

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ALBERTA**head: INTRODUCTION OF SPECIAL GUESTS**

Title: **Wednesday, May 4, 1983 2:30 p.m.**

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

PRAYERS

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

head: INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

MR. SPEAKER: I have the honor to draw the attention of members of the House to the presence in the Speaker's gallery of two distinguished visitors: Mr. Keith Penner, the Member of Parliament for the constituency of Cochrane in Ontario and the chairman of the federal branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association; and Mr. Ian Imrie, who is the secretary general for parliamentary relations for Canada and the executive secretary of the Canadian region of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association. I ask them to stand and be accorded our usual welcome.

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

DR. ELLIOTT: Mr. Speaker, I request leave to table the report of the Select Standing Committee on Legislative Offices for the 19th Legislature. It includes both the Third Session, April 2, 1981, to March 1, 1982, and the Fourth Session, March 4, 1982, to October 5, 1982.

head: INTRODUCTION OF BILLS**Bill 53****Franchises Amendment Act, 1983**

DR. CARTER: Mr. Speaker, I request leave to introduce a Bill, being the Franchises Amendment Act, 1983.

This amendment to the Franchises Act will tend to deregulate certain trades between some vendors and purchasers of franchises. Under the proposed amendment, upon application by the parties involved, the director of the Securities Commission will assess specific circumstances intended to demonstrate that an exemption from the requirements of the Act is warranted. The Franchises Act presently does not allow sufficient flexibility to exempt worthy applicants from the requirements imposed.

[Leave granted; Bill 53 read a first time]

MR. HYNDMAN: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Government House Leader, I move that Bill 53, the Franchises Amendment Act, 1983, be placed on the Order Paper under Government Bills and Orders.

[Motion carried]

MR. ALGER: Mr. Speaker, this afternoon it's my pleasure to introduce to you, and through you to members of this Assembly, several people from the district of Millarville in the constituency of Highwood, who are extremely interested in the designated community school established there. May I present Harlene Mosby and Ron Arkes, trustees in the Foothills school district; Joyce Teskey, Joe Kuzmiski, and Bruce Debnam, who are interested participating parents; Bruce's wife, Lorraine, the community library chairman; and last but not least, the principal of this fine establishment. Mr. Don Green. They are now all standing in your gallery, Mr. Speaker, and I ask to receive the Assembly's gratitude for their being here.

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Member for Lethbridge East and myself, I would like to introduce to you and to members of the Assembly the mayor of the largest city in Alberta after Calgary and Edmonton, His Worship Mayor A.C. Anderson, and city manager Bob Bartlett. They are in the members gallery, and I ask them to rise and be welcomed by the House.

MR. ISLEY: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of an old friend and neighboring Saskatchewan MLA, with whom I share many miles of the Saskatchewan-Alberta border, the Hon. George McLeod, MLA for Meadow Lake and minister of tourism and northern affairs, it is my honor to introduce to you, and through you to members of the Assembly, 123 grades 5 and 6 students from the Jubilee school in Meadow Lake, Saskatchewan. They are accompanied by their principal Mr. Arral who, by the way, used to be a teaching colleague in Athabasca of our hon. member for that constituency. Mr. Arral tells me that he takes this tour every second year. They come out here and see how we do things in Alberta, and they go back and do twice as good a job in Saskatchewan.

They're also accompanied by teachers Ed Taylor, Dale Holtby, Jim Berozowsky, Lorna Grismer, Andrea Rolston, and Allice Stein, and by bus drivers Dennis Hetlinger, Carl Hopper, and Keith Flannagan. They are seated in both the members and public galleries, and I ask that they stand and be welcomed to Alberta by the members of this Assembly.

MRS. LeMESSURIER: Mr. Speaker, I have the privilege of introducing to you, and through you to members of this Assembly, 10 students from the Alberta Vocational Centre in Edmonton Centre. Accompanied by Terri MacKeigan, they are seated in the members gallery. I ask that they rise and receive the warm welcome of this Assembly.

head: MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS**Department of the Solicitor General**

MR. HARLE: Mr. Speaker, I wish to announce today that the government of Alberta will construct a new provincial correctional centre in Grande Cache. Construction will commence in July and is scheduled to be completed early in 1985. The estimated cost of the facility, which will be designed to house about 250 medium-security inmates, is \$43 million.

Construction activity, beginning with site work in July, will generate 250 jobs at its peak and create 350 man-

years of employment on site during construction. When in full operation, the centre will employ about 270 persons. This will significantly assist in stabilizing the economic base of the community, lessening the uncertainty that has been evident there for the last few years.

Some 50 communities expressed a desire to have the government locate the new correctional centre in their area. The primary reason in most instances was the creation of jobs. A careful review of all interested communities concluded that Grande Cache was most in need of stable, long-term employment. Grande Cache also has the established municipal services, residential areas, and infrastructure to meet the needs of the employees of the centre and to provide services to the institution itself. The construction phase will ease the real hardships the community faces as a result of the 50 per cent drop in employment at Smoky River Coals Ltd., the town's single largest employer.

When the centre opens, the 270 permanent staff members will include correctional officers, nurses, psychologists, social workers, office staff, building maintenance staff, management personnel, and others. The total payroll, in 1983 dollars, will be about \$8 million per annum.

A great many of these jobs at Grande Cache will be new positions within the department. Several weeks before the opening of the new institution, personnel officers from the Solicitor General's Department will be available in Grande Cache to conduct interviews. A portion of the orientation program for new correctional officers will be conducted in the new institution before the arrival of the inmates.

In addition, many services will be obtained on a contract basis from residents of the community. It is estimated that extra contracts will inject another several hundred thousand dollars into the community of Grande Cache. The town of Grande Cache will also receive a grant in lieu of property taxes for the institutional land and buildings, estimated at more than \$200,000 annually.

Mr. Speaker, when the correction centre is opened, its direct cash input into the community will exceed \$8 million annually. The government's commitment to strengthening our rural communities is clearly demonstrated by today's decision.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, in rising to comment on the ministerial statement, I am not sure whether the major purpose of the announcement was to disclose to the House a new correctional facility in this province or to outline the government's approach to economic development in the Grande Cache area. But let me say in response that it seems to me the selection of Grande Cache as a site makes a good deal of sense.

I suppose there is a parallel between this government and the government of Canada. During the late '50s and early '60s, the coal mines closed in the Drumheller region, and a good deal of discussion took place about where a federal facility should be constructed. During those years, the city of Drumheller made representation to the government of Canada. As much as anything else because of the economic difficulties of the Drumheller valley, the government chose to locate that facility in Drumheller. In my view, that made some sense then, and it makes some sense on the part of the government to locate in Grande Cache the correctional institution undertaken by this province.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I might just say that

however welcome this announcement may be to the residents of Grande Cache, it will not mitigate the very real problems coal mining communities face and the uncertainty in the coal mining industry. In my view, it just underscores the need for western Canadian governments to get together to plan the rational development of the coal industry, which is still going to be the principal underpinning of the economy of Grande Cache.

head: ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Water Quality — Wapiti River

MR. BRADLEY: Mr. Speaker, I rise today on a point of privilege regarding statements I made during question period on May 3, 1983, pertaining to the Proctor & Gamble pulp and paper operation near Grande Prairie.

In response to questions by the hon. Leader of the Opposition, I stated that the water licence renewal for this plant was currently under review. It has since been brought to my attention that a new licence, dated April 21, 1983, was signed by the director of standards and approvals on or about April 29, 1983, and forwarded to the company by mail on May 2, 1983. At the time the questions were posed, I was not aware that a new licence had been issued. I want to take this opportunity to correct the record.

Further, Mr. Speaker, today I directed the department to rescind this new licence. The company has been informed of my actions. It is my intention to thoroughly review the terms and conditions of the licence prior to its renewal.

Public Service Grievance Appeal Board

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct the first question to the hon. Minister responsible for Personnel Administration. Is the government able to confirm to the House today that Mr. Darryl Larson, the public service grievance board vice-chairman since 1977, was dismissed on April 22, the same day a decision was rendered with respect to court employees of the government of Alberta.

MR. STEVENS: Mr. Speaker, I can indicate that the person referred to, Mr. Larson, was provided with a letter terminating his services with the employer. That letter was sent out on April 25. The judicial clerk award, which was dated April 22, was not received by the employer until some time after the date of the letter.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question. Is the minister then saying that the decision had absolutely nothing to do with the dismissal of Mr. Larson?

MR. STEVENS: Mr. Speaker, the appointments of the chairman and vice-chairman of the public service grievance board require the approval of both the Public Service Commissioner, for the employer, and the president of the Alberta Union of Provincial Employees. In the case of the vice-chairman, Mr. Larson, the termination letter was prepared and sent to him as a result of the unreasonable delays that occurred in the past several months in getting decisions from that particular officer.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question. So there is no misunderstanding, is the minister then

saying that the award was not a factor and that exclusively other reasons led the government to terminate the services of a vice-chairman who apparently had been held in good respect by this government for six years?

MR. STEVENS: Mr. Chairman, I am not sure if there is some sort of righteous indignation being inferred. Either the union or the employer may at any time terminate the vice-chairman. In fact, several months ago the Alberta Union of Provincial Employees terminated the chairman, without notice to the employer. This particular termination was as a result of a number of factors, including unreasonable delay in receiving awards from this officer.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question. Could the minister be a little specific by what the government means when the minister says in the House "unreasonable delay"? Were there any other reasons — and if so, would the minister specify what they were — for the dismissal of a person who had apparently held the confidence of the government for some time?

MR. STEVENS: Mr. Speaker, there are a number of reasons. I mentioned the unreasonable delay, in some instances amounting to some five to six months to receive an award. When it takes that long to receive an award, that works to the disadvantage of employees — no question about that — and of government. In addition, there are other factors. Among those is the fact that the courts have overturned the last three decisions that that particular vice-chairman reached.* The most notable one was on April 11, I believe, when a judge of the Provincial Court quashed the decision of Mr. Larson. In his decision, the judge mentioned the patent unreasonableness, among other factors, of the decision of the adjudication board.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question. The minister indicated "unreasonable delays". How often had the minister communicated the government's concern about this matter to Mr. Larson? Or did the government not communicate any concern until such time as the dismissal occurred?

MR. STEVENS: Mr. Speaker, I do not communicate with the chairman or the vice-chairman, other than to write a letter of appreciation to the chairman, whose services were very much appreciated by the government, when he was terminated by the union some time ago. But I am quite confident that on numerous occasions, our officers and representatives have pointed out the difficulties that the employer and the employees face when board members take too long to make decisions.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question. Apart from general observations and in view of the answer given that unreasonable delays were a principal reason for this dismissal, if the minister did not communicate the government's concern about this matter, can the minister assure the House that some responsible official of the department did in fact warn a valued person who had held the confidence of government for some years?

MR. STEVENS: Mr. Speaker, I will look into that and discuss it with the officials of the department to ascertain that. But I will say that under the master agreement with the union, the appointments of the chairman and vice-chairman are subject to termination on 30 days' notice for no cause whatsoever.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question. Is the minister saying that despite the answer given, he is not able to tell the House whether a warning was given by a responsible official in the department to a valued public servant?

MR. STEVENS: Mr. Speaker, the question put to me was whether or not I had communicated that. I indicated that I did not communicate with the chairman or vice-chairman. I do not. I am quite confident that many times, officials have raised concerns with all the members of the grievance board, whether or not there are delays. There will be questions asked from either party, I am sure. But generally we do not have discussions on other than the matters before the public service grievance board.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question.

MR. SPEAKER: Might this be the final supplementary on this question.

MR. NOTLEY: I'd like to put the supplementary question to the hon. Attorney General. The minister has indicated that one of the reasons was that decisions had been overturned on appeal. Is the government of Alberta going to take the same approach with the dismissal of provincial judges that appears to be the basis for arbitrators?

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, I don't often respond to a question this way: I don't think it's deserving of an answer.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I'm sure I'll come back if there's more time in the question period, because I think the question should be put again.

Water Quality

MR. NOTLEY: I would like to direct the second question to the hon. Minister of the Environment. What steps is the department taking to monitor cadmium levels in the Bow River, the South Saskatchewan River, and the Oldman River, in view of the high levels of cadmium found in water, soil, and wastewater samples in the Medicine Hat area.

MR. BRADLEY: Mr. Speaker, there's an ongoing program with regard to monitoring water in the river systems in the province of Alberta. There are a number of different parameters which are monitored for, including the substance the hon. leader mentioned.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question regarding the health of people downstream from Calgary. Can the minister advise what steps the department is taking to ensure that the users are guaranteed a safe water supply with respect to the traces of cadmium found, particularly in the Bow River system?

MR. BRADLEY: Mr. Speaker, I believe there are traces of cadmium found in various water supplies throughout the province. I am aware that levels of cadmium specifically in the Medicine Hat area have been documented by a report. But I do not believe that at this point in time they are of a nature which requires any further monitoring by the department.

*See Hansard, May 9, 1983, page 864, left column, paragraph 7

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the hon. minister or the hon. Minister of Social Services and Community Health. What specific assessment has the government made of reported incidents of cancer in Medicine Hat that may be cadmium related and that are above the provincial average for urban communities? Has there been any evaluation of this information by either the Department of the Environment or any other relevant department of the provincial government?

MR. BRADLEY: Mr. Speaker, with regard to the specific, a research study which related to high cadmium concentrations in the environment and prostate cancer in Alberta, was done by Mr. Bako, Mr. Smith, Mr. Hanson, and Mr. Dewar. The conclusions study different parts of the province of Alberta and point out certain relationships between high cadmium concentrations and prostate cancer in Alberta. I believe this is the information from which the hon. leader is coming forward with his question. One of the conclusions was:

We are not suggesting that cancer of the prostate is causally related to any of these environmental factors.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the hon. minister. My question is not with respect to that particular assessment but whether the government has reviewed the information which would indicate that there is a higher incidence of certain types of cancer in Medicine Hat and, as a consequence, what studies have been commissioned to evaluate those reports.

MR. BRADLEY: Mr. Speaker, there's a recent federal publication with regard to environmental contaminants, a Hazard Assessment Report on Cadmium. On page 36 of this report, it's stated:

Concern has been voiced on the carcinogenic potential of cadmium as an environmental threat to man. No direct evidence relating cadmium exposure and cancer in humans has been found.

This is from a recent federal study on the matter.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question. Is the minister saying that the information he has been given is sufficient that in the government's view, no action should be taken to deal with this problem on the South Saskatchewan system?

MR. BRADLEY: Mr. Speaker, I believe I responded that monitoring with regard to levels of all sorts of substances in our river systems is going on, on a continuous basis through the province. That is taking place with regard to the Bow River system in particular. With regard to human health effects, my colleague the hon. Minister of Social Services and Community Health may wish to respond further. But I have indicated — and I believe it's the source of the concern the hon. member raised — the report of Bako, Smith, Hanson and Dewar, and the follow-up study done by National Health and Welfare Canada.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the minister. I refer to the Bow River wastewater management study conducted for the city of Calgary, one of the recommendations of which was to advise the public of potential hazards associated with the recreational use of the Bow River. In view of this particular report, Mr.

Speaker, has the department given any consideration to erecting public notices along the Bow River?

MR. BRADLEY: Mr. Speaker, I believe it is a very well-known and well-publicized fact that recreation in the Bow River downstream of Calgary is not recommended. The advice of public health officials, et cetera, with regard to that is known.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary.

MR. SPEAKER: Might this be the final supplementary on this question.

MR. NOTLEY: The question is not what may or may not be known by some people but whether or not the government proposes to follow the recommendation that simple signs be erected.

MR. BRADLEY: Mr. Speaker, I'll take the recommendation of the hon. Leader of the Opposition under advisement.

Stanley Cup Playoffs

MR. HIEBERT: Mr. Speaker, I would like to rise on a point of order, if I could. As a long-standing, suffering season-ticket holder since the WHA days and as chairman of the Edmonton caucus, I would like to extend to the Edmonton Oilers congratulations in terms of their success to date and, on behalf of this Assembly, Edmontonians, Albertans, and Canadians, wish them success in the Stanley Cup bid. [applause]

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, maybe the Attorney General can get Pocklington's jewels back, [interjections]

Commercial Fishing

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, can the hon. Associate Minister of Public Lands and Wildlife indicate what his department is going to do about the reinstatement of fishing in the Fort Chipewyan area, in light of the fact that last year fishing was closed because of the spill by the Suncor plant? Is the minister going to allow fishing in that area by the people in the Fort Chip area?

MR. SPARROW: Mr. Speaker, recent tests have shown that the fishery will be open in the Fort Chip area, and they will be allowed to fish in that area.

MR. WEISS: Mr. Speaker, will the minister advise the Assembly if there will be any freight subsidy to the delta fishermen's co-op in regard to fishing this season?

MR. SPARROW: The question as to any subsidy is under study right now. The real problem in the Fort Chip fishery is that the price of the fish they do catch does not substantiate a very commercial market. We are taking those recommendations of the groups in northern Alberta to consider some type of freight subsidy. We're discussing it with our officials.

MR. WEISS: A supplementary, if I may, Mr. Speaker. Would the minister advise the Assembly if the delta fish co-op has advised the minister or his department whether or not they will fish this year, regardless of the subsidy?

MR. SPARROW: No, Mr. Speaker, they have not advised us as to whether they intend to proceed, now that they know the fishery is open.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, can the minister indicate if the government has given any consideration to establishing a small processing plant in the Fort Chip area, so that the product can be at least partly processed in the area and it will not require so many freight charges to get to market?

MR. SPARROW: Yes, Mr. Speaker. Since November we've had a task force of deputy ministers looking at the fisheries in Alberta, specifically the Fort Chip area. I've just recently received their report, and a committee is going to review it with me. Basically that is one of the areas of discussion in that report.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question. Is the minister in a position to indicate if the government is reassessing the royalty provisions that are charged for the natural resource?

MR. SPARROW: Yes, Mr. Speaker. That is another item in the report that is being discussed and reviewed.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, a final supplementary. In light of the fact that a legislative committee was struck several years ago to look at all aspects of recreational and commercial fishing in this province, can the minister indicate what has happened to that report and how many of the provisions are going to be looked at seriously and some action taken on those recommendations?

MR. SPARROW: Mr. Speaker, yesterday a news release went out with reference to one of the recommendations that was in the select committee on recreational and commercial fishing in Alberta. Basically that recommendation is a first stage of implementing a new policy that will come into effect in the spring of 1984, with a total review of fishing licence procedures.

DR. ELLIOTT: Mr. Speaker, my question is similar to the last one. It's with respect to commercial fishing in Sturgeon Lake. I ask the Associate Minister of Public Lands and Wildlife about his announcement. I wonder if he would see fit to delay the implementation of that regulation for at least 12 months, in view of the hardship it's causing people who have not fished in the last two years.

MR. SPARROW: Mr. Speaker, the terms of my department's decision and mine are to basically tie to the eligibility for a 1983 licence the fact that you had to have a licence in one of the two previous years. That was one of the very specific recommendations of the select committee of this Legislature in 1980. It was reviewed in the fish and wildlife policy that was in place in 1982 and is part of the fisheries policy.

This should come as no surprise to the fishermen. The fishermen of Alberta have been requesting this for numerous years, and the limitation of fishing licences has been one of their prime objectives since 1980. This has been discussed at local zone fishermen's meetings and continuously identified in public presentations by the fishermen. Any real fisherman out there is very happy with it. I presume that what is going to happen is that people who have not fished during the last two years have heard about it and are showing some concern.

DR. ELLIOTT: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. In view of that select committee report, I wonder if the minister had a reason that the information did not get through, to his officials at locations like Valleyview, where they were recommending to local fishermen that they would be getting a licence for 1983 and, through their comments, encouraging them to actually go ahead and purchase the necessary equipment.

MR. SPARROW: Being an astute businessman, Mr. Speaker, I think the first thing you do is buy the licence, then buy the equipment. But I think we are going to have quite a number of concerns and concerned individuals. I'm prepared to review the situation of all those individuals if they take their concerns to the fish and wildlife officers. I'm sure there are some very viable cases where, due to illness and sickness in the last two years, a fisherman has not acquired a licence and should be involved in that. I'm sure we're going to discuss it a lot more in the coming year, with reference to the fish and wildlife policy for Alberta.

MR. STROMBERG: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Has the associate minister had representation from the sports fishermen, who make up the great majority of the fishermen who fish Pigeon Lake, Buck Lake, and Wabamun Lake?

MR. SPARROW: Yes, the department has had representations from them over the years. There are a great number of sports fishermen. Our industry really is dominated by recreational fishermen. In numbers, more than 1,168 recreational fishermen had licences last year, compared to about 700 commercial fishermen with the higher licence fee. We definitely have received input from them.

Correctional Centre — Red Deer

MR. McPHERSON: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Solicitor General. In light of the minister's statement today on locating a medium-security prison in Grande Cache, can the minister advise if he continues to propose to develop a correctional facility in Red Deer, as indicated in the budget estimates?

MR. HARLE: Mr. Speaker, it is very definitely our intention to proceed to develop a facility in Red Deer.

MR. McPHERSON: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Could the minister advise of the nature, the purpose, and the size of the proposed facility for Red Deer?

MR. HARLE: Mr. Speaker, this has been under study since the announcement was made a year ago in the Speech from the Throne. The total bed capacity settled upon for the facility in Red Deer is 104 persons. We intend that it be a multipurpose facility. Therefore there would be a remand unit of 32 beds, a detention unit of 24 beds, a women's remand and detention unit of 12 beds, and a capacity of 20 beds to handle minimum-security, sentenced inmates. As well, because of the introduction of the young offender legislation, we would have a 16-bed capacity for young offenders.

MR. McPHERSON: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Can the minister advise if a location has been determined for such a facility?

MR. HARLE: Mr. Speaker, that also has been under careful review over the past year. The decision has been made to build the facility on the existing liquor store site in downtown- Red Deer, which is across from the new courthouse facility.

MR. McPHERSON: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. I'd be interested in knowing from the minister if he could indicate the total inmate population in Alberta with respect to the existing facilities.

DR. BUCK: Put it on the Order Paper.

MR. HARLE: Mr. Speaker, as of today we have a total inmate population of some 3,088 persons. Not all of those would be considered to be in institutions. They are either in an institution or on a temporary absence, attending at a hospital or an educational facility. That is the capacity as of today.

Labor Legislation

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct this question to the hon. Minister of Labour. Is he able to confirm that he recently met with a group of economics professors from the University of Alberta to develop guidelines for arbitrators when they look at the "fiscal policy" of the government?

MR. YOUNG: Mr. Speaker, I guess what's in the meaning of the hon. leader's question is what "recently" is, and I'd have to check my diary. However, I did have a meeting with some staff members of the economics department.

MR. NOTLEY: I can certainly appreciate that the minister would have to have a meeting to figure out what the fiscal policy of this government is.

Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the hon. Minister of Labour. What discussions took place between other groups? We have a select group of economics professors. What other groups have been brought in to consult with the minister on how one would define the fiscal policy of this government — a real challenge, I might add.

MR. YOUNG: Mr. Speaker, I think the hon. member would be interested in the correspondence from these gentlemen. It was a rare indication that was received late in 1982 and that was supportive of certain economic directions the province was taking. An interesting point was raised in the correspondence, and I chose to invite some of those persons to lunch so that we might expand upon it. That was the extent of the conversation.

For the information of the hon. member, yesterday afternoon my staff had a meeting to discuss certain items in Bill 44 with the Building Trades Council representatives and their legal counsel, if that's of interest.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question. Has there been any effort on the minister's part to consult with those people who have been doing arbitration work, specifically for the government of Alberta, or handling grievance work, such as Mr. Larson?

MR. YOUNG: Mr. Speaker, some weeks before the introduction of Bill 44, I believe, I had one meeting with as many members as could attend of the labor law section of

the Alberta branch of the Canadian Bar Association. One of the items under discussion at that time was interest arbitrations; that is, the ones dealing with the salaries and working conditions.

In the normal course of events, three years ago there was a rather extensive consultation with people involved in the grievance arbitration aspects of labor relations. A large meeting was held in Calgary and another one in Edmonton. I believe a member of the university staff consolidated the observations which came out of discussion groups from those meetings. Subsequently, a minister's advisory committee was established to deal with grievance arbitration and how we might improve the capacity for grievance arbitration in the province and address other aspects that have been raised by individuals, either party to arbitration.

Mr. Speaker, again without checking a diary, I believe a meeting of that committee may be scheduled very shortly. I think the last one may have been held in December, or in January of this year.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question. Given the minister's colleague's answer that one of the reasons for Mr. Larson's dismissal was that on three occasions grievance decisions had been appealed successfully, what assessment has the government given to that sort of reason on the ability to acquire and maintain people of reputation in the roles of grievance arbitration as well as interest arbitration?

MR. YOUNG: Mr. Speaker, to reflect upon that specific question, I should really draw on the report that was done from the discussions that I indicated took place three years ago and that were subsequently consolidated and brought before the attention of an advisory committee. However, my recollection is that it is the view of the advisory committee that what most usefully could be done would be to provide a roster, if you will, which would be based upon those persons who are interested in doing arbitrations and so indicate. It should include their educational experience, references of arbitrations they have done, if they wish to give them, and perhaps their costs and general availability.

In essence, I think the answer to the question is really that the parties should be the ones to decide whether or not an individual may be an acceptable arbitrator to those two parties.

Correctional Centre — Grande Cache

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, my question to the hon. Solicitor General has to do with the minimum-security facilities to be built at Grande Cache. Can the minister indicate what studies the department has done as to what costs will be required to run inmates from the major centre in Edmonton, which is where most of the action is generated? Has the minister been given any indication or had a study instituted to indicate how extensive these costs will be? How important a role did they play in the decision to go to Grande Cache?

MR. HARLE: Mr. Speaker, that's a very important consideration. Rather than a minimum-security, it is, a medium-security facility. It is one of the factors. Unfortunately, until we get this announcement made today and we can carry out more extensive work, I can't give you a full and complete answer. I would indicate that it is an obvious cost that has to be taken into account to build

that facility. However, I would suggest that it is no different than the institution at Peace River, for example. We're already into a very extensive movement of inmates within the province. For that reason, I really don't think it is a factor that is any different from what we presently have.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, can the minister indicate what steps he is taking to compensate or assist the people who will be leaving the Fort Saskatchewan institute? Or will that institution still be in place with a smaller number, maybe for just the minimum-security people? Will that institution still remain in force?

MR. HARLE: Mr. Speaker, that's also a very important question for the town and area of Fort Saskatchewan and the staff of the Fort Saskatchewan correctional facility. The present planning still is to go ahead with the replacement for the Fort Saskatchewan correctional facility. It will not in any way change the number of inmates the new facility is being planned for, nor the staffing for that facility. However, because of the fact that as a result of the appeal we were unable to get a development permit in the northeast Edmonton area, we will obviously have to continue to look for another site.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, in picking a site, can the minister indicate what studies were done as to transportation and the availability of people who act as counsellors, psychiatrists, psychologists, et cetera, to go into the Grande Cache area as opposed to the Edmonton area, where the Fort Saskatchewan and the max are situated?

MR. HARLE: I think the hon. member will well realize that I thought one of the benefits for the northeast Edmonton area was to be able to place the Fort Saskatchewan replacement facility in that area because of the obvious advantages it has for the types of services needed by inmates. That was turned down. There is of course a cost to providing these services to inmates in the Grande Cache area. It will obviously create opportunities for the types of professionals you're describing. If inmates need to be moved from there to other centres in order to obtain perhaps more professional types of services that might be available elsewhere, it will of course require a cost.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, I'm having a little difficulty with the minister's reasoning. He has already indicated that proximity to a major centre such as Edmonton is very, very essential. Then we make the decision to go to Grande Cache. Can the minister indicate why sites within, say, a 50-mile radius of Edmonton were not chosen, rather than going to Grande Cache?

MR. HARLE: I think the ministerial statement explained the rationale for selecting the community of Grande Cache. My colleague the Minister of Municipal Affairs might wish to elaborate on the work he and the committee did in that regard.

MR. KOZIAK: Mr. Speaker, perhaps I should respond in this respect. On April 20 a task force created to deal with the specific problems facing the community met with the community in the union hall in Grande Cache and received some well thought out and well-delivered briefs and submissions from a task force created within the community of Grande Cache. On that day, they were

supported by a large number of people from the town of Grande Cache. During the course of the presentation, one of the most important matters highlighted, in terms of the future economic viability of the community, was a government presence in that town. The community indicated its full-hearted support for a correctional facility to be placed in the town. They even indicated to us an area where such a correctional facility could be sited.

The community itself faces some difficulty, Mr. Speaker. It's had a population drop of approximately 1,000 people. There is a large amount of vacant housing available in the town, both for ownership and rental. The infrastructure is there to accommodate employees of a correctional facility. All these things are very positive aspects that were considered in terms of the recommendation our task force then made to the Solicitor General for siting the medium-term correctional facility.

The aspects the acting leader of the Independents raised are of course ones that could be raised with respect to any government decision that might be taken into account relative to balanced growth. Were we to have taken that attitude in terms of the development of this province over the past 12 years, then what was in fact. . .

DR. BUCK: Speech.

MR. KOZIAK: . . . projected for Alberta by the then Social Credit government, that the majority of people would live in Edmonton and Calgary, would have come to pass. However, we decided that we would take a different approach . . .

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, he's out of order. Why don't you interject?

MR. KOZIAK: . . . and are pursuing a system of balanced growth in this . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. I am fully aware that the hon. minister has gone on at some length.

MR. NOTLEY: That's the second ministerial announcement today.

MR. SPEAKER: However, there was time left in the question period. We're really not struggling for recognition of any members waiting to ask questions, and I suppose some of what the hon. minister said might have come out in answer to supplementaries.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question. Is the Minister of Culture in a position to indicate if the historic part of the Fort Saskatchewan institute — that is, the original RCMP site — will remain intact? That is a historic site, and I want to be reassured by the minister that if the institution is taken out holus-bolus, that site will remain and be preserved.

MRS. LeMESSURIER: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member asked me that question previously, and we do have our staff working on the history of that site at the present time.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

head: COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

[Mr. Appleby in the Chair]

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

Department of Transportation

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

MR. M. MOORE: Thanks very much, Mr. Chairman. The budget of the Department of Transportation for the 1983-84 fiscal year is some \$854 million. I briefly want to outline where some of those funds are being expended and elaborate on some matters connected with policy in the development of the departmental program.

First of all, I'd like to say that I have forwarded to all rural MLAs an outline of the construction work we expect to undertake in their constituencies during this construction year. I have to add that what we're working on is figures with respect to the various programs: primary highway construction and maintenance, secondary highway construction and maintenance, resource roads, et cetera. The degree to which the competition exists, in terms of bids to build those roads and the success we have in the work we do by the hour, in terms of getting construction at the lowest cost possible, will determine the finality of the program for this construction year. So there may indeed be some projects which I have suggested would be tendered late this year that may or may not proceed to construction. On the other hand, if we have good success in terms of attracting competitive bids, as I'm sure we will, some projects that we thought might not be started this year could go late in the construction year, perhaps October or November.

So with that sort of caveat on the overall budget in terms of those memorandums which I've sent to most of you, I want to review the budget and, first of all, make note of the fact that as well, I did forward to all MLAs a document, just recently put together, called Alberta Transportation Airport Development Program General Information, which provides to MLAs a complete document of the airports that exist in this province, whether they be those operated by the federal government, by communities, or by ourselves. It includes the forestry airstrips as well. At the back of that particular document is a map of the province which shows some 86 airports listed as provincial, community, major municipal, federal, and future airports.

I raise this matter, Mr. Chairman, because it was raised during the course of the Heritage Savings Trust Fund, capital projects division estimates of this year, which involved terminal construction. The budget we have before us today does not have any funds for terminal construction by our department. However, it has funds in the amount of \$20,000, for grants to municipalities, to each municipality that may qualify for the construction of its own small terminal building at community airports.

It should be noted that the provincial and community airport program involves some 86 airports. That is the extent, at least for the next few years, of the airport program. We will not be considering any new sites. We feel that the province in general is going to be pretty well

served by those locations. It doesn't make too much sense to develop new locations when we have a considerable amount of work to do on the sites listed there.

In almost every case, something has been done in the order of these airports. A commitment has been made in every case to develop an airport or airstrip, and in most cases land has been purchased. In some cases, actual turf runways have been started, in terms of construction. In other cases, nothing has been done but will be under way this year or next year. That refers to the future airport sites which I referred to earlier.

I just want to sort of highlight for members, if I could, the historical expenditure pattern of the Department of Transportation in this province, in terms of road and highway construction and maintenance. In 1970-71, the year before this government came to office, the province spent some \$94 million on highway construction. That increased over the years to a record high of \$970 million in 1982-83, 11 years later, which is more than 10 times the expenditure in '70-71. Mr. Chairman, even taking the annual escalation costs in construction expenditures into consideration, the expenditure level we are now at, in real terms, is significantly above what it was in 1970.

[Mr. Purdy in the Chair]

I was interested as well in doing a little research on the historical expenditures of the department. Back in 1935-36, 48 years ago, the expenditures of the Department of Transportation in Alberta were \$2.4 million. Again, even given the level of services that were provided for \$2.4 million at that time, it's a small amount compared to what we have today. This department has grown significantly in terms of its magnitude of expenditures in the government's overall expenditure plan, particularly over the last 10 years. It's therefore essential that we do everything possible in this budget to maximize the use of dollars, in the maintenance and rehabilitation area and also with respect to new construction and design.

I wanted to talk briefly about that before concluding, but I did want to mention a few broad figures with respect to the budget here. It does not contain a new program for street assistance for towns and villages. Many of you have been asking about that. Last year we ended a second five-year program that's seen some \$10 million per year going to villages and towns in street improvement assistance.

It is our full intention to develop a new program of some sort, one that I hope can be accommodated within the budget of the department in 1984-85. In that regard, I have already been privileged to receive comments and suggestions from a number of MLAs for improvements to the street assistance program for towns and villages. I look forward to receiving more and then proceeding, through the course of this fall and winter, to try to develop a new and effective program.

The economic stabilization program, which was at a level of \$20 million over the last two fiscal years, was terminated as we had said it would be. But as a phase-out provision, we are providing some \$10 million to municipalities throughout the province under the same conditions, in terms of their being required to hire local equipment, as the economic stabilization program. I think that feature assisted in the phasing out of that program. Of course it will not be continued in 1984-85.

I want to review a breakdown that I have of the budget that really doesn't appear in the budget book, but it's useful for members to think about where the dollars go.

The total budget of \$854,299,000 is broken down as follows, when you consider systems we work with. First of all, the provincial highway system and network takes \$520 million of that \$854 million in terms of maintenance, rehabilitation, and new construction. The administration of the department, the engineering, the cost of operating the Motor Transport Board, transportation safety, the \$12 million airport development program, the \$10 million in round figures we spend annually on Alberta Resources Railway debentures: all those items take about \$90 million a year. Finally \$246,083,000, or 28.8 per cent of the budget, is expended for grants to municipalities.

It's important for members to know, again in round figures, that of the roughly \$850 million this department spends in one year, \$600 million is utilized in ways which help every citizen and municipality in the province, and only some \$250 million is available for distribution to municipal governments. Of those municipal grants, \$165 million goes to urban municipalities, \$32.5 million to MDs and counties, and \$48.5 million to improvement districts, where the Department of Transportation is the sole road authority and pays most of the costs.

I wanted to mention those figures because I think they're important, particularly to members from Edmonton and Calgary. Of the urban grants — \$165 million, which is 67 per cent of our total municipal grants — 30 per cent this year, or \$50 million, will go to the city of Calgary; 34.9 per cent, or \$57.5 million, to the city of Edmonton. Other cities in Alberta will collect about \$57.6 million, or 35 per cent of the total.

Mr. Chairman, I want to make a couple of comments about how we struck a budget this year in terms of our overall requirements. I looked first of all at the maintenance of our highway system and said to the staff of my department that, while I wanted them to be lean and trim — to not waste any funds at all in that area and to make sure that we were being as efficient as we possibly could — I then wanted to make that a first priority in the department budget in terms of the expenditure of funds. In other words, I don't believe we should be cutting back on the maintenance and rehabilitation of our existing system so we can construct more new roads.

I think it's rather false economy to let your system depreciate beyond repair, which is happening in many other jurisdictions in North America, and go on your merry way building new roads when existing ones are deteriorating. That was the number one criterion. But with the budget allocations we have, we think we are able to do a good job in the maintenance area, and I have every confidence that the staff will be able to do so.

Secondly, we wanted to make sure that we met all the commitments that existed with respect to the urban transportation program, grants to municipalities, and other jurisdictions. Finally, I looked at the major construction programs in primary highways and our assistance to municipalities in the secondary highways program, and tried to meet all the commitments that were made by my predecessor, the Minister of Transportation in the last Legislature, the hon. Member for Chinook.

I think we did, and those commitments have been made publicly to groups of people, municipalities, and MLAs throughout the province. I'm confident we've been able to do that. Some of you have said to me: we thought there was a commitment on this or that road or this airport. I guess from time to time, when the Minister of Transportation writes and says we will schedule it in a future program, people believe the future is 1983. Some-

times the minister meant 1984 or '85.

All of us are going to have to be careful about those commitments in the coming years because, depending upon the level of income this province has from its major sources of depleting natural resources, this budget could either grow or shrink in future years. I'm hopeful it will grow at a modest rate and that we can continue to provide the highest per capita expenditures in North America on both new construction and maintenance of our highway system.

I close my comments by saying that those of you who were here during the throne speech debate will recall that I made a number of comments with respect to policy issues in the Department of Transportation relative to the Motor Transport Board, roadside development policies, highway signing, rest areas, a speed limit review, and a number of other areas. I don't want to repeat those now except to remind members that I did make those comments earlier, and I regard it as a major part of my responsibility to ensure that we do have policies in place in the Department of Transportation that are appropriate to facilitate the best use of these funds.

I want to add one while I make reference to the commitment for a 10-year twinning program on highways 1 and 16. That program, at the end of the 1982-83 fiscal year at the end of March, was 13 per cent complete on Highway 1 and 10 per cent complete on Highway 16. With the construction expenditures this year, some \$19,650,000 on Highway 1, the Trans-Canada will be 20 per cent complete, and with some \$25,293,000, Highway 16 will be 17 per cent complete at the end of this construction season.

I have to say that it's necessary for us to reassess to some extent the full extent of that commitment in terms of twinning. I recently asked the department staff to do a study of the costs and benefits of some major passing-lane construction on highways in the category that — it would be nice if they were twinned, but they don't necessarily have a long-term traffic projection that requires it right away.

Interestingly enough, on a section of Highway 16, between Evansburg and Hinton, with some significant straightening and reconstruction of the existing two-lane road and the introduction at regular intervals of passing lanes, in both directions, of some fair length — like 3 kilometres — located every 10 or 12 kilometres, there is an indication that we could increase the carrying capacity of the highway by about 30 per cent. That could be accommodated by a construction cost that's below 5 per cent of the cost of twinning the same road.

I think it's useful in this province for us to consider some of the alternatives that other jurisdictions have been forced into considering simply because of a lack of dollars for the very major construction costs that occur when you build a completely twinned, divided, four-lane highway. That isn't to say we won't be continuing with this program. But indeed some sections of that road, for example, that were scheduled to be twinned in the latter part of the 10-year program could well receive some passing-lane construction five years from now that would greatly alleviate the traffic situation at a far lower cost than what we're looking at for twinning.

I conclude my remarks by saying that in the period of time since November 19 that I have been privileged to be the minister responsible for transportation in this province, I have had a great deal of co-operation from numerous people — too numerous to mention — in the Department of Transportation. After having met some of

them and worked with a good number of them in those ensuing months, I just want to say how pleased I am with the work that more than 2,750 dedicated civil servants in the Department of Transportation do for all of us throughout Alberta.

For those of you — and there are many in this room — who get up early in the morning in the dead of winter and drive to the airport, or wherever, and find the sanding truck is out before you are, you know what I mean. It goes without saying that from the guy operating the motor grader, the sanding truck, the flag man or flag woman, right down to the deputy minister, they are, without any doubt, a really good crew, [interjections] I believe that on occasion they have even been thoughtful enough to sand the road from the hon. Member for Clover Bar's constituency into Edmonton so he can make it to the session right through the winter.

DR. BUCK: Not anymore, Marv. Highway 15 is in the city now.

MR. M. MOORE: Mr. Chairman, with those remarks I'd invite any comments that members might have with respect to any portion of the department's budget and hope that I can answer the questions there might be.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Chairman, I'm not sure that the minister's final observations were an invitation to debate or not. It's the normal course that when we get to Transportation estimates, members take a few minutes to deal with some of the specific road projects in their constituencies. I want to say that I share with the minister and other members of the committee a sense of pride in the performance of employees of the Department of Transportation in Alberta. That doesn't necessarily mean that the same thing should be applied to the policymakers, but certainly the employees are doing a highly commendable job.

Mr. Chairman, when the minister began his discussion, he indicated that in 1970 the budget of the department was \$94 million, and this year it is something over \$800 million. There is no question that that is a significant increase but a little less dramatic than it may appear. My recollection is — and the Member for Clover Bar can correct me if I'm wrong — that in 1970 the total budget of the province was about \$1 billion; now it's just under \$10 billion. So we have seen almost a tenfold increase in our provincial expenditures in the last decade. What that probably means is that the Department of Transportation is holding its own, but I'm not sure it necessarily means it's getting a larger percentage, at least according to this year's estimates.

Mr. Chairman, one of the more impressive speeches I heard in the last several months was in the city of Calgary where I listened to Mayor Klein argue the case for additional public-sector investment now. I think the basic burden of his case was that if you want to get the most for your dollars, the time to do it is when you have significant unemployment, you have many contractors looking for work; public dollars will go further now. I think that's certainly true in the Department of Transportation, as well as other departments that have capital works projects as a departmental responsibility.

All one has to do, Mr. Chairman, is look back to 1979, 1980, and 1981, and I think it can be fairly said that it would have been imprudent to have substantially increased highways expenditures in those years, because we had virtually every firm in the province working full-out.

We had every cat that one could find employed in the private sector. We had significant private development in the province, parallel to our public dollars.

Therefore, simply increasing the budget in 1979 and 1980 might have meant a little more work but not as much as an increase of 10 or 15 per cent might appear. We would simply have had higher contract prices, because there was such a shortage of available contractors, men, and equipment as a result of the overall buoyancy of the economy. That, of course, is not the situation now. We have a significant lag in the economy, and our public dollars will go much further.

That being the case, Mr. Chairman, it seems to me that we have to look at some of these long-term transportation projects. There is no better way we can prepare for the future than to build a transportation infrastructure in this province. That is not just a rural transportation infrastructure. The bulk of my comments are going to relate to northern Alberta, but it relates to upgrading our urban transportation too.

Mr. Chairman, I know this government decided not to fund expansion of Edmonton and Calgary LRT systems. But I say to members of the committee that there is a strong argument for LRT at the present time. We have a pause in energy prices, but the long-term outlook, I suspect, is that over the next several decades energy prices will continue to rise and will probably rise sharply. That being the case, we have to examine energy-efficient modes of transportation. What I have seen in Edmonton and Calgary with the LRT systems has impressed me a great deal.

I don't see the hon. Member for Chinook in the House at the moment, but when the member was minister, he wanted to know why Houston didn't have an LRT or a rapid transit system. The fact of the matter is that last fall — as a matter of fact, during the election campaign — Houston announced that they were going to try to catch up with the 20th century and committed themselves to a massive LRT system in that city.

Mr. Chairman, if you're going to have LRT, it requires planning so you can make sensible use of the system and so your cities can plan for it. The difference between the systems that are very successful and those that aren't is having enough lead time and advanced planning, so your residential development, your apartment development and that kind of thing, can be parallel to LRT routes. That sort of thing requires lead time on the part of local government officials in the cities so they can adjust their zoning by-laws when they have to look at various proposals for development in their jurisdictions.

What I am saying to the minister is that if this government is at all interested in LRT expansion, I think the long-term investment we make today in our two major cities will pay dividends over the long haul; no question about that. But the more lead time we can give these communities to plan for the expansion of the systems, the better it is. I would hate to see this matter held in abeyance until the economy has once again recovered and we then find that our public dollars are chasing private dollars and they simply don't go as far.

Mr. Chairman, I want to move from there to deal with the overall need to continue the work of upgrading our primary and secondary highway systems. I suppose during the course of the afternoon — I regret I won't be able to stay for the minister's remarks, but I rather suspect we may not get to them. If this session goes according to normal procedure, we're going to have all members discussing road projects in their constituencies, and properly

so.

While I am on my feet, let me say that I think there are some important projects in the Peace country that need to be addressed. The minister well knows that a good deal of upgrading is required on all of Highway 49. I am pleased to see that this year we will finally have the contract let to complete the paving of Highway 49. That will be a rather significant accomplishment, although I think the people in the central Peace deserve the Order of Canada for their patience in waiting for this road to be completed.

On the north side of the river, however, we are not doing quite as well. I would hate to think that this had any sort of political ramifications. But I recall a joint forum last October, Mr. Chairman, and the local Conservative candidate was able to announce, when he began his remarks at the meeting, that he had received a commitment from the minister to issue a contract on Highway 64 from Eureka River to Worsley, which was a very positive announcement to make and, I'm sure, timed quite coincidentally. I don't think it had anything to do with an event scheduled for a couple of weeks later. I would never imply that it did; some might, but I wouldn't.

In any event, I now find that while the contract is going to be let this year, it may well be that the paving won't be completed. Mr. Chairman, during the course of the minister's busy summer I hope he will find the time to push this project on a little more quickly, that the pledge made before 500 people in Fairview will be redeemed, that we will see this extra number of miles of pavement actually laid this fall — even late this summer would be fine; I'm sure the people would be very pleased with that — and that we will get on with the job of completing Highway 64.

Mr. Chairman, there are a number of other projects. We've had the announcement of the road south of Grande Prairie to Grande Cache and then eventually through to Hinton. We have additional work needed in the Fort Vermilion area. I think the money we put into our primary highway system is money well spent. I don't know how long we're going to have surplus non-renewable resource revenue, but I have always said, and I say it inside and outside the House, that the money we invest to upgrade, improve, and modernize our transportation system, is one of the infrastructure requirements necessary to diversify the economy of Alberta.

Mr. Chairman, I want to deal with several other items. The question of highway speed limits for trucks has been brought to my attention — and, I gather, to that of members of the government — by the Alberta Chamber of Commerce. One of their members, Economy Carriers Limited, is objecting to increasing the speed limit from 90 to 100 kilometres per hour. The minister has indicated that the government is going to allow that increase in the speed limit. What I found quite interesting in the copy of the letter the minister sent, dated April 6, was the suggestion that there is apparently research that indicates that there is no correlation between speed and safety.

The general manager of the Chamber of Commerce has asked, and I would ask the minister too, whether there is any data to back that assertion. If so, I'd be very interested to learn it. Because as a person not unacquainted with long drives — I think all of us who've driven, especially on two-lane highways, know the impatience of drivers who get behind trucks. If that truck is driving at just under the speed limit, there is the tendency for traffic to bottle up behind it. Perhaps it shouldn't. Perhaps the traffic behind it should be composed of only patient

drivers who say, we'll wait until we can pass safely. But it seems to me that the burden of this particular submission, Mr. Minister, is that if you have trucks that are now travelling at 100 kilometres per hour, you're going to have people taking a risk by passing those trucks when they shouldn't.

If there is any information as to the correlation, I'd be interested. The observations made by Economy Carriers and by the Chamber of Commerce convince me that there is a safety factor in allowing trucks to increase their speed, not necessarily in terms of the safety of the vehicle itself but in terms of the impact of other people on the road. Regardless of whether it's the truck driver's fault or the fault of someone in a car, the fact that an accident occurs is something we have to look at from a statistical point of view. If there is information on that matter, I would welcome it.

Of course, one might argue that in the trucking business — Economy Carriers has made the point that there's a tremendous increase in cost for each additional mile per hour that a truck travels. This particular firm suggests that if they operated at 60 miles an hour, it would cost them another \$187,000 a year; 65, another \$374,000 a year. One might presume, then, that the economics would keep the trucks down to 55 miles an hour. That might be true, Mr. Chairman, with some firms. Obviously this particular firm is very cost conscious.

But I think we have to address ourselves to the question of what is the safest public policy that makes any kind of sense at all. The suggestion has been made — and with the concurrence, I might say, of the chamber — that we take a second look at this policy. I'd welcome any response from the minister on that matter when he concludes his remarks.

Mr. Chairman, I think that summarizes my observations. I would welcome the minister's response. I'll have to read the remarks in *Hansard*. But I would just conclude by telling the minister that at this stage additional investments in the Department of Transportation — some may call them expenditures; I suppose technically they are. But in many respects, I think the outlay of public funds to build decent roads, modern transportation routes, and facilities are certainly an investment for the future.

I just want to make one parting shot. Every time I've spoken in the estimates, I've asked each minister to bring us an update on Mr. McFarlane's proposal to get us into the airship business. I don't say that in jest. Mr. McFarlane and I may differ on a lot of things, but frankly I think there may be some real argument for the development of the commercial airship business in a climate like ours. I see we have a prototype produced in Ontario, which has now been sold to the United States. It may well be that getting into this type of investment has long-term potential. I realize that there were some discussions with the Goodyear company in Akron. I would welcome an update from the minister on just exactly where the airship proposals stand at this time.

MR. JONSON. Mr. Chairman, I'd like to start by offering my congratulations to the minister on his appointment. I know that in his previous portfolios of Municipal Affairs and Agriculture, he was regarded in our area as having done a fine job. I'd further like to acknowledge that in my brief experience as an MLA, I've found communication with his department to be very good and helpful to me in my role as an MLA.

First of all, speaking very briefly, making a few general

remarks about the importance of the department and its service, I'd like to relate to the minister's remarks in which he said that he hoped for some modest increase in the budget as the future unfolds. In this particular area, Mr. Chairman, I would like to go for — if it has to be called that — an immodest increase, because I think there's a very good set of arguments to support additional money in this area and perhaps a hold or cutback in some others. If I am challenged, I can list some of them.

Mr. Chairman, the provision of road and other related transportation services is a long-accepted and expected role of government. I think we sometimes underestimate the importance of a good road infrastructure for the province. It has a tremendous effect in aiding industry. If we're going to keep any type of economic advantage for the various industries we have in this province, I think we have to provide the best transportation system possible. If we don't put added emphasis on that particular area, we're going to have even more difficulty competing with other parts of the nation and North America.

As a province, we've long been noted for our road system. I think we are still worthy of praise in that area. I'd say that that reputation even goes back to the time when the hon. opposition members on the right were in power. They're not here to take that compliment, so I'll skip over it. I think that's been a long-standing feature of the province, which we have to continue. The road network is a key advantage to the province in terms of the saving that it has for people in time and wear and tear on their vehicles, which is a related cost to their business.

A point that I think is very important is that there's a tremendous psychological advantage in having a good transportation network for the population. The person who drives a hundred miles over very bumpy and inhospitable roads to park in a brand new provincial campsite, is probably not as impressed as he should be by the campsite or the road. I think that's a very important thing to keep in mind. The transportation system serves all parts of the province, urban and rural, farming, tourism, oil and gas. In that sense, I think it is a service that can be accessed equally by all members of the population of the province and is right on target with what we need.

Mr. Chairman, I have some questions that I would like to put to the minister. First of all, he mentioned briefly the construction situation in the province. If possible, I would like him to elaborate further on the situation right now with respect to the supply of construction companies, what seems to be happening with the bids coming in on road products, and whether the shortage of services from the construction industry in this area has been completely alleviated.

My second question, one that has come to me frequently in the constituency, is about the relative costs of building pavement and maintaining it — I put the maintenance with the building — versus the costs of building or rebuilding new gravel roads and their consequent maintenance costs. Some individuals maintain, in their view of things, that on a long-term basis it is better to build the paved road than the gravel one because of the consequent maintenance costs. I would like some comments on whether that is a correct observation.

Mr. Chairman, I'm glad to see the minister's reference to investigations or studies that are going on with respect to greater installation of passing lanes and perhaps the avoidance of having to twin highways, et cetera. A third question I have, though, concerns the nature of the analysis or assessment his department makes when it's considering the type of road that needs to be built in a given

area. It seems that all across the province over the past five years, if not the past decade, we have a tremendous increase in the nature of the traffic that is using some of our rural roads. This traffic is having a major effect on the maintenance costs and the difficulty of maintaining those roads. I don't know if this is a correct comment, and I wait for the answer. It has been suggested that in some of our building or repair programs, perhaps we're not fully assessing the type of traffic that's going to be using a particular road.

Speaking now for just a moment about the constituency itself, I would like to acknowledge the road and street programs that have served the constituency of Ponoka, in particular the recent traffic study completed for the town of Ponoka. I think that's going to be of major benefit to that community. I would like to ask a couple of questions. One is, what is the status of — I don't know if you should call it an airport, Mr. Chairman — the paved runway that is proposed for the town of Rimbey? This would be a major benefit to the town, as would such a facility in any town in the province, and has been planned for some time. Secondly, in speaking about the constituency, once again I want to put in my bid for the widening and repaving of Highway 53, the main artery through the constituency and one which, in my observation, is worthy of attention.

Mr. Chairman, I'd just like to conclude by saying once again that if we're talking about priorities among the various material programs of the province, this is one which I think should have top priority.

Thank you.

MRS. CRIPPS: Mr. Chairman, first I'd like to say that I know the minister will do the same effective job in Transportation that he did in Agriculture and Municipal Affairs, and I really appreciate that. I'd just like to make a few brief comments today. First, I'd like to commend the department on the exceptional job they've done over the last few years. Transportation projects are highly visible, either by the lack of roads or by the improvements made on those roads.

I guess I have a soft spot for the Department of Transportation because of the committee I chaired and the tremendous response the department gave to the recommendations made by that committee. I recognize that funding this year can't, and certainly isn't, equal to the funding we received in '82, but I'd like to go back to 1979 when the funding was \$483 million. I know the tremendous amount of discussion that went into getting increases in that funding and bringing in some new innovative projects, which I think have been very beneficial to the overall transportation picture in Alberta. Certainly the move from \$483 million to \$634 million, while 10 per cent less this year, was a major step.

I wish to comment and, I guess, reinforce the effectiveness of the resource road program and the benefits we've had from the economic stabilization program, both in the winter stockpiling of gravel, which certainly makes ultimate sense because nature paves the roads, and in the oil related construction industry activity program, which has been particularly beneficial in many constituencies hard hit by the recession in the oil industry. Another program which is saving tax dollars is the rehabilitation program. I believe it's long overdue, and I'm glad to see funds channelled directly into the upkeep and maintenance of those major highways.

I'm not going to mention specific road programs; I'll deal with the minister on those. But one road I'd like to

see constructed is the Elk River road which would be a short cut for northern Alberta to the trunk road. So all of you Edmontonians, I'd like to see some support for that. Where's Julian?

I also have a suggestion which might be useful, Mr. Minister. Rather than routing all the western traffic over Highway 16, maybe you should look at extending Highway 13 to Jasper. The route is accessible, and it would cut off 100 miles to Jasper, which would certainly benefit all transcontinental haulers. I'd also endorse passing lanes. There are passing lanes on the road between Alsike and Drayton Valley. I'm always amazed at how much traffic moves and how it removes any ballups in traffic in that particular section of the road. It's the only section of the road in my constituency which has passing lanes, so I particularly notice the benefits of that. I have to disagree with the Member for Spirit River-Fairview. I believe that the change to average truck limits, in concert with car speed limits, is going to be beneficial and will make our highways safer.

[Mr. Appleby in the Chair]

I look forward to new projects being tendered towards fall, and certainly hope that tenders come in to allow for additional projects. On behalf of the constituency of Drayton Valley, I'd like to say how much we appreciate the work done over the past four years. When I was elected, roads were the most common complaint in my constituency and believe me, I had plenty of them. I think the minister and the department are doing a tremendous job; spend your funds well.

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Chairman, it's always enjoyable to participate on a yearly basis in the debate on the estimates of the Department of Transportation which are put forward to the Assembly by the Minister of Transportation.

At the outset, I'd like to mention something the Minister of Transportation raised when he participated in the Speech from the Throne several weeks ago. He commented on his new portfolio and pointed out some of the individuals who had participated in Alberta Transportation over the years and who have now left to go on to new careers. When you look back on the excellent role of that department over the years, I think we have to pay credit to the leadership capabilities of former chief deputy minister Mr. Rowly McFarlane and the former deputy minister of construction Mr. Bob Cronkhite and by the same token, offer congratulations to the new deputy minister of the Department of Transportation, Mr. Harvey Alton.

As he undertakes his new responsibilities, which will be onerous over the next three or four years, I think the new Minister of Transportation will find a very competent group of men and women in his department who will be totally loyal to him and to the people of Alberta. It's very important as well, Mr. Chairman, that all of us in this Assembly recognize that there are some very competent people in Alberta Transportation. When you look at the management team that the deputy minister has to deal with, his senior assistant deputy ministers, Mr. Alan McGeachy, Mr. Nestor Chorney, Mr. Leon Root, Mr. Murray Kehr, he's indeed fortunate to have people of their capabilities. As well, of course, the capabilities of the six regional directors and the various directors in various capacities within Alberta Transportation are there.

It's unfortunate the Member for Spirit River-Fairview is not in the House right now, because a few minutes ago he indicated that he was not so pleased with the performance of some of the policymakers. I do know that the people I have talked about, and the other people in senior levels in Alberta Transportation, support and participate with the minister and with all members of this Assembly in the ongoing development of policy with respect to transportation matters in the province of Alberta. I for one am extremely pleased with the empathy these individuals show to transportation in the province and the very professional and determined leadership they provide to all the men and women who work in Alberta Transportation at all levels of involvement.

To repeat, it's unfortunate that the Member for Spirit River-Fairview is not here. When he gave his assessment of the dollar involvement of Alberta Transportation over the years and reacted to the figures the Minister of Transportation presented to the Assembly this afternoon in terms of total Transportation spending in 1970-71 of some \$94 million through to 1982-83 of some \$970 million, I think it was his assessment that while there was a major dollar increase, in all likelihood, the share that Alberta Transportation and the roads system in this province have really accepted as part of the whole provincial budget was little more than just a keeping up.

I'd like to submit, Mr. Chairman, that anytime you have a dollar increase from some \$94 million to some \$970 million over an 11-year period, that really amounts to well above a tenfold increase in total dollar spending. No matter how you slice it, that amounts to an increase of over 1,000 per cent in transportation expenditures. There is not one indicator whatsoever that inflation over that 10-year period in actual road and highway construction amounted to 1,000 per cent. In all likelihood, the actual input costs from a base figure of 1970-71 through to 1982-83 is perhaps no more than about 230 to 250 per cent.

In reality the Transportation budget voted on by this Assembly over the last 11 years has increased, in my estimation, some fourfold above what would readily be agreed to by most experts in the field as being the inflationary factor. The participation of the transportation dollar in terms of the total commitment to Albertans is very significant and increased significantly over the last 11 years.

When we look at the budget before us today, we have to recognize that there are massive capital works which are unequalled in any budget that I'm aware of in terms of actual transportation expenditures. This budget contains a dollar expenditure figure of some \$213 million for primary highway construction work and some \$92 million for secondary roads. I think no member should forget that when the secondary road program was invented, I guess — for lack of a better phrase — in 1970, those who invented the program said they would embark on a major secondary road program over the province of Alberta over a number of years. Unfortunately, after having made that commitment they forgot to allocate dollars of any substantial amount to the secondary roads program.

In that program alone, if you compare the dollar expenditure figures from 1970 through to 1983, we see something like a 92-fold increase — not a twofold increase, but a 92-fold increase. So when you look at the budget that's currently before us, we are prepared to vote on some \$92 million worth of secondary roads work. That is incredible when compared to a secondary road system in any other jurisdiction in this country and cer-

tainly any other road jurisdiction in North America.

I'm pleased as well that the budget contains some \$30 million in grants to MDs and counties, some \$41 million committed to the rural resource road system program that was created several years ago by this government, and nearly \$50 million to pavement rehabilitation. Pavement rehabilitation, as has been pointed out by several of my colleagues a little earlier, is incredibly important. The system we have is an aging system. As any pavement that's been set up, it has the durability and the life of perhaps 14, 15, or 16 years. It has to be recovered; it has to be worked on. The major programs, wherever they exist in all constituencies of the province of Alberta — I know that I'm perhaps not unlike any other member of this Assembly.

If it's a case of a primary highway that has to be repaved in the constituency I represent, I somehow try to convince the Minister of Transportation that it really isn't a project of some importance to me, so as not to have him come back to me and say: look at all the fine work we're doing in your constituency. But it is an expenditure of extreme importance to me and to all the people who live in that particular area. In addition to that \$50 million set aside for pavement rehabilitation, there is also another capital figure of some \$64 million which is dedicated to the maintenance of primary highway systems. Needless to say, we've already heard from the minister what his priority concern is toward the maintenance of the primary highway system.

In reacting to some of the comments put forward by the Member for Spirit River-Fairview — and he's still not in the House — I think it's important that one recognize that in 1983 the actual cost per mile of road for construction and pavement, may very well be less than the actual construction cost experienced by Alberta Transportation in both 1981 and 1982. I'd like to submit to you, Mr. Chairman, and to all members of the Assembly, that while the capital budget for Alberta Transportation this year may be a few dollars less than it was a year ago, in actual fact, when productivity occurs we may very well conclude one year hence that we will get more miles built, repaired, and improved for fewer dollars than one year before. I think that is a factor that has to be considered.

Perhaps it would be irresponsible if, at this juncture, we dramatically increased the Transportation budget. That may very well cause us to hit an inflationary spiral. All members might recall what occurred in the years 1974-75; a similar situation was before the Assembly at that time. Dollars were committed and, in fact, productivity perhaps was not as great as all had anticipated at that time.

Mr. Chairman, recently the Minister of Transportation put forward a new policy on equipment hiring, and it's a policy which I find to be very positive. There is a surplus of equipment currently existing in the province of Alberta. I think the policy put forward by the minister is one which recognizes the loyalty of those individuals in the province of Alberta who have worked for Alberta Transportation in past years.

There was a time when Alberta Transportation wanted to put out additional work, tried to find contractors — cat workers and the like — and hired them for a few days. Then they were told several days later: sorry fellows, it's been great working for you for a couple of days, but we found another employer; we like his terms a bit better, so we're going to take off and go and work for him. That, of course, left Alberta Transportation in the lurch.

So in looking at the equipment hiring policy that has been announced, I think recognition is given to those individuals, those small contractors throughout the province who have been loyal to Alberta Transportation in the past. In my view, preference has to be given to those equipment owners who have worked for Alberta Transportation for the longest continuous number of years. I think that will be accepted by all those people who have been involved in working on our road system.

The Minister of Transportation indicated that this budget does not [contain] a commitment for a town and village streets assistance program: While we recognize the current economic downturn, we can recognize the remarkable success of that program over the last five years. I think it's important that all members spend a considerable amount of time thinking about how we might reintroduce a program in future years, when the provincial budgetary system is a bit richer than it is today. I'm sure that in the ensuing months all of us will be in a position to provide some advice to the Minister of Transportation with respect to that program, pointing out how positive it has been to the numerous towns and villages, at least from my perspective and the constituents I represent, who have had an opportunity to realize some efficiencies and efforts from it.

I would like to compliment the Minister of Transportation, not so much on my own behalf but perhaps on behalf of my good friend and colleague who represents the constituency to the north of the constituency of Barrhead, the current Minister of Housing. The soon to be known, world famous Grizzly Trail will have two contracts worth of work done in 1983 and '84. Members may be surprised when I tell them that those sections of Highway 33 are not within the constituency of Barrhead but are ones I've identified over recent years as being of the highest priority. I am really delighted and very pleased with the co-operation of the Member for Lesser Slave Lake in that regard.

I said, "the soon to be known, world famous Grizzly Trail". Perhaps I should point out to all members that we're talking about Highway 33. It begins at a little place called Gunn, goes north through Barrhead and the historic village of Fort Assiniboine — which was founded in the year 1832 and is the second oldest in the province of Alberta — through what is almost the fire capital of North America, Swan Hills, and up to Kinuso. Much of the road has been improved.

Members will recall that several years ago, when this person was seeking election for the first time, he committed himself to having that highway known as the Grizzly Trail. That commitment was made good within a few short months after the election of 1979, and since then we've been working diligently to improve that, again in a very co-operative spirit with my colleague the Minister of Housing. That will be the third major roadway in north-western Alberta, and in years to come I think it will be met with a considerable degree of enthusiasm by individuals travelling to the northwestern part of the province for either commerce, recreation, or little more than sightseeing.

We in the constituency of Barrhead have many highlights we could talk about, but there's one myth I would like to put asunder today. We have no more paved or constructed roads than any other M.L.A. in the province of Alberta. A myth has developed over recent years that a considerable amount of pavement has been given to me. That was primarily created by opponents of mine and two radio disk jockeys in the city of Edmonton who

chose not to support me in two elections.

Unfortunately, the mythology of it all is that it has caused me to fight that much harder. I have to be that much more convincing in trying to suggest to various ministers of transportation and some senior people in the Department of Transportation that in fact I have not had an above-average amount of response. The reality is that I have not. I just have to continue my efforts, and I'm sure all members will be pleased to know that I will continue to work and fight as hard as I can on behalf of my constituents.

With respect to that commitment to them of hard work, as part of my brief remarks this afternoon I want to present a petition to the Minister of Transportation. It was presented to me several days ago by two senior citizens, Mr. and Mrs. Albert Mix of Mayerthorpe. Mayerthorpe is not within the constituency of Barrhead, but these two individuals are really quite concerned about the condition of secondary road 918.

Several years ago the then Minister of Transportation, now the Member for Chinook, committed pavement to that particular roadway. I recognize that there is a current need to reassess some of these commitments, and I accept that need, but recently these two individuals went around and got a petition. I would just like to read the text:

We, the undersigned, request that Alberta Transportation hard surface Secondary Road 918, from the junction of Highway 43 and Secondary Road 918 to the intersection of Secondary Roads, 918 and 764; and that this project be completed in the 1983-1984 fiscal year.

That commitment was made, but I recognize it cannot be realized in the year 1983-84 simply because of the current need to reassess all the commitments made in the Transportation budget.

So I would like the Minister of Transportation to know that while I'm disappointed that I had to be part of the decision-making of not working that much harder for that particular roadway, it will be my intent to ask him to defer it beyond 1983-84, and perhaps we might assess it for a year subsequent to the one we are currently in. It is important. The people who live along the roadway are determined people, and I might point out that the vast majority of the people who have signed this petition do not live within the constituency of Barrhead. So I think perhaps I'm in a position to speak on behalf of my good friend and colleague the Member for Whitecourt. If he were able to participate this afternoon, I'm sure he would want to re-emphasize my remarks.

Mr. Chairman, the Minister of Transportation has an onerous task. He has a big budget, a big department. I'm absolutely sure that he will bring the professionalism we're all used to and expect from him and, further, that he will bring the high level of fairness and empathy he brought to Agriculture and Municipal Affairs, the ministries he represented before.

Thank you.

MR. WEISS: Mr. Chairman, I'd like to address a few remarks to the minister. I was encouraged by the minister's opening remarks in regard to his preference. He said there would be no cutback on maintenance. I find that very positive, and I am very encouraged. As a rural member, I feel that's the right approach to take. I certainly encourage that commitment.

I would like to thank the minister for one specific area I didn't hear him relate to in his overall remarks: the

improvement district support. To those who are not familiar, the advisory boards to the improvement districts certainly lend an awful lot of support, guidance, and help to people in rural constituencies such as myself. We feel that's the right approach, and we appreciate the autonomy and the overall work they do within the transportation sectors.

I would like to encourage the minister to review the general policy with regard to Highway 63. We're not asking for twinning, as others are indicating for their specific regions, and looking to LRT, which I'm sure we'll hear from some of the urban members later on. We're only looking for shoulders on that particular stretch of road. Of course that is a safety factor, and we hope it will be forthcoming. We realize there is a downturn at this time. Alsands is not going ahead, and there was an awful lot of predication based on the overall improvement of that specific highway in relation to Alsands' proceeding. Still we would emphasize to the minister and the Department of Transportation that that is a very high priority for Lac La Biche-McMurray constituents and would encourage them to look at it for future priorities.

The corridor through the city is improving very well, and this spring and summer we'll see that project completed. We're very grateful to the department for recognizing that need. Some \$9 million has been committed for that overall improvement and access to the plants in the north.

The Conklin road is a particular issue that I would like to emphasize once again through the department. There's a high need within the overall region for opening up access for the oil and gas plants, the activity in the region and, as well, the tourism and recreation potential. I look forward to the meeting the hon. minister has agreed to with the *ad hoc* committee in support of the Conklin road, and I hope we'll be able to see further development and clearing on that and commitments in the near future.

Highway 36 south of Lac La Biche is a specific concern, and we're very pleased with the minister's reassurance and commitment a few short weeks ago that this project will be proceeding to upgrading standards and pavement into 1984. The roads throughout the Metis settlements is an area I don't think we should overlook. I hope they would expand on this program in forthcoming years. I believe it's an area where we have lacked in communicating, and I hope we would continue with improvements in this area.

It was very interesting to note that the minister made remarks on airports in particular, Mr. Chairman. I have a couple of major concerns with regard to airports. One is in the remote community of Conklin. The minister is aware. I made some representation recently to ask for this airstrip to be delayed or deferred as far as mothballing, if that would be the terminology. It affects the community very drastically. If they were forced to utilize a strip some 12 miles from the community, where there is an airstrip put in by one of the oil companies — certainly a much better strip I agree, but it creates undue hardship for citizens, especially those on social assistance and health supports, where transportation becomes a very important [factor]. Financially, a lot of people just aren't able to get that 12 miles. There is no such thing as a taxi in that community, and transportation is a very expensive commodity. With the strip having been adjacent to the community before, it was just a matter of walking down and getting in one of the small aircraft to get out to communities such as Fort McMurray and Lac La Biche, where health or other services were available. I ask them

to review that concern, as it is a very, very important one to that community.

When we talk about airports, I just happen to have a little clipping, Mr. Chairman. A news article says: "New airport still 'years away'". It goes on to explain that a "new airport terminal for Fort McMurray is still several years" away. Further comments make specific remarks:

Funds for a new airport terminal for Fort McMurray were not allocated in this year's provincial budget. However, money could be allotted by special decree from a Heritage Savings Trust Fund program.

My question to the minister, Mr. Chairman, is more of an update on what is happening. I was familiar with some of the remarks made in previous budgets and ongoing discussions with the current minister and his predecessor that the provincial government had undertaken the responsibility and would be willing to proceed such as they have done under the heritage trust fund program in four or five other areas, and specifically would go ahead with the preparation and development of the Fort McMurray terminal. I understand there have been some problems leasing the facility back to the province, and that the federal government perhaps has not been as co-operative as it should be and this project has been delayed.

Could the minister advise me if at this time the federal government wishes to embark on this project on its own, and if this is part of the capital projects we should be hearing about very shortly? I understand that as early as May 13 Senator Bud Olson is going to be in the community of Fort McMurray. I wonder if this is part of the announcement that might be forthcoming. If the minister is aware of any of these supporting remarks by the federal government, we'd appreciate hearing from him; and as well, what the position would be if they were not proceeding, because I understand some \$26 million is needed for this facility.

It's a very large program, and a program that we don't believe should be deferred. I support, in some aspects, what the hon. Leader of the Opposition was referring to earlier: doing things now while the timing is right, where costs would be available, and perhaps it would be advantageous to undertake such a program. I hope he would be able to look at it.

I have an indirect problem, Mr. Chairman, with regard to airports. That's Pacific Western Airlines scheduling to the remote community of Fort Chipewyan. I have a specific problem here, in that the readjusted schedule does not provide adequate service to that community. It provides great hardship and financial duress to the people, in particular the fact that by this method goods and services are available only in the winter months.

Hopefully, as the season progresses we'll have a barge service. Of course, that is dependent on the water levels. If we're unable to get barges in there — maybe one or two early in the next few months will help some. But due to the extreme costs and difficulty, the revised flight schedules for Pacific Western Airlines are very detrimental to the community. They create undue hardship, specifically in the area of health.

While they might feel they are maintaining passenger traffic, we've got people who don't have access to health services, and we have to get these people out. The cost through the McMurray air services and air ambulance has gone up astronomically — some 42 trips, I believe, in the past month and a half out of the community just for air services to provide medical care. We certainly don't wish to deny the care and the service, but we feel the cost factors are something that should be looked at. I believe

that when rights were given to Pacific Western Airlines, a commitment was made to provide scheduled service to these communities. At this time, it would appear that the service is down somewhat.

I still say that's what they have to take. Just like any business person, they can't close their doors and say, we'll only take the good days, the Fridays and Saturdays, and close Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and whatever. I think they have to maintain that, and that's part of an operating cost or deficit. I'm sure that could be picked up in regard to some of their flights that are doing very, very well, such as the Calgary to Edmonton airbus and others. I'm very pleased with the service we did have, but the new scheduling has been very hard.

With regard to the overall long-term commitments, I was very pleased to represent the minister recently this past winter with regard to the Muffaloose Trail, the road project from Fort McMurray to Fort Chipewyan that we hope someday will become a reality, and on behalf of the minister was able to present a plaque to that committee for the ongoing commitment and dedication they have shown in that area.

[Mr. Purdy in the Chair]

MR. WEISS: The Pacific Western Airlines scheduling into the community of Fort Chip is very interesting because of the costs. We've heard it mentioned by the Member for Lethbridge West with regard to the cost of beer. I make reference to that as well to the minister. It just doesn't seem right that a bottle of beer costs less than a bottle of pop or a quart of milk. Yet we make that service available to that community.

I think there should be a moral responsibility [of] the members of this Assembly and the minister that we should review where we don't have the opportunity or the advantage to provide a road service into the community. I say that sincerely. There is no road to that community. These people have to take the one and only method. I say "one and only". It becomes one in the winter with regard to plane service, and in the summer with barge traffic . . . If you want to ask your wife to order her groceries on a two-month or three-month turnaround schedule, I can assure you that's a very difficult problem. You find you run out of milk on the third day and have to wait another two or three months for it to come in.

I'd suggest that perhaps we should be looking at some kind of subsidized freight cost for these people to get in their goods and services. I don't say we should be doing it for all goods. I don't think there are a lot of commodities we could determine and put in the luxury class category, but the necessities — bread, milk, eggs, the things that an awful lot of the members and members in the gallery take for granted. Every day we can go to the corner store and pick them up on the shelves. They cannot do that. Nor do they pay the same kind of dollars. Yet when we turn around and embark on our programs — and I refer to the Minister of Social Services and Community Health for a minute. We talk about a social service program. We allocate the same funding there to the person who might be living in an urban community. Yet he's unable to buy those goods and services for the same dollar level the member of the urban community can. I think it's an area that should be addressed and reviewed.

I hope we receive some assistance from the department, Mr. Chairman, in that regard. Or maybe we have to take the other approach and say, hey, alcohol should no longer be available in that community on the same basis

as it is in other areas. As the member responsible for that area, I would accept that decision. I would be prepared to live with it and would gladly take the flack that might be received from it in saying, we're not going to charge for freight into it but make other goods and services available in place of it.

One small item in closing, Mr. Chairman. I would like to ask the minister if he could update members of the committee on any new research material that might be available on road construction. In particular, I'm talking about the significance of sulphur and new, improved methods of asphaltting our roads for the severe winter conditions we have in the north. We have gone for many, many years with the existing materials, and I am hopeful there is some significant breakthrough here that might do several things in the way of cost factors, improved stabilization, and/or improved roads.

So I hope the minister might be able to guide the committee in that regard. I ask for his indulgence and support in reviewing some of the concerns that we have addressed in particular to our constituency. Thank you for the opportunity, Mr. Chairman.

MR. NELSON: Mr. Chairman, I just have a couple of comments about some of the activities and a number of questions for the minister relevant to the budget. First of all, considering Highway No. 2 was resurfaced in a number of areas last year, I would like to know who the government engineer is who might approve the activities of resurfacing or construction of the highways, considering the very poor job that was done and the taxpayer having to foot the bill. It was very disconcerting that a lot of the surface that was laid last year — and I drove over it after it was relaid — was breaking up in certain areas.

I would like to know who's responsible, from the government's point of view, for looking after that. Should we not get some reimbursement from the contractors who laid the surface? It ended up just as bad, or worse in many cases, as it was before they started. Also, considering the cost of oil-based asphalt used on highways, I would like to ask why we're not giving due consideration to using cement, as cement in the long term may be cheaper, considering that you get 15 to 20 years more life out of it and less maintenance during that period.

A couple of other comments. I believe there are a number of truckers in the province who will be lobbying many members of the Legislature in the near future, and especially the minister, regarding the number of truckers unemployed. They want some highway work and so on. Apparently we are allowing many people, including people from Saskatchewan, to come into our province and take the jobs that rightly should be offered to Albertans first. Also, we want to make travel a little more efficient from the coast to the northern parts of the province. I understand we could develop a little road from McBride through to Grande Cache, and that might assist that community.

Of course we could stand here and start beating the LRT drum and the urban transportation drum. I don't intend to do that today, because we ran through that on a couple of other days when motions were put before the House. I don't intend wasting member's time in dealing with that today. There are couple of areas I want to ask further questions on for clarification. Hopefully, the minister has some answers. If not today, they could be provided at another time.

In looking at the Transportation Revolving Fund on page 411 in the estimates, there seems to be a considera-

ble increase in expenditures — \$19 million, from \$71 million to \$90 million — in that area. I would like to determine what that might be for. Maybe he could give us some indication.

Also, there seems to be a considerable cost increase of some \$2.3 million in administrative services in the computer area. I would like to know why that's been given that large increase this year. Considering the fact that the total program has been decreased by a considerable amount, some \$117 million over 1982, the costs of some of the administrative services have gone up. I would like the minister to give some explanation relevant to those issues.

In support services, there are two areas that concern me. One is supply and services and the other is purchase of fixed assets. Maybe the minister could indicate what those might be, as they are increases over last year. I might indicate to the minister that the reason I bring those particular areas up is that it appears, on the surface at least — and the minister might be able to correct me if I am wrong — that there are costs going to administrative areas that may not be in the interest of the users of transportation facilities. If that's the case, why would we be putting the money into the administrative function rather than putting in into public transportation for the user and the taxpayer of the province?

With that, Mr. Chairman, I await the intelligent answers of the minister. I thank you.

MR. PENGELLY: Mr. Chairman, first, I would like to congratulate the minister on his appointment to the Transportation portfolio. Because of his track record in previous portfolios, I know I will be very, very happy with his appointment. I feel confident that I will have cause to feel the same way at the end of four years. I would also like to thank the members of his department for their most willing assistance and dispatch in answering my constituents' concerns.

I am going to very briefly mention some of them. I know that budgets in the very near future will probably take care of these. I have had a lot of representation on Highway 21, particularly from Trochu through to No. 12; also, secondary 587 from Red Lodge park to Garrington. They would like to see 590 from Pine Lake to the Mackenzie Crossing paved, as well as an overlay on the secondary road west of Penhold to Markerville.

A more immediate concern arises from the winter works program in the Dickson Dam area, where they stockpiled 4,810,000 tonnes of gravel at an expenditure of about \$10 million. They used 815 trucks and 156 pieces of heavy equipment, and there were 52 other employees employed as checkers, scalemen, flagmen, et cetera. Just for the information of the hon. Member for Calgary McCall, as of March 10 the total labor force involved in this winter works stockpiling program pertaining only to truck drivers was 3,266. I'm quite sure there weren't any who came in from Saskatchewan.

Because of the stockpiling out there — and I understand that contractors must maintain the roads when they're using them — I've had a lot of immediate concern expressed by county officials and residents of the Dickson dam area. If all that gravel has to be hauled from there, Mr. Chairman, they are wondering what the possibility is of having some of those roads designated as resource roads, in particular the Cottonwood Road from Innisfail out to the dam.

Thank you.

MR. ALEXANDER: Mr. Chairman, I want to make a very brief commentary on a problem I find myself confronted with. In the meantime, I congratulate the minister as well on his appointment. It's the first time I've had the chance to do that. I trust he's an easier guy in Transportation than he is in Surface Rights, where he's a pretty tough dude.

The problem I have is that in the name of progress, once in a while society inflicts certain injustices. One of those injustices exists in Edmonton Whitemud. It's the Whitemud Freeway. It's exacerbated by the fact that there's an interface problem with the municipality. The minister will take [from] whatever remarks I make in that light that I am not inflicting upon him the responsibility for decisions made by the municipality. But since he's the sugar daddy to whom they look for funds, he can take my remarks in their context.

There have been a number of suggestions to alleviate the problem of traffic on the Whitemud Freeway, Mr. Chairman. A number of people have suggested such things as acoustic walls, depressing the roadway by 10 or 12 feet at great expense, berming, and so on. Cost estimates for all of those run to somewhere in the neighborhood of \$60 million. According to the experts who live in my area, they are considered to be hardly worth the effort in helping to alleviate the problems of such things as noise and vibration. They also tend to visually accent the fact that there is a major artery in the area and therefore, in the opinion of some, tend to depress values. As a consequence, perhaps these cosmetic changes might not be the best idea at all.

As a matter of interest, some of those same experts have suggested that funds could be devoted to heavy landscaping and planting programs to improve the visual value and perhaps to some extent reduce the audible impact of traffic along the freeway. I recognize that many of those will be in the municipal category. They could even be added to such municipal moves as noise abatement by-laws and perhaps speed limits being more closely enforced. Screeching tires and unmuffled motors don't contribute much joy in the general area.

The main focus of the remarks, of course, has to be on the solution seen by people in our constituency, and that is eventually the southwest by-pass. Since I have come to this House, I have looked far and wide for what might be intelligent solutions to both these problems, the present one and the longer term one. So I would urge that the minister might consider one that I recently received. He can probably judge its merit better than I.

It is considered that the present plan for the southwest by-pass is very elaborate. I have been told by an engineer that there are overpasses and circles there which would do justice to Los Angeles in the old days. Perhaps it could be simplified and made somewhat more practical to fit the times and the circumstances. Rather than making it into an engineer's and road builder's dream, it could be somewhat more practical and simplified, which would do two things I think would be helpful.

One, it could send the draftsmen and the engineers back to the drawing boards to have another look at it and see whether it could be simplified, which presumably would create some activity of the design type, perhaps a simpler design, and consequently speed up the time at which the project might then be considered, since we all recognize the funding limitations confronting us at the present moment. We have to take that into consideration. I'm not suggesting this is a project that should be moved to the top of the priority list. But if there is some simplifi-

cation that could be done — if it could be done, in the meantime, with a long-term view to a dramatically reduced cost — then perhaps the residents of southwest Edmonton, and Edmonton Whitemud in particular, might look forward to earlier relief from that problem by construction of a southwest by-pass.

They are particularly concerned, of course, about the "dangerous goods" designation, about which the minister and I have had some brief correspondence in the past. I want to close simply by saying that I appreciate that the Department of Transportation will install some appropriate signs on highways 16 and 2 designating another "dangerous goods" route by-pass which, hopefully, would alleviate some of the concerns of dangerous goods being transported through city neighborhoods in which houses tend to be quite closely packed together.

So I commend those suggestions, which are all the constructive ones I've been able to find, to the minister's attention. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Chairman, I too would like to congratulate the minister on his new portfolio. I'm sure he will do as well as he did with the rest. With the experience he's had in the other two portfolios, I'm sure he will do even better.

I would like to start out by saying that I appreciate his remarks on commitments on Highway No. 1. One of the questions I had was where we stand on the twinning of highways 1 and 16. Also, on the street improvement grants, I thought that was a very successful program. I will have some input to him on maybe some suggestions for changes to make it even better. I hope it turns into a continuing program.

Outside of that, I would like to compliment the minister, the former minister, and the department on the stabilization grants that were so very successful in the rural areas. The reason they're successful, I believe, is because they allowed the MDs and the counties to use the money as they saw fit and where they saw fit. The only stipulation, really, was that they hire local people, the small contractors, by the hour. It really improved our contracting ability and kept these small contractors alive through a very difficult period.

I hope the stabilization grants will not only be continued but improved on and maybe increased as the years go by, even to cut back on some of the other grants, because it has really been a very successful program. The resource grants have also been very successful in the rural areas. They work under almost the same criteria. I hope they will continue. I think the department should be congratulated on these grants.

I have a couple of requests and one concern. To go to the requests first: I'm sure the minister and the department have had people trying to have Highway 56 continued south to eventually meet with No. 3 at Coutts. It is the most direct route from the border. It seems to me that one of the problems in our transportation system on the north/south routes is that we funnel all the traffic onto the No. 2 Highway. The No. 2 is getting to the state now where it almost requires a third lane, and I think it would be much better to build a through road that could take some of the pressure off. I believe the 56 is the one to do it. If anybody takes the trouble to look on the map, they'll see that it goes straight north from Coutts through Stettler, north into Camrose, and eventually into Edmonton. It's a very direct route to Edmonton.

The reason it's of interest to me and my constituents to have the southern portion of this built is that they have

formed a group out there to promote this road, mainly because of its importance to the people in our area who grow rape, or canola as they now call it. They produce a lot of canola in my constituency and even north of my constituency. We have only one crushing plant, and it's in Lethbridge. At the present time, if you start from our area anywhere, you have to go either to Taber or almost to Calgary to get back to Lethbridge. It would cut almost a hundred miles off trucking of canola seed to the crushing plant in Lethbridge, plus it would open a direct route from Coutts straight through into the lakeland area of the province and the tourism area, where many people would like to go, and eventually up into Edmonton. So that is one of the requests.

About 150 to 200 people had a meeting in the small village of Hussar a couple of weeks ago. There were people all the way from Lethbridge clear up to and including Knee Hill municipality, and north of Drumheller. They are going to try to promote this road for the reasons I've just mentioned. Even though it does run through the territory of one of our opposition members, I feel it's an important road for all Alberta and we should have a look at it. I advised them to go for a secondary road because the fellow was 30 years old. I said, you haven't got time enough to get a primary road started through here yet. So I think we could probably get along with a secondary road system and a bridge across the Bow River at Crowfoot.

That was one request. I have another one I would like to see, and it's also not all in my constituency. It's a request from the Brooks and Drumheller areas, from the Big Country tourism area, and from a lot of the people in my constituency, to have a road built down the old railroad right of way from East Coulee to Finnegan and eventually into Dinosaur park and the Member for Little Bow's area. I'm sure he would agree with me that this would be a very important road for attracting tourists.

One other reason it's important to the Drumheller constituency is that we have spent considerable money upgrading the road to the only natural lake in the Drumheller constituency, Little Fish Lake. They have a government park there, Little Fish Lake park. There used to be numerous people coming from Calgary to water ski, fish, and use this lake as an attraction. But over the last few years, for some reason the water table is dropping so rapidly that the Department of the Environment can't really find out where it's going. It got so stale last year that two dogs died when they drank from the lake. They're beginning to think that it's not fit for recreation any more.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Why?

MR. CLARK: Anyway, it's getting to be very important that we have other parks and recreation centres. The road down the Red Deer River valley that I just mentioned would be an excellent opportunity to put in some parks and recreational facilities along that route.

I have one concern, Mr. Chairman. It kind of goes back to what the hon. Member for Edmonton Whitemud was saying, that our new minister was a tough hombre on surface rights. He said he hoped that he was more lenient in the Transportation Department. I would like to bring up a little bit about land acquisition along the western side of my constituency. It seems that almost 100 per cent of the people the Transportation Department has dealt with have been taken to arbitration. They're either in the process of arbitration or they've gone through the pro-

cess. When we look at the oil companies' claim that they only have 5 or 6 per cent that have to go to the Surface Rights Board and we have that great a number, I wonder if some improvements couldn't be made in our land acquisition in that area.

I wonder if the minister would consider maybe going to an experimental deal of trying out private enterprise. This is a private-enterprise government, and I wonder if we might not try out some private land buyers in an area and see if the cost is that much greater than the court cases that ensue in taking all these landowners to arbitration. Although this might not cure the arbitration costs, we could at least see whether or not our department is doing a good job.

I would also like to say that I realize some of the landowners can be unreasonable. But they can also be unreasonable with oil companies at times, and they seem to have a better record than the Transportation Department does when it goes out to acquire land for rights of way. With that, I would like to congratulate the minister again and wish him the very best in his portfolio. I'm sure he will do a good job for Alberta.

Thank you very much.

MR. FISCHER: I too would like to congratulate my colleague on his appointment as Minister of Transportation. I would like to compliment him on the fine job he's done in his previous posts. I'm sure that his wide experience will be very beneficial to the Transportation Department. I'd like to take this opportunity to thank the minister and his department for the funding the constituency has received for transportation facilities in these tough times. We are especially appreciative of the construction of our overpass and upgrading of 881.

I have a special request of the minister concerning our new canola oil refining plant at Wainwright. This plant has already begun construction, and so far the only road to the site is a trail through the farmer's field. This plant will be doing roughly \$45 million worth of business per year. Hopefully this could qualify for a resource road. There will be very heavy truck traffic on this road. Also, if this road were extended half a mile, it could service the Wainwright army camp with a temporary alternate outlet, which is badly needed in view of the fact that the camp overpass application was turned down. The Wainwright camp, which is a town of roughly 650 permanent residents — when training manoeuvres are on, sometimes it goes up to 8,000 or 10,000 — has only one outlet crossing the railroad.

When a long train stops in Wainwright, sometimes it blocks the crossing for as long as two hours. This is not only a disgusting inconvenience, but it could cost lives in the case of an emergency such as an accident or sickness. With the number of people who get locked in, we are waiting for a time bomb to explode. In view of the fact that this one mile of road would be killing two birds with one stone, I would urge that the minister seriously look at this much needed financial help for the construction of this special mile.

I would like to talk for a minute on rail line abandonment. This means that every bit of freight and all the grains have to be hauled on the roads instead of on the railway. I'm very pleased to see the completion of 899 from Provost to Bodo this year, as Bodo will lose their railroad as of December 31, 1983. We are also running into many problems around the Chauvin area. The town of Paradise Valley, which is 20 miles north of Chauvin, is losing its rail line as well, and it desperately needs and

deserves a decent road leading into Chauvin from the north. Both the north and south of Chauvin have a lot of heavy oil development, which has been disintegrating these roads. I even hear stories of tractors having to pull trucks through to get their grain to town. You don't hear many of those anymore in this day and age.

Mr. Chairman, because my constituency is nestled up against the Saskatchewan border, I hope the Transportation Department does not think Saskatchewan is building the roads. Seriously, our constituency appreciates the support it have received in the past. I hope I have brought to your attention some of our needs and concerns. There is still an opportunity to get 899 north of Chauvin named the Marvin Moore Autobahn.

DR. CARTER: Mr. Chairman, to the minister with respect to the Department of Transportation. The province has given substantial funding to the major cities with respect to major continuous corridor financing. In Calgary this has helped with regard to the development of the Deerfoot, and also it's meant a realignment of the Blackfoot Trail. I would be remiss if I didn't express to your department the thanks of the constituents of Calgary Egmont for the work that has been done, especially with regard to the Deerfoot.

The Deerfoot expansion is a very vital throughway with respect to north/south traffic in the city of Calgary. One of the great, yet unappreciated factors with respect to the development of the Deerfoot is the fact that the movement of hazardous goods now is done in a much safer manner. Having the bulk of that traffic down in the river valley and substantially removed from areas of population is a great safety benefit to the residents of Calgary. So I express appreciation for that construction project. It's had increased benefit with respect to decreasing the noise level, and that's also to be appreciated.

However, Mr. Minister, an issue out there which I think is fairly important for the provincial government is this: substantial dollars are put in place to build such transportation corridors and yet there's no signage apparent to give some kind of credit to the provincial government. All too often some politicians at the local level seem wont to create the impression that all this wonderful construction has been brought to you courtesy of your local municipal government entirely. I think it's something that the department, with you as the new minister, perhaps would take into consideration; that when these projects are put in place there is some appropriate way of giving signage to the fact that these are joint projects and there has been substantial funding received from the provincial government.

Perhaps in your comments, Mr. Minister, you might also deal with the matter of the implications for additional transportation costs — upgrading of roadways and new roadways — so the Olympics will be able to handle the transportation flow of goods, services, and people when it is staged.

I'm certain you will make some comments with respect to long-range LRT funding. Mass-transit funding is obviously a continuing issue in the cities of Calgary and Edmonton; it seems to have more particular focus within the city of Calgary. The LRT system in place in Calgary is functioning very well. I know that in the last number of years we talked about the fact that before additional funds were committed we would have to look at the operational aspects of the present south line in Calgary.

not only the volume of traffic but the efficiency of operation. I for one believe that it has proven itself to be a very good system in terms of the movement of traffic, in spite of a few difficulties which have been encountered.

We MLAs from the cities of Calgary and Edmonton find that many of our constituents are pushing us in regard to long-range funding. I know that the mayor of Calgary was engaged in debate with the Member for Calgary McKnight earlier today on CBC Radio in Calgary. I think the major concern there is a shifting of emphasis with the remarks of Mayor Klein to talk in terms of longer range funding, rather than having an immediate infusion of dollars. I look forward to the minister's remarks in this regard.

As one who often travels along Highway No. 1, I want to say thanks to you and your department for the additional work with respect to twinning Highway No. 1. As a former resident of Medicine Hat, I want to say thank you for that very expensive but very useful twinning around Medicine Hat. I see that further construction is under way on the east side of the city of Medicine Hat, and the stakes are out with respect to the highway twinning north of Brooks into the constituency of the Member for Drumheller. I want to say thanks to you and your department for continuing that program.

I for one appreciate the fact that a commitment has been made to carry on with the twinning of the Trans-Canada Highway. Not only is it needed from a safety point of view, but it's also needed from a public relations point of view for people travelling from province to province who don't realize the volume of traffic on Highway 16 or Highway No. 2 but do get involved in those long tie-ups in traffic on Highway No. 1.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

[Motion carried]

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

MR. PURDY: 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, the Assembly will not sit tomorrow night. The next item of government business for Friday will again be Committee of Supply. The intention is that the Department of the Environment will be called at that time. If there is any change, I will let hon. members of the opposition know tomorrow.

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

MR. SPEAKER: Does the Assembly agree?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

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