

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ALBERTA**Title: Tuesday, May 5, 1987 8:00 p.m.**

Date: 87/05/05

[The Committee of Supply met at 8 p.m.]

head: **COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY**

[Mr. Gogo in the Chair]

MR. CHAIRMAN: The committee will now come to order.

Department of Transportation and Utilities

MR. CHAIRMAN: The department before the committee tonight is the Department of Transportation and Utilities, the general estimates book, page 341. Authorities for those programs begin on page 346.

The minister responsible for Transportation and Utilities is the Hon. Boomer Adair. It's customary for the minister to address the committee. Mr. Minister, would you care to address the committee?

MR. ADAIR: Thanks very much, Mr. Chairman. Before I do make some remarks, I'd like to introduce some members of the department that are in the members' gallery. The deputy minister, Harvey Alton; the assistant deputy minister of administration, Al McGeachy; June Zatko, ADM utilities, planning and support; Dave Shillabeer, ADM utilities development; Jeff Belinger, manager of financial planning; and Ted Hole, my executive assistant, are with us this evening.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon. minister, before we proceed, the hon. Member for Cardston has requested an opportunity of introducing special guests. Would the minister concede two minutes while the Member for Cardston introduces some guests? Hon. Member for Cardston.

head: **INTRODUCTION OF SPECIAL GUESTS**

MR. ADY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It's my privilege tonight to introduce three Boy Scouts and their leader from the 176 Scout Troop in the city of Edmonton. Seated in the visitors' gallery tonight are Scott Witbeck, the patrol leader, scoutmaster Jon Jarvis and scoutmaster John Gibb, along with their scoutmaster, Craig Miller. Would they please rise and have the committee give them a warm welcome.

head: **COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY****Department of Transportation and Utilities***(continued)*

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon. minister.

MR. ADAIR: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. In making some opening remarks about the Department of Transportation and Utilities, I thought for quite some time about the fact that we're coming in with a budget that has a reduction of \$147.5 million, which really amounts over the total budget to about a 14.5 percent reduction. I think it's a superb job that the depart-

ment has done in co-operation with Treasury and everyone else to make sure that we had some funds in place to allow us to do the kinds of things we plan to do this year.

Probably one of the most important features we have, Mr. Chairman, is that we've got to recognize that safety continues to be our number one priority. There's no question about that. And I want that to be known, in the sense that we will be maintaining the appropriate levels of funding for our safety programs, such as signing, guardrail installations, lighting, and intersection improvements. We will continue our program of applying skid-resistant surfacing to our highways.

I might add too, Mr. Chairman, that just this past Monday we announced the installation of lights at the intersection of Highway 21 and Baseline Road, and that was in co-operation with the hon. Member for Sherwood Park and myself. Unfortunately, that came about as a result of an additional accident which occurred at that intersection that probably would not have any bearing on whether the lights were there because of the problem of going through a stop sign. That's an unfortunate one that has occurred.

Our second priority, though, must also be to protect our investment. In other words, one of the prime areas we're going to be looking at is protecting the existing road system that we have in place, and we'll be maintaining our pavement rehabilitation program at the level of last year. That's approximately \$41 million. We're watching very closely to ensure that our rehabilitation program is in fact doing the work needed so that we don't run into a major rebuilding program like the US interstate system is now trying to accomplish as a result of letting it go a little bit too long.

This will probably reflect in some of our asphalt paving programs this year, and we intend to see about 800 kilometres of base paving. We have been working to base pave as much gravel roadway as possible since we staged our paving program. Base pavement goes down first, and final paving follows generally a few years later. It's important that we protect that base pavement, and this year's program is appropriate to do that.

We will also be grading and paving about 400 kilometres of roadway, 350 kilometres of grading, and 336 kilometres of base paving will be done in the secondary road system. Now, I might point out, Mr. Chairman, that in that particular area we have 14,565 kilometres of primary roads in the province of Alberta and almost an equal amount of secondary roads, 14,490 kilometres, 5,500 kilometres of which is paved. One of the problems we have is trying to rationalize how we're going to carry on with the primary highway paving program, because right now we have 85 percent of the primary highway system paved and 15 percent yet to do. Highway 40 is unpaved. Highway 67, 64 west, Highway 58, Highway 36 north, the north end of Highway 22: all primary highways that have gravel and are waiting to be paved. So there's a question, and we've had a number of questions from members of the Legislature relative to getting secondary roads paved or moved up into that category.

Of course, with the reduction in dollars, we'll be looking at, as I said earlier, the rehabilitation program and working on a couple of the projects as we go along. I've said all along -- I did last year, and I repeat it -- that where we may have had a 20-kilometre stretch of road for contract last year, we may well have 16 kilometres or 12 kilometres or 8 kilometres of road for this year. We're doing everything we can to ensure that everybody gets a little bit.

One of the things that happened this year, of course, was the opening of the road from Conklin and Janvier north into Fort

McMurray. Those people now have a road link, at their request, and previously there was not one there. It's also beneficial, I think, to recognize and report that the winter road to Fort Chipewyan has proved to be quite a success, and we intend to open that road again this coming winter.

In the area of upgrading, we'll be doing some work on the ferry on the Peace River south of La Crete. The new ferry will be going in there, and that'll help the industry and the agricultural industry in that area as well -- after the new ferry comes in, being set aside for the Fox Lake area, once we can get a band council resolution signed by the band and worked out with the department of transportation. Basically, we're awaiting a band council resolution to come to us.

In the area of basic or regular road grants to counties and municipalities, they have been retained. Basically, there's just a 3 percent reduction. Anything that's formula related is a 3 percent reduction. The urban transportation grants to cities are again a 3 percent reduction, and those cover the major continuous corridor program. All cities have received their funding for that, with the exception of Red Deer, and we're working presently with the city of Red Deer on the possibility of helping them. [some applause] Glad to have the member from Red Deer here. God bless you. We'll continue to upgrade the primary and secondary road systems at an aggressive pace, and I'm pleased to see this support in our budget.

When one reflects on the accomplishments that we've had in the last number of years, I think it's important to indicate that as a result of the work of the former ministers and the department and the deputy minister, we will be pleased to be able to tell you that we have a reduction in man-years of 221 this year. That's a significant reduction without having to effectively lay off any member of the staff. That's partly because of the excellent work of the deputy minister and the department and the former ministers. So I certainly appreciate that.

In the area of utilities, we've maintained our assistance at approximately the same level for those programs that are in place, but we do have a number that have fairly significant reductions. That's primarily because of the fact that the regional services are already in place and finished from the standpoint of what communities we're talking about. I did have a list of the communities that were in fact in place that I can give you a little bit later if I get a question on that one.

But one other thing we've had, Mr. Chairman, is the fact that this has been a busy year for us in the department. If I can just talk for a moment about some of the things like Bill 9, the Highway Traffic Amendment Act, 1987, and seat belt legislation presently in second reading. In the budget are sufficient funds to allow us to have a promotional campaign so that we can get that program off the ground successfully. Bill 22, the Rural Electrification Revolving Fund Amendment Act, 1987, is also on the Order Paper. That will provide us with the availability of providing assistance through the part 2 section of the loans to the rural associations for rebill. Of course, if you recall last year, we had the eight-light system funding starting for the school bus system in the province of Alberta. And under vote 2.10 there is \$900,000 in place for retrofitting buses that are in existence with the eight-light system.

Then, of course, on April 9 we announced, for the small power producers in the province of Alberta, a public inquiry. That public inquiry -- and I should clarify that; that's a public inquiry, not a public hearing -- is so that we can get recommendations back from the joint group, the ERCB and the PUB, relative to what is in fact a small power producer, what kind of

work can we expect to see come from that, what kind of prices might be in place for them. And that is now in place. I believe there is very quickly a preinquiry meeting being set up by the joint group with the proponents so that they can start the process as quickly as possible.

Right after the first of the year we got involved with the REAs and, as we said, the part 2 loans, where we changed it so that the associations now can apply to the part 2 loan, no-interest loan part of it, and then use their own deposit reserve funds or possibly the banks, whichever they may wish. The association has worked out a deal with the Treasury Branches for some loans for the various REAs. It's now basically in place to assist them with the production of the funds necessary to ensure that they can handle the rebill.

One of the areas of repair and replacement, I think, that's important to note -- and it's funds that aren't in our department, but I want to mention them in the sense that under the AMPLE program in the Department of Municipal Affairs there are funds with very few strings attached, if I can use that term. Most of the municipalities and communities are using them for things like repair and replacement of old iron water lines or the likes of that. And that is a major help to us that we want to ensure, I think, that everybody is understanding of what that is and where we're going.

Just fresh from this last weekend, Mr. Chairman, is the 4-H highway cleanup. I did want to mention it for two reasons. There were a number of communities that were not able to have the program carried out, and I want to mention them. We'll be following it up with another bit of announcements on it. On Saturday, May 29, the Hanna/Trochu area, the Red Deer/Alix/Lacombe/Ponoka/Red Deer areas, the Drayton Valley/Leduc/Stony Plain/Glenevis/Morinville areas, Athabasca/Fort Assiniboine/Barrhead areas, High Prairie/Slave Lake/High Level areas will all see the 4-H Junior Forest Wardens and school children out cleaning up garbage in the ditches along the way. With those six areas still to go, the reports for the 1987 cleanup, interestingly enough, are 8,135 children taking part to this point in time in the 1987 program. That compares with 9,366 in total last year; 491 clubs in comparison to 566. And I said, there are six areas that still have to go.

This is probably the most important part: they have cleaned up 4,491 miles so far, and last year, a total of 5,293. They have picked up 54,430 bags of garbage. And somehow or another, I'd like to point out that may not be something we should be that proud of in the province of Alberta, to have young people out collecting that. Certainly, from their standpoint, it's a fundraiser for them. We did pay the group a year ago approximately \$125,000 to \$150,000, and it goes to the 4-H or Junior Forest Wardens or the school groups for projects of their choosing. And so we have that in place.

I think with that, Mr. Chairman, I'll leave it to the questions that I might get and respond as I can.

Thank you very much.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Minister. The hon. Member for Athabasca-Lac La Biche.

MR. PIQUETTE: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I'd like to start off by first of all looking at the estimates, to ask the minister. The minister's office has increased his operation of the office by 22.8 percent, and I'm just kind of wondering why he didn't make any comments relating to that because it's a very obvious kind of situation here, although the deputy minister's

office has decreased by 22 percent. Anyway, I guess we could ask for comments relating to why that increase is so dramatic in the minister's office.

I'd also like to start out by congratulating the minister on a couple of things from my constituency. The announcements relating to the Wabasca Road, which will be the clearing and the brushing which I guess will be happening this fall, are very much welcome by the Athabasca/Calling Lake people and the people in Mr. Shaben's riding as well . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Excuse me, hon. member. Order in the committee please. Hon. member.

MR. PIQUETTE: One of the questions that I've been asked by my constituents, however, relating to the Wabasca Road is whether the minister will be making sure that, as much as possible, local people and local labour is employed in the brushing and clearing of the Wabasca Road next fall. Because of the very high native population in that area, we hope that whoever gets the contract is made to understand that a lot of the local labour should be employed.

One of the things that I also would like to make mention of and congratulate the minister on is that 4-H cleanup along the highway. It was also happening last week in my constituency. I think it's great to see the volunteerism and the kind of education process we are using with the young people of Alberta in terms of making them pay attention to the need not to throw things in the ditches and the need to be aware that some people do and that they have a responsibility of making sure that they participate for the public good. As well, my daughter was involved in the weekend, and I think it is a very good exercise in good citizenship.

One of the concerns that I had when looking at the total budget for the department of transportation is that we've had a \$75 million cutback in the 1987 budget. One of the things that was raised in a western Canada meeting of the Roads and Transportation Association of Canada is that the west is getting shortchanged in the \$300 million Ottawa spends annually on the highways. Even your deputy minister, for example, said the \$11 million help for the Yellowhead twinning project doesn't have much impact on the \$500 million overall cost of the Yellowhead Highway. And many people feel Quebec and the Atlantic provinces are getting the bulk of the federal money being spent on highways. We feel an equitable distribution is needed. As well, a participant of the two-day meeting also indicated that Ottawa spends \$300 million on highways and related projects and it collects \$2.7 billion from road-related taxes.

One of the questions I was asking the minister on Monday was that we have to become much more aggressive in this summer of recession, that perhaps in the past because of jurisdictional disputes we didn't go aggressively at that kind of money. But I really think the \$11 million is not enough when we're talking about having two trans-Canada highways across Alberta with the Yellowhead Highway being designated as the second phase of trans-Canada highway No. 2. I would urge the minister and the government to really go after that money, because any extra money we can get into our coffers here for the twinning of the Yellowhead means that there is more money available for the rest of the 15 percent which is still unpaved in terms of other primary highways in Alberta.

In relation to the improvement of the primary highway system, the minister was in my constituency on April 24. I was quite appalled, as well as many people in the Athabasca-Lac La

Biche constituency. Even though there was only an 11.2 percent cutback in the primary highway for this year, that Highway 36, which is a primary road leading from Highway 28 to the Lac La Biche area, is not going to be paved this year. This was an ongoing program which has been axed by 100 percent. It has not suffered an 11 percent cutback or a shortening of a distance, but here we look at a 100 percent cutback in terms of a primary highway which is in the centre geographically of the province. I think quite a few people in the Lac La Biche area feel there's been some political decision made here which is not consistent with playing fair with all taxpayers in Alberta.

So again I would urge the minister that Highway 36 -- I think maybe the people of Lac La Biche and the St. Paul and the Smoky Lake people are willing to wait another year -- which is a primary highway definitely has to be a number one priority in the minister's commitment for next year's budget. I'm speaking here not on behalf of myself but on behalf of the community of Lac La Biche. They have long suffered in terms of getting that road completed. There was a commitment by the previous minister that this was going to be an ongoing project, and it was going to be completed. I thought in terms of my priorities in the list I submitted to the minister that it was a number one priority for the Lac La Biche area. That advice which . . . If you look, for example, at the advisory council and even a commitment on the part of the department of transportation on how our highway is decided in terms of paving or construction, the advisory council, the local IDs, a representative from the local community, and the recommendation from the MLA are important considerations for the minister to make in determining priorities for road construction or paving.

So I would like to again remind the minister of previous commitments, and we will not stand idly by and see a very important primary highway being delayed because of political expediency not based on the real need for the communities in the north parts of the province. Not only is that road important to improve the tourism industry in that whole lakeland area; we even have a Metis colony, Kikino, who have prepared a park, who have been working hard the last few years to develop a park so that they can access the traveling public in terms of developing some local economy to employ people. All of this will be delayed by that road not moving ahead as planned.

I would like now to go on to another item here which is in terms of the secondary highway, where we're looking at a 27 percent cutback. It is a tremendous drop in terms of money made available for a secondary road. However, I would like to remind the minister again that when we look back at getting good value for a dollar spent in terms of transportation, if we go back over a five- or six-year period -- and I would like to have the minister respond to this, and I tried to get information from the minister's office -- what is the breakdown in terms of cost per kilometre of primary and secondary highway expenditure over the last five or six years, in order for us to determine why it is that in 1981-82 with \$401,174,370 worth of expenditures we were able to construct and pave 4,687 kilometres, whereas in '86-87 for \$432,026,222, only 2,874 kilometres were paved?

I don't think there was that kind of an inflation rate between 1981-82 and '86-87 which would look at spending \$32 million more but only getting 60 percent of the road. That would mean there was a 40 percent inflation rate between 1981-82 to '86-87. And talking with truckers about the cost of the product, that doesn't seem to add up. So what's happening here? Why is it costing us so much more per kilometre to build roads in 1986-87 than back in '81-82 or '80-81? I'd like to have much more in-

formation so that we can actually discover why. Is it the kind of roads we're now building compared to five or six years ago, or what's the reason? I think that information should be available to all members so that we can help the minister in determining whether he's getting good value for every dollar that he spends in terms of transportation.

So the lack of information from the department of transportation about the accountability is the reason I did ask the minister for a per kilometre cost in terms of all the contracts tendered in those years. I know that information should be available to the department, because I was given, for example, the total expenditure for the provincial airports on a year-by-year basis, for every airport the provincial government has funded over the past five or six years. I think that was a reasonable request. It would provide a much greater accountability to the public, and it would also even help municipalities understand the whole aspect of how much it costs to build roads today in Alberta, whether it be the paving aspect or the construction and graveling, et cetera. For us to start clipping newspapers back five or six years ago when that information should be made available when it is requested is, I feel, not an answer to the accountability problem.

Now, in terms of the secondary highway, I would like to ask the minister again, with the budget cutbacks, whether he is still committed to the paving of the majority of the secondary highways as projected by the last minister? Is that still a commitment from this government, or will it be achieved within the 10-year span that was indicated by the previous minister? I believe last year this present minister also alluded to the fact that that target would be reached.

One of the things I think we have to remember is that every dollar spent in terms of road construction is a dollar that remains in Alberta, and that creates jobs. It allows small businesspeople to be gainfully employed. The whole aspect of making sure that we put in our resource roads, that we put in our tourism roads, is very, very important in terms of the economic diversification of Alberta and making sure that the various departments of parks and recreation and tourism move ahead in terms of creating those loop roads within tourist zones.

Here again in my constituency, as I indicated, the Wabasca Road will provide that kind of link around the Slave Lake area back to Highway 44 and Highway 63 and Highway 2. That will provide a loop road. The other one which has been given to the minister -- and I'm meeting him on April 24 in Lac La Biche -- is the Conklin Road. Now, that road is not simply for tourism, but it's a multipurpose road. I think if we do have money in the tourism/resource roads -- there was a fairly dramatic cutback there of 38 percent, which I find is not a commitment to the whole aspect of developing the tourism industry if we're going to be making those kind of cutbacks. But we do still have money which is available to access resources, to access tourism areas, and also money available for the construction of secondary highways.

I think that if the minister would look at pooling some of that money together, the Conklin Road would become a viable reality and should have the government's full support in terms of providing a very important second access to Fort McMurray, opening up the northeastern part of the Cold Lake bombing range for oil and gas activity and the development of the timber industry in that area. Again, I cannot but urge that; the people of Lac La Biche have fought long and hard to ensure that this should happen.

Moving on out of the improvements to rural local roads, I'm glad to see that the construction of bridges has been brought up

by 22 percent. The question I have for the minister is that the Shaftesbury ferry on the other side -- we have the operation of the ferry, which is going to cost the provincial government \$1.165 million to operate this year. What's the annual cost to run some of these ferries -- and whether the construction of bridges in terms of the capital cost would not be a better investment than the continuation of some of these ferries? [interjection] Pardon me?

MR. ADAIR: I just said you've got to be kidding yourself.

MR. PIQUETTE: Well, I'm just on the long-term kind of project. We have to look at some of these long-term investments in terms of the ferries that are operating, whether the traffic count would warrant, to make sure that we have some of these bridges put up in the -- well, one which I'm quite aware of is in the Peace River area, around the Tangent area.

Another thing which I would like to ask the minister about is the designation of usage of hazardous waste roads to the Swan Hills disposal site. Have they been clearly identified by the department of transportation in consultation with the Department of the Environment?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order please.

MRS. MIROSH: What do you mean, order?

MR. PIQUETTE: ... and whether the ...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order please. The Chair is having some difficulty listening to about 15 people at once. Now, the minister is presenting his estimates; hon. members are putting questions. Could we have the courtesy of the members in this House to let the member be heard?

Hon. Member for Athabasca-Lac La Biche.

MR. PIQUETTE: I'd like to ask the minister: what priorities has he put on that designation of the hazardous waste routes? Have they been clearly identified? Are they going to be clearly posted and improved to make sure they meet the high standard that that very important route has been designated for? Has the minister also given the money to make sure that the patrolling of this route will be a priority in this government?

He mentioned the safety aspect, that safety will not be sacrificed by this minister. Now, with the dismantling of the Highway Patrol and the downgrading of that aspect of the on-site patrol -- they will be now stationed out of way stations and not ticketing as much as before, in that they're supposed to be picked up now by the RCMP. In the newspaper here just the other day the RCMP were quoted as saying that they are now facing a cutback on their Highway Patrol themselves, and it really puts a lot of fear in me. I kind of wonder whether safety will not be sacrificed by the cutback in the RCMP budgeting across the province as well as the downgrading of the Highway Patrol.

One of the facts that was indicated to me is that previously when the Highway Patrol was in place ... With the deregulation and the kind of economic situation that many truckers are now facing today, a lot of companies are sacrificing safety in order to survive economically. And I wonder if the government is making an impact study to make sure that through proper monitoring of the trucking industry, we are not going to be looking at sacrificing public safety. It's a real question that I have.

The minister in his answers to me previously really has not given me that complete assurance that somehow we have not gone away from a decision that was made in 1976, where the need for the Highway Patrol was recognized to make sure that there was visible on-highway patrolling to ensure that the traveling public and the trucking industry were very conscious of the fact that safety was a very important consideration.

I really wonder if that's not a step in the wrong direction. And I think the comment by the RCMP, where they feel that their budget is being cut back, their supervision of highways will be diminishing in this fiscal year -- I think it's a very great public issue here that the minister has to be addressing very, very carefully and might have to shift or to make sure that he instructs the restructured Highway Patrol so that it has some effective enforcement teeth. Because if it's just simply an advisory patrol, it's going to lose credibility very quickly with the trucking industry. I'm wondering if the minister is not reacting to the big trucking firms, that they want to have this Highway Patrol just kind of invisible and not really doing its job -- as they would like to see it be doing, according to them -- and if that's not a reason for the minister's decision to downgrade it in its operation.

One of the things I'd like to ask the minister here is on vote 2.5, the maintenance of primary highway systems. Then under payment rehabilitation we have two sections. One is on primary highways, \$68.9 million; then we have the resurfacing, \$41 million. Why are they separate in terms of the entry here if they're really to do with the maintenance and the paving? Are we talking about the same type of program? I'd like to have perhaps a little bit more information of why they are separate here; 2.5 and 2.8 to me should perhaps be lumped together or given an explanation of why they are separate under the items here.

Another thing I'd like to ask the minister is: where is the funding for the Highway Patrol? In here or his new department that he has now taken from the Solicitor General's office? I don't see any shift or extra money here which would mean that his department is now paying some extra men here. Where is that coming into his estimates?

Another question I guess I would like to ask the minister as well -- I'd like to congratulate the government on having introduced the seat belt legislation which will be coming in force in July. That is, I think, a reaction to a changing public opinion poll. A year ago the minister was basically almost ridiculing the idea of the seat belt legislation, and now his department will have to be implementing it.

However, one area which is still in the public safety concern and really in terms of saving money and saving lives and saving a lot of needless injury is the need in Alberta in terms of making sure that we reintroduce a mandatory vehicle inspection program so that some of our older cars that we now see on our roads, with the downturn in the economy, with the headlights missing and probably brake problems and people being taken advantage of by used car dealerships when they sell these "as is," imported from provinces which would not even allow these cars to be sold in their province -- when is this minister or this government going to make sure that as part of the whole traffic safety branch we reintroduce mandatory vehicle inspection? I think that's a very, very important issue that should be addressed by this government in correlation with the whole safety issue. It's all very nice to say we have complete freedom, but we have no complete freedom to allow people to be driving a vehicle which is endangering other peoples' lives.

I really get upset when I'm traveling on the highway and

look at some of these vehicles that are out there. And again, with the cutback in the RCMP budget there will be a less visible RCMP presence on our highways. Again, who is going to be making these checks unless there is not -- at least every five years some of these vehicles have to be certified in terms of a mandatory safety inspection. I think that would be money well spent. I think it should be at the consumer's own cost. I mean, perhaps it should not have to cost the taxpayers very much money, but there should be some effective monitoring of this vehicle inspection and a disallowance of a vehicle to be sold to the public without any mandatory inspection certificate which ensures that that car has not had a previous accident which would make it road unworthy and very dangerous to the traveling public.

Another area, which would involve the urban municipalities, is that we see a 25 percent decrease in the grants available for major continuous corridors and primary highway connectors. I think that's really a great cutback for the municipalities to suffer because they do have to provide a lot of these connector roads to primary highways, ring roads, et cetera. And again it is, I guess, a question as well that perhaps we should be more aggressively going after federal funding, even with the municipal water and sewer system. The city of Edmonton, for example, is indicating that it will take \$2 billion to get the outdated, crumbling water and sewer lines replaced. One thing I would like to congratulate the minister on: there's no drop in that portion of the estimate; it's still at \$40 million. But the federal government is still not kicking in their share, as the municipalities would like to see, the one-third commitment to help the municipalities get their water and sewer modernized so that they will last for the next 50 to 100 years. I think we need a lot more leadership from the provincial government to make sure that the federal government and our provincial and municipal governments address this very important concern for urban communities.

Two minutes left? Other issues that I want to address the minister with I guess will be to do with the deregulation policies of the government. I believe that the deregulation of the transportation industry is of very great concern for the Official Opposition. We are a captive market over here, and I think we have to be very careful how we move in that. I'll have some questions perhaps later on to the minister relating to deregulation.

The other one is variable freight rates. I wonder if the government has really made an impact study of how the farmers will be affected and the closure of grain elevators across Alberta if these variable freight rates are allowed to have negative impacts on our farming community. And I would like to address that questions perhaps later on, or maybe the Member for Vegreville will also have that in his statement to the minister.

My 30 minutes are up?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yup.

MR. PIQUETTE: Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon. Member for Banff-Cochrane.

MR. STEVENS: Mr. Chairman, thank you. To the minister. I would like to address all areas of the minister's portfolio and perhaps begin by raising concerns that I'm sure many of my southern colleagues share with respect to EEMA, the electrical marketing agency, and to ask whether or not the minister will be able to explain or give an estimate as to how long the depart-

ment can continue to offset the increased costs -- well, to areas like Lethbridge or other areas in the southern part of the province -- by providing assistance to citizens, given that the southern part of the province is now in a balanced situation, and of course, the costs of transmission of power have risen to help balance provincewide distribution of electricity. But the minister might be able to alleviate some of the anxiety of some of our constituents by indicating how long he expects to be able to provide assistance financially.

I think, Mr. Chairman, it would be useful, too, if the minister could comment on when his estimate is for the increased costs for Genesee, which will go into our pooling across this province, might be anticipated, and if he has any idea at this time of the timing of that and the period of years or months or pricing periods over which that price escalation could be expected.

In fact, Mr. Chairman, I think many of us would like to know whether the minister is perhaps considering reviewing the concepts of the electrical marketing agency and perhaps describing or developing other alternatives. I mean other alternatives than nationalizing our private power companies, as I'm sure our socialist friends would wish to see. But there are other alternatives, and I wonder if the minister could perhaps express his intention in that area.

Mr. Chairman, to the minister. There is another point. I believe I've been able to explain to my constituents that the large penalty applied to late payments for private power consumption may very well be not a large penalty but in fact is used in a reverse way, as an incentive for an early payment. But I wonder if the minister could comment on that, because it appears when one examines a power bill that the large penalty for late payment is perhaps in the order of 20 or 30 or 40 percent in effective interest rate charges if someone is late. But I believe it may very well be that it's the opposite, that it's an incentive for early payment. But perhaps the minister could clarify that.

Mr. Chairman, turning to the transportation part of the minister's portfolio. Last year during the estimates I complimented the department on the work going on on Highway 2, as so many of us travel back and forth on this major highway between our two major urban areas. And I commented on concerns that I had observed about traffic safety: safety of the driver, safety of the work crews, whether they were transportation officials or private contractors. I know that a great effort is put forward by the department to ensure that there is safety while roads are under construction for the users and for the men and women who are working.

I would like, though, to bring to the minister's attention just one example of what I believe can be seen three miles north of Airdrie on Highway 2, and it is now being seen in other areas of our province, including some parts of Banff-Cochrane, where -- I won't call them unscrupulous individuals but I will identify this one. It is the use of a semitrailer parked on private property adjacent to the highway which then uses the semitrailer as a means of identifying up ahead a particular eating function. It reminds me, Mr. Chairman, of the old highway signs in the '40s that would say, "Eat here and get gas." But I'm very disappointed to see that McDonald's restaurants is one industry like this which is now using a mobile sign in the form of a semitrailer parked on private property along our major highways, and I wonder if that is in violation of the regulations that the minister is enforcing.

Mr. Chairman, I wonder also if the minister, who was very gracious enough to visit the Banff-Cochrane constituency and

tour the facilities that his officials have been so capably developing, could confirm that what he announced as a dead airport in the vicinity of Canmore will indeed remain dead and that there will not be an undead airport. I raise that since the Olympics are still ahead of us and there are a number of citizens in the Canmore area who are convinced that somehow, miraculously, dollars will flow, environmental studies will be complete, and this dead airport will be resurrected. I wonder if the minister would comment on that.

I would also ask the minister to take his mind over to Bragg Creek and west of Bragg Creek where across the river there is no other access for the residents of that area or the visitors to that part of Kananaskis Country other than the existing bridge on the West Bragg Creek Road. The concerns that have been expressed at a series of public meetings go back to the time when the Olympics were being prepared and the nordic site was planned for the Bragg Creek area -- and of course eventually ended up in Canmore. Concern was expressed that should there be a forest fire, should there be a flood or some other disaster taking that bridge out, there would be no other access for the constituents in that area or the visitors -- the heavy-use visitors now. I'm wondering if the minister could give this M.L.A. at least an understanding of when it might be possible to consider an emergency access west of Bragg Creek and up through into the Sibbald Flat area, as budget would permit, as a means of secondary access.

I would like to compliment, Mr. Chairman, the department, the minister, for the work that has been done, including the area of my colleague to the south, the Member for Highwood, along Highway 22 and Highway 22X. I am very pleased that the minister will be announcing shortly a new bridge that will be built on Highway 22 to replace a bridge on a very dangerous curve. But there are other concerns along that highway, and they involve the Sarcee Indian Reserve and whether or not negotiations can be speeded up to acquire right-of-way, whether by lease or by purchase, from the native people so that that road can be developed fully. If it cannot be developed fully to take the traffic load between Calgary and Bragg Creek, then perhaps at least the surface can be examined and whether or not there is some way of developing a cyclist path in the drainage or shoulder area, since the combination of bicycles and traffic to that part of Kananaskis Country along Highway 22 south from the Trans-Canada Highway south of Richmond Road and through into Bragg Creek is a very dangerous situation.

I want to compliment the department for its work in working with the town of Cochrane, and the minister, in conveying to the mayor and the council there the willingness of the department to access the Fourth Avenue extension right through the department's property that it occupies in the town of Cochrane. I hope that extension will be able to be proceeded with at some early date because the completion of the traffic plan for the town of Cochrane would see Fourth Avenue being the major intersection with Highway 1A.

I would mention, Mr. Chairman, that many residents and many other citizens of Calgary have raised to my colleagues, particularly in Calgary North West, concerns about Highway 1A, the Bow Valley Trail, and the work that has been undertaken last year to upgrade the highway west of Calgary, which when completed will see that road carried right through to Cochrane with a much improved surface and a much wider surface. The difficulty has been that the users of this stretch of highway have grown accustomed to inadequate and indeed unsafe lane markings, where in fact head-on collisions could be invited

when in fog, or a dangerous driver, a careless driver, might pass a right-turn moving vehicle and then pass a left-turn waiting vehicle and hit head on.

The new lane markings have been the subject of much scrutiny, much study, and I know the minister himself has seen these markings. Frankly, they are the kinds of markings that are available in all other locations throughout the province where roads are built this way and in all other provinces that I've traveled and in many of the United States where I've had the privilege of driving. But there seems to be a lack of understanding, or the intersections are so close together that when there is snow on the road or when there is fog in the air or it is dusk and there are heavy traffic movements to the commuting areas, the impatient driver -- and sadly, we have to think about the impatient driver -- makes decisions which are predicated on he or she making the right move, but of course it's the wrong move on that design.

I would ask the minister to continue with his assessment, and perhaps he would be able to indicate whether or not there is some widening that could be handled or some surface treatment or some new lane markings that would satisfy what appears to be a very heavy commuter area, added to by the number of cyclists who are leaving the city of Calgary to take the Bow Valley Trail through to Cochrane at least and perhaps even beyond.

Mr. Chairman, I wanted to comment briefly on the Member for Athabasca-Lac La Biche's comments on mandatory inspection and say to the minister that having been for some time a resident of British Columbia, where in fact in the city of Vancouver that kind of inspection was required every six months, I find it incredible to find the New Democratic member concerned about deregulation of the trucking industry, concerned about the freight movement policies and pricing practices, and now arguing for mandatory inspection of vehicles by somebody. At no cost to the taxpayer, I believe, were the words he used. I'd like to understand how we can always do these things at no cost to the taxpayer.

I'd like to know whether or not in fact fatalities, serious injuries, and property damage can be ascribed in a large part to driver, to weather, to road conditions, to the light -- the sunlight or absence of it -- or to vehicle repair and the status of the vehicle. It seems to me, in my studies, that the problem of a deficient vehicle is a very minor part of the many, many problems we have to deal with, and I hope the minister will be able to explain that and of course comment on whether or not a new mandatory government program would be useful at this point.

I also would like to compliment the department for the incredible work it's done in preparing for the Olympics, not only for all of Alberta and for the city of Calgary but for those roads that are going to lead our visitors to the nordic site and to the Nakiska site and to the other venues and attractions in the Banff-Cochrane constituency. I refer specifically to the Trans-Canada Highway, highways 40, 8, 22X in my colleague's constituency, 22, and indeed the road right through Canmore and up to the Canmore Nordic Centre and beyond to the Spray Lakes area.

I would like to make a comment, Mr. Chairman, about Highway 40. Now, I'm not going to suggest that Highway 40 south to the areas that are served by my colleague from Highwood or the Member for Pincher Creek-Crowsnest -- I wouldn't suggest that that road be closed year-round, but I would suggest that while there are many representations being made to my colleagues, to myself, and to the minister about opening that road

on a year-round basis, he give very careful consideration not only to the costs of snow clearing and whether or not staff would be required to be resident in Kananaskis Country or Peter Lougheed Park so that they could carry out the snow clearing operation but whether or not the safety of the animal movement and the vehicles, and therefore their occupants, would be a very dangerous situation. I would hope that any assessment of that will consider carefully those three things. Certainly the constituency of Banff-Cochrane is on record as opposing any change in the temporary closure of that road unless it can be shown that the safety of the traveling public, the lives of the animals, and the costs are not in jeopardy.

Lastly, Mr. Chairman, I want to compliment the minister for a very courageous stand that he has taken, notwithstanding the views that he has expressed for his constituents so well with regard to seat belt legislation, the mandatory aspects of that legislation, but for bringing forward this year and supporting this Bill which, I believe, when enacted will lead to a tripling or quadrupling of the numbers of people wearing their belts and therefore a concomitant reduction in serious injury and loss of life. The minister might wish to comment on whether or not the Ministry of Transport federal requirement for daylight use of headlights will also be coming in and when that might be applied to Albertans.

Lastly, Mr. Chairman, the minister and his department should be complimented for the senior citizen and disabled programs involving transportation assistance and in fact the many programs that assist our towns and villages, our municipal districts, our improvement districts, our counties. But I do raise the senior citizen and disabled transportation program. I hope that as long as our revenue picture permits us, we will be able to continue with that program which is of so much benefit to so many Albertans.

I understand we are going to be protecting what we have, repairing what we have, but perhaps in the case of Banff-Cochrane, Calgary North West, Calgary Foothills, and so on the minister could give us an estimate of when he expects the traffic generation to be such that the northwest bypass might be once again entertained, as it is certainly on hold at this time.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon. Member for Calgary North West.

DR. CASSIN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Again, I would like to congratulate and compliment both the minister and his department for an excellent job considering the restraints we are presently facing in the province of Alberta, and recognizing that it would only be possible because of the fine work this department has done in past years, the infrastructure that we have in place in Alberta in the way of both our primary and secondary roads. It's unfortunate that perhaps more Albertans didn't have the opportunity to visit different parts of this land both in Canada and across the border to recognize that we probably have the finest roads in North America, if not in the world, considering our population and considering the size of this province. I think this has to be recognized, that this government and this department have done an excellent.

I'm particularly pleased that considering the reductions, the department has put a strong emphasis on safety and the safety standards will be maintained and the people of this province and their safety have a high priority. I also would like to compliment the department from a standpoint of both some of the deregulation and the privatization they've allowed within the

department. I would certainly like to encourage them to use whatever inducements they have at their disposal to encourage some of the municipalities to also look at the privatization of some of the servicing and development of roads within the municipalities.

I would again, like my colleague for Banff-Cochrane who has alluded to a number of the areas and concerns we have in northwest Calgary, compliment the minister and his department for the introduction of the seat belt legislation and particularly the indication that there'll be promotion and an awareness program. I would ask, however, that the department perhaps discuss the whole approach to the awareness program with the AADAC people. I think these people have done an excellent job from the standpoint of putting their message across.

I think we all realized when we dealt with this problem that it was only part of the problem. The whole question from the standpoint of the influence of alcohol and the problems pertaining to the vehicle and the young driver are all part of the total problem, and those should be addressed at this time. Perhaps there can be a joint awareness that will deal with all of those problems, that will reflect on better driving habits and a greater awareness from the standpoint of the public that we can strap them in. But that's only part of it. We need to have a conscious and astute driver who is going to be responsible both for his life, for his passengers, and for the other people that are on the road.

Mr. Minister, I would also like to draw attention to the fact that this government has provided for the continuing improvement and support of the development of the roads in the municipalities of Alberta through the AMPLE grants. I think the city of Calgary and many other municipalities have used these funds very appropriately to maintain their roads. I recognize that the improvements in Calgary North West, with the continuing of the doubling or finishing off of the John Laurie expressway to Nose Hill or 85th Avenue -- I think it's also very interesting to maybe just stop and reflect on what's really happening in that part of the city. Quite apart from the fact that it leads to the constituency of Banff-Cochrane that's growing and developing and it neighbours onto the constituencies that will host the Olympics, there's a great deal of growth and development both in residential and also in commercial with the completion of the Crowfoot centre, with the expansion of Harkwood and Scenic Acres.

[Mr. Musgreave in the Chair]

For the last number of days we've heard about the difficulties this province is having with the downturn in the oil and gas, the downturn in agriculture, and the lack of diversification. I think it's sort of interesting to dwell on the fact that if all of these things are happening, where are the funds coming from? Where is the incentive coming from for this growth and development? I think it reflects well on what's happened in this province. There is a good deal of diversification and there is activity out there that are dependent on areas other than oil and gas and agriculture.

I'd also like to draw attention again to the impact and the support this government has had on development of light rail transit. I think we'll see something very interesting in the city of Calgary, and perhaps at a later date in the city of Edmonton, with the completion of the northwest leg to the university. Certainly the people of Calgary North West would like to see that extended. We feel that it's really brought the rest of Calgary to us, but it doesn't give the people beyond the university access to

the downtown core. I think we'll see the dream of the city of Calgary finally come to light, that the system will work, that there'll be access to the University of Calgary, to SAIT, to some major shopping complexes. We will see from that a rejuvenation of the whole downtown core of Calgary very much as we've seen in some larger cities, whether it be Toronto or New York. I think we will see this within a very short period of time.

The Olympics will be the leading light, and we'll finally say, "Wasn't it great to have that in place; wasn't it great to have that infrastructure of those highways, the parking, the access." The people of the world will go back home and say, "I don't know how they did it, but Calgary just did a super job." The infrastructure is there, and I think we have to recognize all of those departments, but particularly the department of highways.

I would again like to dwell on another point the minister has brought up. Sometimes we initiate plans and programs to meet a certain objective without realizing the impact that has and the spin-offs. I think it's a novel idea and I'd certainly like to encourage the clean-up program that was initiated a week ago and will carry on next week. Not only do we have clean air -- and we're working for clean water -- but we have clean highways. Not only does that generate funds for service clubs and for young people, but it teaches those young people the advantages of being tidy and clean and trying to preserve our highways.

In the last few weeks I've visited a very beautiful part of this world, appalled by the litter of glass and cans and garbage. The recycling program and the utilization of our young people and our resources is something that has to be commended. I think we shouldn't lose sight of the fact that people do enjoy taking a part and being responsible, and certainly if it's supported by programs such as our Minister of Career Development and Employment has suggested in the last few weeks, these programs should be supported and certainly not ridiculed.

I would like to again dwell on a couple of points. Number one, certainly Calgary and the Calgary caucus and people in southern Alberta are concerned about our utility cost, recognizing that this province has shielded those people for a number of years, and concerned about what happens when that shielding disappears, as presently scheduled.

But I would also like to draw to the fact that we have another phenomenon that's developing, I'm sure throughout Alberta but certainly in northwest Calgary and the areas between Calgary and the mountains. It's that we just don't have cyclists. You know, we used to think in terms of mom and dad or the kids going out for a bicycle ride. We have a brand-new phenomenon of large numbers of people who are into competitive cycling. It's not one or two people; it's large groups of individuals. Certainly with the thrust this province has given to developing young athletes, many of them who may be skiers during the winter months stay in condition by cycling and being involved with cyclists' clubs. These numbers are growing, and that's a sport we have to recognize.

I would like to ask and encourage the department, if it's not already doing so, to deal with the Department of Recreation and Parks to try and address this problem and to provide areas where cyclists are able to compete without having to worry about competing with trucks and cars, and who are going to be perhaps in a very narrow portion of the highway. I do appreciate -- as has been alluded to by my colleague for Banff-Cochrane -- that in order to address some of the problems because of the increased activity on the Banff Coach Road, we're thinking in terms of the motoring public. We also have to think of not only the pedestrian but the cyclists who are out in that area in large

numbers.

In closing, Mr. Chairman, I would like to thank the minister and the department for the fine job they have done. I realize that there are some frustrations, there are some projects that will have to be put on hold, but I do feel that with the direction this government has taken, the funding and the support will be there. I would like to again thank the minister for the traffic signals in Sherwood Park constituency on behalf of the Minister of Agriculture.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear.

DR. CASSIN: I got a little attention across the way.

I would perhaps at this time like to give some of the other members an opportunity to address the minister.

MR. ADAIR: Mr. Chairman, if I may attempt to try and respond to some of the questions before I get too many pages of notes here.

The Member for Athabasca-Lac La Biche asked the question about the minister's office increase but didn't mention the deputy minister's office decrease. My office increase was 22.8 percent; the deputy minister's office was 22.7 percent. That has nothing to do with the figures. I just mentioned it because I have the deputy minister up in the gallery right now. But the reason for the increase in my office is the fact that by amalgamating two former departments -- the department of what was utilities and the department of transportation -- the increase relates to the hiring of one extra staff I have to assist me with the mail flow I've got in there and the operations of that, and if you check in the book the sum was quite a bit different in the two cases. I didn't mention it because I anticipated getting it asked.

The next part of it was the reference to the Wabasca road and the use of local people. When I was in Wabasca with the Hon. Larry Shaben, the MLA, we had a meeting of about 75 people where we talked about that. There were two ways we could go. One was taking the slow approach and using the concept of, say, hiring locals to do all the clearing by hand and the likes of that. They said no, they didn't want that, but they would prefer, if we do go to contract, that we in fact put in place as many of the contractors and indicate to them that we would like to use, where possible, local people on those contracts, and that will be done. That was discussed quite openly and quite freely at the Wabasca meeting we did have.

The 4-H'ers. One thing about the program -- and I guess I'll answer the 4-H'ers here in the sense that two or three members have mentioned it -- is that I am almost positive after spending a morning with the 4-H'ers and the school kids out cleaning up garbage that they themselves, when they start getting to that particular age, will not be litterers of any type. So we have an education program as well as a funding mechanism coming on stream for those young people. They have a lot of fun doing it. They get into the area where the boys and the girls compete against who can collect the most garbage and the most number of bags and the likes of that. It was interesting that in the group I was with, the guys were far and away ahead.

The discussion on the Yellowhead Highway and federal funding -- as I said before, two things came out of it. For a good number of years we did not receive any federal funding in the province of Alberta, even on Trans-Canada 1. One of the major pushes we are pushing for is to get the federal government to do what we are doing in the balance of the province of

Alberta in Jasper Park and in Banff Park, and if those twinning projects go ahead, that would assist us greatly in the flow and movement of people through and into the parks system throughout Alberta. The one concern that you get into with the federal government obviously is that federal/provincial agreements are a little bit more difficult to actually administer to, and to get into the areas of who has what you might call some control over the roads, we were not prepared -- and I state it again -- we were not prepared to give up the schedule we had in the sense of getting some dollars for the freedom, if I can use that, of proceeding with the twinning of the Yellowhead Highway as well as Trans-Canada 1. Certainly with the discussions going on, we'll continue those discussions with the federal government as to whether we can get some additional funds from what was suggested was about a \$300 million figure, picked out of the sky in the sense and out of the \$2.7 billion that they generate in the way of the tax system.

There was a suggestion by the hon. Member from Athabasca-Lac La Biche that the last minister suggested it would be ideal to pave the secondary road systems in the 10-year period, and I suggested that that wasn't a bad idea, subject to dollars, and of course, that's where we're at right now. We have had cutbacks across the board. There's no particular area in the sense of eliminating, other than the fact that we eliminated what was called the local resource road program and combined it into what is now the resource road program.

Mention was made of the Conklin road to Lac La Biche as a second access. I guess what I should probably do, Mr. Chairman, is indicate what I said to the economic development committee and the people that were attending the meeting in Lac La Biche: if in fact they get a resource in the area between Conklin and Lac La Biche, we can move very quickly. And I'll state that again. Until that time, we have a bit of a chicken-and-egg deal, and certainly we won't be moving to build a road on the presumption that there may well be something in there, particularly in light of the reductions we have in our cutback.

There was mention made about ferries and whether ferries in essence might replace bridges, or bridges might replace ferries -- I guess that's what it was. What usually happens is that the traffic volumes are taken into consideration. In the case of the Peace River hills, the instability of the hills is a major problem. I'm not sure what a bridge would cost in 1987 dollars, but I would assume it would probably be in the \$10 million to \$13 million range, and you can operate a ferry for a good long while on that. Again, one of the other problems they have in the Peace River hills is the instability of the hills themselves.

When it comes to hazardous wastes, there was a suggestion that they should be marked and signed. We're of the belief that dangerous goods can be and are being hauled on highways within the province of Alberta for a good number of years now, and all primary highways under the provincial jurisdiction are capable of handling loads of dangerous goods.

When reference was made to the Highway Patrol, two words were used by the hon. member: elimination and downgrading -- I'm not sure in which order, downgrading before elimination or elimination. Certainly that has not occurred. What has occurred is that the Highway Patrol has moved from the Solicitor General to the Department of Transportation and Utilities, and the Highway Patrol some years ago was in the department of transportation at that time. It is not a downgrading. What it actually is is an improvement of the services to the trucking industry by way of the fact that with the combined efforts of our scale operators and the Highway Patrol people, we have in place a system

where the scales will be open longer, and they can move from site to site at our request and we can move them. They are working very, very well indeed, and I must commend publicly those who are in the highway traffic patrol for adjusting as quickly as they have. The large trucking firms, incidentally, support that particular kind of enforcement.

The staff that came to us from the Solicitor General -- the numbers were around 68, I believe -- certainly are going to be doing an excellent job out there for us. Again, we've removed some of the duplication, and that's one I would assume the hon. member approves of. Certainly he has spoken enough about it. So we would look at that particular route as being one we're doing in the interests of all Albertans: eliminating any duplication, improving the kind of service that would be in place for the highway traffic patrol and their role in working with the industry -- not against it, but working with the industry -- to ensure that they adhere to all the laws and the weight levels that are on our highway system.

The other point that was made was relative to the costs of construction, basically very near the same in 1986-87 as they were in the year 1981-82. It's certainly not valid to compare kilometres of paving completed from year to year because of the fact that some years we're dealing in base pavement, some years we're dealing in final overlay, and some years we're dealing in just the general work: the soil, cement, and the likes of that. So there's a different kind of concept. You can't generally -- although I know you have -- use that particular concept on a year-to-year basis.

There's been very little in the way of inflation as far as bidding on jobs since 1981-82. The deputy minister has informed me that in fact this year to date unit prices for contract work are lower than last year.

The ferries. Interest on the funds to build bridges would be substantially greater than the cost to operate ferries alone. As I said a moment ago on the highway traffic patrol, we have basically covered that particular subject.

Now, I think trucking deregulation . . . Alberta has been deregulated for many years -- I'm not sure how many years, but a good number of years. Alberta has been the leader in Canada in that particular area. And really in essence what we're doing is stopping for a moment for the rest of Canada to catch up. That starts to take place on January 1, 1988, with the implementation of the first part of the program of deregulation with the complete support of the industry and generally the public at large. We're moving into that area of ensuring that we have some ability to move freight from one end of the nation to the other without having to have a different set of regulations in every province across the nation.

When the hon. member was asking the question about maintenance of primary highways and rehabilitation of primary highways, maintenance is much different from rehabilitation. Rehabilitation, in the sense of what we're attempting to do, is actually rebuilding the surface of a highway -- a complete resurfacing job -- whereas maintenance is patching, crack filling, snowplowing, and all the other aspects that go with it. So they are very, very much different in the sense of the dollars that are in the budget for that.

Let's see what I have here now. I believe the next one was mandatory inspections. I guess to put that to rest: clearly no, I am not considering it. We've looked at the kinds of problems we've had. I think that in today's society our public are more interested in having a deregulated society without more mandatory kinds of programs put in place somewhere along the way.

So no, I am not considering that, period.

The Member for Banff-Cochrane: his first question to me, I believe, was relative to EEMA, the Electric Energy Marketing Agency, and the shielding that is taking place and when that might finish. Well, right at the present time, under a program that was put in place a number of years ago, the shielding will be at the 40 percent level until August 31, 1987, and then for the next year will be reduced to the 20 percent level to August 31, 1988. Now, the dollar value of shielding has been impacted by a PUB order adjusting the '85 price to the agency. Consequently, up to the end of the '87 calendar year the shielding has been reduced by 1.236644 per month. That's dollars.

I guess the other one was: what time might we look at the increased cost coming from the possibility of Genesee? My understanding is that October 1989 is the commissioning date. Now, that has not changed. That is the date that was adjusted and moved a couple of times, and then just recently the ERCB in conjunction with the EUPC -- that's the Electric Utility Planning Council -- and the electric energy marketing people has looked at scenarios. I believe there are four scenarios, with a high and a low and two in the middle. That's the bad news. The good news is that there's two years difference between the low and the high rather than a 10-year span or a five-year span. So certainly there is some concern in there. I would suggest that we're watching it very closely in conjunction with what would then have to be an application by the proponents of Genesee to the PUB. They would have to prove prudence and need at that particular time and then see what happens at that case. I guess the best example I can use right now is that the Sheerness plant in the production of prudence and need -- there was a slight adjustment made by the PUB, and not all of the costs were factored in immediately in that particular one, and I would assume that may well apply if the prudence and need factors are not met by the applicant.

On the van near Airdrie -- I believe it's 2.7 miles north of Airdrie -- I've had a number of complaints about that particular one which identifies that the next turnoff is two and three-quarter miles away, and of course there's a McDonald's sign on it. My understanding from the department is that it is clearly illegal, and there will be some discussions with the good people about where they may move that to.

MRS. OSTERMAN: Have you talked to the MLA?

AN HON. MEMBER: What MLA?

MR. ADAIR: Well, I'm not sure. I haven't asked the MLA if she's been to it, but certainly from the standpoint of the number of concerns that have come in to us . . . Plus, a number of others -- not a large number, but a number of others -- have been using vans where they park them somewhere along the highway and leave them there for a short period of time or, in some cases, for a fairly lengthy period of time. It's a case that clearly they're not legal, and we'll make an effort to try and see that they are moved.

You asked the question about the dead airport at Canmore and would it remain dead. I don't think I could have been more clear in Canmore to say no to something than I was in Lac La Biche when I said no, and I use both of them so there isn't any reference to political expediency, which I took a bit of exception to. But when we were in Canmore, if you recall, we did indicate that no, there would not be any plans for an airport in Canmore at this time, and I would say probably into the future beyond my

term of office. Again, though, I have to qualify that. If something changes, some major thing should change at some point in time down the road, I would assume someone would come back requesting that, and it would have to be considered at that point. In my lifetime it's no; it's dead. It won't be.

I'm not really sure. I'm going to have to take as notice the west Bragg Creek road and the bridge in the second access. I can't respond right now relative to that one. I'd like to do that for you, but I just haven't got that.

The one on 22 south on the Trans-Canada. I assume that's one where you're talking about doing something with that section of road, and I believe there is in the plans for this year a section that could have some work done on it, but I don't have that at my fingertips as well. Although Highway 1A is one that the Member for Banff-Cochrane and ourselves and the people of the Canmore area have spent a great deal of time -- and there have been a number of concerns. Probably the most important point that has come out of the discussions and the meetings we have had since the change, since the work was done a year ago, is the fact . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: Cochrane.

MR. ADAIR: Cochrane; I'm sorry. The change that has occurred is the recognition that there are a great number of cyclists that use that road year-round, including this particular year. Because of the kind of winter we had, there were a great number of people using that and the recognition by the department that we must take those cyclists into consideration and also what we may be able to do in the area of putting in a right turn. I say that at the moment. We're looking at that, and I'll get back to the hon. member once we've had a chance to really put that piece together to see if we can do that.

Highway 40, the interesting end, the south end of Highway 40. I wasn't sure whether there was a request to open it, although at the end I believe there was an indication that you didn't want it opened. There have been a number of requests to have it open. I think from our point of view and probably more so from my own point of view, being the minister that was responsible for the start of a project called Kananaskis Country, and the fact that we had said no for a number of reasons -- both the maintenance cost of keeping it open, the heavy snowfall, and in the spring there's a tremendous area there that is an elk wintering range for those particular animals -- I would not see it being opened in the near future for any length of time in light of our present budget and the kinds of dollars we have to work with relative to the maintenance costs that would have to be to keep it open.

The question about lights: the federal government and head-lights on vehicles. My understanding is that 1989 is the year it'll be coming into force. There will be then a set of lights. When you turn your key on, the lights go on; when you turn it off, the lights go off.

The Member for Calgary North West talked about the seat belts and the fact that we do need an awareness program, and I think that's most important because the seat belts by themselves will not solve all the problems that some people think. I think it's important that we put in place an awareness program, and under the budget section 2.10 we have funds in there to in fact put an awareness and educational program in place to alert the public about the use of seat belts, so that we can get the maximum usage as quickly as possible. I haven't changed my position. I'm aware of seat belts, and I have to say it again: I don't

like being told I have to wear them by anybody, including me, the minister. Nevertheless, if the public majority wants that particular kind of a program, then I'm obligated as the minister, on behalf of the citizens, to see that it in fact is put in place.

I had the opportunity yesterday, as a matter of fact, to present to the mayor of Calgary a sum of money, \$51.4 million, for three of the four urban transportation programs. We had that opportunity yesterday at city hall. I might say it's the first time I've been in the new city hall, and it's quite a building indeed. There's no question about it.

The cleanup program, the 4-H, JFWs, and schoolchildren, as the hon. member said, is a very important program. There's no question in my mind, as I said earlier, that those children who go out picking up garbage remember almost for the rest of their lives that that's not a good place to do it. And I'm sure that we could do something. There are not too many places where we can't change an old dog. And I look at some of the old dogs across the way, with respect, and say -- there's lots of them over there -- that really we should look at that in our own minds, because if we are picking up . . . And that's probably an important point when you look at, to date, with six districts still to go out and pick up garbage, we have picked up 54,430 bags of garbage. That was picked up by 491 clubs: 8,135 young people who have covered 4,490 miles. A tremendous job on their part and, of course, the other six, as I say, go this weekend. So please, if you're driving out there, drive with caution, because there will be children out, cleaning up garbage that you may have left.

The only other point that I wanted to make that was asked of me was the one about cyclists in the area of Calgary. There is no question about it that there is a great number of cyclists in the Calgary area. And as I said a moment ago, because of some of the work we've been doing on Highway 1A we recognize and will be recognizing the role of the cyclist and the fact that there are people who, because of the weather down there as well, may be cycling year-round. That's a concern that was not probably taken into consideration to the degree that it is now in the department.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The Member for Vegreville.

MR. FOX: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd like, at the outset, to thank the minister and his department for the response they've given me to the many concerns I've raised and brought to their attention. I'd have to say that as a rural member the department that I'm most frequently in contact with is the department of transportation, not only in terms of secondary road projects and primary highways but in terms of concerns that people bring to my attention that I relay on to the minister. And while I can't say that I've received positive response in every case, I've certainly received response, and I know that the minister and the deputy minister and officials in the department have done their best to help the people in my constituency when required.

I'd like to ask some specific questions about some secondary road projects in the constituency and thank the minister for projects undertaken in the past. There were two projects on secondary road 637 last year, both of which are carryovers and to be completed this year: base paving and a rebuilding contract. This road, when it's completely paved, will provide a very vital and important link between the city of Edmonton and northeast Alberta, which not only is an area rich in resources and has a lot of potential for the oil and gas and forestry industry but is a major tourist destination in the province of Alberta. I'm just wondering, in terms of future plans for paving the remaining

portion of 637, what the department's views on that are. Are they going to do this as priority as assigned by the county of Lamont and the county of -- I believe it's all in the county of Lamont now -- wait until the county of Lamont assigns priority to the two remaining portions of 637 to be done, or will the department view that road as a priority of ours in general, as a priority for Alberta to get this road paved and provide that important link?

In terms of secondary road 855 there was a substantial rebuilding contract let last year and it, too, is a carryover project into this year that sees this road rebuilt from the village of Holden north to join up with that portion of the road that is paved south of Mundare. We really appreciate that, and I'd like to publicly thank the minister and his department for seeing the need to let a contract this year to rebuild that portion of the road going south from the village of Holden on secondary road 855. The people in the county of Beaver and the people in the village of Holden very much appreciate that and look forward to that road being in better shape and providing access into the community.

Secondary road 857. There was a paving contract on half of that road between Vegreville and the hamlet of Bruce last year. Again I thank the minister for that and would note that the county of Beaver doesn't have paving of the portion of the road from Bruce north to Vegreville as a priority of theirs, and I'm wondering to what degree it's a priority of the department's.

I'd like to say in a general way, and I've let the minister know this through communications, that it's a priority of mine as the M.L.A. for the Vegreville constituency to try and ensure that all of the communities in the constituency have paved access to the Yellowhead Highway, Highway 16. I think we have to recognize that this highway is now being twinned from border to border in the province of Alberta. It's recently been designated as a trans-Canada route in western Canada. It's a road that is playing a more and more major role in the economy of this province, and because of that I think it's very important that the communities close to Highway 16 have paved access to it to give them some additional development opportunities in the future. So I'm looking forward to working with the minister and his department in the future to see that we eventually get secondary road 834 paved from 16 to the village of Chipman, 855 from 16 down to the village of Holden, the remaining portion of 857 to the hamlet of Bruce, 854 north of the village of Ryley, and a section of 626 that would join that road to 855 or 857 so that people in Ryley have paved access to the Yellowhead Highway as well. So those, in a general way, are the priorities that I see in my constituency as an M.L.A.

There is another road project that we're keenly interested in, and that is the completion of 631. This is a road that's been upgraded to modern gravel standards, intended to provide a very direct route from the city of Edmonton up into -- I think the Elk Point region is the eventual goal of that route, if you will. And there's a little portion of the road that isn't built yet; it goes from just north of Vegreville to Royal Park, and I'm wondering what sort of plans we might have to finish that road at some point in the future. I know the county of Minburn would be keenly interested in that.

In terms of the cost of secondary roads, I'm wondering if the minister could tell us what the costs per kilometre are -- the comparative costs of building a road to modern gravel standards, applying the base paving to that road, and then the eventual cap or the final overlay of asphalt? Just so we know.

In terms of the primary highways in the constituency, there

were also some projects that I'd like to make note of and thank the minister for: applying a rock chip surface along Highway 14 up to the village of Ryley and recapping the surface of Highway 15 between Lamont and Chipman.

But I'd like to ask the minister, in terms of Highway 36 that runs south of the town of Two Hills, between the Warwick road on that highway and Highway 16. Although a very scenic piece of road, I think it's an especially treacherous piece of road, especially in the winter, because it meanders through a lot of sloughs and around hills. I would imagine that straightening the road out would be a fairly onerous and expensive task at this point, and I'm just wondering, seeing as how it's a portion of highway that has no shoulder whatsoever, what would be the costs involved of providing some sort of shoulder for Highway 36 between Two Hills and Highway 16? Is this something that the department has looked at in terms of that particular road and that particular project? I'm not sure if this is an accurate statement, but it seems to me from traveling on the roads that we're now building our secondary roads to new standards and they in some cases are wider than some of the existing primary highways. I'm just wondering what the minister's thoughts are on that highway in the future.

Another question I might ask the minister. A significant portion of the department's budget allocated to primary highway construction is allocated to the twinning of Highway 16. There's a major contract being completed in the Vegreville constituency; that is, the portion of the highway being twinned between Mundare and Vegreville, and then a new contract for the building of the 16X, which is the truck lane express route going south of Vegreville. That involves two fairly innovative overpass structures at either end of Vegreville that will facilitate the flow of traffic into that community. I think I'd like to commend the minister and people in his department for the imagination applied to that project, because I think we have to recognize that Vegreville is a major destination on that highway. Much of the traffic that uses Highway 16 east of Edmonton is either going to or coming from Vegreville, and so the provision of these overpass structures makes the flow of traffic into Vegreville a much easier and much safer thing.

One little project that I would like to take note of and ask the minister about. There is a shrine just east of Vegreville on Highway 16. It's called Our Lady of the Highway shrine. It's a shrine that's there, I gather, to wish travelers a safe journey on their trip. There are some people in Vegreville that are wondering if the department, when passing by the shrine with asphalt and all the equipment that's required, if it would be possible somehow for the department to spill a little bit at Our Lady of the Highway shrine and run over it a few times and make it a little smoother, because it too is a tourist point along Highway 16. We're not sure how we actually go about getting it paved, but it seems to us that there is an opportunity now with the substantial amount of construction in the area that we might be able to see that project completed.

In terms of other road projects there is a problem that I've attempted to address with the minister, and hopefully it's something we can work on in the future, and that is to help the village of Chipman get their main street paved. Now, this community I think has some special problems. They had some money available through the street assistance program, as did all communities, and made use of it, but they weren't able with that program to pave the main street. I think the reason is that this town was sort of a target for developers during the boom years. They were people that thought Chipman would be a significant

bedroom community for Edmonton people living there and commuting to Edmonton, and some people came out and did some developing. There are several beautiful new homes in the area. And then the slump came, and it became very difficult for the people who live in the village, through their tax revenue, to generate enough income to not only provide streets for these homes but sidewalks and curbs and things like that.

So the village council in their wisdom used the available money through the street assistance program to provide sidewalk and curbs in these neighbourhoods, so as to induce people to move to the community, make these homes more attractive for them. I'm sure the minister can appreciate the situation they're in. They don't have a paved main street. They don't have the money to pave the main street, and in order to make the community more attractive to business and to people to move in, the paved main street is important. So it's difficult for them to get going, and I'm just wondering: is there any way that we can address that problem in the future and try and help the village of Chipman?

A couple of other specific concerns I'd like to raise. I did get some letters on the department's plans to provide a \$300 grant to bus owners for the conversion of their buses to an eight-light warning system. I think that's really a good program. The letter I have comes from a person who on his own took the initiative to convert his bus to an eight-light system sometime before it was even suggested or before it became mandatory, and it's my understanding, as of his most recent communication with me, that the county is not willing to provide him with the \$300 grant because he did this before. I'm just wondering: how does that work? If the department is willing to provide \$300 for every bus that's fitted with this equipment, is it then incumbent on the county to pass that on to people who apply? I'm just not sure of the process there, and I'm wondering if the minister, on behalf of this constituent of mine, can provide us with a little bit more information on it. I understand that the program's not available to people who purchase the buses that already have the equipment installed on it. But in this gentleman's case he purchased a new bus in 1984 and on his own, desiring to make his bus a safer vehicle for the students, had this stuff installed, the eight-light warning system, at a cost of \$500.

Another concern brought to my attention just very recently by a constituent of mine who makes his living as a trucker is the condition of our primary highways in the province. He feels that although we've spent a good deal of money building our primary highways and have generally an excellent system, there are a couple of things that we're doing that's contributing to the premature decline of these roads. As a trucker he maintains that a number of the primary highways have fairly deep ruts in the right-hand driving lane, two to six inches deep, and feels that it's obviously due to the fact that the loads are simply too heavy for the highway. And he's wondering, is it that we're not building the roads strong enough? Is it possible to come up with a different asphalt mix that would provide a stronger base so these ruts wouldn't occur, or is it that we're simply getting to the point where we're allowing loads that are too long and too large?

I don't understand all the ins and outs of A trains and B trains and turnpikes and stuff, but I understand that it's now possible for truckers to haul up to two 50-foot trailers, total weight 53,500 kilograms, and if they apply for additional permits they can haul up to 59,300 kilograms. It is further my understanding, or this gentleman's understanding, that there's some lobbying

underfoot to allow even longer and larger, heavier loads to be pulled, especially between Edmonton and Calgary.

This gentleman's concern is that we've gone a little too far in terms of allowing these larger, longer loads, and it's causing the deterioration of our highways and making them unsafe. He feels that these ruts are deep and dangerous, especially when it's raining, and I'd sure like to get the minister's response on that. He also feels that the mechanism that we have in place to sort of "police" heavy truck traffic on the highway is deteriorating and not adequate. He notes that a number of trucks are not properly maintained and that there are a number of truckers that he knows of that are mixing radial with bias-ply tires and creating some unsafe situations that concern him.

Before I leave the department of transportation and get into utilities, I should make note here of the minister's plans -- in fact the process is under way -- to bring in seat belt legislation in Alberta. I know it's been a difficult thing to grapple with, especially for rural members, where it could be generally said that there is more reluctance on the part of people to embrace seat belts or to be willing to use them. I referred during debate on second reading of this Bill to a study that I did in my constituency, but I didn't give the results of it, and I think it might be appropriate to do that here.

I wrote a letter to the local newspapers outlining both sides of the issue, I thought in a fair way, and indicating to the constituents I represent that I supported the use of seat belts and I supported the introduction of legislation to that end for various reasons. And then I undertook to survey them, and I did it in a very objective way, I think. We did a telephone survey involving over 500 randomly selected telephone numbers in the constituency, which is almost half of what Gallup polls use as their samples for some nationwide polls, on the results of which governments base some very major decisions. So I thought 500 was a good sample. We got 435 responses, people willing or able to answer the questions, and I must admit I was surprised by the results. Forty-eight percent of those surveyed said they favoured the introduction of laws, 42 percent were opposed, and 10 percent had no opinion either way. You know, I was surprised by that result, but encouraged by it.

I agree with the minister that there's a great need to continue our education efforts and try and promote a greater awareness of the benefits of seat belt use, and I look forward in committee stage of consideration of this Bill to what sort of creative exemptions we can get into to try and address some of the very real concerns that people have about seat belts, especially those people who have been involved in accidents and feel that they either would have been crippled or killed had they been wearing a belt. Now, whether this is true or not, this is a feeling they have, and we need to somehow be able to address that fear these people have without turning them into criminals.

In terms of the minister's responsibility for utilities, it seems to me that in the government's headlong rush into deregulation in the oil and gas industry, while there are many negatives to that -- and we've discussed that in other ways -- there was one potential benefit, and that was that those of us who live on top of the gas and those of us who have to drive around gas wells and have to put up with seismic crews and stuff may somehow benefit in terms of paying less for our gas. I don't believe that's happened to any degree and certainly not to the degree that -- well, I'm sure you'll enlighten me on that one.

There are some gas utilities that haven't seen a reduction in their rates, and I'm wondering to what degree this minister is pressuring the Minister of Energy to come up with ways of en-

suring -- as long as we have to live in this deregulated oil and gas environment -- that our consumers here in Alberta receive at least the same benefit through the delivery of natural gas as customers beyond our borders.

The Member for Banff-Cochrane brought it up, and I feel obliged to respond at least in part to the issue of public power, because it's something that comes within the purview of the Minister of Transportation and Utilities. I must say, in listening to the Member for Banff-Cochrane I've seldom heard an argument where ideology triumphs over common sense to such a degree. You know, my concern is that the people of Alberta be able to have good service at a reasonable and fair cost, and I know we don't have that with the delivery of electrical power in the province of Alberta. There's no doubt in my mind that we have good service, especially in the Vegreville constituency with Alberta Power, a number of very capable people that work very hard and deliver a good service to people.

But we don't get that service at a fair and reasonable price, and the reason is because there's no competition. The free-enterprise ethic that's often touted -- and which I as a person with a background of small business ascribe to -- certainly doesn't come into play in the delivery of power to consumers of Alberta. It's a virtual monopoly. If you don't like the rates that are charged to replace a transformer on your pole, to replace a power pole in your yard, or indeed the rates that you're charged for the power that you use, well, that's tough luck. You can't go across the street and buy it from another store. You're locked in, and it's a monopoly, and this monopoly operates to the detriment of consumers in Alberta. I think we're one of only two provinces in the country that doesn't have power delivered as a public utility, and we pay for it.

Anybody I talk to who lives over the border, either in the Peace country or in the Lloydminster area, will confirm that the rates in Alberta are higher, and substantially higher, and it's because the Public Utilities Board or the agreement we have, I guess, guarantees companies a 15 percent return on their investment, a rate that would return them a 15 percent return over and above their costs, based on their capital investment. And what makes that even more ludicrous is that it's they that determine what that figure is. It's the power companies that tell us what their investment in the system is.

So you get a situation like when they're building a transmission line past my farm. I've never seen a more inefficient display of construction in my life, where they would spot a pole here, spot a pole there, drive 10 miles, spot a couple of poles, drive back to my place, spot a pole. Then another crew would come out and put insulators at the odd pole here and there and string wires. It was painful to watch. But I realized while I was watching that the more it costs them to build that line, the greater their benefit in the future. If that line, as an example, cost a million dollars -- I'm just using a figure off the top of my head -- their annual return on that line would be \$150,000, whereas if they could pad the cost to the point where it cost, or they said it cost, \$2 million to build, their annual return would be \$300,000 per year.

So we encourage this privately run, privately operated utility that has no competition involved in it whatsoever to be inefficient by guaranteeing them a ludicrous return on their investment. I don't think that's fair, and I think the Member for Banff-Cochrane ought to sit down and think twice about what he said about that issue.

MR. NELSON: He feels better dead than red.

MR. FOX: Thank you, Calgary McCall, for that comment. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The Member for Calgary Mountain View.

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The review of estimates of any government department is the only time that we really get to question ministers about the overall operations of their department, and so it's basically the only time that we get to review some reports that have been brought to our attention, particularly by the Auditor General. I notice, at least from his comments, that the minister so far has not made any reference to the recommendations of the Auditor General that are found in the latest report for 1985-86 that pertain to his department. There are two in particular that I think need to be dealt with.

The first has to do with the follow-up to previous annual report recommendations, and that is the matter of accounting for fixed assets in the minister's department. Now, this is a recommendation that has been made by the Auditor General since 1981-82. So for four fiscal years this same issue has been raised time after time by the Auditor General, in that there are a number of deficiencies within the department over its control and accounting for fixed assets. Now, of all the government departments, this certainly has to be one that has the largest number of capital assets. I don't know whether that includes the fixed assets or whether the fixed assets referred to in the Auditor General's report include all of the capital owned by the department or not. But the fact is that here is a recommendation that's been four years being made to the department, and there does not appear yet to be any kind of decision made within the department.

I don't know whether that worries the minister or not, that something would take that long and still not be resolved. If it does worry him, I think it would reassure us that he's concerned, at any rate, and if he can tell us what steps are being taken within his department and perhaps an undertaking that this won't appear in the Auditor General's report next year, it will be sorted out by then -- that would go a long ways to easing concerns of members of this Assembly.

I also notice that under the section of utilities, there is the Gas Alberta Operating Fund. Here the Auditor General observes

that the operations of [this] fund did not comply with, or contributed to noncompliance with, the prevailing legislative authorities during [the fiscal year.]

Now, the whole matter of . . .

MR. ADAIR: What fiscal year was that?

MR. HAWKESWORTH: 1985-86, the most recent report of the Auditor General.

I think that's a concern when operations of certain funds may not be complying with legislative authority. In fact,

The audit revealed that from January 1986, billings to distributors for gas sold to them by the Fund did not indicate the amount of relevant Provincial discount. Failure to disclose the Provincial discount on these billings means that distributors will be unable to provide details to their retail customers of the Provincial discount passed on

as the regulations require.

Furthermore, section 30(5) of the Rural Gas Act specifies

that any expenditures made pursuant to such agreements are to be paid out of the fund. The audit revealed, however, that expenditures in respect of the retail billing system are not paid out of the fund but are borne by the department of utilities.

Now, what I would understand from that then, Mr. Chairman, is that the users of the fund, who would presumably then bear those costs in their charges, are not being billed those charges and in fact they are being paid for by the taxpayers in their support under General Revenue Fund to the department of utilities. So it seems to me that in a time when the government, and everywhere else, in its operations is looking at shifting the burden more and more to the user-pay concept, here is one in which this particular department might be well advised to take a look at that particular recommendation and take steps to comply with the observation and the recommendations made by the Auditor General. And if the minister would give us that commitment, I think that would certainly ease a lot of concerns.

Now, we notice under vote 5, in particular, the Electric Energy Marketing Agency. Here's one that I am particularly concerned about because it primarily affects users of electrical energy in southern Alberta. I'd just like to know what is going to be the impact of a 59.5 percent cutback in the grants for electric energy price shielding. What does that mean for the average residential user in southern Alberta? What does it mean for the average small business in southern Alberta?

ANHON. MEMBER: What do you know about small business?

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Well, I know that with this government their expenses are going up and up and up; that much I certainly know. And the sooner the other hon. members are aware of that, the better off all small business in this province will be. How will this reduction of \$27.4 million be shared throughout the province? And I think these are important questions. I know that the minister has mentioned something about at the end of the 1987 calendar year, but this is very important to users of electricity in southern Alberta in particular, and I think some further comments on this impact to them would be much appreciated.

I'm also interested, Mr. Chairman, in the reduction in this year's capital budget for the department of transportation. I notice that comparing last year's capital budget to this year's, there's a \$114 million drop in capital spending in this particular department. It's certainly one of the largest departments for capital expenditure in the entire province.

Now, I'm particularly interested in that earlier in this session the Minister of Career Development and Employment was talking about 60,000 jobs being created in last year's budget because of the capital spending that this government did. I wonder if anybody has done a study of what a \$114 million reduction in capital spending in the department of transportation is going to do towards unemployment in this province. If the minister would like to make some observations on that, I'd welcome them and would invite him to actually do that this evening.

There have been some questions raised, but I don't think they've been answered to my satisfaction, regarding Highway 1A. I note that in the letter from the minister back in January to my colleague from Athabasca-Lac La Biche, he acknowledged some of the problems that had been created on Highway 1A, or potential problems that might occur as a result of changes, and he said in that letter that sometime over this past winter a decision would be made on the need for right-turn lanes or other

intersection revisions. I don't know whether that decision has been made one way or the other, and I would appreciate his further comment to clarify whether in fact that has occurred or not, and if so, what that decision might be.

I'm not sure whether my colleague for Calgary Forest Lawn is going to be able to get in this evening, but he has a particular concern in his constituency: the large amount of traffic that is using 17th Avenue Southeast. It's also a truck route, I gather, and because of the large volume of traffic that's using it, he's aware that one reason for that is that there's no crosstown bypass in the city of Calgary. I could also echo his concerns as well in that 16th Avenue North is the northern boundary for Calgary Mountain View, and every day I see lots and lots of traffic using that. Most of it would be local, but a significant proportion of it is throughtown traffic, and they're forced onto that because there's not yet a bypass around the city of Calgary.

Now, I know that the provincial government has been talking about this for some many years. I'm wondering if there's any decision or any time frame on provincial action towards making this bypass a reality. Indeed, I know that as a result of the plans that have been made over the years, there have been certain privately owned properties in that transportation and utility corridor that have been identified for purchase by the provincial government. I would like some indication from the minister, if he could give the Assembly an update on how many purchases have been concluded in the past year, what percentage of this transportation corridor that's been identified is now within public ownership, within the ownership of the provincial government. And does he have a projected time line by which those purchases will be completed? Therefore, could we find somewhere in these estimates in front of us the area or the sub-program within the votes where these land purchases could be found?

I'd also, like a number of other members of the Assembly before me who've sort of identified specific highway upgrading and improvement projects to draw to the minister's attention -- as an urban member I don't perhaps get as many of these as some of the rural members do. But I would just like to note, not only for myself -- I wouldn't want the minister to think I'm advocating as someone who drives Highway 2 quite often -- but I've had a number of people mention to me in the last several months about the poor condition, the state of repair, of Highway 2 south of about Olds. Now, some of that area obviously has been improved in recent years. However, there are still some stretches in there that are quite bumpy, and I'm wondering when those are going to be fixed.

Again not being sure whether my hon. colleague for Athabasca-Lac La Biche is going to be able to get back into the discussion tonight, he has asked me to draw to the minister's attention or ask the minister to indicate why there is no weigh scale on Highway 16X to weigh heavily laden gravel tracks. If the minister is aware of that particular situation, I think we would very much appreciate that as well.

One concern, Mr. Chairman, in railways -- I don't know that that's gotten much attention yet this evening -- that's the movement of grain from the Peace River area. For the past several years farmers have been asking for improved rail links between that district and the west coast. Presently it travels to Grande Prairie, then along the Alberta Resources Railway, which has been leased to CN, moves on to Swan Landing, and then on CN rail lines to the west coast. Now, the people in that area have made three proposals that would involve upgrading of track, in one instance, and new construction in the two others. This

would relieve pressure on CN lines between Swan Landing and Red Pass Junction and would help moderate rate increases across the prairies, as it is a short route and rates are calculated taking all routes into account. Now, I would just like to know if the minister can give us any particular update on these proposals and if there's some news that just for the information of myself I'd like to get on those particular proposals.

Now, I gather that passenger service is another concern. That's more in the federal area, but it's certainly something that I would hope this minister has brought to the attention of his federal counterpart, I think particularly in view of the government's priority on tourism as one of the main areas for economic diversification. The northern route Super Continental service is being reinstated after its cancellation in 1981, but I think the minister will recognize that the rolling stock is outdated, and there are a lot of tour operators who were burned by the cancellations, and they're a bit hesitant to sort of jump on board, if you'll excuse the pun, with this particular service. As well, I gather the service might be restricted to three trips per week.

But the particular problem is that the government has given the service two years to recoup 60 percent of its cost. Now, that may very well be a very unrealistic deadline, and I think a lot of people who are looking to this service to improve tourism and so on and encouraging more and more use of that rail passenger service would like to see the deadline pushed back until new cars, tour operator confidence, and daily service could have an impact on the financial position of that service. So I would like to know whether the minister has made any representations to his federal counterpart in terms of discussing that particular proposal.

I think with those particular comments and concerns and questions to the minister, I'll conclude my comments for the time being this evening, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: [interjection] Not quite. Hon. Member for Edmonton Meadowlark.

MR. MITCHELL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just have a few brief questions, to the point, coming as late as I am on the list.

Under vote 1, could the minister please explain what is the function and purpose of executive management and why it has increased by 3.6 percent? That's 1.1.3.

Vote 1.2.2, equipment supply and services branch: what exactly are the services that this branch provides, and to what extent are services under this vote contracted out?

Vote 1.2.5, public communications. What is the justification for the \$272,000 budgeted in this particular vote? More specifically, what is constituted by public communications by the department?

Vote 2. The total reduction in vote 2 is 10.9 percent. Clearly, this is an area of heavy capital expenditure which has job-related implications. Could the minister please indicate how many fewer jobs will be created in the construction industry as a result of this reduction? Secondly, under vote 2.2, what process is used to determine what portions of the primary highway system are improved this year and every year? Is there a process of priority setting? Specifically, under this vote, what is the schedule for the complete twinning of the Yellowhead Highway, year by year, until its completion?

AN HON. MEMBER: Nineteen ninety-one.

MR. MITCHELL: Nineteen ninety-one is the final date. Could we have a year-by-year program of what sections are done each year? [interjection] Always a smart answer; I know you have a smart minister over there.

Vote 2.3: what process is in place for determining the priority of rural-local highway improvements? Under votes 2.5 and 2.6, how is the allocation of maintenance funds determined? How are the priorities for the allocation of those maintenance funds set? Under 2.9, there's been a great deal of talk of local authorities buying airports. Will this particular initiative affect provincially owned airports? If not, at this time is the minister considering their sale, and/or has the minister analyzed this prospect to any extent? If so, what are the results of that analysis?

Under vote 2.11, what is the timing, scheduling, of the southwest ring route in Edmonton? I would like to say that residents of west Edmonton are generally extremely pleased with the announcement of the new leg north of the Whitemud Freeway. It still remains to be determined what the schedule of progress for construction, and ultimately completion for construction, will be for the remainder of the southwest ring route; that is to say, the more southern and western portion of that route.

[Mr. Gogo in the Chair]

Vote 2.10, traffic safety branch. Yes, we are all extremely pleased, I'm sure, about the proposed seat belt legislation, as has been the case with my colleague from Vegreville. There is some concern amongst constituents in Edmonton Meadowlark about people who may have medical reasons for being excepted from wearing seat belts. What would those exceptions be? For example, I have a constituent who is specifically concerned because he has one arm and has a concern that he might not be able to remove himself from a burning car were he trapped awkwardly after a car accident.

Under 2.4.1, engineering support, \$733,000. How much of this support is contracted out, if any?

Under 2.2.3, I believe the Edson rest area construction project would come under this vote. I understand it is east of the city and has only one entrance, and that is for eastbound traffic, not for westbound traffic. If that isn't the case, could that please be clarified? Certainly there are people in Edson who believe that to be the case. [interjection]

MR. CHAIRMAN: One speaker at a time, please.

MR. MITCHELL: Thank you. The people of Edson would be -- the Chamber of Commerce of Edson would be extremely interested in knowing that that is the case.

If possible, could the minister please indicate how much road construction has specifically been allocated with respect to the Olympics infrastructure?

And finally, under vote 4.5, could the minister please indicate the criteria for the allocation of northern supplementary fund grants and for farm water grants?

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. ALGER: Mr. Chairman, I'd just as soon hear the question as well, but I think I'd better take advantage of the minister, if I may. A few bouquets and a few questions.

For openers, Mr. Chairman, I'd like to suggest to the minis-

ter that I think all Albertans should be very proud of our highway system. Having traveled the length and breadth of this province for many, many years and recently traveled quite a bit of the province east of my constituency, I was rather thrilled to find the roads in such excellent condition. There are times when I'm grieved about a few things, but I think all in all we're very well blessed as citizens of Alberta to have such marvelous roads and so many long stretches between points where the population isn't very heavy and yet the roads are excellent.

When I say there are times that I'm grieved a bit, it's with regard, I suppose, to the way they are sometimes constructed. I always feel that contractors have a way of being messy no matter what they do. If they're building a condominium or if they're repairing a *Queen Elizabeth II* or whatever they're doing, they always leave a hell of a mess behind them, and I think it's time we overcame that, Mr. Minister. There's a way to do it, by simply laying down the law with the department and telling them to get the job done and done right. Don't leave great rocks all over the ditches and things like that, do the crosswalks a little better, a lot better signage: stuff I've noticed particularly in my area when roads are being built.

Another thing that continually annoys me, Mr. Minister, through the Chairman, is that in the constituency of Highwood we have several roads that were completed before your time, literally speaking, and they're still not paved. I always feel that there's an awful waste of money attached to an arrangement like that, where we put the road into a secondary provincial highway position and then refuse to pave it. I'm referring primarily to Highway 22 from Longview to Lundbreck. It seems like it's taking an excessive amount of time to complete that road, and it certainly should have been paved at least 10 years ago.

The things I would like to mention -- another one is 549. You spent an awful lot of money within the municipal district of Foothills No. 31 in the year of 1986, and it's never been finished. I don't know whether that's a municipal problem or a provincial problem. Now, in view of the fact that you've invested so much money in it, I think you'd like to protect it by paving it. Highway 7 from Okotoks to Turner Valley is going to be an expensive proposition, I'll admit, but it almost seems like it's come to a standstill. Now, I could be corrected on that, but there isn't much going on just yet. It seems to me that we're a third of the way through the year and we're not getting much action. I'd like to see that completed, because it's a very dangerous highway in its present condition and should be widened. Of course, it has been started, and it's an excellent program. When it is completed, it'll be a big asset to all the people out there as well as to the Minister of Tourism and certainly a lot of industry in the area.

Mr. Minister, you should be aware, and I think you should advise the department, that while that road is being constructed -- and we got away from an area that was known as the "bird cage" -- there has been a kind of mistake, I would suggest, made as they leave 7 now to cross the railroad and get on to what is known as 547 by crossing Highway 2. If an 18-wheeler were to make a left turn at that corner and there were a train crossing the track -- and there often are long, long freight trains -- his semi would be out in the middle of Highway 7. In short, there is just not enough space there to make a left turn and cross the railroad safely. That should be looked into.

Certainly, lights and signing and stuff like that along those roads is a very important thing, and I'd like you to look into it if you can.

The four-lane highway that you've condescended to build to

Fort Macleod is under way now, and I think none too soon. I hope you'll have things in a pretty good order by February 1988, so that -- inasmuch as you'll never get it done by then, at least trim it up so that it looks presentable and the biggest part of it is in safe condition for, I would say, an excessive amount of traffic that we can expect during the Olympics. I'd hate to think you're building a four-lane highway for a simple two weeks of Olympics, but it is an important feature that should be very carefully reacted to as you build this new highway and are forced to leave it sometime during the fall and winter, that it's left in very safe condition.

Highway 40 -- or the Bighorn Highway, as I think the title will be someday -- is still being closed for too great a period, Mr. Minister. That is outrageous, to have a -- I don't know how many millions are in that highway, and it's closed for over six months of the year. I think that is the most ludicrous, ridiculous situation Alberta faces. I know you don't, but I do. I want it changed, and I want it changed in my time. I think it's an important thing, there again, for the Olympics. An ideal year to keep it open would have been 1986-87, for the simple reason -- now mind you, you can look backwards and say, "We didn't have any snow," and that's lovely, but it would have been a great year to try it out. In all fairness, I don't think wilderness people or environmentalists or anybody else is going to con you into the fact that it's hard on the breeding season for elk or sheep or anything else. I regret that the government is taking so long to decide to keep that highway open year-round for skiers and hikers and all those types of people.

For whatever reason, the little hamlet of De Winton seems to be completely left out of anybody's plans, municipal and/or provincial, and I often regret that. It's a nice little hamlet. A lot of people living around there, all kinds of acreage people. Not a great big thing, but it has three or four miles of road that should be repaired, widened, and completed in our regular provincial manner. I'd like you to look into that.

In the nature of bouquets, I'd like to get back to Priddis, where you installed a new culvert in place of a bridge and straightened out the road, and those people are just tickled to death. It didn't take you long to do it, and I'm really pleased about that.

The crosswalk at Okotoks was under contention for a long time for those kiddies that are going to school, and I think you've got the safest possible arrangement in there now that people could ask for, and that is a set of controlled traffic lights.

I think that with those comments and requests, Mr. Chairman, I'll take my place and ask the minister to respond in good time.

MR. BRADLEY: Mr. Chairman, I'll try to be brief, given the hour.

I'd like to congratulate the minister and his department on their efforts in my constituency with regards to highway development. They've always been very sympathetic, and they've done an excellent job in meeting the needs of my constituents. I did want to ask the minister what sort of time frame he's looking at for completion of the paving of Highway 22 from north of Lundbreck to Longview. I know that it's a priority of mine and of the Member for Highwood and other members in the Assembly.

I don't often disagree with the Member for Highwood, but I support the minister in his position with regards to the closure of Highway 40. I, too, was involved in the development of Kananaskis Country and recollect the trade-offs that were made

in terms of the development of Kananaskis and the protection of certain wildlife resource areas, and the closure of Highway 40 was part of the protection of wildlife resources trade-off decisions that were made.

I'm pleased to see the government moving forward with regards to the joint inquiry of the Public Utilities Board and the ERCB with regards to small power producers. It's certainly a concern in my riding given the high wind flow-through we have there, that we're able to resolve some of the issues that are out there and see small power generation move forward. I hope the joint inquiry will resolve those outstanding issues so that we can make use of that renewable energy resource.

There has been a concern expressed in my area with regards to proposals in British Columbia to build another east/west connector, north from Elkford through into Alberta. I know the minister is aware of the concerns. I would just like to reiterate that I'd like to see the north/south linkages, particularly Highway 22, completed, looking at Highway 40 in the future to see it paved, prior to completing further or even initiating any studies with regards to further east/west connectors.

I'd like to conclude by thanking the minister and his department with regards to the utilities area for the work they've done in my riding over the past number of years. There have been some significant projects approved: a new sewage system in Pincher Creek, which has just been completed; funding for a new regional sewage system for the Crowsnest Pass; and water system improvements in Bellevue and Blairmore. I'd like to thank the minister for his department's involvement and understanding there and the work that is being done.

Just one final comment. There have been some questions raised with regards to asphalt research by the Member for Vegreville. I was reading an interesting article tonight in a magazine looking at advanced materials and the use of a polyethylene/asphalt mixture which would improve the strength and life of asphalt. Using a 5 percent mixture of scrap polyethylene in the asphalt mixture would attain this, and I was wondering if the minister might have his department look at that, because it could give us longer life of our asphalt and higher strength requirements. So I'll pass that information on to the minister too.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Athabasca-Lac La Biche.

MR. PIQUETTE: Yes, just a couple of quick points about the minister's statement relating to the small power producers, about the year-long inquiry, I guess, not study. In terms of economic diversification I think the government should, as the Member for Vegreville, be making it very clear that there is a role to play for small power producers in Alberta and provide access to the power grid in terms of certain numbers of thousands of kilowatts which would be available for any projects that would come along, like the Athabasca one, which would not need to have any commitment and would know exactly the rules of the game that need to be played. I think that's a commitment this minister can make fairly quickly without having to go through an inquiry or whatever. So I'd like the minister to again perhaps look at that whole situation relating to small power producers much more quickly than a year's review so that they can expedite the ERCB and PUB, so they're not having to look at thousands upon thousands of dollars worth of money to be spent in terms of trying to get access through the regulatory bodies.

So with that, I'd like to conclude this evening and thank the minister for the answers he provided me previously.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Minister.

MR. ADAIR: If I can, Mr. Chairman, I'll make a quick attempt to get through, starting with Vegreville. The hon. member mentioned a couple of projects as carryover projects, and I just wanted to correct him in the sense that some are carryovers but some in essence are projects that are tendered later in the year for next year, knowing that if we get an extended fall, we can get it done in that particular year. So it leaves it appearing like it may be something from last year, if the weather is great in the fall, and I just wanted to correct that. It's a system that allows us to get work done sometimes in a year when the extended open fall season is of benefit to us. It's really important to us to have that in place.

I'm going to have to take the map now to go over a couple of the ones: 637, 855, 857, 834, 854. I don't have enough money. That's probably the easiest way to answer that in that true sense. But one of the things that has to be taken into consideration obviously -- and I think we all know as elected members of the Legislature -- is that we work with the counties and the MDs to in fact put in place their priorities and attempt to work with them, looking at the traffic volumes and other points like that before we get into the construction and work on those roads. So I can probably get into more detail a little bit later on for you in that, but I recognize the point that you did make.

Now, in the sense of numbers -- I had it sitting right in front of me here -- one of the questions was: what is the cost of a secondary road? Approximate figures, and I underline the word "approximate": grading, about \$100,000 per kilometre; base paving, about \$150,000 per kilometre; final paving, about \$125,000 per kilometre. Paving costs are substantially dependent on how far they have to haul the gravel, where the source of gravel is for that particular project. So I guess that's the easiest way to answer that one as quickly as I can.

There was a reference to Highway 36 being an older road with no shoulders on it and that we may be building roads to a wider standard now. What I would have to do with the department is check what the traffic volumes are on that particular segment of the road. There are a number of people who have requested work on 36, and in some cases we've just completed -- in the case of the hon. Member for Athabasca-Lac La Biche -- the actual upgrading to a pavement standard of the section. It's not a case of the road being dropped; it's letting that settle so that we'd move to it there. We even discussed that at Lac La Biche at the meeting we had there and indicated that if it did start, where would it start? They selected the south end of that particular road. I'll have to take a look at the other side of your particular section of it. Highway 16X past Vegreville is slated for completion in the fall of 1988, God willing and weather permitting.

The reference to the Our Lady of the Highway shrine: probably if I could have some information as to who's responsible, or if they might write to me, that would give us an opportunity. How far is it? Is it half a mile off the highway, a hundred yards off the highway, nine miles off the highway? I don't have any idea. But if I could get that information, we'd certainly look at what we may be able to do there.

In the case of Chipman, one of the problems is that they have received their street assistance grant -- and I think the hon. member mentioned that -- and they have made the choice as to

how they use it. Now, the problem you've got is that having done that, then there is a request to try and see if there are some additional funds around. Unfortunately, there aren't right at the moment. So it's one that we'll have to look at. I can't respond in any more of a positive way for you than to indicate that I am aware that they did receive their funds and they did make the choice. There is a problem in a number of communities where they have made a choice to use it for either sidewalks or curbing or whatever the case may be and don't have sufficient funds. We'll attempt to try and work with them to some degree if we have dollars.

The point that was made relative to the bus -- now, I think the purchase price was mentioned, Mr. Chairman. The bus was purchased in 1984, or was it a 1984 bus purchased in 1987? There is a difference, and I only say that in the sense that if it's a bus purchased in 1984, I would assume it could be retrofitted. If it was a bus purchased in 1987 and it is an '84 bus, there may be a problem, and that may be one of the reasons the school division has not accepted it. I would ask you to maybe just clarify that for me if you can.

There was a reference made to the rehabilitation program. Certainly there's no question that we'll be doing a lot of work using the rehabilitation program to upgrade those roads that do have some wear. I might point out, in a note that came down from the deputy minister, when you're talking about the rutting in the road, it's primarily because of the large volumes of trucks, not the axle loads, because they have not increased. The longer, larger loading does not impact on rutting; it's the load on each axle that's important. Truck inspections are carried out now, and the new national safety code will also assist us with that particular one. So certainly from that standpoint we are aware that there are some that have rutting, and the rehabilitation program is in place to assist us to make sure that we protect those roads. Again, with a limit on dollars, we do the best we can. That particular segment of the budget has not been decreased. It's in place, and we recognize that we've got some work to do on that one.

The price protection plan: there was no benefit to the Albertan relative to the sale of gas. We have over a good number of years, and I believe it's -- I don't have the exact figures. I know it was roughly around \$55 million last year, I believe, that Albertans benefited by the price protection plan, where it was protected at a \$1.82 per gigajoule. Present prices are somewhat below that, so that's why that figure is slightly down from what it was in the past.

The hon. Member for Calgary Mountain View talked about the Auditor General in 1985-86. I was appointed on May 26, 1986, so I'm not sure that I can totally respond, although the deputy minister has assisted me in indicating that the Auditor General's observation on fixed assets was really relating to the fact that we had several small systems in place and they would prefer a single system. We've got several small systems in place, and we're reluctant to hire the staff to assist in accomplishing the Auditor's wish. The Auditor's observation relates in essence to small equipment, mostly office, survey, and technical equipment only. The Auditor General concurs with our control of the \$35 million worth of vehicles that we have in place as being satisfactory. In the billing service, the Auditor's comments were noted, and some changes in the billing process are being considered at the present time.

Now, there was a question relating to the Calgary bypass, or ring road. That has not been a priority of the city of Calgary. The land purchases for that corridor are with the department of

public works, and that question would have to be asked of the minister of public works. I can't respond to how much has been purchased and when. So in that particular sense I'm not able to answer the last part of that one.

Highway 2, south of Olds: when will it be fixed? There is some work that is planned on that particular segment now as we start to widen out the median on those sections in the Airdrie toward Red Deer area, so there is work that is going on at that time.

I'm not sure why no weigh scale on Highway 16X. I'll have to check and get a response back to you on that particular issue.

Rail issues are the responsibility of the Department of Economic Development and Trade, and passenger service applies in the same essence, I guess.

Rather than respond to the hon. Member for Edmonton Meadowlark, because I've missed a couple of the numbers that he related to, I'll do that later for him. He's not here at the moment.

The Highwood constituency: the problems of cleanup and signage and the like are noted, and we'll certainly keep that in mind. Traffic volumes are extremely important when it comes to Highway 22. The comment that it should have been paved 10 years ago: I've said on a couple of occasions that I'm not the good Lord. I can't impact on yesterday, but I may be able to impact on tomorrow. And I'll keep that in mind.

The point about the safety on highway 547 as it crosses the tracks and the problem with long trucks: we will take a look at that, and I'll get back to the good member. The road to De Winton: I would assume it's a county priority, and if it's one of theirs and that of the M.L.A., we can certainly take a look at that.

The Member for Pincher Creek-Crowsnest: Highway 22, Lundre to Longview, when? I'm sorry; I can't give you a date as to when it might be completed.

The score is 3 to 1 Detroit, I understand, getting close to the end of the game.

AN HON. MEMBER: It's over.

MR. ADAIR: Game over, 3 to 1 Detroit. How about that.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Chair has some difficulty relating that to one of the votes.

MR. ADAIR: Well, now that I've got the message out -- I may have been able to leak that.

AN HON. MEMBER: Don't shoot the messenger.

MR. ADAIR: Yeah, don't shoot the messenger.

In reference to small power, the hon. member talked about the inquiry. The whole purpose behind the inquiry is to do a number of things that were mentioned, and one of them obviously that came in with the Member for Athabasca-Lac La Biche, and I'll get into it. This is what's in the inquiry, and this is what I as a minister have directed them to do: determine how much electricity can be taken into the Alberta system from small power producers, which principles and methods should be used to set the price for that power, how this power can be expeditiously purchased by the utilities, and whether the regulatory approval process can be further streamlined for small facilities. Certainly we have no problems, in the sense that we as a government are supportive of the projects. The types are wind generators, small hydro developments, waste wood, and other

renewable and waste energy resources types of projects.

With specific reference to the one from the Athabasca area, to this particular point in time there is no application in anywhere as to what it is they are finally deciding to look at as a project, and once it is received -- the ERCB and the PUB have been standing, I guess you could say, on guard waiting for it, as a matter of fact generating meetings to get as much information to them as possible so that they can get an application in. But until we have it, as I said the other day, it's difficult chasing butterflies or shadows. I don't mean that with any disrespect. It's very difficult to approve something when you don't know what it is they're submitting. I would suggest that if the hon. member can sit down with the proponents and get them to work with it -- I've even suggested and am prepared as soon as the session is over to have a meeting of the developers, the farmers that are involved with the projects, the various related departments, and myself so that we can all hear the same story rather than what appears to be some confusion out there as to what is being said, I think we can clear up some of those issues, I've had one good meeting with the proponents, and that was last fall, called at my initiative and not theirs, so we are interested and would like to push it.

Having said that, Mr. Chairman, that covers those who have

asked questions to this point.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Are you ready for the question?

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

[Motion carried]

[Mr. Deputy Speaker in the Chair]

MR. MUSGREAVE: Mr. Speaker, the Committee of Supply has had under consideration certain resolutions, reports progress thereon, and requests leave to sit again.

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

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Those opposed? Carried.

[At 10:44 p.m. the House adjourned to Wednesday at 2:30 p.m.]