

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ALBERTA**Title: **Wednesday, May 6, 1981 2:30 p.m.**

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

**PRAYERS**

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

head: **PRESENTING PETITIONS**

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to present to the Legislative Assembly a petition of some 360 Albertans requesting and humbly showing that further paving take place on Highway No. 64 during the current year.

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

MR. KNAAK: Mr. Speaker, I wish to advise that pursuant to Standing Order 83, I have examined the petitions received for private Bills and wish to report that the petitions for the following Bills have complied with Standing Order 77:

The Katherine Jean Jackson Adoption Act; The Honourable Patrick Burns Settlement Amendment Act, 1981; The Calgary Golf and Country Club Amendment Act, 1981; The Calgary Research and Development Authority Act; The Eau Claire Trust Company Act; The Edmonton Ambulance Authority Act; The April Marie Harris Limitation Act; The Paramount Life Insurance Company Amendment Act, 1981; The Alberta Bible Institute Amendment Act, 1981; and The Honourable Patrick Burns Settlement Amendment Act, 1981 (No. 2).

head: **TABLING RETURNS AND REPORTS**

MR. ADAIR: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to file with the Legislature Library five copies of A Study of Economic Alternatives for East-Central Alberta.

head: **INTRODUCTION OF SPECIAL GUESTS**

MR. STROMBERG: Mr. Speaker, it's my privilege this afternoon to introduce to you and to members of the Legislature eight students from the Camrose constituency. These students are from the Camrose public school Challenge program for gifted children. They are accompanied by their teacher, Bob Larson, and parents Mrs. Thomson and Mrs. Florreng. They are seated in the public gallery, and I will ask them to rise and be recognized by members of the Legislature.

MR. STEVENS: Mr. Speaker, it's my privilege to introduce to you, and through you to members of the Assembly, 50 students from two grade 8 classes at the Manachaban school in Cochrane. On their behalf, Mr. Speaker, I would like to mention, too, a welcome back to the Assembly from your recent trip to Ontario with other members on behalf of our Assembly and the people of

Alberta.

The students are accompanied by their assistant principal, Bill Bell; two teachers' aides from the community, Vi Ankerstjerne and Dolores Hardy; and a special visitor, Mr. Geoff Bailey, who is an Australian teacher on the exchange program that brings Mr. Bailey and his family to Alberta, and the other teacher and family from Alberta are now in Australia. They're seated in the members gallery, and perhaps they would rise and be welcomed by the members of the Assembly.

MRS. OSTERMAN: Mr. Speaker, as the MLA from the Three Hills constituency, it gives me a great deal of pleasure to have two bonuses today: one is the marvellous rain and snow my constituency needed so badly, and the other is the group of very perky grade 6 students from the Trochu Valley school. They're in the public gallery, accompanied by their teachers Bill Cunningham and Robert Tullikopf, and their supervisors Mrs. Gloria Knievel, Mr. Pete Frere, and Mr. and Mrs. Bryan Dowell. I would ask them to rise and receive the warm welcome of the House.

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, I'm very pleased to introduce to you, and through you to the members of the Assembly, 19 students from the University of Western Ontario, accompanied by their teacher, Professor Randy Oiling. As well, there are 10 students from the University of Alberta. The students from the University of Western Ontario are here on an exchange and will be dealing with some of the cogent issues facing us in western Canada and Alberta. I've had an opportunity to discuss a few of those with them in the past few minutes.

I would only note that an outstanding alumnus from the University of Western Ontario distinguished himself in this Assembly: our previous Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Mr. Don Getty. I hope that through the question period, which they will attend, the rest of us show off for our visitors to the same extent that Mr. Getty did. Mr. Speaker, I would ask that they rise and receive the welcome on behalf of the Assembly of Alberta.

MR. WOO: Mr. Speaker, I have the pleasure of two introductions this afternoon. First, through you to the members of the Assembly, I would like to introduce a group of 11 grades 7 and 9 students from Broadmoor school in the constituency of Edmonton Sherwood Park. They are accompanied by their principal, James Story, and teachers Allicen Hershman and Ted Griffith. They are seated in the members gallery, and I would ask them to rise and receive the welcome of the House.

Mr. Speaker, with respect to my second group, I have been assured by Mr. Art Napoleon, the Cree teacher accompanying this group, that he will not fall out of the gallery laughing if I attempt the Cree pronunciation of this particular school.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to introduce to you, and through you to members of the Assembly, a group of 17 students from the Kiskhinamoo Chetwynd alternate school in B.C. They are accompanied by teachers Chic Sharp, Cal McConnell, Art Napoleon, and Patti Gordon. They are seated in the public gallery, and I would ask them now to rise and receive the warm welcome of this Assembly.

head: **ORAL QUESTION PERIOD****Energy Meetings**

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs. I certainly want to give him the opportunity to demonstrate his capability of answering questions today. I thought that would be a good place to start.

Mr. Speaker, in his responsibility for co-ordinating the activities of the province and the federal government, could the hon. minister indicate whether the next meeting of the energy ministers has been established, and whether a date has been established at this point in time?

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, I'll have to reserve articulating that position on behalf of the Leader of the Opposition. As much as I would like to answer a question for him, unfortunately it will have to wait until the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources returns. He will answer that question.

MR. NOTLEY: He flunked his first question.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, I'll have to try again, so the minister can demonstrate his excitement to this Legislature.

With regard to the meeting held in Jasper in preparation for this federal/provincial meeting, the date of which we do not know, could the minister indicate whether outside companies, private companies, or individuals were brought in for consultation in setting Alberta's energy position now?

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, while I would not want to answer on behalf of the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, I think the comments he made previously are very apt right now: in terms of developing a strategy, I'm sure you cannot expect the strategy to be laid before the House; in terms of the full details of what emerged in Jasper, I think it's best that that question rest until the minister or the Premier is back.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, to the hon. minister. I wasn't asking about the details of the meeting; I was asking what type of persons participated. Is it only cabinet members, or are private individuals or companies involved in the discussion as well?

Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question to the minister, in his responsibility. Are the energy negotiations on schedule at the present time, and does July 1, which is a very sensitive date at this point, look like a possible date for reaching an agreement?

MR. JOHNSTON: There again, I'm sure the hon. Leader of the Opposition would not want me to move down the trail of speculation. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I can't comment more than I have.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the hon. minister. I believe the hon. minister is missing the point. The question the hon. Leader of the Opposition was asking was: in the Jasper energy meeting, were companies such as Alsands and Esso Resources invited to sit in on the discussions to state their positions? A timetable may be critical for them.

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, I recall the words of the Speaker yesterday. He asked for divine wisdom. I think I would ask that that come to the hon. Member for Clover Bar as well, because I've restated the answer several times: I will not answer that question until the hon. Minister of Energy and Natural Resources or the Premier is back.

**Ambulance Services**

MR. R. SPEAKER: We recognize that no one in this government wants to answer until the Premier is here, but I'll try another minister, the Minister of Hospitals and Medical Care. The question is with regard to ambulances. Could the minister clarify today whether ambulances are the responsibility of the municipalities of Alberta or of the province of Alberta?

MR. SPEAKER: It would seem to me that this is a question of what the law is.

MR. CRAWFORD: Try the research department.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, yesterday the minister made a statement in the Legislature: "In the meantime I can only reiterate that it has always been a municipal responsibility." Could the minister at this time confirm that policy of the government?

MR. RUSSELL: At the present time that is correct, Mr. Speaker.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question. In the minister's studies of the proposed breakdowns between provincial and municipal support, can the minister indicate what the support is at present? Is it funded 100 per cent by the municipalities, or is there any provincial support at this time?

MR. RUSSELL: No, there is no provincial support at this time, Mr. Speaker.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, to the hon. minister. Can the minister indicate to the Assembly if, in his studies of the situation as it applies to rural areas, the delivery of ambulance service in rural areas is entirely in the private sector, or is it mostly associated with hospitals?

MR. RUSSELL: Mr. Speaker, before I answer that question, I should add one qualification to my previous answer. There is some provincial support by way of the hospital benefits plan, whereby the cost of transporting patients between hospital institutions in the provincial service is paid for by the province plus, of course, 100 per cent of the costs of air ambulance service. So there is that provincial support.

Insofar as the delivery of services throughout rural Alberta, it's a mixture of voluntary ambulance services run by groups of citizen volunteers; in some cases it's run by municipalities, and in others by commercial services.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the hon. minister. In view of the pending agreement between Smith's and the city of Edmonton, what future does the government of Alberta anticipate or assess at this stage for private ambulance services in Alberta? Is it the view of the government that this should ultimately be

publicly operated through either the hospital system or municipal systems?

MR. RUSSELL: That issue hasn't been concluded at this time, Mr. Speaker.

MR. NOTLEY: A supplementary question to the hon. minister. In light of the city of Edmonton's position with regard to Smith's, has the government of Alberta any viewpoint with respect to this particular issue? As part of its long-term policy, would the government encourage municipalities to acquire ambulance services which are now privately run?

MR. RUSSELL: Mr. Speaker, I think that's completely a matter that rests with the feelings and disposition of the various municipal governments throughout Alberta.

I can recall in the early '60s when I was an alderman on Calgary city council, the municipal government there felt very strongly that the service was best provided by a variety of competing private companies and managed for the services on that basis. In the intervening 15 years, the present council has come to the view that it ought to be municipally owned and operated through their fire department. That looks like it was a very good decision. The evolution of services in the case of Edmonton has been quite different. So I really believe that the local council is best qualified to decide on the kind of service they wish.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the minister. Has there been any study of the impact of the air ambulance scheme funded by the province, particularly in rural areas, because of the lack of any systematic ground transportation system; perhaps of abuse of the air ambulance system? It has been brought to my attention that sometimes patients have been sent by air ambulance when they could have gone by ground ambulance, but the cost would be so prohibitive. Has there been any study and review of that? More particularly, is that matter under assessment in the government's ongoing review?

MR. RUSSELL: I would say the answer to that is yes, Mr. Speaker, because annual statistics and reports are presented. The method by which the system works is that an air ambulance is only paid for if it's requested by a doctor. So on the basis of a doctor's representation and decision, the service is paid for as billed by the company providing the service. That's the way all doctors' services are provided. I think it rests upon the professional integrity of the doctor. If any MLA knows of abuses, of course I'd be glad to receive those in my office.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the hon. minister. In light of the fact that we have varying levels of ambulance service across the province, can the minister indicate if the government is in a position to bring in some legislation or update the regulations so there would be at least a minimum standard across the province? Is the minister looking at that?

MR. RUSSELL: Yes we are, Mr. Speaker. At this time I'm not sure how much detail I should go into in the question period about a very broad and complex topic that's under pretty careful review by a variety of people within government, both at the elected and non-elected levels.

Insofar as minimum standards are concerned, that's

presently the responsibility of several areas of government, with respect to motor vehicles, manpower, equipment, and those kinds of things. I think a good objective to try to reach would be to put the responsibility and the description of those standards into one document with one department responsible. As far as I'm concerned personally, that's my objective at the present time.

#### Highway Clean-Up

MRS. CRIPPS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Transportation. On Saturday, May 2, the highways across Alberta came in for a massive clean-up campaign when the 4-H'ers donned their brilliant orange vests and converged on the ditches. Does the minister have a report on that campaign?

MR. KROEGER: Mr. Speaker, I don't have a formal report. I was out on the road on Saturday, though, and watched what was going on. I can simply say that we had about 5,500 young people; quite a crew. We covered over 5,000 kilometres of highway. I believe they gathered up almost 50,000 bags of the things people throw out of their cars.

#### Emission Standards

MR. NOTLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to direct this question to the hon. Minister of Environment. It concerns sulphur dioxide and hydrogen sulphide emissions from Syncrude. Is the minister in a position to advise the House why the one-half hour air quality standard for both hydrogen sulphide and sulphur dioxide was eliminated on September 10, in spite of the specification of such a standard in Part 1 of the Clean Air Regulations published in August 1975? What were the reasons for dropping that one-half hour standard?

MR. COOKSON: Mr. Speaker, I'd have to look more carefully at the question the member has asked. In some instances I think we shift the standards because they're not sufficiently accurate with respect to a short testing period. But perhaps I can take the question as notice and respond to the member.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a further supplementary question to the hon. minister, given the minister's answer on October 23, 1980, that where a company violates emission standards:

The first procedure is to approach that organization and ask them to account for excessive emissions. We do that in co-operation with industry, which I think is the most practical way to function.

As the minister knows, the one-half hour standard is more strict than the one-hour standard. To the minister's knowledge, was there any representation from Syncrude? And was the elimination of the standard taken in the public interest or in the interest of "co-operation with industry"?

MR. COOKSON: Again, Mr. Speaker, I would have to look at the particular situation. I can simply say that we do try to co-operate with industry. After all, they're an important part of our society. They provide jobs for our constituents. I think that's the first approach that is only proper. If there is a disagreement, we have a disagreement.

The standards insofar as both Syncrude and Suncor

are as strict as any standards across Canada. I've said before that we have continuous joint studies with the provinces with regard to emissions in that general area. We have no record or evidence as yet that there's any detriment to both the health of people and the environment in general.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the hon. minister. Again quoting the minister from October 23:

If you reach the point where a company, an organization, or an individual is consistently exceeding the emissions and violates the certificate of variance, then the procedure we take is clearly spelled out if we deem it necessary to prosecute.

In view of the decision to drop the one-half hour standard, which in fact represents a permanent certificate of variance by another name, why did the government not follow the normal procedure spelled out in The Clean Air Act, which he just referred to a moment ago.

MR. COOKSON: Again, Mr. Speaker, it's a complex area for me to respond to in the question period. So far as I know, these adjustments are made on occasion because of the difficulty of evaluation. We have found, for example, that in testing emissions over a general area, we cannot necessarily pin down the emission from a particular stack or stacks in the area or whether it is coming from some other source totally. If the member is suggesting that in some way we violate the Clean Air Regulations — and that seems to be the implication in the question — again I would have to take it as notice. It's not at any time the intention to violate what's required under the regulations. If in some way that has happened, we'll certainly rectify it.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a further supplementary question to the minister. I refer to the emission standards from Alberta Environment on the one-half hour basis, until the government dropped those standards. Given the fact that we're dealing with not only SO<sub>2</sub> emissions but hydrogen sulphide — that much more dangerous and very deadly poisonous gas — what steps has the minister taken in accordance with The Clean Air Act, apart from this rather unorthodox move of lowering the standards and eliminating the half-hour provision?

MR. COOKSON: The member is making an assumption that the standards have been lowered. I don't accept that. What I would accept is the fact that because of inaccuracy or because of efficiency, the one-hour standard will still reflect the same standards as the half-hour. That's entirely different from saying that the standards have been changed in any way. So I guess that answers the question. An assumption has been made that quite likely is incorrect.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I'd never want to argue with the minister, except to refer him to the regulations. It's very clear that the standards for the one-half hour are somewhat more stringent than the standards for the one hour. No question about that. My question very directly to the minister is: does this elimination of the more strict one-half hour standard apply to all sources, including gas plants in the province?

MR. COOKSON: Again, I would have to take that as notice. My recollection is that it does not apply to other

plants in the province, but I would have to take that as notice.

#### **Student Temporary Employment Program**

MR. MANDEVILLE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the hon. Minister of Advanced Education and Manpower. Could the minister indicate to the Assembly if there'll be an announcement in the near future on the student temporary employment program?

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, there was an announcement today on that program. I hope all members have received a copy of the news release issued. The program will go into effect immediately, and this year will involve \$7.8 million and hopefully will employ in the neighborhood of 3,700 students throughout the province — up from last year's number, which was in the neighborhood of 3,550.

MR. MANDEVILLE: Many of the municipalities will surely be pleased with that announcement, Mr. Speaker.

A supplementary question. Just how are the priorities set to approve projects which will qualify for STEP?

MR. SPEAKER: Presumably the question may be answered briefly, but I would have to have some misgiving about a series of questions which might be designed to get at the major content of this news release.

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, I can assure you and members of the Assembly that the question was obviously not induced by myself in any way. I will be very brief.

The priorities with respect to the program are set in consultation with the various bodies involved in making up the elements; there are about 10. I won't go into the details, of course, but with regard to municipal governments, there is consultation with the municipal government, school boards, and veterinary work experience programs; with regard to the government departments, those are done in co-operation with the various ministries.

#### **Contracting to Private Sector**

MR. KNAACK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Government Services. Especially in light of most members' concern [with] the growth in the government sector, I wonder if the minister could advise what the policy of his department is in terms of contracting out services or required services from the private sector, as opposed to increasing the government sector of the economy?

MR. McCRAE: Mr. Speaker, I hope the Department of Government Services policy would be reflective of the entire government; that is, to do as much contracting out as we reasonably can. That would require some explanation, I guess. We try to find a balance between what the private sector can do and recognize that some things should be done within the government, but in a balanced relationship. Certainly the government's general policy is to support the private sector in Alberta.

MR. KNAACK: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. It's my information that the government has purchased or has an option on another King Air. Is that airplane in addition

to the government's fleet, or is it in substitution for another airplane?

MR. McCRAE: Mr. Speaker, perhaps the member would like to go into that more fully during my estimates either tomorrow evening or later in the week, but the short answer is that the King Air we are purchasing is a replacement for an existing King 200.

MR. KNAAK: Will the acquisition of the King Air by the government then in fact reduce the leasing of airplanes from private leasing companies or not?

MR. McCRAE: No I wouldn't think so, Mr. Speaker, unless it flies faster or better than the existing King Air it is replacing. We do try to support the private sector in the air transportation area in terms of helicopter use, maintenance and, where necessary, chartering private sector flights.

#### **Constitution — Provincial Strategy**

MR. R. SPEAKER: Again my question is to the hon. Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs. After that stonewall the first time around, I thought possibly I'd try again. With regard to the constitutional negotiations which at this time I guess are at an end, can the minister indicate what steps are in place at present, leading up to whatever the conclusion is from the Supreme Court? Is the minister preparing the way to Westminster, or are there other actions in the plans?

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, obviously the focus of attention with respect to the constitutional matter has been the Supreme Court of Canada, and as of yesterday the debate has ended there. Of course all parties are waiting for the outcome to decide whether or not the Supreme Court of Canada reinforces the point that there is a shift in the division of powers between the provinces and the federal government. Needless to say, that will be a very important decision and, of course, certain strategies will flow from that.

Mr. Speaker, as I've answered in the House before, we have in place a series of contingencies which we will bring forward depending on the timing and the outcome of the Supreme Court decision. Of course those would include such things as a strategy for Canada, a strategy for London, and a strategy post-London, should that emerge.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the minister. Is the strategy Alberta is developing done in co-ordination with the other seven provinces that were in agreement with Alberta's position?

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, I'm sure the hon. Leader of the Opposition saw the communique from the western premiers' conference. I understand that the Premier commented on that communique during question period last Friday.

Obviously it is fair to say that the eight provinces now in coalition in opposing Mr. Trudeau's proposition will be communicating on several issues over the near term. One of those would be what collective strategy might emerge with respect to communication in Canada, and what collective strategy might be employed should the premiers and the governments decide to go to London. But in fact a collective strategy is being developed among the eight provinces.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, to the hon. minister. The minister's last statement that the government would be going to London — in light of the fact that we are an Assembly, is the minister indicating that a legislative committee or a government committee will be going to London?

MR. JOHNSTON: That hasn't been decided, Mr. Speaker, but I would recommend a government committee.

#### **Stability in Livestock Industry**

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct this question to the hon. Minister of Agriculture. It concerns the April 27 news release from the Department of Agriculture, announcing that the Alberta hog assured returns program would shortly be brought into effect to replace the emergency stop-loss program. Is the minister in a position to advise just exactly where this matter stands now?

MR. SCHMIDT: Mr. Speaker, the proposed submission presented to hog producers throughout the province at the annual meetings is now being considered by my colleagues.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, the hon. Minister of Agriculture indicates it is now being considered by his colleagues. When will the government be making an announcement about the program and, in view of the concern expressed in this House about unnecessary use of special warrants, will there be an intention of bringing in supplementary estimates if public funding is required?

MR. SCHMIDT: Mr. Speaker, in regard to the time frame, it is hoped that some decision in regard to assurance or stability to the hog industry would be fairly soon; the target date for total implementation perhaps towards the latter part of June at the latest. Of course the financing would depend on the outcome and form of the program itself.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the minister. Will the minister give assurance to the House that a new program would in fact be retroactive to April 1, 1981?

MR. SCHMIDT: Mr. Speaker, in regard to retroactivity, in the original program submission made to hog producers it was suggested that if the program in its form were mechanically or physically feasible — if mechanics would allow it to be retroactive to take up the differential between the close of the stop-loss program and the start of a new proposed program — retroactivity would be considered.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the minister. At this stage is the government receiving active representation against the hog assured returns program? More particularly, has there been representation from cattle producers, as opposed to hog producers, opposing any move in this area?

MR. SCHMIDT: Mr. Speaker, we're not holding open house for representations in opposition to any type of assurance or stability to the hog industry, but have had the opportunity to discuss with cattlemen and representa-

tives throughout the province the philosophy of stabilization as it pertains to the livestock interest in total.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, during the discussions of the philosophy with respect to stabilization, has there been representation from cattlemen or representatives of cattlemen in this province opposing in principle any hog assured returns program concept?

MR. SCHMIDT: Mr. Speaker, cattlemen have never been bashful about making their feelings known, and it's not a secret that there is a degree of opposition in the total philosophy of stabilization of any kind in the livestock industry. Some comments have been made as to assurance to the hog industry, and have shown some concern in the question of the future of the livestock industry as it pertains to stability that would go either to the hog industry or beyond into other industries.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question to the minister. What degree of review is being given to the opposition of cattlemen to an assured program for hog producers in view of the general support — at least that's my understanding — among hog producers for a hog assured returns program?

MR. SCHMIDT: Mr. Speaker, we as a government have always recognized concerns, whether they be individuals or groups that represent various producer organizations, and have had the opportunity, and will continue to have discussions, with the livestock industry as it pertains to both cattle and the hog industry.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a final supplementary question to the minister. During the course of this rather extensive consultation, the minister indicated that June was the target. Is the minister in a position to advise the Assembly more definitively at this state if there will in fact be an announcement before the end of June? At this stage, is the government still assessing the very concept? Is there a possibility there won't be a hog assured returns program, notwithstanding some of the announcements made? Is the matter up in the air, or is it just a question of how it can be developed?

MR. SCHMIDT: Mr. Speaker, the last supplementary, and perhaps the last answer: the hog stabilization program is being considered. The approach of the philosophy of assurance that was made to the hog industry itself is now being considered. It is impossible to second-guess the outcome of the decisions as to whether there would be any change or the timing of a program.

MR. MANDEVILLE: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Has the minister contacted or been contacted by any of the producers since the cattle and hog producers had a meeting here about a week ago? Has the minister any indication what the outcome of that meeting was?

MR. SCHMIDT: Mr. Speaker, it is my understanding that both organizations representing the two facets of the livestock industry in this province, beef and pork, had an opportunity to meet and had an exchange of views. It is my understanding that a second meeting has taken place, and I haven't had any results back as to the second meeting.

MR. NOTLEY: A supplementary question for clarification to the minister. Is the minister telling the Legislature that the concept of a hog assured returns programs is then essentially up in the air and is being held in abeyance until the minister . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: Order.

MR. NOTLEY: No, just a minute. . . . can find a consensus between two groups that have different points of view, or are we going to proceed with a program for the hog producers, who want one?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. member is really repeating the question.

#### **Constitution — Provincial Strategy** (continued)

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, to the hon. Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs. The minister's flippant answer that of course it would be the government going to Westminster — I think on an issue as important as this, would the minister consider that this representation in Westminster be a resolution of this Legislature? Has the minister given that consideration?

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, first of all let me say that it was not a flippant answer; it was a very deeply felt answer. I will strongly recommend that the government lead the recommendations to Westminster. That would be my recommendation. That wasn't flippant or casual. It was a very serious reaction. But in terms of the resolution, to which resolution are you referring? Mr. Speaker, I'm not too sure to which resolution the hon. Member for Clover Bar is referring.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, if the minister is going to be leading a government delegation to Westminster, that delegation should have some direction from this Assembly. This is the question I'm asking: will that government delegation be presenting a resolution of this Assembly, or will it be just the government's position?

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, I recall several resolutions of this Assembly with respect to the constitution. I don't have to enumerate them . . . but I will: November 1976, when we dealt with the resolution with respect to the amending formula; the fall of 1978, when this Assembly gave acceptance to the proposition with respect to the constitutional package itself; and I fully remember the debate in the fall of 1980. Now if the hon. member is suggesting to me that he would like to change his position from the fall of 1980, that's fair enough. Maybe we'll give him a chance.

#### **Product Labelling**

DR. PAPROSKI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A question to the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs. I wonder if the minister would indicate to the House whether he or his department have developed a policy or regulations to label products "Made in Alberta", when in fact they're made in Alberta, to augment and promote the excellent products made in Alberta?

MR. KOZIAK: Mr. Speaker, we do not have a policy that would require the labelling of products to indicate

that they are in fact made in Alberta. But I would think those producers who are producing consumer goods for sale in the province would probably find it to their advantage voluntarily to do just that because of the interest of Albertans in purchasing their own products.

DR. PAPROSKI: A supplementary then, Mr. Speaker. My understanding is that that is not necessarily so. Of course it is an advantage, but all producers are not doing that.

I wonder if a study is being carried out by the department in this regard to ensure that Albertans and Canadians really know about these products and the advantages and disadvantages of labelling them?

MR. KOZIAK: Perhaps my colleague the Minister of Agriculture might want to supplement my answer, because I know that on occasion there have been extensive efforts to advertise in Alberta and elsewhere products that have been created, developed, and put on the market for Alberta consumers, by a "Buy Alberta" or "Buy Canadian" theme. But I do not see any advantage to government passing regulations to suggest what I think would be good business practice on the part of the producers who have their goods on the Alberta market.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Workers' Health, Safety and Compensation and, I believe, the hon. Minister of Transportation would like to deal further with some points which previously came up during a question period.

#### **Sulphur Handling**

MR. DIACHUK: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to provide a further response to the question asked last Thursday by the hon. Member for Clover Bar regarding the loading of sulphur. While it was not clear what the hon. member meant by the term monitoring, I have determined that inspections of loading facilities are carried out from the viewpoint of occupational health and safety, bearing in mind the flammable and explosive properties of sulphur dust.

The question of jurisdiction is a problem. Where the spur line and loading facilities are on private property, the operation falls under provincial jurisdiction. If the loading facilities are on railroad companies' property, the operation falls under federal jurisdiction, and the inspection is the responsibility of Labour Canada. Both provincial and federal officials respond to complaints from within their jurisdictional areas. A code of practice for the safe handling and processing of sulphur has recently been completed by my officials in conjunction and co-operation with the industry. This code of practice will be generally adopted in the near future.

#### **LRT Funding**

MR. KROEGER: Mr. Speaker, yesterday I had a question from the Member for Calgary Forest Lawn to do with a suggestion by one of the Calgary city commissioners that we as a department were freezing \$50 million of funds they wanted to use for the development of LRT. Yesterday I mentioned that I would try to expand on the answer I gave. The funds are available to be used on the present southeast leg development. The only restriction that exists is that we've invited the city to be careful about starting a second leg of LRT before they test the

first. So while that may convert into a restriction, I wouldn't really call it a freeze, because it is available to them to use for LRT development.

#### **ORDERS OF THE DAY**

MR. SPEAKER: May the hon. Minister of Workers' Health, Safety and Compensation revert to Introduction of Special Guests?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

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

MR. DIACHUK: Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to introduce to you and to members of this Assembly eight members of an interchurch senior citizens' group. The group has a very interesting name. They call themselves the Take-a-Break group, and it's very appropriate. I often wonder why [one] has to be at the senior citizen level to be able to take a break. They are seated in the members gallery, visiting this Assembly. I wish them well in their visit here and a good trip back to the near constituency. If they would rise and receive the usual welcome of the Assembly, I'd appreciate that.

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

[Mr. Appleby in the Chair]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Will the Committee of Supply please come to order.

#### **Department of Social Services and Community Health**

MR. CHAIRMAN: We were dealing with Vote 1 in the Social Services and Community Health Department. We concluded the votes under 1.1, and we now proceed to Vote 1.2.

Agreed to:	
1.21 — Social Service District Offices	\$40,331,250
1.22 — Family Maintenance and Court Services	\$525,890
1.23 — Administration of District Offices	\$802,730
Total Vote 12 — Regional Delivery of Social Services	\$41,659,870

1.31 — Public Guardian's Office	\$1,875,040
Total Vote 13 — Guardianship of Dependent Adults	\$1,875,040

#### **Total Vote 1**

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Chairman, to the minister. In terms of all of these, I believe this would be part of the regionalization concept. Is that correct? Would this be the right place to discuss that? If so . . .

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Chairman, I think it's appropriate to discuss it before we leave Vote 1. As I indicated last evening, in terms of additional manpower and dollars, we covered that under 1.1.2. There are 18 additional positions in the budget this year for the decentralization of decision-making. The other aspects we've gone through under Regional Delivery of Social Services deal with the social services division of the department only; in other words, the 42 district offices located across the province. As the hon. member is aware, those have been in operation for some time. As we proceed with regionalization, there will be a change in some of the structures. But the specific manpower and dollars were covered in 1.1.2, and there are 18 positions.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Chairman, what I'd be interested in from the minister — I don't think we really covered this — is the decentralization of decision-making and the decentralization of budgets. I was wondering if the minister has examined that. From my past experience with The Financial Administration Act, I understand that decentralizing a budget is not possible at present. My question to the minister: is that one of the steps that will be taken in the next year or so in the decentralization process so that, let's say, the region around Coaldale, which I understand is one of the centres, would be allocated a budget which could be used in terms of southern priorities, and they would audit the budget and be responsible for it, and also look at some various priorities more applicable to the south than to other regions of the province? Could the minister comment on that?

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Chairman, one of the most exciting aspects of the regionalization and the decentralization of decision-making is that we have made a policy decision as government, as elected members, that this is a process we wish to follow. After that announcement was made in the Speech from the Throne on April 2, I held a meeting on April 3 with 160 middle- and senior-management personnel from the department to share my enthusiasm for the concept which has been approved by government caucus and to indicate how they and other members of the department will be given an opportunity to have input to the degree of decentralization that takes place, so we can ensure it works.

We are engaging the firm of Sage Institute of Canada to develop a failure analysis tree. There will be input from approximately 320 individuals from within the department and approximately 150 individuals who are not employed but are very close to the department. One important question which will be addressed is the degree of decentralization and the financial accountability and flexibility that the regional directors and their senior staff will have. Of course there are limitations on us by other pieces of legislation, but that is not a given at this point in time. The only given is that we are going to do it, and we'll do everything we possibly can to ensure that it works effectively. [some applause]

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Chairman, to the hon. minister — the hon. doctor applauds. Is this working towards sort of the — what were they called — community health centre concept, health and social services concept, where there are regionally co-ordinated bodies that look after the needs of people in that respective area? Is that the type of concept we're working towards at present?

MR. BOGLE: Basically, Mr. Chairman, what will happen is that the existing regional managers — let's use southern Alberta as an example. It's one that the hon. member asking the question and I are both very familiar with. We have a regional manager for social services now located in Lethbridge. We also have regional managers for mental health and rehabilitation services in Lethbridge. By establishing a new nerve centre in Coaldale, we will bring those individuals to the Coaldale office with their support staff. The 18 new positions I've identified in the budget cover six regional directors, administrative support for the regional directors. There will be approximately 14 people in the regional centres. They will be co-ordinating centres for the various district offices located across southern Alberta — district offices in Medicine Hat, Lethbridge, Brooks, Blairmore, as an example. So it will be a co-ordinating activity within that region. The senior members of the staff in those regions will not only be in close contact and communication with Edmonton but will be coming to Edmonton for two to three days per month to ensure that we do not fragment our policies so that we have six different interpretations of policy — we have consistency across the province and that kind of input.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Chairman, to the minister. In terms of the responsibility of the regional co-ordinators and budgeting — I can understand the possibility of social accountability. But in terms of financial accountability, will the budget of the department be prepared in a different manner where each area will prepare its budget and then make a request to the department saying, this will be the amount we need in our area because of certain factors and certain responsibilities we want to take on? Then, after that process occurs, the minister may put it in the overall budget of the department. I'd like to have the minister comment again on The Financial Administration Act. Is the minister looking at independent budgets eventually for each one? Is that a goal or is it not a goal? The minister said he was looking at it, but in reality is it a set goal?

DR. PAPROSKI: Mr. Chairman, following on the questions of the hon. opposition leader in the House, I too would like to ask the minister, recalling that in 1971 I brought in the resolution of community health and social service centres. It was passed unanimously to study and look at this very carefully. I'd like the minister to indicate to the House that possibly in that area this is an evolution in a gradual way. I don't think it's been defined in an absolute way, but obviously when you're providing prevention, diagnosis, treatment, rehabilitation, teaching, and primary comprehensive continuing care in a region, it's only one more step to go to the public health units. I'm sure many public health units already provide physical, mental, and social care.

I'd like to know whether the minister in his wisdom can see this as a possible evolution down the road. I don't think it's necessary to commit now, but the closer you get to the community obviously the more responsive the professionals and voluntary groups are to the provision of needs for the physical, mental, and social well-being in that community. I'd just like to know whether we're moving in that direction, and maybe the minister could be more definitive. I know last year he was definitive enough. I was satisfied. I hope it hasn't changed.



MR. BOGLE: Mr. Chairman, I don't want to prejudge the work that's going to take place by the Sage Institute on the evaluation and input that will be sought, but I cannot visualize a situation where there would be three independent budgets across the province. I can certainly see something similar to the model used in the Department of Transportation whereby the various regional directors, in consultation with the staffs in those regions, prepare their estimates as to what they feel is needed in the region. Then, through close consultation with members of the department in the central office in Edmonton, a final proposal is prepared which is ultimately worked on with the minister and presented to cabinet and caucus. Again, that area still needs a lot of work, and we want input from various members of the department on that development.

With regard to how far we go on regionalization and the actual extent, possibly I could share with the hon. member our intent and my very strong personal belief that in a people department like social services, the closer we can bring decision-making to the people who are actually depending upon services within the regions, the more effective our services will be and the smoother the delivery of those services from government to the people. Therefore it's a move in that direction.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Chairman, to the minister. One of the requests over the years from the municipalities — some support this, some do not — has been that they would like to have more involvement in the delivery of social services. I hear a number of councillors and local people say that jobs should be made available to certain persons. I agree with that in some cases and in many I don't. In terms of longer term planning, is the minister looking at this as a possible transition to some type of regional health and social service government that would have some autonomy, like a municipality or a regional hospital area co-ordinating with hospitals and social services? Has this been explored beyond the regionalization we've discussed at present?

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Chairman, I'm certainly excited by the concept, but I would not want to leave with my colleagues in the Assembly any false impressions that have not been reviewed in any tangible way. Quite frankly I cannot see it happening over the next two years. I believe we've got a great deal on our plates at the present time in decentralizing, in the developing of six regions. It's my objective to ensure that, as much as is humanly possible, this is handled smoothly and effectively. It could be that my successor will want to take a further very dramatic step, and will certainly have that opportunity to persuade his or her colleagues and other members of this Assembly.

I can say and share with my hon. colleague our commitment, really a reinforcement of a commitment of the previous government, in terms of preventive programs that can be delivered through the local communities. I'll be very pleased to discuss that in detail when we get to Vote 10 and look at the very dramatic increase in the budget for local municipalities providing much needed preventive social service programs in their areas.

Agreed to:

Total Vote 1 — Departmental Support  
Services

\$66,243,630

Vote 2 — Social Allowance

2.1 — Program Support

\$2,516,060

## 2.2 — Social Allowance for Aged

MR. SINDLINGER: Mr. Chairman, may I please pose a question with regard to Vote 2.2? Could the minister please indicate how many aged will benefit from this vote, what the forecast is, and compare that to the number of beneficiaries in the last budget period?

MR. BOGLE: No, Mr. Chairman, I can't do that. I don't have that kind of information at my fingertips, but I'll certainly provide the hon. member with statistics as to the number of senior citizens who have benefited from the social allowance for the aged program during the past fiscal year and the projections for the present fiscal year.

MR. SINDLINGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Could the minister also undertake to do the same for the following votes that deal with single-parent families, the physically handicapped, et cetera, as it goes down the list? This follows my questioning yesterday: an attempt to determine how many people in the province benefit from these programs in this fiscal period. Also, I'd like to make a comparison between the number of recipients today, or projected for this fiscal period, and the number over the last 10 years, for example, to determine whether or not the number of people has been increasing in proportion to the budget or otherwise.

MR. BOGLE: It might be appropriate, Mr. Chairman, if the hon. member would document the exact information he wants on this matter. I certainly will undertake to do a comparison between the statistics available for last year and the current year. I'm a little alarmed by the suggestion that we go back 10 years in all those areas. It may be that that information can be gathered through legislative researchers. If the hon. member would like to document — I believe I know what he wants in this particular vote, and I can provide that information for him. I would not want to assume that I know exactly all the detailed variances he wants in the different votes.

MR. SINDLINGER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Just to expand on the question a little bit, so there's a greater understanding of what I'm asking for: it's in terms of value received for dollars spent. If I may use another illustration, the department of highways, it's not enough to say that so many dollars are spent this year and so many dollars are spent that year. What's of concern is the output; that is, how many miles of road do we get for each dollar we expend over the years? I pointed out yesterday that if I took the total budget and divided it by the number of cases the minister's department handled, the per case figure was something like \$28,000. Now that's not a representative number, because obviously \$28,000 isn't distributed to each of those cases. There are a lot of numbers in between.

So I tried to look at the per capita expenditures made by the department in regard to just supplies, services, and grants. An interesting thing showed up when I did that. Although this year we have a projected increase of something like 29 per cent in the total budget expenditures, in real terms it's not 29 per cent. Over the last year, two things have happened: the value of the dollar has decreased and the population of the province has in-

creased. Whereas there's about a 29 per cent apparent increase in this year's budget, in fact there is only about a 16 per cent increase in the budget. What makes that even more significant is that if we go back one year prior to that and look at the increase in real terms, there is not an increase but an actual decrease. In real terms for the year prior to this, there's a decrease of 7.6 per cent in departmental funding.

Another thing I looked at that follows out of that regards manpower costs. That follows because yesterday we were talking about the morale of the department and the way many people were attacking the department. By inference, this attack fell on the civil servants. I also looked at the manpower costs on a constant basis, devaluing the dollars so that we're talking about real dollars. Over a six-year period, the average annual growth rate for the civil servants in the department is only 2.2 per cent. If I were a civil servant in that department, I too would be slightly demoralized to see I had faced only an average real growth rate of 2.2 per cent over the years.

I think the lesson here should be borne in mind by all departments and by the government in particular. Because it's not just this department that's at fault; it's the attitude the government has taken in regard to expenditures over the last 10 years. I'm not saying this is necessarily an incorrect attitude, but it hasn't been appropriate for Alberta. In 1971 and shortly thereafter, the government set some management guidelines. There's nothing wrong with management guidelines in themselves. Generally those guidelines were that spending increases would be kept in the order of 7 to 9 per cent. That's fine from a management point of view. However, it doesn't reflect economic and social conditions in the province.

We talk about the growth rate in terms of economic development, industrial growth. Government expenditures should be sensitive to those factors, not just to a management guideline. Over those 10 years we've had two things happen. One, we've had a very substantial increase in population. What is causing a problem there is not only the overall increase in population, but that a lot of that population growth has centred in our major cities. So we look at the large population growth of the province, but there's an even larger one with the ancillary social problems in the major centres. Second, we've had a decrease in the value of the dollar over those years. Where from a management point of view the spending guidelines of 7 to 9 per cent have been appropriate to keep budgets in line, they haven't been sensitive and responsive to the socio-economic conditions in the province.

I wanted to point that out in this instance because as we get into these other votes, we're talking about direct payments and direct grants to various subgroups within our social structure. If we're going to measure the effectiveness and efficiency of the department and the expenditures, I think it's important that we have some idea of the number of people who benefit from these direct payments, not only this year but relative to other years when we've had that large population growth and that large concentration of population in the major centres.

I don't want to give the wrong impression, that I don't feel the increase in expenditure this year is worth while. It is; it's a necessary first step. But that's all it is: a necessary first step for this government to catch up, because of the lag that's occurred over the last 10 years, through no fault of its own.

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Chairman, I cannot accept the statement of the hon. member that for 10 years there's been a lag and we've fallen behind. If the hon. member wishes to debate the issue, I suggest he place a motion on the Order Paper and let us debate very clearly what this government has done to provide services for Albertans since it was first elected in 1971.

Although I was not a member of this Assembly, I recall that prior to 1971 we did not have within the department a division for rehabilitation services, services for the handicapped. Today our expenditures in those areas are in excess of \$200 million. In 1975 — not 1971 — we as a government did bring in wage and price controls. There was unprecedented growth in the department, the former Department of Health and Social Development, and many other departments between 1971 and 1975.

I'm sure the hon. member realizes that social services and community health is not a pure science. We cannot compare, on any kind of economic value basis, a department like Social Services and Community Health with Transportation, where you can go out and measure the number of new miles of road that have been paved or new construction built. This is a people department. We can look very carefully at the services we offer to people, we can look at the number of people receiving those services and the level of benefits they're receiving, we can gauge that against other indicators in our society, but we certainly can't compare the people program services in the dollars and cents ways that you can a new capital facility or a structure that's been constructed.

MR. SINDLINGER: Mr. Chairman, I'd like to expand a little on that as well. I'm not denigrating what the department has done over the years. I'm trying to offer some constructive criticism here. My concern has been that over the last three years I've been in government, many, many groups have come to me and said, we're not getting enough money or assistance in this or that social area. I could never understand it. I'd look at the supplies, services, and grants that the government has provided from 1975, for example, and it starts out at \$221 million. In this budget, however, it's up to \$635 million. That's a very substantial and significant increase. The question I had in my mind all the time was: if we're spending all this money, if we're providing all these services, why do we continue to get these complaints? Is something happening between here where we authorize those expenditures and over here where people receive the benefits? What is the efficiency factor? Obviously something is happening between here and here. What is it?

The way to look at that is in terms of population growth and the decrease in the value of the dollar. If you look at it in those terms, in real terms — the best illustration I can use is highways, where people aren't concerned with the number of dollars spent each year but with the actual number of miles, the value received per dollar. Although we can look in a monetary sense at the supplies, services, and grants from 1975 to 1982, to this budget, and be very impressed that we're going from \$200 million to \$600 million, that doesn't tell the story. The story is in the actual, real percentage increases. The monetary percentage increase on an average annual basis is about 20 per cent; in real terms it's around 2 per cent. We've got a lot of catching up to do.

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Chairman, I suggest that as we go through the elements, if the hon. member wants to question whether or not sufficient funding is available in the

various programs, that's the very purpose of going through one's estimates in the Committee of Supply stage as we're doing. And we'll do that.

MR. SINDLINGER: Just a final question. That was the response I got yesterday when I asked a similar question. But I want to know specifically — and if we can't do it today, I appreciate that you don't have the information here. But I would appreciate an undertaking from the minister that we would get an indication as to exactly how many individuals in this province benefit from each of these direct payments, this year in comparison to last year, if that's the least it has to be. I prefer a long-term comparison, but if we have to settle for just a two-year comparison, that would be satisfactory. I would like to know how many people are going to benefit from these expenditures. It's a very simple question.

MR. BOGLE: I already responded to it, Mr. Chairman. I said that I'm fully prepared, if the hon. member will identify specifically for me — and he's done so with the first one on social allowance for the aged, the number of clients and the support provided. I'll give the information we're projecting for the current fiscal year and the information from the past fiscal year.

MR. SINDLINGER: Mr. Chairman, just so I don't inconvenience the committee by jumping up for each of these votes and saying, will you please indicate to me how many people will be beneficiaries, can I just state on the record that I would like to know in total, by vote, how many people in fact benefit from the expenditures?

MR. CHAIRMAN: I think the hon. minister has indicated that if the hon. member would document what he was asking for and write out that request so that he would know exactly what he wants, he would try to supply that material. Is that satisfactory?

MR. SINDLINGER: Yes, thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Very well then. 2.2, are we agreed?

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Chairman, just before we leave 2.2. I was out for the initial part of the discussion, so if questions have been raised on this and we cover the same ground again, please advise me and I'll check the Blues.

Mr. Minister, I'd like to know what specific criteria were used by the government in arriving at the \$10 increase for senior citizens? Was this a sort of stab in the dark, a caucus committee recommendation: on what basis did we arrive at a \$10 a month increase? We had a very flamboyant, colorful speech by the hon. Member for Edmonton Kingsway yesterday about this increase. The minister talked about the increase over the last several years. I'm not talking about that. I want to know about the \$10 increase.

I say that, Mr. Chairman, because while the Member for Edmonton Kingsway yesterday talked about rent increases, that we all know have gone up, and made reference to the programs there, that really doesn't relate to the concerns I've had brought to my attention by senior citizens. One of the areas that is really upsetting a number of seniors, especially in northern Alberta, is utility rate increases. Just to sort of put this in perspective, natural gas consumers in the city of Grande Prairie presently pay an average of \$485.89 a year, but the pre-August bills averaged \$296 a year; in other words, an increase of

about \$190 or \$16 a month. That's just for natural gas consumption. Electrical bills have gone up; other utilities have increased as well.

I received a letter several days ago from the president of the Waterhole oldtimers association. I can advise the minister that this particular venerated gentleman from my constituency, who I respect very much, is certainly not of my political persuasion. I think it's fair to say he is much closer to the minister's political persuasion than to mine. Nevertheless he makes the point, and it's a very valid one, that the increase isn't going to deal with the actual costs a lot of our seniors are facing, particularly in the area of utilities. He underscores the importance of the utility question.

[Mr. Purdy in the Chair]

Perhaps before we approve these estimates, Mr. Chairman, I think I'd like a little more definitive answer as to how the government arrived at the \$10 figure especially when, as the minister well knows and as we all know, we've got application after application now before the Public Utilities Board for up and up and up, and right across the province nothing but sizable increases ahead of us, both in the area of electrical generation and distribution of power as well as natural gas. Frankly, Mr. Minister, \$10 isn't even going to begin to cover it, especially in northern Alberta. Now I'm not asking for a special allowance for northerners because our utility rates are somewhat higher. I think we have to try to address that in other ways. I used the Grande Prairie example to make the point that I really don't think the \$10 increase is enough.

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Chairman, I suggest we deal with that matter in Vote 5 where it properly belongs, under senior citizens' supplementary benefits.

MR. SINDLINGER: I'd like to supplement that too. I note under Vote 2.2, social allowance for the aged, the increase is 8.3 per cent. Just to put that in its proper perspective, I'll use two bench marks. The first I'll use is Vote 1.1.6, personnel and staff development, where \$4.6 million is allocated. Now if my figuring is correct, if you take the increase between the comparable 1980-81 forecast, compare that to the 1981-82 estimates, and divide that by the permanent full-time positions, there is an increase of \$108 for personnel and staff development over one year. It makes the increase in Vote 2.2, the social allowance for the aged, appear very insignificant.

The second bench mark I would use is the general consumer price index. An 8.3 per cent increase doesn't even compare to anticipated inflation of 12 per cent in this country this year. It's much below that. So there are two standard bench marks that can be used, indicating that the increase is obviously much less than it could be.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Minister, we could deal with the \$10 later under Vote 5, but I really think we have to look at the whole question together. Because this is the area of the social allowance program for the aged, and there is a tie-in. But what troubles me a bit is — taking a look at the actual figures for 1979-80, \$15,902,000, on page 297. Now we arrive at our increase of 8.3 per cent over the forecast for this year, but the actual in 1979-80 was \$15.9 million; in other words, an increase of \$180,000, which would be an increase of about 1 per cent over 1979-80. What has changed in the last year or two that would

make 1979-80 figures of almost \$16 million equal to 1981-82 figures of \$16 million?

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Chairman, two factors are taken into consideration in deriving the figure of \$16,094,000 for social allowance for the aged. They are: an increase in the average cost per case, which has been based on the CPI and actual increases experienced, and also the anticipated decrease in the average number of cases. We anticipate there will be a decrease. When you look at both factors together — the decrease in the average case load and the increase based on CPI and actual increased expenditures — we believe there are sufficient dollars to provide assistance to those Albertans who are in need. That is quite different from the Alberta assured income plan which of course, as all hon. members are aware, is a supplement to the old age security and the guaranteed income supplement from the federal government. That's one of the reasons they're in different votes. We don't believe the AAIP is social assistance, nor should it be treated as social assistance. That's one of the reasons I'd like to deal with them separately.

MR. NOTLEY: I don't have any major quarrel; if the minister would prefer to do that, that's all right with me. But I really have a bit of concern about these estimates of decreasing numbers. We have a population that — I haven't seen the exact projections, but if the minister has any information, I'd welcome it. Because with our population there would be a growing number of people in the bracket that I think would receive some assistance under this program. Taking aging patterns in the country and what I know about that and applying it to Alberta, what information do we have, what are the figures on the decline in case loads that the department projects? On what specific objective criteria do we have information to lead us to the conclusion that in fact there will be a decline in case loads?

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Chairman, what's been happening since the introduction of the assured income for the severely handicapped program, which is anticipated to reach some 9,300 Albertans during this fiscal year, is that a number of individuals who were previously receiving support under the social allowance for the aged are now receiving support benefits under that program. We're basing our projection for the 1981-82 fiscal year on a slightly reduced rate from the number of transfers to the Alberta assured income for the severely handicapped program in 1980-81.

MR. SINDLINGER: I'm sorry, I don't want to belabor this point, but it seems like a very simple matter to me. Perhaps the reason I'm not getting a response to the question is that I'm posing it improperly. So let me try it one more time. We have social allowance for the aged, Vote 2.2. It seems to me the minister should know how many aged will be receiving those allowances in a general way, an approximate number. Are there 28 million aged people in this province going to get that, or are there 10 million people or 10 people in the province who will get that?

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Chairman, first of all we're talking about those individuals between the ages of 60 and 65. Basically the criterion is that there's no test for employment. If an individual is below the age of 60 and able to work, our current policies require that that individual

seek employment. Once a person reaches the age of 60 and is in need of social assistance, that test is not applied. In very rough figures, about 4,000 Albertans are currently receiving benefits under this program. I don't have the exact figures. And from the earlier comments of the hon. Member for Calgary Buffalo, I assume that's what he wanted. But it's about 4,000.

MR. SINDLINGER: That's all I wanted.

MR. BOGLE: Okay.

Agreed to:

2.2 — Social Allowance for Aged \$16,094,000

### 23 — Social Allowance for Single Parent Families

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Chairman, I have several questions and points I'd like to make under this particular vote. Again I would specifically like to invite the minister to deal with the observation made by the Ombudsman in the report on foster care, concerning the poverty level and the situation of the single mother with one child being some \$2,800 beneath the poverty level, I believe.

The second thing I'd like to ask the minister to directly respond on, I'll deal with under social allowance for single-parent families although it could just as easily come under any other of the votes. But because most of our really poor in this province are in that single-parent category, I think this would be the appropriate place to raise it. I refer to the National Council of Welfare paper dated March 1981, Mr. Minister. It's a table comparing the percentage of young family units and working poor families among the provinces. We're dealing especially with single-parent families here. Now I don't want to belabor you with all the statistics, Mr. Minister, but the latest figures we have — this is a 1981 report, but the latest figures are from 1977, so there may be some change in the last several years. But nobody knows that for sure, because nobody has compiled the figures.

What I think is significant is the percentage of all young family units in Canada: 26 per cent in Quebec, 37 per cent in Ontario, 9 per cent in Alberta. Then we get to the point I want to leave with the minister and ask him to respond directly to: the percentage of all working poor families in Canada; in other words, people who are in the category of being poor. We have 9 per cent of all young families, but we have 11 per cent of all young families who are poor, so that we are running 2 per cent above the national average.

Just to put this in context, Ontario has 37 per cent of all the young families in Alberta, but only 33 per cent of the young families who are poor. In other words, they have a lower percentage; so does the province of Quebec. I raise this because it seems to me that in a province where we have rising expectations, a good deal of boom, incomes have been buoyant, a lot of our people are not sharing in that situation. I think this is especially true of single-parent families. I would like to ask the minister to respond to that particular observation.

Mr. Chairman, the other point I want to make is that I think this business of saying to a single parent with one child, you've got to get out into the workplace within four months. There is an appeal procedure. I understood that and read the minister's comments on the appeal procedure in the budget debate. This business of getting out in the workplace after four months seems fair at first, but

we have to look at that in the context of the kind of practical family support system we have in place. We don't have enough day care spaces. My understanding is that in Edmonton, subsidized and non-subsidized, we have 3,846. But 12,000 spaces are required, so we're still behind in day care. The after school care situation is very bad, no question about that. So we're saying to a young woman with a single child, you get out in the workplace after four months, yet it seems to me we don't have in position the kind of back-up family support for that single parent which makes it practical.

The other equally important issue is that many women are not able to find nine-to-five jobs. If you work shifts, you don't get the option of a nine-to-five job. Frankly these are the people where there is no end of problems. I've had people contact my office who are saying, okay, day care and after school care, but what good does after school care do for me? I'm working between 4 o'clock and 12 o'clock at night. A heck of a lot of good that does for me. I've got to hire a babysitter, and by the time I get through doing that, there just isn't anything left.

It seems to me that that is the sort of weakness in the government's approach. We bring in a policy, albeit there is an appeal procedure. I'm prepared to admit that. But we have not got in place the kind of sensitive support system that makes that policy really workable. And I just remind the minister that before his predecessor Miss Hunley made that announcement, it was the position of the government — as I understand it anyway — that the mother should stay with the child, and that we should base our approach on the maintenance of whatever that family unit is. So those areas are the ones I'd like to cover: (a) the National Council of Welfare breakdown figures and, (b) the single-parent policy, particularly with respect to family support services for women and, more specifically, women who must obtain shift work.

MR. SINDLINGER: The minister's response was adequate to the question: how many aged would benefit from the social allowance payments? That's all I'm asking for, a general approximation. Therefore I pose the same question for this vote: approximately how many single-parent families will receive benefits?

MR. BOGLE: Approximately 13,600 during the year.

Turning my attention to the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview, I haven't seen the most recent National Council of Welfare report he cited from. The opening comments made last evening by the hon. member alluded to statistics. I'd be very pleased to have the statistics reviewed that the hon. member raised this afternoon. With regard to the single-parent policy we have in this province, that requires a single parent to seek employment once the baby reaches the age of four months, I remind hon. members that that's when any other individual who's receiving unemployment insurance benefits finds those benefits curtailed. We are reviewing that matter, as we have committed to. It's also interesting to note that in addition to the appeal committee process — and we can't underscore that enough, because any individual who feels that there are some very special circumstances and that they should be at home with their child certainly has the right to go before an appeal committee. I did give you statistics during my remarks on the Budget Address as to the number of successful cases where individuals have appeared before appeal committees who acted in favor of the applicant. So if there are those special and unique circumstances, the individual has the

right.

I know the hon. member meant to mention the very successful training program that's been implemented in this province whereby we assist single parents to go back to school, pay the costs and support to a maximum of two years. I've spoken with several women, not a lot but several who have either taken the program or are now engaged in it. They've told me how extremely pleased they are to have an opportunity to get back into the work force in a meaningful way, and not be caught in that welfare syndrome and locked into the home.

I'm sure we'll deal very fully in Vote 10 with the questions with regard to day care and after school care. At this time I would only mention that we do have a long way to go, but let's not be modest about our track record to date. We have more day care spaces in Alberta per capita than any other province in this country. I think that's a good indication of where we're at. We know there's still a lot to do because of the participation of women in the work force and other factors. But I want to reiterate the point: there are across this province appeal committees made up of our peers, peers of the individual who's receiving or wishing to receive social assistance or an exemption of a requirement. All social allowance recipients have the right to go before those committees. The committees have the responsibility to act in a very judicious way in determining whether or not the department was right in its action of requiring the single parent to go back to work, or whether there are special reasons that that mother should be at home with her child.

MR. NOTLEY: I want to make very clear that I would never accuse members of this government of ever being modest about any of their successes. Undue modesty is not one of the underlying faults of the present administration, notwithstanding that in some areas there's a fair amount to be modest about, if I can sort of paraphrase Sir Winston Churchill.

But I did want to respond to the minister. I agree that the appeal procedure is useful and that it often works very well. That point should be acknowledged. But I did want to respond to this business of the training program, because we had some controversy in this House before the minister assumed office. One of the more controversial aspects of his predecessor's term was a change in the training policy. I couldn't agree more that we should be making the opportunity to receive training available to people on social assistance. But we put the two-year limitation on it. Before, as the minister well knows — we have examples; I know of a very prominent lawyer in this city who went through law school on social assistance, and is now a practising professional lawyer in the city of Edmonton. It was this government that restricted the policy of a few years back, which would allow people to go through — not a blank cheque, but in consultation with the social workers. There were people who received university educations. It was a two-year limitation that was put on by the government.

So let's not stand up and say we've got the best of all worlds here. We have a good program. Two years is fine. But I suggest to you, Mr. Minister, that there are a lot of people in this province in the workplace today who are contributing in a positive way, have that sense of assurance and everything else because, before the change was made, we had a more sensitive policy that made it possible for people to go to trade school, secretarial school, or university.

DR. PAPROSKI: In response to that, Mr. Chairman, I recall those changes very clearly. The hon. member opposite very quickly states that social assistance should pay for a university career of five, 10, or 15 years. As I remember, people were even taking an education in other provinces and countries. I have great difficulty with that. I had great difficulty with it when amendments were brought in, and I have great difficulty now with those comments. Surely the hon. member would acknowledge the fact that training on a short-term basis, in order that that person on social assistance should get out and be able to get a job, should be the first and prime objective. A long-term training program, such as a university career, a musical career, or whatever — which, incidentally, may or may not lead to a job, because some of those careers at university, for example in music or arts, may not lead to a clearly defined job — should be the prerogative of the individual. I don't think the individual would want it any other way.

Besides that, Mr. Chairman, there are other methods — grants, loans, and so forth — of getting support when a person wants to go to university. So I just don't buy that. It's a matter of philosophy. I know that many people on social assistance are extremely intelligent, able, and capable, and want to get out of the web of poverty, if you wish. They will, if there's an opportunity. That opportunity is provided in a variety of ways. One is vocational training, one in fact is the opportunity to go to university with grants and loans, and the other is the opportunity for employment, which this government has placed a high emphasis on. The hon. member knows very well that most of us here who have gone to the postsecondary level have worked very hard during the summer months to get those dollars to get us through.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Chairman, I really can't allow that to go completely unchallenged. When we're dealing with this particular vote, social allowance for single-parent families, it is a cruel, harsh fact that most of the bread winners are women. The options that were available to the vast majority of us who went to university and could spend our summers working on the roads, or wherever we worked, are not available, it seems to me, to a single mother at this stage. We had a sensitive program. It wasn't a something for nothing program. It was a program that had to be worked out with the social workers. In a number of cases it led to women who had children at home being able to go on to university and become teachers, doctors, and lawyers. It wasn't just an "open sesame" kind of program. The point is that we've now said two years.

I raise it because the minister responded with some degree of pride about the training. I think that's the sort of thing we should be emphasizing. I remember when Mr. Strom became Premier in 1968 or '69. He campaigned on the promise of shifting welfare away from the custodial approach to one of giving people the opportunity to stand on their own feet. Part of that policy was to encourage people to get off welfare and go to university, or whatever training, as a deliberate incentive to self-reliance. And a heck of a lot of women benefited.

So let's not kid ourselves. It's not a case of a few of us who can look back on our university days with a certain amount of pleasure because perhaps our parents helped us or perhaps in the summer some of us were able to go out and work on whatever and earn the money. We're talking about women who have to be at home with their children. While two years is useful, frankly I think the

program as it was in place, partly as a legacy of some of the initiatives taken by the former Premier of this province, was better.

DR. PAPROSKI: As a response to the hon. member. I mean, he blurred ...

AN HON. MEMBER: Maybe we can clarify that.

DR. PAPROSKI: Mr. Chairman, may I?

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I think the responses are getting kind of lengthy, but go ahead on a supplementary.

DR. PAPROSKI: Mr. Chairman, he makes it sound like I am, or any member in this Legislature is, against single women taking a higher educational career; be it doctor, lawyer, or whatever. Mr. Chairman, that is completely out of order. We're for it and encourage it. He knows that and we know it. The point to be made here is that the first step an individual wants when he or she is on social assistance is to be able to get out of that circle or web of being on social allowance. I suggest that 99.9 per cent of individuals on social allowance want to get out of it, be able to get a job, be trained if they're not trained — upgraded, updated — and get on their own feet. Once they get on their own feet — and most of them will and do — they can pursue a higher postsecondary education. There's ample opportunity to do that. That's the point I'm making.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Chairman, to the minister again, specifically on the vote [for] social allowance for single-parent families. The increase is 17.6 per cent. Whether it's divorce or otherwise, at present the separation rate is very high. Three out of four marriages are affected by this very thing. The inflation rate is 12 per cent. The 17.6 per cent leaves a mere 5 per cent for increase. It doesn't seem significant enough to meet the demand that is going to be there. At the same time, a number of positions in the department are going to be filled to meet demands in the area of child welfare. They relate directly to mothers who most likely are single-parent families. Number one, has the minister really placed enough money in this estimate? Number two, will we expect a special warrant saying, because we underestimated the number of single-parent families — as a government, we really didn't recognize them; we're trying to hold the budget down — there will be more money allotted to this later on. Is it a realistic estimate?

At this point I think in terms of, one, assisting these parents and, two, meeting the rapid increase in the cost of living this coming year. In 1981, 12 per cent will be the base figure. I'm sure inflation will go to 15 per cent or more. Has that type of figure been calculated there? I really think this is one area where we believe the mother should stay in the home and look after the child. If that's the choice the parent makes, then we have to give them that opportunity. That should be their choice. Where we have single-parent families, in no way should we have forced labor. That's the wrong concept, the wrong direction in social concern in the province of Alberta. That's not what I stand for. If a mother wishes to look after her child, give them the opportunity of good care in the home and adequate income to meet their needs. I think we have to err on that side of the judgment.

Secondly, though, those who wish to go to work — I certainly hope somewhere in this budgeting there are

adequate facilities to look toward giving them better education, training, and opportunity to get out on the job, if that's what they want. I think we still have to respect that individuals in this province, whether on or off welfare, still have the right of choice as to what they do in their lives.

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Chairman, I'll respond first to the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview. Not wishing to debate the point but, as I'm sure as the hon. member will recall when he went through university, there were not the substantial loans programs for students to go on to school that there are today. It's certainly our feeling that an individual who is helped through a two-year program and wishes to continue their education has every opportunity to do that, but on equal footing with other individuals in the same position.

With respect to the hon. Member for Little Bow and his questions, it's a fair point. Too bad he's left. I hope he's coming back. During the past fiscal year, we experienced a drop in the case loads from approximately 14,300 to some 13,100. We anticipate a slight increase this year, at about the normal rate of growth within the province. I gave the hon. Member for Calgary Buffalo an approximate figure of 13,600. So when you look at the underexpenditure of some \$8.6 million last year and calculate that in, we believe there are sufficient funds. Unless there's some very unexpected increase in the number of single parents requiring social assistance, there will certainly be no need to come back for additional funds through the fiscal year.

MR. SINDLINGER: The minister and his associate minister have been telling us how the program helps people get off on their own. The words they've been using are, "helping them get off, "on their own feet". I'll ask two questions in that regard. First of all, could the minister give us an indication of the turnover rate? It was said that 13,600 single-parent families would benefit, and you gave some other numbers. But I don't know if that is a consistent number over time, or whether that number has been growing. Put another way, we could ask how much of this increase of 17.6 per cent is due to cost adjustments and how much is due to increases in the number of recipients? I guess the short question, the first part of the question is: what is the turnover rate? Do we have a turnover of that 13,600, or are the 13,600 who will be receiving benefits this year the same as the 13,600 last year? If the program you are discussing is successful in getting people out on their own — if it were extremely successful, then we would presume that the 13,600 this year would be brand new compared to the ones last year? But of course that's not the case. What percentage does remain in turnover?

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Chairman, I don't have the specific figure with me as to the turnover, but I'll obtain it for the hon. member. I think the second question was the amount of support for the family. Excuse me, I don't have the statistics as to the turnover. And the second part of the question was ...

MR. SINDLINGER: If I may, the second part of the question was: how much of the increase was due to cost adjustments and how much was due to increases in the number of recipients?

MR. BOGLE: Well, as we're anticipating a very small increase in volume, less than 4 per cent, the greater part of the increased proposal for the budget is to cover increased costs. We've recently increased the shelter allowances for single parents with one child and for all other categories. That, of course, is reflected in this budget.

[Mr. Appleby in the Chair]

MR. MACK: Mr. Chairman, I'd like to comment very briefly on what I think are very important factors of the rewards of self-sufficiency as far as individual people are concerned. I think there is an overabundance of belaborment in the comments I've been hearing that everybody should be placed in a position of — you might say, create an atmosphere for them that would remove almost completely from individuals the motivation or the incentive of having the pride of being in the work force and the enjoyment of work. There is such a thing as enjoyment of work. I believe the majority of single parents would much rather be in the workplace and every effort should be made to ensure — and I would certainly encourage the department to expand educational programs and the availability for those who need upgrading in their education in order to ensure that they can get into the work force rather than create a generation, if you will, or a large percentage of our generation as a *Sesame Street* kind of citizens.

I don't really think the hon. member is suggesting that this occur, but the implications are there and they concern me, because there is no reward in being a *Sesame Street* citizen. But there is a reward in being within the workplace and making a contribution to the community and to your own well-being, as well as having the reward and pride of being self-sufficient. I think it's good for children too, [whether] of a single parent or not, even as they communicate with children, to be able to respond that my dad or mother is on welfare but my dad is working here, or my mom is working there. I think that's an important element. I just cannot accept the posturing that is being suggested that our people should, if they choose to stay and become *Sesame Street* citizens, remain there rather than providing them some kind of motivation to get out of that syndrome.

Mr. Chairman, I'd like to comment briefly on the increases. There is an abundance of concern and, of course, we are concerned that there is adequate funding or adequate assistance programs for single-parent families. But I think it's fair for us to be able to reflect and recall that in most contractual agreements, the working poor settle for 9 per cent or in that order, if you have a two- or three-year agreement. They also pay all the benefits and needs in the vicissitudes of life of their children and their families. Yet their increase for that period is only 9 per cent, and it's certainly not keeping up. I think this is where good budgeting comes in, and probably some expectations have to be laid over for a period of time. I really believe we cannot take one and place it in isolation from the sum of people we represent here. That's basically what I would like to comment on, Mr. Chairman.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Minister, just before we vote on this appropriation, I want to come back to the appeal mechanism you've laid a good deal of stress on, and properly so. Perhaps for the sake of members of the committee we could take a minute or two on that, because it's rather

important that there be sufficient flexibility.

Let me cite the example of a mother with a child, and after four months that mother has to go out in the workplace. But the only place she can work is in a packing plant where there is shift work. Would that be considered as the type of job opportunity which would be inconsistent? In other words, would an appeal board say, you can stay on assistance and stay with your child because the only work that's available is shift work and it's just not possible to get after school care or day care. What would be the situation in a community where there is no day care program? We have communities in this province, unfortunately a lot of them — the husband takes off, leaves a mother and young child. If she's in a small community, there's no day care program at all. Is that a reason? Would that particular mother be able to stay home?

I realize we don't have case law in these appeal boards, nor should we; I think that would be a very dangerous thing to get into. But what criteria have we set to determine what are acceptable grounds for appeal and what aren't, as a result of our experience over the last several years? The minister has indicated a number of appeals have been accepted. That's a good thing. Having worked in the special committee on workers' compensation, one thing I think is good about our appeal procedure is that we aren't bound down with case law that says because such and such was decided in 1978, therefore it has to be decided this way in 1981.

Specifically to the minister, I'd like to have some idea of the ground rules, if you like, for the operation of these appeal committees, because that's pretty crucial to this provincial policy, especially dealing with young mothers in the workplace after four months.

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Chairman, I've met personally with the chairmen and vice-chairmen from the various appeal committees across the province, both for social allowance as well as the assured income for the severely handicapped program. Hon. members are aware that because of the case load there are separate committees in Edmonton and Calgary, whereas in other parts of the province we have added one person to each of the committees — I believe in all cases it's someone who has a handicap — so that those committees may deal with both issues.

One very exciting part of the current program, in terms of the ability of appeal committees to function, is that the committee has maximum flexibility to use its own discretion. It may be that a job is available; it may be that there's no day care in the area or no other family support; it may be that a job is available and the individual has no way of getting there; maybe it's a large community that does not have a mass transit system. The committee has the right to make a decision based on the individual circumstances of each case and, in my view, that makes the appeal committee a very exciting mechanism. They are not bound by rules and regulations imposed upon them by the department or anyone else. There are certain matters that they cannot appeal, that are not appealable. But the interesting aspect is that under the regulations in the department, where the appeal committees cannot act in their capacity to appeal a decision, they may put on their other hat and be advisory to the minister and make recommendations where certain regulations should be changed.

I can think of one such change we did initiate a little over a year ago. When the assured income for the severely handicapped program was initially introduced, it was

not available to treaty Indians living on reserves. Two appeal committees, one in Lethbridge and one in Peace River, advised our office that in their view that was wrong. They did not have the authority to overturn the decision because it was written in the regulation, but I did then have a choice to make. I went before a cabinet committee with the proposal that the program be expanded, the cabinet approved it, as did our caucus, and at a cost of about another \$1.5 million we expanded the program to include all Albertans, whether they were treaty Indians living on reserve, where the federal government had a legal responsibility in our view, or not. That's one of the very exciting areas [where] the appeal committees can act as advisory to the government.

MRS. CHICHAK: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to put a couple of questions to the hon. minister. One is with regard to the support provided for single-parent families and the regulations under which that support is determined. I'd like to know whether sufficient flexibility is provided in the program for consideration of higher cost factors for families as a result of their particular residence; by that I mean where the cost of living in the city of Edmonton is at one level, whereas it would not be at the same or as high a level in, say, Magrath or Cardston. Is there sufficient flexibility in the program to take into consideration each component, such differences in cost, that go into making up the total amount a family might qualify for in the way of support?

The other point: from time to time I think many of us receive complaints with regard to the attitude of social workers in their approach to the problems of various families, and often it's reflected as a very negative approach. There may be many reasons for that. It may be that the particular social worker is not best suited for the role they are required to play in the system. Is there a mechanism or vehicle for assessment of the suitability of such personnel, and is there a place in the system where citizens who feel a worker may not be suitable for the role they're required to fulfil in carrying out their service, may be directed rather than perhaps coming through the M L A or to the minister? Is a vehicle developed within the system?

Another point I would like to ask the minister to comment on is with regard to day care. I commend the minister of course on the direction taken with respect to the support for day care following the child rather than the other way. I have been approached recently as to whether the minister would consider day care services provided within the community in a manner where they would be able to provide shift care on a 24-hour basis if this were the need and if numbers warranted. In the provision of the program, is there a restriction by the minister as to when that particular service is provided? Is it restricted to daytime, or would the minister consider such a proposal to ensure that the regulations are flexible enough and allow for that kind of expansion or development of a program to provide services, particularly for single-parent families where the mother or father, as the case may be, is in a type of job that requires them to alter their working time frame?

I think those were the points I most wanted to raise with the minister.

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Chairman, to the hon. Member for Edmonton Norwood. To deal with the last matter on day care first, I'd rather deal with it in its entirety under vote 10, where the operating allowance portion of the day care



vote rests. The short answer is yes, we certainly are looking to find a way to meet their needs. As an example, I'll use nurses who do shift work in a hospital. But I'd like to deal with that more fully under Vote 10.

In terms of shelter and other costs and whether or not certain matters are appealable, looking at the higher cost of housing in a metropolitan centre where there's rapid growth vis-a-vis a smaller, rural community, the answer is yes, there is some flexibility at the district office level. Providing in-service training within the department is an issue that we believe we can assist our own staff greatly on. We are doing that through the American Humane Society, to supplement the kinds of services that have been provided on an ongoing basis by the department itself.

When complaints are received as to the alleged conduct of an official, the individual may follow a number of avenues. One is to go to the district office of the department and register a complaint with the district administrator, which is certainly something that anyone from any part of this province can do. Second, they could speak directly with their M.L.A. Third, they could write directly to the minister's office. I encourage individuals to use the first alternative, to go to the district office. Possibly it's been a misunderstanding. It may be cleared up right at that level without any undue concern by the M.L.A., the minister or his office, or others who might be involved.

Agreed to:

2.3 — Social Allowance for Single Parent Families	\$111,687,000
2.4 — Social Allowance for Physically Handicapped	\$32,681,000

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Chairman, to the minister. That's just direct payment benefits, isn't it, in terms of support benefits? That has nothing to do with the handicapped program, the year of the handicapped.

MR. BOGLE: No.

Agreed to: 2.5 — Social Allowance for Mentally Handicapped	\$9,130,000
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## 2.6 — Social Allowance for Employables

MR. MANDEVILLE: Mr. Chairman, I wonder if the minister could indicate to the committee why the large 23.9 increase. It's the highest element increase in Vote 2.

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Chairman, we are anticipating an increase in the average case loads this year, from about 5,500 to 6,000. We believe that increase will attribute to part of the increase. The other part of the increase is as a result of increased costs per case. Again, we're using the CPI increases and the actual increases experienced to calculate the figure. It's a projection. As I've indicated, we anticipate that the case loads themselves will go up by approximately 500, which is slightly under 10 percent for the category.

MR. MANDEVILLE: Mr. Chairman, would the minister have any indication of how many of the people in this category are Albertans and how many who are receiving social allowance are [from] outside Alberta?

MR. BOGLE: I don't have that breakdown. Part of the master agreement between the province of Alberta and the government of Canada, under the Canada assistance plan, requires that we deal with any other Canadian the same as we would an Albertan. So if an individual comes to Alberta from one of the other provinces, they're treated just like an Albertan would be treated. As you know, the stay in our hostels is limited. We don't encourage people who are able to work to remain on social assistance in the province, and there certainly won't be any change in our overall policy in that area during the current fiscal year.

Agreed to:

2.6 — Social Allowance for Employables	\$36,189,000
2.7 — Social Allowance for Special Groups	\$4,882,000
Total Vote 2 — Social Allowance	\$213,179,060

## Vote 3 — Child Welfare Services

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Chairman, perhaps under the first vote here we could deal with some of the specific questions, although if the minister wants to deal with them separately, by vote, that's fine. I understand that the increase in staff in child welfare services is 127, if my memory serves me right, from 477 to 604. First, if the minister could give us the additional number of social workers and the additional number of support staff, in that breakdown of 127 permanent, full-time positions.

MR. BOGLE: I don't believe I have that at my fingertips, Mr. Chairman. I'll certainly obtain the information and provide it to the member before we conclude the estimates.

MR. NOTLEY: Just following through on that, I'll try to summarize some questions to the minister. I asked for the additional number of social workers, Mr. Minister, because I'd like some indication from the government as to what the additional staff will mean in terms of the actual case load for child welfare workers in this province. We're all aware of the fact that one of the major observations the Ombudsman made was the overwork of our child care workers in Alberta, and I don't think there's any doubt about that. In the assessment of these estimates, I think we have to be satisfied that the extra component of staff — that I'm sure none of the members of the committee begrudge at all — will have a direct relationship to the problem the Ombudsman cited. So, if the minister has any information on what that will mean to the case load for the child workers in the province, that would be useful.

The other aspect I'd like to explore for a moment is whether any new programs are going to be initiated in the area of family support with these extra workers, both the social workers as well as the support workers. Or are we going to be dealing with just more social workers whose primary responsibility is going to be apprehension? Are there going to be new programs of specially oriented family support? The Caton report made the observation — I think properly so — that the place to start with foster care is not apprehending kids but shoring up that family, whatever it may be. I'm interested in whether we're going to be able to do a better job in that area.

Finally I must confess a certain puzzlement with Vote

3.2, community and family services. We've got payments for foster home care costs, contracts with community agencies for services provided to children under authorization, reimbursement to municipalities for probation services . . . and grants to community agencies concerned with child care, and our increase is extremely modest, from \$26,365,000 to \$28 million, 6.3 per cent. When one considers the points that the hon. Member for Calgary Buffalo has raised from time to time, about the declining dollar value and the population pressure, I must confess some concern at a 6.3 per cent increase in an area of this general division of government expenditures which I think should receive a rather larger increase. I'd be interested in what explanation the minister can provide the committee as to why we have a 6.3 per cent increase in that category.

MR. BOGLE: First, just for clarification for the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview, the staff increases he has referred to were accounted for in Vote 1. If he wishes to go back and deal with it in that way, I'll be pleased to give the staffing breakdown. The staff increases in terms of social workers are located in Vote 1. I thought I covered that . . .

MR. NOTLEY: [Not recorded] the 127 in the summary of manpower authorization on page 299. What I really want to know is the difference, the number of support people and the number of social workers. Is it a fifty-fifty proposition? We've got the overall figures, but I'm interested in the figures on this particular appropriation.

MR. BOGLE: The social workers providing services in the field — and tied in with that question of course was the question of the staff/client ratio, if you like. Those matters are dealt with in Vote 1, and I'll provide the hon. member with a breakdown of the number of actual social workers, the supervisors, and the clerical support staff for the same.

I was also asked about new programs that would be initiated. Since there have been several references to the Catonio report of 1972, it seems to me it might be very beneficial if the hon. member put a question on the Order Paper asking for the recommendations made by Judge Catonio in 1972 and the response of this government between 1972 and [this] date. I'd be very pleased to respond to that question and the facts will then be clearly out for all to see.

MR. NOTLEY: They could be debated in the estimates too.

MR. BOGLE: Clearly the new family and community support service program, which we'll be dealing with in Vote 10, is an exciting new program intended to support the family and provide a much needed basis in a preventive rather than a rehabilitative way.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Chairman, I specifically asked the minister about the 6 per cent in the community and family support services provision.

MR. BOGLE: That's under 3.2. I wonder if I might deal with 3.1, and go on to it.

Agreed to:  
3.1 — Program Support \$2,370,350

### 3.2 — Community and Family Services

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Chairman, perhaps we can pose the question then.

MR. BOGLE: I'd like to take that question as notice and just leave 3.2 and come back to that at a later time, if we could, Mr. Chairman.

Agreed to:  
3.3 — Contracted Residences \$31,363,310  
3.4 — Residence and Treatment  
in Institutions \$19,240,510

MR. CHAIRMAN: We'll hold the total then to go with 3.2.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Chairman, that was on child welfare services, and I wonder, in terms of the Ivany report, would foster care come into this area? The report pointed out several flaws in the foster care system in Alberta, including the inadequate scrutiny of foster parents, overworked social workers, inadequate monitoring of foster homes and care. Of the 40 recommendations made in the report, I understand 30 have been implemented by the department, and six this year. Is the minister satisfied that the requirements have been met? Possibly he could report on that now.

MR. BOGLE: I responded to a similar question last evening while going through the estimates, Mr. Chairman. It's my intention to provide this Assembly, before we rise this spring, with an interim report to indicate the progress to date in the implementation of the 40 recommendations in the Ombudsman's report on foster care in the province of Alberta. I intend to deal with it as fully as possible at that time. I've also committed that there will be a final report, approximately four months from now, dealing with the recommendations made. I believe we'll deal in a very complete way with 36 of the recommendations. The four recommendations referred to the Cavanagh Board of Review may or may not have a response by that time.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Chairman, to the minister. With regard to community group homes and residential resources, last year's budget was overexpended in those specific areas. I wonder why the community homes were overbudgeted last year. Were more established or were the services increased? What kind of problem was confronted at that time? [interjection] Yes, that would be under 3.3.

MR. BOGLE: The greatest portion of the increase is due to a decision by the government to increase the funding to the agencies to allow those agencies to pay their employees a more equitable salary. We are closing the gap between the amount we pay our own employees and what a private agency pays its employees for a comparable service. That takes up the largest single part of the increase. It's not a significant increase in numbers as much as it is increased dollars to the agencies so that, in essence, we're not robbing them of their best employees.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Chairman, to the minister. Were extra funds required for the northern regional treatment centre last year? Is that the reason there's more money here now?

MR. BOGLE: Well, as the hon. member is aware, that was nothing more than a farmhouse, and I believe it had a contracted capacity of six. If the hon. member goes on to another question, I can very quickly get the exact information on that centre.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Chairman, possibly the minister could relate to the contract as it presently exists with regard to the northern regional treatment centre. There are the six. What type of contract does exist? What type of payments have been made? What type of supervision goes on? Is the contract a five-year contract, as I recall, or is it a continuing contract?

MR. BOGLE: The Northern Regional Treatment Residence? We do not have a contract with the facility at this time. The facility is not operating.

Agreed to:

4.1 — Purchased Services and Agency Grants for Adults	\$2,762,770
4.2 — Residential Accommodation in Institutions and Hostels for Adults	\$4,145,450

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Chairman, with regard to women's shelters, I wonder if the minister could bring us up to date on what is happening there. Particularly, with regard to the Torrance report, what recommendations have been accepted? What's the present status?

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Chairman, approximately \$2 million has been added to our budget to provide services for women and their families on an emergency basis. Currently we are communicating with various agencies across the province which have expressed some interest in providing this service.

We have tried to develop a policy that is flexible enough to meet the needs of a large metropolitan centre like Edmonton where, due to economies of scale, services may be provided by one agency for one type of clientele and a completely different service provided by a sister agency; at the same time recognizing that a city like Lethbridge, where there are not the large numbers, would not be able to support a women's emergency shelter on its own. Therefore we're working with the local YWCA on providing that service.

I might mention that the agencies we are currently involved with include Win house in the city of Edmonton; the Calgary women's shelter; Grande Prairie women's shelter, that's Kroken House; Fort McMurray crisis prevention centre; the Lethbridge YWCA; Lloydminster interval home; and Medicine Hat women's shelter. We anticipate that other agencies may be gearing up in other parts of the province, or possibly in both of the two metropolitan centres. There is further room for development in that area. We're working very closely with the Women's Bureau and with the director of the Women's Bureau, Phyllis Ellis, on providing this much needed service across the province.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Chairman, to the minister. One of the statements I made earlier in this Legislature was that more women were turned away from the shelters than were being accepted. Has the minister investigated that particular statement? Will more shelters be put in place, if the indications I have had that that is what's happening? Will there be either a purchase or construc-

tion of more shelters to meet this need that seems to be out there, particularly in the two cities?

MR. BOGLE: Well, Mr. Chairman, looking at the kind of support the government provided during 1980-81, which totalled some \$102,000, and then looking at the increased support of some \$2 million this year, there's a very significant expansion in terms of operating costs for those shelters.

MRS. CHICHAK: Just a supplementary on this particular aspect. The increase is substantial across the province, but I believe the increase in incidence of battered mothers and children has been significant across the province. I wonder if the minister is in a position to be a little more specific, to take an area such as Edmonton and indicate what kind of impact, out of the total provincial budget allocated for that particular support, would reflect in assistance to the service of Win house in Edmonton and how far he has determined that kind of allocation would go to meet the very substantial need and crisis faced in the city of Edmonton?

MR. BOGLE: To date Win house is the only facility that has contacted the department, and that we've been working with. We're looking at the establishment of what might be called Win house II. I've indicated there are other dollars in the budget to meet the requests and needs of approved agencies for other facilities, either here in the city of Edmonton or here and in other locations.

MRS. CHICHAK: I'm sorry, Mr. Chairman. I wonder if at this time the minister is able to indicate perhaps what he has anticipated or at least calculated in the way of dollars out of this budget specifically for Win house, or has he allocated in that kind of way? The reason I put the question in the manner I do is because the submission all of us have received from Win house is the number of families that have had to be turned away, apart from the very significant and large number of families who were given support for the period of time they found necessary.

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Chairman, I'm most reluctant to get into that, as discussions are under way between officials in the department and the agency. They're working on a contract. I can comment on the program in general, but reluctant to earmark a specific figure, as I know those discussions are under way.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Chairman, the minister wasn't really clear on whether more shelters were going to be constructed, purchased, or contracted within the two cities. Secondly, to add to that question, will the staff component of either the contracted or the present shelters available to women be upgraded in terms of counselling services?

[Mr. Purdy in the Chair]

MR. BOGLE: We're looking at an expansion of at least seven shelters across the province from those existing at the present time and offering a service. There may be . . . [interjection] Yeah, I thought I gave the list. Win house in Edmonton — those would be new or expanded facilities. I probably should have been clear, Mr. Chairman. There is now a Win house in Edmonton, and the board is looking at establishing a second facility. I probably should have referred to it as Win house II. But the seven I

did list would all be new facilities or expanded services by existing agencies offering the service.

The second part of the question was with regard to counselling services. It is not our view that counselling should be provided as part of the total component, but rather that other agencies offering counselling services in the community should be encouraged to provide that kind of support. So we're not encouraging the establishment of facilities that would be all-compassing, where it's in addition to accommodation and support counselling services for the family.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Chairman, to the minister. Would other types of services such as day care, follow-up, or a hotline fall into the same category? Other agencies would supply those services for women's shelters. The basic function of the shelters would be emergent need. The woman would go there and then, as I understand it, if further counselling, care, or medical care is needed, a referral system takes over at that point?

MR. BOGLE: That's accurate, Mr. Chairman. This program is still in its infancy. There's a lot of work to be done on it. We'll be monitoring it very closely with the agencies, the Women's Bureau from the government, and the Department through our planning secretariat.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Chairman, to the minister. Will the basic planning for the new program be from the planning secretariat? Will it be an in-house type of recommendation that the minister will accept and put into place within this fiscal year?

MR. BOGLE: Whether or not any further planning would be done in-house or on a contractual basis, as the Torrance report was, is still to be decided. Certainly the co-ordination of the program would be through the planning secretariat of the department and the Women's Bureau, which is under the responsibility of the Minister of Culture.

MR. NOTLEY: Just before we leave the total figure — I was out for a few moments. On the question of the men's hostel, last night one of the members raised the suggestion of counselling service. I believe it was the hon. Member for Calgary Millican. The observation that member made was that maybe we should take a look at counselling during the time people are in the hostels, as opposed to during the day. What specific steps is the minister considering on that proposal? It seems to me that it does have some considerable merit. Because if we're going to say to these people, you're in for two weeks and then out you go, or you go to Gunn or Youngstown, it seems to me that we do have to make a reasonable effort to provide counselling when in fact they are in the hostel, as opposed to being out looking for work.

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Chairman, one of the recommendations made by the Social Care Facilities Review Committee, and contained in the report I tabled in this Assembly, was that counselling services at the men's hostels should be expanded from day service to after hours services for the very reason mentioned by the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview. The department has moved in that direction by providing counselling after hours, or what might be termed after hours. We'll continue to monitor it very closely, and there may well be an expansion of that

service. I certainly agree with the concept that if we want to encourage — and I might mention that the statistics have been very encouraging in terms of transients who arrive in Alberta looking for work and stay the two weeks. If they have a job at the end of the two-week period and still have not received a pay cheque, the director of the hostel has the ability to give them a further one- or two-week period at the hostel at no cost. At the end of that period of time, of course, we do expect that they will be on their own.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Chairman, just to follow up. I'm rather interested in the elements. The Edmonton allocation is higher than Calgary. I don't know what one uses as the right way of wording this — the number of people who in fact go through the hostel. I would have thought that Calgary would have had a higher number coming into it than Edmonton, especially in the last several years. The difference between the two major cities attracted my attention when I saw it. If we have any figures, I would be interested in having them.

MR. BOGLE: The Edmonton Single Men's Hostel has a capacity of 397, and it has 35 staff. The Calgary Single Men's Hostel has a capacity of 320, and has 29 staff positions. So the hostel in Edmonton is larger than the hostel in Calgary. That's primarily due to the fact that Edmonton is a jump-off point for both the seismic and other conventional oil activities in northern Alberta and the territories further north, as well as the activities in the Cold Lake and Fort McMurray regions of the province.

MR. NOTLEY: And the total number who would use it in a year — do we have any figures for the total number in both institutions?

[Mr. Appleby in the Chair]

MR. BOGLE: The occupancy of the Edmonton men's hostel has been running at 100 per cent. We have had an arrangement for an overflow accommodation. The Calgary hostel is running at about 85 per cent capacity.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Chairman, to the minister. Is there still a program whereby clothing can be purchased or given to persons in the hostel so they can go out on the job and have proper clothing, and can obtain taxi or bus fare to get to the job? Is that type of program there? Also, is the program in place, as was at one time, whereby there is a charge for those types of things, and that when they are earning a living they can make a repayment?

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Chairman, I don't know. I've visited both hostels and gone through and spoken with members of the staff. I do not know whether provisions may be made to obtain clothing, taxi fare . . . I'm receiving a nod. Apparently that's so. If the hon. member would like a more detailed answer, I'll have to obtain it for him. But apparently there is that flexibility in the program.

MRS. CHICHAK: A supplementary to the minister on the situation in the hostel, and the support that is being provided there. Could the minister indicate whether there is some participation on the part of the federal government in funding, particularly where those employables who require residence in a hostel for some period of time come from other parts of Canada. Is there some sort of reciprocal or contractual agreement with the federal gov-

ernment for funding support in the overall area, and is there some arrangement between Canada Manpower and the department to assist in the matter of employment possibilities and that support?

MR. BOGLE: I'll have to take that as notice, Mr. Chairman. If there's any cost sharing, I assume it would be under the Canada assistance plan. I'm not aware of any other cost sharing we might have with the federal government. But I'll certainly endeavor to obtain more details on that matter and report to the member.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Chairman, to the minister. Gunn was an out-of-town residence for a number of longer term adults who required care. Is that program still in operation, and will there be an expansion of the facilities at Gunn?

MR. BOGLE: We have two facilities outside the major cities, one located at Gunn and the other at Youngstown. Gunn has a capacity of 118 spaces. Youngstown currently has 45 spaces. We are rebuilding the facility at Youngstown. It will be built to eventually accommodate, I believe, 60 individuals. It is correct that both facilities are for longer term care for unemployable men, in many cases seniors.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Chairman, do we expect a reduction in the number of people in Youngstown? I note that we are moving from \$428,000 to \$462,000, an increase of \$34,000, which is about 8 per cent, which would really be less than the inflation rate. During this process of building, will there in fact be a temporary cutback in the number of people at Youngstown? What would be the reason for an increase that to me seems inconsistent with the rate of inflation?

MR. BOGLE: The actual number of spaces at Youngstown was decreased several years ago, due to a fire inspector's report. In terms of the present facility, hon. members who have visited it will recall that it's one of the old agricultural colleges, very similar to the ones that were constructed at Raymond and other parts of the province. I can't give a specific answer to that concern today. It currently has an occupancy rate of about 95 per cent. I'm not aware if that figure would be going down. I know that the new building is being planned to the south and east of the present facility, and I don't believe that would cause any reduction in space. But I'll certainly try to determine a more direct answer to the member.

MR. SINDLINGER: Mr. Chairman, two questions to the minister. The first is in regard to the program. Approximately how many adults will benefit from this program throughout this year?

AN HON. MEMBER: Which vote?

MR. SINDLINGER: I'm referring to Vote 4.2.

Second, the Calgary Women's Emergency Shelter is in Calgary Buffalo, and I have visited it many times over the last three years. Every time I've been there, I've found it to be in complete order, the surroundings impeccable, and very quiet. The reason I mention this is because that same Calgary Women's Emergency Shelter is trying to establish another one in another residential area in Calgary, but they're receiving some opposition from nearby residents. I'd like to ask the minister if they've ap-

proached the department for a general letter of reference that they might use in their attempt to find another residence in Calgary.

MR. BOGLE: Without some research I can't give an answer as to the total number of people who have been helped by the men's hostels, the women's hostel here in Edmonton, and the facilities at Gunn and Youngstown, but I know I can get that information without any difficulty.

With regard to the shelters for battered wives, it's unfortunate the hon. member wasn't in his place. We did discuss that at some length. The Calgary women's shelter has made application for a second facility. That was one of the eight projects that I announced would be going ahead. At present, discussions are taking place between the director of the Women's Bureau, on behalf of the government of Alberta in close consultation with the planning secretariat of our department, and the various agencies on the expansions proposed.

MR. SINDLINGER: Mr. Chairman, I am aware that they are trying to find another site. But if the minister were approached by the group asking for a general letter of recommendation which they could use in support of their application for another residence, would the minister be willing to do so?

MR. BOGLE: If we're discussing the general concept of the establishment of a centre, yes; if it's in preference to a specific site, no.

Agreed to:

Total Vote 4 — Specialized Social  
Services

\$6,908,220

#### **Vote 5.1 — Senior Citizens' Supplementary Benefits**

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Chairman, dealing with the question of assistance to senior citizens now, I think we could do it in any of a couple of places here, either this vote or the next vote. I would be interested in the minister outlining to the committee where the government sees the Alberta assured income going at this stage, the reason for the \$10 a month increase, whether the decision was made as a result of any outside studies, what consultation took place with the Alberta Council on Aging, and what consideration was given to some of the specific cost increases that are not dealt with by other government programs. I made reference again to the increase in utilities, which is very significant especially for northern Alberta residents.

Perhaps we might take just a few moments to discuss this rather important appropriation. The minister could give us not only an outline in some detail of how the government came up with a \$10 a month increase but, I think more important, the planning process to consider increases in the future. We have the guaranteed income supplement, where there is an automatic adjustment every three months related to the cost of living. The basic old age pension is based on the same proposition. I personally make the submission that once we've set a satisfactory level in consultation with the Council on Aging, I think we should then adjust it on the same basis as the basic old age pension and the guaranteed income supplement, so the Alberta assured income rides right along with the other two programs that it must work with.

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Chairman, the Alberta assured income program is a top-up or supplement to the two programs offered by the federal government to senior citizens, the old age security program and the guaranteed income supplement. It was never intended by this government to be a pension on its own. It is intended to assist senior citizens who qualify for the guaranteed income supplement, primarily citizens who do not have other means of support, do not have the benefit of a private pension plan or only a limited portion of the Canada pension plan, and who have other limited resources in meeting their basic day to day needs.

I might also mention — and the hon. member has made several references to the Council on Aging, a very esteemed group of senior citizens. For the hon. member's information, I might add that the Council on Aging has representation on the Provincial Senior Citizens' Advisory Council, which is advisory to this government and provides an annual report. There certainly has been consultation with that organization and, I assume, through the representation on the organization by the Council on Aging, input by that body.

No outside studies were done in determining the rate of increase. I might refresh the hon. member's memory that a year ago a single person was entitled to a maximum of \$45 and, I believe, 2 cents. Through our supplementary estimates we brought in a substantial increase in that program so that the rates would go from \$45 to some \$75. After a number of discussions various members had with senior citizens in their constituencies, it was a decision of our government caucus that there was indeed a need to increase the rates even further. Therefore the maximum benefits were increased from \$75 to \$85. I believe the maximum benefit a senior citizen may receive — a senior who is entitled to the old age security, the guaranteed income supplement, and the Alberta assured income plan — is a little over \$502 per month at present. That's not to take into account the other programs, whether they be renter assistance, tax reduction programs, or other such programs offered by other departments in this government.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Chairman, the minister indicated that the \$30 a month increase last year came as a result of the decision of government caucus. Presumably the \$10 a month increase came as a result of government caucus. Is the minister in a position to outline to the committee whether it was on the direct advice of the advisory council on aging that the increase was \$10 a month this year, or was it as a consequence of a subjected decision by the government caucus? Specifically, in the decision to go an extra 10 bucks a month, was any consideration

given to the higher cost of utilities which certainly are a major part of the budget of our senior citizens?

MR. BOGLE: The hon. member is absolutely correct. Any influence he might have with his colleagues in the New Democratic Party in the House of Commons in reminding the federal government of the hardship it's imposing through its various taxes on citizens in this country, including the most recent tax to pay for the purchase of Petrofina, might be helpful.

If the hon. member would look at the most recent annual report of the Provincial Senior Citizens' Advisory Council, I could mention a recommendation that increases in the Alberta assured income plan be tied to the cost of living. If you wish to make the calculation, you'll see that we have exceeded that request by the council.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Chairman, there are a number of other points I want to raise on this issue.

MR. CHAIRMAN: In view of the time . . .

MR. SCHMIDT: Mr. Chairman, I move the committee rise, report progress, and request 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, 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. SCHMIDT: Mr. Speaker, tomorrow evening we will continue with the estimates of Social Services and Community Health. If those are completed, they will be followed by the Department of Energy and Natural Resources.

Mr. Speaker, I move we call it 5:30.

MR. SPEAKER: Does the Assembly agree?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

[At 5:29 p.m., pursuant to Standing Order 5, the House adjourned to Thursday at 2:30 p.m.]