

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ALBERTA

Title: Tuesday, May 26, 1981 2:30 p.m.

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

PRAYERS

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

head: INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

MR. LYSONS: Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure today to introduce four distinguished gentlemen in your gallery. They are Henry Einarson, MLA from the province of Manitoba; Dennis Banda, MLA from the province of Saskatchewan; Willis Richford, retired farmer from Saskatchewan; and John Bodnar, businessman from northern Manitoba. They all serve on the Port Churchill Development Board and are in Edmonton at a meeting. They're very impressed with our province, and we're very proud to have you, gentlemen. Thanks for standing.

head: INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill 54
The Legislative Assembly
Amendment Act, 1981

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, I ask leave to introduce Bill No. 54, The Legislative Assembly Amendment Act, 1981.

This Bill would introduce a provision allowing members of the Assembly to enter into a dental care plan. This is similar to existing provisions of the Act which cover other areas of group insurance. As well, the Bill would adjust and update the amount of deduction that may be charged to members for absences when they are not entitled to be absent from the Assembly. I believe that matter was overlooked in a previous revision. In the same provision, the grounds for absence are extended to certain appropriate areas such as attendance at the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association.

The next provision would clarify circumstances in which the *per diem* allowances should be paid, by defining in effect brief periods when the House might not be sitting during a brief adjournment, during which *per diems* could be paid if members are maintaining a residence in the Edmonton area and do not reside here, and in regard to the longer breaks makes it equally clear that that should not be done. Finally, the changes in boundaries proposed by the select committee on electoral boundaries in certain constituencies, which reported a couple of weeks ago under the chairmanship of the hon. Member for Calgary Fish Creek, are put forward in a proposed new schedule to the Act.

[Leave granted; Bill 54 read a first time]

Bill 57**The Public Trustee Amendment Act, 1981**

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, once again I ask leave

to introduce a Bill, being Bill No. 57, The Public Trustee Amendment Act, 1981.

There are three basic principles. The first is that the Bill would introduce the new area of unborn infants into the classes of individuals upon whom the Public Trustee might act. Hon. members would be aware that there is an extensive list of persons or classes of persons on behalf of whom the Public Trustee may act, and this change would introduce the idea of the unborn child.

Secondly, some useful changes are being raised in the dollar limits at which the Public Trustee must apply to the court for directions before taking certain steps in regard to disposition of property of estates. There are a couple of sections where that is done. Thirdly, the manner of accounting for interest that accrues on behalf of estates, the assets of which are under administration by the Public Trustee, the manner of accruing the interest, and the dates upon which it's accrued are made more flexible, as well as the manner in which certain payments out can be made.

[Leave granted; Bill 57 read a first time]

Bill 55
The Wilderness Areas
Amendment Act, 1981

MR. STROMBERG: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce Bill 55, The Wilderness Areas Amendment Act, 1981.

The purpose of this hallmark legislation is to reserve, for present and future generations, land suited for scientific research and education purposes. Those ecological reserves would include areas which are representative examples of a particular type of ecosystem or areas which contain rare or endangered native plants and animals, that they may be preserved in a natural habitat. Also to be included are areas modified by man. This affords us an opportunity to study the recovery of the natural ecosystem from such modifications.

[Leave granted; Bill 55 read a first time]

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 55 be placed on the Order Paper under Government Bills and Orders.

[Motion carried]

head: INTRODUCTION OF SPECIAL GUESTS

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce to you, and through you to members of the Assembly, a group of 35 students from the Hugh Sutherland high school in the town of Carstairs in the constituency of Olds-Didsbury. I should hasten to add that some of the students also come from the constituency of Three Hills, and I know the Member for Three Hills would want me to mention that.

The group is present today with teachers Mr. Dale Weiss, Miss Dot Richardson, and Mrs. Pat Christensen; along with parents Mrs. Josephs, Mrs. Casebeer, Mrs. Eggen, and Mrs. Taylor. Perhaps I could also say that I'm sure Mrs. Eggen will be keeping a very careful eye on her sister, the Member for Drayton Valley. The whole group arrived safely as a result of the fine work of Mr.

Gene McKay, the bus driver. I ask the group to rise and receive the recognition of the Assembly.

MR. STROMBERG: Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege this afternoon to introduce to you, and through you to members of this Assembly, 30 students from the Sparling school in the city of Camrose. With them is their teacher, Mr. Pfeiffer. They are seated in the members gallery, and at this time I ask them to rise and be recognized by the Assembly.

MR. STEVENS: Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege this afternoon to introduce to you, and through you to the members of the Assembly, the second group of grade 8 students from the Manachaban junior high school in Cochrane in the constituency of Banff-Cochrane. Some of the students have come from as far away as the constituency of Olds-Didsbury.

The students are accompanied by their principal, Don Thomas; their teachers, Paul Gaboury and Mrs. Claudette McLenahan; teachers' aide Mrs. Viola Ankerstjerne, who was here three weeks ago with the first 50 students from the grade 8 classes; their bus driver; and a parent. Would the students, staff, and visitors please rise and receive the welcome of the Assembly.

head: ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Clover Bar Research Facility

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, my question to the Minister of Housing and Public Works is with regard to the Alberta Research Council facility at Clover Bar and the building codes in effect in the county of Strathcona. The concern of the county is with regard to a major disaster potential in the area of this Clover Bar facility, given the right research activity, hazardous storage, and railway traffic in the vicinity. I'd like to ask the minister whether any changes have recently been made in that facility to meet the building code and to avoid any disaster such as the county is concerned about?

MR. CHAMBERS: Mr. Speaker, in order to be totally accurate in my answer, I would have to find out that information for the member and report back.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the minister. Could the minister indicate whether his office or he personally are aware of the building code concern of the county? Secondly, could the minister indicate whether any new trailers have been added to that facility within the last two months?

MR. CHAMBERS: The answer to the first question with regard to the building code is yes. With regard to the second, again to be strictly accurate, I would wish to check and report back.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the minister. Could the minister indicate whether the coal research operation has been moved or is being considered to be moved at the present time?

MR. CHAMBERS: I presume the Leader of the Opposition is asking only about that specific site. Again, I would like to take that question under review and report back accurately.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, could the minister indicate whether funds are available in the minister's budget this year to make the necessary changes at the Clover Bar site? If not, would a special warrant be considered with regard to this matter?

MR. CHAMBERS: Mr. Speaker, I spent all afternoon here yesterday going through my budget. I will be happy to go back to my office, review that, and report back. I don't have those estimate books with me right now.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the minister. The information was just brought to my attention this morning, or I would have raised it with the minister yesterday during the estimates study.

In reviewing the matter, could the minister also look at whether the program meets all the building codes of the county of Strathcona? Specifically, could the minister indicate in tomorrow's question period what actions will be taken to meet those specific building codes?

MR. CHAMBERS: Yes, Mr. Speaker. I'll be happy to review the circumstances the Leader of the Opposition refers to and report back.

Group Homes for the Handicapped

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, my second question to the Minister of Social Services and Community Health is with regard to the Baker Centre for the mentally handicapped in Calgary. Could the minister indicate whether the changes have been made, and whether there has been a move to utilization of community group homes to reduce the number of persons in that institution?

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Speaker, the plan announced in this Assembly approximately one year ago called for the development of group homes to house approximately 148 residents of the Baker Centre. A further 100 residents from the same centre would be housed in the special extended care facilities to be located adjacent to active treatment hospitals in Fort Macleod, Bow Island, and Calgary. A further 20 residents would be transferred from the Michener Centre to those special extended care facilities.

Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to say that the planning is well under way on both aspects of the Baker Centre replacement. I might mention that five group homes are expected to proceed within the metropolitan centre of Calgary during the present fiscal year. Further construction will commence once planning has been completed. I might also mention that as the Alberta Association for the Mentally Retarded has submitted a proposal as an alternative to the special extended care facilities, I have given the assurance that very careful consideration would be given to that proposal. While that assessment is under way, planning will continue for the special extended care facilities in the three communities I've mentioned.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary to the minister. Could the minister indicate whether there is an overall program across the province towards the establishment of more group homes in other centres in the province? Has budgeting for those facilities been put in place, maybe not in the minister's department but in the budget of the Minister of Housing and Public Works?

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Speaker, since 1971 a very substantial effort has been made by this government to de-institutionalize, to assist parents of handicapped youngsters so those youngsters could be housed in group home accommodations across the province. I don't have the specific details as to the breakdowns in the various areas, but if the hon. member would like to go into the matter in some detail, I'll certainly be pleased to provide that information. Just as a 'guesstimate', I believe the figure of 300 spaces in the various group homes would be accurate for the total number either in the planning or construction stage at the present time. Most of the homes are six-member group homes.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a final supplementary to the minister, a related question with regard to the interdepartmental committee working on the Year of Disabled Persons. The departments involved are Housing and Public Works, Transportation, Education, Advanced Education and Manpower, and Social Services and Community Health. Could the minister indicate whether a person in that group is providing direct input for the disabled? If not, is someone with a specialty there who could provide special knowledge with regard to needs of the disabled?

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Speaker, I'm sure the hon. member is aware that there are two separate committees. A citizens committee is gearing activities outside government. There certainly are some individuals on that committee who have handicaps themselves; others have family members who have handicaps. And as the hon. member has indicated, there is an interdepartmental committee. Dr. Dick Short from our department, who has some very special training in handicapping conditions, is the chairman. I'm not aware of, and would hesitate to suggest, the membership of the committee from the other departments without a further check of the statistics.

Ambulance Services

MR. PURDY: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to address a question to the Minister of Hospitals and Medical Care. Will the minister be reconsidering government policy regarding ambulance service in Alberta since the minister's meeting with the Alberta ambulance operators on May 20 last week, I think?

MR. RUSSELL: Mr. Speaker, I think the appropriate term to use would be to continue the consideration of the problem, rather than "reconsider".

MR. PURDY: A supplementary question to the minister, Mr. Speaker. Has the minister sent a directive to Alberta hospitals outlining the policy of in-patient transfer and where the actual dollars are derived from, either through the global budget of the hospital or directly from the Alberta health care commission?

MR. RUSSELL: Mr. Speaker, if I understand the import of the question, it's how will the recent change in ambulance benefits regulations be paid for? At the present time, it's paid for through the global budgets of the individual hospitals. When I met with the Ambulance Operators Association, they criticized that method of payment in a number of ways. I undertook to investigate the matter for them and see if we can't devise a simpler method of centralized billing.

MR. PURDY: A further supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Has the minister had an opportunity to review the new rate structure presented to the minister by the Alberta ambulance operators?

MR. RUSSELL: Yes, Mr. Speaker. As I understand it, that rate is in place. They presented it to me merely as information, not for discussion.

MR. PURDY: A final supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Can the minister assure this Assembly that he will present to the 1981 fall session the following. One, a set of standards. Two, what is the responsibility of the local municipality towards ambulance service, and what is the responsibility of the province? Three, concern is being raised by a number of people as to where treatment of a patient begins. Is it at the accident scene, or is it when a patient arrives at the hospital? I wonder if the minister could clarify these points.

MR. RUSSELL: There are a lot of questions in that one question, Mr. Speaker. I believe the hon. member is asking for a commitment from me to bring some kind of ground ambulance program to the fall session of the Legislature. At this time I'm unable to give that commitment.

DR. BUCK: We've been trying for seven years, Dave. Don't rush it.

MR. RUSSELL: I thought the Easter bunny had left town, Mr. Speaker, but I was mistaken.

DR. BUCK: Santa Claus has been waiting for seven years to have ambulance service in this province, Mr. Speaker.

Grain Exports

MR. BATIUK: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct my question to the hon. Premier. Could the Premier advise the Assembly whether the newly announced long-term grain deal made by the Canadian Wheat Board with the Soviet Union adequately responds to his proposal of approximately four years ago?

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Speaker, the information on the arrangements is still sketchy, but it appears that the Canadian Wheat Board has responded to encouragement by the Alberta government, which was the subject of some considerable debate in this Legislature in 1977 and 1978, as well as at a first ministers' conference early in 1978.

From what we can gather, the agreement does have the benefit of the long-term stability of five years, which we've been pressing for. I think perhaps we have to await a complete evaluation when the full details have been made public, but from our point of view, it is certainly positive and encouraging.

MR. BATIUK: A supplementary to the Premier, Mr. Speaker. Would the Premier advise whether this approach is one that the Alberta government encourages in other grain trade relationships?

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Speaker, certainly as we discussed in the debate in May 1978, the Soviet Union, together with China, are the two large customers of our grain trade here. With the Alberta farmers very interested

in it, we felt that the long-term agreement was certainly valid for the Soviet Union. At that time the debate centred on whether it was possible to acquire such an arrangement with the Soviet Union. As a result of our trip in 1977, we felt it was, and pressed for it.

It was also raised at that time that it would not be in the best interests of Canadian farmers to tie themselves into a long-term grain agreement. By the public debate, I think it is certainly clear that that isn't so, although that was debated and raised by some representatives in this Assembly at the time we had that debate. Whether or not it's valid to extend it to other nations that are major trading partners for Canada is a question we intend to consider actively now that the precedent has been established with regard to the Soviet Union, and certainly with regard to past history with the other major trading customer from China.

Just to refresh hon. members, Mr. Speaker, Japan too is a very important purchaser of our grain. We would look at that and consider it now that this important development has occurred.

MR. BATIUK: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary to the Minister of Economic Development. I wonder whether the minister could advise what effect this would have on our grain transportation system.

MR. PLANCHE: Mr. Speaker, we were in touch with the Canadian Department of Agriculture today to determine whether or not the 25 million tonnes sold will be incremental tonnes in a net sense over the five years. So it's early to respond as to what the effect may be. But in any event it's appropriate today to underscore the importance of settling the grain transportation rate issue, because our best forecasts again indicate that we'll be on car rationing by 1985 if more construction is not done.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the Minister of Agriculture with regard to the payment by the federal government to western farmers after the grain embargo is lifted. Has the minister made any recent representation to the federal minister urging the federal government to live up to their commitment and pay western farmers?

MR. SCHMIDT: Mr. Speaker, we had the opportunity to touch on the proposal the federal government made with regard to the payment and the obligation to producers for the embargo, the loss to individual producers and the payment that would be forthcoming. At the time we were discussing interest rates some two weeks ago, our collective understanding was that that obligation still existed and that the payment would be forthcoming.

Cabarets

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the hon. Solicitor General, the minister responsible for the Alberta Liquor Control Board.

While I'm speaking on that matter, I would like to say to the press gallery, who have been known to imbibe a little bit after they get soundly thrashed by the MLAs: the game is still on, rain or shine.

Can the Solicitor General indicate the position the government takes on the notice sent out to hotel owners that cabarets will be closed as of March 31, 1982? Can the minister indicate if he has been involved in that decision

announced by the Alberta Liquor Control Board? Is that part of government policy?

MR. HARLE: Mr. Speaker, I have to take that question as notice, and respond on another occasion.

Lamb Processing Plant

MR. MANDEVILLE: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the hon. Minister of Agriculture. Could the minister bring the Assembly up to date on the ownership of the Innisfail lamb plant?

MR. SCHMIDT: Mr. Speaker, the lamb plant is still the property of the province of Alberta. It is administered and run by the Department of Agriculture. The question the hon. member has asked: we've been fortunate that last year happened to be the month that it appeared in the black, and it seems to me the year before that, it was a black month as well. Unfortunately, I'm not in a position to say whether or not this is a black month for the books of Lambco.

MR. R. CLARK: Has it been so few you can remember them, Dallas?

MR. MANDEVILLE: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Could the minister indicate whether they are still advertising the plant for sale?

MR. SCHMIDT: Mr. Speaker, some interest was shown in Lambco last year, and some interest in parts of the real estate. The plant sits on three separate parcels, which leaves two available.

The plant itself has diversified its operation, and of course the responsibility the total operation has to the sheep and lamb industry in this province has been increasing productionwise and shows up more favorably on the ledger. We look forward to a continuing increase in the production of lambs in this province. The plant has that capability of diversifying to some of the smaller animals that perhaps could supplement and keep the plant operative — and perhaps more in the black — on a continuing basis.

MR. MANDEVILLE: Mr. Speaker, could the minister indicate whether Dr. Horner has submitted his report as far as packing plants in the province are concerned, and if he has made any recommendations as to what should happen to the Innisfail lamb plant?

MR. SCHMIDT: Mr. Speaker, that report has not been filed, nor have there been any statements in regards to Lambco or the future of Lambco in the interim.

Acid Rain Study

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct a question to the Minister of Environment. It really follows up the questions asked yesterday with regard to the acid rain studies being jointly done by the provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan. I'd like to ask the minister: what is the status of the report, and when will the reports be finished and made public?

MR. COOKSON: Mr. Speaker, insofar as I know, there was to be an interim report this spring. I haven't had an opportunity to check that. I'll do that for the member. I

think the final report was to be concluded in the latter part of '81 or '82, but I can check that, too.

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the minister. Is the minister in a position to indicate to the Assembly whether the research being jointly done by Alberta and Saskatchewan looks at the present impact of the two plants in northeastern Alberta on the potential for acid rain in both Alberta and Saskatchewan? Is that the main thrust of the work being done?

MR. COOKSON: That's as I understand it, Mr. Speaker. The greatest area of concern is northern Saskatchewan, because of the way the air currents flow and because it's a particular area that lends itself to an SO₂ emission problem.

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, to the hon. minister. Will another report have to be commissioned by Alberta and Saskatchewan, or whoever, at the taxpayers' expense, to determine the ultimate number of tar sands plants which can go into northeastern Alberta before the problem of acid rain gets to the level it is in some areas of central Canada, primarily some areas in Ontario? Will another study have to be commissioned to get that information, or in fact will that very important issue be addressed in this study now under way?

MR. COOKSON: Mr. Speaker, I think it would be premature for me to advise in regard to that. I think we have to await the results of the present group — Saskatchewan, Alberta, and Canada — involved in these studies. When we have this information, we'll certainly be reviewing it to see whether their terms of reference should perhaps be extended to deal with other proposed plants, or whether we should again make a new joint arrangement with Canada to review a new future situation.

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, a further question to the minister. Is the minister in a position to indicate to the Assembly whether in fact the question of the accumulative effect on the atmosphere of not only the two plants there now but the two more on the drawing board, and the potential for acid rain — is at least that much included in the report now being done? Certainly we must know that much.

MR. COOKSON: No, that wouldn't be included in the present study. It really is a hypothetical situation. For example, there's no assurance that the plants will even go. So the terms of reference wouldn't likely include that.

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, just one last question to the minister so I clearly understand the situation. Is the minister telling us that in fact no consideration is built into those studies going on now with Alberta, Saskatchewan, and the federal government, to take into consideration the effect additional plants in northeastern Alberta will have on the question of acid rain? There is no breadth in these studies to look at the impact of at least the two plants that are on the drawing board and will hopefully get going by the end of this year?

MR. COOKSON: Mr. Speaker, I'd have to look carefully at the terms of reference. But some prognosticators in the business suggest there may be 10 plants up there in the year 2000. At present I think it would only make sense to address themselves to the specific situation. There's no

doubt, though, that in the course of assessing they can easily hypothesize on the total emissions of future plants. They would likely incorporate some assessment of what might occur if other plants were built.

One also has to remember that new technology will impact on future plants; therefore, even at this time it might be hypothetical even to determine what those future emissions may be in terms of new plants. Of course on a ton basis, based on the productive capacity of that plant, the Syncrude plant is far, far less than the Suncor.

The other variable that would have to be taken into consideration would be the actual location of future plants. It's one thing to talk about accumulation of plants, but one would have to make that conclusion on the actual location of the plants. If, for example, they're properly dispersed, the cumulative effect in a given area would be far less. So in a sense, those things are hypothetical, because we don't as yet know where those plants may or may not be located.

MR. R. CLARK: You know where the Alsands plant is going to be.

MR. COOKSON: Yes, that's correct.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

MR. SPEAKER: May the hon. Member for Athabasca revert to Introduction of Special Guests?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

head: INTRODUCTION OF SPECIAL GUESTS (reversion)

MR. APPLEBY: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce to you and the other members of the Assembly a group of students from the village of Boyle in the Athabasca constituency, with a special mention to their teacher Mr. Peter Avasthi, who is now well into his second decade of bringing students to this Assembly each year. They are 26 grade 9 students. Besides their teacher, they have with them bus driver Carl Parson and parent supervisor Frances Tanski. I'd like them to stand up in the members gallery and be welcomed in the Assembly.

head: WRITTEN QUESTIONS

133. Mr. R. Speaker asked the government the following question:

What trips were taken on chartered non-government aircraft by members of the cabinet, their assistants', employees of the Office of the Premier, the deputy minister of Executive Council, the assistant secretary of cabinet, the assistant clerk of Executive Council, the secretaries to cabinet committees, the co-ordination officer of Executive Council, the director of project management for Executive Council, and the director of finance and administration for Executive Council, including the date, cost, type of aircraft, and place of origin and destination of each trip, for the fiscal years 1978-79, 1979-80, 1980-81, 1981-82 up to May 1981?

134. Mr. R. Speaker asked the government the following question:

- (1) What individuals from the private sector met with ministers of the Crown in Jasper for energy strategy meetings on or about April 30, May 1, and May 2, 1981, at public expense, and what are their corporate affiliations, if any?
- (2) What costs were incurred by the government for those energy strategy meetings, including but not limited to:
 - (a) total cost of room, board, and conference facilities at Jasper Park Lodge;
 - (b) total cost and type of transportation taken by the ministers of the Crown, government employees or advisors, or guests from the private sector, to and from Jasper; and
 - (c) any other costs arising from those energy strategy meetings?

136. Mr. Notley asked the government the following question:
- (1) Has the Premier's office engaged a consultant to provide advice concerning the installation of a computerized correspondence system?
 - (2) Has the government signed any contract for these services?
 - (3) With whom was the contract made and what are its terms?
 - (4) How much has been expended to date on such advice?
 - (5) What is the projected total cost of the proposed computerized correspondence system?
 - (6) How much has been spent on the system to date?
 - (7) Is it anticipated the system will be programmed to break down correspondence and information by constituency?
 - (8) On the basis of what other criteria will the correspondence be sorted?
 - (9) Is the system to be installed at public expense?
 - (10) Will access to correspondence and consequent responses be restricted to government members?
 - (11) Will such a system result in Albertans receiving the appearance of personal responses rather than the reality of a mechanically produced response to communications they address to the Premier?

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, with respect to the questions on the Order Paper, I advise that all three questions still on the Order Paper may be accepted today.

I would move that Motion for a Return 135 stand and retain its place on the Order Paper.

MR. SPEAKER: Does the Assembly agree with the motion that Motion 135 stand and retain its place?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CLERK: Question No. 133, Mr. R. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: All questions having been accepted, I take it that no further proceedings are required in relation to those questions. They become orders for returns.

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, before calling Committee of Supply, maybe I could indicate that the first hour was designated, and I believe members of the official opposition would be willing to grant unanimous consent to proceed in the same way for the period after the first hour.

MR. SPEAKER: Does the Assembly agree?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

head: **GOVERNMENT DESIGNATED BUSINESS**

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

Special Warrants

[Mr. Appleby in the Chair]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Will the Committee of Supply please come to order. This afternoon we will be considering a number of special warrants. First, would the hon. Provincial Treasurer wish to make some remarks?

MR. HYNDMAN: Briefly, Mr. Chairman. The supplementary estimates of expenditure are of course an important part of the activities of Committee of Supply every year. They are found in the Estimates of Expenditure 1981-82 on pages 407 to 427, with a detailed description of each.

On March 26 I noted that expenditures from voted appropriations during 1980-81 were 5.6 per cent over the amount forecast.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I wonder if we could have order please.

MR. HYNDMAN: Insofar as expenditures from voted appropriations during 1980-81 were forecast, that represented an increase of 5.6 per cent over the previous estimate, approximately \$5,673 million. Therefore the total authorized expenditures for the last fiscal year are approximately \$593 million over the estimates of last spring. That is what we are voting on and what is before us in the estimates book at this time. They were authorized by special warrants, pursuant to Section 30 of The Financial Administration Act.

The only other item I draw to the attention of members of the committee is that the special warrants, which total \$593 million, can be separated into essentially four categories — and probably should be so separated to have a relevant and fair comparison. Firstly, there were land purchases which are long-term assets, long-term capital investments. They total almost \$130 million of the \$593 million. They were once-only long-term investments and, as members can see in the estimates, essentially related to purchases through the Ministry of Environment of utility corridors in the restricted development areas of Edmonton and Calgary. They comprise roughly 25 per cent of the total warrants.

As well, there were other capital items — again investments of a job-producing nature, not operating — such as the water and sewer program, which as we know was oversubscribed, and the rural natural gas program that comprised almost \$200 million of the special warrants, about 34 per cent. That left the non-recurring operating expenditures of about 21 per cent and ongoing operating of about 20 per cent.

As members know, the departments involved were mainly five: Environment, Hospitals and Medical Care, Social Services and Community Health, Advanced Education and Manpower, and Agriculture. I look forward,

as do other ministers, to exploring in greater detail, as is proper, the aspects of the supplementary estimates.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Chairman, in looking at the special warrants, I'd like to say first of all that this has been one of our major concerns during this session of the Legislature. A significant amount of the budget of this province for the fiscal year 1980-81 was determined outside the Legislature rather than endorsed by members of this Legislature. Some 11 per cent of last year's expenditure was made by cabinet. Now today we're endorsing those expenditures after the fact. I believe that is the number one concern.

The number two concern we have with regard to special warrants is certainly the interpretation and utilization of The Financial Administration Act. We feel it is very significant and very important that the words "urgently required" were placed under Section 30 in this legislation by former governments, and adhered to by governments and ministers since placed accordingly in the Act. Mr. Chairman, because it is there, it's the guideline. It's the rule that must be followed by the Provincial Treasurer, who gives final approval. It is the rule that must be followed by other ministers who request special warrants. They must assure themselves that the special warrant is "urgently required". That is certainly the second concern we have at this time.

We feel that a number of special warrants would fit into three different categories. Some special warrants are in the category of underbudgeting, where departments have underbudgeted. When I examine that concept of underbudgeting, it really says the department itself did not determine all the expenditures for a fiscal year. When those expenditures were not budgeted correctly, the minister had to make a decision as to whether additional funds would be put in place or whether the projected budget for that item or program or department should be kept as is and there shouldn't be extensions. We feel the departments under various circumstances utilized that special warrant basis by saying, we'll put so much into the budget; if we run into difficulty and must expand the program, we'll pass a special warrant; that's easy. So there do not seem to be any guidelines for the use of special warrants in terms of expanding budgets of the various departments.

I've already mentioned the second category; that is, whether or not the special warrant is urgent. Again we feel that under a number of circumstances the government has not adhered strictly to The Financial Administration Act and that interpretation as to whether or not the special warrant was urgent. The expenditure may have been necessary, and that's not where our argument is. It may have been appropriate. I'd like to examine that as we go through the special warrants today.

The third area of concern we have with the way this government handles special warrants is that some of those special warrants could have been placed before the Legislature or, secondly, those special warrants could have been placed in the budget we are studying at the present time. At that time the due respect that is necessary in this Legislature would have been shown to legislators, but the government violated that principle under a number of circumstances. For example, in October 1980, in the last fiscal year — prior to the fall session, which started on October 20 and went till November 27 — \$156.7 million of special warrants were passed.

What happened prior to this spring session? In March 1981, the month prior to this session, \$89.8 million of

special warrants were passed. But in the month in which we held a short session, that could have been used to consider special supplementary estimates of this government, special financial needs of this government — those needs could have been justified in this Legislature. On March 25, only a week prior to the opening of this Legislature, just prior to putting this budget into place, where now we as members of this Legislature have the opportunity of reviewing the special warrants, \$42 million of special warrants were passed by the government.

Mr. Chairman, I can come to only one conclusion: the government doesn't care about the total Legislature and the government wants to do all these things on their own. They don't really need the endorsement of the Legislature. They'll get it after, because they have a big majority. One thing we must learn in legislatures is that when a government has a large majority they must take more care to respect the legislative process. To me this is an excessive abuse of that privilege. One idea we suggested a number of times in this Legislature and one opportunity that's available to this government because they initiated two sessions, fall and spring, is that during those sessions, supplementary estimates can be brought before all members of the Legislature.

As we go through these estimates, I can point out various areas where the sums of money were not required on that particular date; two or three weeks or more would not have made any difference. The principle would not have been violated. Respect could have been shown for this Legislature. Mr. Chairman, to me that is very basic to my responsibility as an elected person, someone sent by a number of constituents to represent them in the public arena. In no way can I understand why the government continues to follow that pattern.

The Financial Administration Act talks about moneys being "urgently required". When I examine this Act, my question to the Provincial Treasurer is: is that one of the criteria that is very important in the decision as to whether a special warrant receives his approval? And is it the criterion used by the ministers when a special warrant is brought before the minister, as to whether the matter is urgent or not? How is that criterion judged? How does the Provincial Treasurer, in his terms of reference, examine the definition of "urgently required"? How do they look upon it in government?

There is no question that many programs may be needed or required and are acceptable programs, but if they don't meet the urgency requirement, it is the responsibility of the Provincial Treasurer and, first, the minister that that request for a special warrant by a department is refused. Mr. Chairman, I think it most important that the government be able to define and clarify that use here in this Legislature. It's very, very, very necessary.

We on this side of the House can in no way endorse the special warrant spending by this government. We can in no way approve expenditures that we feel could have been brought before us in this Legislature for our approval and discussion. A short session this March could have discussed many of them. Last fall in the October session a Bill could have been brought before us and we could have discussed the matters accordingly. But if the government continues to abuse what I feel is the responsibility of us on this side of the House and of many of the backbenchers — because the backbenchers on the Conservative side of the House do not sit in on the cabinet meetings. They have to accept this kind of expenditure after the fact. So I think that as backbenchers and persons responsible to their constituents they should be

thinking about the principle they're allowing their cabinet to abuse and should be voicing a concern, in caucus if not in this Legislature, about the process being used.

This government has been in place for 10 years and in 10 years has been allowed to proceed with financial affairs with this type of disrespect. Mr. Chairman, it's time somebody held the government accountable and asked: is it the right procedure to use? We believe it is not and are not going to support the special warrants before us this afternoon, even though the special warrants may be necessary and acceptable. But in terms of the process, it's not acceptable.

Mr. Chairman, I'd very much appreciate the Provincial Treasurer carefully placing before us at this time the process, the kind of criteria used in dealing with special warrants. How is it done? What types of questions are asked? How many are refused during the year, or is there a very liberal attitude toward the special warrants? Because knowing the large majority the government has, this small group of people in opposition won't say much anyway, and if they do, well, it doesn't matter; we're still going to carry on; we've got lots of power and money and we'll do what we want to do.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Vote I, support to the Legislative Assembly.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Chairman, I think it's incumbent upon the Provincial Treasurer to respond to the question with regard to how special warrants are handled, so that we're able to examine that question before we move through the various special warrants. Certainly I have some questions as well on each special warrant.

MR. HYNDMAN: I'm happy to do that, Mr. Chairman. I think a thorough review of the warrants is indeed appropriate. The process in respect of which special warrants move through the Executive Council of course follows and reflects The Financial Administration Act, which represents the guidelines, the qualifications set by this Legislature some years ago with regard to expenditures when the Legislative Assembly is not sitting.

Under Section 30 of The Financial Administration Act, Part 3, Supply Votes, I suggest the process is set forward very clearly. The time period we are talking about is any time the Legislative Assembly is not in session. The statute requires that the Provincial Treasurer must satisfy himself that there has been a report by a member of Executive Council, a certification — that's the word used in the statute — "that, in the public interest, an expenditure of public money is urgently required" with respect to a particular item or matter and, secondly, the minister has to indicate that the estimates previously passed by the Assembly do not have moneys for that particular project.

I can assure the hon. Leader of the Opposition that a large number of special warrants are refused before they ever reach the Executive Council table. Each application for a special warrant, even though on some occasions it may be initiated by a minister, has to go through three or four filters, if you will, three or four very careful reviews to assess the proposed expenditure, the extent to which the item was not previously introduced into the department's estimates that had been passed, so as to avoid any duplication. I don't have at hand the number refused, but a large number are refused at various levels as they go through the system.

In each case where there is a special warrant, regard is had to The Financial Administration Act. The special

warrant must fit within the legislative framework of that Act or it will not be brought to the Executive Council table, or if a defect or problem is found at that stage, it would not be passed by Executive Council. So care is taken to ensure that each special warrant meets those criteria. They are varied, as they have been for many years. They range from forest fires to special programs, say, in the areas of social assistance, where the public and others and the government feel action should be taken, say, in summer or fall, without waiting until the spring. That is evident in the detail here. Having said that, I think it's appropriate, as the hon. Leader of the Opposition indicates, that we assess each of these in some detail, because I believe the government can indicate clearly that they were necessary, urgent, and in the public interest.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Chairman, to the minister. I raised as well the question with regard to special warrants being passed just prior to an opportunity, like the fall session. This spring we had a short session which could have been extended two or three days, in time to pass supplementary estimates. Could the minister indicate the reasons the government doesn't follow that process, because it would eliminate this need to pass special warrants after the fact? As legislators, we could all be involved here in the process, if the opportunity were used.

As I examine the special warrants, a number of them were passed in late March this year. We could have held the session just a few days earlier, had a supplementary estimates Bill to take care of all of them, and had public discussion in the current fiscal year they were to be allocated by the government. I feel that would be an excellent principle for the government to follow and would appreciate the minister indicating good, significant reasons why that can't be done, if the government isn't going to do it. I don't know of any legislative reasons it couldn't, because we were available as members of the legislature.

MR. HYNDMAN: Mr. Chairman, I might mention that the procedure we're following has been in effect for many decades, certainly since 1935. Of course the situation now is somewhat different in the sense that there are fall sessions. Prior to 1971 there were no fall sessions. I think it's a matter of judgment as to when supplementary estimates are brought before the Assembly. That was initiated by this government on two occasions, which hon. members will recall. One was a few years ago when the fiscal year with respect to school boards was modified. In order to get the moneys — which are large, in the hundreds of millions of dollars — which go to the various school boards from the government, a supplementary estimate Bill was brought forward in the fall to enable those moneys to flow from January 1 rather than from April 1. As well, I guess the latter part of last spring, which saw the introduction of a special supplementary estimate Bill with regard to the housing initiatives taken at that time, in the amount of above \$65 million, a rather large and definable amount of money, was another occasion.

Members will recall that during his estimates a week or so ago, the hon. Premier indicated that we would consider appropriate occasions in future on which supplementary estimates could be brought forward. Therefore that would be the procedure we would follow. I think it is a judgment call. Basically, though, I think the procedure the Legislature of the province has been following is in line with the customs and traditions of the province.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Chairman, to the minister, with regard to the size of the special warrants. We can debate the percentage, and that percentage changes according to the base, whether you use the actual estimate, the actual expenditure, the forecast expenditure, and so on. In my mind 11 per cent of money has been requested through special warrants. Has consideration been given to limiting, as we recommended in this Legislature in an earlier debate? We recommended 8 per cent. But on review and on further discussion, I think we would recommend a percentage even lower. Has the government considered setting up a target of some kind so that during the year, when the budget is put in place, we as members of the Legislature know there is going to be a limit on those special warrants? Then maybe one of the alternatives to the additions — which we didn't suggest, and it raises itself in my mind right now because of our discussion — is that possibly over that percentage it would be required by government to have the introduction of supplementary estimates to the Legislature. Let's say that if we looked at a target of 5 per cent, and over 5 per cent of special warrants, then it's a definite requirement of government to do it.

As legislators we should think in terms of not only our responsibility but, in the future, how we would like to see this kind of expenditure controlled and held in line to certain parameters. Could the minister comment on that?

MR. HYNDMAN: Mr. Chairman, of course there was a thoroughgoing debate in this Assembly on this issue, which was introduced by the opposition party. At that time I think the majority of opinion did not lean in that direction. I suggest to members that the basic definition of moneys being urgently required is one which, in the experience of the last 76 years, since we became a province, has been stated in that way in The Financial Administration Act we now have and its predecessors. However, I would think that perhaps on an internal basis, as happens every week, an accounting and a review is kept of the status of the various special warrants. I doubt whether the introduction of what I see would be a major kind of new inflexibility would benefit the Assembly or the people of the province if there were to be a fixed percentage ceiling. That wasn't the case for many years prior to 1971, and the flexibility was there. There should be accountability and, indeed, the proper way is that there is accountability of this government in this Assembly when the estimates are brought forward, just as there is here today.

Perhaps we have to remember that in the development of the province and with regard to the very large capital purchases in the Edmonton and Calgary areas for utilities for the restricted development areas, the principle of which has been approved by the Assembly — they comprise a very large part of the percentage indicated. I think a distinction has to be taken with regard to which of these special warrants are operating expenditures, which are non-recurring operating expenditures, such as an especially difficult problem in the forest fire area, and which are capital and which are land purchases. The mix every year will be different and will give rise to a different interpretation of the warrants. But great care will certainly continue to be taken with regard to all expenditures.

MR. SINDLINGER: Mr. Chairman, I have to disagree somewhat with the criterion that we have a set maximum number, 8 per cent, for the expenditures for special warrants throughout a year, with all due regard for my

colleagues on my right. The 8 per cent is a little arbitrary, and I must agree with the hon. minister that the purpose of these special warrants is to put out fires. They're for firefighting, literally speaking. A good example is the forest fires that were put out last year. It's not practical to say we ought to have a limit of this magnitude, and then find out that we have a fire over here which costs this much to put out. We can't just stop the firefighting process to come in here and approve the expenditure to put out the fire; otherwise it rages out of control.

I think the criteria we have in place today is quite practical, and that is that expenditures should be demonstrated to be urgently required. The minister has pointed out, if I can quote him as best I can: "these expenditures must fit within the legislative framework of that act". Another quote the minister made was that "care is taken to see that each warrant meets that criteria". I agree with that too. Rather than going into each of these votes and asking for justification or demonstration of urgent need, perhaps we might discuss just one particular item. If it can be demonstrated that that expenditure was urgently required, that demonstration would tend to justify the other expenditures.

The one I would like to focus upon, if I could please, is the expenditure of \$20 million on McDougall school in Calgary. Mr. Chairman, I would like to ask the minister if he would be considerate enough to attempt to demonstrate to us right now why that expenditure was "urgently required". It seems to me that if it can be demonstrated that that expenditure was urgently required, certainly it follows the minister's guidelines that it fits within the legislative framework of that Act and that care was taken to see that each warrant met that criterion. If that can be adequately demonstrated, then I think the government's expenditures on the special warrants can be justified.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. That is the item that is before the court at the present time. I would appreciate your ruling as to whether discussion should proceed in this Legislature on a matter that is before the court. My feeling about that at this point is that it should not. It's a legal question; it's before the courts. I would appreciate your direction on that.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I think that point .

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Chairman, if I might just comment, I think the hon. leader is raising a question which may or may not be merely a matter of the Chairman's ruling. Primarily, though, if I can make the suggestion, it's a matter of propriety and good taste in which we're involved. Based on the proceedings of any parliament, there is a matter of privilege of the parliament or the legislature that would enable us to discuss virtually any matter. Yet normal procedures would be that any matter before the courts or about to be before the courts is not normally discussed, in particular is not given publicity under certain circumstances, so if it is discussed, even so it may not be commented upon or reported publicly.

Given those considerations, my feeling on it — and I have tried to direct my mind to a couple of the issues that I think are involved. One is that no suggestion is made in any existing legal proceedings that the Legislative Assembly itself cannot deal with the matter. That suggestion has not been made, and I don't consider that to be a matter that would be before the court. The matter that in due course will be before the court is whether or not when a

certain executive act was performed, it was within the proper scope for the Executive Council. On that basis — I don't know if this helps at all, Mr. Chairman — it seems to me that the desirable course would be not to get into extensive discussion on the matter in the course of the committee. But if the point does come up, as I thought it perhaps would, as to whether or not the committee should feel free to deal with the matter in the sense of voting on it, I think the answer is that clearly they should be able to do that.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I wouldn't ask the committee to vote on such a procedure because in actual fact, if we look in the fifth edition of our reference, which is *Beauchesne*, Section 335 deals with the sub judge convention — and I suppose our legal friends would check my pronunciation. It suggests that hon. members in the Assembly or in committee, which follows the same rules, would refrain from comments on matters that are before the courts or a tribunal. That is fairly clear with matters relating to criminal proceedings, and I think the Chair would always rule that that is so. It's somewhat hazy when you get into the area of civil cases. In 337 of the fifth edition of *Beauchesne* you're looking at customs and procedures in the past that have had different rulings.

So I suggest and hope that members of the committee would keep that in mind and perhaps refrain from commenting on any cases that are in any way before the courts at the present time. I hope the committee would agree to that.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Chairman, I missed the last statement.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I mentioned criminal cases. Did you get that one? The other was dealing with civil cases. Section 337 of *Beauchesne* indicates that there has been some latitude. In some cases there has been a ruling to ask the members to abstain from discussing it and in other cases perhaps not.

As far as the committee is concerned today, I think a member would have to make his or her own decision as to whether they want to comment in that case. In the past I think courtesy and good judgment have prevailed, and in all cases I could find, members refrained from discussing any matter before the courts in any way. I hope this committee will do the same.

MR. SINDLINGER: Just for clarification please, Mr. Chairman. Does that mean you will not be calling a vote on that particular item when we get to it?

MR. CHAIRMAN: We'll be calling the vote, but I hope it wouldn't be discussed in detail.

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Chairman, with the greatest respect to your ruling — and I agree completely with your assessment of my recollection of those two sections of *Beauchesne*. I was just saying to my colleague the leader that it seems to me we should in fact leave this particular vote. There must be some procedure that if the session is not over by the time the matter has been decided in the court, then we can leave this matter over and it can be dealt with in the fall session after the court has dealt with the question.

If we live with the spirit of what you have rightfully suggested to members, sir, it is in fact a mechanism not to have debate on a matter the House is being asked to

approve. Once we establish the precedent here, it could — and I'm not saying it would in any member of the Assembly — end up in a situation where this kind of event takes place from time to time. The effect of the precedent we establish here today would mean that we would not have a debate on that issue, yet we would be asked to approve the special warrant.

With the greatest respect, Mr. Chairman, I suggest to you and to members of the government that we give very serious consideration to the proposition of dealing with the rest of the special warrants, leaving this one special warrant and dealing with it after the court has made a decision.

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Chairman, on the point just made by the hon. Member for Olds-Didsbury, it seems that we're getting a little into a field which is unnecessary. I don't think it would be at all appropriate not to deal with this matter by way of voting. Referring to Section 335 of *Beauchesne*, cited by the chairman, this is a matter where the sub judge rule is really

... a voluntary restraint imposed by the House upon itself in the interest of justice and fair play.

Then 337(2) states:

In civil cases the convention does not apply until the matter has reached the trial stage.

Any civil action which may be under way at the present time has certainly not reached the trial stage nor, unless I'm mistaken, does it deal in any way with the right of the Legislative Assembly to deal with the matter by supplementary estimates. Therefore, while it is true that perhaps we should be exercising some voluntary restraint on our participation, it would seem that we would be well advised to deal with the issue. The House could proceed to discuss the matter at this stage and subsequently bring the matter to a vote by way of the supplementary estimates.

I'm repeating in part what has already been said by the hon. Government House Leader, but I suggest it would be very inappropriate to hold this matter. Indeed it is something this House can deal with in its own right by way of a vote during the course of debate during committee study of the supplementary estimates.

MR. SINDLINGER: In regard to your ruling on this matter, Mr. Chairman, I would concur that it seems there is a conventional practice or accepted custom in terms of not discussing court cases. If I've transgressed on that side, I apologize to members on both sides of the House.

I think that perhaps we should not discuss a case which is before the court, either civil or criminal, given the arguments presented just now. On the other hand, in regard to the words "justice and fair play" used by the two members opposite, I think there would be considerable latitude in regard to this area. In regard to the Chairman's comments about not discussing this matter extensively or the other members' point that we should not enter into extensive debate yet at the same time vote on this matter, I don't think that is in any way justice or fair play. If we do not debate this now, it's not fair that we have to vote on it. I would go along with the lines that we should not enter into any extensive debate on this inasmuch as the matter is before the court. At the same time, I would argue that if we're not able to debate the subject, certainly we should not be voting on it either.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I think we've underlined the references that we would necessarily have from *Beauchesne*. Again I would underline the words:

Members are expected to refrain from discussing matters that are before the courts or tribunals which are courts of record.

The deputy house leader has just mentioned that:

It is a voluntary restraint imposed by the House upon itself in the interest of justice and fair play.

Also, in civil cases it doesn't apply until the matter has reached the trial stage.

Each member of this committee is going to have to exercise judgment as to how they expect to deal with this vote when it comes. But I have to say at this time that having underlined that, and the various members having underlined their thoughts and expressed their views regarding this, the Chair would have no alternative but to call that vote when it arrives in the supplementary estimates. Members will have to be guided by their own conscience at that time.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Chairman, to the Government House Leader on the issue and the way the government wants to handle it at this point. Our consensus and agreed position at this point is that we won't be voting on it and can't support a vote being taken without having adequate discussion. I think that's why we were sent to the Legislature, but under the circumstances where a legal decision is being requested outside the Legislature, we feel we'd like to refrain from commenting. I recall many question periods and instances in the Legislature over 18 years when we as members have been asked not to ask questions or become involved in a discussion because of the court being involved. I'd like to ask the Government House Leader at this time whether the position of the government will be to vote on this special warrant and not consider possibly holding it until the fall session.

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Chairman, I don't mind responding to that. I think in part these very considerations have already been reflected on. I hope there is no failure of communication on what is being asked, what is being proposed, and what is appropriate in the circumstances. I should try to say to the hon. leader and to other members that one of the things we should not do is confuse the procedures that are going along at the same time: in other words, confuse the legislative process with the judicial process or indeed with the executive process, which is the one complained about. In due course a court will express an opinion as a result of the proceedings taken by the hon. Leader of the Opposition, and make a declaration as to whether or not on a certain day in March 1981 the Executive Council acted in a way that it should or should not have. If the hon. leader frames his proceedings correctly and carries them to their proper and final conclusion, some sort of declaration in that respect presumably would be made. But to say that that has any effect whatever on the legislative process is simply not the case.

If you look at the question of how it is, you examine the way in which the Executive Council handled the matter. If the reason for not discussing it here is that that is a matter for the courts, then let it indeed be a matter for the courts and it is a matter for discussion and argument there. That would be as to the various steps taken in reflecting upon The Financial Administration Act and perhaps other legislation at that time. It does not call into question, nor does the hon. leader's action, as I recall it, call into question, whether or not the amount involved is suitable for such a transaction. It doesn't call that into question at all. Therefore the government's view

is that if the amount is known and ascertained, and if the amount itself is not in question, and if the examination of the circumstances that the hon. leader would like to see is going to take place in any event as a result of the steps he has taken to place it before the courts, then the Assembly should just deal with the matter in the form in which it's presented. The estimates as a practical matter are not an easy thing to tinker with in the parliamentary process. Holding an estimate until the fall might really raise the question of whether or not we should be presenting The Appropriation Act in its final form at this time, although I suppose it could be done either way. But I just think, Mr. Chairman, that dealing with estimates in the accustomed way is what the government would expect. Therefore it should be called in its proper sequence, and other matters raised should be dealt with in some other way.

Vote 1 — Support to the Legislative Assembly

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Chairman, dealing specifically with the questions I raised, one was the urgency of the matter. Secondly, could the moneys be held over until the present fiscal year? That's the second criterion with regard to this expenditure. Why was it urgent, and why couldn't it have been held into the present year?

For example, I look at the first one: "office equipment for placement in constituency offices throughout the Province". I want to say that I received two purchased answering devices for constituency offices. I received mine, which I did request, about two or three weeks ago at my home. But in no way did I demand it, saying as the recipient of it that it must be put into my home immediately. There was no urgency as far as I was concerned. Through my fine colleague here who represents us in the all-party committee, I just indicated that I certainly would like to have one because I could see it having great use in meeting the needs of my constituents. I didn't say it was urgent. But here we have a special warrant on March 18 for \$27,450. I'm not talking about whether the expenditure is right or not, but was it urgent? I was a recipient; it was not urgent. I couldn't see the demand at all. We could have placed it in this budget. When we've already passed a special warrant for some \$2.3 billion that we're spending in the current fiscal year, I'm sure that could have been part of the expenditure there, so why is it urgent? Why couldn't it have been placed in the current fiscal year? That's the criterion as I see it. The Financial Administration Act, 31, says, is it urgent? I am a recipient. It was not urgent as far as I was concerned. Somebody will have to justify that to me. [interjections]

Fine, I'll bring it back right now. I don't want to miss the ball game, but I'll get home tomorrow morning and bring it back. To be honest, I haven't really had time to read the instructions as to how to use it, and I haven't put it into effect yet. That's how urgent it was to get it into my household. Whenever the opposition sees fit that this Legislature close, I'm going to go home, and when I have need of it there I'll read the instructions carefully. It is government property and I must be careful with it, so I must follow the instructions. I haven't had time to really do that. I have other priorities in trying to hold this government accountable. So please somebody tell me why it was urgent, because to me it wasn't.

MR. PURDY: Mr. Chairman, if I could just remark on this special warrant that the hon. Leader of the Opposition is questioning. As a member of the Members' Services Committee — and I don't have the figures in front of

me — we had a quote to buy these telephone answering services for constituency offices and the quote ran out in the latter part of October, if my memory serves me correctly. But we were fortunate enough to go back to the supplier and have those purchased at that \$27,150. If we wouldn't have, it would have been a substantial increase over and above the \$27,000, something in the neighborhood of \$50,000.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Chairman, to the hon. member. Could the hon. member table in the Legislature letters and quotes to that effect, or is that just hearsay? Can I have that type of evidence presented in the Legislature in concrete form?

MR. PURDY: Mr. Chairman, the Member for Bow Valley is also a member of that committee. I think the hon. member was present when those discussions were held with the Members' Services Committee.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Chairman, to the hon. member. Is the information available? In quick recall, my colleague isn't able to recall the discussion nor the request that a special warrant go forward. Whether in the form of minutes or information, I'd appreciate that that be tabled in the Legislature for my perusal. Certainly my colleague can obtain it for me if that's the route the member wants to go.

MR. PURDY: Mr. Chairman, as far as I can determine and recall from memory — and I stand to be corrected — it was part of the minutes of a meeting. I would have to check the attendance, but I think the hon. Member for Bow Valley was in attendance at that meeting. We can check that out and get the information back.

MR. HYNDMAN: Mr. Chairman, those minutes of course are not under the control of or in any way related to government. They are minutes of a committee of this Legislature. So the decisions have been taken by this Legislature.

With regard to special warrants submitted on behalf of the Legislative Assembly, I'd also mention that there has to be a distinction between those kinds of warrants and those which are subsequently listed and relate to government departments, in the sense that the requests for warrants are signed appropriately by the Speaker with respect to his situation as it relates to the Members' Services Committee. I think it would be inappropriate to have the Treasurer or Executive Council cross-examining the Speaker with regard to a request for a warrant.

Agreed to:

Total Vote 1 — Legislative Assembly \$116,814.91

Advanced Education and Manpower

2 — Assistance to Higher and Further Educational Institutions

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Chairman, to the Provincial Treasurer. With regard to the special warrant "to provide funds for major regional decentralization of trades and technology training and extension of other post-secondary programmes", could the minister indicate the urgency for that and whether the matter could have been placed in the current budget? Were there reasons it couldn't be placed in the current budget?

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Chairman, with respect to that particular item, those matters were passed by special warrant on September 18, 1980. Those were funds warranted under the department's decentralization initiatives to provide equipment, operating funds, and construction facilities for trades and technology programs, and to provide additional student housing at several colleges.

Hon. members will recall that last year after the budget had been approved, major decentralization and regional expansion of the colleges system was announced. This involved many colleges throughout the province. A total of \$19,170,000 was requested by special warrant. In order to advise members of the Assembly more particularly as to those funds, I could read into the record that they were allocated as follows: Fairview College, \$5,582,000; Grant MacEwan Community College, \$375,000; Keyano College, \$500,000; Lethbridge Community College, \$4.2 million; Medicine Hat College, \$3,835,000; Olds College, \$278,000; and Red Deer College, \$4,400,000.

[Mr. Purdy in the Chair]

Mr. Chairman, with respect to those matters, I should point out that it was a major decision of government to proceed with that regional expansion of the postsecondary system. Indeed the decision was not arrived at until well after the budget for 1979-80 had been approved by the Assembly. Therefore, in order for the construction of the various capital facilities to proceed, it was necessary that a decision be made in late summer of last year. It would not have been possible to proceed with that construction if we had had to wait until this current budget which is being approved by the Assembly. These construction projects are well under way and would not have been possible, therefore it was a matter of considerable urgency that that particular warrant proceed.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Chairman, to the minister. I have no argument with the program or what is being done. The budget of 1980-81 was established. We passed it early in the spring. Was the government unable to predict at that time that they were going to announce this major program in September, and that funding for that program had not been determined at that time? Is that the reason it was not included in the 1980-81 budget?

Secondly, the special warrant of \$3,787,000 was passed on March 25. Are those funds expended at the present time? Could they not have been included in the special warrant which allowed for a total budget of \$2.3 billion, that's being dispersed at the present time out in the field for various government services? Could they not have been included in that budget, so we would have included them in the current 1981-82 fiscal year?

MR. HORSMAN: There were two questions. I think I should correct my first answer. I made reference to the 1979-80 budget. I should have mentioned the 1980-81 budget with respect to the \$19,170,000. So I'd like the record to show that.

With respect to the major regional expansion, that was a decision taken by government well after the 1980-81 budget had been arrived at. The decision to make this major regional expansion of the trades and technologies into the colleges system was one which took a considerable amount of time. Of course hon. members will appreciate that the first budget I had to deal with, after becoming minister, had been prepared by my predecessor. At the time of the first budget, the one of 1980-81, the

government had not made the decision to proceed with the regional expansion of the trades and technologies that required those subsequent funds. With regard to that \$19,170,000, had we had to wait until this current budget, it would have meant a delay of almost a year before the construction projects could have proceeded.

I believe the second question the hon. member raised related to the special warrant passed on March 25 of this year in the amount of \$3,787,400. Those were funds required to provide new courses approved for universities, public colleges, and provincially administered institutions. That was another development which took place subsequent to the decision to proceed with the capital expansion of the postsecondary system into the public colleges area with regard to the trades and technologies.

Those particular funds were part of a package of 113 new programs throughout the entire system which I announced in February of this year. That includes the universities, colleges, technical institutions, and vocational centres, and related to an overall package that we had been gathering together to provide for this major expansion of programming within the institutions.

Those funds which we raised by special warrant were not entirely expended, because while the institutions had requested the programming and had anticipated that they would be able to put them into place, in fact they had not been able to show to government that they could actually utilize the funds when they were available. So I can indicate to the Assembly now that of that special warrant a total of \$3,063,684 was actually expended. So the balance of that special warrant will lapse. Those programs, which are fairly extensive, contained both operating and capital costs relative to the provision of the programs.

Mr. Chairman, I have a green sheet here which outlines in detail the operating and capital costs for each of the programs at the colleges. If hon. members wish, I would certainly be pleased to provide them with a copy of that information. It indicates that those 113 new programs which the institutions will be able to mount take place at Fairview, Grant MacEwan, Grande Prairie, Keyano, Lakeland, Medicine Hat, Mount Royal, Olds, and Red Deer colleges, the Bariff Centre, and the universities of Calgary and Lethbridge. The details are spelled out here.

I'm sure the hon. members will appreciate the fact that institutions, already somewhat concerned about not having had budget allocations made to them at this stage because of the late sitting, wanted to know in the early part of this year which of the programs would be approved so they could mount them for the students. Had they not been able to get that information and the commitment of funds through the special warrant, they might very well have been placed in a position where they couldn't provide the program which they had requested and which had been approved by my department. So I will have copies of this document made and circulated to hon. members of the opposition.

MR. SINDLINGER: Mr. Chairman, to the minister. The minister has described in quite a bit of detail the particulars of the allocations of moneys under this special warrant. However, in my judgment the minister hasn't done an adequate job of demonstrating why the expenditures were urgently required. The minister indicated that the decisions were made well after the budget came down and that they involved capital expenditures. In my experience, decisions on capital expenditures aren't made on a day to day basis. It takes years of planning to do

that. I find it difficult to believe that this government wasn't aware that these capital expenditures were coming up and that adequate provision could not have been made for them.

If I've quoted him right, the minister has used a double negative and said it would therefore not have been impossible to start these projects had there not been a special warrant. I agree with the minister that these projects could have been started, whether or not there's a special warrant. They didn't have to be started with a special warrant last year. The minister has indicated that if a special warrant had not been made for these expenditures, there would have been a delay of at least a year, which says to me that the decisions on these projects or expenditures were made one day after the budget came down. Now in my opinion, one day's planning isn't too much to ask from this government.

So in regard to these special warrants, they indicate one of two things to me: either poor planning on the part of the government or a disregard for the legislative process. In either respect, I wouldn't want to be accused of either one.

MR. HORSMAN: Perhaps the hon. member has a cold in his ears. I said it would not have been possible. I did not say it would not have been impossible. So I hope that can be corrected. I won't comment on the gratuitous comment.

The hon. member is entitled to believe whatever he wants about the planning process. The fact of the matter is that institutions at all times have a number of requests for capital and program approvals before my department, but obtaining them all at one time is not always possible. If I can obtain that approval for capital and operating for programming subsequent to the budget having been put to bed, I will do so on behalf of the institutions of this province and the students the institutions and programs serve. I make no apologies whatsoever for having obtained extra funding for the postsecondary institutions of this province through the special warrant process.

MR. SINDLINGER: Mr. Chairman, to the minister. If the minister did not use a double negative, and perhaps the uncorrected Blues or *Hansard* will demonstrate that, I will stand corrected. But at this point, those are the words I heard from the minister. I do have a cold in my ears, but I'm sure I heard the minister correctly. Otherwise, I do apologize for that particular thing.

Other than that, I don't have anything else to say. Thank you.

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Chairman, to the minister. I won't enter into this discussion about colds and things between people's heads and so on, but I would ask this question. If I accurately interpreted the comments the minister made, the special warrant was passed in February of this year. Is that accurate, Mr. Minister?

MR. HORSMAN: No. I'm sorry. The special warrant was passed on March 25. The announcement of the new programming approvals was made in the early part of February of this year, but the actual funding for that new programming did not actually kick in until the special warrant was passed. But we did make a public commitment that the new program approvals would proceed. I might add that of course some of those are in this year's current budget.

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, to the minister. The real difficulty I have is understanding how announcements made in February can instantaneously generate programs which can be paid after March 25. It isn't a question of anybody being for or against more money for postsecondary education. That's a very convenient red herring. That isn't the issue. I don't think there's a member in this Assembly who is being critical of the minister for getting more money. But, Mr. Minister, I for one would appreciate your explaining to me in some detail how the institutions can spend from March 25 not quite \$3,100,000 in the last six days of the year. As I understand, that's the day the special warrant was passed.

I believe the minister has indicated that the program announcement was made in February. If in fact the program announcement was made in February, I take it that if that announcement really meant anything the institutions would advertise for the new programs, if there are new programs, and expansions of programs they don't have any problem with. But if 113 new programs were offered, and if we're to believe that those institutions weren't geared up prior to the announcement, then the institutions, unless they've changed their operations a great deal, and they may well have, would have to advertise that they'll pick up additional staff.

If they were geared up prior to the announcement, then I would put this proposition to the minister: would it have been possible to have had this package ready to present to the fall session of the Legislature? If it was not, is there any reason why in the future programs such as this couldn't be tied to supplementary estimates in the fall session? I frankly think the Member for Calgary Buffalo makes a very good point. The House now sits between 80 and 100 days a year. That means that we're sitting close to one out of every three or four days of the year. We should really seriously ask ourselves the question of the importance of the process we have here. It isn't a question of not getting more money for Advanced Education and Manpower. It's really a question of: is the process we go through here important? If it is important, all of us on both sides of the House should make every effort to have the important decisions, especially financial, made here in the Assembly.

Earlier today the Treasurer rightly said that for 67 years, or whatever it is, we've used the process of special warrants like we are now. I have noticed that in several other areas this government hasn't been bashful about changing procedures former administrations in this province have used. On some occasions I've been very supportive of those changes. I say frankly to the deputy House leader, the Treasurer, and the Government House Leader: here is an area we could very seriously look at to make the process we're involved in, in both the spring and the fall, far more meaningful for the future.

MR. HORSMAN: In responding to the hon. Member for Olds-Didsbury, first of all I think he asked whether it would have been possible to have had these new program approvals in place for the fall session last year. The answer is no. The reason is this: once allocations have been made to the institutions as a result of the appropriation under the normal budgeting process, there's always a backlog of new program requests from the institutions, and they're at various stages of development. They begin with a letter of intent from an institution. That letter of intent is then reviewed by the program services division of my department for a number of educational criteria and whether or not there is a duplication of programming

elsewhere in the system, which we try to avoid as much as possible.

Once the letter of intent has been received, conditional approval or refusal is attached to it. It is then sent back for further development. After conditional approval the institution may rework it, and it may be some weeks or months before it comes back for a final formal request. Once that has been done, we give approval in principle. If approval in principle is given, that means the program is waiting to be mounted, subject to obtaining funds for it. If there are no funds for it in the budget, as appropriated by this House, as minister I feel it's incumbent on me to try to get the funds by the only other method available; that is, of course, by supplementary estimates in the fall sitting or special warrant.

The hon. member will appreciate that since some 22 institutions — other than private colleges, which we don't fund on a program basis — are submitting these program approvals, they just keep rolling in at different times of the year. Therefore it's appropriate to try to gather them all together at one time and take a request to my colleagues on Treasury Board to approve them in a package. I would like to point out that that's exactly what took place. Once some of these approvals in principle are given, the institutions start to advertise, to acquire the staff, and so on. Some of them may do so on the basis of using funds they have available from accumulated surpluses or, in some cases perhaps, by preparing to incur some deficits in order to get the programs under way.

What took place in this whole process was that shortly after the new year we put together this package of 113 new programs. Through the budgetary process, this House has already approved all but 26 of those 113 new programs. The 26 programs were included in the special warrant. The total package of 113 new programs totalled about \$24 million in commitments. Through the budgetary process, we approved all but those included on this green sheet of which the hon. member has a copy. Those amount to 26 programs in the various institutions. So we try to gather them all together. Otherwise it would be very, very difficult to take new program approvals that don't have a budgetary allocation from either last year's or this year's budget — and every time a new program is approved by my department to go to the Treasury Board and say, will you please fund this program. For example — and the hon. Member for Olds-Didsbury will be interested in this one — at Olds College, meat processing: \$80,100. I'm sure hon. members would be very unhappy to have to deal with a list of special warrants of that size in the process.

That's why I have to use the special warrant process. Otherwise, Mr. Chairman, approval of new programs within institutions will only happen once a year, at either the budgetary time or in the fall, as hon. members have been suggesting with the special appropriation Bill. But that restricts us to twice a year. Quite frankly it would seriously hamper the planning process and the development of new programming within the institutions, which I'm sure all members appreciate are very important to the future of the province.

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Chairman, if I might make two comments to conclude my views on the matter. With the greatest respect, Mr. Minister, I simply say that if approval in principle meant that Treasury Board had agreed to the funding, it would only be a matter of going to the cabinet or the Treasury Board once. As soon as colleges and institutions, with the greatest respect to them, see

approval in principle, as I understand the process now, they then start to spend money to gear up for that program.

With no disrespect to the minister's persuasive abilities, I suggest that once that happens and the minister goes to his colleagues on the Treasury Board, if in fact they turn the minister down, a college would find itself in a virtually impossible position. I think that puts the minister and his departmental people in a very difficult situation. I'd say that it puts the Provincial Treasurer in a very, very difficult situation too. The kind of pressure that can then be applied is in fact the program preparation. We have approval in principle from the Department of Advanced Education and Manpower. That means the government approves, but we haven't got the money yet. But when we got approval in principle, we assumed the money was coming so we started. It becomes six of one and half a dozen of the other.

I would make just two suggestions and hope they would be considered. One is that the department might consider a situation where approval in principle wouldn't only mean that the course had been approved from the standpoint of its academic need but that a price tag would be approved with that. It seems to me that would be a far cleaner approach from the standpoint of knowing where we're going with finances in postsecondary education. Secondly, Mr. Minister — the means of giving advice may not be well received — if it was well known through the department or the secondary education system in the province that in fact there would be an approval in principle twice a year, and that approval in principle would also mean budgetary support from the government that could be done either in the spring budget or the supplementary estimates in the fall, with the greatest respect, it seems to me it would bring a great deal more order, if I might put it that way, to the colleges in putting the kind of pressure they attempt to put on the department.

MR. HORSMAN: I thank the hon. member for the last piece of advice. Perhaps that's worth pursuing. At the same time, I want to indicate I would not prefer to be locked into just twice-a-year opportunities to obtain approval for new programming. I think that would create unnecessary difficulties.

I do want to respond to and clarify the first point, however. I understand why the hon. member took the attitude he did with respect to my comments. I didn't want to suggest that in every case, once they have received approval in principle, the institutions go out and start spending money. If they were to do that, it would indeed place me as the minister, the hon. Provincial Treasurer, and everybody in this Assembly in a very difficult spot.

I indicated that, based on their own budgeting abilities within the funds they have available to them, some institutions may decide they want to mount those programs. But they do so perhaps at the risk of having to drop other programs if the funding is not obtained to follow that approval in principle. So I wouldn't like hon. members to think that once all these programs achieve approval in principle, the institutions start going out and spending money they don't have available to them. But there are times when there are accumulated surpluses, and that has happened. While I don't encourage it, that has happened, and the hon. member is quite right to point out that that is not a proper or healthy way for institutions to behave.

MR. SINDLINGER: Mr. Chairman, I'd just like to note that I'm not opposed to the expenditures themselves. Of course they have merit and value in their own right. My criticisms and comments are in regard to the process. The minister indicated that it had been incumbent upon him to go out and get additional funds for these people demanding or needing them. Obviously he's done a good job; he has gotten the funds for them. But if I follow his argument, it seems we're saying that special warrants ought to be the way we do everything, rather than just the exception. That raises the question of why we go through these estimates annually, like we are today. There doesn't seem to me to be any meaning to that if we're going to have special warrants of the magnitude we've had over the last year, in the \$600 million range. Where does it end in the future?

I said in my initial comments that I don't favor an arbitrary limit to special warrants, such as 8 per cent, because you might have a forest fire that cost \$6 billion to put out and it wouldn't make any sense to stop putting out the fire when you run out of funds. You have to work at it until the fire is put out. In any case, listening very closely to the reasons and arguments presented by the hon. minister, I have difficulty in my own mind being satisfied that these expenditures were an urgent matter and required immediate attention.

MR. HORSMAN: Just let me respond to that, Mr. Chairman. The hon. member may not have thought they were urgent, but all the institutions I was working with thought they were very urgent, as did my colleagues in Treasury. I certainly felt they were.

I never suggested to my colleagues that they appropriate funds by special warrant. I have never suggested for a moment that the only way to deal with these matters is by special warrant. The hon. member might point out that the total special warrants in my department for last year were \$40 million; the total budget for my department last year was well over \$0.5 billion. If the suggestion of the hon. Leader of the Opposition, that 8 per cent should apply — I come in under the 8 per cent rule.

MR. R. SPEAKER: But, Mr. Chairman, the legislation says "urgently required". I think in terms of government planning and responsibility, that must be the judgment: whether it was urgently required or not. If the government was willing to take the responsibility, they could have said to the colleges: we have so much money in our budget; we believe we predicted our budget responsibilities the best that we could. That would have been a decision the government would have had to make, if they believed in the budget they presented to this Legislature, if they believed that we as members of the Legislature approved a good, credible budget. But every time the government, at its whim and fancy, decides they need a new program, they add it on. Maybe it's good and maybe it's not. Then we ruin the credibility of the budget that's presented to us. In discussing the current budget, that question was raised.

But the minister raises a question with regard to a principle that concerns me as well, and that is that there should be more than one opportunity to change the budget and that at the whims and designs of a minister, a new minister, the department, or people in the province we should have great opportunity to change it instantly. Well, if we look at the expectation we have of municipalities and hospitals in this province, we say that they have global, fixed budgets and they must live with them. They

don't have the chance to come back and say, give us some extra money. They're in a very difficult position. They may come back with a deficit budget because they couldn't hold the line on certain things, but they do not have the opportunity during that fiscal year to initiate new programs, unless the government does the initiating and decides it is important to them as a government to do it, but not necessarily always important to the local government. So there is a principle there that is for the government of Alberta, but not one that is supported for local authorities in the province of Alberta. There is an inconsistency in that principle.

Also, is there any reason why a short session this March could not have approved that some \$3.7 million the minister felt was necessary and the funds allocated in the same manner as they have been allocated at the present time? Could a short session have been used? Can the minister see any reason why that process could not have been used? I'm attempting to determine by that whether the government should consider a supplementary estimate Bill being presented before all the legislators.

MR. GOGO: Mr. Chairman, I've listened to the Leader of the Opposition and others and the response of the minister. I'd like to put on record that I represent a constituency that has a university. The minister has mentioned there are 22 in the province. I can't speak for the others, but I can certainly speak for the one the Member for Lethbridge East and I represent.

They come to us with proposals, ask us for help. We in turn go to the minister, in effect pressure the minister to respond. I think that's what he said today. He tries, in a very substantial way, to budget, but then the institutions come. They've done a lot of planning, they make requests, and then we put, let's say, the screws on the minister to respond. And when he responds, all he gets is criticism from other members of the House.

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Chairman, could I just respond to the remarks by the hon. Member for Lethbridge West. I simply say to him, whom I regard as an excellent member of the Assembly, that if we were to adopt that kind of practice for every item of the budget, we would in fact cease to have a budget. The hon. member's colleague the Member for Taber-Warner would be coming to the cabinet with requests from various organizations with monotonous regularity every week, and every other minister would do the same thing.

It isn't a matter of saying that members from both sides of the House shouldn't put pressure on the minister. On the rarest of occasions I've even tried to get more money from the minister for the college at Olds, and I'm quite prepared to say that. But I should tell the hon. member that the people at Olds College know that the likelihood of their getting money other than at budget time is not very great.

With great respect, if we're going to develop a system where more and more of the decisions are going to be made outside the budget, it becomes almost impossible for the Provincial Treasurer to keep a handle on the long-term finances of the province. We can afford the luxury of this kind of situation now, but if we're not careful and this process gets away from us, we're not going to be able to keep a firm rein on the finances of the province for the requests for additional programs, not only from institutions but all sorts of organizations, groups, and municipalities across the province. The real plea my colleagues and I are making here today is that we

can afford to have the kinds of special warrants we're talking about during this session when we're in very good times in this province financially, but if we allow the practice to establish and run roughshod, we're not going to be able to manage the affairs of the province responsibly, and this Assembly is going to have less and less to say about the most important item that comes before the Assembly, the question of controlling the purse strings.

MR. GOGO: Mr. Chairman, I wasn't speaking with reference to any principle. I was speaking to the year 1980 and the special warrants applicable to the University of Lethbridge in my constituency. That's all. I didn't mean to attract any flak to the Minister of Social Services and Community Health just because he sat beside me. I was just speaking in terms of what the minister has done to respond to an MLA who supported me within his constituency.

MR. COOK: Mr. Chairman, I'd like to make some brief comments as well. I'd like to state that the constituents of Edmonton Glengarry benefited from the actions of the hon. Minister of Advanced Education and Manpower in providing some extra funding for the University of Alberta. We gratefully appreciate it.

I'd also like to point out that the Legislative Assembly does have control over the expenditure of money through special warrants, precisely through the procedure we're involved in this afternoon. I think the legislative control is just as effective this afternoon, hon. Member for Little Bow, as it would be to call a special session of the Legislature. That really seems to be the question at hand. Is there more legislative control with a special session of the Legislature or is there more control of the purse strings on an occasion like this afternoon? Given the mandate and the responsibility of the government, it's appropriate for the Treasury Board to make those kinds of decisions on the recommendation of a very able minister like the Minister of Advanced Education and Manpower, and provide the services Albertans require and still come before the Legislative Assembly, as we are doing today, and ask for approval. I think the principle that the Legislative Assembly has to approve the expenditure of the funds is being recognized. The government is being quite accountable and responsible in every sense of the word.

I think it's also fair to say that good management practices are being followed because the province is growing rapidly and the government is being responsive. I'd like to state for the record that the Minister of Advanced Education and Manpower, in bringing this item before the Treasury Board for approval — for example, the additional courses in some of the professional faculties at the University of Alberta are much appreciated.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Before we continue, for the information of the Chair, was the information given to members of the committee a tabling item or was that for information?

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Chairman, that was information requested by the hon. members of the opposition.

MR. SINDLINGER: Mr. Chairman, some of the comments by the Member for Lethbridge West and the Member for Edmonton Glengarry raise a question in my mind, and that is principally the purpose for us being here. It's my understanding that one of the fundamentals

of democracy is that whoever controls the purse controls the throne. From that, we have developed this type of parliamentary system. The issue here today is not whether there is value to these expenditures, not whether there is a need in the province of Alberta for them, not whether this government has been responsive to those needs, and not whether there is a crying demand for them. The issue is whether this Legislature has the authority and the power to give prior approval to expenditures. There's a distinct difference between prior approval and ex post facto approval, such as the Member for Edmonton Glengarry is advocating. Once the horse is out of the barn, there's no point in closing the barn doors. That's what has happened here today.

There is a practical need at times for special expenditures that are urgently required. We're not arguing whether these expenditures have value or merit, because undoubtedly in the minister's judgment they have. It seems to me we have a problem here with the process. The process has to be changed to accommodate these special expenditures if in fact they can be justified. However, in the arguments presented this afternoon, it has not been demonstrated that these expenditures were urgently required. Therefore they have not been justified.

We can stand here and argue about this as we go through each one of these special warrants. I believe the same arguments, justifying or not justifying the arguments, will be presented by each side. I therefore come back to the first question I posed to the Provincial Treasurer, following up on the question posed by the official opposition, asking him the criterion used in determining what is an urgently required expenditure. If the Provincial Treasurer could just address that aspect of the issue, perhaps he could satisfy the questioners over here and we could go through these much more quickly. However, if we have to discuss each one on the same basis as we've just discussed these, I assure you that I'm going to stand up and ask the same questions and reiterate the same argument. I don't think that's in the best interest of efficiency.

[Mr. Appleby in the Chair]

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Chairman, they're special. We believed all these programs to have been special because they were needed within institutions in this province, both the capital and operating expenses for the courses. If hon. members don't think they were special, let them say so. None are prepared to do that, Mr. Chairman. No members of the opposition are going to stand up and say that these programs were not required at the institutions. If they are, I would be mighty surprised. They won't do that. So they say, what was urgent about it? The urgency was this. If they had to wait until the approval of this year's budget, they would not have been mounted when they were mounted. Construction of the new buildings at the colleges and in the postsecondary system throughout Alberta would not be proceeding now. It would have been delayed. That was the urgency. We have a pressing need in this province to provide an expansion of the postsecondary system to meet the manpower requirement of this province. A year's delay is certainly reason enough, certainly urgency enough, to warrant the expenditure on these programs.

I would point out that all the special warrants were related to new initiatives by this government. The regional expansion of the postsecondary system into the colleges with respect to the trades and technologies, the

1980s advanced education endowment fund — a new initiative — the new programming with regard to financial assistance to students, the Alberta educational opportunities grants, the supplementary assistance grants would not have been provided to students in the fall of 1980 if we had not passed the special warrant in the fall. Those students would not have received the benefit of those programs.

So, Mr. Chairman, as I said earlier, as minister I make no apologies whatsoever for signing a special warrant application to provide the funds for the new initiatives my department and this government have approved for postsecondary education in this last fiscal year.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Chairman, the minister can get louder and try to make the argument that what he has done is right and according to The Financial Administration Act. The forms he signed were supposedly — once he signs the forms, it makes the action right and legal. Well, Mr. Chairman, one of the things it says right on the application for a special warrant, and every one of the special warrants — the Provincial Treasurer should hear this. I think it would be some good advice. If the Provincial Treasurer acknowledged that in accepting special warrants, one basic rule was ignored: that when making application for a special warrant, a minister must list — if the Provincial Treasurer is interested, and the Minister of Government Services really isn't contributing much to the whole affair anyway. That's exactly how this government reacts to the public. They don't hear what they're saying. They spend the government's money, spend the taxpayer's money, and don't care one bit. They can have their own quiet conversations in caucus and in cabinet. That's the way this government operates, Mr. Chairman. I know that our suggestions, and the suggestions of the people in Alberta, fall on deaf ears. Hopefully an election will take care of this kind of callousness to the taxpayers of Alberta.

Mr. Chairman, what does it say on the form submitted to the Provincial Treasurer by a minister? This is what the minister signs, witnessed by a deputy minister and the Deputy Provincial Treasurer who witnesses the Provincial Treasurer's signature. It says: "Is for the reasons set out above, urgently and immediately required". Every special warrant submitted, I think without exception — there is never a list of reasons why it is urgent. No proof of urgency is submitted with that form. But the document they've submitted is there. We have tried to establish with the Minister of Advanced Education and Manpower the urgency of it. We have established very well the desirability, but that's not what this form talks about. It talks about urgency, and there's a difference for the reason for using these funds.

The hon. Member for Calgary Buffalo suggests that maybe we need a new procedure. Urgent expenditures can be validated on this form, signed in due honesty, but maybe we need a procedure for the type of expenditure being suggested by the Minister of Advanced Education and Manpower. I would say those are the kinds of expenditures that should be endorsed by a total Legislature. Those funds were not urgently needed on day X, day 1, 2, 3 in March, February, or April. There must have been flexibility if any planning was being done. I'm sure there was a time period of three to four months when these funds were predictably necessary. If all of a sudden the minister says he instantly creates programs, instantly meets demands, that may be true but it isn't very wise budgeting. I'm sure there was predictability of at

least a couple of months. In that time, if the government saw there was a series of these kinds of requests, it could have called the Legislature together and we could have dealt with them through supplementary estimates prior to the expenditure of the money rather than after like we're doing at the present time, which is really wrong.

Here's a form on which a minister is to justify what he is to do, and it's not done. Desirable programs? Yes, we're not arguing that. But as far as urgent, I'm not at all convinced there was urgency under the circumstances expressed by the Minister of Advanced Education and Manpower.

MR. SINDLINGER: Mr. Chairman, perhaps I might ask this question of the Minister of Advanced Education and Manpower. Rather than dealing in terms of urgency or immediacy as per the criterion contained in The Financial Administration Act, perhaps the minister could address the expenditures in terms of whether they were foreseen prior to the budget coming down. That is, which projects or expenditures could be classified as unforeseen?

MR. COOK: Mr. Chairman, I think the official opposition is applying a different test for the concept of urgency than what's provided in the Oxford dictionary. I would like hon. members to consider what the dictionary calls urgent: "pressing, calling for immediate action or decision or attention . . . earnest and persistent in demand". I don't think that is a test that suggests something has to be attended to immediately. It's pressing; it's earnest; it's in very great demand.

I think the opposition is really trying to redefine terms, rules of procedure, or parliamentary concepts, and then taking that new definition they've created for their own purposes and devices, contrasting our actions with that, and suggesting there's a gap. The opposition is trying to use an illogical and unfortunate procedure. They get a little emotional and rhetorical. The hon. Member for Olds-Didsbury tells me that the debate has been heightened and exciting. Yes, it's wonderful for the media. It's a little exciting, but not very accurate, not very logical, and certainly not very honest.

The test I think we should be using is the definition of urgency. [interjection]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order please.

MR. SINDLINGER: I take exception to the insinuation by the Member for Edmonton Glengarry that the arguments put forward by the members on this side of the room are not honest. That's a matter of intellectual integrity, sir, and I object to it quite vehemently.

MR. CHAIRMAN: To begin with, I'd point out to the hon. Member for Calgary Buffalo that there are a number of members on that side of the room. However, I think the Member for Edmonton Glengarry should complete his remarks as quickly as possible.

MR. COOK: Mr. Chairman, I'd certainly be glad to water down my definition of "honesty" if the hon. members beside me would be willing to water down their definition of "urgency". Perhaps both are a little extreme.

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Chairman, there was one remaining question posed by the hon. Member for Calgary Buffalo as to whether I would define the expenditures as unforeseen. I'm well aware of the legal requirements of

The Financial Administration Act. The word "unforeseen" does not appear in that Act, and certainly I'm not prepared to say that is how I would categorize these expenditures.

I will say this, and I will repeat: all these expenditures were in major part related to new programming initiatives with respect to my department, of which I am extremely proud. They relate to a very major expansion of the postsecondary system outside Edmonton and Calgary and to the colleges in particular with regard to capital expansion. The programming in large part covers the colleges and universities system.

I will continue to plan new programs. I will continue to try to obtain funding through the regular budgetary process. I quite agree with the remarks of the hon. Member for Olds-Didsbury that it would not be logical to have everything coming about this way. I'm sure no provincial treasurer would accept programs flying hither, thither, and yon. The hon. member is quite right in saying that would not be appropriate. But when new program initiatives are developed, such as the 1980s advanced education endowment fund, the regional expansion system, the new program approvals, then I'm going to have to obtain money by special warrant.

The urgency in the matter is this: if they're not mounted at the start of a semester, they are delayed for at least six months or perhaps even as long as a year. That's just a fact; that's the way the system works. That's something I have to respond to. Mr. Chairman, I say that all these programs are not only worth while but they can be justified on the basis of the urgency of getting them under way so we can meet the postsecondary needs of this province. That's the urgency of the matter.

Agreed to:

2 — Assistance to Higher and Further
Educational Institutions

Total Vote 2 \$29,007,400

3 — Manpower Development and
Training Assistance

Total Vote 3 \$6,327,777

4 — Financial Assistance to Students

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Chairman, before we deal with the last vote from the Minister of Advanced Education and Manpower, I'd like to ask very straightforwardly: does the minister expect that a year from now the Assembly will be in a position where we'll be looking at sizable special warrants? I think in terms of the \$19 million. Or is it the minister's expectation that the special warrant situation would be somewhat reduced in the minister's department? Does the minister anticipate at this time any major expenditures in the department that presently aren't covered by the budget before the House and could come in the form of supplementary estimates in the fall session should the government — and I recognize the Premier has said we'll look at that — decide to move in that direction?

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Chairman, I think we're on Vote 4, financial assistance to students. That special warrant was required because we instituted two new programs: the educational opportunity grants, which provide up to \$1,400 for rural students, in addition to the supplementary assistance grants. I have the information on those,

which I think hon. members might be interested in. The total warrant was not required because we overestimated the number of applicants. But 2,700 students were assisted through educational equalization opportunity grants for a total of \$3.6 million, and 600 supplemental assistance grants were issued for a total of \$655,000. That is a remarkable development in one year.

With regard to the question, as hon. members are aware, there is a study now under way between all the provinces and the federal government with respect to the overall aspect of student financial assistance. That task force has been meeting over the last year and shortly, I think by the end of this month, we expect the final representations will be made to the task force. As the hon. member is aware the recommendations will then be reviewed by all the provinces and the federal government and will be discussed in September at the meeting of the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada. Whether additional funding will be provided by this government as a result of recommendations from that task force will probably not be known until the latter part of this year. So if we are to supplement in any way the financial assistance to students early in 1982, we may very well have to bring forward a special warrant in that area. That's very hypothetical and conjectural at the moment. But that is one area I do want to identify where there may possibly be special warrants for financial assistance to students. Other than that, I think it's fair to say that having instituted the major programs in the last fiscal year, I don't have nearly as many of those large items on the drawing board, the government having decided to do them last year. I don't think I can look forward to as many major new programs in the forthcoming fiscal year.

Agreed to:

4 — Financial Assistance
to Students

Total Vote 4 \$5,300,000

Department Total \$40,635,177

Agriculture

Agreed to:

1 — Departmental Support Services

Total Vote 1 \$3,889,000

2 — Production Assistance

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Chairman, to the minister. I understand this program isn't in effect, or partial payment has been made out of the \$25 million. I think the urgency might have been there partly. Could the minister bring us up to date in terms of the need at this point and what is happening to that special warrant? This is the special warrant for the stop-loss stabilization program for hogs to expire March 1981.

MR. SCHMIDT: Mr. Chairman, the \$25 million allocated for the stop-loss program of the hog industry came into effect on the first day of April 1980 and guaranteed a return of \$35 over and above feed costs to all the members of the hog industry, based on market hogs, and was paid on a monthly basis. That program paid out until, I believe, the first week of August 1980 when the market took over. The program sat idle until later in the fall when the market dropped again, and payments were

made out of the fund. That program stopped as of the last day of March 1981. Out of the total \$25 million allocated to operate the fund, I believe close to \$18 million was expended under stop-loss. Of course at the end of that program and at the end of the fiscal year the balance that was left reverted to Treasury.

MR. R. SPEAKER: I sent out the order in council that relates to this particular special warrant, but one of the concerns I have is that one thing not enumerated on the special warrants — I think it has been a neglect by the Provincial Treasurer not to require this — is the reason for the special warrant to demonstrate the urgency. I know some of the reasons, but I wonder if the minister would review those urgent reasons at this point relative to that \$25 million special warrant.

MR. SCHMIDT: Mr. Chairman, going back to the stop-loss program and the initiation, as to why the program was necessary, all hon. members will remember the position hog producers were in, recognizing a low price throughout North America and recognizing that the province of Alberta did not have a program of stabilization or support to the hog industry in any way. If one were to think back to some of the comments and questions that arose during the debate on the direction in which the hog industry was going within this province — recognizing that we as a government felt the federal government's responsibility in recognizing stabilization on a much broader base rather than to initiate a provincial program at that time fell on deaf ears. It was decided at that time that the industry needed an immediate influx of funds if decisions were to be made as to future farrowings. In other words, the future of the hog industry in this province had reached a stage that if immediate action wasn't taken financially there would certainly be a depreciating number of farrowings and the hog industry itself would have lost further numbers, which had gone down over a period of years from approximately 3 million hogs to about 1.5 million.

At that time the decision was that a stop-loss program would immediately inject funds into the industry and would provide immediate cash for the one year of the program that would give those in the industry the future to make that decision as to whether there should be future farrowings, whether they should cut back on production, or whether they could maintain the status quo. It's interesting to note that after one year the stop-loss program achieved what it is basically designed to do. In other words, the numbers stayed relatively static. We managed to maintain somewhere within the 1.5, 1.6 million hogs that was the actual number based on production the prior year. So we can only assume at this time that the stop-loss program did exactly what we had hoped it would do to the industry, provided a sufficient influx of dollars that gave some stability to the industry, and we're starting off this year from the first of April with the same numbers we had. Our marketings remain fairly steady, recognizing of course that that stop-loss of \$35 over feed costs was certainly somewhat below many of the stabilization programs throughout other provinces.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Chairman, I'd just like to say that that answer is satisfactory. I feel that the qualification of urgency has been demonstrated by the minister. Added to the special warrant signed by the minister demonstrating meeting the commitment — I have the form now — at the bottom of the form where it says it is

urgently required, I think a couple of those reasons certainly would have satisfied the situation at that time. I don't recall the date of the special warrant, but I don't think there was immediate access for the minister to a session at that point. The minister had to act accordingly, and I would say we support that as being urgent, under the terms of The Financial Administration Act. I would appreciate the minister's answer.

MR. SINDLINGER: Mr. Chairman, to the minister please. I would also like to say that under this vote there are expenditures which, in my limited experience, I would consider warrant consideration under the "urgently required" criteria. Obviously the expenditures were needed, and it's been demonstrated that the need for them was responded to.

I'd just like to make an observation in regard to the second item, the feed freight assistance program. I'm recalling from memory, but another program called the feed freight assistance program was initiated in 1941. It was initiated under special warrant to meet a special need, just as this one was. It occurred a second year, a third year, a fourth year, and a fifth year. It went on year after year, receiving special warrants to fund the program.

In 1941 the program was set up because of wartime circumstances. There was a shortage of beef in the east and in Great Britain, and there was a surplus of feed grains on the prairies. So the program provided feed freight assistance, rail freight, for those feed grains from western Canada to eastern Canada. The problem is, that program is still being maintained today. Thirty-one years after the fact that program still goes on on a year to year basis, if my knowledge is correct. In my judgment that's one of the fallibilities of a program such as this, where we have special warrants authorizing a program year after year. It's susceptible to misuse.

I'd like to ask the minister if he could indicate how much of the \$25 million has been expended under the stop-loss stabilization program, and how much under the feed freight assistance program? We have nice, round numbers here, \$25 million and \$1 million, but I'm sure that isn't the amount that was expended. Perhaps the minister could give us a rough indication of whether 20 per cent or 80 per cent was expended, or an order of magnitude number? One final question: whether or not the feed freight assistance program is contemplated to be extended another year.

MR. SCHMIDT: Mr. Chairman, I think I made available the amount expended under the stop-loss program. It was just under \$18 million of the \$25 million.

The feed freight assistance policy should certainly not be confused with the one the hon. member is discussing, and not as well accepted within the province of Alberta feed freight assistance as it pertains to the program indicated here on the \$1 million special warrant.

If the hon. members look back, last year at this time we were part of a drouth program. It's rather difficult to forecast what producers will face in regard to feed supplies later on in the year. The federal government had announced some programs of drouth assistance and suggested there would be some programs for hay and the movement of fodder for those in the livestock industry, and did not indicate at that time whether the province of Alberta would be covered, recognizing that it had started to rain and of course conditions looked much better.

We stayed away from announcing a program until later in the season; first of all, to assess whether one was

necessary. As it turned out there were two pockets in the province in the eastern, central, and northeastern parts of the province that found it necessary. Because of the drouth conditions, they were short of feed and suggested that a program of assistance be provided for them.

Feed freight assistance is not new within the province, recognizing that it's either wet in the north one year or dry in the south. In some areas we have feed freight assistance within the province that's maybe limited to one particular sector. Recognizing that we may be faced with the same problem, a program was established and \$1 million was set aside. We had a combination of two things: the fall brought more feed on hand than we had anticipated and, secondly, we had a much milder winter than was recognized. So out of the \$1 million set aside and asked for to carry the feed freight assistance program, the total bill was somewhat less than \$300,000.

MR. MANDEVILLE: Mr. Chairman, I'd like to pose a question to the minister with regard to the hog stop-loss program. The minister indicated that the program was covering above the \$35 on feed cost's. Have the hog producers been losing since the stop-loss program? How much would they be losing per hog as a result of the stop-loss program being abolished on April 1.

Another question I'd like to ask: in the throne debate the minister indicated that the hog stabilization program was coming into effect and could be retroactive. Will that have to come in by special warrant as well, or is there some money in the budget for the stabilization program that was discussed?

MR. SCHMIDT: Mr. Chairman, first of all, how much money hog producers are losing since the close of the stop-loss program — it would be rather difficult other than to say they're now losing \$35 more than they normally would have because the program is no longer in effect. The market itself hasn't picked up since the close of the program, so it's been rather difficult. For those provinces that have some form of stabilization, payments are made on a monthly basis, so it's an indication that the industry needs that type of support. Because no program exists in the province, our producers are taking the market and whatever losses they're carrying at the present time.

In looking at the stop-loss program and recognizing that a form of stabilization, assurance, or whatever would be needed for the industry, recognizing the various programs that exist across Canada, there was a time we had hoped we would be in a position to carry on from the stop-loss closing date, recognizing that the physical manner of the program may dictate as to whether it could be retroactive or not.

At this time I am in no position to announce or to give any indication as to whether there would be a program, and if it would be the type of program that would give us the opportunity to work backwards. We recognize that the problem exists from the first day of April on, and certainly would have to recognize that in making any decisions. As to whether or not any help would be now forthcoming to the hog industry or any other industry that found itself in difficulties, that would be approached the same as the stop-loss. We would make application for financial assistance through a warrant to carry whatever programs were established, recognizing that it would be because of the emergency on low market conditions.

MR. MANDEVILLE: One further question, Mr. Chairman. I'd like to ask the minister if he knows what formula the federal government used when they came out with approximately \$9 per hog from April 1, 1980, to March 31, 1981, and if the minister is anticipating meeting with the Minister of Agriculture to see that we don't have that loss in Alberta. As the minister indicated, we're possibly going to lose \$9 a hog on 1.6 million hogs, which is \$14 million Alberta hog producers will be losing as a result of not getting this federal stabilization program. And if we're looking at a stabilization program from Alberta, if the minister will be negotiating with the federal minister of agriculture to see that we don't get into this position again and be left out just because we live in Alberta.

MR. SCHMIDT: Mr. Chairman, we do not have the formula on how the \$9 was arrived at. To be exact, I think it's \$8.96. We have sent a telex requesting that information. On behalf of producers, the hog marketing board has done the same. The reports that are back to date would indicate that Alberta producers will not qualify. Only those who were not under the stop-loss program would qualify. Of course that would only be those people who are shipping hogs on an overseas market. It's my understanding that the federal Department of Agriculture was not aware that even those who are shipping hogs on an export market did not qualify for the stop-loss program, and I don't think they have been recognized in the federal stabilization program.

We have questioned the program from the formula and support base, recognizing that some of the provinces, although they have a program, will be receiving some of the federal funds directly to the province because they had recognized a need. I would have to agree that if one is looking towards any form of stability in the future, we should clear up with the federal Department of Agriculture if it is special wording or direction so that we do not find ourselves in the same boat we do today of not being recognized, as there are two or three other provinces that are only recognized over and above the programs they have because some of the programs are voluntary. Those people who didn't volunteer to be part of the provincial program will of course qualify for the federal program.

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Chairman, to the minister. If the matter was dealt with when I was out for a moment, the minister should simply say so and I'll check *Hansard*. It deals with the question of some immediate assistance as far as hog producers are concerned. People in my own riding familiarized me with meetings held earlier this year when a representative of the Department of Agriculture was at the local meetings of the hog marketing board. Certainly if there wasn't a commitment made, and I'm not insisting there was, the implication was very strong that by April 1, or if not by April 1 then retroactive to April 1, a program would be in place where the producers themselves would be expected to put some money into a fund.

My question to the minister would be: in looking at the estimates approved by the Assembly, and realizing that we're dealing here with supplementary estimates, special warrants, if that program which was discussed with the producers across the province — and there was some feeling that it would be in place effective April 1, whether it may be after that and retroactive. Will that portion of the program that calls for provincial funding have to be

dealt with by a special warrant, if and when the program comes into place?

MR. SCHMIDT: Mr. Chairman, whatever decision is made regarding the starting and closing date of a program, the total package would then be submitted from a financing point of view and would be part of a warrant.

Agreed to:	
2 — Production Assistance	
Total Vote 2	\$27,350,000
4 — Rural Development Assistance	
Total Vote 4	\$1,000,000
Department Total	\$32,239,000

Consumer and Corporate Affairs

Agreed to:	
4 — Regulation of Securities Markets	
Total Vote 4	\$864,567
Department Total	\$864,567

Culture

Agreed to:	
2 — Cultural Development	
Total Vote 2	\$295,000

4 — International Assistance

MR. R. CLARK: To the hon. minister. I don't plan to raise the point numerous times. But to get to the point of this question of supplementary estimates in the fall: with regard to a warrant like international assistance, is there any reason this warrant couldn't be done in the fall session, given the possibility of the government moving in that direction? What I want to ascertain from the minister is: would it cause great internal difficulties from the standpoint of meeting the commitments if it really became the accepted practice that in April and November of each year the matching grant portion for international assistance was available?

MRS. LeMESSURIER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd like to answer that question by saying that of course their year end is in December. Our budget goes forward in June or September. Before that, we prepare it. We have no idea of the amount of dollars that are going to be raised by the private sector and through the voluntary agencies. So each year we base our budget on the moneys raised in previous years. Perhaps next year it will be lower. From year to year we have no idea. It would be much easier for all of us if we could establish the sum when we go to present our budgets, but we have no idea what the moneys are going to be.

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Chairman, perhaps I didn't make my point clear. My question to the minister is basically this: when there is an overexpenditure or a request for additional money, if the practice was that in November of each year during the fall session a supplementary estimate was brought in to meet this question of international assistance, would it be possible to say to organizations, once the budget has been expended — that would be in

about the first seven or eight months of the year — there would be no more funds available on the matching until after the Assembly had dealt with that in November? What hardships would that cause to the organizations presently receiving assistance?

I should be very direct to the minister: in my discussion with some of the organizations which receive money, they told me that they could see no hardship if they knew the money was coming and that it was a matter of the initial budget having been approved and having to wait for supplementary funds approved by the Assembly in the fall. That was the information I received from two of the groups that received money under this vote. Are there some problems I'm not aware of?

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Chairman, because of the hour, I will shortly move that the committee rise and report. Maybe the hon. minister could note the question for when we resume consideration, perhaps tomorrow, of this item.

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

MR. CHAIRMAN: Having heard the motion by the hon. Government House Leader, are you all agreed?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

[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. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, it's not intended that the House sit this evening. Tomorrow afternoon the items under the estimates in respect to special warrants will be called again in Committee of Supply.

[At 5:28 p.m., on motion, the House adjourned to Wednesday at 2:30 p.m.]