

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ALBERTA

Title: **Monday, April 21, 1980 2:30 p.m.**

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

PRAYERS

[Mr. Deputy Speaker in the Chair]

head: **PRESENTING REPORTS BY
STANDING AND SELECT COMMITTEES**

MR. ZAOZIRNY: Mr. Speaker, as chairman of the Standing Committee on Private Bills, I hereby report that Standing Order 77, concerning publications of notice of application in the *Alberta Gazette* and newspapers, has been complied with in respect of the following petitions: the petition of the city of Edmonton for The Edmonton Research and Development Park Authority Act; the petition of the Prairie Bible Institute for The Prairie Bible Institute Amendment Act, 1980.

Standing Order 77 has not been complied with with respect to the following petitions: the petition of Roger Motut, Herve H. Durocher, Francis McMahon, Lucien Maynard, Joseph Moreau, Jean-Paul Bugeaud, and Jules van Brabant for The La Foundation de l'Association canadienne-francaise de l'Alberta Act; the petition of the Alberta Wheat Pool for The Alberta Wheat Pool Amendment Act, 1980; the petition of Edna Barbara Dial for The Keith Dial Adoption Termination Act; the petition of R.W. Chapman, F.G. Stewart, L.H. LeRiche, R.R. Francis, E.B. McKittrick, H. McEwan, and D. McPherson for The Alberta Foundation Act; the petition of Gladys Marshall for The Warren Dean Boyd Adoption Act; the petition of Sherm Ewing for The Stockmen's Memorial Foundation Act.

I beg leave to move that the said petitions be referred to the Private Bills Committee for consideration pursuant to Standing Order 81(2).

head: **INTRODUCTION OF BILLS**

**Bill Pr. 2
The Edmonton Research and
Development Park Authority Act**

MR. PAHL: Mr. Speaker, I request leave to introduce a Bill, being The Edmonton Research and Development Park Authority Act.

The purpose of this Bill is to create a body corporate named the Edmonton Research and Development Authority, which will then have the ability to establish, manage, and operate research and development parks in the city of Edmonton. Mr. Speaker, the import of this legislation is to firmly establish the framework for a home for a rapidly developing research and development or brain industry here in Alberta.

[Leave granted; Bill Pr. 2 read a first time]

INTRODUCTION OF SPECIAL GUESTS

MR. KING: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of my colleague the Member for Edmonton Avonmore, I would like to introduce to you, and through you to the members of the Assembly, 40 grade 9 students from Donnan school in the constituency of Edmonton Avonmore. They are seated in the public gallery, accompanied by teachers. I would ask them to rise and receive the welcome of the members of the Assembly.

MR. COOK: Mr. Speaker, I hope the Assembly will bear with me; I seem to have lost my voice over the weekend.

I would like to introduce to you and to the Assembly, Mr. Speaker, 50 grade 6 students from St. Matthews elementary school in my constituency. I count among them several supporters in my nomination and election campaigns. I am very pleased to have this group here to watch the Assembly in action, to watch democracy as we're dealing with the pressing issues of the day. It's with a great feeling of pleasure that I would ask them to rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

MR. WEISS: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the MLA for Edmonton Meadowlark, it is indeed a pleasure to introduce to you, and through you to the members of the Assembly, 15 students from the constituency of Edmonton Meadowlark who attend the grade 5 and 6 classes at Lynnwood elementary school. They're accompanied by their teacher, Mrs. McKie, and are seated in the members gallery. I would ask that they stand and receive the cordial welcome of this Assembly.

MR. L. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, it gives me a great deal of pleasure today to introduce to you, and through you to the members of this Assembly, 10 grade 12 students from Delia. They are accompanied by Mr. Houghton and Duane Limpert. I would ask them to rise and receive the welcome of the House. They're seated in the public gallery.

head: **MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS**

**Department of
Hospitals and Medical Care**

MR. RUSSELL: Mr. Speaker, at a news conference at 1 p.m. today, I announced that since the commencement of a strike by members of the United Nurses of Alberta, the government of Alberta has been very carefully monitoring the conditions in the health care institutions throughout Alberta.

This morning, reports indicated to me that there were stresses and strains developing in the system to the extent where cabinet felt that the emergency powers of the Labour Act should be invoked. We believed that the health and lives of Albertans may be jeopardized due to any breakdowns of the health care system in the province.

Inasmuch as our responsibilities relate to the health and lives of Albertans we therefore felt, Mr. Speaker, that it was necessary to get the system functioning again as quickly as possible. We were not prepared to risk the lives of Albertans by a prolonged work stoppage.

The cabinet has therefore concluded that an emergency exists and, pursuant to the provisions of The Alberta Labour Act, has declared that on or after 6 p.m. this evening, April 21, 1980, all further actions in the dispute

are to be replaced by these emergency procedures.

The Minister of Labour has recommended and the cabinet has authorized Mr. Justice W.R. Brennan of the Court of Queen's Bench of Alberta to be a public emergency tribunal and to make a binding arbitration award.

head: ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Nurses' Strike

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, to the hon. Minister of Labour. Section 163(2) of the Labour Act says "Before an order is made under . . . , the Minister may give the parties to the dispute" Can the minister indicate if he did meet with the Alberta Hospital Association and the UNA before the emergency decision was made?

MR. YOUNG: Mr. Speaker, to the hon. Member for Clover Bar. I indicated last week in the House that I had indeed had the occasion to meet with both parties through one evening and one night, until after 4 a.m., to examine and understand all the items in dispute. Subsequently, just before the dateline for the strike — because of the very nature of this particular dispute, the fact that it did involve health services which could impact upon the lives of people — as I indicated, I did think it incumbent to call on the presidents of both associations and invite them to my office with whichever other officers they wished to bring. Both presidents came. So, Mr. Speaker, I have had occasions to review the nature of the dispute, the items in dispute, the possibility of assisting in any further way, not only with the negotiating committee but also the very highest elected officer of each of the parties responsible in this dispute.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, to the hon. Minister of Hospitals and Medical Care. Can the minister indicate when the tribunal will commence its work, and when it must report to the minister?

MR. RUSSELL: I should refer those matters to my colleague the Minister of Labour.

MR. YOUNG: Mr. Speaker, it is anticipated that the tribunal will commence its work at the very earliest date. The completion date indicated in the ministerial order is May 12. We hope that the tribunal could complete its work within that time frame, because in my view it is important that this matter be drawn to a definitive conclusion at the earliest date.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, to the hon. Minister of Hospitals and Medical Care. Can the minister indicate what consideration was given — the physical problems involved in getting the nurses to go back to work at 6 o'clock tonight? Can the minister indicate if the physical problems involved in getting people to back to work on such short notice were given consideration?

MR. RUSSELL: Yes, a great deal of consideration was given to that matter, Mr. Speaker. We felt that an emergency did exist. We felt that four hours' notice to the hospitals and to the United Nurses was probably the minimum time that was reasonable to get the involved members back to work. We recognized, therefore, as a result of our meeting time this morning and our discus-

sions, that it would be highly improbable that we could get them back for the 3 o'clock shift change. So we took the next most reasonable hour that we thought was achievable; that is, 6 p.m.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, to the hon. Minister of Hospitals and Medical Care. Have the minister and his colleagues given consideration to waiving the financial guidelines as they apply to Alberta Hospital Association financing, in light of the fact that an arbitration ruling will have to be brought down? Have those guidelines been reconsidered, in light of the fact that the arbitration awards may be higher than the guidelines?

MR. RUSSELL: Well, Mr. Speaker, I think it's implicit in the order that was passed that the order is binding on all parties; therefore the necessary funding would follow the tribunal's decision. The guidelines would still have to be recognized as guidance for the Alberta Hospital Association with respect to continuing negotiations that are coming up, which they're involved in with other labor groups in the health care system. But insofar as the dispute with the United Nurses of Alberta, I think it's implicit in our action that the award is binding on the government as well as the AHA.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, to the hon. Minister of Hospitals and Medical Care. Can the minister indicate what studies his department has done to evaluate the relationship between the worsening shortage of nurses and the salaries?

MR. RUSSELL: I'm not quite sure of the thrust of the hon. member's question. I indicated that we do have an ongoing interdepartmental committee, which includes my own department, that keeps statistical track of the number of nurses in the profession registered in Alberta and the jobs that are available. From time to time we also receive reports from the administration of various hospitals and schools of nursing throughout the province. We have been concerned because of the declining number of applications for enrolment in the schools of nursing during the last two years, and want to take steps to try to improve that. We have had preliminary discussions with the Alberta Association of Registered Nurses on that very matter.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question. Basically I was asking: in his studies, has the minister come to any conclusion: was it a combination of salaries and working conditions, or was it just salaries, Mr. Minister?

MR. RUSSELL: Mr. Speaker, I think salaries are a very important part of it. We're confident that the tribunal will come down with a fair and binding decision on that. But I think it goes beyond that. The AARN has been very explicit in its concerns about the educational opportunities, the career achievements, and the status of the profession, that they feel they can work with in co-operation with government. We're prepared to do that when we get the current matter of salaries and compensation behind us.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, to the Minister of Advanced Education and Manpower. Can the minister indicate what changes in the government's or the department's philosophy have come about recently to look at the

problem of the shortage of nurses? Can the minister indicate if the programs are going to be beefed up to get more nurses involved in programs?

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, the hon. members are aware that last year a new program approval was put in place by the department with respect to a post-basic baccalaureate degree program at the University of Lethbridge. I am confident that will go into effect this fall. I've had discussions with the presidents of the colleges as recently as this morning with respect to a review of the nursing programs in the public colleges system. As hon. members are probably aware, Grande Prairie college is examining very carefully whether it will be putting a basic nursing program into place.

I might also say, in anticipation of a further question from the hon. Member for Clover Bar, that with respect to expanding the program at the University of Alberta, while it is not directed to any specific professional faculty, additional funds have been made available in this year's budget for the University of Alberta. Of course it will be the decision of the board of governors at that institution whether the additional funds requested last year for the post-basic baccalaureate program at the university will be expanded. As part of the overall expansion of professional faculty funding, a special recognition has been made of the concerns expressed to the government by the board of governors of the University of Alberta.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, a further supplementary question to the Minister of Labour. This returns to emergency powers, Section 163 of the Act. Can the minister indicate how the situation has changed between Thursday, when he met with representatives of the UNA, and today, to invoke the emergency section of the Act? What has changed in that short period of time?

MR. YOUNG: Mr. Speaker, that question has been responded to by the hon. Minister of Hospitals and Medical Care. I would again refer the same to him, if he cares to respond to it once more.

MR. RUSSELL: Mr. Speaker, because of the nature of the services involved, I think hon. members appreciate that if a pending work stoppage in the system is possible, hospitals must take certain steps to prepare for that work stoppage. That winding down went into effect about a week before the possible strike deadline that had been discussed. When it became apparent that a work stoppage was very real, perhaps within 48 hours, we set up a very comprehensive monitoring system involving all hospitals throughout the province that were either affected by the shutdown or that were still functioning because they were outside the terms of the dispute. We got ongoing reports on the situation.

I think, as hon. members can appreciate, at first the system coped very well. But as more and more seriously ill people were admitted to hospitals, and nurses still at work and other support staff were having to work longer and longer hours under increasing stress, the advice we were getting changed during the latter part of Sunday and early this morning: on the best belief of the professionals involved, they did not believe they could cope very much longer without endangering health and lives of Albertans.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, my final supplementary question to the minister. Can the minister indicate what

contingency plan for our hospitals he or members of the department have in place if the nurses resign *en masse*?

MR. RUSSELL: Again, Mr. Speaker, I hesitate to answer that because it is a hypothetical question.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, I asked the hon. minister what contingency plan, what emergency plans, the minister has if that eventuality comes about. That's more than hypothetical. I'm asking: what does the minister have in place? [interjections]

MR. RUSSELL: Mr. Speaker, that's still the same question. It's one I've dealt with in discussions with individual nurses who have telephoned the office over the weekend. I've indicated to them that there are certain things a government can do. It can provide funding, pass laws, and other things of that kind. We can't affect the career decisions of individual nurses. It was pointed out to the nurses I discussed this matter with that if they feel so strongly that they must resign, I don't believe the government can stop them.

But I must say, in conclusion, that I was encouraged in my discussions with a number of nurses over the weekend. I believe we're now trying to resolve a problem with a very professional group which has the needs of its patients in mind, and which will respect the laws of Alberta.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to pass a button over to the hon. minister, because I think nurses are worth it.

Metis Development

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the minister responsible for Metis development. Can the minister indicate the written terms of reference for the joint committee established to review The Metis Betterment Act?

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Speaker, a ministerial order was passed on March 14, I believe, setting out the terms of reference for such a review and naming six individuals for the review. Since then the president of the Federation of Metis Settlements has advised me that two of the items which had been dealt with during our meeting on March 14 were still not to the satisfaction of the federation, and he requested further discussions. That request is being met.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, can the minister indicate who will be responsible to establish the committee's terms of reference? Will that be the minister's responsibility? Have those terms of reference been established?

MR. BOGLE: Yes, Mr. Speaker. I believe a copy of the ministerial order is in the Legislature Library, if the hon. member doesn't have one.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, can the minister indicate if funds have been allocated for the committee's work?

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Speaker, funds were committed on March 14, when the committee was established.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, on a point of clarification. Did the minister indicate if the committee has had meetings?

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Speaker, on March 14 when the committee was struck, the first informal meeting of the committee was held to discuss a secretary, research work, and other such items. Following that meeting, the president of the Federation of Metis Settlements contacted me. It's my understanding that no further meetings have taken place by the committee members — until those matters are clarified.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary. Can the minister indicate if the recommendation of the Ombudsman that an independent chairman be established was followed through?

MR. BOGLE: No, Mr. Speaker.

DR. BUCK: Can the minister indicate why this was not followed?

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Speaker, the Ombudsman did make a number of recommendations, I believe nine in total. One of those recommendations was that there should be a five-member committee, I believe, chaired by an independent chairman acceptable to both sides. During our discussions with the Federation of Metis Settlements a number of alternatives were looked at; that was one. A proposal was put forward by the government that in fact there be co-chairmen of the committee: one person acceptable to the federation, either the president of that organization or his designate; and an MLA from this Assembly. On that basis the ministerial order was signed.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, a further supplementary to the minister. One of the recommendations was that more Metis people be established in the development branch. Can the minister indicate if this practice has been followed?

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Speaker, the opportunity to employ Metis people from the settlements has been provided for some period of time. We are examining ways now that the branch might be more attractive to Metis people. One, of course, is if the branch is decentralized and located in two or more sub-branches closer to the settlements themselves. Those concepts are under way. Some discussions have been held on the same.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, to the minister. The minister indicated that these opportunities are available. Have any people been placed relatively recently?

MR. BOGLE: I'd have to take that question as notice, Mr. Speaker. I don't recall following the questions in this area last year when I indicated that if all the employees in the Metis betterment branch are included, including those in the hot-lunch program, well in excess of half the total number are from the settlements and the isolated communities in the north. But I'll take as notice the question of most recent opportunities for employment.

Long Distance Telephone Rates

MRS. EMBURY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, my question is to the Associate Minister of Telephones. Could the minister advise the Assembly with respect to reports that the Canadian radio and television commission has subpoenaed the president of the Trans-Canada Telephone

System for confidential information that belongs to Alberta Government Telephones?

DR. WEBBER: Mr. Speaker, the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission is having a hearing related to the Canada-wide long distance rates of Bell Canada and B.C. Tel. An order was issued to those telephone companies to provide information which was proprietary to Alberta Government Telephones and the Trans-Canada Telephone System with regard to AGT's long distance rates between Alberta and British Columbia, Alberta and Saskatchewan, and within Alberta itself.

MRS. EMBURY: A supplementary question, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Could the minister please indicate why Alberta Government Telephones doesn't want to release this information?

DR. WEBBER: Mr. Speaker, Alberta Government Telephones is regulated by the Public Utilities Board in Alberta. The information that was requested by the CRTC is confidential and proprietary to AGT and the Trans-Canada Telephone System. AGT felt, and as a government we feel, that this information should not be in the hands of the Trans-Canada Telephone System. We felt that the order that was given to Bell and B.C. Tel, plus the CRTC subpoena that the hon. member mentioned, is an attempt by the CRTC to make the first step towards the regulation of long-distance telephone rates in the country.

I might say that Alberta Government Telephones has taken steps to look at the legal possibilities of having this information not become public. I've sent a telegram to the federal Minister of Communications requesting that he take whatever steps he can to quash the order and keep the information confidential. I might add that there are other provinces — Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Manitoba, Saskatchewan — that have taken similar action.

Trades Training

DR. PAPROSKI: Mr. Speaker, a question to the Minister of Advanced Education and Manpower. I wonder if the minister would indicate to the House whether a site has been selected for the proposed new Edmonton trades training facility in Edmonton, which is so important for an expanding economy in our province.

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, no, at this time a site has not been chosen. In fact, I announced just last week that a committee had finally been established — at least the director of the new school has been appointed, and he has been given the mandate to plan and develop the new institute over the next period of months. At this stage no firm decision on site has been made, except that the position of the government is that any new facility will not be located within the city of Edmonton.

DR. PAPROSKI: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. I wonder if the minister would then indicate how many students he anticipates will be accommodated by such a facility. Will that facility have characteristics similar to NAIT and SAIT in this province?

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, it is anticipated that the institution will serve approximately 3,000 full-time stu-

dents. That may translate into many more actual students, with regard to the nature of the apprenticeship training program. It is anticipated that while the programming may be similar to NAIT and SAIT, it is unlikely to be identical. It may very well be that some of the programming now offered at those institutions, in particular NAIT, may be transferred to the new institution when it is operational.

I would point out, Mr. Speaker, that both SAIT and NAIT will be included in the discussions, and programming will be designed to complement and supplement the programming presently offered by our technical, vocational, and trades training.

DR. PAPROSKI: A final supplementary, Mr. Speaker. I wonder if the minister would clarify the statement that the Edmonton trades training facility will not be in Edmonton. Is he suggesting to the House that the facility will be on the periphery, just outside Edmonton, or where?

DR. BUCK: Fort Saskatchewan.

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, I admire the persistence of the questioner, but I wish to indicate that no decision has been made. The location will be reviewed very carefully by the departmental committee headed by the new director. At this stage I'm saying to the House that it will be located in the Edmonton region, however that may be defined, and not in the city of Edmonton.

MRS. FYFE: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Would the minister advise the House if he can anticipate how long it will be before we know the location of this facility?

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, I have indicated to the committee that I would be very anxious to have the decision made so that detailed planning can be concluded within the current year, and that perhaps a start with regard to the project be undertaken so that it will be ready for occupancy no later than 1984. Therefore, I think it's fair to say that a decision should be arrived at within months, hopefully by the end of this year.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

head: GOVERNMENT BILLS AND ORDERS (Second Reading)

Bill 13 The Municipal Taxation Amendment Act, 1980

MR. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, this afternoon I intend to outline in some detail the proposals for changes in assessment and taxation in rural Alberta. First of all, I would want Members of the Legislative Assembly to understand that these are the most extensive changes in municipal assessment and taxation in rural Alberta that have been proposed in about 20 years.

I want to indicate initially the process we went through in order to develop the changes which are before the Legislature now. During the course of the last year in particular, but even before that, extensive discussions have been held with the Association of MDs and Counties, with such organizations as Unifarm, the Western

Stock Growers' Association, a good number of individual acreage owners' associations, and indeed individual councils and groups across the province. In addition, of course, Members of the Legislative Assembly had a very extensive debate on this issue last fall.

Mr. Speaker, in November 1979, in a speech to the annual meeting of the Association of MDs and Counties, I outlined in principle some changes which I proposed to make at that time. Since November we've had further extensive meetings with the association of MDs and counties, finalizing, I suppose, those meetings in April of this year, at a spring meeting of that association in Calgary.

Mr. Speaker, before getting into a description of the proposed changes, I want to recognize the work that went into these proposals with respect to the Provincial-Municipal Finance Council, formed some years ago and made up not only of staff of the Department of Municipal Affairs but rural and urban councillors from across this province, as well as the Minister of Municipal Affairs and a number of other colleagues in the Legislative Assembly. Finally, I would be remiss if I didn't recognize the very extensive time and work that went into these proposals by the staff of the Department of Municipal Affairs, in particular by Mr. Grover, the assistant deputy minister of assessment services.

Mr. Speaker, very clearly my purpose today is to ask for the support of the Legislative Assembly with respect to these changes. First of all, I want indicate to members that I will make all my remarks on Bill 13, and that Bill 9 is a companion piece of legislation which deals specifically with changes with respect to electric power and pipeline assessment. I should say as well that Bill 13 does not include all the changes being made, because a good number of them are made by way of ministerial regulation, by order in council, or by changes in assessment manuals, which are adopted by ministerial regulation.

So for that purpose I outline in detail to members of the Assembly and to others across the province the changes that will occur as a result of the amendments to Bill 13 before you. That forms a document entitled Proposed Changes in Assessment and Taxation, with a covering memo from me dated April 5. In addition, Mr. Speaker, if they haven't done so already, the pages will shortly be passing around a pamphlet entitled Proposed Changes in the Levels of Assessment Values in Rural Municipalities, which is really very similar to the March 5 document I referred to. In addition to that, a single-page graph outlines the increase in values that will occur with respect to some nine different classes of property under these proposals.

Mr. Speaker, there have been a couple of changes with respect to the proposals as they existed on March 5 and as they existed when this particular brochure was printed. Both those changes flowed from the meeting of the Association of MDs and Counties earlier this month in Calgary, and take the form of two changes in figures: one with respect to farmland where, after listening to their debate and seeing the resolutions passed at the spring meeting of the Association of MDs and Counties, we reconsidered the values for farmland and have now re-adjusted those to \$240 per acre, as opposed to the \$260 actually outlined in the brochure. The only other single substantive change, Mr. Speaker, is in the oil well lease site on Crown land, from a proposal of \$650 per well to \$1000 per well.

Before outlining the changes in some detail and the reason for the changes, I might say that this particular

brochure was printed before those changes were finalized. The results of having some of my colleagues and others look at this brochure have led me to ask that another one be printed very shortly to replace this particular pamphlet. That will be done after this debate today, so I would ask members to hold their requests for copies of this till such time — perhaps a week or 10 days — that I might have additional copies available that have the appropriate alterations.

Now, Mr. Speaker, if I can go to a description of the changes that are being proposed: they are most aptly described on the page of the brochure which outlines levels of value for rural municipalities, the type of property, the present situation with regard to the assessment of that property, and what is being proposed by way of this legislation.

I start first with farmland, Mr. Speaker. You will see by looking at the brochure that the present maximum of \$40 per acre is being proposed to be changed to \$240 per acre. The maximum values of farmland were set in the early 1960s. I'm not at liberty to suppose or know exactly why they were set at \$40 per acre, but I presume the discussions of that day centred on many of the concerns we had in developing a new maximum value for farmland; that is, an economic value as opposed to a market value and, in addition, a relationship to other properties assessed in a rural municipality that was deemed fair and appropriate.

I can, however, elaborate on how we arrived at the \$240 per acre figure. First of all I want to emphasize that that is the maximum. That is the amount the best quarter section of farmland in this province would be assessed at. Generally speaking that's a very black soil, level quarter section that has no restraints in terms of farming or production that might exist on much of our land. Only a few quarter sections in the entire province meet this criterion. Every other quarter section is assessed at somewhat below that. When one gets into the drier areas of the province, such as the Special Areas and so on, you will find assessment levels far far below what exists at the upper maximum.

In addition to that, I should say that we should use as a rule of thumb in terms of the increase in farmland assessment on your own or your constituent's farm, an increase of six times the existing assessment. In other words, if you have a parcel of land that is assessed today at \$15 per acre, under this proposal there will be an increase of six times.

There are one or two variations in that sixfold increase that I'd like to discuss briefly. One is in the Peace River district of Alberta, where for a number of years we've had a lower assessment, by some 20 per cent, on farmland than existed elsewhere. It's outlined in the brochure: \$32 per acre. That assessment, Mr. Speaker, was put into place in the Peace River district many years ago because of a concern there with respect to access to markets and the difficulties in a newer developing homestead region. It's my view that those same difficulties do not exist today. In addition to that, Mr. Speaker, the new method of assessing farmland will take into consideration, at least to some extent, the distance from market when we're assessing farmland and other constraints on gaining a livelihood from agriculture that might exist to a larger extent than was the case previously.

In addition to that, I should say that there will be a change with respect to irrigated land, where levels of value up to \$55 per acre were in place previously. We've adjusted those levels to actually provide a situation where

there will be a smaller increase on irrigated land than might be the case on other land, by recognizing after a very thorough review of production on irrigated lands, that irrigated lands, which are mostly brown soils, are in fact able to produce with the irrigation a crop equivalent to that produced on black soils. Through the assessment process; it would be our intention to assess irrigated lands on a black soil basis. So, in fact, under our existing system those \$55 levels would have become \$40 levels maximum. Under the new proposed system they will be \$240 maximum, which is something less than a sixfold increase.

Very briefly, Mr. Speaker, if I might get to the manner of how we arrived at the figure of \$240 per acre as a maximum for farmland, it was very definitely a consideration that involved this business of farming when it comes to the costs that exist today and over the last perhaps five years. It recognized the agricultural industry is one which cannot pass its costs through. It recognized that market values of farmland vary considerably across the province and that it was, in my judgment, a much fairer situation to set the assessment of farmland in Alberta on a productive value as opposed to a market value. In establishing that productive value, we considered the factors that exist with regard to input costs and net income from farming over the course of a five-year period, from 1975 to '79. During the course of that consideration, we looked at loans made by the Alberta Agricultural Development Corporation and by the Farm Credit Corporation in Alberta, recognizing that both those institutions required farmers who were borrowing to purchase land to put together figures of cost and return that would show that there was an ability to pay for the land, get some return for the labor, and pay all the input costs.

In addition to that, Mr. Speaker, we looked at the extensive studies done over the last few years by the Alberta Department of Agriculture called cost and production returns for various classifications of agriculture. Those studies were done with respect to beef cattle, cow-calf operations, feeder operations, hog operations, extensive grain farming, and so on. While it may be a little subjective to come up with a single figure, after all that discussion and that study had occurred we felt it was reasonable to assume that \$240 per acre should be a maximum productive value, that being 65 per cent of what now turns out to be some \$370 per acre as a maximum productive value for the very best farmland in Alberta.

If I could go from there to the question of farm buildings, Mr. Speaker, farm buildings in this province, those being all buildings on the farm except the farm residence, have for many years been exempt from any taxation or assessment whatever. We looked at that situation and recognized a couple of areas which we felt we needed to do some work in. One was the development of farm buildings on farmland for non-farm purposes — in other words, the incidence where a farmer, who qualifies as a farmer and indeed does enough farming to provide himself with a livelihood, has gone into some other type of business and perhaps built a garage on his property to accommodate construction equipment or some such other occupation he might have. We recognized that in many municipalities those buildings used for non-farm purposes were not being assessed as they could not be under the legislation, yet were a legitimate non-farm commercial purpose. So the changes in the legislation and the regulations will provide that farm buildings are going to be

subject to assessment and taxation to the extent they're used for non-farming purposes.

In addition to that, Mr. Speaker, we looked at some of the very extensive agribusiness enterprises that exist in this province. We recognized that many existed on a quarter section or less, where the capital investment was very extensive but the assessment and taxation were almost non-existent — very, very small in relationship to the municipal services that were used — and that there needed to be some changes with respect to the level of taxation those individuals might pay.

Mr. Speaker, this is one area where I was unsuccessful in coming up with what I think is an appropriate definition of agribusiness or an appropriate level of taxation. But I did want to raise it as being an area where I think we need to do more study over the course of the next year. The original proposal, which in fact I had last November, was to implement within the legislation a provision that would allow us to assess and tax agribusiness by placing an agribusiness tax on those entities that might yield some considerable amount of revenue to municipalities but, at the same time, not be so extensive that it might place those businesses in jeopardy and leave them in a position where they may not continue to exist.

So after a fair amount of work, and looking at what was being proposed or was operational in other provinces across Canada, I concluded that we did not have time, in order to move with these very urgent proposals before you today, to develop an appropriate definition of an agribusiness. In other words, does that agribusiness feedlot start with the feedlot that feeds 500 head, or does it start with 1,000 or 2,000? What kind of income, if any criteria, are we looking at? Or are we looking strictly at the assessment of the property of the agribusiness or the farm? In addition to that, how do we assess or tax such a business?

There are all kinds of question marks with that proposal. I'm hopeful, however, that over the course of the next year Members of the Legislative Assembly, and others across the province who are interested in that proposal, would lend me some of their thoughts with regard to how best we might implement a fair and equitable system of taxation with respect to very large agribusiness operations.

If we could then move to the question of farm residences, Mr. Speaker, perhaps the most contentious aspect of assessment in rural Alberta over the last several years has been whether and to what extent you assess a farm residence. Never in the history of this province have the farm residences of farmers who qualify as farmers been assessed. A number of proposals have been advanced over the course of several years. One is simply to assess every farm residence the same as you do any other residence; a second one is to assess the residence and the farmer's land holdings, and tax whichever one is higher, commonly referred to as the either/or concept. I suppose a variation of that is to assess the farm residence and the parcel of land, whether that be a quarter section, 40 acres, or something less, and then put in place the either/or concept; that is, assess whichever one is the higher. That was the popular position of the members of the Association of MDs and Counties until very recently. It is one that we gave a great deal of thought to, but finally discarded because, in my mind, of the very complex problems with the actual mechanical operations of such a system.

Finally I concluded, Mr. Speaker, that it was necessary to assess farm homes to some extent, because of the

growing number of very valuable and large residential accommodations in this province, particularly next to our major metropolitan centres, that were escaping, I suppose, with little or no tax. So we concluded that it was fair and reasonable — and "fair" and "reasonable" are the operative words anyone considering this matter should consider — fair and reasonable to assume that an average farmer in this province ought to have an average home, being a home that, without land, would cost about \$50,000 to \$55,000 to construct in 1980, and that that average home would be exempt from assessment. I have commonly referred to that as a 1,200 foot 3-C home, as it's defined under assessment legislation. However, it need not be a 1,200 square foot home. Depending on the quality and age of the home, it could well be 1,600 square feet and still be exempt from taxation. What we're really talking about is the level of assessment that would be attached to a brand new urban home of about 1,200 square feet with full basement and all the amenities one might expect in a modern home.

Mr. Speaker, that decision to assess all farm residences and provide for a blanket exemption of the first \$28,000 of assessment in 1979 — which will change and move up annually as the cost of building moves up — was not one that was made lightly; one that I think is sort of middle of the road between not assessing farm residences at all, as we are doing now, and the other extreme, I suppose, of bringing in an assessment in total on every single farm home in Alberta. I've had a number of people express a view contrary to the proposal that has been put forward and suggest all farm homes should be assessed. I only need to remind them again that this business of farming is not one where costs can be passed through as it can be in almost any other vocation, including a number that I've been in in this province. Quite frankly, I think we need to move slowly in this area of placing extra taxation loads on the agricultural industry. I, for one, am prepared to take the criticism of the exemption that might exist, recognizing the difficult times that individuals in the agricultural industry often have.

We could move from there, Mr. Speaker, to non-farmland. Basically, that's all land which is not classified as farmland by way of the individual's qualification as a farmer. The existing situation is that non-farmland is assessed at 15 per cent of its value in the year previous to its being assessed — the brochure says 1978; that was in 1979. If we were assessing it in 1980, we would assess non-farmland, under the existing system, on the basis of 15 per cent of its market value in 1979. The buildings on that non-farmland would be assessed at 45 per cent of 1963 replacement cost.

The new proposal, Mr. Speaker, is to assess the buildings at 65 per cent of the previous year's assessment cost, which will mean a slight increase in the assessed value of buildings on non-farmland. By the way, I will explain the increased levels a little later in connection with the graph that all of you have in front of you. When it comes to land, however, the proposal is to assess at a percentage of market value only the amount that's in use, to assess the amount that's in use or the first 3 acres, and then to assess the balance at farmland rates.

I think this particular aspect of the proposals, Mr. Speaker, involves a very substantial recognition of the concerns expressed by acreage owners in this province over the last few years. Many of them have acreages in excess of 3 acres — 5, 10, 15, 20, 30 acres — and were subject to paying market value taxation on all that land, even though much of it might be tree-covered or in some

kind of agricultural production. Certainly there are those who still suggest that, as a group, the acreage owners' share of taxes in a rural municipality will be high. This proposal does provide a very substantial concession, in my view. Bear in mind that an average 3-acre homesite in the rural part of the county of Strathcona, for example, is about the same market value as a residential lot in the hamlet of Sherwood Park. So the situation exists now where an equal home on an acreage of, say, about 20 acres in the county of Strathcona is paying about double the tax that the same home is on a city lot in the hamlet of Sherwood Park. These changes will provide a situation where the taxation on those two homes is very little different. In other words, the country residential person will have his assessment on the balance of land over 3 acres, or whatever is in actual use, reduced very substantially by assessing that land at agricultural values. That, coupled with the fact that the total increase in acreage owners' assessment is less than most every other class, will provide a very considerable amount of assistance.

We could move then very quickly through the balance of the proposals. Commercial, non-farm residences, industrial buildings, will be increased to 65 per cent of current replacement cost, depreciated from 45 per cent of '63 replacement cost depreciated. Machinery and equipment will move to 65 per cent of current depreciated replacement cost. But I want to make a comment about the level that existed in 1963: 22.5 per cent of 1963 depreciated replacement cost, which in 1963 was only half the amount that other property values were set at. The reason for that quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, was that in 1963 much of this machinery and equipment related to the oil and gas industry, and a need was perceived in that day — and I think it was correct — to provide a break for owners of such machinery and equipment so that they might continue to provide an appropriate job opportunity in this province and be able to provide themselves with some profits as well. Obviously things have changed from the day when Ontario didn't even want to buy our oil and gas. Now I think some considerable profits in the oil and gas industry will allow them to be charged in terms of an assessment at the same level of other classes of property.

Electric power and pipelines, again, were assessed at 45 per cent of '63 replacement costs, but there was a 50 per cent immediate depreciation that then remained constant throughout the life of that facility. The proposal is to move those again to 65 per cent of current replacement cost, but to alter quite dramatically the amount of fixed and immediate depreciation. The 1963 theory was based on the fact that over their useful life electric power and pipelines would depreciate from 100 per cent to zero. If they had a lifespan of 40 years for example, it was reasonable to assume that a 50 per cent depreciated level constant over the 40 years would be appropriate. But a new assessment of that decision has indicated that indeed, over the useful life of a power line or pipeline, as long as it's still operating, its value is probably very close to 50 per cent of its replacement cost. So we suggest that electric power lines and pipelines depreciate over their life span from 100 per cent to 50, and that it's more reasonable to put in place 25 per cent as an immediate depreciation that would then remain constant.

Main and branch railway lines, Mr. Speaker, were set at \$1,000 per mile in 1905. I suppose recognizing a number of things, the Crowsnest Pass freight rate perhaps, the fact that other modes of transportation, the highway systems and so on, were built and funded almost totally by government, our proposal to keep them current

with other levels of property, perhaps paying some more — and they will — is to move that to \$10,000 a mile. That in no way reflects 65 per cent of replacement cost or anything near it, but was judged to be reasonable under existing circumstances. Mr. Speaker, if there is any drastic change in the Crow rate benefit that's received by western Canadians, it may well be that I would be back in this Legislature again reviewing the assessment on railways, both main and branch lines.

Oil well lease sites: a nominal taxation of \$100 per well site has been in place since 1963. We're proposing that that be moved to \$1,000 a well; once again a taxation level which we think fair and appropriate under existing circumstances, and certainly not a burden on the industry.

I could make the same comments, Mr. Speaker, with respect to generating, metering, regulating, communications, and substation equipment as I made with respect to machinery and equipment. In 1963 those facilities were set at half of all other assessed property; in other words 22.5 per cent instead of 45 per cent of depreciated replacement cost. Our proposal is to move those to 65 per cent of current depreciated replacement cost.

Mr. Speaker, if I could move fairly quickly to some other matters that, I suppose, are even more important than the existing situation and the proposed situation: the question of what actually happens when you get your tax bill.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I regret to interrupt the hon. minister, but the time had elapsed. Could he have the unanimous consent of the Assembly to continue?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, I'll try to conclude as quickly as I can.

I've outlined the proposed changes in a graph which is before hon. members. That simply indicates the level of increase in farmland, for example, slightly over six times. Non-farmland, your residential land, if you like, will move up about four and a half times. But that's based on an assessment of every acre at market value. If an individual has more than 3 acres, 20 acres for example, the increase would be significantly less than the four and a half times. Residential buildings, once again your country subdivision acreage owner, move up about five and half times, and that would be constant right across the board. Then we have commercial/industrial buildings, machinery and equipment, each particular one showing the number of times that their assessment will increase.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to come to another matter that I think is important for the Assembly to think about; that is, the ability we have on page 7 of Bill No. 13 for municipalities to make further adjustments. I've been asked by some municipalities, what will happen if we lay on a new general assessment and have a class of property tax payers, be it farmers, country residential, or whatever, that increases in a fairly dramatic way, say a 30 or 40 per cent increase? What can we do? For that reason we designed the legislation so that you were able to have three different mill rates in a municipality, if it's deemed to be absolutely necessary. The lowest mill rate must be equal to at least three-quarters of the highest mill rate. Between those two differences, between say 30 and 40 mills, residential property can have one assessment, which must be the lowest at 30 mills, farmland can have another mill rate, at say 32 mills, and finally commercial/

industrial and other property could be set at the maximum 40 mills.

It's my belief, Mr. Speaker, that for acreage owners these assessment changes will result in a general lowering of actual taxes paid and an increase in the order of 10 to 15 per cent in the first year with respect to agricultural land, and then remaining fairly constant beyond that. But if, in fact, we move into municipalities that do not have a current, up-to-date assessment, and very extensive increases occur as a result of bringing in a new assessment at the same time as a new method of assessing property, then they would have the flexibility of this split mill rate provision in the legislation to correct any inequities that they may feel exist.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, it's our intention to implement these proposals as soon as possible, but to recognize that with the number of municipalities we have across this province, it will only be possible to do perhaps six, eight, or 10 municipalities in one year. There are some that have had a recent current assessment and will be easy to do; others will take much longer. It will be our objective to do every rural municipality in Alberta as soon as possible, but that actual assessment work may take as long as three or four years.

Mr. Speaker, I could just conclude by saying that in my belief it's not possible to have a system of assessment and taxation that can't be criticized with respect to some inequities that might exist. I think it's one of the most difficult areas that government has to work in, certainly in Municipal Affairs. But I believe the proposals before you are the very best we can have in 1980, ones that have had a great deal of thought and work with respect to many, many citizens of this province. I ask the support of Members of the Legislative Assembly for the passage of Bill 13.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Before we continue debate on Bill 13, I wonder if the hon. Member for Three Hills might have unanimous consent of the Assembly to revert to introduction of visitors?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed

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

MRS. OSTERMAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It gives me a great deal of pleasure — and it's a very unexpected one — to introduce to you two people from the municipal district of Rocky View, which is immediately adjacent to Calgary and on the south part of my constituency. They are Reeve Louise Feltham and Councillor Harry Wigle. They have a great deal of interest in the Bill under discussion this afternoon. I would ask them to rise and receive the welcome of the House.

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

Bill 13 **The Municipal Taxation** **Amendment Act, 1980** (*continued*)

MR. STEWART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to commend the minister for his detailed explanation of a

very complicated piece of legislation that has taken a lot of hard work on his part and on that of his department. I think the graph he's passed around to us this afternoon indicates that we are trying to achieve proportioned assessment relative to the services that municipalities are expected to provide.

I think the most difficult part of any legislation is when you find one segment of assessment frozen for a long period of time. It gets completely out of relationship to its value. With decentralization and industrialization, and the fact that throughout our province we're developing a large group of rural people who are living on small acreages, a complete reassessment of our system of taxation in municipal areas had to be looked at.

In my estimation, we've gone as far as we possibly can to equalize the opportunities of rural expansion in an industrialized way, recognizing that a large portion of our province has a lot of natural resources that have become almost half the taxation base in some areas, some municipalities and, correspondingly, with changes in agriculture, a more fair taxation method on oil well sites, generating stations, and things of this nature.

The services that municipalities are expected to provide to the oil industry place a heavier burden on the road systems they're expected to provide. Consequently, I think that type of industry is putting a heavy burden on municipalities for additional road services and higher upkeep. Relating that also to the acreage people, we're expected to keep a good system of arterial roads that lead out to these acreages.

I believe this new system of assessment, while it will have its indoctrination pains, will result in a more fair and equitable system of raising the money municipalities will have to have to provide these services. There's no doubt in my mind that farmers have historically been suspicious of change. I guess it's by nature that we feel reassessment will ultimately mean more taxation. This doesn't necessarily follow, but it's the natural inclination of anyone to feel that if his assessment goes up, he's going to be subject to additional taxation.

I believe the taxation of agribusiness, which the minister discussed, is a knotty problem and not easy to draw a conclusion on. With my experience in agribusiness, a lot of them have grown from strictly a farm operation to the point where it's hard to draw the line between a large farm and what has actually become an agribusiness. I had the experience, while involved in agriculture, of growing from what was a ranch and a personal feedlot to what ended up as a ranch and a commercial feedlot. It was done during the period of time when I felt the addition of that particular enterprise was an asset to the area. We had a surplus of grain in the country, and a more mechanized system of cattle feeding seemed to be the only solution to the problem.

Under today's standards, I would recognize that as an agribusiness. But it's pretty hard to draw the line on what percentage of it would actually be equitable taxation, when you consider that agribusinesses located throughout the province are an asset to the agricultural economy as a whole. In most cases the grain that's fed in those probably doesn't travel any farther to the feedlots than it does to the local elevator. So while recognizing that everyone should pay an equal and equitable share, we also have to recognize the assets a lot of our agribusinesses create to our total agricultural economy. I hope the taxation of that type of industry will recognize the additional assets it produces throughout the province.

I suppose my total assessment of the assessment is that

where you historically have railroads frozen at a fixed figure since 1905, and our land values at \$40 an acre, the longer we leave an unpalatable problem, the bigger the problem becomes. What we're now doing is taking a large step forward, moving something that has been historically frozen, but also recognizing that we will be reconsidering these at five-year intervals. Because as time goes on, there's no doubt that inequities will develop again.

This is the unfortunate part of any type of enterprise where we're trying to establish who should be paying for the funds required for municipal services. We all recognize that the people on acreages in some parts of the province have been paying an extremely high tax compared to their fellow citizens who decided to stay in the urban centres. We have a lot of land in this province that doesn't have high agricultural value. It seems that as our population grows, we're going to find more and more people prepared to drive that extra mile to work for the privilege of living on 2 or 3 acres and having some form of rural environment to raise their families in. I think this a healthy situation. Raising a family in a rural atmosphere has a lot of advantages. A lot of our recreation can be self-generated, and it creates a better family spirit when families can go cross-country skiing from their back door. I think we should be encouraging this on land that doesn't have high agricultural value, and the taxation should reflect the fact that they are not being penalized for this privilege.

I hope this change in assessment, once it's properly understood, will be accepted by the people. I'm quite sure there are a lot of misconceptions and a lot of apprehension among people who have been only partially informed of the facts. I hope that the distribution of pamphlets which explain properly how the assessment works will alleviate a lot of the concerns I've heard expressed. In most cases a simple explanation of the fact that farm buildings other than large farm homes are not going to be taxed — a misconception a lot of farmers had heard and were concerned about. I think that agribusiness, while it's going to be an ongoing concern and problem in a proper assessment, will have to fit its proper role and pay its proper share of taxation.

With those words, Mr. Speaker, I will conclude my concerns and express my support for this taxation.

DR. BUCK: I just want to make a few brief comments, Mr. Speaker and members of the Assembly. I would like to apologize to the minister that I had to be in and out. But I will read *Hansard*, and in committee stage of the Bill we will be doing more evaluation. The first thing I'd like to say to the hon. minister is: has the minister indicated if the Bill will go through third reading and receive Royal Assent at this spring session? The minister has indicated he didn't make any comment on that. I feel this is one Bill that should be held until the fall. I know the present government has made a lot of promises that they would never tax farm homes. But that's what we're doing. So I guess you can't always believe what this government tells you. I would like to say to the minister that he's going to have to — and he's certainly come full circle from the time only one or two years ago, 18 months ago, when he said there's no way we will ever tax farm homes. So I'm going to see just how the minister gets himself out of this problem.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to say to the hon. minister that last year when I brought the resolution to this Assembly — the entire problem and situation as it applies to assessments, to acreages, to farmland — a legislative

committee should have been struck, even though the minister says this problem has been studied many, many times. If we had struck a legislative committee, we would at least have taken some of the politics out of the situation. Members of both sides of the Legislature would have looked at the thing, not only as it applies to municipalities and to assessment of mill rates, but also to find out what the people out there really think. Too often we get the information we want to hear from people who want to give us that information.

So I think the consideration of striking a legislative committee would have been very apropos. But the question of increased assessment — I always find that politicians, be they at the provincial, federal, municipal, or county level, are really no different. They tell us one thing; then sometimes they forget what they've told us. When we look at assessment going up, most people assume the mill rate would go down.

Maybe the minister will remember the story I brought to his attention last year, where the assessment of some people in the county of Strathcona increased many, many times, but they didn't know their taxes were going to escalate tenfold. They thought, well, if my assessment goes up 10 times, my mill rate will come down accordingly; therefore there will be very little change. But it didn't happen that way, Mr. Speaker. The people who made representation to me said, well, in essence a sort of speculative tax was being levied, where the taxes being 100 years before, with the new assessment the taxes went up to \$1,100 — ten or elevenfold.

So, Mr. Speaker, to the minister: if everything's going to be reassessed, let's have some guarantee that the mill rates will reflect that increase in assessment accordingly. Now I know we all strive to have fair and equitable taxes. In this province for many, many years — and I'm not blaming just this government; I'm blaming the previous government — the taxes have been a long way from fair, and a long way from equitable. So the problem is not just this government's.

I'd like to speak very briefly again — I'm not going to re-thrash old straw when we had the debate here on my recommendation to have a legislative committee struck — on how acreages are just not paying their fair share. They are paying much more than their fair share. I'm sure the hon. Minister responsible for Personnel Administration is going to get up and tell us how his acreage owners are paying much more than their fair share. The acreage owner has to pay his gas services, his water services, and his power; he does most of his snow removal; and many, many other services people in large urban centres take for granted. They say, oh well, that's fine for the acreage owner; he's got all that peace and quiet, plus all those weeds, of course, as the Minister of Agriculture well knows. The acreage owner is paying for those. At the same time, we ask him to pay a proportionally higher share of taxes, without getting the services people in major centres take for granted.

Another area of concern, Mr. Speaker, is the system of appealing assessment. I made the point that people do not realize they have to appeal when the assessment notice comes out. By the time the tax notice comes out, brother, it's too late. Many people think that if the assessment has gone up, the mill rate will go down, so there won't be too much change. But when they get the tax notice, they find out they've passed the deadline for appealing their assessment. So we will see, and we have seen, many, many backlogs of appeal cases.

The portion I'm sure the minister will address himself

to, especially when we're in committee study, is that I guess we'll never really figure out how to define who is and who is not a farmer. I guess we've been trying to do that for many, many years. The minister, being a *bona fide* farmer . . . Now maybe he's not a *bona fide* farmer, because he probably makes more money from politics than he makes from his farm.

MR. MOORE: I'm still a good farmer.

DR. BUCK: He's still a good farmer. Well, if he's making more than \$60,000 being a farmer, I'll tell you he's a super good farmer, because there aren't too many who make that kind of money. The question has been with us for a long, long time, and it's one that I'm sure this minister will not be able to resolve.

Another area that concerns me is the fact that reassessment will now be lowered from eight years to five. Mr. Speaker, I'm sure the minister has looked at the system they're using in British Columbia. I don't know if it's a good system or a bad system, but surely in this day of computers, I don't think we should have to wait even five years to have a complete reassessment. I'd like to know from the minister if there are counties or municipalities in this province that have not been reassessed for more than eight years. I've heard some rumors there were, and I'd like the minister to indicate to us if that is a fact.

I see we're going to have to look at the split mill rate, which has been used to try to solve some of our problems. Sometimes this seems to cause us as many problems as it rectifies. I would also like the minister to address the problem of alleviating a problem the local jurisdiction will have in trying to define a farmer.

So, Mr. Speaker, the problem is real. I appreciate the fact that the minister is trying to address this problem. I really feel that because of the wide ramifications of what the minister's doing — when we had the promise from the minister and the government just a short while ago that we would not be reassessing and taxing farm homes. In light of that, I think the people out in rural Alberta had better be aware of what this government's doing. Mr. Speaker, I would certainly ask the government to strongly, strongly consider holding this legislation over for the summer. If we're genuinely interested in having input, I think we can have the summer to get that genuine input from the taxpayers across the province. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I say to the minister: the government should give strong consideration to having this bill held and not receive third reading until the fall sitting of the Legislature.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Stony Plain, followed by the hon. Member for Edson.

MR. PURDY: Mr. Speaker, I think the hon. minister has to leave, so I'll give him my place. I'll follow the minister.

MR. STEVENS: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to thank the Member for Stony Plain for allowing me to enter the debate at this moment.

In getting on my feet at this point I'm rather amused to be able to respond to some of the comments made by the Member for Clover Bar. I was just realizing as he spoke that he perhaps has been in and out of the Assembly, but he still seems to be dancing along this fence. He talks about amendments he would like to have seen introduced

at some time, if we'd had a legislative committee, and that this would have taken politics out of the review. I find it rather amusing that a legislative committee would have removed politics.

I'm very pleased that our caucus has, with the advice of the Minister of Municipal Affairs and the work of his officials, put in long and hard hours on this matter which has led to the amendments before us today. There are 79 distinct constituencies out there. Representing Banff-Cochrane, I suppose I have no more and no less a unique constituency than any other member.

In speaking about Bill 13, first of all I would compliment the minister and his officials for this very comprehensive summary which has led to important and significant changes before us. During the campaign that led to the election in March 1979, in travelling about, as each of us here in the House has done, I spent time with officials of the municipal district of Rocky View 44 and the municipal district of Foothills. In our last Legislature, I recall the motion by the M.L.A. for Highwood, unanimously endorsed, which called for immediate review and steps leading to amendments which would put right the inequities in the system that have been described so well by the minister. I met with representative groups such as Unifarm, and the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties. I spoke to over 5,000 individuals in my area. These included small-holding owners, acreage owners, and agriculture business owners, particularly in Springbank and the Cochrane district. I talked to assessors, farmers, and ranchers. I attended a number of meetings, including a meeting in November of a large ratepayers organization in our area called the Bears paw-Glendale ratepayers association. Yes, there are a lot of people concerned and a lot of questions. As the Member for Wainwright said, as information is provided to our constituents and to their representatives, I believe they begin to understand more and more the ramifications of these proposals.

I'd also compliment the minister, too, on his officials. On one occasion the assistant deputy accompanied me and presented the early proposals we had discussed. I've also spent time going over these concepts with the editors and reporters of our weekly newspapers. I really believe these proposals before us are a substantial improvement over our existing situation. As the minister has indicated, agricultural holdings are justified in receiving substantial tax relief, because this is an industry where the costs cannot be readily passed on. There's no question also that in the overall situation in most municipalities, taxes will shift away from acreage owners to farmholders and the industrial sector. That is a concern, particularly in an area where there is a very, very old assessment base — 1967 in the municipal district of Rocky View, a portion of which is in Banff-Cochrane. I believe the department and the minister have directed all their efforts towards reaching a reasonable and fair proposal. It has to take into account not just Banff-Cochrane, but all 79 constituencies and the diverse viewpoints and situations throughout Alberta.

I very much understand the concern of the reeve and council of the municipal district of Rocky View in my area. They do have a very special problem; that is a very large municipality — I believe the largest municipality by size in Alberta — representing a very diverse group of people. The situation there involves rapid urbanization and a number of so-called hobby farmers. I believe the resolution of the difference between a farmer and a non-farmer is still ahead of us, but these amendments

which provide for an exception for our farm residents as described by the minister will go a long way towards solving this particular problem. In fact, I understand that assessors have commented that, except for some small holdings, the new changes do shift the burden of taxation onto industry and business. Taxes will increase in those areas after the assessment amendments are considered and approved and the assessment picture changes.

It does make it less advantageous for hobby farmers. As explained by the minister in his presentation, if they try to abuse the system, they will still face the fact that 3 acres will be like a normal lot in a municipality as opposed to a hobby lot, and the rest of the land will be assessed on the new \$240 basis, with the exception applying for the farm or hobby farm residents. But beyond that \$28,000 exception, the full effect will be felt.

I believe the proposals that have been referred to us now are valid, Mr. Speaker, and I support them fully. I understand the minister has indicated to each of us here today that he would look towards receiving our further input on the agriculture business proposals. But I believe the farm residence exemption is a big step forward, and I believe that the split mill rate will assist the constituents in Rocky View, a portion of which, as I mentioned, is in Banff-Cochrane. I do support the proposals as being, in the words of the minister, the very best in 1980.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. PURDY: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to spend a few minutes this afternoon in the debate on Bill 13. I spoke in this Legislature last fall supporting the resolution of the Member for Highwood regarding municipal taxation.

I support the legislation of the hon. minister, but I do have a couple of questions for the minister and a bit of concern regarding some of the assessment areas we're looking at. Through my constituency organization, I struck a committee in my constituency to look at this particular problem. They've been working at it very actively for about the last month and a half or two months. They've put together some information that I'll share with the members today. Maybe it can be looked at later when other amendments to The Municipal Taxation Act are brought forth.

The present system of taxation isn't fair and equitable, because many people are not paying the tax they should be. I believe the new system outlined in Bill 13 will certainly eliminate some of the problem we have. But I have one concern with the 3-acre parcel in the legislation, which I'll come back to later.

With the definitions under Section 2 of farm buildings, farmland, and farm residence, I think we can now define a farmer more definitively than before. The question asked many times is: what is the purpose of municipal taxation? It's to provide transportation facilities, schools, transportation to schools, and many other lesser services to the residents of that MD or municipality. These services are provided equally, regardless of distance from schools, trading centres, or primary highways, and regardless of the respective incomes of residents.

Should we not be looking at other procedures, then? I look at the person who has a more than average home in a rural area, town, or village. He pays extra taxes for it. So there are some injustices in the whole scheme of assessment. The person who has the same income may not put it into a home; he may take two holidays a year. He's not taxed on that. But if a person puts broadloom in the living room, a double fireplace, and things like that, he's assessed higher than the individual who hasn't gone

that route. So I think there's some unfairness in the whole procedure within our assessment manual as it now stands.

Going back to the 3-acre point in Bill 13, the minister touched on it. I think he was getting at the point I may try to make. He was comparing a 3-acre parcel in the county of Strathcona with a residential lot in the hamlet of Sherwood Park. But I'd point out to the hon. minister that the person who lives on that 3-acre parcel does not get the police services, the fire services, and other services that the person does in the hamlet of Sherwood Park. There's an inequity there.

My concern with the 3 acres — and this is the only concern I have, because my mail tells me there's no concern with the present procedure we are looking at of taxing farm residences with the \$28,000 exemption, and the many other good features of the Bill. But about two years ago the county of Parkland moved to 3-acre parcels and only 3-acre parcels in new subdivisions. So anything west of Stony Plain to Wabamun is pretty well 3-acre parcels. In essence, what I am saying is that the proposed legislation will not benefit those people. It will certainly benefit the small holder who has 5 acres, 15, 20, or whatever the case may be.

The group we put together came up with five very important points. I'll just place them in front of the members of the Assembly, and they can look at them. We started off with a preamble that people should not be assessed or penalized for improving their home or taking part in its appearance. But we should also not be encouraging shacks in order to reduce taxation. So, number one, everyone in the municipality should be taxed on an equal basis, regardless of income. Everyone should pay from his pocket a minimum tax, be it \$200 to \$300 — that's something that can be looked at afterwards. But that \$200 to \$300 would look at what is required to provide that basic county service.

Number two, every home should be taxed regardless of its size or the size of the property on which it stands. We're doing this. The home is where the demand for service comes from: from the family who has children going to school, and from the automobile using those county roads.

Point number three: if a resident of a municipality owns more than one parcel of land, then that particular parcel should be assessed and taxed in the normal manner. In other words, if he's renting one out, that comes back under the old system, and it's taxed as we are now doing it.

Number four was that consideration should be given to the farmer. In taxing a farmer's land, you are in effect taxing his job or business. For no other type of employment does the county collect taxes from an individual's job or source of income.

I just elaborated a bit on point five, but I'd like to go into it again. No assessment or measuring should be done on the residence because of a fine home or not so fine home. If a person wishes to spend his money on cars, holidays, travel, antiques, let that be his choice. But if a person wishes to spend his money on the home and beautification of the lot, the acreage, and so on, let's not penalize him. I think all citizens demand and deserve equal service, and that all taxation should be equal.

MR. WOLSTENHOLME: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I guess I have the green light.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I hesitate to interrupt the hon. member, but I've already recognized the hon. Member for Edson.

MR. WOLSTENHOLME: You can have the green light.

DR. REID: Mr. Speaker, there is some confusion in the backfield this afternoon.

Mr. Speaker, it may seem a bit unusual for me to get up and address the subject of rural taxation, because I think I've stated several times in this Legislature that I don't have many farmers in my constituency; I have an awful lot of trees. But a considerable number of acreage dwellers live in the Edson constituency, and we do have some farmers — admittedly beginning farmers, and farmers on marginal and not very productive land.

First of all, I would like to congratulate the hon. minister for having had the temerity to get involved in the subject of rural taxation so early in his term, and to commend him for his efforts to review and to do something about the problem. Of course, the problem, is not really with rural assessments; it's with rural taxation. I think the negative remarks of the hon. Member for Clover Bar sounded a bit out of place, in view of the problem that exists.

The Bill that the hon. minister has brought forward includes several quite radical changes in the whole concept of rural assessment. It's my feeling it will go a long way to correct the problems that exist, that have been increasing historically over the last several years, and which within the last few years have been introducing the possibility, if not the certainty, of considerable friction between acreage dwellers who are not farmers and their neighbor farmers.

I'm sure nobody, including the hon. minister, and certainly not myself, expects that this Bill will satisfy everybody who lives outside the urban areas of the province. I think that is expecting a miracle. But the Bill as introduced will certainly go a long way to reduce the problems that exist. In view of the willingness of the minister to address the problem, I'm also sure that he will be carefully monitoring the effects of the legislation and will almost certainly be showing considerable willingness to review any inequities that may result and, hopefully, to do something about any that cause severe problems. Indeed, if the minister hadn't been willing to get into that process of review and correction, we wouldn't be discussing the Bill today.

[Mr. Purdy in the Chair]

In a few brief moments, because I'm sure lots of members want to talk on this subject, I would like to address several parts of the legislation before us. First, I would like to address the subject of farm residences and the exemption that has been introduced. While I know it will cause some heart-searching in some constituencies where there are large numbers of acreage dwellers, I think the concept of exempting a basic farm home but taxing beyond that level, really is a good concept. It will enable us to tax farmers who are fortunate enough and affluent enough to build a 5,000 square foot house with a swimming pool and triple garage, who at the moment pay no tax on that dwelling. On the other hand, as the minister said, the limit of approximately a 1,200 square foot basic home will be of considerable benefit to farmers who are on marginally productive land, especially the beginning farmer who has invested most of his capital in

his farmland and equipment. That beginning farmer essentially will be exempt from tax on his farm home during his early years and that, along with the programs introduced by the Minister of Agriculture, should help him considerably. On the other hand, if that possibly mythical farmer, with 5,000 square feet, the proverbial swimming pool and triple garage, is doing well enough to be able to afford to live in that kind of house, I think that, just like the acreage dweller with a similar home, he should be paying some reasonable taxes upon that amount of his home in addition to the basic exemption.

The important thing on the subject of the taxation of farmland, as the minister has expressed so well, is that the upper limit is \$260 per acre. For a large part of this province the assessment per acre will be considerably less than that. For the few farmers I have in my constituency who are largely farming on quite shallow, gray-wooded soils, their assessment per acre will be considerably less than \$260. Of course, it's interesting to note that the assessment on non-farmland beyond the first 3 acres will also be based on that concept of its value as farmland, so that those who hold acreages larger than 3 acres, where the agricultural value of the land is extremely low, will be equally assessed on that low value.

The next subject I would like to address is the 3-acre concept. If my memory serves me correctly, in the debate last fall I suggested a 1-acre concept. That was based on some information I had, based largely on the constituency I represent, where in actual fact the value of acreages is considerably higher than it is elsewhere, largely because of a lack of land since we live in the greenbelt. This problem may continue to exist. If it does, I'm sure my constituents will monitor it closely, and I will hear about it and pass their remarks on to the minister.

However, the 3-acre concept does help a large number of the acreage dwellers in the greenbelt of the province. The previous legislation really prevented the development of so-called acreages in that area. It essentially was a matter of cutting off more than 20 acres so that you were a farmer, not officially but unofficially, as a 20-acre plot was the minimum farm. So a large number of the existing acreages in the Edson constituency, and I think in some other constituencies in the greenbelt, are in excess of 20 acres. Those people will benefit considerably from the reduction of assessment on those acreages in excess of the 3-acre limit. As I said, my constituents who find that 3 acres with a market value in excess of \$20,000 and assessment of somewhere in the vicinity of \$15,000 I'm sure will be communicating with me pretty early in the game.

The other points I would like to address are essentially the increase in taxation on pipelines, power lines, railroads, and other non-farm equipment. The increase in the assessment on these parts of the tax base and the increase in taxation on farmland will of course broaden the tax base considerably, and the result will undoubtedly be to reduce mill rates considerably. Whether that will in actual fact reduce the net taxation will depend on the individual arithmetic of the property and possessions of an individual taxpayer.

I would like to commend the minister for trying to broaden the tax base, trying to some extent to equalize the treatment of residents of rural areas, and thereby removing to a considerable extent the inequities that have been gradually building up under the present system. I welcome the changes in the legislation. I'll be monitoring them, and I'm sure some of my constituents will as well.

Thank you.

MR. WOLSTENHOLME: Mr. Speaker, I'm very pleased to speak this afternoon on Bill 13, as proposed by the hon. minister, especially as it follows along something of the debate that took place last fall on my Motion No. 214 which, in effect, asked the government to reconsider assessment and taxation particularly as it affected the rural areas of Alberta. It was well debated, and passed. So I am very pleased to see this Bill on the Order Paper. I must commend the minister for his remarks on Bill 13. He covered it so adequately that he doesn't leave much more to say, unless I am to repeat what I say last fall, and I don't think that's necessary. I think the hon. Member for Clover Bar must have been fishing on the weekend, because he sure scattered around quite a few red herrings this afternoon.

The minister and his staff deserve a great deal of credit for a job that was well done, in my view. As a former member of a municipal council, I realize the problems involved in trying to come up with an equitable, reasonable answer to a very intricate and complex problem, especially when you realize that property tax is the major source of revenue for a municipality and that the residents of that municipality have to pay that tax. I'm sure it's been a real headache to come up with this, in my view, reasonable and equitable application of the proposed Bill No. 13. As the minister stated last fall when we were discussing my Motion No. 214, there was no point in making changes for the sake of changes, because in that case it would likely just relieve some that were in problems with taxes then, but would just pass it on to another group of taxpayers, and that isn't desirable. In the past there were many inequities in taxation assessment, in my view, mainly because there was a problem in not being able to designate properly what a farmer is or was.

There's going to be a real need for an understanding of the difference between assessment and actual taxes paid. I think for the minister and his department properly to communicate this to the taxpayers out there will be a real challenge. Hopefully this educational program will assist the average taxpayer to understand the difference between his assessment notice and his actual tax notice.

I have a very large number of acreage owners in my constituency, as well as large owners of land who farm/ranch. So it's a real challenge to come up with anything that goes anywhere near relieving both sides and still try to be equitable. Of course, I realize that it won't please everyone. But I have to stand here in my place and recommend it as a very real improvement over the old method of assessment and taxation. I recommend it for real consideration.

Thank you.

MRS. FYFE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to offer a few comments on Bill 13 this afternoon. I notice from the discussion we had on assessment last time that the Member for Clover Bar still seems to demonstrate a lack of knowledge and an understanding of municipal taxation. Some of the comments he made certainly made me wonder whether he is arguing in favor of having reduced taxation applied to both acreages and farms at the same time. If he were to understand that municipal taxation is a total program, assessment based on all the properties within that municipality, and that the municipal council sets a rate to raise the amount of money needed to provide municipal services — and in addition to municipal services, school services, senior citizens' homes, and a very small levy for hospital taxation, which I think in-

cludes improvement of parking lots. We have X number of dollars in a total package required each year. In order to raise the required number of dollars, a mill rate is applied against the taxation of each property.

[Mr. Appleby in the Chair]

I realize that there has been considerable concern on the part of acreage owners that they have been paying the lion's share of municipal taxation in rural municipalities, I think with some justification. I appreciate their concern. I think the hon. Member for Clover Bar has tried to compare the situation within the county of Strathcona to all other rural municipalities. I think that is a particularly unique situation, where we have probably the largest hamlet in Canada — 30,000 persons with hamlet status. So there may be some inequities between acreage owners in that municipality compared to what they are paying in urban areas. But we mustn't lose sight of the fact that we are concerned about taxation across the province. I think this Bill goes some distance in trying to rectify that disparity faced by acreage owners.

If we were to have taxation that reduced the acreage assessment to a much larger degree, on the other side of the coin we would also have the concerns that would be raised by the farming segment of our population. The farmer is indeed concerned that if his municipal taxes are raised to an excessive degree, this discourages people from staying on the land. I think this is a very important factor. If farmers are encouraged to leave because of high taxation on their homes or land, we have really forced the family farm out of business and into large farming corporations. I think it's a very healthy thing to fly across the province of Alberta and see a multitude of lights on the land, knowing people are living there, not having moved miles and miles away and only coming out during the productive seasons of the year.

A second factor relates to the exemption of farm buildings from assessment. If we were to assess all farm buildings the same as any other business, it certainly would also have the effect of providing a very heavy burden on the farm family. I think it has been recognized this afternoon, Mr. Speaker, that the farmer cannot pass on his costs the same as a retailer, manufacturer, wholesaler, or other type of business.

So this afternoon, while this may not rectify all the problems that are faced in rural Alberta, I think it's one step forward. With the five-year reassessment included in the Bill, I believe we won't be going for a 20-year period as we have previously, where the assessments on farmland have remained unchanged for such a very long period of time and no longer are realistic.

With those brief comments, Mr. Speaker, I would lend my support to second reading of Bill 13.

MR. OMAN: Mr. Speaker, I will make just a very few brief remarks on the Bill. First of all, I want to congratulate the minister for bringing in what I think is a courageous and indeed advanced piece of legislation. Property tax, in fact any tax — I don't know where you'd find a tax that would be universally acclaimed as being a fair tax. Bringing in new taxation principles is never a particularly popular move, and creates a lot of tension and unease among people. I'm sure this has done the same, although my own constituency lies entirely in an urban setting.

I think to be fair, property tax should be assessed equally on all property at fair market value. I suppose if

there's criticism about this, it could have been a lot worse, in the sense that if that definition is fair it would indicate that certainly farm houses and all farm property should have been assessed in it. Therefore, I think the minister and his department have been bending over backwards for legitimate farmers in the way they have brought this in.

One of the weaknesses, of course, in property taxes generally is that they never reflect a person's ability to pay — as against income tax, which directly affects the ability to pay — for he may be taxed simply because he has large holdings, which don't necessarily produce capital. A change may therefore present unnecessary hardship at times.

I recall several years ago when the city of Calgary — along with the city of Edmonton and, I think, all other urban areas — was required by the province to bring its assessments up to date; in other words, to reflect current market values. One of the things that happened was that we'd been allowed to go so long before we did this that there were some rather marked changes over a period of a decade or more. One of the things we found was that some of the smaller houses close in downtown were on properties that had mushroomed in value. Therefore, whereas the house maybe was worth very little if anything, the assessment of the land — which was ripe for development of, say, high-rise apartments and so on — was very, very high. Most of these properties were owned by senior citizens who were on limited and fixed incomes. So it did create a hardship. When that was revealed, some fine tuning was done, and the province gave special help to those people who were in a special bind.

The minister has explained well — and again I'm not going to go into detail with regard to its effect, because many of my colleagues have done this. However, I just want to re-emphasize and underline the minister's statement to the effect that higher assessments do not necessarily mean higher taxes. In fact, they may mean lower taxes, simply because of the way the tax load is being divided. Obviously, however, the municipality should not need more money. This is not a scheme to raise more money; rather it's a scheme to raise it more equitably. Higher assessment on one property likely means a higher assessment all the way across the board and, therefore, there would undoubtedly be a reduced mill rate.

I recall again that when the city of Calgary went through this — and I think, if anything, we need to do it more often rather than less often, particularly bringing the assessment up to date — there was a flood of calls when people received their assessment notices. But when the final tax notices went out there was great relief, generally speaking, across the populace. Some people who thought they were really going to be soaked found that they were getting off relatively easily.

So I conclude by summarizing, Mr. Speaker. It's a matter that needed to be done because there were great inequities in the rural scene. It took considerable courage to do it, and I commend the minister for doing it. I don't think we should delay it; it should be done now. It will not be as obnoxious or onerous as it appears to be at first blush. I appreciated the minister's statement that it will be fine-tuned to take out the bugs once they are realized.

Thank you.

MR. BATIUK: Mr. Speaker, I would like to participate on Bill 13. I enjoyed listening to the other members participating, and I give the minister a lot of credit for having the guts to bring in this legislation that has been

looked for for many years. Not totally do I agree with all the members who spoke today, and that's why I decided at the last minute to make a few of my own observations.

As a county councillor for a good number of years, I have lived with that problem of trying to define what a *bonafide* farmer is. There had been many areas and even the assessment manual had different areas at times. One that we dealt with for several years was that if a person residing on a piece of land 20 acres or more could prove he had an income good enough to provide a living, the equivalent of a senior citizen's pension, he would qualify as a farmer. The problems came with people who were employed, teachers or any others, making from \$15,000 to \$17,000 a year, yet he would have a fine home, a fine garage, and some other buildings, and he was exempt from taxation. He just paid a few dollars on his land because he was able to show that on that little piece of land he kept probably two ponies. He'd sell a colt for \$1,500, and he had the money just from that. It was a real problem, and I don't think we ever came to see that everybody paid his fair share.

However, I cannot agree with some of the members who have made statements today that all homes, regardless where, should be taxed. There is the difference. I could see that anybody putting up a home for half a million dollars in the rural area maybe should be taxed. If he can afford that much for a home, naturally he could put in a few hundred or a few thousand dollars for taxes.

But what really perturbs me is usually the tax is set to raise funds to provide services. Now I just can't see what services there are to a home on the farm. In town you are provided with water, sidewalks, street lights, natural gas, police protection, fire protection. That's all included for your tax dollars. But on the farm, if you want to have a water system, it's going to cost you from \$4,000 to \$6,000 to \$8,000. If you want a yard light, which you have right in the town, it costs you \$7 to \$9 monthly just for the outside light. If you want natural gas, it costs you from \$2,000 to \$3,000 to install it. Nowadays electricity costs up to \$5,000. So, as I say, if the home were taxed according to the one that is in town, it's definitely not right.

However, in his formulations in this Bill I think the minister has provided exemptions for people in homes that are necessary homes. A home of 1,200 square feet, or whatever it is, is a home that can give you reasonably good living. If somebody else has a home much greater, probably a few dollars more will not hurt.

I have spoken to a number of farmers over the last while, and it seems everybody is against more taxation. But this Bill was in no way intended to derive more money. It would give the municipalities a much easier job to provide equitable taxation. So I must say I support this Bill, and it's a pleasure to participate.

MR. HYLAND: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to, make a few comments on this Bill. First, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to make note of the section that deals with putting irrigation land on a different system of assessment from what it was previously. I remember about three years ago — and it showed the very problem when assessment is left too long, the very thing the Member for Calgary North Hill was talking about, when assessment on pieces of ground is left for so many years before a general reassessment and what happens to it. It happened in the county of Forty Mile. It was quite a number of years before reassessment, and a lot more of the land had become irrigated in that 8- to 10-year span. With reassessment and the

former way assessment was done on irrigation land, some of the assessment increased threefold or fourfold, with the resultant increase of the taxes twofold and plus. So there are problems with letting assessment run for such a number of years instead of having it reassessed in the time limit that's supposed to be there.

I attended a meeting in Medicine Hat three weeks ago that dealt with the new assessment, particularly that relating to farm homes. There was quite a bit of activity in the meeting, to say the least. The concern expressed there was over the taxation of farm homes and over the increase in assessment in general. Once explained to people that the way it was proposed to be done — it's the same old story. They see the story; they hear an increase in assessment, and assume that that will drive the taxes up sixfold or whatever the increase in assessment may be. Many people don't realize the workings of a municipal government or an ID. They don't realize it takes so many dollars to run the operation, that that is spread out over the total amount of the assessment, and thus the mill rate is arrived at. As previous members have said, that mill rate is to provide service for the operation of the municipality.

But the concern that was expressed, and I'm sure the minister can do away with that, was the fact that taxation of houses, even with the exemption of the 1,200 square feet or thereabouts and an amount put on the assessment, is the first step toward taxation of the other buildings on a farm. For examples they were using areas in the States where farm buildings are taxed and where you don't see very many good buildings on farms.

Another part of taxation — I haven't noticed it in the Bill, and maybe the minister can comment on it — is that related to the greenhouse industry, most prevalent in Redcliff and Medicine Hat, and their taxation in an urban area in producing an agricultural crop. They have fairly high taxation on their establishments, and it is creating a great deal of concern for them. Discussions have been going on for at least the last three or four years relating to this taxation policy.

In general, Mr. Speaker, I believe the people out there now understand Bill 13, as it's getting explained better. When he makes the necessary corrections and distributes them, I'm sure the pamphlets the minister has passed around will help a great deal towards explaining the new assessment policy and the need for reassessment every number of years. As some members have indicated, maybe even the allotment in the Act, as things are changing so fast, is not the appropriate amount and it should be reconsidered as well.

I'd like to leave those few comments for the minister to comment on when he closes debate.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Has the hon. minister permission to close debate?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, first of all I want to thank hon. members for their participation in second reading of Bill No. 13, and for their positive attitude toward its implementation and passage during the spring session.

I want to emphasize one particular aspect of this Bill again, but I think the Member for Calgary North Hill did it better than I could when he explained very effectively that an increase in assessment doesn't necessarily mean an increase in taxation, and for those who consider themselves to be paying more than their fair share can often-times mean a decrease in actual tax dollars paid. The

most recent example of that is the city of Edmonton which a year ago brought in a new method of assessment in the entire city resulting in a situation where the assessment increased by, I believe, 5.5 times. That of course resulted in a very dramatically decreased mill rate. I think that fact was well explained in a brochure that went to citizens with the assessment notice some time before the actual tax bill went to the citizens of the city of Edmonton. I think it's that effective communication job that is necessary.

Mr. Speaker, a couple of other points — and of course I'd be prepared to answer a number of questions in committee study. I was asked about what might be perceived by some as an outdated method of assessment where in fact in past years we went to every quarter section of land, looked at the soil again and it hadn't changed much from previous years. It's our intention to bring in a system of assessment that will keep an assessment current every single year. In other words, there shouldn't be the need to do an eight-year general assessment. Rather we should have in place a qualified assessor, part- or full-time, in every single municipality in this province whose job it will be, given the very extensive information now provided to municipal governments through building permits and so on, to place new assessments on the roll and to keep that assessment updated with changing conditions.

Very obviously that is going to be coupled with computer systems. The staff in my department are now working to try to develop it so it can be laid onto a municipality without them doing the cost of research and so on that might be necessary for a good system. So very definitely it's our wish that down the road we have updated assessments, which means that you don't have a dramatic change occurring if you haven't done one for a number of years.

To answer the question whether or not there are assessments in this province older than eight years old, the answer is yes, there are a number. The legislation says they must have a general assessment every eight years unless the minister signs a ministerial order allowing them to continue beyond eight years with their existing assessment. There are some for which my predecessor and I have authorized an extension beyond that time frame. Part of the reason is that we knew we were working on a new assessment proposal that might provide them with greater equity, and so that was done.

Finally, a couple of comments with regard to the last speaker's concern about the greenhouse industry. We are looking at changes that might be effective in assisting farmers who own farm buildings in urban areas. Presently the situation is that they are assessed and taxed as though they were non-farm buildings. That creates some problems, particularly with respect to annexation, where we move lands into urban areas which aren't required for urban purposes for perhaps 20 years down the road. Within the next month or two I hope to have some answers to that problem that would be effective in the property taxation year 1981.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, it is our intention to move during the spring session with third reading and Royal Assent of this legislation. If we don't, it means another year. If we wait till fall it really means that we're delaying by one year the very change that the hon. Member for Clover Bar and others have been asking for; that is, to provide some assistance to those whose property is based on market value and the market values are increasing very dramatically, while a good part of the other property

in a municipality, such as farmland, is based on a fixed assessment or on replacement cost which has not been increasing nearly as fast as have market values, particularly the areas adjacent to our large urban centres. So we want to move this year.

I just say in closing that the Association of MDs and Counties did consider this matter by way of a resolution at their spring convention, when they asked that the provincial government delay third reading of the legislation until the fall sitting of the Legislature to allow further study and input. That resolution was defeated at their spring conference. So I think an awful lot of people involved very directly in this business want to ensure that we move with this legislation in the spring of 1980 and put it into place as quickly as possible.

Mr. Speaker, as I indicated earlier and want to say again to hon. members, I will have a replacement for this particular brochure, within a week I hope, that will have the correct figures as I've outlined them today. If hon. members could wait until then, I know we'll be prepared to provide copies in large volumes to members who request them. We'll also be forwarding copies of this brochure to every municipal district office in the province and other places where interested citizens may have access to them.

Mr. Speaker, with that I ask for the support of the Assembly, and move second reading of Bill No. 13, The Alberta Municipal Taxation Amendment Act, 1980.

[Motion carried; Bill 13 read a second time]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Before we proceed to the next Bill for second reading, might the hon. Member for Three Hills have permission to revert to Introduction of Bills?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

head: INTRODUCTION OF BILLS (reversion)

Bill Pr. 6 The Prairie Bible Institute Amendment Act, 1980

MRS. OSTERMAN: Thank you for your indulgence, Mr. Speaker, and members of the Assembly for their indulgence.

I request leave to introduce Bill Pr. 6, The Prairie Bible Institute Amendment Act, 1980. This amendment Act will allow the bible institute to grant degrees in divinity.

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

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

Bill 9 The Electric Power and Pipe Line Assessment Amendment Act, 1980

MR. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, as I indicated, my comments on Bill No. 13 also included discussions with respect to the principle of Bill No. 9. I would recommend its support by members of the Legislature.

[Motion carried; Bill 9 read a second time]

Bill 37 The Unfair Trade Practices Amendment Act, 1980

MR. KOZIAK: Mr. Speaker, in rising in my place to move second reading of Bill 37, The Unfair Trade Practices Amendment Act, 1980, I would like to urge all hon. members to indicate their support for the amendments and their continued support for the concepts embodied and codified in The Unfair Trade Practices Act.

Hon. members will recall that this type of legislation is fairly recent in the parliaments of this country. The idea behind it, or the objective for legislation of this nature, is to provide suppliers with a minimum standard of conduct in the marketing of consumer goods and services. I suppose this standard can best be described as "truth in selling". With this concept in place, we feel that consumers will benefit through improved trade information and will be in a better position to make independent and rational choices. As we indicated in our Speech from the Throne and other documents, it is our firm belief that the best protection for the consumer in the market place is to be an educated and well-informed consumer. Because the number of choices that a consumer makes daily, multiplied by the number of consumers in the field, would indicate the impossibility of a government making those decisions for consumers, even if a Legislature were so politically bent.

At the same time, Mr. Speaker, it provides benefit to business in that shopkeepers, those who provide goods and services, are not required to compete with others who maintain a philosophy of providing for unfair business practices in their dealings with consumers on a day to day basis.

Hon. members will probably be interested in knowing that since 1975, 2,868 complaints, as of March 31 this year, have been dealt with by the director of trade practices and his staff under this Act. In enumerating those complaints, we found that less than 5 per cent were unfounded. Also of interest to hon. members is the fact that in that period of time, over \$306,000 has been refunded to consumers in this province who have been disadvantaged as a result of practices performed which were prohibited by the Act.

I should indicate to hon. members that probably the most significant in terms of dollars and numbers was one in which I was personally involved in terms of some of the negotiations. That was with General Motors of Canada Ltd. relative to the sale of motor vehicles, Oldsmobiles, Pontiacs, or what have you, with Chevrolet engines. In other words, a consumer in the province thought he was buying an Oldsmobile and subsequently found that that Oldsmobile was powered by a Chevrolet engine. What's significant in this, Mr. Speaker, is not that the Oldsmobile had a Chevrolet engine, because if you want to put a Chevrolet engines in an Olds, a Rambler, or a Ford, you can do so. The important thing is that the consumer should be made aware of that when he makes the purchase so he isn't under the false assumption that he's buying an Oldsmobile engine. Through the provisions of this Act, we were able to provide restitution for consumers in the amount of \$200 cash plus a 36-month warranty and certain other benefits in the event that repairs as a result of breakdown were necessitated prior to the warranty being put into place. So that's one significant example, Mr. Speaker, of how the Act is used on a

day to day basis.

Over the course of the history of the Act, the director of trade practices has sought about 55 undertakings from the suppliers of goods and services in this province. When I say undertaking, that really amounts to what would be a cease and desist order directed toward the tradesman or businessman, plus an undertaking not to perform that type of an unfair trade practice in the future. These undertakings may be accompanied by restitution for a consumer; they may be accompanied by a penalty payable to the government of the province of Alberta for the costs of investigation. They'll of course provide for the cease and desist concept, and the undertaking not to proceed in the future. These undertakings are a matter of public record, Mr. Speaker, and are kept on file at all the regional offices of the Department of Consumer and Corporate Affairs.

Some other examples of the use of the Act would include an undertaking obtained from a firm that advertised in the yellow pages that it had the sponsorship of the Better Business Bureau when in fact it did not. An undertaking was obtained in that particular case. Further areas would be in the body beautiful area, if I might head it up that way. We see many advertisements nowadays in the press that promise all kinds of things in terms of weight control and other inducements that will result in our greater attractiveness, so it seems. One particular establishment advertised that its process would permit a client to lose between 8 to 20 inches of fat in just one sitting. Our investigations found that that was hardly the case, that the representations of that particular salon were never in fact met. An undertaking was obtained from that business not to continue with advertising in that area. Just a few examples, Mr. Speaker, of how The Unfair Trade Practices Act is used on a day to day basis.

At the same time as I make those comments and indicate there are three areas of amendment I'll come to specifically, I also would like to state that this is an area of the law which if unfairly administered would provide great difficulty for us in this Assembly and for both consumers and business people in the province of Alberta. Fortunately, since the proclamation of the Act on January 1, 1976, we have had an administrator who has approached his task and responsibility fairly and with — I suppose I could use that phrase that someone else once used: for a wise man a rule is but a guide; for a fool it's the law. We have had a wise man in the administration of this Act, Mr. Speaker. I pay that tribute to Mr. Douglas Carr as the director of trade practices, because we are the eve of his promotion to further and better things within the government of the province of Alberta. I felt that I would like to place on record my appreciation for the diligent and fair way in which he has administered this Act to this time. I would also like to pay similar tribute to our head of consumer relations division, who has, I'm sure, imprinted his fair-minded influence on the administration of the overall section of the department which has responsibility in this particular area of the law.

In speaking to the three specific amendments, as hon. members will quickly find by reading the short Bill, we're expanding the definition of services when it comes to the question of private dwellings to include not only repair and maintenance, but also improvement. We have had situations, Mr. Speaker, where businesses have made some fairly rash promises with respect to improvements to dwellings and, as a result of those promises, have encouraged and induced consumers to enter into contracts they might not otherwise have had. Fortunately,

until this time we have been able to rely on the Act as presently written in order to provide the appropriate redress. However, there may come a time when the situation may be responded to by a statement that what we have is not a repair or maintenance situation, but an improvement situation. It's my recommendation to the members of the Assembly that we consider positively the amendment to cover that situation.

As I mentioned during the course of first reading of the Bill, Mr. Speaker, we're also expanding the jurisdiction of the Provincial Court to include the responsibilities up to the appropriate dollar limits of the judicial administration of this Act in addition, of course, to the overseeing role the Queen's Bench of the province of Alberta now provides.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, the third amendment is a clarification as to the estimates clause, to ensure that consumers do not enter into an agreement based on a particular set of estimates which are subsequently increased substantially.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I urge all hon. members to support Bill 37 on second reading.

DR. PAPROSKI: Mr. Speaker, just very briefly, I'd like to make a few comments, and indeed compliment the department for its action under The Unfair Trade Practices Act. As the M.L.A. for Edmonton Kingsway, I've had the opportunity to refer problems to the department on a number of occasions, and the results were very positive indeed; if no positive action was taken, at least a clarification which resulted in a satisfactory situation for the consumer and the business alike.

Mr. Speaker, the number of complaints, cited by the minister, that have been dealt with over the years as a result of this particular Act, truly tells a story. I think all citizens in Alberta are very pleased and happy to have such an Act. I'm sure the senior citizens in our province will be extremely pleased with the amendments, because of the home repair program the senior citizens are using very diligently to upgrade their homes.

I'm pleased that the minister and the department continue surveillance and positive action on behalf of all consumers, as well as businesses, as he indicated, in a balanced way, recognizing that those same citizens in fact operate businesses in many, many cases, and may be affected by another business.

I hope the minister and the department will not cease or diminish in any way the continued education regarding consumerism in general, and will continue positive direct action. The complexity of consumerism in our society is, as we all know, increasing with the variety of products and businesses in the market place. I think it's very, very appropriate that we have such an Act in place, expand and modify it, and bring it up to date as the case may be, as we are today. I urge all members to support this Bill.

MR. KOZIAK: Just very briefly to thank the hon. member for his comments, Mr. Speaker . . .

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I regret I omitted to ask if the hon. minister has permission to close debate.

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. KOZIAK: . . . and to assure the hon. member that our efforts will continue in the area of educating and informing consumers in this province, so they can make the best decision they should, having regard to a fair and

true disclosure of the facts they need in order to make that decision.

[Motion carried; Bill 37 read a second time]

[On motion, the Assembly resolved itself into Committee of the Whole]

head: **GOVERNMENT BILLS AND ORDERS**

(Committee of the Whole)

[Mr. Purdy in the Chair]

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The Committee of the Whole Assembly will please come to order.

**Bill 12
The University of Alberta Hospital
Amendment Act, 1980**

MR. MACK: Mr. Chairman, Bill No. 12, The University of Alberta Hospital Amendment Act, 1980, is an expansion of the mandate of the University Hospital board to include the Walter C. MacKenzie Health Sciences Centre. That's the major thrust of the amendment.

[Title and preamble agreed to]

MR. MACK: Mr. Chairman, I move that Bill No. 12, The University of Alberta Hospital Amendment Act, 1980, be reported.

[Motion carried]

**Bill 18
The Hospitals and Medical Care Statutes
Amendment Act, 1980**

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Are there any comments, questions, or amendments to be offered with respect to any section of this Act?

[Title and preamble agreed to]

MR. RUSSELL: Mr. Chairman, I move that the Bill be reported.

[Motion carried]

**Bill 21
The Department of Culture Act**

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Are there any comments, questions, or amendments to be offered with respect to any sections of this Act? I think you've all seen the amendment.

[Title and preamble agreed to]

MRS. LeMESSURIER: I move that Bill 21 as amended be reported.

[Motion carried]

**Bill 24
The Gas Utilities Amendment Act, 1980**

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Are there any comments, questions, or amendments to be offered with respect to any section of this Act?

[Title and preamble agreed to]

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Chairman, I move that Bill 24, The Gas Utilities Amendment Act, 1980, be reported.

[Motion carried]

**Bill 25
The Public Utilities Board
Amendment Act, 1980**

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Are there any comments, questions, or amendments to be offered with respect to any section of this Act?

[Title and preamble agreed to]

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Chairman, I move that Bill 25, The Public Utilities Board Amendment Act, 1980, be reported.

[Motion carried]

**Bill 26
The Land Agents Licensing Act**

MR. L. CLARK: Mr. Chairman, there are a couple of small housekeeping amendments to this Act. I haven't got the amendments here yet, so I don't know whether you want to ... I can read them.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I would suggest that the amendments be passed around to members before it's carried.

MR. L. CLARK: They haven't come down to me yet, Mr. Chairman, so I don't have them at this time.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: We'll hold the Bill then.

**Bill 30
The Hospital Debt Retirement Act**

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Are there any comments, questions, or amendments to be offered with respect to any section of this Act?

DR. BUCK: Mr. Chairman, to the minister. In light of the fact that a large portion of the debt will be retired, can the minister indicate the government's position on some of the operating deficits that have been built up? Is the minister in a position to indicate what will happen to some of those in the last fiscal year? Can the minister indicate if that's a prevalent condition or just one or two isolated cases across the province?

MR. RUSSELL: It's not one or two isolated cases. Traditionally we've been picking up the operating deficits of the hospital boards since we went to a hundred per cent financing. This has been done a year later. So a few months ago we passed an order in council with an at-

tached special warrant which picked up the deficits for '77-78. It's not a hundred per cent good businesslike arrangement, Mr. Chairman. On the other side of the ledger are the existing surpluses. We have both those matters under review now. I expect to be bringing forward some kind of program of principles that will deal with those issues and others that are involved in the financing of operating costs.

[Title and preamble agreed to]

MR. RUSSELL: Mr. Chairman, I move that Bill 30, The Hospital Debt Retirement Act, be reported.

[Motion carried]

Bill 32
The Livestock and Livestock Products
Amendment Act, 1980

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: There is an amendment. Are there any comments or questions to be offered with respect to any section of this Act?

[Title and preamble agreed to]

MR. STEWART: Mr. Chairman, I propose that Bill 32, The Livestock and Livestock Products Amendment Act, 1980, as amended be reported.

[Motion carried]

Bill 39
The Companies Amendment Act, 1980

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Are there any comments, questions, or amendments to be offered with respect to any section of this Act?

[Title and preamble agreed to]

MR. OMAN: Mr. Chairman, I move that the Bill be reported.

[Motion carried]

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

[Motion carried]

[Mr. Deputy Speaker in the Chair]

MR. PURDY: Mr. Speaker, the Committee of the Whole Assembly has had under consideration and reports Bills Nos. 12, 18, 24, 25, 30, and 39; and reports with some amendments Bills Nos. 21 and 32.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Having heard the report by the hon. Deputy Chairman of Committees, are you all agreed?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, it's proposed that when the House does its business tonight at 8 o'clock, we'll resume in Committee of Supply starting with the

estimates of the Attorney General's Department. I therefore move we call it 5:30.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Does the Assembly agree that when the House convenes at 8 o'clock, it does so in Committee of Supply?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

[The House recessed at 5:27 p.m. and the Committee of Supply met at 8 p.m.]

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

[Mr. Purdy in the Chair]

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

Before we go into study of the estimates for the Department of the Attorney General, the Minister of Transportation would like to supplement an answer to a question that was asked in Committee of Supply last week.

Department of Transportation

MR. KROEGER: Mr. Chairman, the question was asked by the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview, and the phraseology threw me a bit. He asked if Alberta was planning on becoming the zeppelin centre of the world, and I answered it partially. I'd like to give a better answer tonight.

At the time, I said that while there was certainly a great deal of development going on, my department was not actively involved in the funding. This is so, of course. But it occurs to me that the House may be interested in a somewhat fuller report on the development of lighter-than-air vehicles and Alberta's interest in this worldwide development.

Briefly, I can say that a considerable amount of money is being spent on both research and production in the dirigible field in such countries as the U.S., the United Kingdom, West Germany, Russia, and Japan. Countries such as Venezuela are entering the market as buyers, while countries such as Belgium are anxious to enter the field as fabricators, by taking an equity position in development which originates outside their own borders.

As far as I know, there is not a great deal of attention being paid in Canada to the international airship industry, except for the very keen interest the government of Alberta has maintained through the Department of Transportation for the past five years. It is our policy to act as a catalyst to stimulate interest and eventually involvement on the part of Alberta's private sector. To this end, Alberta is generally recognized as having the best contacts and the most up-to-date knowledge of the industry of anyone in Canada.

As a matter of fact, the Alberta modern airship study, which was completed in June 1978, has achieved world recognition as a feasibility study on a wide range of

aspects of the lighter-than-air transportation concept. Officers of my department have been in regular contact with NASA in the U.S., which did a study in this province on their own, and with Goodyear Aerospace, which has expressed to us a very strong interest in talking to Alberta businessmen, with a view to taking a minority interest in an Alberta airship company. Goodyear has the blessing of the American government to provide the technology and other considerations to become associated with any Alberta group which would like to enter this extremely vigorous, young industry.

As a government, we would like very much to see an arrangement of this type take place. We think it would be extremely advantageous for Alberta. This province is an ideal location for an airship industry, not only insofar as manufacturing and marketing, but from an application point of view. With this in mind, my chief deputy minister talks to potential interested parties in Alberta almost every week. I hope very soon to be able to advise this House that our vigorous and imaginative private sector has taken our encouragement and assistance, and has indeed launched this province as the zeppelin centre of the country.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Department of the Attorney General

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Has the Attorney General any opening comments?

MR. CRAWFORD: Perhaps a few, Mr. Chairman. I was going to say I'm grateful to the Minister of Transportation for getting everybody's mind in the right focus by speaking of gas bags just before I got up.

AN HON. MEMBER: Filled with lead. [interjections]

MR. CRAWFORD: I shouldn't have started that way, Mr. Chairman. I'm getting witticisms from all around now.

In respect to the estimates of the Attorney General's Department, I thought I would just try to put forward a few of the focuses and the important senses of direction that there are in the department as reflected by this year's estimates. It is, of course, bound to be the case that with any program of significance and importance, there's a development over a period of years. Therefore, many of the things of which I speak, and about which there may indeed be questions shortly, are matters that are a continuing or evolutionary type of program within the Attorney General's Department.

I mention that because of the emphasis there must be in regard to the data systems and the long-term computerization plans with reference to this department. It is very much oriented towards the service of the public, as distinct from any types of programs that are perhaps more oriented towards other activities of government. These go directly to the people, in the sense of the large number of employees directly involved in the maintenance of records and the recording of transactions. The entire court, land titles, and vehicle and central registry systems, with the millions of transactions per year, are obvious targets for computerization. That is there in order to provide increasingly good service.

There was a time when manual service adequately served all of these areas. That is no longer the case. I recall, as hon. members might, that a year ago we in the Attorney General's Department were actually very enthu-

siastic about new personal property security legislation. Although we haven't been able to come forward with that yet, it's aimed at the type of area of which I speak: registration of interests in chattels and certainly in motor vehicles, and the efficient service of the public in regard to those important areas. What there is in this year's budget in that respect is a continuing, sort of early developmental stage of what will later be more electronically-oriented systems in these areas.

With respect to the other activities of the department, there are certainly some very important ones. No doubt, there are always concerns over the entire question of law enforcement. That is the principal function, although it's not necessarily reflected in any changes or particular noticeable movements in budgetary procedures. But it remains the principal reason for the existence of the department.

Coupled with that are areas such as fatality inquiries, still quite a new area in the sense of the new legislation, The Fatality Inquiries Act, now about two to three years old. My observation on that would be that I think some of the difficulties in gearing up a new system are slowly being worked out and progress is being made by the department. I know that division of the department feels that way about it. My view is that maybe it's still necessary to take a further period of time to watch the progress and the change in the area of fatality inquiries before we can assuredly say that any difficulties, in the sense of change-over from the old coroner system, have in fact succeeded.

There is the area of the court merger, which took effect just under a year ago. There may be questions on that, so very briefly I would say that in my view it's been a successful merger, and the new Court of Queen's Bench is functioning with commendable efficiency, considering what was involved in putting together what had historically been two separate court systems, one superior to the other. There's a significant development plan, based on the recommendations of the Kirby Board of Review of a few years ago, in the sense of new courthouses throughout the province. That's part of the capital program, and it is indeed very significant. It's as typical as anything of what I remarked upon at the outset; that is, any program that is significant in carrying out the responsibilities of the department is likely to proceed over a period of years. Of course, this is not the first year of the major gearing up of construction in regard to courthouse facilities. This is necessitated not only to serve areas outside the major metropolitan areas better, but in fact to handle astounding increases in case loads in the metropolitan areas.

The other area that catches the attention of hon. members from time to time, and indeed of others, is gaming legislation and the plans the government may have during this year in regard to any amendments in rules and regulations relative to gaming. Some references have been made to that.

The department is also responsible, as hon. members know, in the areas of crime compensation and public utilities regulation, although in not a particularly direct way, because of the existence of quasi-judicial boards in both those areas.

So, Mr. Chairman, on that basis, before proving the case of the hon. Minister of Transportation beyond a reasonable doubt, I'll conclude for now.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Chairman, I'd just like to draw one or two things to the minister's attention, or get some information on the matters. Briefly, can the minister indicate if

the merger of the courts has expedited matters? Do we still have a major backlog in our courts? Have all the wrinkles been taken out in that, and is the system operating more efficiently?

Also, at the same time, what is the record of our traffic courts? Are we breaking the logjam so that these relatively minor charges can be dealt with more expeditiously? The fatalities inquiry — I'd like to know the mechanics from the minister. When there's a fatality, is it automatic that an inquest is held and the thing is fully reviewed?

Another thing which may appear minor, but the ramifications are not so minor, is the instance where a person receives an ordinary parking ticket. I would like to know what safeguards are in place. What warning does a person have before a warrant is out for his arrest, if he ignores one ticket, two tickets, and so on down the line?

The reason I ask, Mr. Attorney General, is that a person I know quite well and respect as an upstanding member of the community, had a relatively minor traffic offence. In arresting him the officer said, oh, we've been looking for you. Somehow, in the mechanics of I believe a disregarded traffic offense, a warrant was out for the man's arrest. Fortunately, when he got thrown in the pokey, he happened to have \$80 with him. In the days of plastic money, not too many people carry \$80 around with them. Otherwise he'd have had to spend the night in the crowbar hotel.

The man was trying to make the point that what bothered him was that somehow he thought he had paid the ticket. But it hadn't been paid, so there was a warrant out for his arrest. He felt that there should be some kind of safeguard mechanism so that really the person doesn't have to go through that type of operation over what he felt was a relatively innocent thing. Of course, we see stories come up quite often, where people are picked up on warrants when they think it's been a relatively minor offense. Now I know we can't allow people to disregard traffic tickets. But on the other hand, I just want to know what safeguards are in place so that if a person ignored it, and maybe didn't get his notice before his final notice, the mechanism is there to prevent such occurrences.

In the area of crime compensation, I'd just like to know from the Attorney General, in the case I brought to the attention of the Legislature, the young man, Mr. Lindquist, who because of some problems in the licensing branch of the Solicitor General's Department . . . Does this person have any access to crimes compensation? He wasn't an innocent victim, but still he was innocent in the light that he lost his job and spent five days in the pokey. I would just like to know if Crimes Compensation has taken into consideration compensation for people who have been unjustly treated by our own system. I know the hon. Solicitor General has indicated that he could go through the Ombudsman's office and possibly get some compensation that way.

Another point to the hon. minister, that I believe I brought up last year, getting back to the fatality inquiries section. The parents of the girl who was killed in the Lamont area about 5 or 6 years ago felt that the information was not available to them from the investigating RCMP officers. I know the minister said last year that he would look into this area. So far we've not really received any firm definition of what is available and what is not available. So I would like the minister to comment briefly on some of those. Then we'll follow the rest through in estimates.

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Chairman, certainly a number of things could be said with respect to these areas. All of them are important, and all of them touch very closely upon the relationship between the citizen and the administration of justice. I would be the first to agree that it's very, very important that this system function in relation to the citizen in a way that is, to all appearances and in substance, fair.

Now, one question of backlogs had come up with reference particularly to the Court of Queen's Bench. In any court, I think, backlogs occur to a varying degree and for various reasons. At the present time in the Court of Queen's Bench, I don't think there is a backlog problem that could be described as such in anything like the way the provincial courts, about which the hon. member also asked, had a backlog problem two or three years ago. The reorganization of the system in effect in the provincial courts enabled significant changes to be made in the way cases were streamed through the system and, because of that, to reduce the backlog. By a year ago, in the heavy volume courthouses in Calgary and Edmonton, Alberta had the best throughput time, if you can say it that way, of any equivalent system in the country. We became quite proud of that.

Before leaving the question of the Queen's Bench, I'm not aware of a problem in the sense of backlog caused by sheer volume. The backlog on any list of court cases is more often a function of the complexity of the proceedings and to a large extent the manoeuvring tactics of the legal counsel involved. Indeed, some clients are not interested in bringing a case to trial before doomsday, if they can possibly avoid it. So it's just a real mix of factors that cause delays of that type.

With regard to the operation of The Fatality Inquiries Act, there would be between 4,000 and 5,000 cases in a typical recent year. I don't know what it would have been 10 years ago, but in 1979 or 1978 the figure of 4,000 to 5,000 would be approximately in the ballpark for the number of deaths that occur in the province in respect of which the medical examiners feel some questions should be asked. They resolve numbers of them very rapidly without formal inquests. In such cases, it requires perhaps only a very minimal type of inquiry into the circumstances before becoming satisfied that no further explanation is called for.

In cases where what has previously been called an inquest and is now called a fatality inquiry, the cases where it's more appropriate to proceed the whole distance, what is involved is basically that the chief medical examiner and his officers, who may be full-time employees of the department or, in fact, practitioners on appointment in private practice throughout the province, make the recommendations and decisions. When a case is before them and their judgment is that a better explanation of the cause of death should be provided, they may direct an autopsy. I don't know what the percentage of cases would be, but it would certainly run into hundreds per year out of the 4,000 to 5,000 I mentioned. In any event, a formal inquiry is done by an officer, either a staff person or a medical examiner or an investigator acting under the provisions of the Act, performing the duties I've just described.

You come down to those cases where it should be obvious to the persons involved that a full-scale inquiry should be held, or where there are sufficient circumstances that it becomes the judgment of officials in my department that the most formal form of inquiry should be followed. In those sorts of cases, now a narrowing

number, a provincial judge, who may sit with a jury or alone, would convene the inquiry and provide a report after the inquiry is done. That is equivalent to the sort of proceeding that the coroner carried on under the previous legislation.

We do receive reports. If I'm not mistaken, all the proceedings are public in those. I don't recall cases where it was drawn to my attention that they were not public. In fact, one sees it referred to in the newspaper from time to time that a judge has held an inquiry with respect to a certain death.

I think the important thing that hon. members would want to be satisfied with, though, would be that if all the systems up to that point failed and there were still something that an interested person honestly felt should be further explored with regard to a death, then the Attorney General has the jurisdiction to order an inquiry in those cases, even though the Fatality Review Board had not up to that point come to the same conclusion. That has occasionally been done. It hasn't been my obligation, as I've seen it, to do so in any case in the past year, because the cases have been coming forward and have been heard. But on one or two occasions my predecessor found it necessary to do that, and did so. That's a fairly lengthy explanation of that, but it's always a very sensitive area for people who are involved.

In regard to the way outstanding warrants and so on are held and the sort of checking system there might be to assure that injustices don't occur to a person who has either paid or believes he has paid for a presumably relatively minor offence, I'm afraid we're still struggling with that. There are so many such tickets for minor moving offences as well as for even less important items such as parking violations where, after the follow-up system . . . I guess the first follow-up system is typically handled by the municipal government sending out a second notice type of thing. At that point it's only a tag, and the proceeds are payable to the city treasury.

If it goes beyond that and the city hasn't been paid or believes they haven't been paid, a summons would be issued. How that comes to the person's attention is perhaps part of the difficulty. I think it would be impossible to see to the personal service upon people of each and every summons, so the mails are used.

There are certain presumptions. If a person doesn't show up on a particular occasion as a result of a summons, the next step goes into place. I should really check the procedure on this. I'm going partly from memory in the sense of having appeared a few years ago for people who were in similar difficulties. There would be no actual issue of a warrant without personal service of a summons on the person. I think that much is there. What happens is the difficulty arising where, say, a first appearance is missed or something along that line, or where a substitutional service is allowed for. Certain types of offences, I believe, can be served. They may not be the traffic ones we're speaking of now, but there are certain other types of offences where service of the document may properly be made by mail.

The result of all this is that warrants are issued in large numbers and acted upon only in the tip-of-the-iceberg sense. Police would never be completely caught up in their service and execution of warrants. That is one of the things that's really wrong with the system. We have talked about many different ways of trying to get around that. The main point is that if there's been an offence and a penalty has been assessed, probably the recovery of that penalty should be purely a civil proceeding. That's a

discussion I think we've had in the Assembly on previous occasions, and that is the present philosophy of the enforcement system. But you do get to the point where even though the amount owing may be treated only as a civil liability from the individual to the Crown, if it is simply never paid and if a warrant is ultimately issued, then that person could end up in the type of difficulties the hon. member has raised.

Given the number of cases, those are not common. But I think it's still possible to do it better. The most useful suggestion I've heard over the years has been to tie it more closely to, say, the issue of the registration of a vehicle, and use that as an occasion upon which accounts might be settled, and do away with a lot of warrants and a lot of expensive police time, which does concern everyone.

With regard to wrongful imprisonment, I think I would have to say that that would never come within the purview of crime compensation. It may be a basis for a civil action by a person against the Crown, and it is clearly a case, as I think the hon. member mentioned the Solicitor General had said, where the Ombudsman should look at it.

Maybe I should take the occasion to say what the attitude of the government is now with regard to the Ombudsman's recommendations on such things. Although each case has to be looked upon in its own facts, I think a recommendation by the Ombudsman, with regard to compensation for a person with this particular type of complaint would certainly be put pretty high on the list of priorities for which the Executive Council would deem an *ex gratia* payment should be made. I mention that because there was some doubt of that a year or two ago when there were two such cases. The Ombudsman made recommendations, and in the first instance they were not paid. The two cases were then reviewed and, as a result of a decision of the Executive Council, payments by way of compensation for wrongful imprisonment were in fact made.

That didn't find its way into the most recent Ombudsman's report. That happened because of the timing of the incidents and the drafting of the report. I really welcome an opportunity to say that as far as wrongful imprisonment and the Ombudsman's approach to it is concerned — reserving again, obviously, that the facts of each case must be looked at to see what the circumstances were — I think the recommendation of the Ombudsman would normally be accepted without much question in those cases. So there is always some opportunity for the individual in this particular case to follow matters up by that route.

With regard to the other case the hon. member asked about, it's been a source of a little bit of frustration for me as well. Through staff, I have communicated with the individual involved on a number of occasions, the import of which was that consideration of amendment of the legislation which appears to bar him from looking at certain records with regard to a motor vehicle accident — review of that legislation would willingly be undertaken if he would make a distinct proposal through legal counsel. I asked him to do it that way, because I wanted to be able to have my officials discuss it with someone who fully understood the law we were discussing. I did indeed send the message that we would look quite seriously upon such revisions, from a matter of policy and the intent of the legislation. Despite many suggestions to that effect, I have never succeeded in getting the individual to approach it in that way.

There are other factors in the case, which led me to believe I shouldn't adopt a more accommodating attitude than I did. I think the other circumstances were these: one of the reasons I wanted him to go and see a solicitor was because he may well be entitled to what he's asking for under the existing law. One of the other aspects was that it seemed to be well known, in that particular case, that the police themselves had been extremely accommodating in providing the very information demanded. It seems to be a difficult case when it's stated in the abstract. It appears from a statement of the case that a person who has had an accidental death in the family has been unable to obtain as much information as was available. That is questionable. I realize that's the way the case has been put forward over and over again by the gentleman to whom the hon. member refers, but all of that is questionable. I can only respond to him now by saying that I think the approach I offered was a reasonably accommodating one that should have handled the situation. But because of circumstances and attitudes among the people involved, it has not.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Chairman, just a supplementary before the hon. Member for Edmonton Belmont asks his question. We shouldn't be dwelling on one specific case, but the minister is aware of the case we've been mentioning. In cases similar to this, Mr. Minister, how extensive are the inquiries the police conduct? Do they conduct the inquiry just at the accident site; for example, that the car went X number of feet and slid X number of feet on its side, et cetera, et cetera? Or are there guidelines established that in the course of their investigation the officers should look back at, say, the goings on, if any, previous to the evening of the accident — the movements of the person who was killed in a fatality like that? How extensive are the investigations? Can the Attorney General indicate or does he know what guidelines are established for police officers when they're investigating a fatality? Is it just the site, or is their investigation a little further, say, hours before the accident took place, as in this case? That question has always bothered me personally. How extensive was the investigation? Was it just the site, or was it hours previous to the accident?

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Chairman, I think it would be difficult to answer that. The practices probably vary from one police force to another. They are undoubtedly a function of at least two other circumstances, one being the amount of pressure on the detachment at the particular time, and the other the individual officers involved. My guess would be that in what appears at the scene of an accidental death to be a relatively straightforward matter to the investigating officer or officers, extensive inquiries as to what may have occurred prior in the day, relative to the deceased, probably are not made. But there may be cases in which further inquiries are made. So it's extremely difficult to say. In the particular case the hon. member and I both speak of, I don't know the answer.

MR. MACK: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I'd like to make three points to the hon. Attorney General. He might be able to give us some direction or perhaps information on what might be done under the current Judicature Act. It was recently brought to my attention that a constituent sold a parcel of land in 1974. Under the current legislation, in order to have the purchaser live up to the initial agreement, which is clearly stated on the legal form currently being used in the

province of Alberta — and they followed that form as his legal counsel administered it in his behalf in drafting the bill of sale — it would appear there can in fact be a default in payment for the property which is purchased, and it's virtually impossible to foreclose.

After a lengthy series of hearings that it goes through, a partial payment is finally made, and the procedure has to be repeated a few months down the line. I think this constituent indicated to me as I met with him that this was the third or fourth round since 1974. In the interim, the property had increased in value, probably quadrupled or even higher than that. It's extremely frustrating. Having had a tertiary look at the document, it would appear it provides assurance to the vendor that he would have no fear either of being able to collect for the property he sold or, in turn, to foreclose and recapture, or at least regain ownership of that property. There are some very, very serious concerns in that area.

I realize that perhaps the Act was drafted some years ago, during the late '20s and the '30s to protect the then owners of land who were losing to various finance companies. It would appear that there is a residual problem with that particular form. I wonder if the minister could indicate whether, in fact, some attention will be given to that particular aspect of The Judicature Act.

The other problem we've experienced — and I wonder if the minister could give us any indication as to whether he will be addressing this particular aspect — is the unsatisfied judgment fund. It would appear at times almost incredible that if an individual were able to determine who damaged a parked vehicle, then he couldn't collect from the unsatisfied judgment fund. There's an apparent weakness there that is a great frustration to those who pay into the fund but, it would appear, have difficulty — it is virtually impossible for them to have their vehicles repaired, which would be no fault of their own. If the vehicle that runs into a parked vehicle does not carry any insurance, it would appear that the owner of the parked vehicle could not claim for damages sustained from the unsatisfied judgment fund. I believe there is an inequity. Perhaps the minister might be able to give us some indication as to what might be done or what procedures might be followed in order to overcome the apparent inequity.

The other one, most recently, Mr. Minister, was the area of a business corporation or someone selling a vehicle, declaring that particular vehicle free from all encumbrances and liens. Subsequently one would find that, in fact, there were liens on it, and one of the lien holders would be a very large automobile manufacturer. I wonder if the minister could give us any indication as to whether they might be able to resolve this particular matter in a more expeditious way than what would appear currently available to innocent victims.

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Chairman, those are difficult matters. I'm sure the hon. member is correct in saying why The Judicature Act historically has the provisions it has with regard to foreclosures. Although any review of that type of policy could always be undertaken, I think I would be hesitant to move very quickly away from something that was originally put into force for the protection of people who happen to be in unfortunate circumstances. I know the hon. member agrees with that. He has described one of the ways in which such a law can be abused or can function in a way that perhaps was never intended; that is, that a person who does owe the money, and the value is in the property, is not meeting

obligations. It's difficult to say much about the case without trying to describe things that are really in the discretion of the judge who hears the application, because there's no doubt that a judge has the jurisdiction to order the sale of such property in order to satisfy a claim. I don't know why it wouldn't be done in a particular case, because it often is done. So I say to the hon. member that it would be difficult to get into that case without really commenting on the individual orders made by a judge on those certain facts.

As to the administration of the policy in regard to the unsatisfied judgment fund, I would like to check into that further. It seems to me that, in principle, if the unsatisfied judgment fund is there for payment of claims against people who are uninsured, then I'm not clear why the fund at the present time would not be paying for cases where uninsured vehicles hit parked vehicles. That deserves a look, if that's the situation. Certainly, if the vehicle that struck the parked one could be identified, it would seem to me straightforward that the fund would apply as much in that case as in a case where both vehicles were moving. There may be a problem that I'm not clear on, where the identity or even the existence — let's put it that way — of another vehicle can't be established. I suppose it's an unhappy note to say about any of our citizens, that it would be entirely possible that if claims were paid where there was no way of establishing that another car had in fact struck the parked vehicle, there might be some otherwise honest citizens who would go so far as to come to the unsatisfied judgment fund with spurious claims. So that is probably involved in the way the matter is being administered now.

As to the other matter, the hon. member mentioned to me the difficulty that a constituent had had with a particular case where liens were registered against certain vehicles. I'm afraid the registry system is there to protect the buyer. It is a case where it's the buyer's clear responsibility to satisfy himself, before buying, that the vehicles are in fact clear. The unfortunate circumstances where a purchaser in such a case would rely upon the declaration of a vendor, even if sworn, simply places the individual in a position, I think, beyond the ability of the law to protect him further. The case isn't the same if the registry wrongly records or fails to record the liens. But if the registry correctly records them, and they're there for anyone who inspects them, then the law has done all it can to help.

MRS. CRIPPS: Mr. Chairman, my question is to the Attorney General. It goes back to the registering of caveats also. I think it's Vote 2. Caveats can be registered against land by companies going across the land — pipeline companies or contractors working for those companies. There may be as high as 20 caveats registered against the land. I understand there is no requirement now to notify the landholder that a caveat has been registered against his land, and no mandatory requirement for removal of that caveat once it's no longer applicable. Twenty years down the road you may find you have 10 or 15 caveats. You can't even find the company or the people that registered them, and it's almost impossible to have them removed. Is there any chance of having it made mandatory to remove a caveat once it's no longer applicable?

MR. CRAWFORD: The practice has long been that when the interest protected by a caveat has expired, the person making the claim is obliged to provide a discharge

of the caveat, which can be registered; in other words, a discharge in proper registrable form. That is often done. The hon. member speaks of occasions when obviously that hasn't been done. It's difficult to know what change could be made to get people to carry out such a simple duty.

I think I know what happens. A company, say, is in business and is perhaps a shaky operation on its own. It's in a particular district, doing a particular type of work, maybe to do with resource development, or the like. I think it is often the case that claims are registered by all and sundry when they relate to a pipeline, an easement, or the like. To get everybody involved corralled at the right moment and say, now look, does your interest still exist and don't you think it's time you discharged it, and have a way of requiring them to do it, would be quite an administrative task for a registry system. The assumption is that the interests lie between the two parties, and that they are the ones who should deal with it.

Now the hon. member has described the innocent bystander owning the surface rights, who has had a title encumbered by someone who presumably had another interest in the land, directly or indirectly. I suppose the only sort of thing — and it would be a major change in land registry system — would be to provide for automatic cancellation after a period of years, and therefore require the person who claims to be interested to renew his claim. Now that sort of system would get around the problem, but that hasn't been adequately studied. To my knowledge it hasn't been studied at all. It may be something where, if members have found and constituents raise these things in other areas, and if it turns out that that is a real concern, a change such as the one I've mentioned could be looked at.

MR. MANDEVILLE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I understand, Mr. Minister, that under the gaming regulations or the gaming policy, charitable organization can't make donations to private day care centres. I certainly agree that that would be the case. But, Mr. Chairman, I have a particular situation in Brooks that I would like to explain briefly to the minister and then have him comment on it.

We have a group of people who set up a society down there. They call themselves the child development society, and they're doing complete child care. It's a nursery, the Brooks day care society. But it's total care for the child. The organization that was set up applied and, through the neighborhood improvement grant, got \$100,000. We had an old hospital down there, and they've been renovating this old hospital. They have it renovated, but they're short \$56,000. They've been trying to get service clubs to make donations to their project from lotteries. But they've been running into a snag with the gaming branch, which classifies it exclusively as a day care centre. It is not. It's completely voluntary. The directors or any of the people involved are all volunteers, and it's going to be operated by all volunteer help when they get it completed.

Mr. Chairman, I'd just like the minister to comment on a situation such as this.

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Chairman, I think one of the continuing difficulties there will be with gaming is that people come up with ideas that are different from what has been the case before, and a system doesn't rapidly adjust. Maybe sometimes that's good. In other cases, it may not be. But it doesn't fit into a particular type of known activity which might benefit from gaming. From

what the hon. member has said, it's clear the place is not being operated for the personal profit of anyone, and in that sense may indeed be a charity. Yet day care centres, as a type of activity, are usually outside that particular description.

I would suggest that if the hon. member would like to look at that particular case with me, I would be pleased to do so. I don't know if that will end up being of any help, because we're required to look closely at the circumstances. But perhaps at least as important is the intention that the government, I believe, will be able to propose shortly that whatever the details of the gaming policy, which has not yet been pronounced by our caucus and made public through the caucus committee on gaming, the idea of some system of appealing such decisions is generally regarded favorably. So maybe a situation like that would be a typical case where, if an appeal were taken, a change in attitude would result from a successful appeal.

Agreed to:

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| 1.01 — Minister's Office | \$151,030 |
| 1.02 — Deputy Minister's Office | \$186,000 |
| 1.03 — Information Centre | [\$777,300] |
| 1.04 — Planning, Research and Development | \$528,500 |
| 1.05 — Administrative Services | \$346,080 |
| 1.06 — Personnel | \$655,710 |
| 1.07 — Finance | \$2,275,630 |
| 1.08 — Materials and Facilities | \$1,930,530 |
| Total Vote 1 — Departmental Support Services | \$6,850,780 |
| 2.1 — Court Support Services | \$3,573,350 |
| 2.2 — Court Operations | \$22,241,360 |
| Total Vote 2 — Court Services | \$25,814,710 |
| Total Vote 3 — Legal Services | \$11,493,070 |

Vote 4 — Support for Legal Aid

MR. D. ANDERSON: Mr. Chairman, I'm sorry I didn't get in before you called that vote. However, I'd like to ask the minister why there hasn't been an increase over the previous year in that particular program. One would assume that that kind of legal aid service would be utilized to a greater extent in this province, which is growing so rapidly. Does this mean that statistics do not indicate that requirement?

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Chairman, it means there are alternative forms of funding. The legal aid program is, in fact, budgeted for by the Legal Aid Society. They calculate the amount of grant they would require from the provincial government each year, and make a submission in that regard. This was the amount they calculated and asked for, and it was agreed to.

The other sources of income would be the progression of repayments; for example, people who have received free legal aid and then are in the process of paying back. That money doesn't come to the government; it goes to the Legal Aid Society and forms part of their income. Federal money is involved in the legal aid program as well. I can't recall whether that is funnelled through the General Revenue Fund and forms part of the \$4.5-odd million involved here, or whether some of that is received directly. All in all, I think the foundation of the society

manages to end each year with a small surplus and then calculates its requirements from that point.

MR. D. ANDERSON: Mr. Chairman, a supplementary question to the minister. Has the minister had any presentations which request an expansion of the parameters for legal aid services? In other words, are the legal aid services we're currently providing in the province — taking into account the growing number of people, et cetera — adequate to deal with all those problems which individuals would be unable to pay for themselves?

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Chairman, the question of whether the areas of practice in the legal profession for which free legal aid should be provided should be expanded beyond the basic concept, which was originally criminal law, is discussed by the Legal Aid Society, I believe, each year. They take representations on that and consult on a cross-Canada basis. I think the hon. member probably knows, because he's always so well informed on matters about which he speaks, that some other provinces have gone in other directions and expanded the parameters. That hasn't yet happened here.

If it is proposed that such an expansion take place, I think it should really be a very serious discussion. I for one am extremely reticent about expanding the parameters too far. It doesn't mean they shouldn't be examined from time to time and that some changes shouldn't take place. But some views are put forward from time to time that are pretty ambitious with regard to expanding it, and would really create the beginnings of a legal care system, which I'm sure is not called for under present circumstances.

Those are the reservations I have about expanding the parameters. I suppose what I'm saying to the hon. member is this: since the society hasn't recommended any changes, I've been relatively happy to meet with them on each occasion. Maybe when they do on such an occasion in the future, we'll have a harder discussion.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Chairman, to the hon. Attorney General. The Attorney General was speaking of widening the parameters for legal aid. There's an area that's always concerned me, Mr. Minister, and that is the old saying, you can't fight city hall. I think the average citizen feels most frustrated when, as a taxpayer, he has to fight city hall. Through his taxes, he is paying to support city hall and the battery of legal counsel they always have, be it the city, the municipality, the provincial government, or the federal government. So he's participating, he's paying for those people who are doing that for the citizens. But if he has to turn around and sue that authority, then he has to take it out of his own pocket.

Mr. Minister, if we are looking at a change in philosophy, if we really want that little man to feel he has a chance against city hall, I think this is one area that we should seriously consider that that citizen have access. He doesn't have to be destitute, as we have it now; if you can't afford anything else, legal aid will look after it for you. But for the man who can afford to, but feels he doesn't want to sacrifice, possibly, his family and everything else to go into an extensive law suit — I think that's one area, Mr. Minister, where the little guy doesn't have a chance. I know it opens a great Pandora's box of ramifications. But if we're looking at widening the parameters of legal aid, I think this is one area we should certainly look at.

I'd like to indicate what I mean to the minister by an

example. There were five businessmen in my community who thought that city council couldn't arbitrarily look at a list of businesses and say, this business should pay a business licence of X number of dollars; the next one, oh, he's making a lot of money, he'll pay more; and on down the line. There was an arbitrary decision, using surrounding communities, as to how they did it. Everybody had been doing it like this for 25 or 30 years, saying, well, the hotels pay \$75; the barber, he doesn't make much money, he pays \$35; the dentists, they make lots of money, they'll pay \$150. Five of us got our backs up and said, this is discriminatory, it's arbitrary, we don't think it's right. So we wouldn't pay our licences. Of course, an action was started.

We were doing it on principle. We as taxpayers had already paid for that mechanism of the town and the lawyers paid by the taxpayer. We had to go into our own pockets to fight the case. As it turned out, we won. It was appealed, and the town lost the appeal. But it always did bother me: had those five individuals not taken the initiative on their own, and spent a fair amount of money, this case would never have come to the light of day, and some bad legislation would not have been thrown off the books.

That's why I always felt, as one of those crusaders, that I was in — what's the legal term, double jeopardy? That's not really what it was, but I was paying twice. How many people will want to walk that extra mile? So I think that's an area we could give some consideration to. So when the minister is looking at legal aid, maybe it isn't necessarily the destitute who require the help. If somebody has a legitimate case and he's fighting city hall, then maybe he should be fighting city hall with public funds.

Agreed to:

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| Total Vote 4 — Support for Legal Aid | \$4,518,000 |
| 5.1 — Public Trustee | \$2,720,110 |
| 5.2 — Central Registration | \$1,835,050 |
| 5.3 — Land Titles | \$5,812,350 |
| 5.4 — Land Compensation | \$257,700 |
| Total Vote 5 — Protection and Administration of Property Rights | \$10,625,210 |
| Total Vote 6 — Fatality Inquiries | \$1,775,160 |

Vote 7 — Crimes Compensation

MR. D. ANDERSON: Mr. Chairman, my question with respect to this section is similar to the one raised before. It's not that I advocate spending more money; however, I note that the increase in operating capital is 6.1 per cent, which is far below the inflation rate. I wonder if the minister could indicate whether we have a program in progress that is adequately informing individuals eligible for this compensation, and if a lack of that program may speak to the lack of need for further funds in this area, or if in fact we are in the lucky position of not having individuals who require more compensation.

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Chairman, it appears to me that the increase is over the 1979-80 forecast, which was higher than the estimate. It may well be that the forecast having exceeded the 1979-80 estimates in any event, the board feels that the amount that should be added in addition to that into the base resulting from the fact there was extra expenditure, is adequate.

This is an area where occasionally the question of parameters also comes up. I think it's not so much a matter that people are unaware of the services of the board. I think it's more that the board is not able to get into some areas. I have agreed with the chairman of the board that we would examine any recommendations they might have, and I think that process can take place in the coming year. As I recall, I met with them late last year, but do not recall anything other than an agreement to look into the possibility of widening the parameters. I don't believe there's an actual proposal pending from the board that hasn't been dealt with.

I'll look into that again and ascertain where we stand. In the event of a favorable reaction by the government to any proposals to change the parameters slightly, it may well be necessary to see the appropriation grow a little more rapidly. But I would point out to the hon. member that the actual — no doubt he's looked at that as well — but two fiscal years ago we were down to an actual of less than \$600,000, and have provided just about \$750,000 this year. All I can say is that I would believe that's the figure the board asked for.

MR. D. ANDERSON: Mr. Chairman, I appreciate very much the minister's explanation, and the indication that the fund has grown significantly over the past two years. I also appreciate that the government would be willing to consider any expansion that might be necessary in the parameters attached to that fund. I'm wondering, though, if the minister can further identify what actual programs are in place which would allow individuals who can receive compensation to know about the program and make application. Just for information, could the minister run through the process that takes place there?

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Chairman, I'm not sure if there's an advertising program as such. The cases tend to be well reported, though. They're in the media frequently. It's the sort of subject that attracts some human interest attention, and a fair amount of publicity is given to some of the awards. I think the sort of thing the hon. member is asking [about] is, say, a person who has been injured and could very well at that time have it drawn to attention through the police force or some nearby agency like that, that this was one of his rights. I don't know whether that is done. Perhaps it would be worth following up. I agree with the hon. member that if a person has the entitlement under our law to be reimbursed in such cases, then it would be wrong if a fairly extensive amount of information wasn't available to such people in order that they would know their rights.

Agreed to:

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| Total Vote 7 — Crimes Compensation | \$748,200 |
| Total Vote 8 — Public Utilities Regulation | \$1,812,590 |

Department Total

DR. BUCK: Mr. Chairman, just one question to the hon. Attorney General. I guess the Attorney General is quite aware that we have the odd escape from the Fort Saskatchewan Correctional Institution. Once in a while, some of the people who decide they don't want to stay there quite as long as the Attorney General has indicated they should stay, take liberties with some of the property of Fort Saskatchewan citizens through the commandeering.

ing of cars. In one instance, one of our car agencies was broken into, and about \$10,000 damage was done. Of course I know the person has his own insurance for break and enter, et cetera, but often the person is still substantially out of pocket.

I'd just like to know if there's any mechanism similar to crimes compensation in either the Attorney General's Department or the hon. Solicitor General's Department to compensate those people. It is grossly unfair, Mr. Minister, that sometimes these people suffer fairly substantial personal losses that are not fully covered by their insurance. I'd like to know if either hon. gentleman can give me any direction on that.

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Chairman, something like that would require a new program, and would have disadvantages as well as advantages. If my memory is correct, one of the features that is probably present in this discussion is that until now property damage has been outside the purview of the Crimes Compensation Board. It seems to me that's outside of their purview. That's one of the areas I've indicated to the chairman we would look at along with him.

Beyond the possibility that Crimes Compensation may one day look at the question of property damage, I think there are some difficulties in the approach the hon. member implies, despite the apparent unfairness to people who suffer as a result of it. The people, be they escapees or other individuals in society, who go here and there causing this or that type of damage, are very numerous indeed. To try to create a program to bring all those home to the government would probably not be possible. I realize the hon. member is saying that perhaps the government has quite an additional responsibility. He began on this point because at that time the person was, say, in the custody of the state or of the people of this province. Maybe I can just leave a large question mark over that observation and say, yes, that makes it quite different from cases where some other person who is not an escaped convict does the damage. But to look at it in any area beyond the potential expanded parameters for crime compensation, I don't think should be approached.

DR. BUCK: I'd just let the minister know that my concerns are specifically for people who are incarcerated and cause damage while escaping. If your car or truck is stolen, and you have \$100 deductible, then you have to pay the first \$100 of it. I think that area certainly should have some consideration, because the person is an instant victim of a person in our care. I certainly agree with the minister that we couldn't widen the parameters too much, because every time you had your aerial ripped off, you'd be wanting compensation. But this applies specifically to people escaping custody, who have already been sentenced.

Agreed to
Department Total \$63,637,720

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Chairman, I move the vote be reported.

[Motion carried]

**Department of
Advanced Education and Manpower**

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Has the minister any

opening comments?

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Chairman, in making a few comments with regard to the 1980-81 estimates, I wish to remind members that manpower training was set out in the Speech from the Throne as one of the priorities. Throughout the estimates we are attempting to provide additional services in order to provide well-qualified professionals, technologists, and technicians, as we see our economy grow and diversify.

We intend working closely with boards of governors, where they are in place, and with provincially administered institutions, to try to ensure that properly skilled people are available to meet the province's manpower demands. No doubt we will be touching on a number of those as I go through the estimates.

I do want to make particular reference to the provision of education and training programs for the handicapped and for those who will work with the handicapped, to bring members up to date on the development of programs resulting from the announcement last year. You will recall, Mr. Chairman, that I announced a five-year, \$4,500,000 program. The response from postsecondary institutions has been excellent. Five programs have already been approved, and eight more are in various stages of development. Those approved include two, scheduled to begin this September at the University of Alberta, to train teachers of the hearing-impaired and teachers of the multiple- and dependent-handicapped. As well, a rehabilitation studies program will begin at the University of Calgary. Mount Royal College has embarked on a therapeutic recreation curriculum revision, and Fairview College offers a vocational skills program for the mentally handicapped. I point these out, Mr. Chairman, to indicate that it is obvious from these initiatives that considerable effort is being made to ensure that all Albertans will share in the economy.

With regard to the training of trades and technologies, the status of apprenticeship in the various trades has been mentioned and well publicized. Once again there's been remarkable growth. We anticipate a marked increase in the forthcoming year, and we are committed to accommodating the apprentices who will be required to take theoretical training in our institutions to supplement their practical training on the job. In particular, the public college system, which currently trains about 10 per cent of the apprentices, is being encouraged to offer programs to a larger number. We thereby hope to relieve the pressure on NAIT and SAIT, and to provide more at-home training of apprentices so that they will not have to travel to the major metropolitan areas.

You will recall from my ministerial statement that we have approved a heavy-duty mechanic's addition at Keyano College in Fort McMurray. In addition, funds will be required to begin planning for a major new technology/trades institute in the Edmonton region, where the demand for training is beyond the present capacity of NAIT. Last week I named an executive director and chairman of a planning committee to co-ordinate the planning of this new facility, which is scheduled to open in 1984 at a cost of more than \$30 million.

Hon. members are well aware that the Grande Prairie Regional College concern for student residences has been dealt with in this budget. We anticipate further expansions in various other parts of the province, which I think were well set out in my ministerial statement some weeks ago.

With specific reference to the budget before you, I wish

to emphasize that the total amount, \$513,019,848, represents a 10.7 per cent increase over forecast expenditures for operating and capital purposes last year. You will be considering what I believe to be a responsible budget, prepared with considerable care and designed to meet essential needs of my department within a spirit of fiscal responsibility.

With reference to manpower requested for the department, there are 88 additional positions in the budget. Of these, 63 positions will be used to provide additional staff at the provincially administered institutions: NAIT, SAIT, and the vocational centres. Ten positions relate directly to the provision of career development and counselling services in northern Alberta. Seven positions relate to a further expansion of employment development, career development, manpower mobility, and apprenticeship services to various areas of the province. The remaining eight positions represent additions to departmental support staff, the first increase in three years.

Vote 1 covers general support services. Vote 2 deals with the operating and capital support to more than 20 postsecondary institutions, and includes funds for new course development, innovation of further education program. Vote 3 covers apprenticeship, employment development, career development, and special manpower programs. This vote also includes the funds necessary to provide settlement services for the Indo-Chinese refugees.

Vote 4 deals with financial aid to students. I'd just point out that hon. members are well aware that this area is currently under active review, and in the near future I intend to announce changes in this program. There have been a number of relatively minor changes in this program to date, Mr. Chairman, and there will of course be more which are not presently included in the budget. Should they require additional funds, they would of course have to come by way of special warrant.

I wish to point out, Mr. Chairman, that in addition to the operating and capital provided by my department, our universities in particular receive substantial support from other government areas. Almost every ministry of this government, in fact, makes use of the facilities of the institutions for research, staff development, or consultation. It is a matter of public record that other government departments — the public accounts, not the most current ones but the previous year, indicate that more than \$7 million has been spent annually in the universities.

We have responded to our universities, providing significant increases designed to cover a 9.5 per cent cost increase, in addition, for special circumstances and quality improvements in programming. The University of Lethbridge will receive a stabilization grant in the amount of \$500,000, Mr. Chairman. I feel a little like I am stealing a type of program from the Minister of Agriculture. But it is important that the University of Lethbridge, because of its fledgling status, in a way receives some special consideration so they have a solid base on which to work and grow. There's no question at all that this government is firmly committed to the success of that institution. This is a further example of our commitment to the University of Lethbridge.

I wish to point out, Mr. Chairman, that in response to submissions by the University of Alberta concerning a need for expansion and improvement in professional facilities, such as nursing — and the hon. Member for Clover Bar asked a question on that matter today — dentistry, medicine, business administration and commerce, we are providing an additional \$810,000 to their global budget, and are expecting the governing board to

establish internal priorities and make the necessary allocations. I wish to emphasize, Mr. Chairman, that we as a government do not intend to move into directly increasing grants to one department or another. But we feel that in this way, we have responded responsibly to legitimate concerns with regard to the enhancement and development of professional faculties at the University of Alberta.

In recognition of the growth in enrolments, Athabasca University will receive an overall increase of 28 per cent which, of course, is beyond the 9.5 per cent but reflects the continued growth of that institution. To accommodate the transition to year-round operation, the Banff Centre for continuing education will receive an additional 36 per cent. The University of Calgary, which is developing additional programs, will receive 10.6 per cent. In summary, the total increase to the university sector is 11.7 per cent over the previous allocations.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, I would like to recognize the efforts of 3,600 volunteers who serve our intricate advanced education and manpower system. They are dedicated citizens from all walks of life, who are public members on numerous boards, councils, and advisory committees. They fulfil an absolutely indispensable role in ensuring that our institutions and training programs maintain high standards and remain flexible enough to adjust to changing needs of the public and industry. They uphold our institutions as autonomous, respected organizations within the general framework intended to implement an effective advanced education and manpower structure, which we believe will benefit all Albertans regardless of background, educational achievements, or geographic location.

Mr. Chairman, those are a few remarks in summary with respect to this department, and I will be pleased now to answer any questions or respond to any representations made by members of the Assembly on any of the votes in question.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Chairman, to the hon. minister. I will be asking questions on the different votes as we go along, but I would just like to bring one matter, which I consider very serious, to the minister's attention; that is, the representation by the SAIT instructors' association. There seems to be quite a difference of opinion between the association, and the minister and his cabinet colleague, the Minister responsible for Personnel Administration, on staff turnover at SAIT. Part of it, Mr. Minister, is that the people down there feel they are inadequately compensated; they feel that's one of the major problems for the turnovers. But some of the faculty turnovers in 1979 — business education, 18 per cent; communications arts, 17 per cent; electrical, 9 per cent; metals, 8 per cent; petroleum, 42 per cent; power engineering, 28 per cent; and structures, 39 per cent — do cause concern to the association. I welcome the minister's comments on the representation I make. Also the representation indicates that communication with the government is inadequate. The association feels there are serious problems in communication and in the high rate of staff turnover.

I would like to say to the minister that when there are problem areas at universities, I feel we can stray a little from the global funding. It's just not good enough, Mr. Minister, to say to the university — because in some of the meetings we've had with the universities they say, it's fine for the government to blame us, saying there's too much fat and we have to thin down and make do with what we have. But I feel that honest and concerned

representations have been made to us that they've trimmed as much fat as they can. There are fixed costs: staff and operating costs. You have to pay the water and the rent all the time. Flexibility has been taken away from our universities. There just isn't sufficient room to manoeuvre. So in cases, Mr. Minister, where there are programs that will be of great benefit to the citizens of this province, I think special steps have to be taken.

[Mr. Appleby in the Chair]

Today we were asking the questions about the shortage of nurses. When the government's own computations say we're 400 to 450 nurses short in the province of Alberta, then maybe we have to take more drastic steps than we are taking. We have to encourage students. Number one, of course, is through salaries after you graduate, but number two, possibly, is bursaries and other attracting mechanisms to encourage people to go into nursing. I brought the Faculty of Dentistry to the minister's attention last year. There's a danger of that faculty — I guess the oldest dental faculty in western Canada — losing its accreditation. In a province that's suffering great financial shortages, it's a little hard to understand why we're possibly going to lose the accreditation of our dental school. The two things just don't jibe, Mr. Minister.

Now that the minister has found out that three or four faculties could use some additional funding, I would just say to the hon. minister, that it's not quite good enough to say, here's another \$800,000; go ahead and do your thing. The minister in his generosity of a 9.5 per cent increase overall should know that's not going to help out with too many new programs. I was disappointed that we really have, I believe, only 20 positions open at the University of Lethbridge for baccalaureate degrees, an additional 20. That was a small step in the right direction. But if the people of this province are going to be fully served, it's not good enough just to have new hospitals; we have to have nurses to staff those hospitals.

With those brief comments, Mr. Chairman, I welcome the minister's response. I will have other words of wisdom for him as we go through the estimates.

MRS. CHICHAK: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd like to raise a few points or questions with the minister, with regard to facility utilization, student financing, and a couple of other areas.

Perhaps I would start with a couple of issues that have been raised with me on student financing, and the inability of the current policy within the program to accommodate students in the postsecondary system who wish to continue through the summer months with additional courses, after their regular courses in the normal university year or postsecondary year. Whether it is our policy or just the inadequacy of the regulations not having been adjusted to policy, not necessarily to require a student within the time frame of a year to earn a certain amount of money to qualify for another loan for the ensuing year of studies, if the hon. minister has not addressed himself to this matter, perhaps he might indicate whether he is amenable to addressing himself to it and if we could have some consideration of change. I have had a number of students indicate to me that in order to shorten the period of time or the number of years they attend the institution in preparing for their degree, they would like to be able to take these extra courses during the summer months. I hope the minister is prepared to address himself to that area.

Another area of complaint — and I haven't checked recently on when the issue was raised. If the report is accurate, perhaps the minister might again consider making some changes with regard to adult education. I think the greatest problem lies with single parents who are or want to become sole supporters of their families. They are finding that in order to train themselves for a profession or suitable position that will give a reasonable level of remuneration in the market place, they really require more than one or two years of postsecondary education or training in a particular field. But with the funding they have been able to get, if they're on social assistance and are receiving support, they're not able to go into a program beyond two years. They've indicated that the two-year program doesn't quite give them sufficient accreditation to get into the job market with some higher level than just a very minimal kind of income. It really doesn't allow them the income they need to sustain their family because they are self-supporting.

With regard to senior citizens, I know we have provided in the university a range of programs that senior citizens can benefit from, and that has really been a plus. The indication is that the same opportunity does not exist within the college system. Perhaps I'm inaccurate in that; however, the question was raised with me that we have many seniors who have retired at a reasonably early age, or at the very beginning of their retirement age could contribute a great deal in a whole host of services in the community. A bit of additional training could be provided to them that would prepare them to be of greater service within the community. Then the community would perhaps be more prepared to accept them in these contributory roles, because they would feel they are prepared and have had some training or direction to provide such a service. Although these citizens can go into the college system and of course prepare themselves, to some extent the problem in that area has been the fees they would be required to pay, bearing in mind that many of them are on limited incomes.

I indicated that I wanted to raise an issue with regard to institutional utilization. I know it is grand to have in the province the finest buildings in our institutions, and I think no one wants to begrudge or take that away. But I think there is a time when there has to be a recognition of today's very high capital costs, that perhaps sometimes we go just a little overboard in building our very fine institutions, in the educational areas particularly, and build into these institutions the kinds of fineries that, except being pleasing to the eye, really don't add that much to the utilization of that facility and perhaps really take away from the operational funds available. I would think we would want to examine that.

[Mr. Purdy in the Chair]

The other is that if we assess the percentage of time that our educational institutions are being utilized on a year-round basis, we would probably find they are utilized only approximately 70 per cent. With today's very high costs for capital expenditures, it would seem to me that before we embark on a lot of additional facilities, we require the boards of governors to examine utilization to see that there is maximum utilization on a year-round basis. That might require some alteration in the time frames of the various courses or programs being offered, in order to utilize or get the maximum out of the facility that is there. I wouldn't restrict the consideration to a normal daytime study instruction time. I think it can go

on a much larger scale, not only a five-day week. I'm talking about a seven-day week, 12 months of the year, and more than 8 to 5 or 6 or 10; almost on a total, overall basis.

When we get out into the market place, many jobs require the ability to work different shifts, 24-hour shifts. I think it shouldn't be that far from consideration that our educational institutions need to be utilized to a far higher degree. If we considered embarking on such a program and providing the kind of funding that may be necessary for operational costs because of the matter of staffing and so on, and minimizing what we're putting out in capital costs at this time, I think that kind of program would lend itself a great deal to the changing population patterns within the institutions. It would be far easier to adjust if your population pattern drops or increases.

I want to say that I've had a lot of very good comments with respect to the programs and services provided through our Alberta Vocational Centre. I sometimes wonder if the general population is really aware of the breadth of programs available to our many citizens. Perhaps sometimes we don't do enough publicizing in a detailed kind of way, rather than indicating that it is a tremendous facility. I'm not going to take the time at this moment to go into what we're talking about, but I hope perhaps at some opportunity, both my colleagues and I will present to the citizens just what is being offered by our Alberta Vocational Centre.

I'd like the minister to make some remarks as to whether he's had any further consideration or discussion with the Board of Governors of the University of Alberta or any of the universities in the province, with respect to a school of optometry, and where we are in that area. It seems to me that is one area of health care that is sorely in need of attention in this part of the country. So much needs to be done with respect to research in eye diseases and eye care; not only that, but the need to have more people involved, enrolling in, and taking professional training for services that need to be provided with respect to eye care. I know that a couple of years ago there was some consideration of this matter. I think it was left at that point, without a resolution of the matter.

I would like to suggest that perhaps Alberta may not wish to go alone on the matter of a school of optometry, but I think we certainly should be the catalyst. I would like to see the school established here in this province, with the other western provinces participating perhaps. We have far too little manpower in this particular area; not only that, but the research that needs to be done with respect to eye care.

I think those are the comments I wanted to make initially. Perhaps as we continue with the estimates, there may be some other points. Oh, yes, Mr. Chairman, one other point I'd like to raise with the minister. I know he's aware of this, because we've discussed it on a previous occasion. I think attempts have been made to resolve the parking situation around NAIT. As well, I know the students at NAIT have addressed themselves to the problem, and have attempted to resolve it. However, I'm afraid the residents in the area are being put at some real disadvantage and difficulty.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. D. ANDERSON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In terms of initial comments, I'd first like to congratulate the hon. minister on what I feel has been an excellent administration of both his department and programs involved with Advanced Education and Manpower. I've been par-

ticularly impressed with the minister's personal visits to institutions, and therefore the kind of individual orientation he has to the problems faced. I'd also like to say that many of the comments which I feel close to were dealt with by the hon. Member for Edmonton Norwood. I think she raised some excellent points, a couple of which I'd just like to emphasize.

One is looking, over a long-term period, at the problem faced by single parents who are now planning to go back to school, or who are currently in postsecondary institutions. I think the minister and the government may well want to consider that area in some detail when considering future budgets.

Another, of course, is the area of seniors, also dealt with by the hon. member who spoke previously. Again, I urge the government to consider that in more detail in coming years, even though I realize our current programs which allow seniors to get back into the system, are quite excellent.

The other couple of areas I'd like to deal with are, first, a consideration of the institutes of technology within the province of Alberta. It's still my belief that we should very seriously consider more independence for those institutions. I think the kind of programs operated out of the colleges and universities in our province speak very highly for the kind of thing that comes from an independent board of governors, and from a general move to allow more autonomy to that kind of institution. I realize there are historical reasons for the current structure and indeed that we have to look at other ramifications. But over the next year, I think it would be advisable for the government to take a second look at this area, and urge the minister and government to do so.

The other area I forgot to mention, that was indeed spoken to by the Member for Edmonton Norwood, was utilization of buildings. Especially as our large urban centres increase, I feel that some program to look at the way the community, or other parts of the institution, may utilize currently underused facilities at times when they're not at peak use, should be considered in some detail.

I guess all those things really speak to what I'm sure the minister will have in mind: a long-term program and projection for postsecondary educational institutions in the province. If we could take a look down the road, particularly at the needs of this very expanding province, and put them in some kind of flexible blueprint — and I emphasize that the need would be flexible — I think we'd be able to see, and attach programs and detach programs much more easily than the year by year budget kind of process. I'm sure that as the minister goes on in his term of office, he may want to consider the approach to long-term planning, which I think could benefit this area.

Mr. Chairman, I also introduce briefly a topic on which I hope to question the minister more during the specific estimates; that is, of course, the expansion of Mount Royal College in the city of Calgary. That was not in the budget this year. I was sorry to see that it did not take place. I look forward to the minister's answers as to why, in a city that is expanding by 2,000 people a month — it will reach a million within 10 years — we did not choose at this time to move forward with that expansion. But I'll deal with that further in the specific budget estimates.

I look forward to the minister's remarks on those topics.

MR. LYSONS: Mr. Chairman, I'd like to congratulate the minister and thank him for some of the programs that

have been launched with a college that's very near and dear to me; that is, Lakeland College, which is partly in my constituency. I notice in the votes that there is very little in the way of capital spending, and I don't want to belabor it at all. One of the problems they have down there, with the expanded role of teaching trades, is that the facilities are just not big enough. The instructors and students are pretty near standing on one another to get the job done. I'd sincerely appreciate it if the minister could have a broad look at that when the appropriate time comes.

MR. COOK: Mr. Chairman, I hope members will bear with my voice; it's still a little rough, but I wanted to make a few points.

DR. BUCK: Why don't you pass till next year.

MR. COOK: Thank you, Wally.

I'd like to point out that most members in this Chamber are very appreciative of the hard work the minister's doing and of the work of his officials. He's to be commended for it.

DR. BUCK: It's what he gets paid for.

MR. COOK: He has a 10.6 per cent increase in his overall budget. I'd like to suggest, much as the hon. Member for Calgary Currie has, that the province is going to witness very rapid growth in the next 10 years. We're looking at a population in Alberta approaching 3 million in 10 years, and we should be planning for it.

I'd like to refer hon. members to one of the problems at NAIT here in Edmonton. They have a real shortage of advanced equipment there. Often students are being taught on outmoded equipment, with technology that hasn't been used in the private sector for quite some time and certainly won't be in the future. I understand from talking to some instructors that they would very much appreciate being able to teach their students with up-to-date and modern equipment — computing facilities, for example, or electrical technologies.

One other point I think we should be examining is funding our universities a little more generously. I would like to make the point that across North America and certainly in Canada, a lot of promising young graduates are leaving graduate schools with very little opportunity for research and scholarship in furtherance of their careers. It seems to me that by endowing universities a little more generously, we could accomplish a number of objectives. If we were to provide substantial funds to universities for specific chairs of learning in a faculty — for example, commerce at the University of Alberta, chemistry, physics, biology, history, philosophy, the list goes on — we would be accomplishing a number of things. It would give focus or academic leadership in an academic community that is fairly comfortable and not outstanding. I won't use some of the phrases that *The Gateway* has quoted me as using. But I think it is fair to say that many of our academic institutions in Alberta are comfortable, not outstanding.

I think it is also fair to say that we should be trying to put the emphasis on unequivocal excellence in research, scholarship, and teaching. One way to accomplish that might be to try to give the academic leadership that is lacking by endowing chairs of learning and attracting outstanding scholars, researchers, and teachers to organize their colleagues. I think that's a worth-while en-

deavor. With that, Mr. Chairman, I will sit down and wait patiently for the minister's response.

MRS. EMBURY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I too would like to congratulate the minister for many of his visits over the past year to the various institutions of higher learning, and for many individual meetings that the minister has had with various groups, not only on one occasion but on several occasions. I know this because I attended them. I refer particularly to the meetings with the Alberta Association of Registered Nurses.

Speaking as a Calgarian, I wish to reiterate the concerns expressed here about the rapidly growing population in our cities, considering that the institutions in Calgary also draw heavily on the surrounding rural areas. So students do come into the city to use those facilities. I think we have to consider the request that has been made by Mount Royal College, and look at the pressing needs as they expand many of their programs.

I too would like to express the general concern that has come to our attention, not just recently but many months ago, over the Southern Alberta Institute of Technology. I visited that institution with the minister and several other MLAs. I was most impressed with those meetings, looking at their fine facilities and the number of programs they offer. But whether it's a matter of continuous communication with the staff, some pressing problems still seem to be evident there.

I think another concern in our institute of technology is the qualified staff that needs to be available for the many and varied programs they offer. I know that, as one example, people in the oil business teach part-time at SAIT at night. This seems to work quite well, because they can offer the expertise, experience, and knowledge needed in those courses. But there does seem to be some general concern at times about having full-time qualified teachers available for the various programs there.

I would like to say a few words on a very popular subject at this time. I think it's time somebody, along with the professional association, looked at an overall plan of where nursing will be going in this province. It has been known for many years that nursing has many pressing needs as a professional group, and many of these centre around the educational programs available for nurses. The department can certainly be commended for introducing new programs and encouraging the expansion of the post-basic baccalaureate programs at our universities, and also the new program at the University of Lethbridge. And I found out with great interest, when the Member for Grande Prairie raised the issue — and this has also been brought up in the Assembly since then — that Grande Prairie is looking towards establishing a school of nursing. This was a dream of mine and the association members in the north country back in the early '60s when I lived in Peace River. It will be interesting to see this program come to fruition.

I think one of the problems we have to face in establishing these programs, though, is where we are going to obtain qualified faculty members for these institutions. We already have a great shortage of qualified nursing professors, and we certainly are not turning out enough to fulfil this need, primarily because we are short of graduate programs. We have the programs at the University of Alberta and soon we will have a master's nursing program at the University of Calgary. But I would like to present the idea that at this time there is not a doctoral program in nursing in Canada. While there is consideration of this possibility, it seems to centre on the eastern

part of the country. I would like to propose at this time that we give very serious consideration to establishing a doctoral program in the western part of the country.

One of the other problems faced by educational institutions of nursing is the utilization of clinical facilities. There seems to be some mistaken idea in the public mind that with nursing programs moving primarily out of hospitals into the educational settings, nurses are educated only in the educational institution and something has happened to the clinical practice of nursing. I would like to assure the Assembly very, very strongly that this is not part of the philosophy of educational institutions. In fact, if members check our college and university programs, they would find that nurses spend a lot of time not only in hospital settings learning to nurse, learning to care for and looking after people, but also in the community, in the public health agencies and many of our other social agencies. It creates an enrolment problem in our schools of nursing. While there may be a general thrust to open up those programs and accept more students into them, one has to consider: are the clinical facilities available in the hospitals for these students to receive their education?

I think we also have to consider recruiting high school students into nursing programs. Today there is a lot more competition for nurses, because they have the same requirement to get into nursing as to enter other faculties and professions. We find that women are now choosing to enter medicine, law, engineering, and many other professions as well as nursing. This creates a strain on recruiting young graduates from high school into our nursing programs.

I think we have to give very serious consideration to keeping the present nurses in the work force. It seems to be an area that is very difficult to monitor. The number of nurses leaving the nursing profession and going into all kinds of other work is known by word of mouth and listening to stories. I think we have to give serious consideration to how we can keep them in nursing and what types of programs of an educational nature can be offered that would allow nurses to stay working at the bedside but also to pick up courses that would apply toward their degree.

This also leads into another concern in nursing: the need for specialized courses over and above the basic courses offered in nursing. We have several of these in our college programs: occupational health courses, rehabilitation nursing, gerontology nursing, and psychiatric courses. One of the tragedies with the courses offered in the college system for registered nurses is that they do not receive any credit, and I suspect they do not receive any remuneration at all for courses that are taken. So there isn't as much incentive for those nurses to further their education. Hopefully, we could very soon look at the articulation of the college programs with the university and nursing, so that nurses who take these specialized courses will receive credit toward their baccalaureate degree.

Lastly, I think we also have to look at utilizing our part-time nurses more in the community. This is a popular way for some women to return to the work force. It also maybe gives them the opportunity to further their education at the same time they are working in the situation.

Mr. Minister, I think I have indicated many, many serious problems that we must address. I hope Alberta would soon become a leader in the field of nursing, not a follower.

MR. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, I too would like to commend the minister in the leadership and the initiative he's taken in handling his department. I'd like just to talk on three areas. I commend him on the support he's given to Canadian Union College and private schools of that type, in their ability to grant degrees. I think he made a very difficult decision on the site for Athabasca University, and I commend him for that. Also I would like to give him special commendation for setting up the post-baccalaureate degrees for nurses in Lethbridge, and the support and confidence he has shown in the University of Lethbridge in the generous funding he has given to it this year.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MRS. CHICHAK: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm sorry I'm getting up for a second time before the minister responds, but in my initial remarks I missed a couple of points I would like to put forward, which the minister could deal with in his concluding remarks.

I want to refer to our schools of technology, and recognize that it is important that the schools of technology are directly under the governance of the government rather than boards, because it is necessary to be able to respond quickly to the kinds of courses and programs necessary to provide trained manpower for the rapidly changing industrial and commercial needs in the type of buoyant economy this province has been fortunate to experience. I'd like to ask the minister with respect to the manpower assessments that are made, with respect to the needs over a projected period of time, and the training programs that are usually put in place through our technical institutes. But I'd like the minister to comment on the kind of response or direction that exists for programs which fall under the purview of the universities, those institutes that have their own boards of governors. They make the determination on the kinds of programs being offered and when programs come on stream. I wonder, with the current very desperate need, I might say, in some areas in the industries in Alberta, whether there has been a real addressing of that problem with our universities, or whether the universities have responded as rapidly with regard to those courses that are so necessary.

I also wanted to comment quickly to the minister, Mr. Chairman, and commend him on the progress being made with Athabasca University, its developing role, and the direction we are moving. So many thousands of Albertans are not benefitting from this distance learning institution that I think the minister perhaps ought to be commended in having moved the university in such a very strong direction, in recognition of the philosophy and role it was intended to play.

I feel very strongly about Athabasca University. I recall, I believe it was in 1975, when we examined the role Athabasca University would play. It was a very strong determination of this government that it ought not to be another conventional university, but a distance learning one. I am pleased that it is developing very strongly under that philosophy.

The other question I would like to raise with the hon. minister is with respect to the paramedic ambulance service, whether some greater understanding could be achieved with the university and the medical profession, or whether there needs to be an expansion or more attention in course development or training development in order that this particular service might receive greater acceptance and recognition by the medical association, so it can play a more fulfilling role, as is found in many

parts of the United States and in some parts of Canada. I hope the minister will further develop on that type of program, to have a meaningful program. Last, I would certainly like to endorse the comments of the hon. Member for Calgary North West with respect to some specialization, provision, or recognition of courses in the nursing profession.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Chairman, I'd like to try to respond in order, if I can, to the various members who have raised concerns. With respect to the question of SAIT and NAIT, I think the concerns of the instructors, expressed to various members, have certainly been well considered by members and by the department. However, I think it's important to point out that at the present time both institutions are provincially administered. I think the hon. Member for Edmonton Norwood has touched upon that point in her remarks. Obviously there is a difference of opinion as to whether those institutions should continue to be provincially administered or whether another form of governance might be considered. On that decision will rest the situation with respect to some of the concerns raised by instructors.

There's no question that in today's dynamic Alberta society there is considerable staff turnover, particularly in the trades. I think that is a matter we will have to address. I hasten to add that it is certainly not the responsibility of my department to negotiate the contracts of employment that exist with the instructors at those institutions. I have undertaken in my visits to the institutions to review the question of governance, and that review is presently under way.

The hon. Member for Clover Bar indicated that there had been inadequate communication with the government. If I may, I want to indicate the steps I have taken to try to make sure there is adequate communication. I visited both institutions officially twice. I've met with various component parts of those institutions. In addition, my deputy minister is now holding regular meetings with the administration at the Southern Alberta Institute of Technology, and there is close communication between the deputy minister and the new president at NAIT. I might point out, Mr. Chairman, that in both instances the presidents of those institutions are at the assistant deputy minister level.

About the question of university funding, I want to say that I think it's quite clear, with respect to the level of funding, that this year's budgetary allocation is by far the largest of any university system in Canada today, and at a time when the enrolment is either stable or somewhat on the decline. I do want to emphasize and underline to the hon. member the fact that indeed we have taken special steps. There is \$800,000 in this year's budget for the University of Alberta. I'm sure the hon. member would not suggest to me or to the government that we should be interfering in the autonomy of the institutions with regard to the allocation of those funds. We responded not specifically to an existing program request, and I want to draw the distinction between new program funding and enhancement of existing programs.

With regard to the University of Lethbridge, I'm sure the hon. member was somewhat in error when he said he was disappointed that that university received only 20 places. They received only 20 places because that's all they asked for. I think the university indicated to the government, to my department, that that's the type of program they would like to initiate. When it comes to

approving a program, hon. members and Mr. Chairman, that program was done with record speed. There's no question that if you ask anyone at the University of Lethbridge ...

DR. BUCK: I apologize. The whole province got only 20.

MR. HORSMAN: Thank you. The hon. member has clarified his position. I'm glad to hear that, because I would like to emphasize how quickly we responded to that concern.

DR. BUCK: How about the University of Alberta?

MR. HORSMAN: But it is quite clear that the request of the University of Alberta for the school of nursing may very well be met from additional funding in this year's budget, if that's the decision of the board of governors at the University of Alberta. But the decision properly rests with that body, not with me, Mr. Chairman.

If I could take this opportunity to respond to some of the concerns raised by the hon. Member for Calgary North West, may I say that nursing is a very complicated area, because there are a number of programs provided, through my department and our relationship with the colleges and the universities. In addition, my colleague the Minister of Hospitals and Medical Care has under his jurisdiction the nursing schools which presently offer that programming. The hon. member is well aware of the study that was carried out by the task force, and the response by the government, by my predecessor, to that study.

Many factors have to be taken into consideration with regard to nursing education. I appreciate the representations on the subject made to me by the Alberta Association of Registered Nurses. But I say to this committee and to the people of Alberta that the decisions with respect to allocation of funding to these programs within the institutions, other than new programs, must come from the boards of governors at those institutions.

Mr. Chairman, if the nursing program at the University of Alberta is to receive the additional funding it requires to expand its program to 144 students in the post-basic baccalaureate program, then it is incumbent upon the Alberta Association of Registered Nurses to make their representations to the board of governors at the University of Alberta, not to me. Because the decision to allocate the funding cannot come from me.

DR. BUCK: All they need is money, Jimmy boy.

MR. HORSMAN: I underline that. The money is there this year. I'm not going to accept responsibility for the allocation of that funding.

The hon. Member for Edmonton Norwood indicated some concern about student finance. Of course, I want to emphasize the fact that student finances are under active review by a federal/provincial task force, in which our government is participating as a member of the Council of Ministers of Education for Canada along with the federal government, with respect to the Canada Student Loans Act. I appreciate the representations that have been made with respect to the necessity of summer employment, and the desire on the part of some people to speed up the process of acquiring their education. I certainly will take the representations to the Students Finance Board to see if there are programs that can assist. It is part of the policy, both of the Canada Student

Loans Act and all provinces, to have students participate through their savings in providing for their own education. It may be that these things come into conflict with each other. If they do, that is a matter we will perhaps have to review.

About adult education, particularly with regard to single parents, I want to point out that several changes were made in the fellowships/scholarships program within the last few weeks. Part of that was to increase maintenance grants to single parents. That, of course, was part of an order in council which has been passed. It is possible to accommodate anticipated need in that area within the existing budgetary allocation. I think that is an important step. We will continue to watch that with a great deal of care, because it is important, and we recognize, that accessibility to postsecondary education include single parents, to ensure they're not shut out. I'm going to emphasize that these are by way of grants, not loans. That is important.

In addition, such people have access to the appeal system of the Students Finance Board, which is new and perhaps not that widely recognized by people involved with postsecondary education. But I can assure hon. members that we are going to do what we can to ensure that more information is made available to the public.

With regard to senior citizens and their accessibility to programs, I understand that many colleges are in fact examining and making available programming to senior citizens without fee. That, of course, is a decision that boards of governors must make at those institutions, and I think quite properly falls in their area of concern.

I might point out that I hold regular meetings with the council of presidents of colleges. As a matter of fact, I met this morning with the council of presidents. All 10 presidents were there. I will certainly add that to the agenda for discussion next time I meet with them. In addition, I meet with the council of college board chairmen. I'll refer the matter to them as well for their consideration, and take the representations of the member.

Utilization of facilities — this matter was raised by a number of members, including the hon. members for Edmonton Norwood and Calgary Currie — of course, is a matter of concern. But I suggest again that it's really a matter that must be dealt with in large measure by the boards of governors at the institutions, other than the provincially administered institutions, those being the technical and vocational institutes.

I may say that the utilization rate of those facilities is remarkably high. In fact, they are being used day and night in both Edmonton and Calgary and the other vocational centres at Grouard and Lac La Biche. I don't know about the figure; a 70 per cent utilization rate was raised. I can't confirm or deny that figure. But in view of the fact that many of the institutions operate on an eight-month year, then have summer programs, that may very well be an accurate figure. But I certainly think the members of the boards should be taking careful note of the concerns expressed by members in the Assembly today.

With regard to the question of university programs, and the response to concerns expressed by society for programming, in all honesty I don't think I could really say we notice a marked degree of difference between provincially administered institutions and board-governed institutions. It's a balance matter, and I would certainly like to take that representation under consideration as we review the question of governance.

I have taken note of the comments of the hon. member

about the Alberta vocational centres, and I certainly concur in her remarks that we really don't know what goes on in those institutions. There are four in Alberta. Those who have been to them are always surprised at the number of people making use of those facilities and, indeed, the type of programming that's offered.

Not so long ago I had an opportunity, along with the hon. Member for Calgary Millican, to tour the vocational centre at Calgary. One of the remarkable things there, Mr. Chairman, was the program of English as a second language. It was enrolment day, and the rooms were overflowing with students from many countries. Indeed, well over 30 first languages were represented in those rooms. Indeed, those institutions are performing a remarkable service in that area.

The hon. member mentioned paramedic programs. I appreciate the concerns that have been raised there. Certainly that's one area of training that must be examined very carefully in the provincially administered institutions. Indeed it's logical that some of the colleges, particularly in the major metropolitan areas, should be considering expanding those programs and really getting into them. I appreciate that representation.

With regard to the subject of parking at NAIT, one of the factors, of course, in the decision to institute a new institution in the Edmonton region is partly to deal with the overcrowding at NAIT. That overcrowding spills over onto the street, into the neighborhoods, and certainly into the byways of the constituency of the hon. Member for Edmonton Norwood and others. Certainly that's one of the reasons we have decided that the time has come to put a halt to the growth of that institution, and perhaps put some of its courses into the new institution that will certainly be part of what will take place in that area.

The hon. Member for Calgary Currie has touched on the single parents' area, which I've responded to. More independence for institutions — of course, my opinion is that there always has to be a partnership arrangement between government and the institution, and it's in this sense: government must identify for the institution the needs of society as expressed to government, and the institution should then respond with new programming and with new developments. Institutions will also be responding to that concern by eliminating programs that are no longer required. Quite frankly, as a minister I want to have as little as possible to do with directing programming in the institutions. I regard the role of the department as being that of co-ordinating the programming of the institutions. As far as long-term budgeting is concerned, Mr. Chairman, under our present system, of course each year we have to vote supply to the institution.

I've skipped over one of the concerns of the hon. Member for Edmonton Norwood, which was the subject of the school of optometry. I've had discussions with the University of Calgary on that subject, and with the Alberta Optometric Association. Quite frankly, I think there is a very good case to be made for a school of optometry for western Canada, located in Alberta, and I'm quite supportive of that. But once again the request for that school must come to government from an institution. I cannot, and I don't think it would be desirable, and I'm sure hon. members would not urge me to, impose that school on one of the universities, if they don't want it, won't work with it, and won't integrate it into their existing system. But I made it quite clear to the board of governors at the institution that I think there is a lot of merit in the proposal being advanced to locate a school of optometry at the University of Calgary.

As to Mount Royal College, the decision has been made that it will not be expanded in this current budget year. I can't say more than that, Mr. Chairman. But I have certainly taken note of the representations made by the hon. Member for Calgary Currie, and that will be carefully reviewed in future budgetary years. Of course, one of the reasons I visited each institution was to get the feeling of the boards and their component parts. I certainly got the message, but I didn't get the money. It's quite as simple as that.

With regard to Lakeland, I think the Member for Vermilion-Viking and other members in the Lakeland College area — that expansion, and there's no question it will have to take place, will have to await some decisions of considerable magnitude relating to the development of Cold Lake. If it goes ahead, there will be tremendous demands placed upon Lakeland College to meet training needs in north-central Alberta. That of course is part of that overall decision, and I will be actively involved in those discussions.

The hon. Member for Edmonton Glengarry has made representation with respect to equipment at NAIT. I must say that that has been a matter of considerable concern in the provincially administered institutions generally. Perhaps it is one of those areas where a board-governed institution might respond with more alacrity than having to go through the various networks of government decision-making. But that is one area we will have to review carefully as we review that question of governance.

With regard to chairs and expansion of the opportunity of the private sector to contribute significantly to the development of universities, and so on, nothing stops the private sector today from getting involved with the universities and providing funding which will contribute towards the educational opportunities of Albertans. However, that funding must not eventually fall back upon government, if it's going to be of a short-term nature. There is a good case to be made for encouraging more co-operation between the institutions and the private sector. Without interfering in what they are doing, I suggest we might well be prepared to take a look at some of the concerns raised by the hon. member. I point out once again that just providing more money is not necessarily the answer to all the problems faced by postsecondary institutions.

Mr. Chairman, I think I've touched upon the comments of the hon. Member for Calgary Northwest with regard to nursing and also her concerns with respect to SAIT. However, one thing I do not accept as a responsibility of government is that government *per se* should be attracting nursing students from high school into the nursing programs. That is obviously a responsibility shared by the health care system in Alberta, by the nursing profession itself, and to a limited degree by government, in that we fund the institutions which provide the educational services to nursing students.

A quick review might be in order. There are five programs at public colleges. Grande Prairie is actively involved in that review of a new program there. All the universities will now be providing some form of upgrading beyond the RN level, and I think we are indeed making considerable progress in that area. However, I do indicate to the hon. member and to all hon. members that we must deal with the issue in a co-operative way. Certainly the events we have seen in recent days identify some of the areas of concern with respect to nursing.

At the present time the universities co-ordinating council's committee on nursing has been reviewing the college

programs. Colleges have made certain representations to me and to the universities' co-ordinating council as to how these programs might be improved. So it is not static. Indeed, the program is under active review by the profession, the colleges, the universities, and the department. I suggest it is very important that the concerns also be reviewed by the users of the graduates, namely the hospitals and the medical profession. So there's nothing static about the subject of nursing training in the province; it is very active indeed.

In conclusion, on the subject of those members who have raised matters, may I say that I appreciate the compliments handed out by members of the Assembly. I thank the hon. Member for Cardston for having touched upon a couple of points. The Universities Amendment Act, of course, will be introduced later in the session to implement the policy announced last fall with respect to private colleges. Hon. members will note that with respect to assistance to private colleges in the estimates, there has been a rationalization and an equalization of the grants being made available to all the private colleges we fund so that everyone is being treated equally this year. That, of course, is a policy with respect to operating grants, that Albertans being served in those institutions should be treated fairly and equitably as we fund those institutions which are providing a valuable service to Alberta.

That, Mr. Chairman, concludes my remarks on the general comments raised. I assume hon. members would wish to go through each vote and pass them this evening.

Agreed to:

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| 1.01 — Minister's Office | \$148,407 |
| 1.02 — Minister's Committees | \$198,312 |
| 1.03 — General Administration | [\$5,680,891] |
| 1.04 — Planning and Research | \$400,000 |
| Total Vote 1 — Departmental Support Services | \$6,427,610 |

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

[Motion carried]

[Mr. Deputy Speaker in the Chair]

MR. PURDY: Mr. Speaker, the Committee of Supply has had under consideration a certain resolution and reports as follows for the Department of the Attorney General: \$6,850,780, departmental support services; \$25,814,710, court services; \$11,493,070, legal services; \$4,518,000, support for legal aid; \$10,625,210, protection and administration of property rights; \$1,775,160, fatality inquiries; \$748,200, crimes compensation; \$1,812,590, public utilities regulation.

The Committee of Supply has had under consideration certain resolutions, reports progress thereon, and requests leave to sit again.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Having heard the report by the hon. Deputy Chairman of Committees, are you all agreed?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, it is proposed that the House sit tomorrow evening and continue in Committee of Supply. After the estimates of Advanced Education and Manpower, Utilities and Telephones would be next.

[At 10:44 p.m., on motion, the House adjourned to
Tuesday at 2:30 p.m.]

