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COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY, SUBCOMMITTEE B
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8 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. Donnelly

Department of the Solicitor General

MR. CHAIRMAN: You've all been here before. Any questions you have, please signal me and all the questions will be directed to the minister. Mr. Minister, if you care to introduce your support staff then make a short statement to begin with.

MR. FARRAN: Mr. Chairman, on my right is Rheal LeBlanc who is the Deputy Solicitor General; then on my left is Jim Fliczuk who is finance man in the department; directly behind me is Richard Griffith from the motor vehicles branch; we've got George Pedersen who is the registrar for motor vehicles; Bill Wong who is Jim Fliczuk's right hand; Bob King, who is the ADM specifically in charge of all of our corrections wing; and Ed Lysyk who is the director of law enforcement.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Would you like to make a statement, Mr. Minister, before we begin our general discussion?

MR. FARRAN: Mr. Chairman, this is a department that is very intensive in manpower by the very nature of it. Forty per cent of it is concerned with what was formerly under the jurisdiction of the Department of Highways -- which is the huge motor vehicles branch in its registration operation, and the highway patrol, which is an 80-man patrol primarily concerned with enforcing provincial statutes in relation to trucks, school busses, and licensing. Then in addition to that is responsibility for all the police forces in the province, approximately 1,000 men under provincial contract to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police; the municipal police forces, 450 of whom are also RCMP under contract to small towns; and then approximately 850 men in each of Calgary and Edmonton, which are the large metropolitan police forces. Our responsibility there to the municipal police forces is very indirect, but it's there through the director of law enforcement and we have a small section which is devoted to that sort of law enforcement problem.

That section, of which Mr. Lysyk is the director, also looks after certification of firearms in the province, the licensing of private investigators and security guards, the swearing in and appointing of special constables, and our quite extensive backup for provincial crime prevention programs. The leading one of course is operation Check Stop, which is directed at impaired driving, in which we do the co-ordinating of the police action in the field and we also provide the educational backup through the media. Then we have a number of other crime prevention programs which has been part of our policy direction in the last two years; such as neighborhood watch, block captains, lady beware, operation identification and other programs directed at locking up your car, avoiding the theft of skis and so on. Through this program we have now encouraged considerable support both from the private sector, represented by Chambers of Commerce and by municipal

authorities, all directed at preventing crime and reducing crime by that method in addition to the traditional police method of reactive policing on complaint.

We then look after all persons sentenced by the courts to sentences less than two years less a day. This is an area of responsibility for enforcement of Criminal Code, which is a federal law enforced by the provinces, and our numerous provincial statutes such as The Highway Traffic Act, The Motor Vehicle Administration Act, The Liquor Control Act, The Petty Trespass Act, Off-highway Vehicle Act, and so on. The number of prisoners sentenced to serve terms of imprisonment has grown remarkably over the last decade, and a high point in recent months, I regret to say, has been as high as 2,000 people in confinement. In addition to that we have some 272, at the last count, inmates who have been allowed early release in the form of temporary absence. I will explain in a moment what that system is. We have in excess of 6,000 on probation, around 6,100 at the present time.

The main institutions we run for those who are incarcerated and -- the average last year was around 1,800 to 1,850, but then I say recently we have reached 2,000 -- of the institutions we run, the largest one is Fort Saskatchewan, 25 miles east of Edmonton, which was originally built around the turn of the century to hold 200 prisoners and on occasion lately has had as many as 700. I think at one point it did reach 800. You can understand that means either doubling in cells or sometimes having three people in the cell. So we have Fort Saskatchewan. Then run pretty well in tandem with Fort Saskatchewan is Belmont, which we use as some sort of a safety valve for the overcrowded prisons, as a sort of a front door for re-entry back into the (inaudible). As prisoners come closer to their time for release we put them through reorientation in Belmont. It is also used as a base for those who, through good behavior, qualify for a chance, although they are still serving their sentence, but a chance for the last third of their program to operate in the community from a disciplined halfway house, and I'll talk about that again in a minute. So we have Fort Saskatchewan. Then similar to that in Calgary we have Calgary Spy Hill which is also a comparatively large institution, with 350 to 400 inmates, but it doesn't have the same problems as Fort Saskatchewan because it doesn't have prisoners on remand. In the Fort Saskatchewan population, there can be as many -- when I say it has gone up as high as 800, at least half of those are prisoners awaiting trial on remand or adjournment, some of whom have to be kept in maximum security because they're the sort of inmate who will eventually be a candidate for a federal penitentiary because the sort of crimes they've committed are likely to draw sentences of more than two years. They are in the serious category and maximum security has to be applied. So Calgary Spy Hill doesn't have those problems, because we have a remand centre next to the provincial courts in downtown Calgary, which is another one of our big institutions. This was built to hold 200 in comparatively recent times and we have had to add another floor and we're aiming -- what is the capacity now, 300 is it?

MR. KING: Three hundred and twelve.

MR. FARRAN: Three hundred and twelve. In that remand centre, as well as holding prisoners awaiting trial we also operate the detention centre for the Calgary city police, which is really like the big metropolitan police lockup for people who have been arrested and their cases are still under investigation before the charges are actually pressed in the court. That includes also responsibility, the very onerous responsibility of the drunk tank. We have fully-fledged correction institution at Lethbridge and this has a regular clientele of around 120 to 150 inmates. Plans are included in the budget this year to rebuild the Lethbridge correction institution, which is of similar vintage to Fort Saskatchewan -- very old. The reports are from Public Works that maintenance is getting to be very costly in there. We'd be well-advised to rebuild.

Up in the north, Peace River, we have the most modern of our correctional institutions, really well designed good new building. In that correctional institution, which is again a fully-fledged orthodox correctional institution, we have approximately 150, is it? Today, how many?

MR. KING: In Peace River we have 163.

MR. FARRAN: One hundred and sixty-three. We do ship inmates from Fort Saskatchewan when the crowding gets completely unbearable to Peace River, despite the fact that this often produces complaints from the inmates and their families because of course it moves them away from family contact. Sometimes it is a good thing to move them away from their environment, but it has to be done anyway on the point of view of logistics. At Peace River we have a most comprehensive trade school, which is operated with Grande Prairie college, a place where we can offer the most trainings in trade.

In addition to those main correctional institutions, we have the new Nordegg correctional institution which is a wilderness challenge camp based on the old ghost town of Nordegg where a number of buildings have been reconstructed with inmate labor and some log cabins have been made satellite camps. It operates three satellites and they do work there for the lands and forests section of the department of natural resources as well as undergo these very challenging, rigorous, outdoor, character-building programs. Our capacity there is again around 100, and I think we have sometimes been as high as 120, but I think the average now is about 90, isn't it?

MR. KING: Eighty-six.

MR. FARRAN: Eighty-six. If we have too many there of course it detracts from the overall value of the program. The teacher/pupil ratios have to be pretty low in that sort of operation. When they're out with six or seven tough young kids in pup tents climbing up and down the mountains, you can't have too many.

We also operate at the present time seven work camps in the provincial forestry reserves, picnic grounds and for the department of highways. We intend in this budget to increase those seven work camps by another four or five, hopefully five. It could be by the end of the year if everything goes well, we might have as many as 13. When I say seven, am I right? It is eight, isn't it?

MR. KING: There are seven excluding the three at Nordegg, so 10 if you include those. Then the other ones would be in addition to that for this year.

MR. FARRAN: So we can have a total of 14 if we get the ones this year, if we get all of them. Two of those that are planned this year will be run by the native court workers association, which is commanded by a very outstanding Albertan called Chester Cunningham, and they will be primarily for native offenders. The community corrections wing of the correctional service is responsible for the probation service. We have probation officers throughout the province and, as I say, some 6,100 offenders on probation. The case loads are high for probation officers, but in the last couple of years we have reorganized the probation branch so that we believe they can handle this heavy load by the classification of their case load into maximum, medium and minimum securities. We have also tightened up the general procedure in the probation branch so that more field visits are made and there are not so many perfunctory checks on probation by telephone or postcard. We have standardized the pre-sentence report, which is a service we give to the assistance of judges for determining what would be an adequate sentence after a finding of guilt.

This correction service also looks after the new innovative Alberta fines options program, which could probably be more easily understood if we called it work-for-fine project, where nobody by reason of inability to pay need be incarcerated on default. Some still are incarcerated on default, but it was their own lack of responsibility. So we have a second phase to this program operated within the institution so that they can work their way out more quickly than they otherwise would, by chopping firewood or picking rocks or something like that. This section of the service also looks after our temporary absence program. This has just really begun to unfold in the last year and really in effect what we mean is this. If an inmate who's sentenced for a comparatively minor offence, and by that I mean not a violent or very serious crime, would normally expect to serve two-thirds of his sentence in the correctional institution and to get one-third off for good behavior in terms of earned or statutory remission. We say under the temporary absence program that he can serve another one-third out at a job in the community, provided that he comes home at night to the disciplined atmosphere of a halfway house. So he serves one-third in the institution and before he goes out he gets pre-release training at Belmont, and then the other third he would serve in the community from one of these halfway houses.

We have under contract 23 different halfway houses in the province run by volunteer organizations such as the John Howard Society. We determine the house rules, post the house rules, and if the offender misbehaves in the slightest way he is whistled straight back to the prison again. So it's a much, much stricter control than is exercised by the national parole board. There is no formal breach of parole or anything like that, they are still technically inmates. If they don't come home at night, they are unlawfully at large and they are picked up immediately by the police. We have had considerable success, very few failures, with this temporary absence program. It's only permissible if they go to work or go to a regular vocational training. We have to know where they are all day and night really. We've been pretty cautious with this program. As I say, we've got nearly 2,000 in the correctional institutions, and we only have close to 700 on temporary absence. So we haven't gone all that strongly on it, but if we hadn't had those 300 out on temporary absence, our pain in the overcrowded institutions would be even greater.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Did you say 300?

MR. KING: Three hundred, yes.

MR. FARRAN: Two hundred and seventy-one it is today on temporary absence.

MR. R. SPEAKER: I thought you said 700 at first. Sorry.

MR. FARRAN: No, 300 and our total has gone as high in recent months as 2,000 in the institutions.

Perhaps I should give you an indication of what's contained in this budget now for our new directions in those areas I've mentioned so far. In the area of law enforcement the biggest new direction is in regard to gun control, which has been postponed for one year by the federal government to come into effect on January 1, 1979, where anyone buying a firearm has to have a firearms acquisition certificate. That certificate includes some tests or value judgment that he is a suitable person to have a firearm. So we have had to tune up our department ready for this and appoint a firearms officer and, of course, acquaint all police throughout the province of what's coming effective January 1, 1979. This is a program that we didn't particularly want, but has been forced on us by the federal government. That department anyway was suffering some pressure, that little

section on the firearms, with the increasing applications for restricted weapons of one sort or another. The fact that we've got to the point where we feel that we've got to regulate ranges, though we will allow individual ranges they have to be of a safe standard, and this applies also to the bona fide pistol club. We have our proposition for ranges out among the gun fraternity at the present time awaiting the feedback.

We've also in that area had a big increase in the number of security guards and private investigators. This is a reflection of high crime rates in North America and the fact that business in particular, but also some householders, are now seeking protection from private enterprise. Our Private Investigators and Security Guards Act is sadly in need of revision. All we do at the present time is to check that they have no criminal record, through CPIC, but we feel that the time will probably come for us to enforce some sort of standards in that area. So we have a draft act circulating among the industry at the present time, again waiting for feedback and, we would expect perhaps to bring it in in the fall or at the very latest the spring of next year.

The third area in law enforcement which is gaining greater and greater importance in our policy drives is crime prevention. We have now every police force active in this area. We've got so many programs that we have the feeling that we should be tying them together in some way. We've got as many as 11 different programs going and at the time has probably come for greater co-ordination. But it is an important growing area where we have had, we feel, some success; some areas where they do point to a reduction in the general level of run-of-the-mill petty crime due to crime prevention. For instance, the RCMP claim reductions from this reason in Sherwood Park and the Calgary city police in some of their suburbs claim that they have reduced the level of petty crime.

We have new areas coming up in crime prevention and this is mostly connected with the sudden and startling increase in vandalism and arson. We are having to devote some of our time to this. We have pamphlets out hopefully be circulated through all the schools on the dangers of vandalism. I tabled them in the House I think in the first week, and of course we have these ongoing programs, which we are monitoring very carefully, of sophisticated alarm systems in selected schools in Calgary and Edmonton. The big difference between those two projects, incidentally, so we can measure one against the other, was that the Calgary one is on dedicated private lines straight into a computer on the central police switchboard through AGT, but they're dedicated tied private lines; whereas the one in Edmonton through Edmonton Telephones is on the regular telephone line, which of course would be much cheaper and have much greater application to rural areas if it proves itself out. They are two-year experiments and we've got to watch them very carefully.

The other new initiative in law enforcement is that we have started tentatively in a modest way to recruit for the RCMP auxiliary volunteers. We've given them permission to have 90 unpaid auxiliary volunteers in Mounted Police uniform. This is something that is done in British Columbia and it is a way of augmenting our strength, which tends to be held down by the federal authorities in Ottawa. Anything else I should add on law enforcement?

MR. R. SPEAKER: Could you just go into that in a little more detail?

MR. FARRAN: Yes, in British Columbia they have a system of one-for-one volunteers where they allow the RCMP to recruit an unpaid volunteer, who is called an auxiliary, who can only function as a policeman when he is alongside a regular policeman. He is really in the nature of a reserve for emergencies and disasters, but he is also a help to strength while he is in training. While he is with the policeman in the car he operates under his directions. The great advantage is of course it reduces the element of risk some people

claim exists in single-man cars, and it also gives you a reserve in the case of a disaster or wartime emergency.

In this province we have been led into it -- this is one of the reasons that our total staff this year was 90 -- by the fact that the Armed Forces will no longer promise the extensive backup they used to in the case of a big disaster, wartime or otherwise. The most they can offer us is a limited number of radio-equipped jeeps. They can no longer give us the manpower, partly because of the transfer of the airborne regiment to Petawawa, but also a shift in their policy where they feel they will need all their regular forces plus the militia in the event of a big emergency. So the obvious thing is that the only disciplined forces we can rely on in an emergency are the police, so the best way to start is to double-up one for one with earmarking at this stage of volunteers who can operate alongside the police.

MR. R. SPEAKER: What will this cost?

MR. FARRAN: There's no cost involved. It's very minimal.

MR. LeBLANC: There's a cost of \$450 for buying uniforms.

MR. FARRAN: Yes, for the uniforms only. That's all, they're not paid.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Four hundred and fifty dollars per person?

MR. LeBLANC: Yes, that's right.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Have you had a good volunteer list come forward and is it . . .

MR. FARRAN: It's only just started and they have to be very carefully selected so there's no friction in the community. They've got to be very balanced sort of people, so the whole success will depend on the selection. Edmontons city police have also been contemplating doing this but I don't think they have started it yet.

The law enforcement branch is also responsible for the highway patrol. We are increasing the size of the highway patrol by . . .

MR. KING: Seven officers and three clerical.

MR. FARRAN: . . . seven officers and three clerical this year.

MR. KING: There's been no increase in four years.

MR. FARRAN: We've had no increase in this area for four years. We did re-equip them last year with cars and they've got better radios. This year we feel we've got to do something because of the enormous number of trucks in the province. We've got more trucks per capita than anywhere in Canada. There's been a complete explosion in the truck population. So we're hiring seven more men, seven clerical, and getting 16 of the portable weigh scales to supplement their equipment. They also of course have this side responsibility for helping us (inaudible) drivers and retrieving plates from drivers who prove not to have valid insurance. That's for the law enforcement.

Now the new tax in correctional services . . . Maybe I should tell you in the departmental support services there's a very important new one and that is what is called COMIS. It's a system for giving us profiles of the types of inmates in our institution.

There's no way that you can really constructively plan in a correction service unless you've got some idea of the type of offender you've got in your system. So we've had to develop a form to give us ready statistics of, really, inmate profiles and the performance of the inmates under these many different programs we have introduced as options. So that's a very important one in support services.

Now in the correctional services themselves I say the accent this year is on forestry work camps. We want some of them to be mobile so they are not in trailers hitched up in any sort of semi-permanent position. The normal way has been to put the trailers out somewhere in a square and then hook them up to sewer and water and make them almost semi-permanent. Well some of these work camps this year we want to make completely mobile so they can move up a highway for brushing (inaudible) lines or assisting the department of highways and moving deadfall from the shoulders and that sort of thing. So, as I say, we've got four new camps, possibly five, coming this year. If you included Nordegg and its satellites, that would then give us a total of 14 work camps. If you excluded Nordegg and its satellites, it would be a total of 11.

The other thing is that we have to start this year in recruiting for the Edmonton remand centre, which is due to open at the end of the year. So for the second half of this year we have to start recruiting, because we can't have a completely one-for-one transfer from Fort Saskatchewan. We still have to have men to man the tiers. Even though a lot of the clientele have gone, there's not a direct switch over, although Treasury often tried to tell us there should be, but there's no way that it can be. I mean I've still got to man those tiers of cells whether there's three men to a cell or two men to a cell. So we have to start recruiting for a completely new facility in Edmonton. This facility will hold initially 300 and we may have under-built; we've got 400 on remand so it's . . . Is it 300 or 400 on remand?

MR. KING: The total capacity is 328 but the remand includes a number of categories of inmates that aren't really on remand, such as penitentiary transfers. We have 100 inmates awaiting transfer to penitentiary at this time.

MR. FARRAN: So they'd still stay at the Fort?

MR. KING: Yes, that's right.

MR. FARRAN: Then we are in the initial stages of developing yet another facility for the younger offender in the 16- to 18-year age bracket in northeast Alberta somewhere. The present thoughts are and our desires are to establish it if the people want it in the form of a seminary at St. Paul. The idea there is that, say we have roughly 400 offenders in this age category in our system. About 100 will go to Nordegg to the wilderness challenge camp. We have about 100 out in work camps of one sort or another. We'd have 85 in this new facility, and the balance would stay in the regular correctional institution. In this new facility we wanted to operate it as a boarding school with tough discipline, accent on team sports and on instruction in the housebuilding trade, not too much emphasis on formal academics because most of them are school dropouts -- around grade 9 or 10 -- and we don't want to frustrate them further with formal academics. So we'd be following much the same lines that are followed in the Shaughnessy school in Calgary and the Wagner in Edmonton, where they're teaching by action. We will be giving instruction in such housebuilding trades as drywall, stone masonry, laying floors, carpentry, eavestroughing -- this type of thing.

The seminary at St. Paul would be remodelled this year and then be put into action next year. There is a last minute small protest group in St. Paul and we've said quite clearly

to the council and the chamber of commerce in that town that if they don't want it they don't have to have it, the choice is theirs. We can put it somewhere else if they don't want it in St. Paul. Of course the mayor was very keen to have it in the beginning because 40 full-time staff would be very good for the economy of St. Paul. However, we don't intend to go into lengthy public hearings there because we don't want to foist it on anyone. If they don't want it, they don't have to have it.

MR. R. SPEAKER: I've got a couple of communities if they're not interested.

MR. FARRAN: Yes, Carmangay, or Slave Lake, or somewhere else.

MR. R. SPEAKER: That's right, open arms. Just let us know.

MR. FARRAN: Yes, well, Lac La Biche is very keen to have it, so is Bonnyville.

I think that's a pretty fair summary of what we're doing in the correctional service. The accent there is on work. You remember that last year we rewrote The Corrections Act, and it's now an obligation and a duty of every director of a correctional institution to find work for inmates. Particularly the effects are being felt in this budget. Last year we increased the incentive pay for work for inmates too.

The next area is, I think, the motor vehicles registration and driver licensing. This area occupies 45 per cent of the government computer's time. It's probably the biggest administrative headache in government, next to Alberta health care insurance. We have over 1,300,000 vehicles in the province, and they grow at a rate of what -- 12 per cent a year?

MR. PEDERSEN: Approximately.

MR. FARRAN: The new program we're introducing this year: one directed at stolen vehicles, where we are insisting that used cars registered in the province for the first time be inspected for vehicle identification numbers before we'll register them. We have tightened up the purchase of plates or validating tabs by mail from out of the province people. This is because there was some suspicion that a number of stolen cars were being registered in this province.

The two-part licence form came into effect on April 1 for new drivers or people renewing their driving licence. It doesn't affect people who've already got a valid driving licence until it comes up for renewal. The attempt here is threefold: one, to reduce the number of times anybody has to go into an outlet or one of our agencies so it can be done on one visit, so to speak. For this we've got provision here in the budget. We've changed or are about to change all our camera equipment. The photo-ident equipment we had before proved very unsatisfactory; it was continually breaking down and we didn't have enough cameras and so on. So we're going to the same sort of basic polaroid system that the Liquor Control Board has.

The two-part licence fits in a little plastic envelope. There is one part which is still the plasticized licence and it looks very much like the licence that you have today, but there's another part which is a piece of banknote paper more difficult to forge which contains more details about the vehicle, and also a human organ donor form if people choose to donate any of their spare parts after death to the hospitals. This human organ donor thing was started in Ontario. B.C. are now doing it as well. We find it very difficult to do because some years ago somebody got all modern in Alberta and introduced a plasticized driving licence which prohibits you being able to put a form on the back or even an endorsement of the fellow's bad driving record, so we had no piece of paper on

which we could do any writing. So that's why we had to go for a two-part form. Is that all?

MR. LE BLANC: CPIC.

MR. FARRAN: Oh, CPIC. CPIC is a big one, which swings over into law enforcement as well.

AN HON. MEMBER: What's that?

MR. FARRAN: This is what we're doing. CPIC stands for Canadian Police Intelligence Centre.

AN HON. MEMBER: You're starting to be like Yurko.

MR. FARRAN: All right. It's a big computer in Ottawa that contains all criminal records and makes them instantly available to the police. We have, through negotiation with Ottawa, got them to agree to include all suspended driver information, which will give the police and the registrar instant information about suspended drivers. This is essential for the third phase of the decriminalization of traffic offences. The first phase is to have offenders go before a Justice of the Peace, a voluntary payment system where there is an incentive for paying early and a penalty for paying late. But the final phase is meant to be suspension of either driving licence or the motor vehicle licence or both for default on payment of a traffic fine. We can't put that into place until we have the CPIC system working. So there is provision in this budget for continued development of the CPIC system.

Later in the year, we will probably be taking over the functions that are presently being done by treasury branch satellites in the satellite offices, taking them back into the department.

We have expanded the driver control board. We're at the point now where all those with repeat suspensions are being interviewed by the driver control board. A number of them are being retested. Kids who accumulate eight demerit points between the ages of 16 and 18 are called in for counselling. I feel we've made big strides in the last year in getting on top of this particular aspect of law enforcement.

The other thing is we've made it mandatory that impaired drivers take the impaired drivers course with AADAC before they get their licences back at the end of the suspension. I think that's about it.

The control and development of horse racing: you know the Alberta Racing Commission reports through me. They're financed by a formula of 1.25 per cent of the total public bet, so their budget is directly related to the amount people are betting in the province. Last year it was \$103 million; this year it's \$120 million. So that is a very expanding form of enterprise in Alberta.

MR. YOUNG: Could I ask, Mr. Chairman, we're having difficulty. We're catching three-quarters of the conversation but every time the minister turns and speaks softly towards you, sir, we don't hear back here. We missed the number of demerit points for the 16- to 18-year-olds. I think you mentioned, Mr. Minister, that you have a special approach.

MR. FARRAN: It's eight to nine.

MR. DIACHUK: There's not enough loudspeaker.

MR. FARRAN: The target is eight, I think at the moment they're doing it when they get to nine and we're trying to fetch it down to eight. When they get eight to nine demerit points they're pulled in. Because, if you remember, we changed the law that a licence was only probationary until you were 18 years old, between 16 and 18 it was a probationary licence. That means that the way we enforce that is to call them in when they get roughly half the number of demerit points a fully-qualified driver is allowed to accumulate before suspension.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Mr. Minister. I'm going to open it now for questions and general discussion. Rusty Zander.

MR. ZANDER: Yes, Mr. Minister, back to the department where the drivers licence suspension. Does the department acknowledge letters, say within a time frame of 10 days from the time it receives it?

MR. FARRAN: My department does, and I hope the general department does. I don't know. Letters in my department I can guarantee are answered within a few days.

MR. ZANDER: Well I've just been in contact with a parent of a son who is down in the United States and has received a notice of driver suspension. Now whether he is guilty or not I don't question. I just question the fact that the son has not received acknowledgement of the letter, which is almost over three weeks old.

DR. McCRIMMON: Probably in the post office.

MR. FARRAN: Well it may be in the post office. Apparently if it looked like Conservative literature, it's probably in the post office.

MR. ZANDER: Well it wasn't Conservative literature. I don't think that should be taken lightly. I think if a letter is written to the department, whether a person is guilty or not guilty is not the question. The question is to acknowledge the letter.

MR. FARRAN: Yes, well if you'll give us . . .

MR. ZANDER: And then do the research.

MR. FARRAN: . . . the specifics I could let you know at what date it was acknowledged.

MR. ZANDER: I just phoned them before I came in here and he said he has not received acknowledgement of the letter, that the department received it.

MR. FARRAN: What date did the department receive it?

MR. ZANDER: Well I can get the date. I have a copy of the letter.

MR. FARRAN: Well any specific like that you only need to come to me and I'll ream the hell out of these guys.

MR. ZANDER: I don't want you to ream them out, but I think the letter should be acknowledged upon receipt.

MR. DIACHUK: Mr. Chairman, since Mr. Zander took some of our time here, I'm still at a loss what his point is.

MR. ZANDER: The point is . . . I don't know, maybe you're stupid.

MR. DIACHUK: Yes.

MR. ZANDER: Because I think regardless of what department it is the acknowledgement of a letter by anybody in Alberta should be acknowledged.

MR. FARRAN: We have a system in this department which perhaps they don't have in others: everything is logged. And if a response isn't made within a reasonable time, the question is made; the log is examined every day.

MR. ZANDER: I'm just wondering if the research went on first before the acknowledgement of the letter went out.

MR. FARRAN: Yes.

MR. ZANDER: Then the other question to the minister is: what payment do inmates receive -- and I imagine this is one of the satellites from Nordegg in the Brazeau area. What salary do they receive? Is it 25 cents, or 75 cents?

MR. FARRAN: This is reflected in this budget. At one time incentive pay ranged from 70 cents a day to \$2 a day. Towards the end of last year, we increased it from that level to a range from \$1 to \$5 a day, and this is reflected in the budget. The top of the scale, if they're doing the most onerous work and working hard, is \$5 a day. If they're doing very minimal work, just cleaning up their own cells and the corridor, then they'll probably only get the \$1 a day.

MR. ZANDER: This satellite camp is still in existence, is it not?

AN HON. MEMBER: Brazeau is.

MR. ZANDER: Yes, okay.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Don Hansen.

MR. HANSEN: One of the things was the one that Rusty didn't finish there and I was quite interested to find out how much the wages have gone up. Another thing I wanted to know I think he answered. If they're out on the job working it's one thing, but just to clean their own cells up and make their beds, do they get paid for stuff like that?

MR. FARRAN: It's pocket money really. I think from a humanitarian point of view you've got to allow them a little bit of tobacco or . . . And they pay for their own television set and if they save the money it's held in trust until they go out. So the \$1 a day minimum is really in the nature of pocket money so long as they behave and do what they should do and clean up the corridor and their cells, that's right.

MR. HANSEN: Another thing I wanted to know about was the ones that you put out in these work camps. What is the worst victim you've got out there or the worst act that they've

done? They must be settled down. Is it just for drunken charges and stuff like that or are they real criminals, some of them?

MR. FARRAN: Let me put it this way: 60 per cent of the inmates in provincial correctional institutions in our service are serving less than six months. That probably gives you some indication of the severity of the offence; 60 per cent serving less than six months. So the ones in the work camps are unlikely to be serving longer sentences than that, although they might be. They might be serving a longer sentence and in the opinion of the classification team -- we have a classification team in every institution -- they are not a security risk and we can move them into a work camp.

MR. HANSEN: Can you name any of the worst crimes that they would have committed, the worst you figure, and still be able to go out and work? Can you give us an instance?

MR. FARRAN: No, we haven't got a rule of thumb like that. All I can tell you is that we work on a basis of evaluating the security risk, and the murderers in the system are all on remand because they would be sentenced to something much longer than would warrant a sentence in a provincial correctional institution -- more than two years. So all our tough guys are really on remand awaiting trial and they don't go out at all.

MR. HANSEN: This is what I was trying to figure out, how you adjusted these people to go out.

And the last one on the St. Paul deal: are these people who are going to be put in St. Paul -- is there going to be a work camp there as well?

MR. FARRAN: There are going to be two work camps operating from that area and using that facility as its headquarters so we can check people in and out to the work camp -- minor offenders -- without shipping them all the way into Fort Saskatchewan for processing.

MR. HANSEN: I know we talked quite a bit about that about a year and a half ago, and I was wondering just what it was sitting at now.

MR. FARRAN: Yes, about the great white bird. Yes, that's right.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Charlie Stewart.

MR. STEWART: Yes, Mr. Chairman, I was interested in this volunteer group that you were talking about. Does the time they spend there qualify them as having any type of training or is it . . . MR. FARRAN: It qualifies them to help us if the balloon goes up, that's all.

MR. STEWART: My second question is: are they armed while they're on duty?

MR. FARRAN: While they're in the car under the direction of a regular constable of the RCMP -- they're full special constables with sidearms and RCMP uniform.

MR. STEWART: Do they get any special training?

MR. FARRAN: They get training, yes, but they don't get pay.

MR. STEWART: Is that on-the-job training or is it a special school they go to?

MR. FARRAN: It's on the job. Some will come into the K division headquarters in Edmonton but, by and large, it's on the job. They don't go to Regina.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Larry Shaben.

MR. SHABEN: Mr. Minister, earlier in your remarks you mentioned that the department supplies a service to the city of Calgary in providing facilities for lockup. Is this reflected in sort of a matching grant to other centres where that service isn't provided?

MR. FARRAN: No it isn't. It's a service we can only provide and offer where we have the facility close to the police station. We started with Calgary. We are now prepared to offer it also in Lethbridge, where the correctional institution is in the city, and we will offer it to the Edmonton city police as soon as the remand centre is open. Of course, if they don't build their new police headquarters right alongside the remand centre, then they won't get maximum cost recovery benefit from it because they still have to move their prisoners a few blocks. But once they finish their new police headquarters, we can probably connect by tunnel, as we are to the provincial court, and they will get the full benefit.

MR. SHABEN: Mr. Chairman, a question related to lockups under 84(1) where people are locked up and released. This has been on ice now for a number of years. Is that system working or are the people -- you had mentioned I think in the House that it was like a revolving door in some cases. My understanding was that a person who is locked up, on a number of occasions would be charged rather than continue to be provided with room and board overnight. What's the sort of process under 84(1) in preferring charges rather than providing board and room?

MR. FARRAN: Well, they're picked up. Section 84, which allows the police to hold them for 48 hours in a drunk tank -- in effect, this means holding them until they're sober. This has a humanitarian motive in that you don't want him to die in a snowbank if you can avoid it. You dry him out and let him go. You say, is it working? I don't think it cures anyone, but it certainly saves some lives by giving them somewhere warm to go. And of course stops them bothering other people out in public places.

After a while, the police patience gets short and they charge him under Section 83, which is being intoxicated in a public place, The Liquor Control Act. Then the magistrate will fine them \$50 or 15 days. Very rarely do they have the \$50, so they come into one of our correctional institutions for 15 days. If they do it more often, then sometimes it's 30 days. I've seen some cases in Lethbridge, which has a lot of this kind of clientele, who are in there for the fortieth or fiftieth time in the correctional institution itself. It gives us longer to dry them out. We have, of course, developed for native alcohol abusers the Poundmaker school just outside Edmonton, and Napi Lodge just outside the Lethbridge Correctional Institution.

These in effect are day-parole camps or, if you like, halfway houses where they take treatment and counselling for their alcohol addiction. We believe this is having some success, although we have no firm figures with which to substantiate our impression. Is that right?

MR. LeBLANC: Right. There's also a new one opening in Fort Macleod.

MR. FARRAN: Yes. We've got a new idea in Fort Macleod and there's a new one right at Stand Off in the former St. Paul's Anglican school.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. R. Speaker.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Under crime prevention, you mentioned the pamphlets that you put out and there's also been ads in the paper and so on. I was wondering, have you any indicators to recognize any of the successes in that kind of program? Or is it just a matter of putting the information out there and hoping for the best?

MR. FARRAN: No, in concert with the federal government, this year's program is being evaluated for effectiveness. They funded a study at the University of Alberta for before and after perception of what people can do themselves to help prevent crime. So this year's program is being measured. This is, incidentally, the first year that we've come on quite strongly on crime prevention in the mass media.

MR. R. SPEAKER: You also have a program with regards to theft of automobiles. That's involved in that whole program.

MR. FARRAN: Yes.

MR. R. SPEAKER: The other area related to crime prevention: a number of the CBers -- they've just mushrooming all over the place in the last four or five years -- some fellows attempt to help local police and things like that. Is that causing problems or is it of assistance or will there have to be new regulations for that kind of thing, for the use of radio? Is it creating a problem?-

MR. FARRAN: At first we did think they were causing problems and were a bit of a nuisance, especially when they were being used by truckers to warn each other of where radar traps were and that type of thing. In the last few months I think there's been a big change in the police attitude toward CBers and we're now trying to recruit them as the crime prevention thing, as extra eyes and ears for the police. The RCMP have plans to equip their vehicles with CB radios so that they can communicate with these clubs. Edmonton is in the early stages of a very sophisticated program to recruit CB clubs in Edmonton to assist the police. I think that this is probably the right approach, that they can be turned towards being a great benefit for society rather than the other way around.

MR. HANSEN: What restraints and what do they have to go through to get their licence now for a CB?

MR. FARRAN: It's all done by the Ministry of Transport. Maybe Mr. Lysyk could tell you more about it. I'm not sure.

MR. LYSYK: No, I can't explain the details other than to say that it's relatively easy to get a CB set licensed.

MR. HANSEN: Do they just fill out a form more or less?

MR. LYSYK: At the time of purchase.

MR. HANSEN: It's not like it was 20 years ago to get a two-way radio when you had to find out where your Dad lived in the old country to get it.

MR. FARRAN: It's not a provincial exercise anyway. The federal government controls the airwaves under the constitution.

MR. HANSEN: It's just more or less a record form then.

MR. FARRAN: Yes.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Neil Webber.

DR. WEBBER: Mr. Minister, I was interested in your comments about standards needed in the area of security guards and private investigators and that there was an act being drafted or a draft act had been set out. With respect to correction officers, what kind of standards are maintained there across the province? In particular, I was wondering about the Nordegg wilderness camp. It seems to me that these people would require kind of special skills in order to work with these people in outdoor programs.

MR. FARRAN: That's right on. In the correctional service generally for the last two years we've been putting more and more emphasis on training. Now the senior correction officers are brought into central points, such as the Holy Redeemer school or Londonderry Heights here, for training and instruction for short periods. We have one staff instructor at each one of our correctional institutions for in-house training for new rookie correctional officers. This process is going on all the time. We have very well trained riot squads now in the last two or three years that we've developed, that have been taught in the latest Japanese techniques for controlling riot.

You specifically mentioned the special skills that are required for the wilderness challenge camp at Nordegg. This is a very real problem because the adventure leaders are few and far between and they burn themselves out very quickly. They come in with a fine flush of enthusiasm, but after you've run up and down mountains for about a year and lived in the bush, you begin to yearn sometimes for the bright lights. So we have a steady turnover. But we have succeeded -- despite the fact that most other provinces are now going for this type of outward-bound project as well -- in attracting some very good people. I think we're close to being up to strength. We were eight down a few months ago. What are we at now?

MR. KING: Up to strength now.

MR. FARRAN: Just about up to strength again. We've got some from Britain. Australia seems to produce some. There's a school at Kelowna in B.C. which turns people out. Then we've picked up a few from the Canadian Airborne.

MR. LeBLANC: We've picked up some from Ontario.

MR. FARRAN: And some from Ontario, from the (inaudible) camps in Ontario.

DR. WEBBER: Some of the postsecondary institutions in the province are offering programs. Are you recruiting students from those programs to any great extent?

MR. FARRAN: From Mount Royal College?

DR. WEBBER: That type of thing.

MR. FARRAN: Yes. Not for the wilderness type of program where you need these very, very special skills, and I don't think we've got anything in the province. But we think very highly of the Mount Royal College criminology program.

MR. LeBLANC: Grant MacEwan I think has one.

MR. FARRAN: Grant MacEwan has one as well. These are probably our main pool of potential recruits for the correctional service and the probation service.

MR. STROMBERG: Mr. Chairman, a question on the same subject.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Just a minute, please.

MR. STROMBERG: Sorry.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Do you have a separate question?

DR. WEBBER: Yes. MR. CHAIRMAN: Gordon, perhaps you'll ask one on the same subject.

MR. STROMBERG: Yes. The federal prison guards seem to be an unhappy lot right now. Do you have a high turnover of prison guards within the provincial system?

MR. FARRAN: We haven't had, but we expect we might have, with the (inaudible) change which is taking place in the federal penitentiary service, where in order to get a better calibre person in their service they're increasing the wages beyond our provincial level. So we anticipate we might have a problem with people shifting out of the provincial service into the federal service. It hasn't happened yet, but it could happen, especially since a new federal institution is being built near Oliver.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Neil.

DR. WEBBER: This is in a different area, Mr. Chairman, (inaudible) before the fall session of the Legislature, Mr. Minister, received a special plea to mention stricter enforcement of the drinking age, age 18, in their drinking establishments. To what extent do you police this and try to enforce this?

MR. FARRAN: Well there are two angles: there's the offence committed by the minor, and the offence committed by the operator who allows the minor to frequent the licensed premises and take the alcohol. The Alberta Liquor Control Board reports to me, but of course its appropriations are not before us tonight. Since, I suppose, my office is responsible for them it's legitimate to ask questions.

The ALCB has a number of inspectors, some of whom are stationed in a centre on a regular basis, and some 20 of whom float around the province, plain-clothed sort of people. The year before last, we suspended some, I think it was 64 hotel licences for infractions which ranged from continuing to serve minors to allowing disorderly conduct on their premises. There was considerable improvement last year. There were 32 suspensions of hotel licences last year.

DR. WEBBER: One final one, and I'm not sure you're the man I should direct this question to. But someone recently, who shall be nameless, was caught speeding in Calgary.

MR. FARRAN: It wasn't me.

DR. WEBBER: His initials are N.W. The police officer asked me my occupation.

MR. DIACHUK: You said unemployed.

DR. WEBBER: I told him what my occupation was and I can be sure that telling my occupation I was going to get a ticket, which I did. But I was wondering: is this a practice throughout the province for police officers to ask people, when they're caught, what their occupation is?

MR. FARRAN: Well if he thought you were a suspicious looking character. Certainly when they stopped me for impaired driving some years ago now -- I guess three-odd years ago -- I told them my occupation too, but it didn't do any good.

DR. WEBBER: I didn't volunteer. I was asked. I thought maybe if he hadn't ask and I hadn't told him, I might have got a warning ticket.

MR. DIACHUK: There's some similarity between you and the former Attorney General from Ottawa.

MR. FARRAN: Yes. The police have to be on the alert for criminals of all sorts. So, my advice is to answer the question. It seems a pretty innocuous question. If you'd answered that you were a cat burglar, he'd have fainted on the spot.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Gordon Stromberg.

MR. STROMBERG: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. A couple of years ago, Mr. Minister, it seemed like Fort Saskatchewan had a reputation of being a sieve. Now I don't hear of the fellows leaving in the middle of the night or the during the middle of the day. What have you done to tighten it up?

MR. FARRAN: I don't know. Let's touch wood before we answer that question, because in this game it's like walking on eggs; you never know what's going to happen tomorrow. We did invest almost \$3 million in remodelling Fort Saskatchewan. We made D block, the maximum security area, pretty secure. Nothing is absolutely foolproof. But it's pretty secure.

In addition to that, I think it's fair to say a lot of credit is due to Terry Downie, the new director, who was moved up there from Spy Hill in Calgary.

MR. LeBLANC: Plus the increase in staff ratios.

MR. FARRAN: And the rest of the staff too.

MR. LeBLANC: Staff ratios have been improved.

MR. FARRAN: The staff ratios have been improved in that we got budget from you kind fellows last year and this year to increase the number of guards so we have a better teacher/pupil ratio.

MR. STROMBERG: So with the spending of that \$3 million, Fort Saskatchewan's going to be around for quite a while. You won't be considering tearing it down and replacing it?

MR. FARRAN: No, it will be perfectly adequate, when its figures get down to 350 or 400 anyway.

MR. STROMBERG: When you get your figures down to that amount, Mr. Chairman, to the minister, are you planning another new prison of that style or that type?

MR. FARRAN: Certainly not of that type. That type is pretty old. That's like . . .

MR. STROMBERG: No, I don't mean it that way, but I meant for that longer term prison.

MR. FARRAN: At Lethbridge. We have one on the books for this year at Lethbridge.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Ray Speaker.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Yes, you indicated that you're going to bring in legislation in the fall with regards to private investigators and security guards. I was wondering: is there improvement needed in the area of training for these type of personnel? Would you recommend a level of training, a level of qualification, educational level? Would there be a better registry of these people? Is that the kind of thing?

MR. FARRAN: Well that's right. The dilemma is trying to strike the balance between not over-regulating private business, and yet having reasonable standards for the people who are employed in this position of trust, because they do interface with the community, particularly in department stores and so on where they're watching out for shoplifting and that type of thing. So we felt powers and procedures ought to be spelled out more adequately and that there ought to be some sort of a training period.

Now this may mean that the private investigation or security guard firms might have to charge a little more for their services. At the moment, they tend to hire people at the minimum wage and put them in very responsible positions and they just really don't know what they're doing. So, following the lead of British Columbia, we feel we've got to do something in this area.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Under the circumstances, do they enforce both federal law and provincial law? MR. FARRAN: Yes, the security guards operate under the laws of Canada and the ones that pertain in Alberta are the Criminal Code and our provincial statutes. But they can only make a citizen's arrest. They have no power of arrest under the Criminal Code, any more than anyone of us would have.

MR. R. SPEAKER: What kind of protection is there for the general public in the use of private investigators or security guards? Let's say there was an injury or something occurred in the matter of making a citizen's arrest.

MR. FARRAN: Just an action for damages against the person involved and his employer. But they have no greater right -- we don't intend to give them any greater powers than a citizen has under the Code. But we intend to spell it out to make it clear for them, too, what they should be doing.

MR. R. SPEAKER: I notice a number of them use dogs in their security checks and so on. Will there be regulations for the use of dogs?

MR. FARRAN: That's under consideration. It's a much more difficult area because I don't know how we can test a dog or even apply standards to dogs. But we are discussing it, and B.C.'s discussing it too. I'm not too sure how we're going to do that. But the proposal is to look at it anyway.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Was there consideration of looking at the training of the personnel that are looking after the dogs?

MR. FARRAN: Yes, something like that.
Locksmiths is an area where we feel we should be tightening up in particular.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Do you have a supplementary?

MR. YOUNG: Yes, on the same point. I'm just wondering, have we had some bad experiences reported with respect to these security services?

MR. FARRAN: Not bad, no. But they have in some other jurisdictions. There have been cases in the United States of security guards themselves committing crimes in off-duty hours. Most of the complaints are of a petty nature here in the province, of the security guard himself -- particularly in department stores -- not really knowing what he should do in the case of shoplifting and not having it spelled out how he should behave towards the citizen and how he should call the police immediately and his rights to detain until the police come, and that sort of thing.

MR. YOUNG: In that case, Mr. Chairman, the store is liable, is it not, as the employer of this service?

MR. FARRAN: Right.

MR. YOUNG: And isn't it a bit hopeful, too optimistic, to expect that you're going to have a system that doesn't have the potential for crimes from security guards, seeing as how we haven't been able to perfect this system with policemen?

MR. FARRAN: It could be and it could be that I wouldn't get such an act through legislative review. But at the moment we're doing the absolute minimum, which is just checking that they don't have criminal records before we license them.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Is there consideration for some type of a liaison group between, you know, the RCMP, the city police, and the security system, the private security guards?

MR. FARRAN: No. All we're doing at the moment, as I say, is checking out their criminal records. If one misbehaves, of course, and we remove his licence -- and the licences are only for one year, we only allow them to apply when they're actually engaged in the business. They don't go on being a licensed security guard when they're no longer practising the art.

Anyway, we're doing comprehensive study in the field and it may be that we can't settle all the details by the fall and may have to put it off till next year. British Columbia's just been going through the same exercise.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Bill Diachuk.

MR. DIACHUK: Yes, Mr. Chairman, to the minister. Are you or is your department watching and monitoring the lack of discipline training now that the city of Edmonton police department has given up? You know they no longer are going through that discipline training that they had before.

MR. FARRAN: I was consulted on it and I think it's a worth-while experiment. Of course it saves a lot of money if people can be trained on the job. I was assured that they were not going to completely eliminate the foot drill part of it, that this will be kept. I was consulted, although I didn't have to be consulted because the local police commission is fully autonomous. My only concern is that I have an obligation under the act to make sure there's an adequate standard of policing in the city of Edmonton. I have no reservations on that point. I think that training on the job has a place and it's a worth-while experiment. We'll all watch it. If it can save some money, so much the better.

We're doing much the same thing with correctional officers in the correctional institutions, so I would find it very hard to object to the tack that the Edmonton city police have taken.

MR. DIACHUK: Another area, Mr. Chairman, to you, Mr. Minister, is the area of accident reporting. The police called out on accident that is over -- what is it -- \$300 damage now.

MR. PEDERSEN: Three hundred and fifty dollars.

MR. DIACHUK: Three hundred and fifty dollars? Whatever figure it is, you know it's a judgment figure. So the police officers don't give any . . . For example, I've heard time and time again they don't issue any ticket if the damage is below and they don't even turn out a report. But the motorist does obtain estimates of greater damage and wants some co-operation from police department, first (a) to get the information off the other motorist, or (b) the charges to be laid. Is this receiving any consideration from your department to review that?

The third part of that is: when one of the motorists does not have their information about their insurance, they promise to advise the other motorist. Then the motorist goes through the long harangue of trying to get it. You know the example I called your office about. I wonder if that is looked at, that the public doesn't have to go for that information. If the one motorist didn't have that information, the police officer says, you bring it in by 3 o'clock this afternoon. They get it. I feel that should be the onus of the police officer to advise the other party, yes the person was insured by so and so, and so and so.

MR. FARRAN: There may be something in what you say. But let me respond this way. First of all, the value judgment on whether an accident is \$350 more or less; that problem was even worse when the reportable limit was \$100. A mere taillight assembly cost \$350. At that time the police were devoting so much of their time to minor bumps and scrapes in parking lots that they hadn't got time to enforce the general law on the streets. So we had to fetch it to something that was comparable with the \$100 accident before inflation took hold. So that's why it was raised to \$350. It also roughly compares with deductibles on many insurance policies. So the value judgment's always there and has to be there.

Now you question the obtaining of information for the settlement of some dispute; property damage or public liability. First of all, police records are not evidence.

MR. DIACHUK: Are not what?

MR. FARRAN: Are not evidence. They're full of conjecture and opinion by the policeman. The only way they can be introduced as evidence in the court is by cross-examination of the policeman. Even the judge doesn't go on the basis of what a policeman wrote out at the time of an incident. So if anybody wants what is in a police report, they can only get it by subpoenaing the policeman. Otherwise you would have all sorts of innuendo and conjecture introduced into a case, which is not fair. So that's the place for evidence, not the police report.

Now you talk about driver abstracts, which is something entirely different, I suppose. Anybody can get his own driver abstract by paying a fee and going to George Pedersen, the registrar. Also we make them available to people in the insurance industry for the very practical reason, that they've got to be able to assess the credit worthiness or rating of people throughout the province. Otherwise the industry wouldn't work, no matter who's running it. They've got to have access.

Apart from that, we're very reluctant to give it to lawyers for the sake of pursuing a legal case. We say to the lawyer who asks for it, well okay, you get your client to ask for it. The client can ask for the abstract. Otherwise you're totally violating the privacy confidentiality of information thing. The exceptions, as I've mentioned, are there for a particular purpose. But to broadcast information far and wide I don't think is probably right. Now maybe George Pedersen, the registrar, can supplement what I've said.

MR. PEDERSEN: Well, that's basically what we're doing.

MR. DIACHUK: Mr. Chairman, the minister volunteered some information I didn't even ask. I know the situation about the drivers abstracts. I'm talking of the case where an officer is investigating an accident and provides the information about both motorists. You know, people have the little card from the city police that says so and so was driving the other car and shouldn't. But one of the motorists does not have his insurance with himself -- his pink card in the car -- so the police officer, out of courtesy says: look, I'd like you to bring that in by 3 o'clock this afternoon. This other motorist cannot get the cooperation of the police department to get that information that should have been provided at the scene of the accident.

MR. FARRAN: I think you could probably get that. The insurance industry can get that. They can get it from you.

MR. PEDERSEN: The act says that you have to supply certain information, and if the person promises to supply it and doesn't, I suppose a charge could be laid.

MR. FARRAN: Charges could be laid, but the record of the insurance is with the registrar.

MR. DIACHUK: No.

MR. FARRAN: Yes, of course it is, because you have to have a pink card before you can register your vehicle.

MR. DIACHUK: Well my understanding, Mr. Chairman, to the minister, is that your record at the motor vehicles branch doesn't provide the name of the company or the policy number.

MR. PEDERSEN: It does now.

MR. FARRAN: Yes, it does.

MR. DIACHUK: For every motorist in this province?

MR. PEDERSEN: This was introduced this year, yes. On each renewal form you fill it out.

MR. DIACHUK: I beg your pardon?

MR. PEDERSEN: On each renewal form, you fill out who your insurance company is, the agent, and your policy number.

MR. DIACHUK: Well, fine. If that is information, I won't dispute that because that will indicate that -- when I got my renewal plates, the clerk at the treasury branch didn't take that information down.

MR. PEDERSEN: This has been the last month, has it not?

AN HON. MEMBER: Well, yes.

MR. PEDERSEN: It's just been the last month .#.#.

MR. DIACHUK: But what I'm looking for is that that vehicle doesn't have the registration or the pink card there, and the police officer says to that motorist without that information: you provide it to my office or to the police department by a certain time in the afternoon.

MR. FARRAN: Well, I'd have a look at it. I see the problem.

MR. DIACHUK: The other person who was involved has difficulty getting that from the police department.

MR. FARRAN: I'll look at it and see if we can send a guideline to the police. Yes, I can see the problem and I'll look at it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Les Young.

MR. YOUNG: Yes, Mr. Chairman. A rather not totally frivolous observation, but a minor observation, except that it might raise some questions later on. In the annual report of the department, which I'm sorry I don't have before me but the most recent one to come out, there is a table, and it shows among other things the religious background of the prisoners. I was kind of curious why it shows the religious affiliations of the inmates.

MR. FARRAN: I don't know why we do it in the annual report, but we do pay the chaplain, and we've just given him an increase in pay as a matter of fact .#.#.

AN HON. MEMBER: Oh, my God.

AN HON. MEMBER: Negotiated?

MR. FARRAN: So there is a point in having that record on file.

AN HON. MEMBER: It's always been collected.

MR. FARRAN: It's always been collected.

MR. YOUNG: Well, I .#.#.

MR. FARRAN: That's why we have to have it.

MR. YOUNG: I raise the question, and I leave it with you, Mr. Minister.

MR. FARRAN: Maybe it shouldn't be in the annual report.

MR. YOUNG: It seems to me that it's not very helpful information unless some bigot wishes to, in fact, use it.

MR. FARRAN: Yes, okay.

MR. YOUNG: The other point, Mr. Chairman, which I wish to explore briefly is the question of, I think you called them the provisions for temporary absence at halfway houses?

MR. FARRAN: Right.

MR. YOUNG: What I want to get at is with respect to John Howard and others. Has there been a change in their function as seen by the department in the last while?

MR. FARRAN: A tightening up, maybe, of house rules. That could be. We're pretty insistent that they run a clean and tidy shop, and that the lights are turned out at a reasonable time of night, and there's no alcohol and drugs on the premises; that type of thing. But apart from that, I can't think that there's any change.

MR. YOUNG: Well, are the persons operating or responsible for the houses at any given time -- are they classified as peace officers now?

MR. FARRAN: No. No. Oh, I know what you're driving at. There is a slight change in this. In order to make sure that we can pick them up for being unlawfully at large, because they're still inmates, we did designate these halfway houses as correctional institutions. This was just a technical procedure, so that there was no difficulty in charging the chap who ran away. We found in one area that we had a bit of trouble with one of the courts, who said that they were not running away from a prison; they were running away from a halfway house. So we've made that quite clear now. Is that correct?

MR. KING: That sounds correct.

MR. YOUNG: So they're now designated as correctional institutions.

MR. FARRAN: Yes.

MR. YOUNG: What about the people operating them? Are they peace officers?

MR. FARRAN: Nothing. It's just a technical thing. It's a nomenclature, but they're not part of our service. There's power in the act to designate anywhere as a correctional institution -- a farm on which a work gang is; a road on which somebody's doing some work. It's just to overcome this problem of being able to charge the ones who run away with being unlawfully at large. So it's just a titular thing.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Gordie Stromberg.

MR. STROMBERG: How many native people were put in the slammer last year and what percentage would that be, and how many women were in the prison system and what percentage of the total prison inmate population would that be?

MR. FARRAN: Well, of men, as I say, we have approximately last year 850, and if you take it that we have .#.#.

MR. STROMBERG: That's the amount for the total?

MR. FARRAN: We have 1,800,000 people in the province, it's -- what's 180 of 1,800,000?

AN HON. MEMBER: It's slightly less than 1 per cent.

MR. FARRAN: It's 1 per cent of the population. Now of that 1 per cent, formally the female prisoners would only have constituted about 4 per cent of the prison population. It has recently risen, and it's up to about 7 per cent now. Two years ago we only had 40 female inmates. The other day when I checked we had 86. How many have we got at the moment?

AN HON. MEMBER: Just a second.

MR. STROMBERG: Any reason for that?

MR. FARRAN: Womens lib. They're getting equal in everything.

AN HON. MEMBER: Eighty-four in total.

MR. STROMBERG: My original question was: what percentage of the prison population is male?

AN HON. MEMBER: One-third.

MR. HANSEN: Would that be decimal 1 per cent?

AN HON. MEMBER: Thirty to 40 per cent.

MR. HANSEN: No, I mean of the whole deal there.

MR. FARRAN: A tenth of one per cent.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Under The Child Welfare Act that we amended here not too long ago, you can confine a child for 90 days -- a juvenile. How has that been working and what's happening with it?

MR. FARRAN: It doesn't affect us at all. We're only responsible when they become technical adults at the age of 16.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Oh, I see.

MR. FARRAN: Children are looked after by the Department of Social Services and Community Health.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Gordon, you didn't finish your question?

MR. STROMBERG: Yes. With 30 to 40 per cent of the native population in our jails -- and they're such a small percentage of our total population. What's the reason? Alcohol?

MR. FARRAN: Mostly for offences related to the abuse of alcohol, and highway traffic offences, too. The number has gone down considerably since we introduced the fine option program. Bob King said one-third. Well, one time it was 40 per cent, and the last time I looked at the figure it was only 26 per cent, so there has been a remarkable reduction. But they're nearly all short-term prisoners in for very short periods of time.

MR. STROMBERG: Could it also be that they've never had it so good?

MR. FARRAN: No, I don't think that's so. I think that with the obligation on the directors to find work for all inmates, it's not as cushy as one might think.

MR. STROMBERG: Well, you don't have your potato patch any more in Fort Saskatchewan, you don't have the dairy or the licences.

MR. FARRAN: Yes we do. We are producing quite a lot of food.

MR. STROMBERG: I'm sorry.

MR. FARRAN: Lethbridge is still working the beet harvest. We still have a farming operation in both Calgary and Fort Saskatchewan, and in Peace River we have a considerable one. There are greenhouses for winter work in all correctional institutions.

MR. STROMBERG: Could I phrase it this way? Is the work such that they're not looking forward to coming back to working here?

MR. FARRAN: Well, I don't know when they begin to abuse the alcohol and get into the cooking sherry whether they really remember much of what happened before.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Did you have a supplementary, Mr. Zander?

MR. ZANDER: Yes, did I hear the minister correctly say that -- how many inmates have you got in the province in total now?

MR. FARRAN: One thousand, eight hundred and fifty. We had 2,000, but the average is -- well, the prediction is -- about 1,850.

MR. ZANDER: The total amount for the whole year?

MR. FARRAN: One thousand, eight hundred and fifty at any one time, not the total amount.

MR. ZANDER: Yes, but the whole year.

MR. FARRAN: No, they're coming and going all the time. The only reading we can take is at any one time on any one particular day how many there are in there.

MR. ZANDER: Did I also hear you say that one-third of them are natives?

MR. FARRAN: Yes, between 26 and 30 per cent.

MR. ZANDER: So 600, roughly, are native people.

MR. FARRAN: Yes.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Gentlemen, if we could move on to Vote 1. I think we've had a pretty good general discussion, and I imagine we won't have too many more questions on the votes.

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: On Vote 1, Departmental Support Services. Any questions?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Vote 2, Correctional Services. Any questions?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Vote 3, Law Enforcement. Any questions?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Vote 4, Motor Vehicle Registration and Driver Licensing.

MR. BRADLEY: Yes, I have one question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Fred Bradley. I had to let you in, Fred, because you're one of the few that haven't asked a question.

MR. BRADLEY: With regards to the licence plates and the little stickers that are put on. This year it seemed that the quality of the numbers that were imprinted on those labels wasn't up to scratch as had been in previous years. What's the reason for that, and are there measures that can be taken next year to improve that situation?

MR. FARRAN: Well, we were concerned about it, too. Government Services drew it to our attention. There wasn't too much time left for a reprinting or a re-doing of the batch

before the beginning of the licensing year. We thought it over and we didn't think it was so bad that it affected our identification purpose, so we didn't have them re-done. Otherwise, we'd have been late for the beginning of the licensing year. We agree they're less than satisfactory, and . . .

MR. LeBLANC: There was a new contract, and they had production problems in the first runs. They were improved subsequently.

MR. BRADLEY: They are a better quality now?

MR. LeBLANC: Better quality now, but the first production runs -- the printing wasn't as sharp as it was in the previous one.

MR. BRADLEY: It almost looked like it was some sort of a different process than had been used in previous . . .

MR. FARRAN: It wasn't a good choice of ink, and it blurred.

MR. LeBLANC: They had inking problems.

MR. DIACHUK: Just of interest to Fred's question: where are they printed?

AN HON. MEMBER: Saskatchewan.

MR. LeBLANC: No. They are printed in Toronto.

MR. DIACHUK: In where?

MR. LeBLANC: In Toronto.

AN HON. MEMBER: They gave you the best price, did they?

MR. HANSEN: Are they done on a bid basis?

MR. LeBLANC: Yes, it was the lowest bid. That's right.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Gordon Stromberg.

MR. STROMBERG: Well, I have a question on Vote 4. You mention that the use of the computer taking up the majority of the time, and then of course the big rush now for the licence plates. Has consideration been given to what some states in the United States have done, where the licence is issued on the birthday and spreading it out for the whole year?

MR. FARRAN: It's a very good question, that. You're right on. Our administrative problem would be greatly reduced if we staggered the licensing year. However, since it's not just a tax collection exercise -- the whole point of the registrar is law enforcement -- it's got to be done in such a way that the police can still recognize the vehicle and see whether it's properly paid up and registered. So our dilemma is this: some provinces and some jurisdictions have gone on birthdays, or numbers, or letters of the alphabet for the

starting of a name, and that doesn't help you at all when you're in a five-year licence plate and you have different colors of little stickers on.

What we do think we could do -- and we're planning now, and it wouldn't detract from police enforcement at all -- is to have different types of vehicles at different times of the year. You could have all pick-up trucks in one month; all passenger cars up to a certain size in another month; little cars in another month, and so on; and spread it that way. Because the police would then be able to readily identify whether they should have the valid sticker on the back or not at a particular time.

MR. STROMBERG: Are you planning to go that route, then?

MR. FARRAN: Yes. We're working on it now.

MR. LeBLANC: There's also a different way. There's embossing of the plates, if we change the plate. You have a very large number -- AUG for August. So that's another system.

MR. FARRAN: Yes. That's the way Saskatchewan does it. Anyway, we're discussing ways and means of it, and we're hoping to have it next year. Or are we going to do it when the plates run out?

MR. PEDERSEN: We were thinking about 1980 or '81.

MR. FARRAN: Yes. They're five-year plates, you see, and the plates don't have to be renewed until '80 or '81.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Can I have an agreement on Vote 4, then?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Vote 5, Control and Development of Horse Racing. Ray Speaker.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Off-track betting. Is there licensing, or are you studying that?

MR. FARRAN: Well, there has been an active lobby in Ontario pushing off-track betting. There were rumors two months ago, with some foundation in fact, that the federal government was preparing to change the law in this regard. The general concept was that a bettor could establish a line of credit or make a deposit with some betting point, and then place his bets on the telephone. There was no consultation with the provinces or with the Provincial Racing Commission, but the federal Department of Agriculture did call a meeting of all other people in the horse industry to Ottawa.

We're still open-minded on it. The pros are that they think this would vastly increase the public bet, and since 15 per cent goes to various agencies -- including the track management, racing commissions, and the horse industry -- that 15 per cent of \$200 million (inaudible) in Alberta is better than 15 per cent of \$100 million.

But there are the other snags which they haven't properly examined, and they are these: it would reduce the crowd at the races, so they would lose their concession revenue, or it would be sharply cut. The sophisticated telephone communications necessary to access the computers for off-track betting would probably not be available at the small race courses in the country points, so that business would be siphoned away from them to the bigger tracks, the class A tracks.

The argument that this would reduce the legal bookmaking is probably not valid, but if people get in the habit of phoning in their bets, they might phone the illegal bookmaker, who takes 10 per cent commission compared with the 15 per cent the pari-mutuel takes.

Then there's a whole new area of law. If this was legalized, you'd be able to collect your bets legally. Then there will be disputes over the deposit account; the line account; the exact time at which the bet was placed on the telephone; whether the race was running at that time. If there were disputed odds, in that when we had the dispute in the Canadian Derby over the winner -- that would have been terrible if there had been telephone betting.

So there are pros and cons, and I'm glad to be able to tell you that yesterday Eugene Whelan made a statement that they were backing off; that there was not going to be off-track betting.

The other aspect of it, of course, was betting shops where you wouldn't have this telephone risk. But we feel that the industry is in a very healthy state at the present time and that off-track betting should be approached with great caution. It would certainly knock the bottom out of all these national lotteries if it was ever permitted.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Can I have agreement, then, on Vote 5?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Motion to report?

MR. HANSEN: I so move.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Motion to adjourn?

MR. HANSEN: I so move.

MR. FARRAN: Thank you very much.

(The meeting adjourned at 9:40 p.m.)