

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ALBERTATitle: **Friday, April 7, 1978 10:00 a.m.**

[The House met at 10 a.m.]

PRAYERS

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

head: **PRESENTING PETITIONS**

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, I wish to advise the Assembly that the Private Bills Committee has had under consideration an act respecting the Royal Trust Company and the Royal Trust Corporation of Canada, and reports favorably that the petition be received by the Assembly.

Accordingly I present the petition of the Royal Trust Company and Royal Trust Corporation of Canada for an act respecting the Royal Trust Company and the Royal Trust Corporation of Canada.

head: **INTRODUCTION OF BILLS****Bill Pr. 6****An Act to Incorporate
First Western Trust Company**

MR. GHITTER: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce Bill Pr. 6, An Act to Incorporate First Western Trust Company. The principle of this bill is to incorporate an Alberta-based trust company, which is another indication that Alberta is a very good place to do business.

[Leave granted; Bill Pr. 6 read a first time]

Bill 224**An Act to Amend
The Child Welfare Act**

MR. KUSHNER: Mr. Speaker, I request leave to introduce Bill 224, An Act to Amend The Child Welfare Act.

The purpose of this bill is provide a curfew from 10 p.m. to 5 a.m. for children under the age of 16. This would apply to any child found in a public place without a legitimate purpose. The parents of the child breaking the curfew the second time could be prosecuted under the act as having contributed to a child becoming a neglected child.

[Leave granted; Bill 224 read a first time]

head: **INTRODUCTION OF SPECIAL GUESTS**

MR. LYSONS: Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure today to introduce to you and to the members of the Assembly 70 grade 6 students from the Vermilion Elementary School. They are accompanied by their teachers Mrs. Convey, Mrs. Long, Mr. Moir, and Mr. Wood, as well

as their bus drivers Frank Ewing and Alvin Swanson. I would ask them to rise and receive the welcome of the House.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce 21 young people from the grade 8 class at New Sarepta school.

Before I do that, I would like to inform hon. members of the Assembly just what volunteer work can do, and I use New Sarepta as an example. This community put in place a recreation complex. It was a package, and the people of that community put every bolt in place, every nail in place, and every bit of work from the community went into building that structure.

There are 21 students. They are accompanied by their teacher Mrs. Gregor and their bus driver Mr. Thompson. They are in the public gallery. I'd like them to rise and receive the welcome of the Legislature.

MR. SCHMIDT: Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege this morning to introduce to you, and through you to the members of the Assembly, 30 grade 9 students from the Ellerslie school. They are accompanied by their teacher Mr. O'Reilly. They are seated in the public gallery, and I would ask them to rise and receive the welcome of the Assembly.

head: **ORAL QUESTION PERIOD****Oil and Gas Industry**

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct the first question to the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources. It really follows up the series of questions I asked the minister yesterday with regard to the amount of excess oil capacity for production in the province.

Is the minister in a position to give the Assembly some sort of ballpark figure as to the volumes of natural gas discovered in Alberta that are now shut in?

MR. GETTY: No, Mr. Speaker, not of that kind of description. However, because of the amount of discussion about a gas surplus or a gas bubble in the province, we've requested the Energy Resources Conservation Board to do an up-to-date assessment of Alberta's reserves and supply and demand forecasts. I hope that report will be finished and available for public distribution sometime within the next month.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the minister. Is it the position of the government of Alberta that in addition to a gas bubble or gas balloon now, we also face a very serious problem as far as Alberta is concerned in the deliverability of natural gas outside the province? That is, the transmission lines are virtually full. In working with industry, what steps is the government taking to increase the capacity of the delivery system?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, to the best of my knowledge, the original assumption is not correct.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, then can I put the question to the minister this way: what steps is the government taking to market and deliver this excess gas in Alberta?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, we are encouraging industry to find markets. That's their responsibility. If there are markets and we have a supply, and profit can be made in putting the two together, we believe industry will do it, and we are encouraging them.

One problem that the hon. Leader of the Opposition may know is that in eastern Canada, the Quebec market we were talking about, there is the problem that gas is being undersold by residual oils. Therefore large purchasers are staying on residual oil. This residual oil is being dumped on the market, and natural gas is being undercut. Therefore the market is not expanding, as some would have predicted and would like.

Of course one of the other markets for natural gas would be into the United States, and we've been working in that regard. I'm sure the Leader of the Opposition is familiar with the efforts of the government.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, specifically to the minister. With regard to the efforts of Pan-Alberta to put together a volume of gas to export outside the province — and in the course of putting that contract together, they're emphasizing there has to be approval from the ERCB, the Alberta government, and the federal government — have there been discussions between Pan-Alberta and the Alberta government with regard to the possibility of the Alberta government agreeing to exports to the United States, so that Pan-Alberta has gone ahead and is now putting together a contract?

MR. GETTY: I've had numerous discussions, Mr. Speaker, with Pan-Alberta. They have placed before the Energy Resources Conservation Board a request for gas removal permits from the province. Should the Energy Resources Conservation Board find these reserves surplus to Alberta's needs — and I believe they probably will — they will recommend to the Executive Council that we approve the gas removal permits.

As I said earlier in the House, at that point the permits will stop, because it's our policy that without additional access for Alberta agricultural products to the United States, we will not approve additional exports. I don't think that's a difficult thing for the United States to live with, and I think those two things will be worked out.

Then the process is that the permits will go to the National Energy Board. It must be found there that it is in the public interest that they be allowed to continue, so gas can flow to the United States. As members know, at that point the National Energy Board may request that the federal government work out a gas exchange, gas swap, or gas replacement arrangement.

That's a complex matter, but I think with the ingenuity of governments and industry it may all work out well.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, a further supplementary question to the minister. During the period of time of

the hearings, the negotiations, and the use of the ingenuity of the governments involved, what is to happen to the small Alberta and Canadian producers who have gone out and used the incentive program, who have proven pretty sizable reserves in Alberta, who have financed to a very great extent, and who now are not able to acquire markets and are in serious financial difficulty in a number of cases? What steps or what suggestions has the minister for those companies so that in fact they can continue to exist, rather than have to sell off their proven reserves to the larger companies at bargain basement prices?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, it's something that might well be discussed at estimates, but I'll try to do it in the question period.

It has been only in the last three or four years that producers in this province could expect to find natural gas today and get a market for it tomorrow. That has never been the long-term history of the oil and gas business in Alberta. There has always been a large surplus — either of oil or gas — built up, then a pipeline is built and a market is found.

Unfortunately some companies have been lulled by the short-term situation, where they were able to sell everything immediately. That's a management problem, not a government problem. Most companies in Alberta, contrary to the earlier comments of the Leader of the Opposition, are not in serious financial problems. As a matter of fact, they're doing very, very well.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, just one last supplementary question to the minister. No question about most companies. My question specifically is with regard to small Alberta companies that have come into existence in the last five to seven years. It seems to me it's those companies we should encourage, by whatever means are needed. Is the minister prepared to help those companies, by whatever means are needed, so that in fact they can continue to exist rather than be gobbled up by some of the larger companies?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, I don't believe that's the alternative. The marketing matters I talked about earlier — markets in Quebec and gas exports to the United States — are both solutions. Also, the companies may arrange their financial situations, because they have a very valuable asset, natural gas. Looking a couple of years in advance, they know it's going to be one of the most viable products on the North American continent. They have an ability to work out for themselves a means of using that asset to be successful in the oil and gas industry.

MR. STROMBERG: Mr. Speaker, I think this will fall in line as a supplementary. Due to the increase in activity in the oil stocks on the Toronto market this morning, due to a rumored new find in the West Pembina field, could the minister indicate whether that is gas or oil, and the extent of that new find?

MR. GETTY: No, I can't, Mr. Speaker.

DR. BUCK: A short supplementary to the hon. minister. In relation to the small gas producers in the

province, is the minister in a position to indicate if many of these companies have moved across the line, where once they find the natural gas it's immediately sold? Can the minister indicate if many of the small companies, and Alberta investors, are doing that?

MR. GETTY: Well, Mr. Speaker, I think entrepreneurs tend to move to a variety of places where they can make money. Money tends to follow profits. But in Alberta most small gas producers are making more money than they've ever made. The oil and gas industry and the current level of exploration, the current level of royalties, the current level of land sale bonuses indicate that.

Constitutional Reform

MR. GHITTER: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to address some questions to the hon. Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs. First, is it the position of the government of the province of Alberta that they are opposed to any constitutional reform which would result in reform of the Senate whereby members of the Senate were elected to represent regional areas of this country?

MR. HYNDMAN: Mr. Speaker, I think the Premier spoke on this Wednesday and also at Banff. I think the position stated is that we believe the approach of intergovernmental conferences, which has been developing over the last six or seven years, has redounded to the benefit of the provinces, particularly the province of Alberta, in trying to negotiate a degree of equality in the federal system.

The proposal which has been current over the past week or two with respect to a concept of a house of the provinces, which is suggested as a major reform to the Senate, carried with it the implication that those federal/provincial conferences would not continue and that the house of the provinces concept would replace these intergovernmental conferences. In my view and the government's view, that would be very wrong and a backward step.

Certainly we would agree that major reform of the Senate, major surgery to the Senate, is necessary if it is to be at all meaningful in the parliamentary system. But I think we should be very careful not to look to changes in the parliamentary system — Parliament involving the Senate and House of Commons — which in the final analysis might work against the provinces in the institutional arrangements between governments, such as the conferences between federal and provincial governments, and between provincial governments, which have grown up and which in our view have been a very positive and effective new dimension for federalism over the last six years.

MR. GHITTER: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Leaving aside the question of the house of provinces, is it then the position of the province of Alberta that any constitutional reform of the Senate whereby they would be elected to deal with matters within the federal powers under the BNA Act would be repugnant to the province of Alberta, and that the province would stand opposed to such an amendment?

MR. HYNDMAN: At the moment, Mr. Speaker, I haven't seen any specific proposal for election. How-

ever, I would think that the elected representatives of a province, being the members of an assembly, can be more effective and the province better represented if they talk to the elected representatives of a government or elected representatives of Parliament. I very much doubt whether election of all or part of the Canadian Senate is the kind of reform that's going to assist in giving the provinces, in giving Alberta, a more meaningful part in the mainstream of Canadian life.

MR. GHITTER: A further supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Then I take it from the hon. minister's comments that the government of the province of Alberta is opposed to an elected senate that would represent regions in matters relating to constitutional powers of the federal government?

MR. HYNDMAN: Yes, Mr. Speaker. Having the Senate represent Alberta, the west, or any other part of Canada in the very crucial constitutional matters that are current and will be coming forward, in my view, would be the wrong way to go. Meetings face to face between provinces, between the elected MLAs in provinces and elected members of the House of Commons, would be the better approach.

MR. GHITTER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary to the hon. minister. Is it the intention of the government of the province of Alberta to prepare a white paper or statement as to their views on constitutional reform, both on this issue and on the position of the province relating to amending formulas? Or are we merely to deal in terms of comments in this House?

MR. HYNDMAN: Very good point, Mr. Speaker. A number of statements have been made by this government and by the Premier, beginning with the statement of Alberta's position in the letter of October 14, 1976, to the Prime Minister, and subsequent statements by the Premier. At the moment, however, we are giving very serious attention to the possibility of preparing perhaps a discussion paper which could be available in mid-summer of this year, setting forth the basic position of the government of Alberta in respect of the constitutional reforms which might be necessary and desirable in the country.

MR. GHITTER: A final supplementary, Mr. Speaker. If that is accomplished — and I certainly recommend it — would the hon. minister then take under advisement the possibility of allowing the House to debate the paper at the fall session of the Legislature, as I believe it is a matter of high priority in this province?

MR. HYNDMAN: A very useful suggestion, Mr. Speaker.

DR. BUCK: Before or after the election?

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, to the hon. minister. Didn't the government in fact give the House a commitment last week that there would be a debate in the House in the fall session prior to the first ministers' meeting in November? Isn't it the position of the government that there will be that discussion in the Assembly?

MR. HYNDMAN: I'd have to check *Hansard*, Mr. Speaker. As I recall, a statement was made with regard to a fall debate. Whether it related to the exact parameters of the statement just made by the Leader of the Opposition, I'm not sure. I wouldn't want adopt his words as being the commitment. But there certainly would be opportunities for debate and discussion of any such proposed discussion paper in the fall session.

Parks Development

MR. TESOLIN: Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the hon. Minister of Recreation, Parks and Wildlife. Can the minister advise if the much-talked-about proposed Lakeland park has been shelved, put on the back burner awaiting fertile minds to develop the greatest park in Alberta?

MR. ADAIR: Mr. Speaker, that was a tremendous speech. With regard to the Lakeland concept, I think I should try to clear up in the hon. member's mind exactly what has happened.

The Kananaskis Country concept is the first of its kind, and the Lakeland area is one area, Mr. Speaker, where that kind of concept could be developed in an area other than the eastern slopes. At the moment it's a study area for the possibility of an integrated management plan for a provincial park and a recreation area. So it is still some time away. We are still working on the concept for recommendations to come back to me.

MR. TESOLIN: A supplementary if I may, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to know what the minister refers to as "some time"?

MR. ADAIR: Mr. Speaker, to try to be more specific, it's between five and 25 years.

Wheat Prices

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, my question to the Minister of Agriculture relates to comments the minister made the other day with regard to the domestic price of Canadian wheat being \$6 a bushel. I wonder if the minister has some further detail on that, relative to what he plans to present at the agricultural ministers' meeting, which I understand is going to be held fairly shortly.

MR. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, not a great deal of detail. The current price of domestic wheat is \$3.55 per bushel. That's the amount received by the farmer. The millers pay \$3.25 a bushel, so there's about a 30 cent subsidy paid by the federal government. I do know that increasing the price from \$3.55 per bushel to \$6 per bushel will mean an improvement in Alberta farm net income of about \$33.5 million a year. I know as well that the added cost to Alberta consumers, or to the federal government depending how the adjustment is made, is about \$6 million a year. So there are great advantages to that in terms of improving net farm income.

As for the proposal being presented at an agriculture ministers' meeting, I did not imply that, because in fact there is no upcoming agricultural ministers'

meeting. But I did say we would shortly be making those representations to the federal government.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, further to the minister. Has the minister at this point in time had any response from the federal minister with regard to the proposal?

MR. MOORE: No. My comments the other day during committee debate on the Department of Agriculture estimates were the first time I had raised the matter publicly. I indicated I would be making representation and that we had recently had the matter under review. I have not yet made that representation, although I am sure there are some within the federal government who are aware of the concerns I expressed on Wednesday of this week.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, further supplementary to the minister. Have the other western provincial ministers of agriculture agreed with the position of the minister and the government of Alberta?

MR. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, the other western ministers of agriculture or western premiers have not yet been approached on the subject. I would hope we would have an opportunity to do that shortly, though.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the minister. Is this specific issue on the agenda for the upcoming meeting of the four western premiers?

MR. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, that question should probably more properly be addressed to the Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs. He and I have discussed the matter and, as I understand it, the agenda for the western premiers' conference is not yet finalized. This item could be on the agenda.

MR. HYNDMAN: Mr. Speaker, the subject of agriculture is certainly one of the items to be discussed by the four western premiers. We'll take under consideration whether or not the specific item raised should be brought forward.

Senior Citizens' Housing

MR. APPLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to ask a question of the Minister of Housing and Public Works. I've had a number of inquiries as to why senior citizens' self-contained housing does not include air conditioning as an integral part of the planning and construction. From my own observations I know it isn't included in some single-storey units I'm familiar with. I wonder if the minister could tell us the AHC policy with regard to air conditioning in senior citizens' self-contained units.

MR. YURKO: Mr. Speaker, the Alberta Housing Corporation policy is basically the same as that of the provincial government; that is, until several years ago the provincial government provided no air conditioning in hospitals and other institutions unless it made an exception. The provincial government has made an exception in some areas because of comfort and need, and exactly the same policy is being used by Alberta Housing Corporation. Generally there is no

air conditioning unless there is a very specific need in regard to health or some other purpose.

MR. APPLEBY: A supplementary on that, Mr. Speaker, if I may. I wonder if the senior citizens, individually or as groups or through associations, have ever been surveyed as to what they felt would be useful in their type of housing in respect to air conditioning.

MR. YURKO: Mr. Speaker, if my memory doesn't fail me I believe the senior citizens' association from southern Alberta has, on several occasions, suggested a re-examination of the policy with respect to air conditioning. We periodically re-examine that matter.

MR. PURDY: A supplementary question to the minister. If there was a new departure in policy that air conditioning was being placed in the senior citizens' lodges, how many lodges would he have to cut back in to keep the flow going?

MR. YURKO: Mr. Speaker, I can't answer that question specifically at this time. But I might say this: there is a constant examination within the Alberta Housing Corporation, weighing and balancing the process between quality and quantity. Indeed the demand for senior citizens' accommodation is very great, and only a certain degree of budget can be allocated. As I indicated yesterday, a vast amount of money is being allocated. Even so, there always is a balance between quality and quantity because of the demand, which will be increasing with the coming years rather than decreasing. So some luxury, if you wish, is always tempered with the idea that more and more units have to be brought on the market. As I've indicated, the subsidies on these units are in the order of \$200 to \$300 per month.

DR. WALKER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary to the minister. Has there been any assessment of the extra costs in health services due to the old people getting colds from the air conditioning? [interjections]

MRS. CHICHAK: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct a supplementary. Has the minister examined the adequacy of the ventilation system in many of the new units, following the numerous representations that the system that had been put in place — the ventilation system, not speaking of air conditioning — whether any modifications have been made in order to ensure that a more adequate ventilation system is in place?

MR. YURKO: Mr. Speaker, perhaps some of the older units have had some difficulty with the ventilating systems. As a result, a repair program was set up a couple of years ago to make some major revisions. In some of the lodges, for example, kitchens and ventilating systems were repaired. This is an ongoing matter.

However, I want to suggest that the newer units are built by very competent engineers and ventilation people. Though they may have some difficulty in start-up, generally they are brought to a very high level of providing ventilation throughout the units. I don't suggest that the property administration of the Alberta Housing Corporation isn't involved in this area. It constantly is, because there are complaints,

and we do attempt to solve the problems as they arise.

MR. KUSHNER: Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct my question to the Minister of Housing and Public Works. At this point in time, is the minister in fact reviewing the heating system? It's quite common practice today that the same unit is used for heating in the winter months and cooling in the summer, and I know it isn't that much more.

MR. YURKO: Mr. Speaker, I can only answer in a general manner. If there is any difficulty with a particular senior citizens' housing complex, be it a lodge or a self-contained complex, the matter is generally brought to the attention of the Alberta Housing Corporation and looked at in light of what might be required with respect to an alteration. So it's not possible for me to answer the specific question.

MR. KUSHNER: A supplementary question to the minister, following his answer. I wonder if the minister in fact would study the heating situation. As I mentioned before, the same unit could be used for heating in the winter months and cooling in the summer. Would the minister review that and report on its feasibility?

MR. YURKO: Well, if the member's asking a technical question, certainly parts of the system are used for cooling and heating. All the duct work is to a large degree the same, and some of the fans are the same. There is an interplay between the two systems now. Not in all units; in some units they have separate systems. But in some units the operated ones are interconnected.

MR. KUSHNER: Mr. Speaker, the units they have are what they call roof units. It's an air conditioning and a heating unit. It's the same unit, the identical unit that does two functions, air conditioning and heating. As a matter of fact, I have one in my home, it works, and it's not that much more.

Gambling Activities

MR. MANDEVILLE: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the hon. Attorney General. Could the Attorney General indicate what the policy of the government is with regard to calcuttas, which are held on such sporting events as curling, rodeos, and golf?

MR. FOSTER: Mr. Speaker, I don't think it's a question of the policy of the government. There's some suggestion that such gaming events may offend the provisions of the Criminal Code, and of late certain activities have been taken by Edmonton city police. I'm not personally aware, although I should be, of whether any prosecutions are before the courts, but I'll certainly check.

MR. MANDEVILLE: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Is the department anticipating any changes as far as lucky seven tickets are concerned, that the revenue is used for capital construction with Legions, Elks clubs, and so on?

MR. FOSTER: Mr. Speaker, that matter is currently under review by the government caucus. I can say at this point that we have no difficulty in principle with the use of those funds for capital purposes. The question becomes whether or not all those funds should be expended for capital purposes. That's what's being discussed at the moment.

DR. BUCK: A supplementary question to the hon. minister in relation to curling calcuttas. Has the minister given any consideration to possibly limiting these calcuttas to small clubs and putting an upper limit on them rather than, say, to large open competitions? I believe the area that concerns most curlers is the small club calcuttas.

MR. FOSTER: Frankly, no, Mr. Speaker. I must say I'm not particularly well informed today on the status of calcuttas in this province or the problems with them. But I'll take your inquiry as notice, inform myself, and reply to you in more detail later.

Drinking Harmful Liquids

MR. TAYLOR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the hon. Solicitor General. Has the hon. minister delved any further into the matter of the drinking of Lysol by hard-core alcoholics?

MR. FARRAN: Well, I personally am off the stuff, Mr. Speaker. [laughter]

DR. BUCK: Lysol, Lysol.

MR. FARRAN: I have done some checking with the police. It's true that one man's drink is another man's poison. They say there is a growing incidence of the consumption of Lysol in the form of aerosol sprays, that it began in skid row in Winnipeg and has been spreading through the country, that it's mostly a habit or an addiction of young natives rather than the more elderly derelict alcoholics.

The city of Edmonton police say the order of drinking these abominable poisons is as follows: the most used is rubbing alcohol, followed by vanilla extract, shaving lotions, Lysol, hair spray, shoe polish, and antifreeze. None is recommended of course, and none is sold by the Liquor Control Board. You can recognize the Lysol addict by the fact that he has difficulty speaking.

MR. CLARK: No throat.

DR. WARRACK: You're dead.

MR. FARRAN: It affects the vocal cords. Calgary's situation is much the same, and the Mounted Police report much the same.

The problem of the derelict alcoholic is a very serious one, and members shouldn't really take it too light-heartedly. The big question is: what can one do about it? A growing number of people are killing themselves with these fluids and are derelict in the east ends of our cities. Some shelter is given to them by government agencies, PSS, the churches, and the Salvation Army.

AADAC is mostly a cure-oriented agency, and these people don't really seem to have any desire to be

cured of their addictions. In British Columbia they tried the experiment of putting them on a farm at a place called Alouette River. They didn't like that and would just walk away. Very few went there voluntarily. The only people in the industrialized world who seem to have been able to cope with this are the Japanese, who have taken the draconian measure of saying that any addiction — alcoholism, heroin, and so on — is actually an offence, and addicts are picked up and given cold-turkey treatment. They have solved their problem.

Under our system and our concept of justice, whether it's a crime to be an addict is something I suppose public conscience has to continue to wrestle with. Of course we do it under mental health regulations; people can be confined for their own good. Whether this principle should be extended to severe alcoholism or addiction to illegal narcotics is something I don't know.

But under our present system, there are inmates of our drunk tanks who are there every second or third day, who have been picked up under Section 84 of The Liquor Control Act. They keep them in the drunk tank overnight — 40, 50, 100 times, just like a revolving door. If any members have some suggestion how we could tackle this very severe social problem, I'd be glad to hear from them.

Water Impurities

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the hon. Minister of the Environment. It arises from concerns expressed by several Edmonton scientists with regard to the safety of tap water in the Edmonton area. Could the minister indicate whether any special efforts are being made during the time of spring run-off to monitor the level of toxic substances in Edmonton's drinking water?

[Mr. Russell took a sip of water]

MR. RUSSELL: The water is okay, Mr. Speaker. [laughter]

AN HON. MEMBER: Hey, look, he's turning green.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, how prevalent is the practice of dumping salt and sand in the North Saskatchewan River? Is it still being carried on?

MR. RUSSELL: Mr. Speaker, this question of run-off usually arises as a matter of concern every spring. With the information we have in the department, and the work the various municipal governments are doing, particularly the city of Edmonton, I'm satisfied there is no hazard to health as a result of impurities in the spring run-off. Sometimes there is discoloration or unpleasant odors, but certainly no hazard to health.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker . . .

MR. RUSSELL: I didn't deal with the matter of dumping salt and gravel as a result of street cleaning. Both Calgary and Edmonton make a habit of dumping the street cleanings, which eventually find their way into the river courses. We've conducted specific studies

on this and are satisfied there is no damage to the environment as a result.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, a more specific question on halomethanes and other carcinogenic substances. Is the minister's department studying some of the carcinogenic products that apparently get into our rivers?

MR. RUSSELL: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I believe work is being done on that. Earlier this week the *Edmonton Journal* carried some quotations by officials of the department that dealt with that matter.

Rapid Transit Financing

MR. KUSHNER: Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct my question to the Deputy Premier and Minister of Transportation. This is with reference to the light rail transit in the cities of Edmonton and Calgary, which has developed into a serious financial problem — financing of construction. I wonder if the minister could inform this Assembly if there are any discussions, that we can see further relief, between the provincial government and the federal government at this point in time.

DR. HORNER: Mr. Speaker, there are no discussions going on at the moment between the provincial and federal governments relative to that matter. As the Assembly perhaps is aware, the federal government has lumped all its programs for urban assistance and mass transit assistance into one program, in which it has cut the amount of money it will be spending in all the areas across Canada to a figure of \$2 per capita for the next five years. That will build about one grade separation, so I wouldn't expect that our cities should have too great an expectation that they'll receive a great deal from the federal government in regard to LRT.

I would hope that both cities do a very competent evaluation of the first portions of their LRT before they plunge on.

MR. KUSHNER: A supplementary question to the minister. Would the minister or the government be preparing a presentation to the federal government on probably receiving some relief for the responsibility of financing the light rail transit? As I see it, Mr. Minister, right now we're financing 90 per cent of the main arterial road. At this point in time in the cities, there seems to be a very high priority on constructing light rail transit.

DR. HORNER: Mr. Speaker, the question of whether or not a city builds light rail transit is, of course, a decision for that city to make. I would point out that the assistance for transportation we give to the various cities in Alberta is more than any other province in Canada and, in this year's budget, amounts to some \$65 million.

DR. BUCK: You're the only ones who have the money, Hugh.

DR. HORNER: We have entered into a five-year program so the cities would know what they could expect in the way of capital, and have been giving them \$7.5 million apiece to put toward capital devel-

opment of mass transit. Of course it's up to the cities to develop their own programs in that regard.

One other correction, Mr. Speaker. The only area at the moment in which we're paying 90 per cent of road costs in the cities is in the particular policy relative to continuous corridors through the two major cities.

Hotel Bookings

MR. KIDD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the hon. Minister of Business Development and Tourism. On behalf of the government, does the minister support the position, which the press suggests a hotel in Banff has taken, of overbooking in a major way?

MR. DOWLING: Mr. Speaker, we are aware that there has been an occasional overbooking in some of the hotels, or one of the hotels, in Banff and are somewhat concerned if the practice is continued and done in a major sense. However, we investigated the most recent allegations regarding a hotel in Banff and found that the situation as alluded to in the press was not entirely correct. Of course the overbooking takes place to maximize occupancy of any hotel or motel unit and to take into account the normal cancellations that occur, in much the same sense as a person will make two reservations on two different flights in an aircraft and cancel one.

However, in this particular instance, four booking agencies in Japan were told very clearly last October that accommodation would not be available in Banff during either the Christmas season or at Easter. That information was transmitted to them all by letter, and they clearly understood it. However, they did proceed to make reservations for the particular hotel in Banff and were told accommodations weren't there. They arrived in Banff expecting accommodation, and in only one instance was there overbooking, which caused some embarrassment. It had to do with a travel group from California. These people were accommodated in Jasper at that time — which of course delighted my Jasper friends — and there was no cost associated with transferring those people to Jasper.

So the problem is not one of the hotel; it's one of the agents doing the booking.

Postsecondary Education Financing

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct a question to the Minister of Advanced Education and Manpower and ask what his department's policy is with regard to the relative priorities of requests for capital funding between universities and government-run postsecondary educational institutions.

DR. HOHOL: The policy, Mr. Speaker, is based on the long-term plans, called development plans, that involve both operating and capital construction. We take those into consideration. A process is involved between the department and the institutions that's not unlike negotiation, not in a collective bargaining sense but in the discussion of pros and cons for particular capital units and requirements. These shake down into a long term and then into immediate, year-by-year capital on-line developments. That kind of approach sets the priorities for all institutions

in advanced education, with no particular preference one way or another on the basis of a provincially run institution or a public institution, but on the basis of need.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the minister. In deciding which buildings and projects will go ahead, does the government relate to its commitment as far as the grades 1 to 12 system is concerned, which has generally been referred to as back to the basics; in other words, placing a higher priority, a higher emphasis on the basic part of post-secondary education?

DR. HOHOL: Generally speaking that would be the case, particularly during the period of restraint in which we had no major capital construction since 1975 and only two or three major ones preceding 1975. During that period of time renovations, minor additions, and one or two major constructions were involved. Most of these related rather specifically to the notion of student space for instruction. That has been the overwhelming criterion, but not the sole criterion.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, then having regard for the minister's comment about priority given to student spaces, could the minister explain to the Assembly the rather strange priorities which forced the University of Calgary to put a quota on the number of young Albertans going into engineering, and at the same time at SAIT in Calgary funds are being included in the budget this year for an ice arena; rifle, pistol, and archery range; racquetball and squash courts; bowling alley; and billiard and game rooms. Mr. Speaker, my question . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. I believe I can sense the direction of the question, and I would respectfully suggest to the hon. Leader of the Opposition that this might be an appropriate item to take up in the discussion of the estimates.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, can I rephrase the question to the minister this way. In light of the minister's answer about priorities for student spaces, how did the minister arrive at the decision not to expand facilities at the University of Calgary for engineering, for student spaces, as opposed to money for recreational facilities at SAIT?

MR. SPEAKER: You're really on the same track. The time for the question period has run out. Perhaps the Assembly would agree that since I have already recognized the hon. Member for Little Bow, we might have another short question and short answer.

DR. BUCK: Ask them at the convention, Bert.

Social Services Funding

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, my question to the Minister of Social Services and Community Health is with regard to the level of support for community social service organizations. Is a definite funding guideline of 6 to 7 per cent for community social service organizations being adhered to in providing grants to those particular organizations?

MISS HUNLEY: Mr. Speaker, I don't know that I can be specific about that, because it varies according to the services provided and what the local institution or organization is doing. So I'm afraid the hon. member would have to be more explicit before I can be more explicit in my answer.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, being more specific: I had in mind the organization in Grande Prairie for the mentally retarded. Their funding was increased by 6 per cent, and their operational cost was significantly higher than that. I wonder if there is a guideline for all organizations such as that.

MISS HUNLEY: Mr. Speaker, with most of those organizations it's subject to negotiation except that, yes, we are attempting to stick to a 6 per cent increase. But that doesn't mean any particular agreement can't be renegotiated and discussed with the department officials. That's what I would expect to happen in this particular case.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

head: GOVERNMENT MOTIONS (Committee of Supply)

[Dr. McCrimmon in the Chair]

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

Department of Agriculture

MR. MOORE: Mr. Chairman, there were a couple of outstanding questions from the last session that I'd like to answer. One has to do with the employer contributions, which are listed as having had a 45.2 per cent increase in one vote. That is the contribution by the government to such things as Canada Pension Plan, Workers' Compensation, and so on. At the request of Treasury, we increased the total contribution in that vote from 3 per cent to 4 per cent of the total salaries. If the hon. member would check the salary figure for this year as compared to last year, he'll see that the employer contributions are 4 per cent of that total salary rather than 3 per cent. But the total is approximately the same.

In addition, I was asked if I'd made written representation to the federal government with regard to capital gains tax problems. After reviewing files in my office, I have to say I cannot find any written representation made from my office. That may have occurred from either the Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs or the Provincial Treasurer. Mr. Chairman, I think those were the outstanding matters from the last meeting.

1.2.2 — Agricultural Societies and Research

DR. BUCK: Mr. Chairman, on the vote on agricultural societies. Can the minister indicate how far the additional \$25,000 grants that will be available will go toward lowering the repayment programs a lot of these societies have? Is this going to help some of the societies that have problems, and how many agri-

cultural societies that have major facilities have serious financial problems?

MR. MOORE: There are fewer with what one might term serious financial problems today than there were a year ago. Most of them have been struggling very hard and doing very well in terms of working with the municipalities they're involved with, and with the Minister of Recreation, Parks and Wildlife, on their programs. So I would guess we would consider not more than two or three today are in a rather serious situation. Those I think as well can work their way out of it if they have the total co-operation of the community. That's usually the largest problem, either too many facilities or too many groups not working together. We find if we can get them working together, they can make these payments and make the thing work.

As to how far these dollars go, over the course of the last five weeks, since increasing the grant from the budget of '77-78, I've already authorized payments of \$25,000 each to I believe about 15 ag. societies. So we've already helped a great number of them out of the past year's budget, and considerably more will be helped out by this budget. On the other hand, I have said the major reason for raising the grant from \$50,000 to \$75,000 is that today it takes at least \$75,000 to do what was done three or four years ago with \$50,000. Those who have never made an application and are planning a building program will have first opportunity for that new grant. In other words, I may be asking some who want an additional \$25,000 to pay off a capital debt to wait another year if it's necessary.

DR. BUCK: I wanted to have that point clear in my mind, Mr. Chairman: existing societies will be eligible to apply for the \$25,000, but they will be a little lower on the totem pole than the ones applying for new grants.

MR. MOORE: That's correct, Mr. Chairman.

MR. MILLER: Mr. Chairman, one of the major costs of arenas which were built by agricultural society grants and are operated by agricultural societies is the high cost of fire insurance. This has increased dramatically in the last few years. I know of one arena: when it was first built the insurance was \$1,000, and now it's in excess of \$3,000. This has been brought about largely because of the costs in building materials which have occurred. I wonder, Mr. Minister, if any thought has been given to having agricultural societies form an association and the possibility that, in the event of a fire in one of the association's arenas, the government would be prepared perhaps to give a special grant to pay part of the cost of a new structure and that the association would also be prepared to contribute toward the building of one of their members' arenas that might happen to burn down? I think that the provincial government, by being in a position to say, yes, if a disaster occurs and your arena [burns] down, we would be prepared to give a certain number of dollars, they could reduce their insurance coverage and thereby reduce the amount of money which has to be raised each year to pay the fire insurance cost.

MR. MOORE: Mr. Chairman, I can answer that by saying first of all that there is an association of agricultural societies. It's called RUCA, which is the short form for Rural-Urban Community Association. After some discussions with me a little over a year ago, that association set about trying to determine the best way of reducing fire insurance cost to agricultural societies. After considerable study, they determined it was probably not in the best interest of ag. societies to go into a self-insuring kind of fund. But they felt there was a way insurance costs may be brought down, so they approached a number of underwriters with respect to developing an insurance policy that would be designed especially for agricultural societies.

That resulted in an underwriter accepting the task of developing that program. It was developed and finalized, I believe, in October 1977. During November and December 1977, RUCA held a number of information meetings throughout the province where they invited every ag. society in Alberta to attend and receive information. The underwriters attended as well. We now have in place an insurance program that we think is going to be much less expensive than previously. The details are available to any ag. society that wishes them from RUCA or from the ag. societies branch of the Department of Agriculture.

MR. MANDEVILLE: Mr. Chairman, a question to the minister on the additional \$25,000 that's going to be on the societies grant. Is it going to work on the same formula as the past \$50,000? Is it going to be a matching grant? Will there be any changes in the policy or the formula?

MR. MOORE: There is a change, Mr. Chairman. The previous grant was based on a 50 per cent contribution by the government and a 50 per cent contribution to the capital cost by the ag. society. The new program is based on the government grant being two-thirds the total capital cost and the society being required to put up one-third.

Agreed to:

1.2.2 — Agricultural Societies and Research	\$2,781,000
1.2.3 — Farmers' Advocate	\$152,927
1.2.4 — Surface Rights	\$606,616
Total 1.2 — Agricultural Assistance	\$3,934,753

Total Vote 1 — Departmental Support Services	\$8,450,444
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Total Vote 1 — Capital	\$1,040,755
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Vote 2 — Production Assistance

MR. PURDY: Mr. Chairman, I don't know if this is the opportune time to raise this question, but I think it is, under Production Assistance. I'd like to raise a question to the minister regarding prices of fertilizer. I have a news release from the Alberta Wheat Pool, dated February 20, 1978, which indicates that the price of hydrous ammonium fertilizer will rise by approximately 15 per cent. I also have a news release from the minister's department, dated February 27, saying we will see no increase in ferti-

lizer prices this year. I wonder if the minister could outline to the committee the situation in Alberta today for fertilizer prices, and what we can foresee in the year 1978. What will take place?

MR. MOORE: Mr. Chairman, our assumption that increases, if any, would be very slight this year was based on the fact that there were more than adequate supplies, and the demand had dampened somewhat from previous years.

According to the information I had as late as last week, a number of companies are still marketing fertilizer in Alberta at prices which existed in January 1978. So the real advice to farmers is to shop around very carefully before purchasing fertilizer this year. During the course of the last two months there have been some fairly significant price spreads between companies.

MR. PURDY: Would the minister have any information regarding the price of fertilizer? If the dollar trend stays as it is right now, at about 88 cents compared to the American dollar, will this have any effect on our market in Alberta?

MR. MOORE: Mr. Chairman, it could have of course, if we were in a deficit position and there was a high demand from farmers in the United States for Alberta-produced fertilizer. We don't believe that is the case. Certainly this spring, any fertilizers which are destined for U.S. markets would already have left and been sold this late in the year.

The major problem with fertilizer supplies at the moment is that we moved a smaller amount of fertilizer to the farm during the early and mid-winter months than was the case in previous years. Some farmers will find themselves in a difficult situation with regard to transportation problems.

Agreed to:

2.1 — Program Support

\$730,954

2.2 — Irrigation

MR. MANDEVILLE: Mr. Chairman, I see there is a reduction in the irrigation vote. Could the minister indicate: was that in manpower, or in just what area is the reduction with regard to irrigation?

MR. MOORE: You're referring to a 1.2 per cent reduction in the total vote, are you?

I don't believe that in any way reduces any of the total services being provided. There is considerable reduction in the grants to individuals, as referred to down here, I believe. I don't know if that's an irrigation vote or not. But generally speaking we intend to maintain the level of the service that existed in other years.

The irrigation division, though, has been involved in a number of contracts involving engineering work and that type of thing, and they go up and down from year to year. I'm not totally familiar with the ones that might be completed this year and the ones that may be started in the new year.

Generally I can say there's been no reduction in manpower. I know the manpower complement of the irrigation division is staying the same. The programs,

including the \$2 million in grants provided through this vote, are being maintained exactly the same as they were in previous years. I don't expect any reduction as a result of the 1.2 per cent reduction from the comparable forecast.

You will note that the estimates for 1977-78 were \$4,435,000, while the estimates for this year are some \$400,000 over that. Now we had an additional expenditure in 1977-78, which is included in the forecast. It was accomplished by way of a transfer of funds. I don't expect that to occur in '78-79, and we'll be able to accommodate the same type of assistance we have in the past.

MR. MANDEVILLE: Mr. Chairman, one further question on irrigation. I realize it's not under this particular vote, but the minister did indicate when we were expending the money under the heritage trust fund. It's with regard to the formula set out by the department where the irrigation districts pay 14 per cent and the government pays [86] per cent. The minister did indicate he was looking at changing the formula to a 25/75 per cent formula. Could the minister indicate his position as far as the formula is concerned?

MR. MOORE: Mr. Chairman, only to say I've told the irrigation districts, the council, and projects association that there will be no change this year in that 86/14 formula. I would expect that within the course of the next couple of months we will finalize discussions on that formula, and at the very least determine whether that formula will be maintained or changed for at least the first five years of the 10-year program.

I've had extensive discussions with the Irrigation Council and the Irrigation Projects Association about the formula, but it will not change for 1978 work.

MR. MANDEVILLE: One more question on irrigation, Mr. Chairman. I did mention it in my comments last Wednesday. It's in regard to farmers who are pumping out of a river where they don't have a water right. I was wondering if the minister has had any representation from boards of irrigation districts in regard to establishing a policy that would permit a charge to be laid for a water right on individuals pumping out of the river?

MR. MOORE: Mr. Chairman, I don't believe I have. But it's entirely likely that if those representations were made, they would have been made to the Minister of the Environment, who really has that responsibility with respect to water rights and the payment of same.

I can make sure the question is referred to the Minister of the Environment, so that he may respond to it during his estimates.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Chairman, I was wondering if we are making substantial progress in small vegetables and fruits through irrigation in southern Alberta? For a number of years we talked about the possibility of establishing vegetable farms, and so on, to cut down our imports from California. What progress is being made in regard to small vegetable farms?

MR. MOORE: Mr. Chairman, there's been some progress. Certainly the packaging and sale of carrots has

improved in recent years, particularly because of one plant that's operating well now. But there's a tough road ahead, really. The competition from imports is particularly severe during certain times of the year, and you cannot develop and maintain an effective small vegetable growers' market unless you have a good processing and transportation network tied into it. That has created some degree of difficulty.

We have things like the frozen dinner trade, where a lot of vegetables are used, that we've been trying to get off the ground in Alberta. We've had some difficulty. However, I'm sure the building of the General Foods plant in Lethbridge, which is going on right now, will improve to a considerable extent the market for many of those types of vegetables in Alberta. So in short, Mr. Chairman, we're still pursuing as well as we can the objective of increasing the percentage of Alberta-grown vegetables that go into our consumer market. It hasn't been an easy road, but we certainly haven't taken the view that we should not continue to press in every way we can in that regard.

Agreed to:

2.2 — Irrigation \$4,850,952

2.3 — Animal Products

MR. CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member for Drayton Valley.

MR. COOKSON: Mr. Chairman, I wonder if the minister on this . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: I'm sorry, I called the hon. Member for Drayton Valley first. I believe he had risen before you.

MR. ZANDER: Sorry, Jack. Mr. Chairman, I wonder if Vote No. 2.3, Animal Products, includes part of the deficit from the Innisfail sheep processing plant, or has that anything to do with it?

MR. MOORE: No, Mr. Chairman, there are no funds in this year's budget for any deficit in the operations that may occur at the Innisfail lamb plant.

That operation, in a technical sense at least, is being operated by the Ag. Development Corporation. If there are losses during this fiscal year, the Ag. Development Corporation will be reimbursed from a department vote. But we did not put any funds in the budget for that purpose because, first of all, we were not sure the operation would continue under our operations for the balance of the fiscal year. We're still trying to find a buyer for the plant. Secondly, if we did keep it, we were hopeful that we might be able to reduce the losses. I indicated earlier in the session that we had brought the losses down from an average of about \$50,000 a month to \$18,000 a month in January and February. I look for continued improvement in that position.

MR. TAYLOR: Supplementary on that point. What is the state of the sheep industry in Alberta? Are we making any progress, or are those people in it getting pretty discouraged?

MR. MOORE: The numbers have pretty well held their own in the last three or four years, while elsewhere in Canada they have decreased. We're not happy with that, of course. We'd like to see some increase in numbers. But there is growing evidence that more and more people want to get involved in production of lambs and know that good profits can be made there. Certainly I think it's fair to say that over the last three or four years, those who were knowledgeable and wanted to do that kind of work have fared far better than those in the beef cattle industry.

We look forward to some slow expansion. I don't think it's going to be that rapid, because you just can't turn an individual into a sheep farmer overnight. They have to be the kind of people who want to get involved and make a long-term commitment. That's the other thing. You can't be an inner and outer in that business any easier than you can be an inner and outer in some of the other enterprises carried out on the farm.

So we think we can maintain the population and probably increase it slightly. We don't look forward to any dramatic increase.

MR. MANDEVILLE: A supplementary question, Mr. Chairman. Have any lambs been imported from the United States this year to slaughter at the Innisfail plant? Are they slaughtering lambs from Saskatchewan or Manitoba at the Innisfail plant, or are there any imports from the provinces?

MR. MOORE: There are still lambs coming to the Innisfail plant from British Columbia and Saskatchewan. In terms of any significant number, no lambs have been brought in from the United States. That matter was under discussion last October and November. It involved a system wherein the plant would have had to contract for the feedlotting of lambs in the U.S. and pay in advance for those lambs. I reviewed the matter as it was presented to me and felt we didn't have the experience to get into such a risky business as we were talking about, and the devaluation of the Canadian dollar against the U.S. dollar probably proved it was a good idea not to move at the present time.

That's still being looked at. But as anyone in the business of forecasting future prices knows, a lot of risk is involved in buying something in October and November that isn't going to come out of the other end of the pipe until perhaps February or March. The effort there, of course, was to increase the number of slaughter lambs that might be available to the plant during the slack period in Alberta marketings, and to ensure that employment in the plant was kept at a steady level and that the market served by the plant would be served on a regular basis. We'll continue to look at that possibility, but I wouldn't want to say at this time that it will be a reality in the future.

MR. COOKSON: Mr. Minister, I'd like to raise the problem of livestock feeders' associations. I'm not sure whether that comes under your department. Would it be fair to raise it at this time?

Basically I just want some response as to the problem the feeders' associations are in or have been in. As you know, the Lacombe livestock feeder association has gone bankrupt. I presume it's one of the larger feeder co-ops in the province. I'd like to know,

Mr. Minister, if you'd care to comment on the general picture across Alberta, or the seriousness of the problem in which these associations have found themselves, and whether you as minister feel there may have been some mismanagement or whether some changes could be made in administration to re-establish these associations as viable associations.

I think they had a good purpose. They have been valuable, particularly to a small feeder who normally does not finance through our banking institutions. I know they certainly made a good contribution to the Lacombe constituency, and it's rather unfortunate they find themselves in the position they are in. I wonder if the minister would care to make a few comments on that.

MR. MOORE: Mr. Chairman, first of all the feeders' association idea was developed many, many years ago when we did not have any such thing as the Agricultural Development Corporation or Alberta farm development loans. It is now quite possible to finance feeder cattle through provincial government guaranteed loans at the bank on an individual basis. That wasn't possible years ago. So there is some question as to whether feeder associations, as they now exist, need to be expanded or not. On the other hand, I think they have served a useful purpose and can continue to. We're not wanting to phase them all out.

With respect to those — and there are a number of them — who have had financial problems that resulted in their dissolution, I can say that of course the general problem was the difficulty individuals had in making a profit feeding cattle. But if I can put it very frankly, Mr. Chairman, the more specific problem was poor management on behalf of the board of directors of the feeders' association. Many of them let into the association as members individuals who had not enough financial backing or expertise, not enough ability with respect to feeding cattle.

Quite frankly, I was surprised at the one the member refers to in Lacombe having gotten itself into that position. But really it's a matter of the feeders' association members having to realize that the feeders' association membership door isn't open to everyone. It's open only to those who can demonstrate they have not only the ability to feed cattle, but the financial capacity to take on the job, and the desire to repay.

I found in many instances that part of the lack of repayment was individuals saying, oh well, it's a government-guaranteed loan. I don't intend in any way to discredit, or to get into a position where we have to quit providing government-guaranteed loans, because we're into the area of \$400 million a year now in agriculture alone, through the Ag. Development Corporation and other programs. If we leave the attitude out there that every time there is a debt to pay, or 10 debts to pay, the government-guaranteed one comes last, that's what will occur. I've said very forcefully to the feeders' associations and others, that that debt is the same as any other, and you must gear yourselves up to make sure you collect. I think that message is getting across now. A number of feeder associations that were in a great deal of difficulty a year ago have gone out and put the pressure on and made collections. They are out of the dark now and are going to continue.

Agreed to:

2.3 — Animal Products	\$7,354,331
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2.4 — Animal Health

MR. MANDEVILLE: Mr. Chairman, I don't know if this is the area or not, but in most of the counties, municipalities, and IDs in the province, warble control is compulsory. I appreciate that two or three areas weren't compulsory. Could the minister report: do we have warble control in all counties and municipalities in the province at this time?

MR. MOORE: Yes we do, Mr. Chairman. Three areas — Peace River, Stettler, and the Brooks area, which the hon. member represents — were not in the program. The county of Stettler and the MD of Peace River asked that they be brought into the program more than a year ago. About three weeks ago an order in council was passed by the cabinet bringing the county of Newell into the program. That was done after I had several discussions with the members of the county and the MLA for the area. While they could never bring themselves to ask that they be brought in, it seems that bringing them in was the proper thing to do. As a matter of fact I haven't had any complaints about it thus far.

Agreed to:

2.4 — Animal Health	\$3,820,846
2.5 — Plant Products	\$13,791,982

Total Vote 2 — Production Assistance	\$30,549,065
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Total Vote 2 — Capital	\$1,111,655
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Vote 3 — Marketing Assistance:

3.1 — Program Support	\$645,975
3.2 — Market Development	\$4,422,306
3.3 — Market Intelligence	\$1,367,263
3.4 — International Marketing	\$1,154,859
Total Vote 3 — Marketing Assistance	\$7,590,403

Total Vote 3 — Capital	\$99,300
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Vote 4 — Rural Development Assistance

MR. MANDEVILLE: Mr. Chairman, the minister indicated in his remarks that they would continue with the emergency drought program if the occasion arose. The minister does have in place some pumps, pipes, and trailers to move around the province. Will they be available to ranchers who want to use them this summer?

MR. MOORE: Yes, Mr. Chairman, they are available. However, last year we felt that because of the emergency situation, we would make pumps, pipe, and assistance to operate them available free of charge. Outside of an emergency situation like that, we thought it was only reasonable that we recover some of the cost of operation. So just a couple of weeks ago I established a schedule of payment for the rental of pumps and pipe. Individuals who wish to obtain that equipment for the filling of their own dugouts or for any other farm purpose should call the regional

office of the Department of Agriculture in any one of those six regions. They will be advised of where the equipment is located and the of fee schedule. As a matter of fact, Mr. Chairman, later on I can provide the hon. member with the fee schedule we've set up and the details regarding the program.

Agreed to:

4.1 — Program Support	\$1,223,458
4.2 — Family Farm Services	\$9,495,278
4.3 — Advisory Services	\$5,082,669
4.4 — Community Services	\$5,433,725

Total Vote 4 — Rural Development Assistance	\$21,235,130
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Total Vote 4 — Capital	\$161,730
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Vote 5 — International Development Assistance	—
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Capital Estimates:

1.0 — Departmental Support Services	\$1,040,755
2.0 — Production Assistance	\$1,111,655
3.0 — Marketing Assistance	\$99,300
4.0 — Rural Development Assistance	\$161,730
5.0 — International Development Assistance	—

Total Capital Estimates	\$2,413,440
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Department Total	\$67,825,042
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MR. CHAIRMAN: At this time could we have a report from Subcommittee B?

MR. STEWART: Mr. Chairman, in the absence of the chairman of Subcommittee B, I would like to report that Subcommittee B of the Committee of Supply has had under consideration the estimates of expenditure for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1979, for the Department of Transportation. The subcommittee recommends to the Committee of Supply the estimates of expenditure of \$330,279,489.

Also, Mr. Chairman, Subcommittee B had under consideration . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: [Inaudible] subcommittee on the Department of Transportation, and we can have another vote later on when we come to the other department.

Would all those in favor agree that the report of Subcommittee B with respect to the Department of Transportation be received by the committee?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Carried.

Could we have the motion from the minister that the Department of Agriculture be reported?

MR. MOORE: Mr. Chairman, with respect to the Agriculture estimates, I move that the resolution be reported.

[Motion carried]

Department of Transportation

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

DR. HORNER: Mr. Chairman, I did make some opening remarks relative to the department in subcommittee. I thought I'd just take a few minutes, though, to make some remarks, because in my colleagues' estimates there have been remarks relative to the Crow rates and the government's position thereon.

As all members are aware, there has been a great deal of discussion relative to that matter. As I think the hon. Member for Bow Valley pointed out, some farm groups are now expressing some degree of awareness of the impact of the Crow on further processing in Alberta.

I would like to point out to him that insofar as the livestock industry is concerned, the Crow rates have impact only in years in which we have a scarcity of grain. Where we have a surplus of grain and low quotas, the Crow rates in fact have little or no effect on the livestock feeding and/or processing industry. Of course that doesn't apply when there is some scarcity of grain, as there was a year or two ago, and the prices were high.

Mr. Chairman, in any case we've been having a great number of meetings, particularly between my colleagues in Saskatchewan and Manitoba, with the federal minister, with the railways, and with Mr. Justice Hall, in an attempt to try to move ahead on implementation of the Hall report. Quite frankly, progress has been slower than we would have liked. However, I think we're making some progress in direct negotiations with the railways, and I'm hopeful that later this year we'll be able to make some announcements relative to a number of matters in that regard.

Insofar as the Crow rate is concerned, we are taking the position that until we get some of the recommendations of the Hall report implemented, we're not going to talk about it, and they're going to stay there. Once we get some indication from the federal government that in fact they will move on some of the things we've asked for in regard to PRA and the extended rehabilitation programs on our lines, and once we get the resolution of the right-of-way question, then we're quite willing to talk Crow benefits. But we don't intend to see that those benefits should disappear in any way.

The other matter I just want to raise very briefly: I think the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview talked about not hearing too much about what we were doing in northern Alberta. Well, I can't help it if he's asleep. But we have been moving and trying to resolve that particular problem we have in northern Alberta. Our latest attempt to resolve it is by approaching Canadian National directly and suggesting that they acquire the Canadian Pacific's interest in the NAR, and that we have one authority operating railways in northern Alberta. I think it would be a major step forward in rationalization.

The only other matter I think I should raise is the question of Prince Rupert. We are negotiating with both the federal government — two departments are involved there — and the grain industry, relative to moving ahead in a major way at the port of Prince Rupert. I would hope those negotiations can be con-

cluded at an early date, and that I will be able to make some announcement relative to our involvement and relative to the long-term benefits there. They are certainly there. More and more, Mr. Chairman, as we divert grain through the west coast, as opposed to Thunder Bay — and part of it will be an increase in production, particularly in the feed-grain side — each additional bushel we can put through west coast ports means an additional 25 to 30 cents in the farmer's pocket.

Some people have erroneously referred to it as a saving. It's actually additional income on a yearly basis. If the target we've been looking at — 100 million additional bushels through the west coast — can be achieved, that's an additional \$25 million a year income to western Canadian farmers and, therefore, is a very substantial invitation to become involved and to see that something finalizes there.

The other obvious advantages to Rupert of course are the fact that it's 500 miles closer to the major markets in the Far East, and that you can get double utilization out of hopper cars by the run to Prince Rupert because your turnaround time is about half of what it is to Vancouver. The substantial savings that could be made in demurrage are there for everybody to see, if we had the facility in Rupert.

Mr. Chairman, in that regard I'd just like to report that in a meeting with The Canadian Wheat Board we had a very positive reaction in relation to what we are attempting to do. As I said, those negotiations are ongoing, but I hope to have some announcement in the near future relative to that matter.

Mr. Chairman, I think I've covered the other major things relative to road and air in my preliminary remarks in subcommittee. I'd be pleased to answer any questions that the members might have.

MR. CHAIRMAN: May the hon. Member for Stony Plain have leave to revert to introduction of visitors?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

head: **INTRODUCTION OF SPECIAL GUESTS** (*reversion*)

MR. PURDY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It's my pleasure this morning to introduce to you, and to the members of this Assembly, 55 young adults from Woodhaven Junior High School in Spruce Grove. They are grade 7 and 8 students. They are accompanied by their teacher Mr. Chuck Allen and their bus driver Mr. Henry Singer. I would ask them to rise, and the members of the Assembly to welcome them.

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

MR. CHAIRMAN: Are there any general questions to be put to the minister before we start on the vote?

Agreed to:

1.0.1 — Minister's Office	\$187,237
1.0.2 — Chief Deputy Minister	\$143,509
1.0.3 — Legal Services	\$44,248
1.0.4 — Public Relations	\$133,791

1.0.5 — Program Evaluation	\$50,000
1.0.6 — Deputy Minister, Construction	\$147,870
1.0.7 — Assistant Deputy Minister	\$64,358
1.0.8 — Personnel	\$303,906
1.0.9 — Finance and Office Services	\$1,150,106
1.0.10 — Management Advisory Services	\$141,060
1.0.11 — Computer Services	\$1,384,480
1.0.12 — Equipment and Supply Services	\$707,894
1.0.13 — Regional Administration	\$557,417

Total Vote 1 — Departmental Support Services \$5,015,876

Total Vote 1 — Capital \$330,619

Vote 2 — Construction and Improvement of Highway Systems:

2.1 — Program Support	\$9,780,417
2.2 — Design and Construction of New Primary Highway Systems	—
2.3 — Design and Construction of New Rural-Local Highway Systems	—
2.4 — Financial Assistance for New Rural-Local Highway Systems	—
2.5 — Improvement of Existing Primary Highway Systems	\$113,649,715

2.6 — Improvement of Rural-Local Highway Systems

DR. BUCK: Mr. Chairman, I'd like to ask the minister a question that concerns my constituency and the hon. Member for Redwater-Andrew and the hon. Member for St. Albert.

Mr. Chairman, to the hon. Deputy Premier, this has to do with the problem of trying to get traffic from the Redwater fertilizer plant down to Highway 15 and then on to Highway 16 and highways going south. The problem is becoming graver all the time. The funding made available to the MD of Sturgeon to oil the road from Highway 15 in the Fort Saskatchewan area up to the Redwater fertilizer plant at least served the purpose of keeping the dust down. But the road was not built to proper specifications, because it was just a rural road.

I would like to submit to the hon. Deputy Premier that this road should be of a higher priority than it seems to be. Not only would it solve the problem of moving many tons of fertilizer in a southward direction, then disseminating it east, west, south, and whichever way you want to go; it would also solve the commuter problem, because many of the employees of the Engro fertilizer plant in Redwater reside in Fort Saskatchewan. I'd like to know if the minister can indicate to us at what stage the programming is, and what he can indicate to the Legislature.

DR. HORNER: We're aware of that particular situation, Mr. Chairman, and will be looking at it. Hopefully we can do something this year on that particular stretch of road. That will depend on some co-operation from the MDs and counties involved in the area. It's one of those areas that corners on about three different areas. So it's one of those we'll look at for additional financial assistance, perhaps on a joint basis with the three local governments involved. We'll see if we can't get something going on it this year.

MR. COOKSON: I wonder, Mr. Chairman, if I could ask the minister . . . I don't see the term "secondary". Is this a new term?

DR. HORNER: The secondary road program is in Vote 2.6.

MR. COOKSON: Mr. Chairman, I don't want to delay the approval, but I didn't have a chance to sit in on the subcommittees, on the estimates. I imagine the minister has had lots of representation through the subcommittee. I don't know what the plans are, Mr. Minister, and whether the situation is the same across the province. In my own constituency we have several secondary roads, rural-local highway systems that were constructed several years ago, and it's unfortunate that we can't keep up with the surfacing part and completion of these roads once they're constructed. It seems to me bad business to construct the basic part of the road . . . I can see the advantage of leaving it a year or possibly two to have that roadbed firm up, but once you get beyond that, of course you get the problem of deterioration of that secondary road. We have secondary roads down there now that every time traffic passes over them in the summer, part of the road goes. I think, Mr. Chairman, you have some in your own area where the road actually is deteriorating. That's poor business on the part of government since they're assuming the capital costs.

I'd like to put a pitch in for my own constituency to the government in general. Number one, let's not build secondary roads if we can't complete them in a reasonable length of time. Number two, let's make sure the Minister of Transportation has sufficient funds so that when we're caught in a situation like that, he can put 3 or 4 inches on the top of that road and stabilize it.

Agreed to:

2.6 — Improvement of Rural-Local Highway Systems	\$56,223,960
2.7 — Financial Assistance for Improvement of Rural-Local Highway Systems	\$20,984,370

Total Vote 2 — Construction and Improvement of Highway Systems	\$200,638,462
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Total Vote 2 — Capital	\$200,638,462
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Vote 3 — Construction and Improvement of Rail Systems

DR. BUCK: Mr. Chairman, may I ask the minister a short question? This had to do with rail relocation. I'm sure there are towns in the province — and I know the minister has been doing some work in consultation with the federal government. Can the minister indicate, looking at rail relocation, what steps have been taken in the program, especially in the Fort Saskatchewan area? I asked the minister that question in the question period. Can he indicate if there is a policy, or what they are doing in this area?

DR. HORNER: Mr. Speaker, as I indicated earlier today in the question period, in the matter of rail

relocation one of the problems has been that we had undertaken rail relocation studies in Lethbridge, Red Deer, and Edmonton, jointly with the federal government and the local municipality. From the federal government point of view that money has now dried up, and I would suggest any rail relocation planning is going to have to be done by our own department with the local government. I think there are certain areas that require that consideration — and Fort Saskatchewan is one of them — to look at whether or not movement of the rail will really improve the situation.

Insofar as the question of hazardous materials is concerned, relocating the rail in Fort Saskatchewan really isn't going to solve the problem if the train then has to proceed down the line through any number of smaller towns and villages. I would just like to report that in discussions with Canadian National on the Fort Saskatchewan situation, they think they have it in control because of the way they operate the trains, the nature of the track they built up there, and much stricter control by the federal authorities on rail movement of hazardous materials in Canada than there is in the United States. That's being upgraded all the time, as I indicated. I wear two hats on that one, as both the Minister of Transportation and the minister responsible for Disaster Services.

We have an ongoing committee upgrading the whole matter. However, we would be pleased to sit down with Fort Saskatchewan and look at their total transportation plan, including the rail area and how it affects that. There are some considerations coming along that CP Rail, of course, would like to get access into Fort Saskatchewan. If we can resolve that without additional trackage being built, I think it would be very helpful. That's part of the ongoing negotiations taking place between CN and CP, and might be one of the trade-offs in which I could accomplish the earlier objective I talked about in that regard.

So rail relocation is a very difficult subject. My comments to the head of CP Rail were that we would expect them and Marathon Realty to pick up most of the costs of rail relocation where the Canadian Pacific was involved, because they were going to be the major ones to benefit.

Agreed to:

3.1 — Design and Construction of New Rail Systems	—
3.2 — Improvement of Existing Rail Systems	\$6,760,000
Total Vote 3 — Construction and Improvement of Rail Systems	\$6,760,000

Vote 4 — Construction and Improvement of Airport Facilities

DR. BUCK: May I ask a question of the hon. Deputy Premier. I was not on this subcommittee, but I'd just like the Deputy Premier to indicate to me very briefly what the basic philosophy is, and how the department has laid out its priorities. How do you establish where airports will go, which are going to be the larger ones, what is the overall game plan?

DR. HORNER: As the member may be aware, we have three different situations relative. The first one is the so-called provincial airports that are multi-use air-

ports and were basically put in place originally relative to firefighting and the forest services. Those include airports at Fort Chipewyan, High Level, Rainbow Lake, Whitecourt, Edson, Rocky Mountain House, Pincher Creek, Jasper, and Hinton to some extent. These are provincial airports which are owned and operated by the province. Those have now been practically completed. They vary in length, but we try to get them up to 6,000 feet. Most of them are that except for Jasper/Hinton. There, because of the terrain, we couldn't get longer than 4,000 feet.

We then have what we call special purpose airports where the priority is based on isolation and that manner of thing. In that category would be such airports as the ones in the middle north, north of Slave Lake, which are, at the moment, gravel strips; Grande Cache because of isolation, we are . . . In this vote there is enough money to build a new airport at Grande Cache. The clearing has been done this winter. We intend to move ahead there because of the isolation factor. And there are others like that.

Then we have what we call a community airport development, and under that there are two different types, if you like. There's the general one that we're building in the communities with community assistance, and then the community operates and maintains it. These are usually 3,000-foot strips, and we've done a number of them. I can get a list for the hon. member if he wants them.

Then there are certain ones, such as Camrose, which are 3,500 feet, have a little longer air strip with more of an industrial capacity. Hopefully, if the land can be acquired, in the coming year we'll be extending Hanna, because of the coal thermal plant development there.

We opened 13 new ones last year. This year I would expect we will be opening at least as many — I think there are 14 or 15 to be opened — and this is finalizing them with pavement, lights, and a beacon. When we complete the program in a year or two — perhaps you never complete a program like this; there will always be maintenance and upgrading and so on — we will have the best small airport program in North America. Already I'm getting some very positive reports of lives being saved because of the lighted airports we have now throughout the province and the beacons that are there. So I think it's been a very well received and satisfying program, and we will be continuing something like 30 different ones in this year's budget that will be moving ahead. There will be others for which we will be acquiring land, moving on for next year.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Minister, if a community wants to go ahead, starting right from stage zero, can you indicate what support there is from the provincial government, and the mechanics of trying to get some support?

DR. HORNER: I think the application and support is substantial. We usually buy the land, build it, and then turn it over to them to operate.

DR. BUCK: A short question to the minister. This doesn't affect the minister directly, but I would just like to know what control facilities there are in the Fort McMurray airstrip. The reason I ask that comes out of the Cranbrook situation, where somebody told me there's somebody to operate a radio, and they

said, well, as far as we can tell there isn't anybody to run into you, and that's about it. Can the minister tell us what the situation is there?

DR. HORNER: My understanding of the situation in Fort McMurray, which by the way is a federal airport, is that there is very adequate air traffic control by radio from the tower at McMurray, and that there's no problem with it.

Agreed to:

4.1 — Program Support	\$372,840
4.2 — Design and Construction of New Airport Facilities	\$5,680,000
4.3 — Improvement of Existing Airport Facilities	\$2,270,000
Total Vote 4 — Construction and Improvement of Airport Facilities	\$8,322,840
Total Vote 4 — Capital	\$8,322,840

Vote 5 — Operation and Maintenance of Transportation Systems:

5.1 — Program Support	\$1,932,015
5.2 — Maintenance of Primary Highway Systems	\$26,365,250
5.3 — Maintenance of Rural-Local Highway Systems	\$9,005,297
5.4 — Highway System User Services	\$5,072,871
5.5 — Air Transportation System User Services	\$1,022,546
5.6 — Apprentice Training	\$1,372,067

DR. BUCK: Mr. Chairman, can the minister indicate when he's going to get his favorite hovercraft off the beach, and what's happening?

DR. HORNER: Mr. Chairman, the hoverlift ferry is operating. I would remind the committee that when we went ahead with the development — it's a two-year project, and it's been funded 50 per cent by the National Research Council. We've finalized that and received funding from them to the amount of about \$400,000. Naturally in a new endeavor such as this, there are some bugs to work out. We had a real problem with the original winches on the ferry. These are in the process of being replaced by larger, stronger winches of a maritime type as opposed to the ones that were there. However, on Friday last, on my latest report, they were skimming across the Peace River in eight minutes flat.

DR. BUCK: I'm really glad to see the minister got his boat off the rocks. Can the minister indicate what other areas in the province he is looking at where we can also make use of hovercraft?

DR. HORNER: I think there are a number of areas, particularly in the north where, if the concept proves out, there'll be substantial savings. I think of north-eastern Alberta, Lake Athabasca, and a variety of areas. Wabasca, Wabasca River, and other crossings on the Peace have a great deal of difficulty, not only in the cost of building a bridge, but because of the nature of the soil — it's slipping and sliding around — so the concept may prove very useful indeed. A great deal of interest has been expressed by British Columbia, northern Saskatchewan, and northern Manitoba

as well in the concept that was developed here in Alberta. The other important thing that has come out of that is an icebreaking application with the use of the hoverlift, and it can increase the icebreaking capacity of an icebreaker by about 10 times.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Chairman, a question to the minister. In these studies and in looking into the use of these machines — and for some of the members who don't know, the one at La Crete is not free-flying because of fog and some other problems — are there areas where they're going to be using free-flight hovercraft as opposed to the directed ones?

DR. HORNER: Mr. Chairman, that's an important distinction to make. The ferry at La Crete is winch-operated and is not, as you call it, free-flight. The matter of free-flight hovercraft as opposed to hoverlift ferry is that they are much more expensive to build and operate than the hoverlift ferry concept. The hovercraft has been used in the north to some extent. I understand Northern Transportation has one or two of them stored up there. We don't see an application for the hovercraft as opposed to the hoverlift ferry.

Agreed to:

Total Vote 5 — Operation and Maintenance of Transportation Systems	\$44,770,046
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Total Vote 5 — Capital	\$2,586,716
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Total Vote 6 — Transportation Planning and Services	\$2,807,118
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Total Vote 6 — Capital	\$35,950
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Vote 7 — Urban Transportation Assistance

DR. BUCK: Mr. Chairman, I'd like to ask the minister a question. I think I make my biannual speech to the Legislature about maintaining the railroads, especially within the confines of the city of Edmonton. I'd like to know if the minister or the department have done any intensive studies on the use of the railroad lines coming into the centre of the city of Edmonton from areas such as Fort Saskatchewan, Stony Plain, Leduc, and wherever we have these lines coming in. I'm really vitally concerned that we politicians, in our wisdom or lack of said, may go ahead and scrap these rail lines, and in 20 years have to pay millions of dollars to buy them back.

I would like to have the minister give serious consideration to reinstitution of a service such as the dayliner service that used to go between North Battleford and Edmonton, possibly looking at a modified system using that line and type of service for a commuter service between some of the so-called satellite cities and the city of Edmonton. I think we as legislators have to provide some leadership in trying to get people out of their motor cars. I know I feel morally guilty every time I have to make a trip in and out from the Legislature to my town, when I have to drive that little red beast of mine that maybe gives me 11 miles to the gallon, where for one dollar and in 20 minutes of time I could ride a commuter train. We politicians have to provide the leadership. That train or bus is no use to the commuter if it comes once a

day at 11 o'clock in the morning and 6 o'clock at night. So I'd like to know what studies the department is doing in conjunction with the federal government to have a realistic look at making use of these existing railroads to bring the people into the city of Edmonton who are working here.

DR. HORNER: Mr. Chairman, very extensive studies have been done relative to all modes in the metropolitan area and between the two metropolitan areas. I don't think there's any danger that we'll lose the ground of any of the lines coming in, because I think we'd fairly quickly put an RDA or something on them. I think that's very important and I agree with the hon. member.

The fact of the matter is, though, in the studies we did in the surrounding communities as to whether or not they wanted commuter bus service, the only area that showed any inclination at all was Sherwood Park, and the county has now developed a bus program from Sherwood Park. I must advise that the good burghers of Fort Saskatchewan didn't think that was a very good idea at all, nor did those in Spruce Grove or Leduc. While I agree that there are going to have to be additional modes of travel down the road, the only other suggestion I have for the hon. member to start with is, I hope he will drive in to the end of the LRT and help out the city of Edmonton by using it.

DR. BUCK: A comment to the hon. minister. In most of these surveys, I think people have the preconception that they're going to get a little improvement in the bus service. I would like to bring to the information of the committee: last summer when we were in Scotland, a radius of about 50 miles outside the city of Edinburgh, there is a 20- to 30-minute bus service, within about a 12-hour period. The service has to be there; it has to be in place.

We as taxpayers have to start realizing that if we have to subsidize mass transit, or public transit, in the long run we are really saving a lot of money if we leave the car at home. But I guess we as North Americans are married to the automobile, and we have tunnel vision when it comes to thinking about any other type of transportation. So we have to put the transportation in place first, take our lumps as to the losses we inflict, and provide the service, and then I think the commuters will come.

It's the same thing as when Pacific Western Airlines started the airbus. I don't think they had any idea that that service would be utilized as extensively as it is. But they put it in place and said: okay boys, let's take our lumps for the first year or two if we have to; we think it will be used. Really, I feel that is what would happen if we had this transportation in place.

Agreed to:

Vote 7 — Urban Transportation Assistance	\$55,891,000
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Total Vote 7 — Capital	\$50,345,240
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Vote 8 — Surveys and Property Acquisition

DR. BUCK: Mr. Chairman, I'd like to ask the minister a question that came out of the Alberta Tourist Associa-

tion convention in Peace River. This will concern the member from there, the hon. Mr. Adair, and the hon. minister Mr. Dowling.

The representation was made to me at that time that the 1978 road map we were using, showing the main roads in the Peace River country is practically a duplicate of the 1972 map. Some of the people in that area were quite upset because they said, we're trying to promote tourism in this area and all it shows is one little red line with a few little ramifications. The official map has taken off 1,100 miles of good secondary road tourists should be aware of.

Some of the comments that came out of that convention: one chap said, we had an inquiry from people coming up from the United States asking, how many gallons of gasoline would we have to buy in Edmonton to get us up to, say, High Level or Manning? They thought there was nothing between Edmonton and Manning to High Level. A second inquiry came from people coming from eastern Canada who were going up to the Peace River country. They said, how many loaves of bread for sandwiches do we have to take to make the long run from Edmonton up into the Peace River country? They felt that the map had just taken off all the side roads.

So I would like to say to the minister that I know you can't put everything on a road map, but I also know the people of Alberta had better start learning how to look at road maps. Many times I get a phone call saying, my relatives were coming up from Calgary and they can't find Fort Saskatchewan because it isn't marked at the southern limits of Edmonton, on a great big map saying how you find Fort Saskatchewan. Well, I tell the people, when you go to the United States, to a heavily populated area, do you not look at the road map? Of course they do.

But you know, we're getting a little more sophisticated here. We're getting more people, so we have to start looking at these road maps. So I say to the minister, let's not just have a bare-bones map. The minister should be proud of some of these secondary roads, and we want people to use them, get them off the beaten track. I would just like the minister's comment on the 1972 road map versus the 1978 road map.

DR. HORNER: Mr. Chairman, I've had those representations of course from my two colleagues who were at that meeting. There were some problems with the early editions of the '78 road map, some of which have been corrected in later editions. However, I think the comment is fair, and we will attempt to upgrade it and put in as much information as we can. But as the hon. member has noted, you can't put everything on there. We'll take particular pains to ensure that particularly the good secondary roads are on the map and are identified.

AN HON. MEMBER: Agreed.

DR. HORNER: I think we have improved our signing on the roads generally throughout the province, and we would hope to continue that.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Chairman, to the minister. Can the minister indicate if the Alberta Motor Association is still as involved in signing some of the rural roads as it was years ago? I know it was a great service. They

did an excellent job, and I'd like to know if they are still involved in that.

DR. HORNER: Yes, Mr. Chairman, they're still involved in that.

MR. MANDEVILLE: Mr. Chairman, just one question as far as surveys are concerned. I'm speaking of the surveys where subdivisions come into the surveys branch. They get such a large stack of applications that they have a hard time to deal with them. Has the minister made any change or is he anticipating any changes in the surveys department?

DR. HORNER: Very substantially, as the hon. member might note. There is an 80 per cent increase in surveys and mapping. That primarily is to initiate a new survey control and co-ordinate system that's going to bounce off a satellite up there and give us a very accurate surveying system which will cut down the amount of time involved in getting some of the property of these subdivisions surveyed. It should also cut the cost relative to surveying, because we will be able to pinpoint the mounds, using what they call geodesic co-ordinate controls with a satellite and a computer.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Chairman, to the minister. I'd like to ask a question. I do want to compliment the minister on some of the signing, but some I'm not so happy with.

When I've been speaking to members of the minister's department I've been told you can only put as much on a road sign as you can see at 60 or 80 kilometres per hour. Now I have some concern, and the concern has been expressed to me about some of these large signs that have the cup, the fork, the tent, the other stuff, and the services. What is the policy on the facility signs?

DR. HORNER: The facility signing is there at the option of the community involved. We provide the sign, they have to pay a small fee initially, and that's it. If they apply and can identify the facilities in their community, we will erect the signs in the appropriate area.

I have a continuing argument with some of my engineers about the signing program, but I think we're winning.

DR. BUCK: A further question to the minister along that line, Mr. Chairman. What are the criteria? If you say a mile or 2 or 3 or 5 miles off the main road . . . Let's use Ardrossan for an example. It's approximately a mile and a half — I guess I had better start converting to kilometres — about 2 kilometres off Highway 16 East. What can they ask of the department of highways for indicating what facilities are available? I mean how far does that stretch? There has to be a limit.

DR. HORNER: Generally 5 miles. But we try to keep it flexible because if you start drawing the thing at 5 miles and it's 5.25, you can get into problems.

DR. BUCK: I would like to know from the minister what the overall policy is on signs on the highway right of way, saying, so many miles to Joe Blow's

historical site. What is the signing on that? We've been waiting for years, and the people have been waiting to know what they can put on signs and what they cannot. What is the overall policy?

DR. HORNER: Generally we would use facility signing for anything like that, a golf course, or those kinds of things. We would use the facility signs, the symbols. We, and I'm sure the people of Alberta, don't want to see our highways cluttered with advertising signs as such.

The other addition we have made, though, is to allow the radio stations in the rural areas to put up a small, neat sign which they pay for, identifying the station and its place on the dial.

DR. BUCK: So we might as well find out now what the policy is as to signing, in case there's a provincial election this fall. I can couch this question by asking, if a farmer is, say, a shorthorn breeder and he's putting a sign on his own property, how far off the highway must this sign be? I'm sure the minister is asked this many times.

DR. HORNER: Ordinarily the regulations say 1,000 feet. But we've been flexible about that, particularly farm gate signs. I have no objection to farm gate signs. We would like to see them well done, but we wouldn't have any objections to farm gate signs as such. If a farmer along the highway wants to put up a sign, which I hope would be aesthetic and so on, there's no objection. But ordinarily the signing is 1,000 feet.

DR. BUCK: That will answer my question. The politicians must keep their signs 1,000 feet off the right of way.

Agreed to:
8.1 — Surveys and Mapping \$4,478,024

8.2 — Property Acquisition

DR. BUCK: May I ask the minister just one short question? This has to do with the policy when the Department of Transportation is acquiring right of way. It was a former practice, and I don't know if it is the present practice, where if we needed, say, 20 acres of land we would buy the whole quarter. Then the farmer was happy, and if the department still wanted to sell the remaining portion to a neighboring farmer . . . Is that policy still in effect, and how is it working?

DR. HORNER: Actually, yes, Mr. Chairman. We leave it up to the local landowner whether or not he wants us to. But if we're going to have a major case of severance, we will buy the whole quarter. If it is just taking off a corner, that's a different matter entirely. Expansion of a right of way is a different matter as well. The policy generally is the same. We're trying to treat the farmer as fairly as possible in relation to acquisition of land and right of way. It becomes a very difficult problem on certain occasions, I might say mostly within the environments of the cities and towns as opposed to the rural areas, generally

because most rural people appreciate the need for better highways.

Agreed to:
8.2 — Property Acquisition \$1,614,123
Total Vote 8 — Surveys and Property Acquisition \$6,092,147
Total Vote 8 — Capital \$1,251,021

Capital Estimates:
Vote 1 — Departmental Support Services \$330,619

MR. COOKSON: It may be unusual to come in at this late stage, but I just want to say to the frontbenchers over there and the cabinet that there simply isn't enough money being spent on road maintenance in this province. We can't keep up with the deterioration of roads. I know the Minister of Transportation is very capable, and I know he has to face the cabinet in terms of priorities, but we can't stay at a 5.2 per cent increase and maintain our road system.

I could tell the cabinet of many areas where we could reduce our costs. I go back, just to cite one, to alcoholism and drug abuse, where the increase is something like 19 per cent. You know, I could give a great speech at this time in terms of priority, but I won't because of the lateness of the hour. But I would suggest to the cabinet that if we're going to knock off the 10 per cent sales tax on fuel — which the Member for Clover Bar supported, and he's concerned about transportation — maybe we should take this \$95 million and apply it to the maintenance and capital construction on roads. I'm looking forward to it in next year's budget — that the \$95 million we've saved the people of Alberta in terms of tax will be back into the Department of Transportation for construction and improvement of the road system of Alberta.

I can't think, Mr. Chairman, of a better place to spend it. To improve our road system would enhance the overall picture of Alberta in terms of attractiveness to industry and, in particular, to the rural areas of the province.

DR. HORNER: Mr. Chairman, I think it's important to . . . The percentage figures in here don't give the picture. I think it should be pointed out that if you compare the comparable estimates the situation is substantially different.

There is a 25 per cent increase in the primary road construction vote. There is a 35 per cent increase in the secondary highway program. There's a substantial increase. The reason these percentages are not accurate is that we were fortunate enough to get some additional money last year, and the special warrants are in the forecast. They were fairly substantial, something like almost \$22 million, as a matter of fact, in additional spending last year. So the 5 per cent figure doesn't give you an accurate thing. You should compare the \$330 million this year to the \$272 million voted last year.

MR. COOKSON: Mr. Chairman, can the minister assure us that there are sufficient funds in the estimates to cover the maintenance of the primary system in Alberta, including the capital expansion this

year, and the lift that is required on some of our primary highways? I'm thinking in terms of Highway 51 which goes west of Bentley: it happens to be in my constituency. Can he assure us that sufficient funds are in the budget to cover the delayed completion of secondary roads in the province that have been in the construction process for upward of six to seven years?

DR. HORNER: Mr. Chairman, I would hope the hon. gentleman, who on other occasions talks about restraint, understands that the industry in this province has a certain capacity. If you try to strain that capacity, you're not going to get your dollar's worth of work done. We have to balance the program, according to the capacity of the industry to produce, without an undue inflationary pressure. We have to balance the type of construction we do to give the industry a fair chance in its various segments; that is, grading, paving, asphalt, concrete, and those things.

I consider this budget to be well balanced, to have the capacity to use the industry to its fullest without, I hope, putting any inflationary pressure on them, and to accomplish a great deal in Alberta this year.

MR. COOKSON: Mr. Chairman, I'm still talking about constraint. I haven't changed my position whatsoever. I've always talked about constraint. All I'm talking about is in terms of priority. You could go through this estimate of expenditures, and I wonder sometimes where our terms of priority are. We should emphasize priority in the area of the Department of Transportation.

Agreed to:	
Department Total	\$330,297,489

DR. HORNER: Mr. Chairman, I move the resolution be reported.

[Motion carried]

MR. CHAIRMAN: In light of the fact there is less than half an hour to go into another major department, do you have any announcement, Mr. Government House Leader?

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

[Motion carried]

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

DR. McCRIMMON: Mr. Speaker, the Committee of Supply has had under consideration the following resolutions, reports the same, and asks leave to sit again.

Resolved that for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1979, amounts not exceeding the following sums be granted to Her Majesty for the Department of Agriculture: \$8,450,444 for departmental support services, \$30,549,065 for production assistance, \$7,590,403 for marketing assistance, and \$21,235,130 for rural development assistance.

Resolved that for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1979, amounts not exceeding the following sums be granted to Her Majesty for the Department of Transportation: \$5,015,876 for departmental support services, \$200,638,462 for construction and improvement of highway systems, and \$6,760,000 for construction and improvement of rail systems, \$8,322,840 for construction and improvement of airport facilities, \$44,770,046 for operation and maintenance of transportation systems, \$2,807,118 for transportation planning and services, \$55,891,000 for urban transportation assistance, and \$6,092,147 for surveys and property acquisition.

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, before calling it 1 o'clock, next week's business, at least on Monday, will begin with Committee of Supply on Orders of the Day, starting with the Department of Energy and Natural Resources. We will then proceed in committee to take those departments which have been in subcommittee as the ones for earliest consideration here in Committee of the Whole.

During the evening of Monday we will have continuation of the subcommittees, but the Assembly itself will not sit.

I move we call it 1 o'clock.

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

[At 12:35 p.m., pursuant to Standing Order 5, the House adjourned to Monday at 2:30 p.m.]