

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ALBERTATitle: **Friday, June 22, 1979 10:00 a.m.**

[The House met at 10 a.m.]

PRAYERS

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

head: **INTRODUCTION OF BILLS****Bill Pr. 3
The Edmonton Convention Centre
Authority Act**

MRS. CHICHAK: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce Bill Pr. 3, The Edmonton Convention Centre Authority Act. The purpose of this Bill is the establishment of the city of Edmonton convention centre authority, whose function it will be to develop, maintain, manage, and operate a trade and convention centre in and for the city of Edmonton.

[Leave granted; Bill Pr. 3 read a first time]

**Bill 221
An Act to Amend
The Students Finance Act, 1976**

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce Bill No. 221, An Act to Amend The Students Finance Act. The Bill requires that at least one member of the Students Finance Appeal Board be a postsecondary student.

[Leave granted; Bill 221 read a first time]

**Bill 225
An Act to Amend The Election Finances
and Contributions Disclosure Act**

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I request leave to introduce Bill No. 225, An Act to Amend The Election Finances and Contributions Disclosure Act. The principle behind Bill 225 is to prohibit board members or officers of Crown or quasi-public companies from soliciting funds for political parties.

[Leave granted; Bill 225 read a first time]

head: **TABLING RETURNS AND REPORTS**

MR. HARLE: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to table two brochures which describe the gun-control program and the procedure to obtain firearm acquisition certificates. This is a federal program administered by the provincial government and local police forces. Copies will be distributed to all members.

I'd like to supplement that and say that the yellow folder which describes the firearm acquisition certificates refers to the fact that provinces may also ask for proof of ability to handle a gun. In Alberta there is no

such requirement. I understand no provinces have in fact made that requirement, although Quebec is considering it.

head: **INTRODUCTION OF SPECIAL GUESTS**

MR. PURDY: Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure today to introduce to you and to members of the Assembly some 84 grade 5 students from the Brookwood school in Spruce Grove in the Stony Plain constituency. They are in both galleries, accompanied by their teachers Mrs. Esposito, Mrs. Akins, and Mrs. Person and their bus drivers Mr. Singer and Mr. Patterson. I would ask the group to rise and receive the recognition of the House.

head: **ORAL QUESTION PERIOD****MLA Appointments**

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct the first question to the Provincial Treasurer. I ask the question in light of Bill 22, The Legislative Assembly Amendment Act, which is before the House. When might the Assembly expect to get the report under Section 14(4) of The Legislative Assembly Act?

The Treasurer will recall that that report outlines the MLAs who have been appointed to government committees, task forces, and so on, and the fees and remuneration they have received. The legislation doesn't call for the information to be made available within 15 days of the opening, but it does call for it to be made available within 15 days of the start of a session. I raise the question in light of the fact that we'll be debating Bill 22 in committee, I would suspect, within the next week.

MR. HYNDMAN: Mr. Speaker, I'll look into the matter and report to the hon. gentleman later on this morning, this afternoon, or on Monday.

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, is either the Government House Leader or the Premier in a position to indicate to the Assembly the appointments the government has in mind with regard to Bill 22? I know that a list has been released from the Premier's office, appointing a number of MLAs to a variety of areas, but I ask the question in light of that portion of the proposed legislation that allows the delegation from a minister to officials of the department. Is it the anticipation of the government that there will be appointments in addition to those that have already been released from the Premier's office?

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Speaker, there may well be. The news release of May 17 sets forth a list of 22 appointments, but there could be more.

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, is the Premier or the Government House Leader, who is sponsoring the Bill in the House, in a position to indicate not the names, but at least the areas where those appointments would be forthcoming within the next year, so that we have the benefit of that information when we're looking at the legislation?

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Speaker, if the hon. Leader of the Opposition is referring to my first answer, which concludes that there could be supplementary appointments, the answer to the second question is that no such decisions have been made, only that the possibility is that they may be made.

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, to the Premier. Is it reasonable to assume from that answer that no more commitments for appointments to such committees have been made to members of the Assembly other than those made in the release which came from the Premier's office in the middle of May?

MR. LOUGHEED: Yes, that's accurate, Mr. Speaker.

Metis Settlements

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct my second question to the Minister responsible for Native Affairs and ask if that minister was consulted and gave his approval to "visits" — and I use the term advisedly; that's the government's term — which were made to Metis settlement offices last Monday morning?

DR. McCRIMMON: No, Mr. Speaker, I did not give my approval. I was not aware of the visits at that time.

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, to the minister. Then there was no consultation with either the Native Secretariat or the minister's office prior to the decision being made to pay those visits?

DR. McCRIMMON: No, Mr. Speaker, there was no consultation. It was a matter connected directly with the Minister of Social Services and Community Health.

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary. In light of the actions taken by the minister's colleague, the minister responsible for the administration of The Metis Betterment Act, what steps does the Minister responsible for Native Affairs plan to take to repair the damage which has been done with Metis people in the province?

DR. McCRIMMON: For one thing, Mr. Speaker, I am not sure he is correct in his statement about the damage that has been done. It is a procedure that was followed, and I think the minister responsible has explained to this House reasonably and well the steps that were taken and the steps that have followed. As for my department, I see no reason to go after the other minister in any way, shape, or form. I see no reason that he stepped out of line in any way, shape, or form.

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, perhaps I might rephrase the question. I wasn't getting involved in the question of whether the minister stepped out of line. I'm sure the minister and I disagree on that matter.

But my supplementary question is: what steps will be taken now by the minister's department to improve relations with the Metis settlements, in light of what happened last Monday morning?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. leader seems to be repeating, with a slight change of phrase, the question he asked a few moments ago.

DR. McCRIMMON: Mr. Speaker, several weeks ago I had an excellent meeting with the president and vice-president of the Metis Association. We covered a lot of ground and left on amiable terms. So I see no connection whatsoever to the statements the hon. Leader of the Opposition has made.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the hon. minister. Is he proposing in the next short time to meet with the officers of the Federation of Metis Settlements, as opposed to the Metis Association of Alberta?

DR. McCRIMMON: Mr. Speaker, I have no official meeting with them laid out at this time.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a further supplementary question to the hon. minister. Has he made any plans to visit the eight Metis settlements in the province, to meet with the local councils concerning the question and to discuss relations between the Metis settlements and the government of Alberta?

DR. McCRIMMON: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I have made arrangements to travel to some of the Metis settlements. The arrangements were made before the point in question, about which there's been so much furor from the hon. member and from the Leader of the Opposition, had come up.

DR. BUCK: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Can the minister indicate if an evaluation has been done by his department in consultation with the Metis settlements as to the disruption that occurred on the colonies because of the loss of some of their records? Is the minister able to evaluate or has an evaluation been done of what that disruption meant to the communities?

DR. McCRIMMON: Mr. Speaker, if there has been any disruption at all, which I rather question, I don't believe there's any problem. If any records were picked up, I think they have been returned by now. So I see no reason for any disruption whatsoever.

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the minister. Is he in a position to give a commitment to the Assembly this morning that for work projects delayed as a result of files being removed and so on — is the minister prepared to compensate the settlements for losses which have occurred?

DR. McCRIMMON: Mr. Speaker, I consider that a completely hypothetical question. I don't know of any losses or even problems that have occurred.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, one could argue whether a problem has occurred.

I put a question to the hon. Minister responsible for Native Affairs and ask if he can advise the Assembly what initiatives his department or the Native Secretariat plans to take to deal with questions in the Legislature several days ago, answered by the hon. Premier, with respect to a without-prejudice agreement to move to the recognition of the settlements quite apart from the legal case regarding mines and minerals.

Mr. Speaker, my direct question to the minister is:

what initiatives does his department plan to take in order to achieve this goal?

MR. LOUGHEED: Perhaps I could respond, Mr. Speaker, because the hon. minister has raised that matter with me. We intend to have discussions with the Metis settlements on that matter during the summer.

Wheat Trade

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct this question to the hon. Minister of Agriculture. It concerns a meeting in Saskatoon several weeks ago of the wheat-exporting countries. Did the government of Alberta send an observer to the meeting?

MR. SCHMIDT: Mr. Speaker, I would have to take the question as notice and check. I have no information at this time.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the hon. Minister of Agriculture. The meeting in Saskatoon was, I might add, of major wheat-exporting countries. Among the questions discussed was the possibility ...

MR. SPEAKER: Possibly the hon. member could come directly to the question.

MR. NOTLEY: ... of a wheat OPEC. Has the government of Alberta considered the merits of an arrangement among wheat-exporting countries somewhat similar in nature to the agreement among the oil-exporting nations?

MR. SCHMIDT: Mr. Speaker, it would appear that we are discussing wheat as a Canadian export commodity, and perhaps the inference would be to Agriculture Canada. Indeed we as a province would be interested. Until I have the opportunity to check into the basic question — and I have taken the original question as notice — I'm sure that any input or comments we had would be related to that notice.

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Speaker, just supplementing the answer of the Minister of Agriculture with reference to the notice, I would not like to have the record of *Hansard* indicate any acceptance by the government of the view that there's any logical comparison whatsoever between the OPEC situation in terms of world trade in oil and the world situation in trade of grain. They simply don't compare in any way.

What we have in the world oil trade is a clear situation of a sellers market. In the world grain trade we have an entirely different situation,

I think most observers feel that although there could be some advantages in having the wheat- and grain-exporting nations join together, the general view has consistently been that the prospects of success, without having the major wheat-importing countries agreeing to these arrangements, would render such a wheat- or grain-exporting arrangement relatively ineffective. Past history with regard to the international wheat agreement and pricing reflects that point of view. Just so the record is clear with regard to the implications and perhaps confusion raised in the hon. member's question.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the hon. Premier. It is the position of the Alberta government at this juncture that there should be movement toward an agreement of both importing and exporting nations, as opposed to the thrust of at least some of the people who attended the meeting in Saskatoon, which centred on a getting together, if you like, of the four major wheat-exporting countries?

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Speaker, in the world grain trade there are limited advantages to wheat-exporting countries joining together and attempting to work out mutually beneficial arrangements. But they are of limited advantage. The real advantage is if an arrangement could be worked out — and considerable effort was undertaken unsuccessfully over the past year to bring in the wheat- and grain-importing countries. That isn't to say that the Alberta government does not support and endorse efforts by the Canadian federal government to work with other exporting nations, but with the recognition of that limited advantage.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a further supplementary question to the hon. Minister of Agriculture or the hon. Premier. Has any recommendation been made, or have any discussions held with the new government of Canada respecting changes in the structure of the Canadian Wheat Board to reflect the debate in this Legislature a year ago, if my memory is correct, of provincial representation on the board?

MR. SCHMIDT: Mr. Speaker, not at this time. I'm sure the opportunity will provide itself, and we are certainly looking forward to it.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question. Is the hon. Minister of Agriculture in a position to outline to the Assembly if "not at this time" means it just hasn't been possible in the last two or three weeks and is planned over the next two or three months? What time frame are we looking at, and what priority does the government of Alberta place on the change in the structure of the Canadian Wheat Board proposed by some hon. members a year ago?

MR. SCHMIDT: Mr. Speaker, we have the opportunity and the pleasure of attending the meeting of ministers of agriculture in July, and I'm sure that will be one of the topics of discussion.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the hon. Minister of Agriculture. Quite apart from a meeting of ministers of agriculture, is it the intention of the government of Alberta to make a direct proposal to the government of Canada with respect to provincial representation on the Canadian Wheat Board?

MR. SCHMIDT: Mr. Speaker, as the opportunity provides itself, hopefully in the very near future, the Department of Agriculture for the province of Alberta will certainly be bringing their views to the meeting, which we hope will be on the Canadian Wheat Board, for original discussions before the agricultural meeting in mid-July.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a further supplementary question to the hon. minister. Will it be the intention of either the minister or the hon. Premier to contact

formally, on behalf of the government of Alberta, the minister in charge of the Canadian Wheat Board or the Prime Minister of Canada requesting changes in the structure of the Wheat Board? I am asking whether there will be representation by the appropriate provincial and federal ministers apart from discussions at a departmental level which take place from time to time.

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Speaker, perhaps I could respond this way with the Minister of Agriculture. Our basic objectives with regard to a grain-marketing strategy debated in this House a year ago may be met in different ways with a different administration in Ottawa. With the Prime Minister and federal ministers involved, we will examine whether that will be possible. If we can reach our objectives in grain-marketing strategies in a different way from direct representation by the provincial government and the Canadian Wheat Board, we will examine that possibility. But we will still look at the possibility, as debated here in the Legislature, that there needs to be a greater involvement by this provincial government in the activities of the Canadian Wheat Board than has been the case in the past.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a further supplementary question to either the hon. Premier or the hon. Minister of Agriculture. What efforts have been undertaken by the government of Alberta to meet on a regular or at least periodic basis with the advisory committee to the Canadian Wheat Board? Its members are chosen by farmers in duly authorized elections in the Wheat Board zone; members come from the province of Alberta.

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Speaker, we've reached the conclusion that certainly there have been and will continue to be discussions between members of the Canadian Wheat Board and the Minister of Agriculture and members of his department, and with members of that advisory committee — but the committee is advisory. I think what is much more useful is the fact this government has shown, that we've taken the initiative in direct discussions with the commissioners of the Canadian Wheat Board. That is the most appropriate way of doing it. We've taken that initiative. Other governments have not, either here in the past or in other parts of western Canada.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, one final supplementary question to the hon. Premier. Has there been any formal meeting with the Alberta members of the Wheat Board advisory committee? I raise this in view of the fact that this committee reflects the views of Alberta farmers, because the members were in fact elected by permit owners.

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Speaker, those meetings have been held and will continue to be held.

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, one further supplementary, if I might. Mr. Premier, have there been meetings between officials of the Alberta government and members of the advisory group elected from Alberta?

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Speaker, I just answered that in the affirmative.

Industrial Relations Board Hearings

MR. HYLAND: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Labour, in reference to a release dated June 6 from the public affairs branch that arrived on our desks this morning. It refers to the Board of Industrial Relations hearings starting on June 25 in Medicine Hat. According to the release, the final date for briefs to be filed with the board was June 14.

Mr. Minister, is this not a short time to be able to register and have a brief prepared? Secondly, will they only accept written briefs at these three hearing sites?

MR. YOUNG: Mr. Speaker, the hon. Member for Cypress raises a very good point. Let me first assure the House that there has been a considerable amount of discussion with the participants in the industry. I understand to date we have received notice and copies of some 40 submissions which will be heard during the hearings next week at the four locations of Medicine Hat, Calgary, Edmonton, and Grande Prairie. I can give further assurance that there will be an opportunity at each hearing for anyone present to make an oral submission to the Board of Industrial Relations.

The reason for requesting advance notice was to enable the Board of Industrial Relations to plan the amount of time which might be required in each of the respective hearing locations; in other words, to enable them to schedule better. This has been accomplished, and I trust that if members have acquaintances or know of anyone desirous of making a submission, verbal or in writing, they will advise them that they will have plenty of opportunity to do that if they're present at the hearing.

Mr. Speaker, perhaps just a quick word. The hearings are to study the possibility of extending hours of work beyond the normal eight hours a day for those employed at well sites in the oil well drilling industry. That's an important consideration because of the nature and practice of the industry. At the same time, regard must be had to safety considerations which may arise if employees become overtired.

Drivers' Medical Examinations

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, my question is addressed to the hon. Minister of Hospitals and Medical Care. This applies to a situation where the motor vehicles board requires biyearly medical examinations for people with certain physical handicaps and for senior citizens. In light of the fact that this requirement is imposed by the provincial government or its agency, has any consideration been given to the Alberta health care plan covering these required examinations?

MR. RUSSELL: Yes, Mr. Speaker, consideration has been given to that topic on several occasions. I'm sure it will be reviewed again.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question. A memo by the previous minister dated October 20 indicated a study would be done. Has the study been completed, Mr. Minister?

MR. RUSSELL: No, Mr. Speaker, I don't believe it has yet. Of course, the situation is that senior citizens don't pay any health care insurance premiums. They get substantial benefits on the extended benefits portion of

the program as well. This further request for the consideration that the hon. member has alluded to is being considered in light of that among other factors.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, is the minister in a position to indicate if that decision will be made by the fall sitting?

MR. RUSSELL: No, Mr. Speaker.

DR. REID: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary to the minister. I'm a bit confused about this. I always had the impression that pensioners' medicals for drivers' permits were paid by the commission, or later by the plan. Could you correct that for me, if it's been changed?

MR. RUSSELL: Mr. Speaker, I have to admit that on specific details I would have to report back. But certainly it's clearly understood that on a continuing basis we have received requests from certain groups in the classification alluded to by the hon. Member for Clover Bar for payment of those mandatory medical examinations.

Wildlife Damage Program

MR. MANDEVILLE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the hon. Minister of Agriculture. Before its defeat, the previous federal government announced a \$3 million wildlife program to compensate the wildlife program in the provinces. Could the minister indicate whether he's been in touch with the new government as to whether it is going to go ahead with the \$3 million compensation for wildlife damage?

MR. SCHMIDT: Mr. Speaker, I've had the opportunity to work with my colleague in the wildlife division in regard to the program now in place between the federal government and the province of Alberta in regard to wildlife damage in all aspects, and am very pleased with the program to date. My colleague the Associate Minister of Public Lands and Wildlife may wish to add to the comments.

MR. MILLER: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I would like to add a few comments. As you know, the wildlife program has two aspects: prevention and compensation. Although we've headed for compensation and prevention for migratory waterfowl, we never had a program to deal specifically with damages by bears to beehives. My colleague the Minister of Agriculture and I are presently working on a program that will deal with both prevention and compensation for damages to beehives subject to bear damage. We're also looking at prevention and compensation in respect of damage by elk herds that get into baled haystacks.

Social Assistance Delinquent Accounts

MR. OMAN: Mr. Speaker, I get the feeling that the hon. Minister of Social Services and Community Health is feeling neglected this morning, so I'd like to ask him a question if I could. I noted some time ago, Mr. Minister, that your department was introducing a new or better method for pursuing delinquent accounts of those who were behind in child support or alimony payments. Is that program in effect now? Could the minister indicate, to some extent, what kind of moneys are collected in those cases?

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Speaker, under the direction of my predecessor the department developed a program to recover from overpayments through the social assistance program and to ensure that those people who have a legal responsibility to a former spouse would be obliged to fulfil that obligation. That program is now under way. I reported to the subcommittee during the estimates of the department that I believe during the last fiscal year approximately \$4.5 million was recovered. We put out a statement, I believe on a quarterly basis, giving the total moneys being collected. The program is not perfect. We're working on ways of improving it further. I think we must not lose sight of the fact that those people who have legal obligations must be held accountable under law.

Public Utilities Board Legislation

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct a question to the Premier. The question flows from comments made by the former Minister of Energy and Natural Resources shortly after the Public Utilities Board gave its decision on the cost-of-service hearings by Alberta Gas Trunk. At that time the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources indicated he was prepared to consider amendments to the Public Utilities Board legislation.

Has the government now had an opportunity to reassess that statement? Can the Premier assure the Assembly there will be no amendments to the Public Utilities Board legislation which would be aimed directly at the decision the board made with regard to the AGT application?

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Speaker, I can give the House no such assurance. I can advise the Leader of the Opposition that that particular matter has not reached cabinet review.

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, can the Premier give some indication to the Assembly as to when the government would be in a position to indicate they either plan to move ahead with legislation or, in fact, feel that existing legislation meets the need? What kind of time line are we looking at?

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Speaker, on a number of occasions I can well appreciate the Leader of the Opposition, because certainly when I was in that position I asked those questions that way as well, asked both myself and ministers to outline time frames so that some appreciation could be raised with the Legislature and the public as to what's intended. On the other hand, until a conclusion is reached on certain matters it's very, very difficult to determine what these time lines might be. For that reason I'm really not able to be responsive to the hon. leader's question.

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, I can appreciate what the Premier is saying. But can I ask this supplementary question? In light of the fact there are not only the Public Utilities Board but a number of people in industry who are in competition with Alberta Gas Trunk — not in their gas-gathering capacity, but certainly in some of AGT's newer activities outside gas-gathering — I think it is a matter of some importance that the government indicate at the earliest possible date whether it plans to change the rules of the game for

future decisions of the Public Utilities Board as far as cost of service is concerned.

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Speaker, I'm still not able to provide the hon. member with any further information.

Water Management — Bow River

MR. COOKSON: Mr. Speaker, could I supplement a response to the Member for Bow Valley on a question asked earlier.

There were two parts to the question. One had to do with the development of the Bassano dam; the other had to do with the development of the Eyremore dam. I want to respond to the member that the Eastern Irrigation District was involved in the transfer of works from the federal government to the province, and the province has withheld taking over ownership of the Bassano development, primarily because of unknown factors with regard to ownership of the land. You can appreciate that it's in the area of an Indian reserve, and the dilemma we find ourselves in with regard to the situation on the Piegan reserve has resulted in our deferring a decision.

At this point in time the province is not prepared to accept any costs for repair of the dam and is therefore not prepared to make a decision on the Eyremore dam, which would be downstream. However, it might be an opportune time again to pursue with our federal counterparts the present state of negotiations with regard to ownership. I'll pursue that.

MR. SPEAKER: Would the Assembly agree to revert for a moment to Introduction of Visitors?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

head: INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

MR. SPEAKER: I'd like to draw to the attention of hon. members the presence in the Speaker's gallery of the distinguished Deputy Clerk of the Senate of the Commonwealth of Australia. Mr. and Mrs. Roy Bullock of Canberra are making a visit to Edmonton.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

head: GOVERNMENT MOTIONS (Committee of Supply)

[Mr. Appleby in the Chair]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please come to order.

Department of Education

MR. CHAIRMAN: Any comments or questions?

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Chairman, I'd like to make a couple of comments and several questions as well on general education policy in the province.

Last year, Mr. Minister, one of the major debates as far as the Department of Education was concerned revolved around the government's decision with respect to category four schools. During the course of the

estimates last year, the former Minister of Education indicated certain steps the government was going to take: first of all, to review the curriculum of those schools; and second, to delineate how the inspection process would take place to ensure that the quality of education provided children in category four schools would be adequate.

Mr. Chairman, I'd like to ask the minister to give us a fairly comprehensive report on just where things now stand on the whole question of category four schools in Alberta: how many there are, what the curriculum situation is, what the inspection experience has been, and generally whether or not the minister can assure this committee that the level of education in category four schools is consistent with what should be our objective, considering our overall provincial responsibilities for the provision of education.

Beyond that I would repeat a point. It's not a question, just a point I made last year, when this matter was decided by Judge Oliver. With the greatest respect to a provincial court judge, I do not believe it is satisfactory at all to have something as important as an interpretation of two major Acts in this province — the Bill of Rights and The School Act — adjudicated, if you like, by a provincial court judge.

A provision of The Judicature Act allows the government to refer this matter to the Supreme Court of Alberta. It seems to me that if we're talking about Bills as important as Bills 1 and 2 and The School Act of Alberta, the adjudication should be made by the Supreme Court of Alberta. Then we live with that decision, whatever it may be. I think it is sufficiently important that that kind of clarity is required from the highest court in the province. This is not said with any disrespect to Judge Oliver. I know this argument was made in the Legislature last year. I simply make it again. But the questions I put to the minister relate to the overall performance, if you like, of category four schools.

I want to move from there if I can, Mr. Chairman, to say that, while there has been some improvement in the last year with respect to grants that will alleviate some of the problems in rural school districts, particularly those with low assessment, the fact of the matter still remains that most rural school divisions in this province are in pretty serious shape. Not too long ago, the hon. Minister of Utilities and Telephones, the hon. Member for Grande Prairie, and I met with representatives of trustees in the Peace River country. The major question they brought to our attention and that carried through the discussions was the problem of providing an adequate level of instruction in their respective divisions, because of the problems of making dollars stretch as far as they have to in many of these rural divisions.

For example, we had it brought to our attention that buses begin running as early as 6:45 in the morning, not because the school division deliberately chose to have a bus make the first pick-up at 6:45 — in this case I believe a grade 1 student — but because the financial constraints of the division were such that they had to make a decision which, in their judgment, was not very useful from the standpoint of education in that particular area. They were caught in the bind so many of our rural divisions find themselves in.

I know I've talked about this for the last seven or eight years. We've made some progress, Mr. Minister. But it would be completely misleading to look at the

budget you presented to this Assembly and suggest we've solved those problems, because we have not. We still have the situation in all too many rural divisions in this province where the quality of education is really being jeopardized. Yesterday in the Fort Vermilion area, meeting with local people before the Wop May celebrations, the comment you got time and time again was: we just don't have the funds to provide the quality education that people really feel is necessary and, I think, have a right to expect.

So, Mr. Chairman, I just reiterate the appeal I've made for a number of years in terms of our whole approach to education funding. I know that the government has said, all right, we have the foundation plan that provides a level of assistance throughout the province; we'll supplement it with special programs such as the low assessment program, the small school program, and the declining enrolment grants. But what I'm saying to you, Mr. Minister, is that even with those programs in place, there is still a very, very serious administrative problem in allowing the divisions to provide the level of education which they argue they would like to make available, and which I think most Albertans would see as being reasonable education standards.

I conclude by saying that in the major school in the Spirit River school division, the Spirit River high school, the teachers felt it was necessary to get a copy machine. That is a very sensible thing to do if you're preparing lessons. Unfortunately, there was no money in the school division budget, no possible way the school division could provide a copy machine. So the teachers bought their own copy machine, which is very nice. I suppose that's an example of volunteerism. But I really question whether that kind of volunteerism should be necessary in the public school system. It might be much better if the teachers who had to raise money to buy their own copy machine could have used their money for the local Kinsmen, Lions, or some other group raising moneys for other voluntary projects that aren't publicly financed. Either they did it or they didn't have a copy machine.

I think that illustrates the kind of situation a lot of school divisions are in. I have met with divisions all over the province. It's not just a problem in the Peace River country; it's a problem throughout. What I'm saying is that the supplementary programs we have talked about in this Legislature for the last seven or eight years are still not adequate.

MR. KING: Mr. Chairman, on Wednesday afternoon I was asked about enrolment in private schools. I think the member asking the question was particularly concerned about private schools in category one. I can provide the information in both categories.

Of a total school enrolment of approximately 425,000 students in the province, 5,200 students are enrolled in private schools. So they're approximately 1 per cent of the total enrolment.

The evaluation of all category four private schools has been an activity of the department this year. You will appreciate that this is the first full year in which operation of category four schools has been possible. So the department has evaluated all category four schools in the province. Unfortunately, the evaluation can't be completed until the school year is completed. So it isn't possible for me to report to you now on the outcome of that evaluation, although I would be able

to, if the member were interested, come the fall sittings of the Legislature.

The member commented about finances. We haven't solved all financial problems of all school jurisdictions in the province. We continue to be concerned about financing. But I wouldn't cast it in quite the same light as the hon. member opposite, who said most — I guess that was the word — rural school jurisdictions are in difficulty.

In 1978, the last complete year of operation for which we have information, of the Roman Catholic separate school districts, which are most often rural, 32 had an operating surplus and 15 a deficit; for counties, 15 had an operating surplus, and 14 a deficit; for school divisions, 17 had a surplus and 12 a deficit. I compare that with accumulated surpluses and deficits in these different jurisdictions: 21 divisions have a surplus, eight a deficit; 28 counties have a surplus, one a deficit; two Roman Catholic school districts, other than in the cities, have a surplus and five a deficit; for other types of jurisdictions, six have a surplus and three an accumulated deficit.

Admittedly, there are problems in particular parts of the province with respect to the operation of particular jurisdictions. Those problems have to be addressed. But I don't think it is correct, and I think the figures I have just quoted demonstrate it is not correct, that most jurisdictions are experiencing financial difficulty with which they cannot cope.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Chairman, I'd just like to follow that up for a moment. The minister has used a statistical argument. Certainly there's some argument for that kind of presentation. But I would remind you, Mr. Minister, that that can also be misleading. I'll tell you of one division that in all likelihood will have a surplus for this operating year: Spirit River. Now, how have they arrived at the surplus? I'll tell you how, Mr. Minister. Because of draconian cuts that not a single member on that board wanted, but they had no other choice.

I know some of the school divisions in this province that you have down as having a surplus. Sure they have a surplus. But not because of improving the quality of education, because it's chop, chop, chop, chop. [interjection] Some hon. member doesn't agree. Well, he should get around the province and see the areas that don't have the kind of assessment they have in the Innisfail area, and find out the problems of divisions.

Mr. Minister, I don't argue with the fact that you've admitted there are some very serious problems. But I would say that a simple recitation of department statistical information can be misleading, because some of those surpluses are in fact gained at the very expense of the quality of education. Those are the points some of the trustees in the Peace River country have brought to our attention for — well, about eight years that I've been a member, but most graphically in the last year. Don't take what appears to be an operating surplus as an indication of financial health, because it has been purchased with a very serious cutback in the quality of instruction.

MR. KING: Mr. Chairman, I only want to assure the hon. member that I was not making a statistical argument. I prefaced my views by saying that there are, admittedly, some particular situations throughout

the province which require attention and, further, that we do not have perfect formulas or programs for providing financial support to local school jurisdictions. We constantly have that under review and revision, out of a desire to improve on the way we deliver financial support to school jurisdictions. I was not making a statistical argument.

Nevertheless, statistics do create a picture of what is current. Overall I am simply saying that the statistics do not suggest that overall the problem is as bad as has been intimated. I don't like to discuss individual school divisions in this situation, because I think both of us are working on the basis of only partial information. But, since Spirit River School Division No. 47 has been raised, they have requested of the department a budget review for this particular reason: to gain special support for the purchase of school buses. According to the information I have here, they are not requesting a budget review because the overall quality of their education is suffering and because they have had to apply draconian measures across the board. They are requesting a budget review in order to gain special support for the purchase of school buses.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Chairman, I don't want to get into a long discussion here of the problems of the Spirit River division, except to say that the Minister of Education is probably not aware that last summer the board of the Spirit River school division met with the hon. Member for Smoky River, the member at that time from Grande Prairie was requested to be present, and me, and outlined the kind of steps they had to take. Mr. Chairman and Mr. Minister, they took those steps, and they were not happy about it. Those steps caused very substantial cutbacks in the quality of education, and that was clearly laid out before the two MLAs who were present.

Now the financial position of the division is much better, and I commend the board for taking rather courageous steps in a situation that was extremely difficult. The government responded partially. Additional funds were made available, not enough to allow them to achieve their objective of maintaining the standards of education, the quality of instruction, the numbers of staff they wished. But within that period of a year they were able to dramatically cut back what had been a very serious operating deficit. But it was a cutback which came as a result of staff cuts which not a single member of that board wished or thought was wise from the vantage point of the children in the division.

I have talked to other divisions. I won't name them. I can name Spirit River because it happens to be in my constituency. But I won't name other divisions where the same sort of argument has been brought forward, that we have balanced the budget but in our judgment at the expense of the quality of education.

I reiterate my point, Mr. Minister, that while the supplementary programs first announced in 1975 are of some help and have been enriched in the last four years, they still don't go far enough in those areas of the province where you don't have a high assessment base. Even some of the northern divisions have substantial industrial assessment. The east Smoky division is an example. They're worried about what's going to happen in the next year or two because their pipeline assessment is winding down. But they've had substantial industrial assessment that has put them in a rather

different position from the Peace River school division, for example, or the Spirit River school division where you don't have the assessment. Perhaps in time, when the Shell prototype plant comes on stream, Peace River is suddenly going to have a bonanza in the short run. And if a major dam were constructed in Dunvegan so would Spirit River and the Fairview divisions.

But the problem they cite and the concern they advance to us as MLAs is that the financial health of too many of these divisions is dependent upon the hit-and-miss circumstance, happenstance, of where major industrial activity proceeds. Even though we have a program that is based on low assessment, it doesn't go far enough.

MR. KING: Mr. Chairman, whether or not any of the decisions made at the local or provincial level are comfortable or uncomfortable is not at issue. The only thing at issue is the quality of education the children are receiving locally. If the Spirit River school division believes that the quality of education has suffered in their jurisdiction this past year as a result of financing, then the department and I would be pleased to co-operate with them to do an evaluation of the achievement of their students this past year as opposed to prior years, in order to discover whether or not that has in fact occurred. And if it can be demonstrated that these students have come out of that school division this year less prepared to face life than were their predecessors last year or the year before, that would provide valuable information for us in the department and for all local school divisions.

MRS. EMBURY: Mr. Chairman, page 94 of the annual report of the department, which was recently tabled in the Assembly, indicates that per-pupil expenditure has gone from \$449.14 in 1965-66 to \$1,818.17 in '78. This is an increase of four times in 12 years. The Minister's Advisory Committee on Student Achievement [report], which was also recently tabled, points out relatively little difference in the ability of students. Would the minister please answer the question: how do we justify this ever-increasing cost?

MR. KING: That's a very good question, Mr. Chairman, for which I wish I had a very good answer. I don't. Some of the things which have contributed to that significant increase in per-pupil expenditure between '65-66 and '77-78 include larger and more complex, if not more luxurious, facilities and schools; increased academic requirements for staff, including the fact that virtually everyone in the province now has at least one degree and an increasing number of teachers have years of university following a degree or a second degree; as well as paying for increased years of experience by virtue of the fact that our population of teachers is aging and experience seems to be a concomitant of age. As well there are additional trained support staff — counsellors, librarians, psychologists, speech therapists.

So in terms of improved capital facilities, increased academic attainment, increased experience, and an expanded support staff, all of which have to be paid for and are paid for across the population of pupils, you can account for a very large part of this increase, other than that which is accounted for by inflation.

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Chairman, I wonder if I might just raise a matter with the minister. I can start with the issue from my own constituency, but it's a matter that I've had brought to my attention by a number of rural boards. It relates primarily to students who would be in grades 7, 8, and 9 in rural jurisdictions where precious little can be offered to those students in junior high school. I use the example of a community in my own constituency where the principal advises me that likely 20 to 30 students in that junior high school have had educational problems. They perhaps have come to that school from other jurisdictions, but basically the junior high school program of the day simply doesn't meet their needs.

If these students were in the city of Calgary, they'd be able to go to one of the junior high schools where special vocational programs are offered. Until recently it's been possible for jurisdictions close to Calgary — and, I believe, jurisdictions close to Edmonton — to be able to work out an arrangement where the school jurisdiction could give money to the city, and educational opportunities could be provided. Now Calgary is more than overloaded. In my own riding, the county of Mountain View school committee can no longer contract with the system to the south, because that system is now full.

I've done some checking with other divisions and counties; it isn't a question only in my own constituency. Several jurisdictions indicate that we're letting down students in junior high schools who are not good academic students. If you'll allow me to be very blunt, Mr. Minister, the game plan seems to be to keep them somewhat interested in junior high school until they are sixteen. Then the parents are encouraged to get Johnny or Susie out of school. Work experience programs or modifications of the work experience concept are a small step in that direction.

A proposal has come to the department from the county of Mountain View to open up one of the old schools in the area, with some financial assistance from the government, and have these junior high students in the school for half a day, then outside the school in work experience situations for the other half of the day. This would enable them to bring into a school perhaps 75 to 85 students of somewhat like academic abilities. I think it would do a great deal to enable those young people to have some educational success, because there's a direct relationship between young people like them and the young people who later have problems and end up in the departments of the Solicitor General or of the minister at the other end of the front bench. I think that is fairly well recognized.

I know it's a difficult question, Mr. Minister, because the numbers in rural jurisdictions are small in comparison to Edmonton and Calgary. I think the Calgary public system, as I understand it, is doing a very good job in that area.

Mr. Minister, my question is — and there was reference to it in the Speech from the Throne — what are we going to do with these kinds of situations? What kind of direction or leadership, if I can use those terms, is the department prepared to make available to school systems like my own in the county of Mountain View? Several other rural jurisdictions have similar problems.

MR. KING: Mr. Chairman, as the hon. member has suggested, the problem with respect to junior high schools is not peculiar to rural areas, although perhaps

it is exacerbated because of population. You said, and it is a fact, that the urban school divisions are having problems too: knowing what to do that is really positive or constructive with children in junior high school. So I begin by saying that I don't believe anyone has come to a conclusion about the answer. We know that what we are doing at the present is not working, so a number of alternatives are under consideration. I think it would be the attitude of the department to support any of these alternatives on an experimental basis over a period of time to see which one is going to be most effective. It has been suggested, for example, that you do away with junior high school — that you run elementary school from grades 1 through 8 and that the high school operate from grades 9 to 12. That's one alternative. It has been suggested that we should extend the vocational education program in junior high schools, and that we should make vocational education available even in very small junior high schools. That's a second alternative which, I might mention, is going to be addressed in a preliminary way at a meeting in the department next week. The third was the announcement of the extension of the educational opportunity fund into junior high school. That fund is meant to provide support to the local school jurisdiction in addressing attitudinal, motivational, and psychological problems of junior high school students. That's another alternative.

The last alternative would be something called integrated practical arts, a program presently operating in elementary schools that is designed to give students experience with doing things, but not in a complex or expensive environment, as most of our shops are in at the present time. I said integrated practical arts was the last alternative; that's not correct. Co-operative activity between jurisdictions to create a population base large enough to sustain one of the earlier alternatives is actually the last alternative. That is to say, the type of arrangement you suggest exists between some rural and urban school divisions. The problem in your case is not a change of attitude on the part of the Calgary Board of Education, but the fact that space is not available. It can be overcome with continued co-operative activity and planning between the two boards. But certainly there's a discontinuity in the short-term.

I know the hon. member is aware that with junior high school students, you are dealing with students whose educational interest is impacted very, very much by the physical, psychological, and social changes going on within them. It's an absolutely unique experience in the life of a person and has to be responded to in a unique way. For whatever reasons, it's a problem we haven't seriously addressed our minds to until recently, which is why we have thought of so many alternatives but have not yet concluded which is the best one.

So I would say that all of those I listed are going to be examined in co-operation with local school boards over the course of the next few years. They will be supported by the department.

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Chairman, I may have several supplementaries.

Mr. Minister, what kind of specific support can the county of Mountain View — we'll use that as an example, because it's in my riding — expect from the department this year, if they're able to put together a

proposal that would bring from 80 to 100 of these students together in a central location for half a day or a day. Mr. Minister, that becomes a very practical problem. In our own case you have five different centres where these students would be bused from.

The minister makes reference to the educational opportunity fund, and that's a step in the right direction. But if the information I've received is accurate, that may mean one person in the county to help out in that area this year, which isn't going to do a great deal for the students affected. It's a step in the right direction, Mr. Minister. I'll agree with you, we don't know the answers. But I question whether there is one answer. That's my personal point of view. I'm a great believer that a number of approaches have to be tried. Some will work for some students, some will not work for others. But while we're going through the discussion, the experimenting and so on, we're losing youngsters who are now in 7, 8 and 9. My plea, Mr. Minister, would be that some steps be taken.

I guess finances are the big hold-up. I understand that the county of Mountain View feels that for \$100,000 to \$125,000 they could put on a pretty reasonable program next year that would go some distance to meeting the needs of these youngsters. Mr. Minister, is that kind of money available someplace in the budget, if application is made properly by the county of Mountain View or other jurisdictions? Is there a significant amount of money someplace in the budget so those kinds of things can be tried in the rural parts of the province?

MR. KING: Not knowing the details of the program the county of Mountain View is considering, I'm afraid I can't answer the hon. member. But I would consider any representation made to me. I just did some rough calculation here, and the possibility of what he is suggesting for 80 students in each of the operating school divisions in the province would be in the order of \$15 million.

I too have said there is no one answer. We have to determine the relative value of a number of different answers in different situations. Therefore we are prepared to support financially the exploration of those answers, not only through the educational opportunity fund, but through other avenues of support. We have a responsibility as well to make some judgment about whether, on the face of it, the proposal is reasonable, effective for the students who would be involved, and to some extent cost effective. I'm not going to make a commitment here this morning that we will give them what they need without knowing the details of what they propose. But I will make a commitment that I will entertain it seriously.

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Minister, are there funds in the budget, either in the foundation allocations or under — I would suspect the EOF isn't that sizable. Are there funds the minister can perhaps tuck away out of the foundation fund . . . On a little side trip just for a moment, Mr. Chairman: the foundation program generally has a few million dollars left in the fund at the end of the year. One may have difficulties with the auditors, but it seems to me that in the budget of the Department of Education, be it the foundation allocations or someplace else, one should be able to find some money for — I naturally hope it's the county of Mountain View, but I'm not so narrow as to say that's

the only place. Some of these projects could start now in a number of other areas too, rather than say we're going to wait for a period of time.

The possibility of the county of Mountain View, the county of Red Deer, or other areas being able to do that kind of research and come up with answers themselves, with all due respect, isn't that great. Much work has been done in Calgary and Edmonton, Mr. Minister. Let's not get the impression that no work has been done in this area. There are some successful programs in Calgary and Edmonton. I think we should take the good parts of those successful programs and make that kind of educational opportunity available to a number of youngsters outside Calgary and Edmonton.

I should also point out that I know the Calgary board has had some difficulty in getting a junior high school location for a similar program approved for the city of Calgary. They just have run out of space.

But let me conclude my comment to the minister in this area. With all due respect to the people in the department, Mr. Minister, don't let them tell you we have to wait on this thing until some definitive answers come about, because that will be some time. With great respect to all our colleagues in the field of education, it really becomes a matter of the minister taking the bull by the horns and saying, doggone it, we're going to get some things done in this area.

I think this area of junior high school and youngsters who have not been successful educationally and academically is a very high pay-off area, Mr. Minister. I say pay-off simply from the standpoint that the Solicitor General and the hon. minister who has Monday morning raids wouldn't find as many people with that kind of educational experience ending up either on their rolls or in their institutions.

So I urge the minister to give high priority to some seed money, if that's the right term, a few million dollars in this area, so that one legacy of the minister's four years in the department would be to feel pretty proud of the accomplishments he's had at least in that area.

MR. KING: Mr. Chairman, first of all I must say that the hon. member knows the staff of the Department of Education are very intelligent and worldly wise. In consequence they know not to tell me that action waits upon a definitive answer. If action in the world waited upon a definitive answer, none of us would be here; I'm not sure what we would be doing. As the hon. member knows, the department is intelligent enough to recognize that.

MR. R. CLARK: It's the minister I'm worried about.

MR. KING: The department also has a well deserved reputation for careful financial planning and management.

DR. BUCK: Easy now, easy.

MR. KING: Therefore I can say with a good deal of certainty that we do not have slush funds. We don't budget to have money left over at the end of the year. I am not going to approve a project because I know there is money in a slush fund that can be expended on a program submitted for approval. I will approve support for programs because they have merit. The

money is available in the department for programs that have merit. But I am not going to approve programs because I happen to know we have the money hidden away somewhere and I can buy off a problem in some part of the province.

I acknowledge that a lot of good work has been done by local school jurisdictions. I appreciate the hon. member's saying that, because I think it should be put on the record. Both rural and urban school jurisdictions began seriously to address themselves to this problem four, five, six, or eight years ago. Some good programs are in place, no question about it. I think local school jurisdictions deserve credit for that.

There are also problems locally that the Department of Education or the provincial government cannot intervene in, regardless of what our feelings might be for the quality of education. The question of the location of a vocational secondary school in Calgary is an excellent example of that. The Calgary Board of Education may have a very good vocational education program. It may well deserve the support of the Department of Education, and it may address the needs of a substantial number of students in Calgary. The community, including the local municipal government, the neighborhood, and certainly the school board is the appropriate level at which to address and resolve that problem, not with the intervention of the Department of Education. I don't think the member was suggesting that.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I wonder if we could revert to introduction of visitors for a moment?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

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

MR. L. CLARK: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It gives me a great deal of pleasure today to introduce to you, and through you to this Assembly, 14 grade 9 students from Rockyford, accompanied by their principal Mr. Robert Moggey, and Mrs. Dunsmore. Rockyford is situated in the centre of the Big Country in the Drumheller constituency. I would like also to tell you that these students came up via the CNR dayliner and are staying overnight at one of the youth hostels in Edmonton. I would ask the students to rise and receive the traditional welcome of this House.

MR. COOKSON: Mr. Chairman, another brief interruption to introduce a very lively group of 50 grade 5 students from Lacombe school. They have just come in and are watching the proceedings. They're accompanied by Mrs. McLelland, Mr. Start, and, I think, Mrs. Hutchison and Mrs. Frizzell. Perhaps the busdriver is also in attendance. They're seated in the members gallery. I wonder if they would rise and receive the reception of the House.

MR. KING: Mr. Chairman, thank you. I very much appreciate being brought back down to earth. I believe we have in the public gallery a grade 5 class from Sacred Heart school in my constituency. They're accompanied by their teacher Mrs. Yanchuk. They arrived in the gallery at 11 o'clock, and I hope they are still

here. If they are, I would ask that they rise to receive the welcome of the Assembly.

STRANGER FROM THE GALLERY: They haven't arrived yet.

MR. KING: They're like another class; they'll be introduced twice in the Assembly.

HON. MEMBER: It's a good try anyway.

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

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Chairman, I'll try to forego the opportunity to comment that I hope school boards don't come up empty-handed like the minister just did. Not having said that . . .

Seriously, Mr. Minister, one problem in the area of educational finance on which I think the department is going to have to give some leadership is, understandably, when boards feel they have tough decisions to make. The kind of students we've been talking about this morning, Mr. Chairman, are very often the ones about which there is a feeling of: is the money well spent? The numbers aren't that great. I'm not for one moment urging that the minister or his department personally intervene. On the other hand, I'm not enthused at all about designated grants. Having said that, Mr. Minister, I'm not sure I can make any earth-shattering suggestions as to how we get at this problem, other than to say: it's youngsters like the ones we've been talking about, especially in junior high school, whose educational opportunities become more slender when cutting has to be done by boards. I, for one, recognize it's a difficult problem.

I want to conclude by saying I think it's a matter worthy of the very best efforts of the minister and the department. It would be an area where Alberta could give some real education leadership, not only within Alberta but across the country. I really hope that if there isn't something significant in the estimates a year from now, at least the minister would be able to indicate some of the steps taken in this area in the course of the year.

MR. PURDY: Mr. Chairman, I'd like to thank the Minister of Education for acting so quickly on the request from the residents of Spruce Grove, when they attempted to set up a French immersion class for grade 1. They already had it in kindergarten, and it was turned down by the local board of education. The minister indicated to people in Spruce Grove that because of legislation in place they could set up a citizens' advisory committee. From the last conversation I had with citizens there, it appears to be going very well. It looks like we'll have French immersion for one class in the fall of 1979.

I'd like to ask the minister what he foresees for French immersion in the province. The other day it was indicated in estimates that maybe we should be looking at having French in some of the lower grades. What does the minister foresee for more French immersion classes starting at grade 1 and the kindergarten level?

MR. KING: Mr. Chairman, the policy of the government in this area was enunciated just over a year ago by my predecessor and the Premier. It has been referred to as a best-efforts policy — one of the phrases contained in the statement that the government would make its best efforts to provide French immersion programs in areas where numbers warranted. Those two phrases are key to the policy statement made a year ago.

The judgment of both those things is very subjective. What are best efforts, and what are sufficient numbers to warrant a program? I think it's appropriate that you establish subjectively or arbitrarily a certain level of activity. You run with it for a while and see how well it is responded to in the province. When you have a measure of that, you try to strike a slightly higher plateau and develop that in the province before you move up, a step at a time. The decision to take each step, and how high you're going to step, is a subjective judgment on each occasion. I think it is now appropriate that we consider another step in terms of supporting the development of immersion programs. That is under active consideration in the department; we have not made a decision about it.

In summary, I think we've had very good experience with the programs and methods we have been using. I think the experience has been so good that it justifies our considering, right now, expansion or improvement in the program for the near future.

MRS. CRIPPS: Mr. Chairman, all questions today have been geared to educating students with problems in the regular curriculum. We're totally ignoring the needs of the brilliant student. Courses of study are geared to the average student. Under the educational opportunity funds, special programs are adapted for underachievers. Brilliant students are not being challenged and, in effect, are becoming underachievers. I've always maintained that we lose the slow students from grades 1 to 4, and the brilliant students from grades 4 to 9.

Mr. Minister, could you tell us briefly if the department is looking at special enrichment courses that will challenge and encourage brilliant students to maintain high standards of achievement?

MR. KING: Mr. Chairman, I'm not aware of any particular programs of the department. Generally, the position of the department has been to provide a core curriculum in courses and at grade levels, and to leave the responsibility for expanding that core curriculum to the local jurisdiction, however they choose. That may simply be supplementary materials addressing the same level or standard, or supplementary materials or activities that address a higher level or standard. In that respect I think responsibility for enrichment programs has lain with the local school jurisdiction rather than at the initiative of the Department of Education. As a general principle, I favor that in the same way I favor the local jurisdiction being responsible for developing programs for children who have any kind of handicap. I think the situations are analogous.

The Alberta Association for Bright Students has been in touch with my office. I'm going to meet with them some time during the summer. I'm sorry I can't tell you when. They want to explore with me precisely the problem you have raised, and I have made that commitment to them.

MR. D. ANDERSON: Could we revert to introduction of visitors once more?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

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

MR. D. ANDERSON: Mr. Chairman, I have the privilege today of bringing the Minister of Education down to earth again and introducing a class from the Calgary Currie constituency to him, to you, and to members of this Legislature. They are a grade 9 law option class from Bishop Pinkham school in my constituency. They're here to see our proceedings. I ask that they rise and receive the welcome of this Assembly.

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

MR. HIEBERT: Mr. Chairman, in the past school boards and schools have experienced difficulty when implementing a new program approved by the department, such as the K to 12 social studies curriculum that is coming on stream. Many times moneys that are normally allocated to maintaining the level of the other programs are redirected toward launching the new program. Is there any consideration or appropriation in the new budget with regard to seed money for launching a program? If not, could such be considered in the future?

MR. KING: There is no program that provides seed money, as such, for launching a new program. Recently we received a resolution of the Curriculum Policies Board which relates to a comprehensive examination of the question of in-service by the Curriculum Policies Board, the ASTA, and the ATA. I think it was those three. The Department of Education is committed to such a study and, for our part, we expect that that study by the department, the ASTA, and the ATA will go ahead. It will be a comprehensive study on the question of in-servicing new and changed programs.

I want to emphasize that we go into that study with no preconditions or presumptions. But we are going to undertake that study jointly with the other two major interested organizations.

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Chairman, just one other area I want to question the minister about. I've received a number of commentaries on the report of the Minister's Advisory Committee on Student Achievement. I think some have called it a half-million dollar monster, which rather recommends that it kind of succeed itself. On the other hand, I've had some more positive representations with regard to the committee report.

My purpose in raising it, Mr. Minister, is to get some indication of the steps the minister and his department will be taking so that not only we in the Assembly know where we stand, but people in the far greater and more important community can make some decisions with regard to this area of student achievement.

MR. KING: At the news conference at which the MACOSA study was released, I advised that there would be a period of time following release of the study when we would be inviting response in an informal and non-structured way, and that subsequent to that the department would make plans for formal response and reaction. It is my plan that as soon as these sittings are adjourned for the summer, I would address my mind to that question of formal opportunities for response. I would see that formal opportunity being provided through the fall months — that is, September, October, November — with some period of time following that for the integration of the responses, then the development of a position for the spring of 1980. But there will be some kind of formal opportunity for stakeholder groups to make responses additional to whatever comments we may have received since the news conference. I can't give the exact nature and timing of that opportunity, except that I expect it to be in the early fall of this year.

MR. R. CLARK: Just following along, Mr. Chairman. Then, Mr. Minister, during the estimates or on some more formal occasion during the spring session next year we might expect a response, recommendation by recommendation, from the minister as to which recommendations the department plans to proceed with, which the minister finds unacceptable — that kind of breakdown. That's really what I want to establish, Mr. Minister: that next April or May we can expect that kind of detailed response from the government.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I believe the hon. minister's class has now arrived, if he'd like to reintroduce them.

MR. KING: Before I introduce my class, Mr. Chairman, I am shaking my head "yes" to the hon. member's last comments.

head: INTRODUCTION OF SPECIAL GUESTS (reversion)

MR. KING: I would like to introduce to you, Mr. Chairman, and through you to the members of the committee and of the Assembly, a grade 5 class from Sacred Heart school, which is located in my constituency. They are accompanied by their teacher Mrs. Yanchuk. They are seated in the public gallery. I would ask them to rise and receive the welcome of the Assembly.

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

Agreed to:

1.01 — Minister's Office	\$104,210
1.02 — Deputy Minister's Office	\$288,400
1.03 — Finance, Statistics and Legislation	\$958,700
1.04 — Educational Grants to Individuals, Organizations and Agencies	\$323,000
1.05 — Staff Rotation	\$131,000
1.06 — Minister's Committees	\$10,000
1.07 — School Buildings	\$513,600
1.08 — Planning and Research	\$1,318,500

1.09 — Personnel Office	\$141,800
1.10 — Board of Reference	\$2,200
1.11 — Student Evaluation and Data Processing	\$1,412,700
1.12 — Communications	\$155,000
1.13 — Alberta Education Communications Authority	\$109,600
1.14 — Field Administration Services	\$323,300
1.15 — Library Services	\$163,800
Total Vote 1 — Departmental Support Services	\$5,955,810

Vote 2.1 — Grants to Schools:

2.1.1 — Provincial Contribution to the School Foundation Program Fund [SFPF]	\$523,548,000
2.1.2 — Supplementary Requisition Equalization Grants	\$14,853,000
2.1.3 to 2.1.24 — School Regulation Grants	\$43,010,000

2.2 — Grants to Private Schools	\$3,636,000
2.3 — Early Childhood Services	\$22,122,000
2.4 — Educational Opportunity Fund	\$11,851,000
2.5 — Special Assistance to School Boards	\$26,851,000
2.6 — Learning Disability Fund	\$2,083,000

MR. CHAIRMAN: Total amount to be voted, Vote 2 — \$647,954,000. Are you agreed?

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Chairman, before we vote on 2, I'd like to refer to page 117 in the estimates book. If we look at the school foundation program fund closing balance, a year ago we had \$12 million surplus and this year we'll have some \$2 million. I take it that in the course of the year in essence we've committed to school boards \$10 million more than we've taken in the fund. Is the minister in a position to give any indication as to what the department expects to have in the fund at the end of this year?

MR. KING: I knew there would be one of these, Mr. Chairman. No. I will provide the information to the hon. member. I can't tell him now what our expectations will be. The intention is to be as close to a nil balance as possible.

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Chairman, to the minister. While the minister is getting that information, in light of the earlier comments about slush funds I wonder if he would also find out the reason \$12 million was left unexpended in the fund at the end of '77-78? A note from the minister's office would be quite satisfactory.

MR. KING: Yes, Mr. Chairman. My recollection is that it is the result of a change in accounting practice in the Treasury Department and the result of a request from them that we should change practice pursuant to their changed practice. But I will check that to confirm and will advise the hon. member by note.

Agreed to:

Total Vote 3 — Regular Education Services	\$7,862,450
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MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Chairman, I want to explore just three other areas. Mr. Minister, with regard to the department's involvement in the Woods, Gordon study, where does that sit now? I know changes were made in the foundation program in the support for school

boards some months back, but has the government now finalized its view on the recommendations of the Woods, Gordon report? Could we have a recommendation-by-recommendation breakdown as to what's to be done and which are to be thrown out, hopefully?

MR. KING: That would be very difficult to do immediately, Mr. Chairman. The member is correct that the new school building funding formula reflects, in part, the work and recommendations of the Woods, Gordon report.

You will have noted a 44 per cent increase in the budget of the school buildings branch. In part that is because they will be administering two programs for three years rather than one, and in part because of the large expansion in the building quality restoration program. I don't think the operation of those two programs should be committed to in final form this early in the operation of the new school building funding formula.

In addition, when the Sindlinger task force on school closures was created, I advised Dr. Proudfoot, the chairman of the Calgary board of education, and of course all other school jurisdictions, that following on the Sindlinger task force we would be considering the question of the community school concept, the community use of schools. Obviously that impacts on school buildings and school building funding and is impacted by some of the observations and recommendations of the Woods, Gordon report.

Since all of this is still in an important stage of development, the government can't come to any final conclusion in the near future about the recommendations of the Woods, Gordon report.

MR. R. CLARK: Coming at it from another angle, Mr. Minister, has the government rejected any recommendations in the Woods, Gordon report?

MR. KING: Yes, Mr. Chairman. I'm sorry, but I don't have a copy of the Woods, Gordon report here. I'll advise the hon. member.

Agreed to:

Total Vote 4 — Special Education Services	\$7,275,700
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Department Total	\$669,047,960
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MR. KING: I move that the vote be reported.

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Chairman, just before we do that, I should have asked about two other areas. Mr. Minister, one is the task force of the hon. Member for Calgary Buffalo. Can we have some sort of time line as to when that will be finished? Could the minister indicate to the Assembly whether the recommendations of the task force will be tabled in the Assembly? I know the hon. member can develop the argument that the commitment can't be made ahead of time. On the other hand, I would remind the hon. minister that task force reports have been tabled in the Assembly on occasion.

Mr. Minister, could I also ask you to comment on the department's involvement in the Bonnyville-Cold Lake development? What kind of commitment has been given to the boards in that area with regard to financial support, primarily for capital, and in a manner

that will allow them to build facilities before the students are there, so we don't have a scattering of portables?

MR. KING: With respect to the Sindlinger task force, Mr. Chairman, it is still my expectation that its work will be concluded by the deadline which I announced in my letter to Dr. Proudfoot; that is, the end of this month. All of the task forces are operating under a more serious time pressure than I think the ministers expected. There is a possibility of a brief extension, but I wouldn't consider it to be likely at this time. I cannot make a commitment at this time about tabling the recommendations of the task force; I would have to take that under consideration.

With respect to Bonnyville, the member is aware that I spend two days there last month and met with representatives of all seven jurisdictions which operate in the area. I have since sent them a letter asking whether or not they would be interested in participating jointly in a co-operative department/local jurisdiction study of every pertinent educational question in the Bonnyville area. I have heard from one jurisdiction and am awaiting replies from the other six. I'm hopeful that each will be prepared to participate. As I say, that study will consider the whole range of educational questions that have been raised in that area: boundaries, financing, staff development, and capital facilities. I hope it will be wide open.

I have not made a commitment to any front-end funding, which I think is what you were alluding to. A policy on front-end funding will not be arrived at by any single department of this government. It impacts on a number of departments, including Hospitals and Medical Care, Municipal Affairs, and others. A policy on front-end funding, if explicated by any minister, will be done on behalf of the government as a whole. I did not make any commitment to them in that regard.

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Chairman, with regard to the task force headed by the hon. Member for Calgary Buffalo, is the hon. member receiving remuneration for the work being done on the task force?

MR. KING: Not from any government funds. In fact he is not receiving remuneration at all.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Very well. We'll vote on the motion of the hon. minister that the Education vote be reported.

[Motion carried]

Culture

MR. CHAIRMAN: I believe we have a report from the chairman of Subcommittee A, regarding Culture.

MR. CAMPBELL: Mr. Chairman, Subcommittee A of the Committee of Supply has had under consideration the estimates of expenditure for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1980, for Culture. The subcommittee recommends to the Committee of Supply the estimates of expenditure of \$25,790,095.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Having heard the report of the chairman of Subcommittee A, are you agreed?

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Chairman, before we agree, I'd just like to make two comments. One, I appreciated the minister's frankness last night. Despite some differences of opinion, I did appreciate the minister's outlining to the committee five areas she was going to give some priority to in the course of the next year. I want to acknowledge that.

Secondly though, Mr. Chairman, I want to have on the *Hansard* record my very real concern about Alberta's 75th anniversary celebration. I think they're lagging woefully behind. Last year my office sent a letter to the Deputy Premier — and I'm quite prepared to table the correspondence if the House wants it — urging the government to start preparation for Alberta's 75th anniversary. Obviously little or nothing was done, because we still don't even have the staff for Mr. Dowling's office. We've signified our comments with regard to Mr. Dowling's appointment, and there's no need making that point again. But I want to say I've had a chance to go back and look at some of the information with regard to Alberta's 50th anniversary, and the centennial. In my judgment any comparison between the way that was handled and the way this is being handled is very small. Regardless of where one sits in the Assembly, I look on the Jubilee auditoriums as a very significant contribution to the cultural life of this province.

Last night the minister told us we don't even have the staff yet for Mr. Dowling's office. Of the \$70 million, we've committed \$5 million to the homecoming, and no decision has been made as to how communities and organizations can participate in that. The minister said a request for a decision was going to cabinet in due course. I just want to say, Mr. Chairman, and I want it on record, that I fear very much for the 75th anniversary celebrations. Hopefully the minister will make looking at the preparation for Alberta's 75th anniversary one of her immediate priorities.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Are we agreed to accept the recommendation of the subcommittee?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: We'll proceed to Vote 1. As we did in other cases where these estimates went through subcommittee, we'll vote on the total amount. If anybody has any questions or comments on any item within that vote, they can raise them at their pleasure. Voting the total amount will mean we are approving each subvote within the vote. Are you agreed?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

Agreed to:

1.01 — Minister's Office	\$112,434
1.02 — Deputy Minister's Office	\$102,323
1.03 — Financial Services	\$381,420
1.04 — Personnel	\$75,837

MR. APPLEBY: I see I've crossed myself up here. I was going to vote on the total amount. We'll finish this one this way then.

Agreed to:

1.05 — Planning and Development	\$180,916
1.06 — Communications	\$84,368

1.07 — Department Library	\$60,149
1.08 — Records Management	\$32,725
1.09 — Executive Director for Finance and Administration	\$43,793
1.010 — Special Programs	\$335,765
Total Vote 1 — Departmental Support Services	\$1,409,730
Total Vote 2 — Cultural Development	\$12,071,889
Total Vote 3 — Historical Resources Development	\$7,933,889
Total Vote 4 — International Assistance	\$4,374,587
Department Total	\$25,790,095

DR. BUCK: Mr. Chairman, before the minister moves the vote, I've had many concerned people ask me: where does all the money go from our share of the lotteries? Before we complete this vote, I would appreciate it if the minister could give us a breakdown of what share we get of Loto Canada, if we do, what share of the western Canadian, and who's responsible for it. In the years the lotteries have been running, in all conscience I have not been able to find out from the government how much money we get and where it goes.

MRS. LeMESSURIER: Mr. Chairman, yesterday I answered that question. An annual report from the Western Canada Lottery Foundation is on hand. I will make it available for the hon. member to look through. The percentages and the people who received grants from the western Canadian are all there in black and white. As far as Loto Canada is concerned, I will also make sure he has the information.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Chairman, I would like the minister to make all that information available to the people of Alberta through *Hansard*. If the minister would be kind enough to give us as much information as she has available, we would certainly appreciate it. Mr. Chairman, is the minister in a position to give us that information right now, or as much as she has?

MRS. LeMESSURIER: Mr. Chairman, I'll take notice of that and make sure I have it for a future date.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Chairman, then I would ask if the minister can hold the vote.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The question has been called on the motion by the minister to report the vote for Culture. All those in favor please say aye.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Those opposed say no.

DR. BUCK: No.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The motion is carried.

Oh, I'm sorry. The minister did not get the motion in. I thought she had. All right, would you like to move the motion, hon. minister?

MRS. LeMESSURIER: Mr. Chairman, I move the vote be reported.

[Motion carried]

**Department of
Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs**

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Chairman, only a brief overview of the role of the department in the structure of the province of Alberta.

As many members know, the department was formed in June 1972. The first minister was Mr. Don Getty, and he was succeeded by Mr. Lou Hyndman. I think both these gentlemen have contributed much to the role of the province in developing a position as a leader in many of the negotiations which affect all jurisdictions, particularly the province of Alberta.

One piece of legislation, the federal and intergovernmental Act, as I referred to, sets out the broad responsibilities of the department, primarily the role of the department in its contact with the operating departments on a day to day basis, in particular with reference to the co-ordination of policies, programs, and the activities of the province. Of course it does have the responsibility to lead the government in terms of its role with other governments at both the national and the interprovincial level, and with negotiations with other states and governments on an international basis.

I might note as well that the several offices of the province of Alberta maintained across the world are the responsibility of the department. However, in most cases we supply only the administrative officials, and in specific cases the offices are staffed by the line departments.

Most recently the role of the department has been to take the leadership in Alberta's negotiations on the constitution. That was one of the priorities of the Prime Minister during the last national government, and I think the contributions of the Premier and the then Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs certainly showed Alberta's leadership in the constitutional negotiations, which we considered to be of importance to us.

In terms of objectives, since the department does touch on the role of many departments in the co-ordination of policy, it's obvious to expect that, while we may not take the lead, we are very clearly involved in most policy negotiations, in the determination of a broad provincial policy. To outline a couple might be of importance to some members here today.

I think the discussions we have on natives is clearly one of the areas where the department will play a major role: both the land settlement negotiations, which are in front of us, and the development on Indian reserves, which is of interest to many MLAs.

Naturally all of Canada will be looking at the question of national unity. Mr. Levesque, the Prime Minister of Quebec, has now announced the rough dates for the national referendum, and I think the forces and strengths of all parts of Canada will be brought into this discussion.

At the same time we'll be dealing with the post-GATT negotiations, to follow up the work of many departments in leading up to the settlement of the GATT arrangements. Our department will be playing a part role, particularly in the non-tariff negotiations

which will ensue.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, just to outline one other initiative. In the budget of some \$2.6 million, we have a staff component of 60 very capable people led by Dr. Peter Meekison, of whom many of you are aware. I believe the role of the department can be commended. It has provided leadership, as I've indicated, and I would like to take the opportunity to extend our thanks to the very capable people in the department.

We will likely be opening another office in one of the Pacific Rim areas — Hong Kong or Singapore. This decision has not yet been made, but the funds are reflected in the budget.

Mr. Chairman, I would just leave it at that point, and would welcome any questions on issues affecting Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs.

1.04 — Alberta Offices

DR. BUCK: Mr. Chairman, I would like to ask the minister one or two questions on Vote 1.04, Alberta offices. Can the minister indicate how many offices we have now, where they are and, if he has the information available, a breakdown of the staff component? At the same time, how much good are these offices doing, and are they serving the function they were set out to serve?

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Chairman I can run through the offices and perhaps provide the more careful information which will reinforce the total amount of \$1,088,000, which includes the proposal for the Pacific Rim office I mentioned. First of all, the Tokyo office has a budget of about \$315,000; the Los Angeles office, \$27,000; the London office, \$282,000; the Toronto office, \$35,800; the Ottawa office, \$97,700; and potentially either Hong Kong or Singapore, \$330,000. In terms of the aggregate amount, without carefully checking I think that would probably total \$1 million.

The role of the department in its extension of these foreign offices is multifold. It is clear within most federal constitutions that the external affairs role is one of the federal government, and we don't really believe that we play a major role in that area. However, there is growing recognition that particularly in trade and exchange of our very important commodities in Alberta and in tourism, the province should take a very strong role to ensure that its products are well recognized and that the opportunities for our private-sector firms to enter those foreign markets should be recognized and researched. So in that sense there's a role for exchange of information to provide opportunities for trade missions to flow back and forth to Alberta, to our various national offices, and to act as an information gathering force so that we both have an understanding of the role of foreign governments and their foreign policies that might affect Alberta, but as well to provide us with information as to changes in positions which may affect, for example, our energy resources.

So I think the number of offices outlined broadly reinforces the \$1 million we expend. The increase of 78 per cent in the budget is accounted for by the potential opening of a new office. And yes, I do believe that the offices, staffed with line department representatives from Tourism and Small Business, Agriculture, and other departments, do provide important information

gathering and trade potential for the province of Alberta. I would like to see us continue those.

DR. REID: Mr. Chairman, could I address a question to the minister?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Is that a supplementary?

DR. REID: It's a supplementary.

Is the subject of the office in Hong Kong or Singapore on the Pacific Rim addressed primarily to the thought of trade with China, or outside China? If it's with China, it would make much more sense in Hong Kong. If it doesn't have to do with China, has consideration been given to a future office in Peking?

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Chairman, of course the intention is to have access to the very important, and likely expanding, Chinese market. We feel that Hong Kong is our priority, because, as the hon. Member for Edson indicated, it does suit the apparent emerging of the eastern trading block. We probably would move it to Hong Kong. I have some small dispute with some of my colleagues as to where it should be located, but I would say that likely we'd move to Hong Kong, particularly because we want access to the Chinese area.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Chairman, to the minister. We on this side of the House have quite a concern about the patty-cake attitude the government seems to be taking now that we have a Conservative government in Ottawa. I say that with genuine concern, because the last incident we had, a potential moving of the embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, really indicates that the government of Alberta is taking the "let's give Joe a chance" type of approach. While we seem to be going through this exercise, Alberta industries seem to be more concerned than the Alberta government.

I would like to know from the minister, Mr. Chairman: is this an obvious ploy, or is it just something that seems to have happened? I feel that the government of Alberta should have taken a firmer position and given some direction as to what we as an Alberta government think, as it affects our business people. I would certainly like to know from the minister just what the government's stand is.

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Chairman, I don't think the role of the provincial government, as it deals with the federal government, has really changed all that much. There are clear areas of provincial and federal jurisdiction. If we can see that these areas have been well administered, there is an opportunity for each to play a role within its own area. We should recognize that. That was the tone of expression which the both the Premier and I outlined in the two or three question periods in which we have explored the possibility, particularly, of the movement of the office from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. But I do think there will be opportunities for us to have some very strong debates and very difficult times on a range of issues.

I'm just saying at this point that with a new government taking its position on various issues — really the first time that department has had a chance fully to develop and articulate its position — it might be somewhat premature for us to rush in and take a tough position, if we think that only to be a preliminary view. Obviously, as I've indicated before and as

I'm sure the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources will be reporting, we are going into a time in which negotiations on energy — simply because of the major role it plays in the gross national product and the implications it has for our balance of payments — will be difficult enough for both governments to handle.

But I would not say we have changed our role. There have been the halcyon days in intergovernmental affairs. Let's face it, with several provinces having elections across Canada, the national election itself, and our own election just past, it might be expected that the frequency of intergovernmental meetings and opportunities to knock heads or have positive discussions just haven't been as numerous as in the past. For example, I note the continuous discussions held on the constitution up to February 1979. We will likely get back into the swing of things now that some of the major items facing the Clark government are out of the way, including the Summit. I expect we'll have many issues to contend with and on which we will have differences of opinion. I don't think this is any new position emerging. It's simply the way negotiations are going at this point.

While I'm speaking on the move to Jerusalem from Tel Aviv, I presume the Social Credit government then is in favor of it?

DR. BUCK: Wouldn't the minister just have to end up on a note like that, eh?

Mr. Chairman, to the minister. I am accusing the government of a change of attitude in our relationships with Ottawa. We've had indications in this Assembly that there has been a change in attitude. We are going to Ottawa hat in hand now. When we had a different government in Ottawa, we did not use that stance.

Mr. Chairman, I'm trying to make the point to the minister that there has been a change of attitude, which seems to be quite obvious in the recently settled labor strike on the west coast. I know the Deputy Premier would have been firing off a telegram every half hour, had there been a different government in Ottawa. There has been a change in attitude. We would never accuse the minister of bringing about that change in attitude.

MR. COOKSON: The change is in Ottawa.

DR. BUCK: The change is in Ottawa? Well, Albertans are still getting short-shrift when we go down hat in hand in our negotiations on the price of oil. I'm just saying, Mr. Chairman, that I am concerned about this government's apparent change in attitude.

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the views of the hon. Member for Clover Bar. Let me make it absolutely clear: the province of Alberta goes nowhere with its hat in its hand.

MR. R. CLARK: That's only because the minister doesn't wear a hat.

MR. JOHNSTON: Instead, Mr. Chairman, it's the view of the government that we go to these meetings well prepared, clearly understanding the issues being debated and able to contribute in a very positive way to the formulation of a policy which will suit Alberta. Not one which is regressive. Not one which is retroactive.

Not one which is reacting to some negative response.

In fact, Mr. Chairman, as I indicated, the leadership of our department and the previous minister's has been unexcelled. I can suggest to you we will continue to work in a positive way, because we think it's through a positive contribution, through showing clearly the alternatives to a case in point, that the position of Alberta can be advanced and that, in particular, the resources of our province can be safeguarded.

DR. BUCK: Just one small point with this strong attitude we're taking. Can the minister indicate how the negotiations relating to freight rates are going? What advance is being made in this area? We've had this now government in power for a few years now. Can the minister bring us up to date on what advances have been made in doing something about the change in western freight rates?

MR. JOHNSTON: Well, in the history of Alberta, 1905 to 1979, I recall that every government since 1924 was going to challenge, change, and revolutionize the question of the Crow rates. In fairness I think the Social Credit government also made that pledge at one time. As you know, the question of transportation is not itself a simple issue you can pull apart and say, this is going to be changed very quickly. However, it has been addressed by the western premiers' conferences, in which broad discussions were put forward as to ways we can move, particularly on the Crow rates or the kinds of prejudices which face shippers in and out of Alberta. With a new reorganization of the government in terms of the responsibility of Dr. Horner and the fact that he's brought the transportation element into his own department, I think we'll see a steady improvement in the transportation tariffs as they affect the province of Alberta.

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Chairman, I would like to ask a brief question of the minister. Now that the minister has had a chance to be in the office close to three months, would it be fair to get some indication as to what the minister sees as his priorities for this year? I wouldn't want the minister to say, well, we're going to have wait and see what the federal government does, because the minister has just said Alberta goes no place with its hat in its hand. What are Alberta's priorities this year in the field of federal/provincial relations?

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Chairman, in some of my opening comments I outlined very briefly some of the items I wanted to talk on. I would just perhaps touch on those again. I think the Premier and the previous minister made the point before that constitutional discussions weren't exactly a priority of ours back in 1975-76, but because the national government at the time assigned that a high priority Alberta did take a very strong role. Of course, it's my view that although there is a change in government we will move back into the constitutional discussions through late 1979 and 1980. Obviously, the federal government will have to wait and let us know what their position will be on certain issues. To that extent, we are continuing with the officials' meetings and with the committee of ministers on the constitution, and will continue to work toward the constitutional resolution. In fairness, some progress was made up to the February 1979 first ministers' conference on the constitutional discussions.

I think we'll have to deal with the broad issue of the constitution. To some extent, that has to be separated from the question of unity, which I really think is the Quebec issue. Now that we've had a time frame advanced by the Prime Minister of Quebec because of Alberta's leadership role in the national unity question we probably will have to focus some of the Alberta forces on the issue of the referendum. Certainly that will take some of our time.

More locally, as my own priority there will have to be discussions on the native role in the province. We can work on a couple of outstanding issues. One will be the question of land entitlements in the Chip Cree area; second, the resolution of the urban reserve development on the Enoch and Sarcee bands.

Further, we might have to pursue, with the consent and advice of the people in Banff and Jasper, an organizational study on options for them to move to a different kind of municipal form and arrangement, but only at their request. As I indicated before, the department does not necessarily take a leadership role, for example, in health arrangements and energy. But we do play a supplementary role to ensure a co-ordinated policy between the two. That will have to be an important priority of the government and this department specifically.

The other one of course will be the preparation for and role the FIGA plays in the first ministers' and the various premiers' conferences. As you know one is coming up this August. Again these will be some of the objectives we would like to pursue to ensure that Alberta's position is clearly spelled out, either by way of position papers or by clear debate.

I could go on to enumerate the subissues in the area of energy, et cetera, but I think those are probably familiar to the people across the way. That gives at least a broad overview of some of the short term things I'd like to deal with.

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Chairman, just one brief comment and a statement, then I can conclude my participation in the debate.

I would assume, Mr. Minister, from what you have said that it will be the constitution; native rights or land claims, the native area; Banff-Jasper; an overall co-ordination of the government's presentation. That, and being ready for conferences which come up, will be the priority for this particular year.

I would just like to make one additional comment, Mr. Minister. This question of constitutional debate has gone on for an awfully long time. I recall in '62 or '63, maybe a little later, when the Fulton-Favreau thing came along. There have been on-again, off-again efforts since then. It does seem to me, Mr. Minister, that all of us should keep in mind that we've had a flurry of federal and provincial elections in Canada, and for the course of the next year there's a very great likelihood that we won't have any provincial elections close at hand. Never would I want to suggest that provincial or federal politicians would do a bit of posturing in preparation for elections in the provinces or at the federal level. But, for whatever reasons there are, there should be a period when perhaps a desire to make some concrete accomplishments in the area of constitution may be possible. It may have to wait until after the Quebec thing, I don't know. Hopefully before. But whatever way it is, we do have perhaps a year to a year and a half before we're going

to start getting back in federal or provincial elections again. Who knows what's going to happen as far as a federal election is concerned. But it may well be that we have a period of time now when some initiatives can be taken, once the new government in Ottawa finds its feet.

I simply want to say that if we don't do that in the next year and a half — and I say "we" as Canadians, not as an Alberta Legislature — we're likely going to be lined up for a series of provincial elections all over again. Then it becomes increasingly difficult to make any progress.

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Chairman, in this case I do agree with the Leader of the Opposition. I think that's good advice, not just to articulate here but right across Canada. I think we can advance substantially with the list of changes we have debated previously if it is a broad national objective to have a changed constitution. In fact I think the time is right. It may well be that the next provincial election will not take place within one and a half to two years, as the hon. member has suggested.

I noted a positive tone from the, Leader of the Opposition. I think I share that with him. He has the experience of Victoria and was at that constitutional conference. The years click by and really not much progress has been effected, except perhaps in the last year. I think now we're moving closer to resolution of some fundamental issues, and that in fact the machinery and the impetus are now upon us and we have to carry through with it. I noted the comments of the Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs in Ontario who similarly suggested that the time is right for us to proceed. I think this fall we'll probably see a furthering of the constitutional debate.

Agreed to:

1.01 — Minister's Office	\$111,026
1.02 — Administrative Support	\$246,976
1.03 — Intergovernmental Affairs	\$1,066,563
1.04 — Alberta Offices	\$1,088,659
1.05 — Conferences and Missions	\$146,000

Total Vote 1 and Departmental Total	\$2,659,224
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MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Chairman, I move the vote of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs for the year ending March 31, 1980, be reported.

[Motion carried]

Government Services

MR. McCRAE: Mr. Chairman, inasmuch as the department is relatively new and its programs perhaps are not as highly profiled by the media as some others, and with the number of new members in the House, I thought I might take a moment or two to review what the government does. As you would be aware, Mr. Chairman, it is a large government department providing internal common services to all departments and agencies. We provide a wide range of services from building management, supply, public affairs, to data processing.

Some statistics might be useful to assist hon. members to visualize the dimensions of the department. We have over 3,300 permanent employees. We manage 25

million square feet of space in 214 cities, towns, and villages in all areas of the province. We have 1,500 vehicles under lease to other departments. We have 12 aircraft flying over 8,000 hours per year. We issue 42,000 purchase orders annually for \$190 million of goods. Through the RITE system, we handle over 100,000 calls to government. Additionally, each year we sell in excess of \$2 million worth of surplus assets. In our computer division we process over 600,000 jobs on a 24 hours per day, seven days a week basis. Further, we stockpile and distribute \$8 million worth of commonly used office supply, building and institutional needs.

Some highlights in this year's budget are: in building operations we have increased our square footage by 5.9 per cent, to something in the 25 million square footage area, 21 million owned and 4.1 million leased. We've increased by 5.9 per cent, but with only a marginal increase in the number of positions: 40 positions, 19 per cent. Additionally, in the department we have an energy conservation program which will be expanded and continued this year. Since the implementation of the program, approximately \$2 million in savings has been realized.

Several major projects in our supply division are being continued. Firstly, development of a computer base supply information system which will replace current manual systems and will increase procurement efficiency while at the same time providing comprehensive management information. Secondly, we've consolidated a warehousing facility to derive maximum utilization of manpower and capital while providing better service to other departments. Thirdly, we've increased product evaluation for the economies which flow from aggregation of purchases and standardization.

In our computing and systems division we plan a new computer for the Edmonton office. It is an IBM 3033. We also plan a further processor capacity increase for the Calgary branch. These purchases of course are not shown in the budget because they come from the revolving fund.

One of the areas of concentration in the past several years has been in 'privatization'. That is something we have heard a lot about since the election of the Conservative government in Ottawa. In fact we have been doing that in Alberta for some four years. 'Privatization' is simply turning back to the private sector government services that might in other jurisdictions be carried out by the public sector. In the past four years we have put more than \$10 million back into the private sector through our 'privatization' program.

Another interesting program, Mr. Chairman, is the enterprise program. Alberta Government Services has implemented the enterprise management system, which charges program departments for the use of the following common services: passenger vehicles and light truck rentals; duplicating services; commodity stores of various kinds including stationery, office furniture, and building materials; data processing and computer design system; and micrographic services. The system operates through an advance account or revolving fund which allows the common service areas to operate much like private enterprises, delivering services on a fee for service basis, operating as profit and loss enterprises. The system is designed to achieve cost efficiencies.

With those remarks, Mr. Chairman, I would be delighted to answer any questions.

MR. PLANCHE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just a couple of quick comments. In his new responsibilities in this portfolio, I hope the minister will do his utmost to speed up the payment of invoices to small contractors and business people who do business with the government.

Secondly, I'd like the minister to review one more time his car-buying procedures. It seems that cars are continually bought from Edmonton dealers because they have to be serviced before they are delivered. I think it would be to the benefit of everyone in the Legislature if the automobiles could be bought in the area they're used, and the constituents of all members could share in the good blessings of the government's purchasing policy.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear.

DR. BUCK: Are we getting cars?

Agreed to:

1.01 — Minister's Office	\$138,850
1.02 — Administrative Support	\$593,360
1.03 — Accounting	\$438,000
1.04 — Personnel	\$559,370
1.05 — Metric Conversion	\$201,580
Total Vote 1 — Departmental Support	

Services	\$1,931,160
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Total Vote 2 — Building Operations and

Maintenance	\$62,728,730
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Total Vote 3 — Government Transportation	\$2,613,830
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Total Vote 4 — Supply	\$2,051,300
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Total Vote 5 — Public Affairs	\$5,068,750
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Total Vote 6 — Computing and Systems	\$763,060
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Department Total	\$75,156,830
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MR. McCRAE: Mr. Chairman, just in responding to the hon. Member for Calgary Glenmore. On his first suggestion that the government try to increase the speed with which it makes its payments to small and large suppliers and providers of whatever, I can assure the hon. member that the department has been working industriously on that. I think it has made substantial gains. The return on invoicing to payment in government probably compares more than favorably with the private sector. But we take the representation and will certainly do our best to improve that, Mr. Chairman.

On the automobile purchasing question, again I am pleased to have the member make this representation. It's something that has been near and dear to my heart in the past four years, and I made a number of representations to the previous minister in that area. Of course he was always very positive about it, and I'm sure worked toward implementing a system that would permit the tendering of the automobiles that will be used in the southern Alberta area through the Calgary office. So we plan on doing that this year. I think there may be some modest increase in cost because of the utilization of that, but all members are probably prepared to absorb that.

With those remarks, Mr. Chairman, I move that the vote for Government Services be reported.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Having heard the motion by the hon. minister, all those in favor say aye.

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Those opposed say no.

We'll proceed to page 321, Tourism and Small Business.

Department of Tourism and Small Business

MR. ADAIR: Mr. Chairman, might I just make a few comments about the department, structured now as Tourism and Small Business, and our working relationship with the functions that came out of the Department of Business Development and Tourism.

Travel Alberta moved over in its entirety with its various programs. The successful Stamp Around Alberta program is involved, and the homecoming program is just nicely off the ground.

On the other side, of course, is the small business sector. Within that are the various services available to the private sector in the province. I might just point some out: the management assistance program, the day to day counselling services available on a one to one basis, and other areas where we assist with the various chambers and organizations in identifying business opportunities within the province of Alberta.

Six brochures are also available, and I should point them out, Mr. Chairman. In working with the private sector to develop areas where they would like some information assistance, we have now printed brochures about starting a business in Alberta, financing a business, marketing for the small manufacturer in the province, operating a small retail business, operating a small manufacturing business, and operating a small service business in the province. They are available. To some degree they have been extremely well received, and are now into their second printing.

With that, Mr. Chairman, I would await the questions as they may come.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Chairman, I'd very briefly like to compliment the government on the establishment of the department as Tourism and Small Business. It's been a representation by the tourist people in this province for many years. I believe it's a move in the right direction. I compliment the government, which I'm sure may come as a surprise to them. I wish the minister well, and I'm sure all members of the Assembly will work with him in trying to promote tourism even more than it has been in this province.

Agreed to:

1.01 — Minister's Office	\$114,710
1.02 — Deputy Minister	\$116,100
1.03 — Administrative Support	\$49,800
1.04 — Accounting	\$142,700
1.05 — Personnel and Administration	\$137,300
1.06 — Legal Affairs	\$19,000
1.07 — Public Relations	\$23,000
Total Vote 1 — Departmental Support	
Services	\$602,610

2.1 — Small Business	\$2,020,300
2.2 — Tourism	\$5,330,400

Total Vote 2 — Development of Tourism
and Small Business \$7,350,700

Total Vote 3 — Financial Assistance to
Alberta Business via
Alberta Opportunity Company \$4,950,000

Department Total \$12,903,310

MR. ADAIR: Mr. Chairman, I move that the vote for the Department of Tourism and Small Business be reported.

[Motion carried]

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Chairman, it runs in my mind that in the report from Government Services you didn't actually declare the motion carried.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Minister of Government Services has moved that the vote be reported.

[Motion carried]

MR. CRAWFORD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

[Motion carried]

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

MR. APPLEBY: Mr. Speaker, the Committee of Supply has had under consideration the following resolutions, reports as follows, and requests leave to sit again.

Resolved that for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1980, amounts not exceeding the following be granted to Her Majesty for the Department of Education: \$5,955,810 for departmental support services; \$647,954,000 for financial assistance to schools; \$7,862,450 for regular educational services; \$7,275,700 for special education services.

Resolved that for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1980, amounts not exceeding the following be granted to Her Majesty for Culture: \$1,409,730 for departmental support services; \$12,071,889 for cultural development; \$7,933,889 for historical resources development; \$4,374,587 for international assistance.

Resolved that for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1980, amounts not exceeding the following be

granted to Her Majesty for the Department of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs: \$2,659,224 for inter-governmental co-ordination and research.

Resolved that for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1980, amounts not exceeding the following be granted to Her Majesty for the Department of Government Services: \$1,931,160 for departmental support services; \$62,728,730 for building operations and maintenance; \$2,613,830 for government transportation; \$2,051,300 for supply; \$5,068,750 for public affairs; \$763,060 for computing and systems.

Resolved that for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1980, amounts not exceeding the following be granted to Her Majesty for the Department of Tourism and Small Business: \$602,610 for departmental support services; \$7,350,700 for development of tourism and small business; \$4,950,000 for financial assistance to Alberta business via Alberta Opportunity Company.

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

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, as to the business on Monday and Tuesday, on Monday afternoon it's proposed to do second reading of Bills on the Order Paper, except Bill No. 3, then, if there's time on Monday afternoon, to do Committee of Supply.

In any event, Monday evening at 8 o'clock we would propose to begin with the estimates of Executive Council and, if those are completed on Monday night, other departments more or less in sequence. I say "more or less" because the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources was away this week but will be back on Monday. We'll probably do either Energy or Hospitals at the top of the list, other than the reference I've made to Executive Council at 8 p.m.

I should mention that on Monday I will seek unanimous leave from the Assembly to designate an hour of government business on Tuesday, which has not been designated within the time limit required, and in the evening to look at committee study of Bills.

I move we call it 1 o'clock.

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

[At 1:52 p.m., pursuant to Standing Order 5, the House adjourned to Monday at 2:30 p.m.]

