about how many cars do we have in the government that are operated on the mileage basis, and how many government cars? Maybe that's a proper question for the Order Paper, and if so, I will put it there. Maybe I should stop there, and then I want to pursue it a bit further.

MR. SCHMID: Mr. Chairman, it's sometimes very difficult for the hon. members to know the exact distinction unless they are involved with the department themselves. I appreciate the question of the hon. Member for Drumheller.

This is within the jurisdiction of the Provincial Treasurer, and if you would put that question on the Order Paper, I'm sure it will be dealt with accordingly. It would not be within the jurisdiction of Government Services. I would be unable to answer this question at this time.

MR. TAYLOR: What I'm actually getting at is that, at one time at least, people who drove their cars tried to supplement their salaries through getting allowances on their cars, which I don't think is right. They should be paid a salary, and the car should be a separate item entirely, not something on which they can make extra dollars at the expense of the people.

The next question I would like to ask is: are all government cars marked? What are the criteria used for marking government cars operated by civil servants — not by ministers, by civil servants?

MR. SCHMID: Mr. Chairman, I don't believe that all government cars are marked, because some of them probably are being used by security personnel and would be unmarked. I know, for instance, the former minister of highways arranged to have trucks marked in the province of Alberta. I know that because I've seen a few trucks going past me marked, "Alberta Government Services". They probably are being marked because of regulation, or maybe something in the act that [says] these trucks in the province of Alberta have to be marked.

I don't think general policy exists as far as the markings are concerned, because let's say a civil servant who works in the Department of Social Services and Community Health would have a marked car. A person being visited by one of those workers might object to being visited by a marked car — like some people may not like to have a police vehicle drive up in front of their home. Maybe that's why the marking of cars is not as enforced as one member may wish, because, of course, it would not be as easy as otherwise to use the car on personal business.

Nevertheless, I have to repeat that the overall honesty of our civil servants in Alberta is just outstanding. Rather than erring in this matter, I think that if it's in private use, sooner or later a criterion would be found out anyway. I prefer the policy to stand as it is at present.

MR. TAYLOR: I'd just like to make a comment or two with regard to that.

I remember that when we had marked cars I received a great number of calls, not from the civil servant — I can't recall ever getting one from him — but from his wife, sometimes his daughter, in one case his grandmother who objected to driving this car to the shopping centre. Of course, my reply was that he had no business driving the car to the shopping centre; it was there for government business only. That is the thing that led the previous government to change the policy, gradually getting out of providing government cars and going into the private car business with mileage.

I would like to know how that policy has been working out. What is the cost now per mile, per car, counting the capital cost of the car and so on, at the private end and at the public end? It would be a very interesting study, and I really think it should be made.

The program has been in operation long enough to ascertain whether it's wise to go back to marked cars or to get more and more into the privately owned cars and pay mileage. We were in the process of carrying out a study like that about the time the government changed. I think sometime during the coming summer would be an excellent time to do that. After all, a lot of money is involved in government transportation — what is it, \$1 million in this particular vote alone.

I think the purchase of cars by the purchasing agency is handled excellently. The government is getting the best possible prices many times below what the garage could sell to anybody else because of the volume, because they want to sell to the government to have the prestige, and so on. So the people — when we say the government, that means the people — are getting a particular advantage through the methods used by the purchasing agency in the purchase of various types of cars. I think that is good. If anybody should get the benefits, [it should be] the people of the province and not any one individual.

But in the operation of cars, it would be a good thing for the government to know exactly what's happening with regard to the privately operated and the publicly owned. Secondly, if we're not marking cars, maybe there's no abuse. Maybe civil servants have changed their attitudes completely in the last few years, but there was certainly a lot of abuse when this thing was handed to me. It was a hot potato in fact. There was a lot of cleaning up and really hard feelings about it before we got the thing in a condition that I thought was operating reasonably satisfactorily.

So I would suggest to the hon. minister that sometime during the summer he put somebody on the job to come up with some kind of information as to just which method — maybe they're both satisfactory, maybe they're supplementing each other — is costing the people of the province less. Which one is giving a better value for every dollar to the government? I think this is something well worth evaluating, and I am suggesting it to the minister at this time.

MR. SCHMID: Mr. Chairman, I'd like to thank the hon. Member for Drumheller very much for his suggestion. I would like to pass it on to the hon. minister responsible for the treasury of Alberta. Under personnel regulations, the Public Service Commissioner is responsible for mileage payment and the regulations regarding mileage payment. I'm quite sure he'll do his best to look into this question as soon as possible.

Maybe I should mention to the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview, as far as the number of people who choose a salary increase rather than taking a car, it usually happens because — two of the persons, I understand, had just purchased a new car. Another person's home is not at the same place his office happens to be, and he usually goes home for weekends only. Therefore he doesn't use the car at

all. That's why that person felt he or she would rather have the increase than a vehicle.

MR. MANDEVILLE: Mr. Chairman, at one point the local school committees were concerned that they weren't able to use the RITE government number. Would the minister outline the department's policy in regard to RITE government numbers for local school boards?

MR. SCHMID: Mr. Chairman, as I mentioned before, the RITE system provides, first of all, communication for the civil servants of Alberta amongst themselves, amongst different departments, from different places in Alberta to the capital city, and so on. Also it gives about 95 per cent of Albertans the opportunity to contact their government without having to pay long-distance charges.

Because of the expense, however, even though it's an overall saving of about \$270,000 a month on long-distance toll charges, as I've mentioned before, as far as the Alberta government is concerned, a huge expense would arise if everyone had access to that system. Therefore, policy was established that only government personnel and the private citizens of Alberta could use the RITE system, with one exception. For instance, a lawyer could call the Land Titles Office on behalf of his client, because that information would only be available to a lawyer, I suppose. At least that's the way I understand it.

Maybe I could just outline the guidelines. It's to be utilized by provincial civil servants for calling any government office, private citizen, or company on official government business. Alberta citizens may utilize the network to contact government departments or personnel on matters of a non-commercial nature. When a citizen inquiry cannot be answered at the area office, the call will then be transferred at no charge to the appropriate government office in Edmonton or Calgary. Organizations, boards, commissions, agencies, et cetera, funded 100 per cent by the Alberta government may utilize the network. The network may not be utilized for commercial or professional calls by private industry or professional groups, with the exception, as I said before, of lawyers contacting the Land Titles Office on behalf of clients. Nor can it be utilized by federal or municipal bodies or school boards.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Chairman, could I have a supplementary on this question? I recently received a letter from a doctor in Drumheller in connection with the problem. Apparently the girl was very nice to him about it, but she refused to accept a call to a sanitarium that he wanted to make on behalf of a patient. Was the girl right, or was the doctor right? May a doctor phone a hospital or sanitarium on behalf of a patient and have the toll charge paid by the government?

MR. SCHMID: Mr. Chairman, the guidelines presently state, if I interpret them correctly, that it would not be possible for a doctor in his professional capacity to have access to the RITE system to phone a government office. However, the doctor's client, as a private citizen of Alberta, would have been able to call the government office. That is the difference.

MR. TAYLOR: But would that not be unfair between the doctor and the lawyer? The lawyer can call the Land Titles Office on behalf of a client. Why shouldn't a doctor be permitted to call a hospital on behalf of a patient? They're both really semi-commercial.

MR. SCHMID: Mr. Chairman, I appreciate that question. A lawyer would not be able to contact any other office of government except Land Titles. I suppose one of our legal minds in the Assembly might be able to help me [as to] why a lawyer has to call the Land Titles Office, maybe because of certain questions that would be asked there on behalf of the client which no one else can answer, whatever it may be. But really the only exception is if a lawyer calls the Land Titles Office in Edmonton or Calgary. No other call can be made by a lawyer through the RITE system.

AN HON. MEMBER: The lawyers are ripping us off again.

MR. TAYLOR: Is it confined to public business? Is there supposed to be no private business, commercial, industrial, or anything of that nature in regard to this system?

MR. SCHMID: That's correct, Mr. Chairman. There is no public business in any way, shape, or form. Only the private citizen may have free access to the government's RITE system, to the different government departments for information, inquiry, questions, or whatever problem he may have.

MR. TAYLOR: I really think it should be the other way around, where the doctor can phone the hospital and the lawyer should be charged, because a lawyer generally puts the charge on his client's bill anyway. A doctor doesn't.

MR. MANDEVILLE: Mr. Chairman, could, say, a school committee board member use the RITE government number if he were to use it as a private citizen seeking information regarding school situations?

MR. SCHMID: Well, Mr. Chairman, that's where a degree of honesty comes in. If that private citizen calls to get information for himself or herself regarding a question of school business, I suppose he has the right to use the RITE system. But if that school board member calls on behalf of the school board, then I'm afraid he or she cannot use the RITE system. Because then that person calls on behalf of the school board, and I am sure he will probably charge the call anyway to the school board to which he belongs, in order to get the information he needs for the next school board meeting or whatever it would be.

MR. GOGO: To do with the RITE system, I think the very fact that the government adopted it to express a form of open government — the number of calls that have come through is an indication of the success of that operation. I think the government should be complimented. I know that in the south the RITE system was oversubscribed, and they had to put in a new operator.

However, it's not without flaws. I would like to mention that the local treasury branch in Lethbridge for some unknown reason has the RITE number. Because of the success of the RITE system, it has to ring about 20 times before you get the operator. People who call the treasury branch in Lethbridge tend to give up. I suspect many bank accounts have been opened in the chartered banks as a result of not being able to get through to the treasury branch, and I'd hate to think that's a plot by the chartered banks. However, I would suggest to the minister that next year's directory have the proper phone numbers entered for the treasury branch and for the RITE system.

MR. SCHMID: Mr. Chairman, for the information of the hon. members, maybe it could be stated that 54 departmental switchboard positions became redundant, at 13 centres the RITE operators also serve a dual role as receptionists, and 54 building switchboards were eliminated because of the RITE system.

MR. KIDD: I almost hate myself for asking this question because I'm sure everyone here is quite ready to get on to Vote 1. It is entirely a matter of curiosity and goes back to that question of cars. Every major company I know — and certainly the company I formerly worked for — leased its cars.

Is it a matter of taxation that the government does not lease its cars, or is it just out of step?

MR. SCHMID: Mr. Chairman, because of the tendering system we get the cars at quite a reasonable price. Also, a number of studies, inquiries, or calculations have found that in this case, because of the huge number of vehicles involved — as I said before, about 1,000 alone within the former Lands and Forests Department and 364 in ours — it really does pay to acquire the cars and service them, rather than lease them.

MR. KIDD: A supplementary. I'm sure the government's investigation was very detailed. I doubt whether it was any more detailed than those looking to make a profit on their operations. Unless the question is one of taxation, I doubt very much whether your answer is correct.

MR. SCHMID: Mr. Chairman, maybe I should add that the federal sales tax, for instance, is involved in all purchases by other companies and would add an expense the provincial government does not have, thereby acquiring a saving that otherwise isn't there.

Agreed to:

Vote 1

Ref. No. 1.0.1	\$128,320
Ref. No. 1.0.2	\$476,850
Ref. No. 1.0.3	\$392,120
Ref. No. 1.0.4	\$297,160
Total Departmental Support Services	\$1,294,450

Vote 2

DR. BUCK: Mr. Chairman, may I ask the minister a question? I thought at one time the government was going to embark upon the policy of asking people in

local areas to build public buildings. It seems that we as government get more involved in real estate, cars, and all things in which I don't think governments should be involved.

First of all, I believe governments are elected to govern, to provide services to people. We seem to be getting more and more involved in these other aspects. I'd like to know, Mr. Chairman, if the government has given any consideration to looking for private people to build for us so that we can lease buildings back.

I know a project was started in St. Paul. Something happened — they hit a blind switch — and I don't know if some lawsuits are going on or not. I can always remember the argument by the former minister, Mr. Ludwig, when people wanted to have an Alberta Liquor Control Board store in a small community. He'd always say, well, our budget said we can only build X number of buildings this year. I said to the minister at that time, why do you not go to the people in that community and say to them: we want a building of \$50,000? How about the local people building it, and we'll lease it back from them?

Now many people say, well, that's going to be just great for all the Conservatives in that community, or if it's a Social Credit government, all the Social Crediters. But, Mr. Chairman, that can be solved very simply by limiting the amount of shares each individual can have in that to, say, \$500 or \$1,000. Take any community and you could find 50 shareholders. You're going to build a \$50,000 building and there would be Kelso's second income plan in operation.

Mr. Chairman, I just think the government should be looking at that, because the cost of building is increasing all the time. I would like to know if the minister has given any consideration to this. It certainly could be worked out, and there certainly could be a limit so it wouldn't be just the rich participating. I think it's a program we should look at.

MR. SCHMID: Mr. Chairman, the hon. Member for Clover Bar makes a very good point, in fact very much so, since we all of course happen to believe in the principle of free enterprise and giving the people in our province the opportunities to participate in whatever possible way in this system.

However, the division of accommodation is within the Department of Housing and Public Works. I understand that that minister is presently considering ways and means and, for that matter, the possibilities of how government requirements for accommodation could be met through either lease, lease/purchase, or the government itself building these buildings. I'm quite sure that if the hon. member would express his remarks again in a debate or in personal conversation with the minister, the minister would appreciate his comments.

DR. BUCK: I just want to set the minister straight on one thing. The government he represents talks about free enterprise. I'd really like to implement free enterprise.

Mr. Chairman, in maintenance here, the amount to be voted is \$56 million. Can the minister just give us a breakdown of some of the services provided by IDSS?

MR. SCHMID: Mr. Chairman, I could try to give an idea of what the breakdown of these items really is.

First of course, as I'm quite sure the hon. member realizes, the major expense in this vote is really the maintenance and operation of government buildings. This includes all the manpower needed for maintenance; and 2,138 positions in the Department of Government Services are within that one division, be they janitors, plumbers, electricians, painters, whatever one really needs for the maintenance of all these government buildings. If I'm not mistaken, I think we presently have about 18 million square feet of space to look after. That of course includes such institutions as jails, some hospitals, warehouses, workshops of different departments, and so forth. In total, that is a great amount of area to look after. It is being done by the Department of Government Services under Building Operations and Maintenance.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Chairman, would the minister have the grants to municipalities in lieu of taxes? Would you have that figure available?

MR. SCHMID: Mr. Chairman, yes, there is an amount for grants in lieu of taxes. If I'm not mistaken — Mr. Chairman, I'll look it up in a moment please.

Agreed to:

Vote 2 Total Program

\$56,835,380

Vote 3

MR. NOTLEY: On Vote 3, I notice a substantial reduction, which I gather is a result of a shift. I wonder if the minister could advise us just how that works out?

MR. SCHMID: Mr. Chairman, I'm sorry. I was just concentrating on this amount. The grants to other government levels are listed here as \$6.5 million, which of course would be grants in lieu of taxes. May I ask for the question again, please?

MR. NOTLEY: It's on Vote 3, Government Transportation. The total appropriation is \$1.2 million, down from \$2.5 million, which I gather is the result of a transfer. Is the minister in a position to break down what would appear to be a substantial reduction? I would assume it's made up in some other way.

MR. SCHMID: Mr. Chairman, as the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview well remembers, I think that reduction probably came from the purchase of a government aircraft last year. That would be the reduction of \$1 million, I think — was it \$50,000, something like this? Ah, yes.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Vote 3, amount to be voted: \$1,233,920. Are you agreed? Do you have a question?

MR. GOGO: Yes, I do. It concerns the courier service and the mail service. I think that we as a government spend a lot of money with the Canada post office that is probably not necessary. We operate a courier service through the major centres of the province, and I notice in Lethbridge the courier goes around

twice daily to the government buildings, including the University of Lethbridge and the Community College. The man in charge of the courier service tells me that the mail he picks up, the bulk of which is for government departments, is stamped with postage.

I think it could be an area of great savings if we looked at the government offices and the schools that year-round mail a tremendous amount of mail daily to government offices in Edmonton, where the courier service comes automatically every day bringing various mails. Why that can't be combined to eliminate postage — I think that would be a substantial amount of money and might even result in saving a hospital bed or two.

MR. SCHMID: Mr. Chairman, I will definitely take the remarks of the hon. Member for Lethbridge West under advisement and will check into the possibility of having envelopes stamped with postage by government and non-governmental agencies, Mr. Chairman.

MR. GOGO: The point is that there's a postage meter in the University of Lethbridge, there's a postage meter in the Lethbridge Community College, and there's a postage meter in all the schools. The bulk of their mail comes to government offices in Edmonton. The courier goes there anyway and picks up mail that's already stamped. He then has to deliver that to the post office to be cancelled. He picks it up the next morning, and it comes in the courier service anyway.

MR. SCHMID: Mr. Chairman, I definitely will have someone look into this matter and report to the member as soon as possible.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Vote 4, total IDSS, amount to be voted: \$782,500. Are you agreed?

DR. BUCK: Mr. Chairman, I'm not quite finished with No. 3. You're speeding me up a little too much.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to ask the minister a few questions on the airplanes. I would just like to know how many times the airbus between Edmonton and Calgary could be used instead of the King Air?

Now, just using some figures from the logs that were presented to us, about 38 trips were made by cabinet officials on the Edmonton-Calgary route using the government aircraft — 31 round trips and seven one way. The cost of flying that King Air round trip from Edmonton to Calgary is about \$344, and that's not even including the \$50 per hour waiting time. If we'd used the airbus at, rounding off figures, about \$50 a trip, we could have saved the taxpayers of this province over \$6,000.

Mr. Chairman, my question is: just how much are we abusing that airplane? Because I would like to say right now that on the trip to Camrose to meet with the group from Germany, I'm driving my car. I just don't think there's any justification for members of the Legislature, or anybody, having to take a plane from here to Camrose and then a helicopter back. I just don't think that's responsible spending of the taxpayers' money. I don't consider myself or any MLAs that important that we can't get back here half an hour after the Legislature starts.

I just think, Mr. Chairman, there are an awful lot of times that the commercial air liners could be used,

and let that King Air rest a bit. So I'd just like the minister to give us some breakdown of his philosophy.

MR. SCHMID: Yes, Mr. Chairman. First of all I can assure the member that there is a policy that the King Air is not used if the airbus is available. But what the hon. member maybe has to consider is that, for instance on a Saturday, the airbus has rather a small number of flights. Sometimes it happens that a minister has to go to Calgary in the morning and be back here on time for a different meeting again; or for that matter, vice versa, be back in Calgary for another meeting. Or, as the hon. member may know, the last airbus from Calgary leaves at 10:45. A meeting may be held in Calgary, or away from Calgary for that matter, which wouldn't allow a return at 10:45 but maybe at the hour of 12 midnight or 1 o'clock in the morning.

Mr. Chairman, also I think the utilization of government aircraft is such that if a cabinet minister and some of the officials of government who are really high priced, not only as far as money is concerned but high priced as far as education, knowledge, and contribution of their education to the people of Alberta is concerned, the value thereof is — for instance, if a lawyer, let's say, charges \$150 an hour, it would therefore pay to have an aircraft for that lawyer to fly somewhere, to save the amount of money it would cost if the lawyer didn't have any aircraft. I think the number of cabinet ministers who do fly to different parts of Alberta and bring their government to those people out there rather than staying in the city of Edmonton alone — considering their time, the value of their time and so on and so forth, taking that into consideration and taking into consideration that the aircraft, when it's being used for Calgary, is only being used if there are a number of people flying anyway or when there is no scheduled airline flying, then I would think, Mr. Chairman, that utilization is really well worth the amount of money being spent on the government aircraft, in thereby really helping the people of Alberta [by] bringing government closer to them.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Chairman, I wonder if I could make a comment in connection with the government aircraft, first of all by asking a question. Is there any rule set out by the government that no more than X ministers travel in the aircraft at one time? Some governments have this policy. In case of a crash, you don't lose your entire government or half your government. I think this is something worthy of consideration. Aircraft is as safe, perhaps safer than any other type of travel today. Normally you don't have more than three or four in a car, but you could have several ministers in an aircraft, and should there be a crash it might be pretty serious for the province for some time. I was just wondering, is there a government rule here that no more than so many ministers travel in the aircraft at one time?

MR. SCHMID: Mr. Chairman, the point is well taken. While I don't think it's an established policy or a rule as such, somehow or other I think maybe the ministers themselves are conscious [of it]. Because at one time I remember we were about seven ministers in one plane, and I think it was mentioned that there

were a few too many there, [and] if something happened, of course a great problem would be caused.

I very much appreciate the concern of the Member for Drumheller regarding this. Being responsible for government aircraft, I guess it would be up to me now maybe to make sure that a policy like this is established. What really concerns me too, since the member has mentioned it, is that some of our deputy ministers again would be just about irreplaceable for some time — to get someone again of the calibre we have. While we have outstanding pilots, without any question — in fact I feel much safer with them than in any other aircraft — the more I think about it, Mr. Chairman, I appreciate the concern of the hon. member. Within the week I will propose a policy to cabinet regarding that. Thank you very much.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Chairman, I'd just like to ask a supplementary on this thing. While he's thinking about making his recommendations, I'd like him to take into consideration the fact that one opposition member is worth 10 government members, so we must have the right proportion if we're having opposition members in relation to government members. [laughter]

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Chairman, I certainly would agree that we wouldn't want to lose any deputy ministers, or even cabinet ministers for that matter. I think the minister is probably well advised to follow up the suggestion of the hon. Member for Drumheller.

I want to come back for just for a minute or two to the usage of government planes. Do I understand there is a very clear policy that government planes will not be used if there is, at a given time, an airbus between Edmonton and Calgary, or for that matter a Time flight or any of the other commercial carriers — Gateway now to northwestern Alberta, CP, or whatever the case may be. Is that the clear, expressed policy of the department?

MR. SCHMID: Not only of the department, Mr. Chairman, but it's the clear, expressed policy of the Executive Council. One could say for instance, how come the aircraft took off at 8 o'clock if there's an airbus at 8 o'clock too. That may be because the return time would have been out of the availability of an airbus. Therefore, that's why the airplane was taken in the first place. That would be one instance.

Another may be that a greater number of people would fly on the government aircraft. Calculating the number of people flying on King Air as compared to paying passage on an airbus, of course, would equalize the expenditure which would be made.

Another reason may be that the aircraft might stop over going from here to Grande Prairie, then from Grande Prairie to one of the other outlying communities. Then again, of course, to utilize a commercial aircraft would not be possible.

Personally, all I can say is this: since I'm afraid of flying and get deathly sick when an aircraft bounces a bit, the bigger the airplane the less bounce. Whenever I can take the airbus, I gladly take the airbus.

MR. NOTLEY: I don't think there's any doubt that in a lot of areas of Alberta, if you're going to some of the rural points, you obviously have to have a government

plane because you don't have air service in the first place. So there is no particular problem with that.

I wonder, Mr. Chairman, if the minister could tell us how many pilots we have and what the policy is with respect to pilots. Do we share those with — it used to be the lands and forests division? For example, right now we're coming into the forest fire-fighting season. Are the pilots first of all committed if a major forest fire is raging? What is our relationship with that particular branch of government?

MR. SCHMID: Mr. Chairman, there's no doubt — and whether it's a written or unwritten policy for that matter — the forest fire situation definitely has priority number one in the government. If necessary, all government aircraft are utilized for fire fighting first of all, then all the other things come into position.

Now while I'm unable to state how many pilots would be utilized by government at any one time, the hon. member may be interested [in knowing] that we have nine salaried positions in that particular branch. Since we have, I think, two — a stenographer and an aircraft dispatcher — there are about four pilots in the branch.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Chairman, to the minister. Can the minister recollect a situation where the forest fire problem was so serious we had to use what one might call the executive aircraft — the King Air?

MR. SCHMID: Yes, Mr. Chairman, I recall in fact not only one but several situations where the King Air was utilized to fly firefighters or other necessary personnel to different areas of Alberta.

Since we're speaking of government aircraft, maybe I should also mention that one of the airplanes is used just by daylight, whenever the weather permits, for photography of the province of Alberta. You know, it's sometimes out seven days a week if necessary, also, of course, not only sometimes for fire-fighting but also to supply different bases of the forest ranger operation and so on and so forth. So government aircraft truly are utilized as much as possible for this area, like everything in the government within the province of Alberta.

DR. BUCK: A supplementary on that. I think the minister should really read the log of that airplane. He won't find too many fire-fighting jaunts.

The question I would like to ask, a supplementary along this line, is if the minister can indicate to us how many airplanes Executive Council used, the types of planes, and all the other additional services available to members of the government.

MR. SCHMID: Mr. Chairman, the hon. member asks how many aircraft the members of the Executive Council use. I remember one day having to fly up to the northern part of Alberta, north of Grimshaw somewhere, and I was flying in a Dornier. As we were flying, the head winds were so strong that the cars beneath passed us. Then the pilot had to descend, and I looked outside to the right and we passed a grain elevator. I had to look up at the elevator. I was glad at the time we were in a Dornier, because the pilot told me other aircraft would have been grounded or would have had to make an

emergency landing.

So the Dornier is an aircraft that is being utilized also. I think it is usually a matter of which aircraft is available. If the King is being used for one thing and the Queen for photography, it may happen that a minister has to use any aircraft that happens to be around. But usually DC-3s are used for the forestry preservation situation more than anything else. Well, of course, the King Air is used more for transportation of members of Executive Council than, for instance, the Dornier.

DR. BUCK: Does the minister have that list before him of the planes that the Executive Council has used?

MR. SCHMID: No, Mr. Chairman, I don't have the list here, but as the hon. member probably knows, I filed it on the first or third day of the week this session started. I'm quite sure all the information the hon. member needs could be found there: whether a helicopter was used, a Dornier, a DC-3, a Queen or King Air.

MR. BATIUK: Mr. Chairman, in reference to the statement the hon. Member for Clover Bar mentioned about this trip on Thursday, I also feel that if the King Air was intended just to take him, the hon. Member for Camrose and me, maybe it shouldn't be used. But this program was made and it was brought out that the Premier requested the three MLAs to go. There are supposed to be other people going and some different ones coming back. If it is only for the three of us, rather than drive to the airport I would be even willing to drive with the hon. Member for Clover Bar, provided he doesn't go in a farm truck. I thought this was arranged that I didn't [have] any preference to drive to the airport and back. Camrose isn't so far away, but I thought there was an arrangement with another group of people. I think it's very nice of the Premier deciding on one opposition and two government members. If he took them proportionately, as the hon. member said, maybe there would have been only one-tenth of a member going. This is my feeling. It was not planned by the government members.

MR. SCHMID: That's an example of how a government aircraft is utilized, because I'm quite sure it's going to [be] anyway with members of the civil service and/or government elected members. Since the seating capacity of that aircraft happens to be eight, at least some energy resources of the province are saved if a member cares to join that aircraft, because then his own [gas] is being burned up. The environment isn't polluted by the exhaust he happens to cause when he drives his car to Camrose.

MR. CHAMBERS: Mr. Chairman, as to how the operating cost per hour is arrived at, which the hon. Member for Clover Bar mentioned, is that taking into account the capital cost of the aircraft, the annual operating cost, and all expenses incurred over some historical period, divided by an estimate of hours the aircraft is used? If so, would it be true that there's some optimum, that the more hours the aircraft is used, in effect, the cheaper the rate per hour that's charged for the aircraft? I know that this is literally the way it works in many private companies. There's

an optimum number of hours in which you can justify the aircraft and a lesser number you might not. If that is the case, might there be some optimum number where it would be more economical, say, for three or four people to use the King Air to go to Calgary than to take the airbus?

MR. SCHMID: Mr. Chairman, that's exactly what I mentioned before. Usually one considers, for instance, that if the government aircraft is utilized rather than the airbus, the number of people flying around would be greater than just one or two. Then also, of course, the configuration would have to take in the availability, for instance, even of pilots for emergency and for using the Queen Air to go photographing and so on, and the Dornier for supply of the forestry towers. All these different things come into the overall expenditure for government aircraft. From that, I think, one could calculate the actual expenditure that would be created for the use of members of the Executive Council for travel to different places in Alberta to visit with the public.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Chairman, the only point I'm trying to make to the minister is that when you go through the log, there are many instances where you suspect that possibly the taxpayers' money would be better spent by using the airbus. That is the entire point I am trying to make. I know it's a great convenience to members of the Executive Council, and especially the Premier, to be able to go down at their convenience. I just want to make sure it is not being abused, because excellent service is available by our own air line.

MR. SCHMID: Mr. Chairman, as I mentioned before, anytime I — or I'm sure other members of cabinet, because I meet them all the time on the airbus — can utilize the airbus, it definitely is utilized because of its faster speed, and of the convenience of leaving the air terminal and having a taxi waiting there. If you land at the other place, you have to get a taxi first. That takes some time, and time just has to be precious.

All I can say again, Mr. Chairman, is that the policy is that whenever the airbus can be utilized it is utilized, and executive aircraft are used only if there is no way of using commercial air lines.

Agreed to:

Vote 4 Total Program

\$782,500

Vote 5

DR. BUCK: Could the minister give us the complete rundown on — I wouldn't call it the propaganda bureau — the Bureau of Public Affairs, all the services that are available under that department?

MR. SCHMID: Mr. Chairman, the Bureau of Public Affairs is responsible for developing government-wide communication policy, and providing services to increase citizen awareness and understanding of government; for developing and co-ordinating all government communication; for co-ordinating official Alberta government identification, and fostering standardization and [compatibility] of communication

production equipment.

The services are provided through two main groups, communications and communication production, comprised of the following branches. The communications group has three public affairs units, and each unit co-ordinates the activities and professional development of the public affairs officers who are assigned to various government department programs. These public affairs officers provide the link between departments and the public affairs division and analyse and develop solutions to department communication needs, making use of the planning and creative resources of the division.

Then we have the communication group services branch. This branch provides or co-ordinates specialized services in media relations, including news releases, news conferences, press kits, interviews, feature articles, and clipping services. It also operates a system of teletype printers linking radio and television stations and daily newspapers for rapid equal dissemination of releases throughout the province. It co-ordinates use of outside resources for providing survey research, for communication services, and for professional development of communication personnel.

Within the Public Affairs Bureau is also the promotion and hospitality branch. This branch provides consultative services for special promotions, conventions, and special events, and hosting of department guests. It provides consultative services for promotion, protocol, and hospitality outside the province, and manages the program of hospitality grants related to major conventions held within the province.

Telephone inquiry service, is of course also in Public Affairs. It operates a system of 34 telephone inquiry centres across the province, providing department-to-department and individual-to-individual access on government lines, and the citizens of Alberta with a convenient, no-charge telephone system for securing information from government.

Also, we have within that division the advertising services and special projects branch which maintains continuing familiarity with media relations, with advertising agencies, and co-ordinates their selection for advertising production and placement in daily and weekly newspapers, magazines, radio, television, and on billboards and buses. As well, it provides technical advice and conducts special projects for a communications group.

Last but not least, we have in Public Affairs the communications production group, which is responsible for the audio-visual services branch and manages the production of films, photography, videotape recordings, and slide and tape presentations. As well, it operates the provincial film library.

Also we have the creative services branch, which manages the production of publications and displays, provides creative graphic art services, and co-ordinates special divisional projects.

The print procurement and distribution branch co-ordinates the make/buy decisions regarding the acquisition of resources for printing production. It manages the pricing, scheduling, and tendering activities related to the procurement of printing services from the private sector. It co-ordinates the cataloguing and distribution of government publications. As

well, it is responsible for the duplicating and copying services of the entire government.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Chairman, how much of the vote here is being spent for metric conversion? Exactly what fields are we in?

MR. SCHMID: Mr. Chairman, I'm sorry, I didn't catch the last thing.

MR. TAYLOR: What areas are we converting to metric?

MR. SCHMID: Mr. Chairman, first of all, I happened to attend the metric conference last week in Ottawa. The major decision, I think, was something like this: as far as the expense of metric conversion was concerned, the expense falls upon the group in government or private enterprise which happens to be converting from the unit system we are presently using to the metric system.

The Government of Canada presently provides an information service on metric conversion. Within the Alberta government itself, we only have the information system as far as the government conversion is concerned.

Just to give you an idea, Mr. Chairman. I think it was the conversion of the weather stations we had throughout Alberta for the forestry. Initially, the estimated cost to convert that system was about \$33,000. It was found, however, through the application of a certain dial, this cost was subsequently reduced to about \$30. Now we have all the systems converted to what they call kilopascals. However, when that was done and all systems had been converted to the metric system, it was found that Ottawa, or whatever the bureau down there has as a computer, wasn't ready for it. So they still had to put that reading in under the old system.

One of the questions I posed while in Ottawa that might be of interest to members was, why would we have kilopascals on our barometer readings, and not millibars, like they have in the rest of the metric world? I was told that the reason was that Canada is the first country in the world to use the kilopascal system because the international standards association — I think it's called — had mentioned that sometime in the future they will revert from the millibar system to the kilopascal system, and Canada felt this would be one way to put Canada in the lead. Whenever the other countries convert to that type of system on barometers, we would of course be equal to all the others.

Mr. Chairman, I'm looking now for the amount of expenditure of the metric conversion office. As soon as I have found it — like here, I know that it seems we have three salaried people there, a manager, an administrative officer, and one clerk. As soon as I find the amount, Mr. Chairman, I will convey it to the hon. member.

MR. TAYLOR: I was going to make the comment about Canada being the only country — rather a dubious honor in my view. I would like to know if the Government of Alberta is committed to a full-scale conversion. If so, what is this going to do to our Land Titles Office and our land tenure system with regard to sections, acres, townships?

MR. SCHMID: Mr. Chairman, the amount of the metric conversion code here seems to be \$96,100. This includes everything as far as the office expenditures are concerned and any other items, personnel, salaries and so forth.

Now, Mr. Chairman, [from] my recollection of the discussion — especially on that subject as far as land titles are concerned — I understand that the idea of the federal government related to the provinces is that land titles in themselves, of course, being in our present units of footage or acres or whatever they happen to be, could be converted quite easily on a computer. Only when an abstract is needed would that conversion then be made to the metric system in order to conserve costs. In fact a term of as much as 30 years was mentioned until one would really be able to convert all these land titles to the metric system as far as all of Canada is concerned. This is about the time line which was mentioned in Ottawa.

MR. HANSEN: How much money is going to be spent to educate the public so we can understand this system once we get it?

MR. SCHMID: Well, Mr. Chairman, this was also a point of our discussions in Ottawa. It was found by the provinces that since conversion from our present system to the metric system is within the jurisdiction of the federal government, all costs to inform the general public about metric conversion and its usage should really be borne by the federal government. Therefore we expect the federal government, at one time or another, to open one of those information offices in the province of Alberta and provide the citizens with the information they desire to convert to that system. One of the considerations, for instance, was that any item imported from other countries to help in this conversion would possibly be imported — it's not decided yet — tax-free and customs duty-free in order to help the businesses convert to that kind of system.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Chairman, I'd feel a lot better about this metric system had the system been authorized by the Parliament of Canada. My MP tells me the matter was never even debated in the House of Commons. It's just simply thrust upon the people whether we like it or not. I object to that type of thing in a democratic country. When we say the government is going to pick up the charges, I wonder if the government is going to pick up the charges for tradesmen who must change the calibration of the massive tools they use, of mechanics, of farmers — there's just going to be millions of dollars of expenditure coming straight out of the pockets of the people. I think the Canadian government should be severely censured for the way they've thrust this thing on the people without even asking for the approval of a majority of the members of the House of Commons.

MR. SCHMID: Mr. Chairman, I have to repeat the kind of statement which was made: the costs of conversion will fall where they will. In other words, any cost that accrued to the provincial governments, the provincial government would have to pay for that. If the costs fall on a tradesman, I'm not aware of it of course right now, but there may be a possibility, hopefully I suppose, that at least one could write off

this kind of cost on the income tax submitted to the federal government.

However, Mr. Chairman, I realize the serious concern the member has regarding a statement in Parliament, in the House of Commons, Ottawa, regarding metric conversion. I expect the minister, the hon. Mr. Jamieson, to at one time or another — or hopefully soon I would say — probably come up with the regulation and even an act in the House of Commons, maybe in fact a consolidation of many different bills that have to be amended as far as the federal government is concerned and metric conversion.

Agreed to:	
Vote 5	\$4,045,635
Vote 6	\$10,758,330
Department Total	\$74,950,215

MR. HYNDMAN: Mr. Chairman, I move the committee rise, report progress, and beg leave to sit again.

[Motion carried]

[Dr. McCrimmon left the Chair]

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

DR. MCCRIMMON: Mr. Speaker, the Committee of Supply has had under consideration the following resolution, begs to report same, and asks leave to sit again.

Resolved that for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1977, amounts not exceeding the following sums be granted to Her Majesty for the Department of Government Services: \$1,294,450 for Departmental Support Services; \$56,835,380 for Building Operations and Maintenance; \$1,233,920 for Government Transportation; \$782,500 for Supply; \$4,045,635 for Public Affairs; \$10,758,330 for Computing and Systems.

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, tomorrow, Wednesday, we'll begin with three bills, the ones proposed by the hon. Minister of Energy and Natural Resources: Bill 25, The Energy Resources Conservation Amendment Act, 1976; Bill 42, The Oil and Gas Conservation Amendment Act, 1976; and Bill 44, The Alberta Energy Company Amendment Act, 1976.

We would then move back to Supply for Hospitals and Medical Care to attempt to complete those estimates, and then go to Bill 19, The Alberta Home Mortgage Corporation Act, and continue down the Order Paper.

I move the Assembly 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 Assembly stands adjourned until tomorrow afternoon at half past 2.

[The House rose at 9:45 p.m.]

