

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ALBERTATitle: **Friday, May 9, 1980 10:00 a.m.**

[The House met at 10 a.m.]

PRAYERS

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

head: **INTRODUCTION OF BILLS****Bill 31****The Financial Administration
Amendment Act, 1980**

MR. HYNDMAN: Mr. Speaker, I request leave to introduce a Bill, The Financial Administration Amendment Act, 1980.

The basic purpose of this Bill is to permit a wider range of investments in the General Revenue Fund by diversifying and therefore keeping the yield or return as high as possible. The amendments parallel those proposed in Bill 29 in permitting investments by the General Revenue Fund for the first time in direct mortgage lending, units of mutual funds, and treasury bills of selected foreign governments. Other sections simplify, clarify, and streamline the Act.

[Leave granted; Bill 31 read a first time]

head: **TABLING RETURNS AND REPORTS**

MR. HYNDMAN: Mr. Speaker, pursuant to The Alberta Heritage Foundation for Medical Research Act, I wish to table copies of the annual report of the endowment fund for the year ended March 31, 1980.

MR. ADAIR: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to table the annual report of the Department of Business Development and Tourism for the year ended March 31, 1979.

head: **INTRODUCTION OF SPECIAL GUESTS**

MR. APPLEBY: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of my seatmate in the Legislature, the Member for Calgary McKnight, I would like to introduce a group of students from his constituency. I might say that the Member for Calgary McKnight, as chairman of the Alberta Research Council, is involved in a very important meeting this morning and regrets he cannot be here. The 36 students are a grade 6 group from Huntington Hills in Calgary, and they are accompanied by their teacher Mr. Sproule. They are in the members gallery, and I'd ask them to stand now and receive the welcome of the Assembly.

MR. TRYNCHY: Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure this morning to introduce to you, and to the members of the House, some 31 grade 6 students from Fox Creek. They are accompanied by their bus driver, two teachers, and three chaperones. They are in the members gallery. I'd ask that they rise and receive the welcome of the House.

MR. SHABEN: Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure for me to introduce to you, and to members of the Assembly, 49 students from the E. G. Wahlstrom school in Slave Lake. The teachers accompanying the students are Mr. Naidoo and Mr. Schmidt, along with parent supervisors Mrs. McKinnee, Mrs. Waddell, and Mrs. Mills. They are seated in the public gallery. I'd ask that they rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

head: **MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS****Department of
Advanced Education and Manpower**

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, Alberta's program of student assistance has undergone a detailed review during the past two years. Government has received suggestions from a variety of sources: from the Report of the Task Force to Review Students' Contributions to the Costs of Post-secondary Education — more commonly known as the Grantham report — from students and educational institutions, from my public advisory committees, from the caucus committee on education, from the Students Finance Board, and from Advanced Education and Manpower. In addition to the review of our programs, Alberta is a member of a special federal/provincial task force, which is currently examining existing financial assistance programs for students throughout Canada.

In the course of reviewing the recommendations put forward by the Grantham task force, among others, our government has concluded that the fundamental structure of the student assistance program in Alberta is sound. However, certain areas were identified where we feel major improvements can be made, and it is our intention to address these areas in a number of ways. Changes will come into effect for the forthcoming academic year.

Firstly, in recognition of the higher costs faced by rural Albertans who are forced to move away from their home communities in order to pursue postsecondary education, we intend to provide Alberta educational opportunity equalization grants of up to \$1,400 per academic year to dependent rural students. These grants will be based on need and will be paid to those students whose requirements for funds exceed established budgets for students living at home while enrolled in similar programs. It is our view that this grant will enhance significantly and equalize the opportunities for participation in postsecondary education by rural Albertans. This grant is not intended for students who wish to leave home in the pursuit of programs which are available at an institution within commuting distance of their place of residence; it is clearly intended for students who are forced to leave home to pursue their studies.

Secondly, recognizing that student costs have been increasing, it is our intention to provide more flexibility to financial assistance programs. Funding levels will be increased in two ways. First, grants of up to \$2,500 per academic year will be provided to undergraduate students who might otherwise be unable to attend a postsecondary institution because of financial restraints. These grants will be issued to those who demonstrate that their needs exceed the maximum \$4,300 in loans per academic year. As well, for students in designated professional programs — such as graduate studies, medicine, dentistry, and law — the yearly provincial loan maximum will be doubled from \$2,500 to \$5,000, and the lifetime provincial loan eligibility will be raised from \$10,000 to \$20,000.

Mr. Speaker, by continuing our participation in the Canada student loans program, and making changes which are addressed directly to the problem of enhancing accessibility, we will benefit those students whose needs are greatest at this time.

Several concerns raised by the Grantham task force and other interest groups are being acted upon. With respect to the students' finance appeals process, provision for ministerial appointment of appeals committee members has been made. The question of the age of independence criterion is being addressed by the federal/provincial task force. Alberta will await the outcome of those deliberations. In the interim, we will continue to abide by the existing three-year parental contribution requirement based on income rather than assets. However, I want to point out that a mechanism is in place for both the Students Finance Board and the appeals committee to deal with special and extreme cases.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to elaborate on the appeals procedure and assistance to students during the past fiscal year. In 1979-80, [14,036] students received loan and remission assistance totalling \$29.3 million. Of the applications received, 1,395 were formally appealed. Of those, 1,125 were resolved to the satisfaction of the students by the counselling staff of the Students Finance Board. The other 270 cases were forwarded to the appeals committee and, as a result, 176 students received additional funding totalling \$130,000.

My colleagues will recall that in January and April, I announced increases in amounts of existing scholarships and bursaries, a number of which will benefit Albertans with special needs, such as single parents, the disabled, the disadvantaged, and part-time students.

As my colleagues in the Legislature are aware, Mr. Speaker, under our loan/remission system, government guarantees loans which are interest free to students during their period of study and for six months following completion. Dependent on certain requirements being met by the students, the Students Finance Board will repay a percentage of their loans. Last year, under this aspect of our financial aid program, more than \$7 million was awarded on behalf of students in the form of loan remissions. The current loan/remission system, which this government considers the most beneficial to students, therefore will be retained.

As stated in the government's response to the Grantham report, which I am tabling today, it is our intention to maintain a continuous review of student finance programs in the future, and to revise the programs as required in order to ensure that accessibility to postsecondary education for all Albertans is maintained. Also, Mr. Speaker, a more concerted effort will be made to better communicate financial assistance programs to postsecondary and potential postsecondary students. A review of forms, promotional materials, and methods is currently under way, and changes will be made as soon as these are updated.

While we are on the subject of students and their finances, Mr. Speaker, I would like to take the time to announce that I have received formal requests for tuition fee increases from university and college boards of governors. Beginning with the 1980 fall term, domestic and foreign tuition fees at all public postsecondary institutions will increase 10 per cent. This marks only the third occasion in the past 12 years that tuitions have been increased. Alberta tuition fees remain among the lowest in Canada. On the average, this government continues to pay more than 85 per cent of the costs of operating

postsecondary educational institutions.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I wish to point out that more than 51,000 full-time students and more than 60,000 part-time students will be enrolled at our postsecondary institutions in the next academic year. During this fiscal year, financial assistance to students in the form of fellowships, scholarships, bursaries, remissions, and loans — including Canada student loans — will total more than \$42 million. Alberta's direct and indirect aid to students will increase by 45 per cent, from \$11.5 million to \$16.7 million, as a result of the decisions announced today.

This support is evidence of our commitment to the provision of higher education to a maximum number of Albertans, and underlines the capacity and soundness of our financial assistance structure.

Thank you.

head: ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Calgary LRT — Access for Handicapped

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct the first question to the Minister of Labour. It's a follow-up to questions put earlier this week by my colleague the Member for Little Bow dealing with the question of access to Calgary's LRT. Would the minister clarify at this time whether there is a direct means of appealing decisions of the director of building standards? I raise the question in light of comments made earlier in the week by the minister that he felt there was an avenue of appeal, but certainly left some question as to whether that avenue of appeal was open.

MR. YOUNG: Mr. Speaker, I'm happy to respond again to the hon. leader on this matter. In my view, there is a provision for appeal to the Alberta Building Standards Council. That is my opinion at the moment, one which I have some substance to believe is correct, but one which we are also checking to assure is absolutely clear and well understood.

I could advise the hon. leader that in connection with the change in the Alberta uniform building standards regulations expected to occur at the end of 1980, it will be our intention as a department to have a series of seminars and meetings across the province, not only to clarify the regulations and to allow persons who will be working with them an opportunity to have a better understanding of the new regulations, but to clarify the appeals procedure. If it turns out that there's any doubt as to the ability to appeal, I can assure the hon. leader that I will do my utmost as a minister to make every effort that an appeal is made possible to the minister's level and to accommodate in that respect. Further, if there are any defects in that procedure, we might anticipate some corrective legislation in 1981 if necessary.

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, to the minister. From the answer the minister has just given, the handicapped groups in Calgary can be assured that before the next two legs of Calgary's LRT will be constructed there will be, if there is not now, an avenue of appeal for Calgary's handicapped people on the decision made?

MR. YOUNG: Mr. Speaker, I wouldn't like any incorrect impressions left. One should clearly distinguish between the ability to appeal and the ability to appeal successfully. I want it quite clear that we are now talking about the

appeal mechanism, not about the results that may or may not occur from the possibility of an appeal.

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, a further supplementary question. Will the minister undertake to amend The Individual's Rights Protection Act to include discrimination on the basis of mental or physical handicap as unlawful, so that such unfair discrimination is no longer possible? I raise the question in light of comments made by an alderman in Calgary a few days ago announcing for the government that there would be changes in the legislation at this spring session.

MR. YOUNG: Mr. Speaker, thank goodness I'm not responsible for all the comments made by various elected officials in the province of Alberta.

But I would like to assure the hon. leader that it is my continuing hope, ever growing greater, that if he can be patient for a few more days he may indeed find out whether we will be able to amend The Individual's Rights Protection Act in this session.

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Chairman, a further question then to the . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. I believe the hon. Member for Calgary North Hill has a supplementary.

MR. OMAN: Mr. Speaker, thank you. To the Minister of Labour: would it not be true that at the present time the citizens of Calgary certainly have the right of appeal to the members who have made the decision, in the sense that that has basically been city council as far as the matter of access to LRT is concerned? Is it not also true that the city council of Calgary has provided an even better service in its handibus service than the LRT could provide?

MR. SPEAKER: I believe we should say that the hon. member has successfully made two representations. I did not interrupt him because the first question by the hon. Leader of the Opposition actually asked for a legal opinion; these were somewhat phrased as if they were asking for opinions as well.

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, considering the score as 1 to 1. [laughter] I'll move on to the second question, now that we have assurance from the Minister of Labour that within a few days we'll be getting some amendments to The Individual's Rights Protection Act, if they can just get them through caucus.

MR. NOTLEY: They're not very optimistic, Bob.

Natural Gas Pipeline Safety

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, the second question, to the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, deals with an issue I raised during the fall session last year regarding pipeline relocation from the Mill Woods subdivision. Then the minister later corresponded with my office. Would the minister inform the House what recommendations the ERCB has made to him about relocating the Rimbey pipeline to the restricted development area?

MR. LEITCH: Mr. Speaker, I'm sorry I missed the last few words of the question.

MR. R. CLARK: What recommendations have been made by the ERCB to the minister concerning the Rimbey pipeline — which had the unfortunate accident over a year ago now — being relocated to the RDA?

MR. LEITCH: Mr. Speaker, I have received no further recommendations from the Energy Resources Conservation Board apart from those in their initial report, which were reviewed last fall in the Assembly, as I recall.

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, to the minister. In light of that answer, is the minister in a position to indicate to the Assembly what progress has been made concerning the upgrading of similar pipelines to meet CSA standards across the province?

MR. LEITCH: Mr. Speaker, I'd have to get an up-to-date report on that. I have had some reports from the Energy Resources Conservation Board with respect to the progress they feel has been made arising from their recommendations, but I do not have an up-to-date report. I'll get that and respond in the House later.

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, a further supplementary question to the minister. What progress has the minister made on ensuring adequate setback distances from housing near hazardous lines?

MR. SPEAKER: With great respect, it would seem to me that the second question is contained in the first, and also in the minister's answer.

MR. R. CLARK: That he doesn't know?

MR. SPEAKER: That he's getting the information and will report back. Until the hon. leader knows whether the information is adequate, it would seem to me that to try to extract it piecemeal now would be an exercise in not using the time to our best advantage.

MR. R. CLARK: With the greatest respect, sir, the first supplementary dealt with whether the pipe in the ground was going to meet CSA standards. My second supplementary, the one I just asked, sir, dealt with the setback from houses of hazardous lines. The third one, which I was going to ask, dealt with the depth of cover to ensure safety at road crossings.

MR. SPEAKER: With great respect to the hon. leader, perhaps the hon. minister could indicate whether he's going to be covering those aspects of the topic in the information he's going to bring in.

DR. BUCK: How does he know, till he asks the question?

MR. LEITCH: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased the hon. Leader of the Opposition has given the details of the information he wants. I will check into it and provide the answers later on.

MR. PAHL: Mr. Speaker, my supplementary to the minister is with regard to the implication that CSA pipeline construction standards are not being met in Alberta at the present time. Perhaps he could clarify that the standards are being met, and it's a question of changing the standard.

MR. LEITCH: Mr. Speaker, to my recollection that is accurate; the standards are being met. The question was whether there could be a retroactive application of standards. As I recall, that was one issue; another was whether there could be changes in those standards.

Automobile Safety

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, my question to the hon. Solicitor General deals with automobiles that have been severely damaged in motor accidents. Is the minister in a position to indicate what procedures his department has to ensure that severely damaged cars that are put back on the market are safe, working vehicles?

MR. HARLE: Mr. Speaker, some requirements in The Motor Vehicle Administration Act relate primarily to damaged vehicles; to establish first of all that the accidents have been reported, and also that when vehicles are taken to wreckers that the identity of the vehicle's owner is, in fact, ascertained by the wrecker. As far as aspects relating to safety matters, I'd refer the question to my hon. colleague the Minister of Transportation.

MR. SPEAKER: With great respect, it would seem that the original question was asking the minister what powers he had to deal with certain vehicles. That is a question of law. I had misgivings when it was asked, but if we're going to go further with it, I think I should mention those misgivings. Perhaps not every question of that kind isn't in order, but I think there do have to be fair and practical limits in asking ministers for legal opinions.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, speaking to your point. I think we could probably use that rule for practically every question. I'm asking the minister what he is doing, or what the department has done, to make sure these vehicles don't get on the road. That's basically the question.

MR. SPEAKER: With great respect to the hon. member, and without wanting to get into a debate on it, we have a lot of members who still want to ask their first questions. It was my understanding that he was asking what the minister's powers were. However ...

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question. Can the minister indicate if he or his department has given any consideration to seizing registrations of severely damaged cars, so that they do not go back on the market?

MR. HARLE: Mr. Speaker, I'd have to refer to the legislation, but I believe there is some capacity for seizing and destroying serial numbers of vehicles that proceed through the wreckers.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs. Can the minister indicate if there has been any monitoring in his department to find out if the sale of severely damaged cars is a problem in Alberta?

MR. KOZIAK: Mr. Speaker, not in the sense of monitoring. However, under The Unfair Trade Practices Act, we have obtained undertakings — on at least one occasion that I'm aware of at the moment, and there may be more — where motor vehicles that had been damaged substantially had then been repaired without the consumer's being made aware of the previous history of the motor

vehicle. On investigation under The Unfair Trade Practices Act, by the officials and the director of trade practices, the disadvantaged consumer was reimbursed entirely. In fact, investigation costs were paid to the government of Alberta to cover the costs of investigation, and an undertaking was obtained from the particular automobile dealer wherein there was a recognition and an admission by that dealer that the practice was an unfair trade practice and that the dealer would not pursue that practice again.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the Solicitor General. Can the minister indicate if the program of highway patrols by the RCMP and by the minister's department, the highway patrol division, is being intensified to keep unsafe cars off provincial highways?

MR. HARLE: Mr. Speaker, I'd have to take that question as notice. I can certainly ask the assistant commissioner for K Division whether they have any particular emphasis on that at the present time.

Domestic Labor Force

MR. D. ANDERSON: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the hon. Minister of Labour. Could the minister indicate if he's in a position to tell this House whether the Department of Labour has recently received information which shows that many of the domestic personnel working in homes in the province of Alberta receive as little as \$50 to \$100 a month for work weeks far in excess of 40 hours?

MR. YOUNG: Mr. Speaker, if the department has, it hasn't been forwarded to the minister's attention, nor has it come to the minister's attention indirectly by any other means until the representation just made.

MR. D. ANDERSON: Mr. Speaker, one further question. Is the minister aware that many of these individuals are around the age of 16 and have probably left home as a result of bad home environments? If not, could the minister undertake to investigate this area and report back to this Assembly?

MR. YOUNG: Mr. Speaker, the minister would be happy to follow up any of the allegations being represented today if some detail could be provided directly so that we may be able to do that.

Municipal Police Grants

MR. ZAOZIRNY: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the hon. Solicitor General. It relates to the question of law enforcement grants to municipalities in the province, in particular to a brief from the city of Calgary to the minister dated January 7, 1980, which expressed a particular concern about the significant increases in major crime and traffic offences in the city of Calgary. In that regard, and with regard to the actual submission made by the city of Calgary, can the Solicitor General advise what considerations led to the government decision to discontinue the previous funding formula for the law enforcement grant, which had been based upon growth and inflation factors, and its replacement with a formula simply based upon a fixed increase, which in 1980 I believe will be something on the order of 8 per cent?

MR. HARLE: Mr. Speaker, there's a long history to that particular program. The hon. member will recall that in 1975, with the rapid growth in inflation and the belief which was quite commonly held that government expenditures had a great deal to do with the inflation rate, from then on the question of grants to municipalities was determined by provincial guidelines which applied not only to policing grants but to all grants to municipalities from various government departments.

I have met with the city of Calgary on that topic, and have had contact with the city of Edmonton. As a result of that, I'm still awaiting a submission on the same topic from the city of Edmonton. I've indicated to both cities that following the police commission seminar held earlier this year in Calgary, I would be reviewing the matter of policing grants. Hopefully we'll be able to come to some mechanism for calculation of those grants following the end of this spring session.

MR. ZAOZIRNY: A supplementary to the Solicitor General. In the event that for some reason the circumstances in the city of Edmonton are different from those in Calgary, and as a result there is a considerable delay in their providing a submission, is the minister prepared to move in this area to provide some relief to the city of Calgary, if there is some undue delay or if the city of Edmonton sees fit not to make a submission?

MR. SPEAKER: With great respect to the hon. and learned member, I should say that the question is very, very heavily hypothetical.

MR. ZAOZIRNY: A further supplementary, Mr. Speaker, if I might take another run at this. Given the fact that between 1977 and 1980 a shortfall of some \$3 million was experienced, is the minister at least prepared to see that deficiency made up for the 1980 calendar year?

MR. HARLE: Mr. Speaker, I've indicated to the city of Calgary that following receipt of their submission, I will be reviewing that situation. I am, however, awaiting a submission from the city of Edmonton. I think it is only fair that both cities are treated in the same way.

MR. ZAOZIRNY: Without wanting to engage in a hypothetical question, could the minister advise when he expects to be in a position to make a decision on this matter?

MR. HARLE: Mr. Speaker, I've already indicated that I hope to be considering that matter following the end of the session. Sometime over the summer I hope to be able to resolve the matter.

Crowsnest Pass Freight Rates

MR. SINDLINGER: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask a question, please, of the Minister of Agriculture, or the Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs, or the Minister of Economic Development, or perhaps the Minister of Transportation.

MR. SPEAKER: Perhaps the hon. member could put his question and then call for volunteers. [laughter]

MR. SINDLINGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question for any volunteer is with regard to the Crowsnest Pass freight rates. It's traditional in Canada to have royal

commissions on transportation every 10 years, and it's about time we had one. The federal government is in the process of setting up the mechanism for a royal commission on the Crowsnest Pass freight rates, the idea being to eliminate them. My question is: what representations or consultations has the Alberta government had with the federal government with regard to that royal commission?

Thank you.

MR. R. CLARK: No volunteers?

MR. NOTLEY: Well, Dallas, you're on.

MR. PLANCHE: Mr. Speaker, I'll be the first volunteer. We haven't had any consultation with the federal government on that commission. [interjection] I beg your pardon?

DR. BUCK: That's your pat answer for everything. Maybe you have another one.

MR. PLANCHE: It's the kind of questions we get.

MR. R. CLARK: We didn't ask that one.

MR. SINDLINGER: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker, to the hon. minister. Could the minister please advise what the Alberta government's position is with regard to the elimination of the Crowsnest Pass freight rates for agricultural products?

MR. PLANCHE: Mr. Speaker, we're busily trying to formulate a policy that will fit all the facets of the people involved in the total transportation system, at the same time maintaining a Crow benefit for our agricultural producers.

MR. SINDLINGER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary, please. With regard to the elimination of the Crowsnest Pass freight rates, or on the other hand the maintenance of the Crowsnest Pass rates, one of two things is going to happen. One is a continual deterioration of the railway service; the other is reduced earnings by the farmers. Could the hon. minister give us an indication of what planning or programs are being undertaken to ease the transition from the economic perturbation that is bound to result?

MR. PLANCHE: I continue to volunteer for this. Mr. Speaker, those would be part of the representations we would make if and when the federal government puts a task force together to examine the Crow rate issue again. But from this government's point of view, we've already committed to the total system \$50 million for hopper cars, \$8 million plus for inland terminals, almost \$4 million in an unconditional grant to the Prince Rupert terminal, and at least \$100 million in debt — which is a pretty good start, I'd say.

DR. BUCK: Why don't you get Foster to volunteer?

MR. SINDLINGER: A final supplementary if I may, Mr. Speaker, to the hon. minister. Would it be the Alberta government's position to support a royal commission on the elimination on the Crowsnest Pass freight rates?

DR. BUCK: If it's headed by Foster.

MR. PLANCHE: Mr. Speaker, I don't think my colleagues have discussed that particular question in that context. From our point of view, there may be considerably more importance in a time frame than a royal commission would allow.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question, if I may, to the hon. Minister of Agriculture. What assessment has the government of Alberta made of some of the proposals for Crow benefit, in particular the proposal by the Manitoba Minister of Agriculture that in fact we have payments going out to permit holders, which I suggest would be rather an unrealistic approach? Has any assessment been made of the various options for Crow benefit?

MR. SCHMIDT: Mr. Speaker, throughout the province the various farm organizations have had, of course, the opportunity to bring together collectively, through their own organizations, the feelings of producers across the province. Unifarm has done considerable work in holding meetings and making available all the information available to them, to other organizations, and indeed the information that government has in a very broad way with regard to transportation and rates, as they pertain to the Crow and the benefits that accrue on both sides. They have come up with some very broad guidelines and, of course, are continuing their research in the area of refining those areas of benefits that would accrue to the producer.

In a very preliminary way, we have had an opportunity to hear, I suppose, the cursory remarks of some of the provinces, and the comments that were made with regard to the Crow rate, the benefit. In the meeting towards the end of this month, I'm sure we'll have the opportunity to hear perhaps a total presentation on behalf of the provinces in western Canada.

MR. NOTLEY: A supplementary question to the hon. minister. During the meeting the minister alluded to, what will the Alberta government be saying when the total presentation is made with respect to provinces?

MR. SCHMIDT: Mr. Speaker, it's my understanding that the meeting will be called to discuss in a very general way, not to the point where hard and fast rules will be presented. I suggest that in the overall discussions in the transportation field, being so diverse in the areas — which vary indeed because of the geographic locations — at this time a hard and fast approach without any degree of flexibility may place the total transportation system in some jeopardy, if you're discussing the benefits to all producers across western Canada.

MR. SPEAKER: Might this be the final supplementary on this important topic.

MR. R. CLARK: A supplementary question to the minister. In light of your ruling, Mr. Speaker, that this be the last supplementary question, let me put it to the hon. minister this way: during the estimates last spring when this matter was discussed, if my memory is accurate the minister indicated that by this year's estimates the government would have a fixed position on the Crowsnest rate question. What events have taken place since the estimates last year that have prevented the minister and

the government of Alberta from getting to the point indicated during the minister's estimates last year?

MR. SCHMIDT: Mr. Speaker, the activity that has been ongoing since the estimates last year. And of course we still have a few days to go before the estimates this year.

MR. NOTLEY: That's a pretty weak one.

MR. SCHMIDT: A weak what? The week or the estimates?

DR. BUCK: The argument.

MR. SCHMIDT: It's not an argument.

DR. BUCK: It's nothing.

MR. SCHMIDT: The opportunity to discuss the total transportation problem as it existed a year ago, and as the opportunity has expanded over the period of a year, broadened the scope of the total transportation package which had that opportunity to be reviewed. The opportunity again of various agencies and individual groups represented by producer groups throughout the province, and some review and some changes in the direction that the producer himself had made in changing the basic philosophy as to how transportation would best fit in this last year, have given us the opportunity to review all those areas that have been available to us — studies that have been started, conducted both by government and the information available to us by other agencies that have done considerable work in the field of the rate itself, the benefits, indeed transportation in total, and some changes in views — have broadened to the point that gave us the opportunity to collectively review some change in philosophy of producers.

So at the present time [we] are bringing together with our colleagues a stand, and at the present time have, in a general way, agreed with the total support and the philosophy that is being established by the producers through the province in their submissions to Unifarm, and in the broad areas that have been represented in their stand with regard to the benefits that would accrue; and have, of course, submitted to them the support in a general way, with the opportunity of not only their own organization, but indeed us as government, to take those broad aspects and come up with some definitive direction in each area.

MR. SPEAKER: Perhaps we could come back to this topic if there's time.

Postsecondary Canadian Studies

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct this question to the hon. Minister of Advanced Education and Manpower and ask that hon. gentleman if he is in a position to advise the Assembly whether there have been any discussions with the University of Alberta concerning the problems encountered by the Canadian studies program at that institution, particularly as they apply to budget.

MR. HORSMAN: No, Mr. Speaker, not with my office, although there may have been some discussions with officials of the department. I shall have to take the question as notice.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs. Is that hon. gentleman able to confirm to the Assembly that the Department of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs has made more money available on a yearly basis over the next three years to Duke University in North Carolina to fund its Canadian studies program than we make available to the University of Alberta?

MR. SPEAKER: This is the type of question that certainly should be put on notice on the Order Paper, insofar as it asks for statistics. But in view of the nature of the question, it would be only fair to allow the minister an opportunity to answer.

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, during the estimates, of course, my grants were up front for consideration. It's true that we are supporting Canadian studies at Duke University. However, I would not make any comparisons about the relative or quantifiable assistance to other programs. We simply made the decision on an independent basis to support Canadian studies at Duke University for, I believe, a three-year period.

MR. NOTLEY: A supplementary question to the hon. Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs. Is the minister able to advise the Assembly: why the emphasis on a Canadian Studies program in the cotton belt, when Canadian institutions have to scrounge for available dollars in this province?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh.

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, the intonation of the question is obvious. That is the kind of thing that just draws our country apart.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh.

MR. JOHNSTON: That's the kind of particular argument that just fosters this kind of contempt for this Assembly.

Let me state that we made a very careful consideration of these expenditures. If the hon. member had wanted to question it during the House, I would have been fully ready to debate and to back up our decision. The decision is not one of where the money goes; it's what kind of quality you get from those expenditures. On that basis, we made the advance to Duke University.

MR. NOTLEY: A supplementary question to the hon. minister. What reasons drew the government to the conclusion that a commitment should be made to help finance this particular program at Duke in North Carolina, as opposed to funding that could be made available to other institutions in Canada at a time when there are stresses and strains in this country?

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, I repeat, if the hon. member had wanted to pursue this during the budget, we would have shown him that we are in fact supporting other institutes in Canada.

Consumer Education

MR. MANDEVILLE: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the hon. Minister of Education. What plans does the minister have to implement the recommendations by the

consumer education committee to have consumer education in our schools?

MR. KING: I'll have to take the question as notice, Mr. Speaker.

Private Schools

MR. BATIUK: Mr. Speaker, a follow-up to the question yesterday to the Minister of Education, when I asked whether there has been an increase in private schools in this province. The minister replied there wasn't. A week ago, six members of this Legislature met with the membership of zone three of the Alberta School Trustees' Association, and this was one area of concern they expressed. Could the minister advise whether there have been any detrimental effects from private schools getting into smaller school systems, particularly where there is a declining enrolment?

MR. KING: Yes, Mr. Speaker. First of all, I would like to say that yesterday I was perhaps responding too narrowly to the hon. member's question. He asked whether I was concerned that there had been a significant increase in the number of private schools over the past two years, and I was paying particular attention to the word "significant". There has not been a significant increase in the number of private schools throughout the province in the last two years, but there has been an increase.

Some small school boards are concerned that this increase is concentrated in the rural areas of the province, among the smaller school jurisdictions; and that when a private school is formed in such circumstances, it has a disproportionate influence on a declining enrolment in the neighboring public or separate school jurisdiction. So some small school jurisdictions are indeed concerned about the situation the hon. Member for Vegreville has described.

Mr. Speaker, it was in response to that, during the term of my predecessor, that the private school opening grant was provided to school jurisdictions, whereby Alberta Education provides compensatory funding to a school jurisdiction when a private school is established within that jurisdiction. The purpose of compensatory funding is to help school boards make a transition through the period of declining enrolment that results from the establishment of the new school.

Over the longer term, the government is committed to increasing support for private schools at the rate of 5 per cent per year, as against only one grant that we administer, the School Foundation Program Fund per pupil grant. We provide no other assistance — financial, that is — to private schools. We have no intention of providing any other financial assistance to private schools until a thorough review and evaluation of the position of private schools in the province is done, in about three years. Policy change will depend upon the outcome of that review.

MR. BATIUK: Mr. Speaker, could the minister advise whether some of these private schools which operate with teachers who are not accredited receive any funding?

MR. KING: A very good question, Mr. Speaker. Indeed, we have four types of private schools in the province. The two of interest in this discussion are called the type one private school, which uses certificated teachers and the

standard curriculum of the province of Alberta. That school receives limited financial assistance from the provincial government. Type four private schools, which are not required to use certificated personnel or the standard provincial curriculum, although they are required to use a curriculum approved by the Minister of Education, do not receive any financial assistance whatsoever from Alberta Education.

MR. BATIUK: Another supplementary to the minister, Mr. Speaker. Could the minister advise whether he has received any submissions from concerned school boards?

MR. KING: Yes I have, Mr. Speaker: from zones of the Alberta School Trustees' Association, from individual boards, and from the Alberta School Trustees' Association itself. We have the detail of those submissions constantly before us in the department.

MR. BATIUK: One final supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Could the minister advise whether the Alberta Teachers' Association conferred with the minister regarding this?

MR. KING: Yes, Mr. Speaker, they did. They share a similar concern with the Alberta School Trustees' Association.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, to the minister. Can the minister indicate if he is considering, or reconsidering, the consultation and informing of local school authorities before he makes his decision to allow these private schools to come into being?

MR. KING: I'm not sure what the hon. member means with respect to consultation with the local school board by Alberta Education.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, to the hon. minister. It seems that the local school authorities find out, usually through the newspapers, after the minister has made a decision that a private school is going ahead. Can the minister indicate if there's going to be a change in policy in that direction?

MR. KING: As a result of an experience in the county of Strathcona, I made an undertaking to the Alberta School Trustees' Association that we would, as a matter of course, advise the local school jurisdiction, as we were in the process of approving the formation of private schools, if that's what the hon. member is referring to.

Students' Finance Programs

MR. KNAAK: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Advanced Education and Manpower. It relates to the \$1,400 Alberta educational opportunity equalization grant. Would such a grant apply to students who try to obtain entrance to an Alberta postsecondary institution or a professional faculty and for a variety of reasons cannot get in but are accepted either in an American university or in a university outside the province of Alberta?

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, the proposal which we have before the Assembly by way of my ministerial statement today provides that the funds would be available for Alberta students who are forced to move away from their home communities in order to pursue postsec-

ondary education. It would seem logical, and I believe it is the intent of the policy, to extend this assistance to Alberta students who cannot obtain admission for one reason or another and are therefore required to move away from their homes, if they meet the other standards that are applicable in terms of need and, I should say — it's important — qualification for the program.

MR. KNAAK: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. The way the news release is set out, it appears that the announced \$2,500 grant applies only after the maximum \$4,300 loan is obtained. First of all, is my interpretation correct with respect to the grant coming after the loan? And does the remission policy still apply to the \$4,300 loan?

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, the grant would come after the loan. The remission, of course, would still apply to existing loans in the normal manner.

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, dealing with the announcement the minister made today and the question of the age of independence. The announcement included reference to a federal/provincial task force, which is set up. My question to the minister is: what time line does the minister anticipate for that task force, so that a decision might then be made by Alberta on this question of age of independence, which has been before the government now for an extended period of time?

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, the task force is charged with a mandate to report by November of this year to the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada.

DR. PAPROSKI: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary to the minister, regarding the equalization grant of \$1,400 per year per student. I wonder if the minister would further clarify whether this will apply to students who have applied to a number of institutions in the province of Alberta, have been rejected for whatever reason in one institution yet have been accepted in another city. Would this grant be available to them because they could not get into that course that year, as the student wished?

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, I thought I had answered that when I answered the question of the hon. Member for Edmonton Whitemud. We have to work on individual cases, of course, when it gets to those types of situations. The Students Finance Board will try to be flexible and to reassess carefully the real circumstances in each and every case. I want to make it clear that this program is not designed to assist students who just wish to go elsewhere for whatever reasons, but those who are in fact really and truly required to leave their home communities to pursue their education.

DR. PAPROSKI: Supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. We have reached the end of the time allotted for the question period. If the Assembly agrees, perhaps we could have a further supplementary on this topic and come back to it tomorrow — I'm sorry. Monday; I didn't mean to scare anybody. I've already recognized the hon. Member for Calgary North Hill, and through a regrettable oversight I did not recognize the hon. Member for Vermilion-Viking, who had asked quite early on to be recognized. If the Assembly agrees, perhaps we could deal with those intended

questions, then receive some supplementary information from the hon. Minister of Education.

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. OMAN: Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague to my right has stolen my thunder and left me questionless. [laughter]

MR. SPEAKER: Perhaps the hon. Member for Vermilion-Viking has some thunder left.

MR. LYSONS: Mr. Speaker, in view of the time, I don't think I'll ask my question today.

75th Anniversary — Grants

MR. KING: Mr. Speaker, yesterday certain questions were asked about a 75th Anniversary project. I have some information which I would like to provide to the House. However, it is not complete information, and I will seek another opportunity when additional information has come to me.

First of all, I wanted to say that the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview referred yesterday in a supplementary question to a copy of a letter which the Minister responsible for Culture had received. I'm sure he meant to say that the letter had been sent to the Minister responsible for Culture, because she has not yet received a copy of the letter, apparently sent on May 1. However, I do have a copy of that letter, which I have received from the 75th Anniversary Commission, and am able to provide these points of information to the hon. members.

First of all, when this project was originally considered by the cabinet committee, the question of out-of-province jurors was not considered central to the project; certainly, I did not consider it central. I think that's an important piece of information for people to understand: in our view, whether the jury was of Albertans or of people outside the province was not essential to the project.

Secondly, I think it is important to highlight the fact that the complaint that has been made has not reflected on the capacity, integrity, or good will of the men who were the jurors. The apparent complaint is not about the way in which the jury itself acted; the controversy appears to be over the question of whether there is a significant difference between a juried show and an invitational show.

It is at that point that the availability of information fails me. I'm hoping to get some additional information from both the 75th Commission and the art gallery. In the meantime, I wanted members to have the other information.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

head: GOVERNMENT MOTIONS (Committee of Supply)

[Mr. Appleby in the Chair]

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

Department of Hospitals and Medical Care

MR. KOWALSKI: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I'm pleased to participate in the review of the estimates of the Minister of Hospitals and Medical Care this morning. First of all, several plaudits to him. Since November and December 1979 and in the last several months, I'm very, very pleased to see that he and the government have moved on a major commitment to hospital capital projects in the province of Alberta. The \$1.25 billion of committed projects will certainly be of significant benefit to a large variety of Albertans, from the Montana border to the Northwest Territories border.

As well, I'm very pleased with the co-operation I as the new Member for Barrhead have received with respect to the forthcoming approval to the community of Barrhead with regard to a 77-bed nursing home. That facility had been under review for some months prior to the fall of 1979. In a series of meetings with the minister, and through the good offices of his officials in dealing with the Barrhead General Hospital board, a quick conclusion was made to a concern, and now the community will benefit in the next several years with a new nursing home.

I would, however, like to talk this morning about a void in northwestern Alberta, which exists in the medical care facilities package with respect to one community in the constituency of Barrhead. Over the last several months I've had several good, positive meetings with the Minister of Hospitals and Medical Care, with respect to needed medical facilities in the town of Swan Hills. For the benefit of all members this morning, I would like to make several comments on the town of Swan Hills. In fact, for the benefit of even a well-understood, knowing, and well-meaning minister, perhaps I can provide a few additional comments this morning that might indicate to him why I think the need for additional medical facilities there is rather pressing.

Mr. Chairman, the town of Swan Hills was developed as a result of major oil strikes in that area in 1957. In 1959 it attained new town status. On January 1, 1967, it became Canada's first centennial town, when it received town status. Its population in 1967 was 1,400-plus, and by the fall of 1979 it had grown to over 2,550 permanent citizens. Because of the primary and secondary industry in the area, however, it has attracted a large, variable, transient population. By last fall, some 2,400 additional people were living and working in the Swan Hills area.

With a permanent population of 2,550 and an incoming working population of some 2,400, the area has a population upwards of 5,000. We expect that will grow as well in the future, with the exploitation of the Judy Creek coal fields, the implementation of a tertiary recovery program by Imperial Oil, and increased conventional drilling activity. The interesting thing is that Swan Hills is 240 kilometres northwest of Edmonton. Its nearest centres are Barrhead, Whitecourt, and Slave Lake; distances of approximately 110 kilometres, 70 kilometres, and 128 kilometres respectively. There is only one paved highway into Swan Hills, and that's Highway 33 via the town of Barrhead.

Swan Hills, unfortunately, has no resident physicians, no resident dentists, no resident chiropractors, and has to go out to other centres to receive its medical response. That's a population upwards of 5,000, located 240 kilometres away from this city. Traditionally, people of Swan Hills have had to go elsewhere, as I've just indicated. Essentially they have gone to four different areas:

Barrhead, where the majority go for medical services; a very, very small minority go to Whitecourt; and a very, very small minority go to Westlock. The remainder have to come some 240 kilometres to Edmonton.

It's very important, in my view, that the citizens react positively in emphasizing the need for increased and improved medical facilities within their community. Despite the fact that the town was created quite a few years ago, it was not until recent months that a very, very active, well-organized medical facility steering committee was established in the town of Swan Hills. They have yet to provide an application to the current Minister of Hospitals and Medical Care with respect to a needed medical facility. That will be forthcoming very shortly.

I simply want to use this opportunity this morning to let the minister and other members know that, as the representative of that community, I am very concerned about the current lack of facilities and the need for medical facilities in the future. I certainly look forward to a good, fair hearing by all members when the matter comes up for resolution in the future. I know the minister is empathetic towards that item. On this occasion, I would like to take the opportunity to invite the minister to visit Swan Hills. I'm sure he will find the people very friendly, very positive, and very enthusiastic. I look forward to his attendance there sometime in the next several months. As well, I alert and advise him that an application will be forthcoming.

Mr. Chairman, I'm very pleased with what we're doing in the area of health care in the whole province of Alberta. The 1980s will be very positive. I simply reiterate that I wanted this opportunity to advise all members that we do have void, which I know we'll be responding to at sometime in the future.

Thank you.

MR. BATIUK: Mr. Chairman, I don't want to belabor this area; however, I think I would be remiss if I didn't at least say a few fine comments about the minister. I'm not going to start just with this, but go back to when we formed the government. The Minister of Hospitals and Medical Care was the Minister of Municipal Affairs. When we heard the Minister of Municipal Affairs going through his estimates, a lot of programs — whether it was the home improvement program, the renters' assistance program, the education portion of the school foundation — were programs of the Minister of Hospitals and Medical Care when he was the Minister of Municipal Affairs. I had the privilege of serving on the committee that brought in some of the recommendations that we take the last dollar of hospital financing. After eight years, maybe that was not the right thing, but it was sure a good experience.

Nevertheless, when the minister was appointed Minister of Environment, we had representation from some communities in the constituency that had hoped he would retain his position, because of his effectiveness during the time he was minister. However, I am really glad that when he was Minister of Environment some of our biggest concerns were resolved. The Vermilion River flooded once during his time as minister, and created millions of dollars of damage. That has been resolved. Another very important — the need for water throughout the communities west of Edmonton. It was with the minister's inauguration that a study of a regional water system was made. That has been approved already. Times are going ahead.

With hospitals, I am really glad the minister took such

a strong look at the need for more facilities. True enough, there is a continual increase in costs because of inflation. But in our province, there is an increase of population amounting to 5,000 per year. I know for a fact that many people, even senior citizens, are already coming in because of the benefits. We will be needing considerably more accommodation for these people. I am glad that last fall, during the time the minister had this portfolio, we officially opened a new hospital in my home town. The previous hospital had served 50 years. The celebration consisted of a 50th anniversary and the official opening of the hospital. There was also a fine celebration because the medical doctor who was there before the first hospital was built in 1929 was still active when this one was opened. So it was a real celebration in the community.

My biggest concern in the constituency, over this or the next term of office, is more nursing home accommodations. This has been a request for the last few years. I know everything can't be done at one time. I was glad the minister approved an expansion to the Two Hills nursing home, where there was a request and a waiting list for quite a while by quite a number. There was also a strong request for an addition to the nursing home in Vegreville. Now I can well understand that Rome was not built in a day; this could not be done. But I hope the minister would have a study made for the area, and if it proves there is a necessity, that he would consider expansion of the nursing home in Vegreville. Also, as I say, Mr. Minister, I am very grateful for the way you've carried on with your various portfolios.

MR. OMAN: Mr. Chairman, I would like to pose a couple of questions to the minister. First of all: I think it's been mentioned, but on behalf of the city of Calgary we are certainly grateful for the kind of new facilities we're going to get in that area. But on another topic, the minister has stated — as recently as this weekend, I think, and on several occasions — that in the province of Alberta we basically have a situation of abortion on demand. I wonder if the minister could give us some figures to indicate the extent. Perhaps some philosophical problems are involved, but I'd like to know what numbers might be involved here. Also, what are the costs to the system of abortions that are taking place in the province, and how much hospital time; maybe there are direct and indirect costs, but how much hospital time would be involved? I suppose most of them would be day care cases, but I'd appreciate hearing some information, particularly on operating facilities and this type of thing.

DR. PAPROSKI: Mr. Chairman, very briefly, I'd just like to make some comments regarding the department and the minister in particular. I'd like to offer my congratulations to him, too, for the excellent work he is doing. I hope he will continue in that vein. I know he will, providing he gets the support of members of the Assembly.

The one particular item I would like to raise for his ongoing consideration, and possibly expansion, is the program of teaching family physicians, or general practitioners, as most of us here know. I know there is support provided through his department for that particular area; namely, family teaching units in some hospitals in this province. I certainly appreciate the support recently granted to the Misericordia Hospital, which I have had a long association with and, as a matter of fact, was chief of general practice there for a number of years.

But I think it's very important, Mr. Chairman, that the

minister and the department review this area very carefully. As we all know, family physicians, general practitioners, are not in the numbers we'd like to see in our society. It's difficult to find a family physician or general practitioner to take care of the whole family and to appreciate the primary care, or first contact care, emergency care, the ongoing care — if you wish, the continuing care or comprehensive care, which I think is even more important; that is, utilization of all available medical facilities and information that society provides for our citizens. I think it's vital that somebody co-ordinate that, so that citizens can get optimum use of all the things we have for their health in our society. This is one type of individual, health professional if you wish, who is trained extremely well to provide that for our citizens; that is, in the areas of prevention, diagnosis, treatment, rehabilitation, and teaching.

Mr. Chairman, it's an area I want to underline. I know we're providing some assistance in this regard. Some assistance probably flows through the university, but it's not as great as it should be. A lot of doctors participating in the training of family physicians at the student level, are certainly not being paid for that in any way, shape, or form. I think it's a nominal fee, something like \$10 a month, and they have to pay for their parking. So essentially it works out to zero. It's a very important area, and I want to put it on the record. I hope the minister takes note of that, of course. He doesn't necessarily have to respond today, but to address his department to that area over the next year or two.

Thank you.

MR. BORSTAD: Mr. Chairman, I would like to make a few comments on this vote. The Leader of the Opposition mentioned the Grande Prairie hospital. I believe he brought it up last night. I would like to relieve his anxiety and his concerns about the Grande Prairie hospital. Since the minister has taken over his portfolio, I can assure him that the Grande Prairie hospital has been moving along very well.

I would also like to thank the minister for his quick response in allocating moneys to make renovations to add those extra beds at the hospital, which were so badly needed. They seem to be coming along fairly well, and I'm hoping they will be on stream before too long. The contractors also seem to be moving along very rapidly. I urge the minister to keep the pressure on them, so that that hospital can come on stream at the earliest date.

Hythe will be getting a new 10-bed hospital this year, in conjunction with their nursing home. Beaverlodge also has a request in for nursing home beds to be added to their hospital. I urge the minister to take that under consideration at his earliest time.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I believe those are all who have indicated they wish to speak at this time. Perhaps the minister would wish to respond.

MR. RUSSELL: I think I should, Mr. Chairman, because a number of important points have been brought up. I've certainly appreciated the comments and the tenor of the discussion from all members in the House, because we're dealing with something pretty basic to all our constituencies.

Thank you very much for the complimentary things you've been saying about me and the department. I appreciate that. I realize there'll be times when you'll be giving us our lumps, but for now it's nice to receive good

comments. I thank you very much for those. I'll pass those on to the department and see that they're shared there.

Obviously, the capital works program being undertaken is of significance to constituencies throughout the province. It is a large investment, that I'm sure will give us some difficulty in handling. As we proceed with it, I'm sure there will be bumps and wobbles in it throughout various constituencies. None the less, I'm fairly confident that we can put in place those projects that have been announced. I was asked to give a status report on the progress being made with the program, and also asked to comment specifically on a couple of projects, especially the proposed northern Alberta children's hospital. I'll do that now, while we're dealing with capital projects.

First, in a general way I think we can say that, considering the demands on the construction and design industry in Alberta and the size of the program itself, things are probably proceeding about as well as can be expected. I get monthly reports on the status of every project under way throughout the province. Generally speaking, projects are on schedule and proceeding without the kinds of problems that can't be solved very quickly.

I know the Grande Prairie hospital has gone on for some time longer than we would have liked. There are a number of unique problems because of the conditions in that particular community. It's undergoing extremely rapid growth, as you know, and there are manpower shortages both in the design field and in construction. There has also been a problem of reaching agreement with the board with respect to programming, and it's further complicated by the fact that the existing hospital has to be kept operational while the new one is built around it. So we're phasing in new construction and phasing out other construction.

I think we're over the worst of it. The first major contract for construction was let this spring, for the services building. It's under way. As the Member for Grande Prairie said, we've responded to the immediate concern of the medical staff for additional beds to keep things operating at a satisfactory level while this incredible growth in Grande Prairie, and particularly the hospital construction, is under way. So we have our fingers crossed; we're hoping for good weather and good tendering. And the pressure is being kept on all the people involved in that Grande Prairie project. So I think it's going to be okay.

From time to time, I'm sure there will be others of a similar nature. I can't promise members of the Assembly that some projects might not hit some unforeseen delay or difficulty as a result of boards' concerns or local construction conditions. But I can assure you that whatever is going on in your community, we will do our best.

I've had considerable dialogue with the proponents of the children's hospital project. I think we've indicated to them pretty clearly our concerns about their proposal. Essentially, they're threefold. First of all, Mr. Chairman, we believe, and I think it's true, that the hospital system in place in Alberta, with the specialized facilities now under construction at the health sciences centre at the university here, the children's hospital in Calgary, and the extension of cancer treatment facilities for the southern region, also in Calgary — taken as a total package, the community hospitals throughout Alberta and those specialized facilities funded by the Heritage Savings Trust Fund, we have an excellent system of capital facilities at the disposal of Albertans. We're a little surprised to see the move for a children's hospital in northern Alberta, when the first provincial children's hospital is yet to be

completed. So that's our concern: is the need really there on a provincial basis?

The second item of concern we raised was that there is at the moment a surplus of pediatric beds in community hospitals in the Edmonton area. If we build more, of course it would mean that those pediatric beds would have to be closed down or converted to something else. I'm not sure the boards of those hospitals want to do that, or if in fact the community of patients they serve want to see that happen. That hasn't really been the experience historically. So that's another important issue that has to be dealt with. I've pointed that out to the proponents, and they themselves have recognized that.

The third thing we'd be concerned about is the deficiencies in the proposal that has been presented to us. They have hired a consultant from Toronto to write a report for them, known as the Bain report. They gave me a copy, and our department gave a written response and an assessment with respect to the deficiencies we recognize in it. The proponents have gone away, and have said they're going to deal with the deficiencies. In the meantime I've referred the matter to the Edmonton area hospital planning council, and asked them if they would give consideration to the request and give their comments on it. I think that's a good place to refer the matter, because that council has representation from all the hospitals in the Edmonton region.

The next thing I wanted to talk about was the role of boards, because that has been mentioned by several speakers. It's a difficult one. We're looking at the question of responsibility as now legislated, the philosophy of local autonomy, the principles involved with 100 per cent financing by the provincial government, and the concept of whether boards should be elected or appointed. It's something we've given a great deal of thought to, and will be reviewing again through the summer months as we review the whole question of the financing of hospital systems.

The hon. Member for Vegreville made reference to actions this government took in 1972, when it took over 100 per cent financing of hospitals. I think that was a good move. In my opening comments, I made reference to the rapid escalation in health care costs, particularly in hospital care, during the past decade. I think it's fair to say that if the total burden, or a great portion of it, had rested with the municipal property tax, as it did 10 years ago, it would have been a strain on the assessment and taxation basis of some Alberta communities. I'm not suggesting that we ought to return to that system. But in examining sources of supplementary discretionary funding that autonomous boards might want to have, I think the list is pretty short to begin with and is getting shorter.

A year ago I suggested that perhaps the public and boards might want to consider a user fee. I think the response to that was more negative than positive. That really leaves only a couple of other sources of funding that have ever been suggested, as far as I know: the use of lotteries, or the return to a requisition to the tax base. If there are other sources, I'm not aware of them. In my own mind, I would certainly reject the lottery system. I don't think we should have our health care system dependent on gambling. So that really brings us down to one issue: should we or should we not return to some form of local requisitioning? If we do, then we must deal with the question of the responsibility and rights of boards to levy requisitions on their local tax payers. That means we'll have to consider whether boards have to be elected.

One hon. member, in addressing his views to this matter, suggested that being a hospital trustee today is really a labor of love. I certainly agree that it must be a very challenging and frustrating commitment. I can particularly appreciate the feelings of frustration they must have when they realize that essentially the management of the total system has to come through the provincial government; that is, where hospitals are going, their relationship to each other, their capital support — and that includes equipment — and, essentially, what 100 per cent of their funding should be. So I appreciate the frustration of some trustees when they ask themselves: well, what is left for us to do?

I suggest there's a lot for them to do. We know that some hospitals throughout Alberta are better institutions than others. We know that the management of staff in some institutions is better than in others, and we know that financial management in some hospitals is better than in others. So there's a great many things a dedicated and sincere board of trustees can do for their particular institution. I think it's fair to say that, generally speaking, trustees fall into the role of dedicated and very interested community spokesman as far as health care needs are concerned.

This brings me to the next point I wanted to talk about. I'm now directing my remarks at the members of the opposition, all five of them, both the NDP member and members of the Social Credit Party. Mr. Chairman, I've been quite curious about their actions during the past several weeks, particularly with the nurses' strike. I would have expected different kinds of comments from the members, in view of the comments they have on record on more than one occasion during the past couple of years, about respecting with almost religious fervor the autonomy of hospital boards. Yet I think it's fair to say that the five members I've alluded to did everything they could, by way of public comment during the nurses' strike, to make the public believe the dispute was between the government and the nurses. That term was used again as recently as yesterday by the Leader of the Opposition: that the dispute was between the government of Alberta and the United Nurses of Alberta. Of course, we know it wasn't.

I can only guess at the motives of the members in promoting that kind of false image. The motive of the NDP member isn't hard to read. When you see him and Mr. Broadbent on television, joining the picket line and shrieking about what a terrible provincial government we have, we know what his motives were. But I'm curious as to the policy of the Social Credit members. Because I think they have kept a firm position with respect to the sanctity and recognition of the autonomy of any locally elected body. Yet in addresses on the steps of the Legislature and through the various media sources, they really did everything they could to promote the incorrect image that the dispute was between the nurses and the government.

I see this continuing. Other bargaining groups in the health care field are coming along. And again, especially the Member for Spirit River-Fairview is attempting to push that dispute onto the government's shoulders. Mr. Chairman, I don't know how that'll turn out, but I think the members are doing their constituents a disservice when they promote or enhance the image that hospital employees are employees not of the locally elected boards but of the provincial government. I wanted to mention that, because quite frankly it has troubled me. I don't know why a responsible, elected member of this Legisla-

ture would want to do those things.

Some comments were made on the status and situation of nursing homes in Alberta. I've received a preliminary report by CUPE, and have referred it to the department for assessment to see if some of its observations have validity. I understand CUPE will also make available to me a copy of its final report.

When CUPE writes its final report, I hope it will take some time to mention the good and positive things that are present in our nursing home system. I'm confident there's no better system in any other province in Canada. It's available at an extremely reasonable rate to the people who have to live there. I'm pleased with the comments I receive from families of those residents.

We know some nursing homes are not as well run as others. As far as I can determine, and I've looked into it pretty carefully, it's not a pattern. There's no pattern dividing private from public nursing homes; there's a scale of different levels of quality in both systems. Quite frankly, I think there's room for both private and public nursing homes to expand in Alberta.

I think some of the private ones — and I'm directing my remarks this morning toward the private nursing homes, because they're the ones that have been castigated — are the very best run nursing homes in the system. If the operators of those nursing homes can do that, and at the same time make a profit for the owners, I see nothing wrong with that. We provide many citizens with services of a social nature in a great variety of fields through the private sector and based on the profit motive. If the proper standards are met, and the residents are getting the kind of loving care and attention they ought to, I really don't see anything wrong with that.

There were some comments about the Hall report and, more particularly, the matter of extra billing. Mr. Chairman, I still say that I believe Alberta doctors are better off than any other doctors in Canada, insofar as their net income and their ability to select their way of billing patients are concerned. I am intrigued by some of the comments and suggestions that have recently been coming forward about the matter of extra billing.

A few months ago I caught by accident an historic film clip of that great pioneer in the medicare field, Tommy Douglas, expounding on how medicare would work. Mr. Douglas was saying, and I think I've got the quote down word for word: the only difference there will be is that the government will pay your doctor's bill, instead of you; that would be the only difference. Well, of course we know that's socialistic pie in the sky. It can't work that way. We're now hearing some interesting variations from unnamed similar philosophical sources who sit in this House, Mr. Chairman. We're now having to say: yes, the government will pay the doctor's bill instead of the patient, but we have to have some reasonable way of determining the doctor's fee.

Of course the hornet's nest is, how on earth do you control costs in this thing? You can't have a universal medical care system, service on demand, without having agreement on some reasonable level of services that would be paid for by the public purse, and expect a non-organized group to provide those services. By "non-organized" I mean a group — and I'm speaking of the doctors now — which is still part of the private sector.

I'm making these remarks because I really believe Alberta doctors today have the best of both worlds. The only fee schedule that is higher in Canada this year is in British Columbia, and it is only slightly higher in some aspects. Our taxation system, of course, is much more

attractive than the B.C. situation. On top of that, our doctors are allowed to incorporate as small businesses: many of them have. So there are those added benefits.

We are still the only province that doesn't have some kind of opting out legislation in force. We're trying to approach that in a reasonable way, but I still think it's important to realize that we have a hybrid here. We have a form of state medicine which is run via the insurance vehicle. We have services provided on demand by a professional group who are not state employees, yet we're trying to make them behave as if they are state employees. When I say "we", I mean Canadian society as a whole, not this Alberta government. So there's a dilemma that I'm sure is going to give Justice Hall some worries in arriving at his recommendations.

I don't think there's any point in my going over the status of extra billing at the present time. The latest statistics we have show that just over a third of Alberta doctors are still doing it. In our way of thinking, that's too high to be acceptable to the public.

Some hon. members raised questions about ambulance service in Alberta. Again, I think we can point to some pretty good progress. If we're looking at a complete system for a region like Alberta, with its particular geography and population pattern, we're talking about a combined air and ground ambulance system. Our air ambulance system has now been in place for a year, and is working well. The development of a ground ambulance system is well under way. The preliminary studies have been carried out. The department is now working and consulting with a variety of involved public groups. We're at the point where we're looking at, I think, five pieces of existing legislation that apply to a ground ambulance system. We're looking at a program of financing. We're looking at the problem of dealing with private operators, volunteer ambulance systems, and those that are municipally owned. I want to assure hon. members that work on developing a proposal for a ground ambulance system is well under way. The third component of such an integrated system, of course, will be the communication system linking the ambulances with the health care facilities, and linking the air and ground systems. Good progress is also being made on that aspect of the program, Mr. Chairman.

I think I've dealt with most of the major things brought up. I do want to respond for a moment to the comments of the Member for Calgary North Hill, re abortions. I think it's something that we as legislators have to be concerned about. As you know, the Criminal Code of Canada provides that therapeutic abortions are legal; they're considered an insurable medical procedure, if I can put it in that kind of terminology. Not only in Alberta but across Canada, I think we are developing an attitude and a system that makes it pretty easy for women of all ages to achieve those.

In my discussions with the College of Physicians and Surgeons and the Alberta Medical Association, I've been very concerned about the frustration the medical profession is expressing with respect to what's happening. Two things are happening. First of all, Mr. Chairman, I'm advised that they're finding it very difficult to recruit members of the profession to serve on the abortion assessment committees that are necessary in hospitals where those procedures are carried out. Secondly, the volume of business is such that virtually every applicant who comes in front of the committee is being approved to have the abortion carried out. The committees tell me they're doing this because they're relying on prescreening in the

privacy of their professional colleagues' offices.

I think we have to be concerned about the total numbers, and the pattern with respect to the status of single women and the high percentage of abortions carried out in the 15- to 19-year-old age bracket. The analysis of the statistics would seem to indicate at this time that in the latter group I mentioned — that is, single teenagers, 15 to 19; those represent about a third of the procedures and are usually first time and non-repeaters — those are being carried out as a means of birth control. If that is true, then we're certainly getting a long way away from the concept of therapeutic abortion, and why it ought to be ...

MR. CHAIRMAN: I apologize for interrupting the hon. minister, but the hon. Member for Three Hills has a group of visitors in the gallery that she would like to introduce, if the minister and the committee would to agree.

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

head: **INTRODUCTION OF SPECIAL GUESTS**

(reversion)

MRS. OSTERMAN: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman and members of the Assembly. I apologize for interrupting the hon. minister in the course of some very serious discussion on the running of his department.

It gives me a great deal of pleasure to be able to introduce to you, Mr. Chairman, and to the members of the Assembly, a class of grade 12 students from Prairie High in Three Hills. There are approximately 100 of them. They are accompanied by Jerry Unger, Ken Knight, and Kline Capps, who are teachers with this class. I look forward very much to attending their graduation on June 20. If you will all rise, you will receive the welcome of the House.

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

Department of **Hospitals and Medical Care** *(continued)*

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Mr. Minister.

MR. RUSSELL: Mr. Chairman, I'll just conclude by trying to answer the questions on the cost of those procedures to the medicare system. Last year, some \$590,000 was paid from medicare to Alberta doctors to carry out these abortion procedures. In addition to that, of course, there are the costs of hospitalization, which are probably in excess of \$1 million. I say "probably" because the stays involved average about one day. If we take an average cost per hospital day bed, it would work out well in excess of \$1 million. So I think the round figure of \$1 million is conservative. But it's there.

I think members of the Assembly would agree that as a collective group of legislators we are not able to do much about the problem by passing laws or cutting off funding. There is something that goes deeper, back to our own communities and our family situation, in trying to get better information about what's involved in these procedures, and trying to get back to some of the principles

and attitudes that are probably very important to our families, especially our young people.

To the hon. Member for Three Hills, I want to say I didn't know your class had come in while I was speaking, but I'm very glad they were here to hear my remarks because it's their age group and their colleagues throughout the province about whom we are concerned in this very serious developing problem.

Mr. Chairman, I think I've dealt generally with the points that were raised, and suggest it might now be appropriate to go through the votes. If I've missed anybody's questions, it wasn't intentionally and I'll try to get back to them. The only thing I didn't deal with is the concern of the Member for Spirit River-Fairview about the Berwyn hospital. I've written voluminous letters to many of his constituents on that matter within the past week, and I think he's got answers to his concerns in writing. So I won't take time in the House with that matter.

Agreed to:

1.01 — Minister's Office	\$151,863
1.02 — Deputy Minister's Office	\$571,870
1.03 — Professional Services	\$259,755
1.04 — Hospital Planning and Operations	\$2,348,067
1.05 — Health Care Insurance Plan Administration	\$12,467,846
1.06 — Finance and Administrative Services	\$4,902,719
1.07 — Policy Development	\$1,099,850
Total Vote 1 — Departmental Support Services	\$21,801,970
2.01 — Basic Health Services	\$118,618,000
2.02 — Optional Health Services	\$25,540,000
2.03 — Extended Health Benefits	\$13,451,000
2.04 — Out-of-province Hospital Costs	\$11,363,000
Total Vote 2 — Health Care Insurance	\$168,972,000
Vote 3 — Financial Assistance for Active Care:	
3.1 — Program Support	\$72,491,502
3.2 — Major Medical Referral and Research Centres	\$103,404,266
3.3 — Major Urban Medical and Referral Centres	\$188,399,975
3.4 — Other Referral Centres	\$82,775,976

3.5 — Specialized Health Care

DR. BUCK: I'd to ask a question, Mr. Chairman. I think it would fit in this vote, as it relates to specialized services. Mr. Minister, as the petrochemical industry is enlarging in this province, I think it's very appropriate that we have a look at a specialized unit that could deal with problems that could arise from a major catastrophe, say, in the Fort Saskatchewan area. I know there is a burn centre at the University Hospital, and that the Edmonton firemen do a lot of work towards the support of that facility. But part of that will be phased out as we move into the new health centre at the university.

I would like to know if the minister has given any consideration to two facilities, in the northeast or southeast parts of the city, and possibly a small unit to deal with one, two, or three people who could be injured in, say, the Fort Saskatchewan area. Maybe it's an area we

haven't addressed ourselves to. But if we did have a major calamity in the refinery area within a 25-mile radius of the city of Edmonton, it could cause us a major problem. I'd like to know if the minister has given this any consideration, and if he could give us some information on it.

MR. RUSSELL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It's something that probably will be addressed as programming is developed for the new Mill Woods and northeast Edmonton hospitals. I'm glad the hon. member referred to the burn unit program assisted and sponsored by the Edmonton firemen, because that's very important. The other essential things in place throughout the province are the emergency disaster programs each hospital has in place. As you know, they rehearse those once a year. Beyond that I can't give any specific information today on a special facility that might respond to the sort of catastrophe the hon. member is referring to. But the way programming is now developing for regional hospitals, I'm certain that would be addressed.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Chairman, rather than hold up the vote, can the minister check with his department, find out what plans are in place, and just write me a memo?

Agreed to:

3.5 — Specialized Health Care \$46,806,757

DR. CARTER: Mr. Chairman, while the minister is responding to the Member for Clover Bar, whether by memo or not, I wonder if he would also check into the same kind of facility in the Medicine Hat and Brooks areas, because of increased oil field activity down there. I understand that in Medicine Hat, in particular, there is a shortage of that kind of facility.

MR. RUSSELL: Mr. Chairman, I hope we don't get members popping up all over the House saying, we need a special kind of facility. I'd be remiss if I didn't mention the air ambulance program, which is really working well in response to this kind of thing.

3.6 — Community-based Hospital Care

MRS. FYFE: Can I ask a question, Mr. Chairman? I wonder if the Minister of Hospitals and Medical Care would just explain to me very briefly the basis for the operating funding for community-based hospitals. Is it per bed, plus inflation factor, or how is it determined?

MR. RUSSELL: It's more historic, Mr. Chairman. They look at the previous year's budget, whether there was a surplus or deficit, and the volume of business done by the hospital. Basic factors are applied, which recognize inflation in the market place, also increases for payment of staff. Recognition is given to any new programs that might have been approved for that particular institution. Then there is the annualization of developing programs that are in place, as they proceed on a yearly global budget. When you add up all those things and take those historic deficit and surplus factors into consideration, you come up with the new budget for each institution.

Agreed to:

3.6 — Community-based Hospital Care \$118,832,221
Total Vote 3 — Financial Assistance for
Active Care \$612,710,697

Vote 4 — Financial Assistance for Long-term Chronic Care

4.1 — Program Support \$2,467,183

4.2 — Long-term Chronic Care

MRS. FYFE: Mr. Chairman, I wonder if the minister would comment on the approval of an additional auxiliary hospital within the Edmonton region. From some comments I've heard, there are significant lengths of time on waiting lists for patients requiring entry to auxiliary hospitals. Often they are patients who are chronic, require immediate care, and simply cannot afford to wait long periods of time. I wonder what the progress is on approval of an additional auxiliary hospital.

MR. RUSSELL: Quite frankly, Mr. Chairman, that's puzzling us, not just in the Edmonton region but in Alberta. The mathematical yardsticks we use in Alberta — that is, X beds per so many thousand population — are very generous. Yet we know that even though those formulas will often show a surplus in the community, it's alleged that there still is a very long waiting list. I've discussed this with the chairman of the utilization committee, who will be reporting in July. They are going to pay particular emphasis to this, because it appears to be a phenomenon that's unique to Alberta, and we're curious as to why.

I think it's fair to say that we do have a pretty good, accurate reporting system with respect to the waiting list for the Edmonton region — district board No. 24, I think it is. They show us their figures monthly. Some private practitioners have told me that they believe a number of patients occupy active beds, all of whom perhaps don't show on those lists. In any event, for the next while anyway, I think it's not a bad a situation. We're going to be taking a much closer and better informed look at it within the next three-month period.

MRS. FYFE: I'd like to thank the minister for his answer. I have one further question, Mr. Chairman. I wonder if he would further consider the co-ordination or integration of auxiliary beds with active treatment beds. I'm speaking particularly of the Edmonton region, where you have different hospital boards and a different process of admission, so that one hospital board cannot really be responsible for its chronic patients who would better utilize auxiliary beds than active treatment beds. I wonder if the department has evaluated this move, and if the minister could make any comment on it.

MR. RUSSELL: Well, sure there are a lot of good arguments in support of integrated hospital boards and, in some instances, integrated physical facilities. I think it's harder to do in metropolitan regions, but some members know that they have combined general and auxiliary boards in communities in their own areas. On the evidence we have so far, I can't say that better service is given under any particular system. But I know my department officials have worked hard, wherever they can, to promote integration and what we call rationalization. It's not always easy to do, because of the local politics that are concerned and the community interests that are expressed in a variety of ways. But certainly the hon. Member for St. Albert is quite correct in the argument she puts forward.

Agreed to:	
4.2 — Long-term Chronic Care	\$60,149,016
4.3 — Specialized Long-term Chronic Care	\$1,156,190
Total Vote 4 — Financial Assistance for Long-term Chronic Care	\$63,772,389

Vote 5 — Financial Assistance for Supervised Personal Care:	
5.1 — Private Nursing Homes	\$28,125,090
5.2 — District Nursing Homes	\$19,943,568

5.3 — Voluntary Nursing Homes

DR. PAPROSKI: Mr. Chairman, just one question, if the minister has it at hand. If he doesn't, we'll pass it over and he can give it to me later. Approximately what amount of dollars are we sharing with the federal government regarding private nursing home care?

MR. RUSSELL: I'm not sure we're sharing any. I'll have to take that as notice and get back to you.

Agreed to:	
5.3 — Voluntary Nursing Homes	\$10,348,342
Total Vote 5 — Financial Assistance for Supervised Personal Care	\$58,417,000

Vote 6 — Financial Assistance for Capital Construction:	
6.1 — Program Support — Capital Construction	\$12,731,832
6.2 — Major Medical Referral and Research Centres — Capital Construction	-
6.3 — Major Urban Medical and Referral Centres — Capital Construction	\$27,560,693
6.4 — Other Referral Centres — Capital Construction	\$43,041,118
6.5 — Specialized Health Care — Capital Construction	\$1,352,000
6.6 — Community-based Hospital Care — Capital Construction	\$37,827,000

DR. PAPROSKI: Mr. Chairman, I have a question here also. It came up in reading; that is "... which provide an element of Active Care" Would the minister care to explain the implication of that comment?

MR. RUSSELL: Mr. Chairman, the vote we're on, the community-based hospitals, of course, are the smaller ones throughout rural Alberta, in the smaller communities that aren't specifically referred to in other votes. Generally we refer to them as giving level 1 treatment, whereas the health sciences centre would be level 3, and other less specialized hospitals are level 2. They have an element of active care in them, and that might be minor surgery, a medical ward, or whatever.

Agreed to:	
6.7 — Long-term Chronic Care — Capital Construction	\$1,716,000
6.8 — Supervised Personal Care — Capital Construction	\$2,043,500
Total Vote 6 — Financial Assistance for Capital Construction	\$126,272,143

Department Total	\$1,051,946,199
------------------	-----------------

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

[Motion carried]

Department of Housing and Public Works

MR. CHAIRMAN: Would the hon. minister wish to make some opening remarks?

MR. CHAMBERS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm pleased to be able at least to start my estimates today. They include the Department of Housing and Public Works and the operating estimates of the Alberta Housing Corporation and the Alberta Home Mortgage Corporation. I refer members to page 227 of the Estimates of Expenditure for the overview. Votes 1 to 4, which total some \$290 million, primarily involve Public Works. Vote 5, totalling about \$51 million, is the responsibility of Housing. Vote 6, \$44 million, and Vote 7, \$12.5 million, are for the Alberta Housing Corporation and the Alberta Home Mortgage Corporation respectively. The total budget to be voted is almost \$400 million. I would also point out to members that this does not include the capital budgets of the Alberta Housing Corporation or the Alberta Home Mortgage Corporation. However, these appear in summary form on pages 67 and 68 of the Budget Address.

The source of financing for the Alberta Housing Corporation and the Alberta Home Mortgage Corporation capital budgets is through debenture borrowing from the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund. The provincial fiscal commitment to affordable housing for Alberta citizens resulted in our involvement in about 25 per cent of total new housing starts in Alberta during 1979. With the level of construction starts expected to drop in 1980, from the past three-year average of 40,000 to somewhere between 25,000 and 30,000, this percentage could go even higher.

The reduction I mentioned is primarily due to two factors, both under the control of the federal government; they are, of course, the high interest rates and the cancellation of the capital cost allowance. As previously announced, in 1980 we are committed to finance up to 5,500 homes under the Alberta family home purchase program, and 4,500 rental units under the core housing incentive program. I might add that the response to the \$505 million announcement on these two programs on March 14, 1980, has, if anything, exceeded our expectations. Many builders who had not used our programs in the past, are now coming to us for financing.

The Alberta Home Mortgage Corporation has over \$50 million either committed or in the process to the development industry and Alberta municipalities, under the revolving trunk services program. We anticipate that applications for another \$50 million will be received during '80-81. I think it's fair to say that this program has become a major factor in increasing the supply of serviced lots in Alberta growth centres.

The Alberta Housing Corporation plans to start construction of almost 3,000 new housing units in 1980-81. Over 2,100 of these units will be for senior citizens and over 800 for low-income families. In addition, we're continuing with an aggressive land-banking and development program for both residential and industrial users.

[Mr. Purdy in the Chair]

Mr. Chairman, I will touch briefly on some highlights of the grants program administered by Housing. The Alberta pioneers' repair program, of course, is very popular with our senior citizens. As of March 31, 1980, over 30,000 applications have been received and 28,000 approved. It should be pointed out that the senior citizens have up to five years to spend their home improvement grants. This government has significantly increased its commitment to the self-help program, the so-called CHAP program. In 1980, over 1,000 families will build their own homes. We're now sponsoring training courses for these families in about 80 municipalities, and the program is expanding rapidly.

Another program that was started in 1979, with which I'm sure members are familiar, is the neighborhood improvement program component of the community services program. In 1979, 82 projects were approved in 44 communities, for a total commitment of \$6 million. In 1980, 94 projects were approved in 65 communities, for a total commitment of \$7.5 million.

This government is continuing the commitment to provide housing for native people and people living in isolated settlements in the province. Plans are under way to construct approximately 500 homes in 1980, under four separate programs: the rural and native program, the rural mobile-home program, the transitional housing program, and the rural home assistance program.

Plans for 1980 include the four additional initiatives I recently announced, including, first, the Alberta municipal housing incentive program, which provides to municipalities grants up to \$2,000 per eligible unit; secondly, the municipal non-profit housing program, which will fund approximately 500 more rental units in Edmonton and Calgary in 1980, in addition to the 400 units that were already in the original budget; the Alberta home conversion program, which will provide financing for up to 500 new suites in conversions; and fourthly, the one-third capital grant program for senior citizens' non-profit housing groups, which will finance up to 500 new senior citizens' units this year.

Mr. Chairman, I think it will be clear to all members that the province is committed to stimulating the supply of affordable housing in Alberta. We intend to achieve this goal through co-operation with the private sector and with municipalities. To summarize our planned activity in 1980-81, we anticipate financing up to 16,500 units. This government's record in the area of assisting in the provision of an affordable supply of housing is second to none in Canada.

Continuing the government's policy of decentralization of government facilities, the Department of Housing and Public Works continues to be involved in a program of construction of provincial buildings at a number of locations across the province. During 1980-81, Public Works has 12 provincial buildings for which design work is either under way or about to commence. The beneficial results of this policy have had an effect which, I think, members will agree touches every area of our province.

This department plans to construct three major office complexes in the city of Edmonton, in order to maximize the economic benefits of equalizing owned with leased space, and to decentralize government administrative functions from the Legislature area. The projects will be located where they will take advantage of existing and proposed public transit routes. Planning is under way on the new Agriculture building at 113th Street and 71st Avenue. Design work will commence shortly on buildings to house a number of departments, one to be located at

97th Street and 103 A Avenue, and the other at 122nd Street and 104th Avenue.

Two major renovation projects are nearing completion here in the government centre. The Natural Resources Building is being completely upgraded to house the administrative offices of the Department of the Attorney General. The Administration Building is also undergoing a complete interior renovation, and will provide space for divisions of a new corporate tax division of the Treasury Department. These two projects are fully integrated with the Legislature grounds concept.

The Legislature grounds landscaping and utility upgrading project is continuing, as I'm sure members are observing. The emphasis for the 1980-81 fiscal year will be placed on the underground elements; namely, the south parkade, the north/south pedway, and the east parkade; the 107th Street realignment and bus terminal, and the selection of landscape elements to complement and complete the green scheme.

Initial planning is scheduled to begin about July 1 this year for a new industrial training campus to relieve overcrowding at the Northern Alberta Institute of Technology, particularly in the area of training apprentices. Construction will commence in the spring of 1981, with completion scheduled for the fall of 1983. It will have the capacity to serve some 1,000 students. In addition to the projects included in the Public Works budget, this department administers a number of capital projects on behalf of several Crown agencies, including treasury branches, the Alberta Liquor Control Board, and others.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, I have highlighted only a few of the activities to be undertaken by this department in the 1980-81 fiscal year. I'll be happy to provide any additional information to hon. members during the course of the review of the department's estimates.

DR. BUCK: I want to make one or two comments to the minister. I'd like to say that the minister is trying to solve some of the problems we have in housing. But I'd like to say to the minister that the government seems to have lost some of its initiative in providing leadership in some of the new things that could be done in housing. It seems the minister's or the department's philosophy is that if you throw enough money around, something good is going to happen. Most of the time something good does happen, but it doesn't seem to provide any direction as to any long-term solution to the problems.

The one area I'd like the minister to give some consideration to, and possibly make some comment on, is the studies of energy-efficient housing. I don't think we can go on disregarding the fact that we should have more energy-efficient housing; also some of the innovative and creative uses of our present land, and alternative housing design concepts. The fact that we don't seem to be looking at too much experimental housing causes me some concern.

Also, maybe the minister can indicate to the committee the melding or the combined efforts of government and the private sector as we approach innovative housing concepts. We seem to be developing the philosophy that government is the fount of all knowledge. I think the private sector probably comes up with some of the most innovative and efficient answers. I'd just like to know what the two sectors are doing in some of these areas.

I'd also like to know what role the Land Use Forum plays in some of the concepts we're looking at to possibly use some of the more marginal lands available, especially in the major urban areas, plus the government's or the

minister's philosophy on satellite cities. Mr. Chairman, we will be covering some of these areas in the individual votes, but the minister can make a comment or two on some of those brief ones.

Lastly, I would like to know if the minister sees any hope of some of the red tape being cut as far as applications by developers go, to try to get housing units on stream with, may I say, a maximum of six months waiting time, rather than 18, 24, or 36 months that it seems to take now, from the time an application comes in until we start building houses. With money costing as much as it now does, I think we have to look at cutting down the time it takes to get product on stream. So with those brief comments, Mr. Chairman, I'd be pleased to hear the minister's response.

MR. CHAMBERS: Mr. Chairman, I'm always pleased to receive constructive advice. My friend from Clover Bar has made a number of good points. I would say, though, that I personally consider that these programs we have in place and that I've recently announced are innovative. I think they're carefully designed to go a long way toward producing supply and also affordability in the province. Perhaps we can cover a number of the points the Member for Clover Bar mentioned when we go through the individual vote details.

With regard to energy, I would say that this province has been a leader in the area of energy efficiency. Some years ago, Public Works carried out a comprehensive study of some government buildings, in terms of energy efficiency, and found that often by implementing little in the way of capital improvements, significant operating savings were affected. These were in a number of areas, but would include controls — turning off lights and fans when they were not required — and a number of different areas that effected significant savings. These programs are being implemented throughout government buildings by the Department of Government Services.

In the area of housing, we have — and members can observe as we cover the housing vote — an innovative grants program, which has been ongoing for some time. A number of grants have been given to people who have approached the department with what seemed to be innovative and novel ideas in that area. Hopefully, over time this will result in some breakthroughs.

As far as the use of marginal lands, I think we would all agree that it's most desirable to construct buildings, or to cover with concrete, if you like, the poorest lands rather than the best lands. I think that's got to be an ongoing objective of everyone in whatever area, municipal or otherwise. However, there are often circumstances where this is difficult to accomplish, particularly when a municipality might be surrounded by nothing but good land. Therefore, it's inevitable that a certain amount of good farmland will be consumed, as it is all over the world, with population growth and ongoing construction.

With regard to satellite cities, of course these have to fit regional and community plans. Personally, I think there's a lot of merit in the well-thought-out development of satellite cities and communities. With proper transportation access, and with consideration of soil grade, I think these communities offer quite an attractive alternative to growth from the core of major municipalities, when one looks at the possibility for savings on land costs and, therefore, more affordability in housing.

As regards red tape, of course one has the planning process to take into account, which objective, necessarily or not necessarily, is the same as production in terms of

housing. I think the municipal incentive grants announced last week, which we're introducing — with the base formula, the 50 per cent, the 75, and over 100 per cent; the \$2,000 grants — will be definite motivators for municipalities to streamline and speed up that process.

MR. GOGO: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. With reference to Housing and Public Works, I'd like to make some general comments and pose a couple of questions. They concern policy, and maybe the minister could have the answers prior to the conclusion of his votes. I'd like to pose the questions early, before we get to the votes.

The first comment I'd like to make, Mr. Chairman: being from southern Alberta, I spend a lot of time in the air. And it's certainly encouraging to see the results of the department's policies when you fly over rural Alberta and look at the tremendous new development in terms of housing. I'm not one to think the private sector is not doing a good job. But I happen to know for a fact that many of those homes are there only because of the role of the Department of Housing and Public Works, with the sponsorship of the Alberta Home Mortgage Corporation. The announcement the other day in the House by the minister with regard to housing is an example of initiatives by the department, in accordance with government policy, to provide affordable housing and rental accommodation to Albertans. For whatever reason, the media haven't commented on it. Maybe so much good news comes out that they haven't got time to print it all. I think it's a shame that most Albertans don't have the opportunity of hearing about that.

The pioneers' repair program speaks for itself, Mr. Chairman, simply by the number of applications that come forward. There's no question that many, many senior citizens would end up in institutions, because they just don't have the means or the ability to make those improvements to enable them to stay in their homes.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to make some comments relative to affordable housing, and a policy question or two. But before that, I'd like to pose a question to the minister with regard to the land-banking policy of the department. I understand that about the only way government can have an effect on land banking, in terms of the price of residential land, is to acquire about one-third of land that exists in municipalities. I would appreciate if the minister could comment on that later in his estimates.

The Member for Clover Bar raised points regarding conservation in government buildings. I guess the comment I'd like to make is: it seems inevitable that when one sees a light switch, one flips it on. I'm constantly amazed, as we see these new buildings being developed, that we have no end of lighting built into the design. Then Government Services has the problem of trying to institute programs not to have people [turn] on light switches. I'd like the minister to comment with regard to the relationship between his department and the Alberta architects who design these buildings. I think it's fundamental that they work together in order to effect meaningful conservation.

With regard to policy questions in affordable housing, Mr. Chairman, I think we all recognize that not only the country, but particularly Alberta, is unique in terms of the mobility of people. My information tells me that Canadians are moving about once every five years. We're very mobile. So the question of affordable housing is obviously very important for a variety of reasons, not the least of which is that people keep moving around. I'm

very pleased that in the past year or so the minister has seen fit to change the policy with regard to the home ownership program, whereby somebody in Edmonton who is transferred to Calgary or Lethbridge, and has already purchased his first home in the province, is now able to purchase another home, and perhaps even a third home as a result of moves, on condition that the equity realized from the previous home is invested. I think that was a very positive move, Mr. Chairman.

However, when we get to mortgages held by the Alberta Home Mortgage Corporation — and I don't know the numbers in this case — a situation has developed where an existing home is for sale, a potential purchaser would like to buy that home, and the mortgage is carried by the Alberta Home Mortgage Corporation. The prospective purchaser doesn't have much money, and is looking for affordable housing. They make an offer to purchase that property, which is normal. Under our affordable housing program, 5 per cent of the down payment is normal.

However, it seems that problems originate. I'd like the minister to respond to this question that I want to pose to him. The existing mortgage on the property is with the Alberta Home Mortgage Corporation. The purchaser would simply like to make a down payment and take it over. But because of income limitations, they'd like to qualify under the subsidy program. It seems that the present policy is that they make an offer to purchase this property. At the same time they have to go to the Alberta Home Mortgage Corporation regional office and make an application for the mortgage and a separate application for subsidy. The net result is that they can't take over the existing mortgage and get the subsidy program. A new mortgage has to be created. With that there again has to be an appraisal fee, legal costs for drafting the mortgage, the real estate fee, which is inherent in the transaction, the 1 or 1.5 per cent mortgage insurance fee, that have already been paid once.

I suggest that when we look at the principle of providing affordable housing, the real intent is to allow young Albertans to get into the type of housing they can afford, qualify for the subsidy program, and avoid rental accommodation by having their own home. But what happens in many cases is that the legal costs, the appraisal fee costs, and the closing costs for the property, are higher than the down payment. Really nothing has changed at all. The property hasn't moved two inches. The Alberta Home Mortgage Corporation still has the mortgage. So we make a few fat, wealthy people out of the transaction, but we don't seem to deliver affordable housing to that person. For whatever reason, we have to create a whole new mortgage and a whole new ball game.

Surely, Mr. Chairman, when I see what the Alberta Housing Corporation has done in the last five years, there are ways that that could be changed. Really, that's a policy question. Therefore, Mr. Chairman, I'd like to leave with the minister the question: is he prepared to review the policy whereby a person can purchase an existing home with an existing Alberta Home Mortgage Corporation mortgage, and at the same time apply for and receive, if they're qualified, the subsidy program? In relation to my job as MLA for Lethbridge West, the minister has always responded to new ideas. He's innovative, he comes up with new ideas, and I think he should be congratulated. From my point of view, the Alberta Home Mortgage Corporation, under the Department of Housing and Public Works, is doing an excellent job.

Thank you very much.

MR. ZAOZIRNY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'll keep my remarks relatively brief. I've received a note suggesting that I ought not speak. It comes not from my caucus, but from the hon. Member for Clover Bar. [laughter]

DR. BUCK: I didn't say you couldn't speak, just don't give us your lawyer speech.

MR. ZAOZIRNY: With some difficulty, I will resist the temptation to respond to the suggestions by the hon. Member for Lethbridge West that the cost of legal fees is an impediment to home ownership.

I do want to bring two matters to the attention of the minister. Firstly, I very much support the recently announced program, the \$97 million infusion to increase the supply of housing. An integral part of that program — and we're still awaiting the details — has to do with the provincial government trying to meet the gap created by the federal government vacating the capital cost allowance program. Keeping it brief, I suppose my hope would be that the government is consulting with industry and the investment community to ensure that when the details of the program are announced, it will be sufficiently attractive to ensure that in fact it encourages investment. I think it would be a tragedy if such a well-intentioned program wasn't of sufficient magnitude to ensure that it is responded to and acted upon in the way the government wants.

The only other point I would make has to do with the question of mobile homes — a matter which I raised with the minister in question period at one point; namely, the difficult situation many mobile-home owners in Alberta are faced with in trying to sell their homes, because the market for mobile homes has deteriorated dramatically in the last few years. At one time the minister was asked whether the existing rural mobile-home program could be expanded by setting up a very simple agency which would allow mobile-home owners to notify the department that they were attempting to sell their home, give them the particulars on it, and the asking price.

When the government is launching a distribution of mobile homes in parts of rural Alberta, possibly some of these homes could be utilized, which would have, the benefit of allowing the existing mobile-home owner in the city an expanded market for his unit, and might very possibly provide some mobile units to the government at a significantly lower cost than the brand-new ones being purchased off the assembly line, as I understand it. I am still having some difficulty appreciating why that would be so impractical. I'd appreciate the minister commenting on that.

Thank you.

MRS. CRIPPS: Mr. Chairman, my question is regarding the Alberta Home Mortgage Corporation. In the case of divorce — and I'm talking about single parents here — or similar circumstances where there's joint ownership of property, when one partner wishes to divest himself or herself of the interest, they cannot apply through the Alberta Home Mortgage Corporation unless they sell the home and purchase another one. If they sell the home and purchase a similar or different home, they can apply to the Alberta Home Mortgage Corporation and, in most cases, would probably become eligible for the subsidy. It seems to me that the additional cost incurred by necessitating the exchange of homes is expensive and useless. It's needless. I can't, for the life of me, understand why moving from one home to another would be necessary

when buying out a partnership in the home.

The other question I have is on metric measurement in plans to become eligible for Alberta Home Mortgage Corporation loans. You can't buy materials in metric, you can't build the home in metric, but you have to change the plans to metric. That also seems to me a needless and unnecessary expense.

DR. PAPROSKI: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Very briefly, I'd like to make a comment again regarding the interesting program of providing low-interest loans for the development of suites or housekeeping rooms in homes, especially with reference to basement suites. Firstly, when I mentioned this and raised it as a question earlier in the sitting, I failed to mention a person we all know very well in Edmonton and Alberta; that is, the late member of Edmonton council, Mrs. Julia Kinisky, who fought hard and long to obtain more basement suites, as we all know.

Even at that time, she recognized a great need for low-rental accommodation, or rental accommodation that would at least be more reasonable for people who are renting, and to assist those who are paying off mortgages. I'm just indicating here and now that she would be very pleased indeed to hear that we are finally moving in that direction. I'm sure that many citizens out there would be very pleased. So I would like to make that comment, and ask the minister again whether his department is going to make representation to municipal councils or authorities to encourage them to rezone areas to allow housekeeping rooms and basement suites.

MR. COOK: Mr. Chairman, I'd like to make a couple of brief comments. One is to congratulate the minister for introducing a very fine program to the House in the last two weeks, to develop affordable housing for Albertans. I think the minister should be congratulated on his initiative. I welcome that.

Secondly, I'd like to express a concern about urban development on prime agricultural land. I'd like to question the minister on the role of the department in land banking property on Nos. 1, 2, and 3 soils in the Edmonton/Calgary corridor; secondly, on providing public facilities. For example, I certainly hope the new educational facility for technology in the Edmonton area would not be located on good soils. New jails, hospitals, and facilities like that should certainly not be located on prime agricultural soils. I wonder if the minister could give us a policy statement as to the department's view on protecting agricultural land as it acquires property around urban areas and promotes urban growth.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Would the minister care to respond?

MR. CHAMBERS: Thanks, Mr. Chairman. First of all, I appreciated the comments of the Member for Lethbridge West. As I'm sure members became aware, we have had some discussion on the point he raised before with regard to the remortgaging or a different purchaser. In looking into that, I haven't been able to see where it is technically feasible to do what the member suggests. But always having an open mind, I will look at it once more.

[Mr. Appleby in the Chair]

With regard to the question of the Member for Calgary Forest Lawn on mobile homes, again I would point out that there are a number of difficulties in attempting to

acquire existing older mobile homes, not the least of which is the number of people the Legislative Assembly allows me to have in the department to administrate. That would obviously be a time-consuming operation, which would require considerable additional manpower. Furthermore, there is a difficulty in appraising what an older mobile home is worth, and that's part of the administrative difficulty.

In acquiring mobile homes for our rural mobile-home program, we of course look for certain standards in the houses. The best way to achieve these, of course, is to tender new mobile homes which meet those standards. So that is our policy, hon. member, and will continue to be; that is, to tender new mobile homes on the open market.

The question of the Member for Drayton Valley. Again, we've had discussions on this, but it is extremely difficult to change policy in the area of acquiring existing homes. I think the way the program now operates, in terms of acquisition of existing homes, is the only feasible way it can operate.

As regards metric, of course metrication of the building industry, and metrication in any area, is set by national agreement. The building industry was converted as of such and such a date, as was the petroleum industry, and so forth. So that's where we're at; it's a case of national standards.

With regard to the basement suite conversion program that the Member from Edmonton Kingsway mentioned, I'm indeed hopeful that municipalities will take up that program to the maximum possible extent. Our department will be carrying out an information and advertising program to make sure everybody is aware of the program and therefore can assess whether they can access it in the area in which they live, zoning permitted.

Land banking — the Member for Edmonton Glengarry. When the department banks land, it always takes into account the quality of soils. Whether it's land for a provincial building, an institution, housing, or whatever, soil consideration is a factor. It's not always possible to acquire land in a No. 5 soil area. The structures have to be amenable to the area in which they are located, and that often depends on the quality of the soil in that area. But it is taken into account to the maximum possible extent.

MR. CRAWFORD: There seems to be a consensus, Mr. Chairman, that the committee rise, report progress, and ask leave to sit again.

[Motion carried]

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

MR. APPLEBY: Mr. Speaker, the Committee of Supply has had under consideration certain resolutions and reports as follows:

Resolved that there be granted to Her Majesty for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1981, sums not exceeding the following for the purposes described:

For the Department of Hospitals and Medical Care: \$21,801,970 for departmental support services, \$168,972,000 for health care insurance, \$612,710,697 for financial assistance for active care, \$63,772,389 for financial assistance for long-term chronic care, \$58,417,000 for financial assistance for supervised personal care, and \$126,272,143 for financial assistance for capital construction.

Mr. Speaker, the Committee of Supply has had under

consideration certain resolutions, reports progress thereon, and requests leave to sit again.

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

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, on Monday afternoon the House will continue in Committee of Supply with the Department of Housing and Public Works, and Solicitor General. In the evening, whatever stage we're at, we propose to do the Executive Council estimates at 8

o'clock, followed by the Department of Labour.

As to evening sittings next week, I've indicated Monday and, in all likelihood, Tuesday as well. I can't help hon. members with their plans beyond that.

Mr. Speaker, I move we call it 1 o'clock.

MR. SPEAKER: Does the Assembly agree?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

[At 12:55 p.m., pursuant to Standing Order 5, the House adjourned to Monday at 2:30 p.m.]

