

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ALBERTATitle: **Tuesday, June 27, 1989 8:00 p.m.**

Date: 89/06/27

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

head: **COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY**

[Mr. Schumacher in the Chair]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order please. Would members of the committee please take their places. I would like to ask whether the committee would agree to reverting to the Introduction of Special Guests for a moment.

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed

head: **INTRODUCTION OF SPECIAL GUESTS**

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Chairman, it gives me pleasure this evening to introduce guests in the members' gallery. We have the members of the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties: the president, Joe Smith -- and I'd like Joe to stand -- the vice-president, Dick Papworth, and three directors from across the province, Lavern Sorgaard, Norm Stanger, and Vince Fabian. I'd ask the three of them to stand and be recognized. They're here to observe the minister of transportation in action, and that's very profitable.

head: **COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY***(continued)*head: **Main Estimates 1989-90****Transportation and Utilities**

MR. CHAIRMAN: Members of the committee, as has been pointed out by the hon. Minister of Municipal Affairs, the Minister of Transportation and Utilities is here with us this evening to present the estimates of his department, which are to be found commencing at page 331 of the main estimates book, with the elements contained on page 145 of the elements book.

I would now recognize the Minister of Transportation and Utilities to introduce his estimates.

MR. ADAIR: Well, Mr. Chairman, I thank my colleagues for that introduction. I'm pleased indeed to present the estimates for the Department of Transportation and Utilities. It's my intention tonight to talk a little bit about the departmental responsibilities in each of the areas covered by the estimates and to highlight some of the initiatives that we have planned for this fiscal year.

Mr. Chairman and members of the Legislature, if you look at our budget, \$891.7 million is committed toward transportation infrastructure and support of utilities development in the province of Alberta. That's an increase of \$62.4 million, or 7.5 percent, over the previous year, reflecting the government's commitment to an efficient transportation and utilities network, which is essential to support the growth and the diversification of this province. The budget also reflects our commitment to ensure that the needs of all Albertans, both rural and urban, are addressed. Finally, we are increasing our partnerships, espe-

cially with local municipalities. This year will see an increased emphasis on capital investments. An enhancement of \$22.6 million has been allocated for road, rail, and bridge infrastructure in northern Alberta.

A major part of this increase is required to support an expanding forest industry. Funding to develop the infrastructure to support the Peace River pulp mill -- and for those who don't know, that's in my constituency, if you should ask -- the Alberta Newsprint Company Ltd. in Whitecourt, Crestbrook project, public lands development program, and the Alberta Energy Company in Slave Lake are included in this program as well. An increase of \$5 million in the primary highway budget will accelerate the twinning of Highway 2 south of Calgary. As the highway is currently an important tourist route, this program will serve an expanding and important tourism industry.

Also with the implementation of the free trade agreement this high-quality road infrastructure, now known as the export highway, will accommodate increasing export flows of Alberta farm, forest, and manufactured products. This is a timely demonstration of the Alberta government's support for free trade. There was some discussion about that support this afternoon. It's there, I can assure you.

Funding for the improvement of secondary highways has been increased by \$18 million, a 21.9 percent increase over the 1988-89 budget of \$82.2 million, to commence our long-term commitment to pave the system over a 10-year period. It might not hurt for me to take a moment right now and correct what seemed to be a bit of a mix-up, if I can use that term politely, in the way it was projected during the election of last March. There are 140,000-plus kilometres of gravel roads in the province of Alberta. There are 14,600 of those that are secondary highways; simple mathematics, roughly 10 percent. Of that 10 percent, 6,000-plus of them are already paved and have been paved with a program that's been in place for the last 20 years. Thanks to the good people that are in the gallery tonight -- the request by the AAMDC and other organizations to speed up that process or give them a firm commitment of when we're going to do it -- we made a commitment in the election of 10 years to in fact pave the balance of that secondary highway system, approximately 8,000-plus kilometres or 5 percent of the total of the gravel roads in the province of Alberta: a major undertaking and a commitment of this government.

There's no question that they're a critical link to the transportation network that delivers the farm products from our farmers, forestry products, and manufactured products as well as the movement of schoolchildren and the likes of that in and about those communities in which they live, wherever they are in the province of Alberta. These highways also provide essential access for the families and the business community in what on occasion could be referred to as somewhat rural communities or in some cases isolated rural communities. Very important that we clear up that particular issue.

The 1989-90 budget represents the third and final year of a 50-50 cost-sharing program with the federal government to accelerate the twinning on Highway 16. That's the Yellowhead Highway or the Trans-Canada north, and there's an extra \$1 million in this particular budget to cover that cost sharing, the 50-50 arrangement that we have. I might say that this is probably the most ambitious year of work on the Yellowhead, both east and west -- primarily on the west side -- of all the years we've been involved in the program. It's a very industrious year, and we are on target, on budget, and the only thing that

can hold us up right now is the weather -- not whether you approve it but the weather outside. The good Lord may have some say in the way we've had some of the rainfalls of the last number of days. It's a very important program, and it has seen a commitment that was given originally for a 10-year project to pave the Yellowhead and the Trans-Canada in southern Alberta, and both of them are on stream, on target, and on time.

Then to support the construction and the future operation of the OSLO project -- that's the other six leases organization, a project north of Fort McMurray -- a new four-year program, \$49.4 million, will commence this year. It includes increased funding of \$8.2 million to accelerate the widening of Highway 63 from north of Edmonton through Fort McMurray and the paving of a highway to the plant site access north of McMurray. The upgrading program will reduce the traffic delays and the highway closures during the peak construction years of that project. I might say that in the past we've been able to work out an arrangement by marshaling them into the Plamondon area and then closing the highway and allowing them to progress up to Fort McMurray. That becomes almost impossible with the number of loads that would go with the movement and the acceleration of the OSLO project. So we're moving with the idea that that project is going to go, and we'll be doing that widening of that particular highway to Fort McMurray and then the paving of the road to the junction of the turn-off to that particular OSLO site, which will be done by the OSLO organization itself from that corner on to the site.

Mr. Chairman, safety will continue to be a top priority of the department. As mentioned in the Speech from the Throne, \$146.7 million, which represents a 19.9 percent over the previous years, will be available for allocation to the 16 Alberta cities and the urbanized area of Sherwood Park in the county of Strathcona under the first year of a new three-year, \$500 million Alberta partnership program. This new partnership program, which is based on the previously existing urban transportation program, will provide up to \$65 per capita per year to Alberta cities and Sherwood Park to help with the costs of their multi-year capital transportation plans. This represents a \$5 per capita increase and provides for projects such as arterial roadway construction, rehabilitation, collector roadway rehabilitation, and construction of major transit facilities.

In recognition of our government's concern for safety, a new component called the community safe streets component was introduced with this new initiative. The goal of this program is to reduce or resolve community safety concerns. Up to \$5 per capita per year is available for projects such as improved street lighting, pedestrian overpasses, emergency stopping bays on roadways, and emergency telephones. The work resulting from this program will be performed by the private sector and is expected to provide approximately 700 jobs per year.

Other aspects of our Alberta cities transportation program have remained basically the same as they have in previous years. Funding at the same level is available for primary highway maintenance and for public transit operating, which is provided to the municipalities under the co-operative arrangement with the Department of Municipal Affairs and the Alberta partnership transfer program, where those funds are transferred electronically to the various municipalities. As well, Mr. Chairman, to promote additional protection of all highway users and to promote commercial vehicle fitness in our province, a sum of \$594,000 has been provided to complete the development of a computerized programming system to track compliance with the

national safety code.

In the area of financial assistance to rural transportation we have established a new six-year, \$75 million street assistance program to provide funds to our towns, our villages, and our summer villages for various capital street improvements. Grants totaling \$10 million, an increase of \$3 million or 42.9 percent over last year's budget of \$7 million, have been provided for in this budget for this year in Transportation and Utilities. We have also been able to increase our rural road grants to municipal districts, counties, and special areas by approximately 3 percent overall. Now, these grants will continue to assist the rural municipalities with road construction and upgrading and dust abatement. In addition, the hamlet street assistance program will continue as well.

Well, Mr. Chairman, in the area of utilities, several of our utility programs have been extended, such as the Alberta farm water program, the remote area heating allowance, the primary agricultural producers' rebate program, and our very successful and popular senior citizens home heating protection plan. To accommodate the growing number of senior citizens in our program, we have increased our seniors program by 4 percent. Approximately 100,000 senior citizen households benefit from this program annually.

We have, however, reduced the remote area heating allowance by about 32.2 percent from last year. This decrease, Mr. Chairman, has been a direct result of our milder weather patterns, resulting in less fuel being used by rural Albertans. On the other hand, our farm water grant program continues to be extremely popular. We've allocated an additional \$900,000 or a 31 percent increase in that program. I might say that we're basically almost at the end of the applications. We have 600 and some applications in now, and we're not going to be able to handle them even with the program dollars that we've got in place for this year. So we'll have to continue to monitor the ongoing needs of that particular program, and I seek your support, those of you who would be interested in providing that support, for the continuation of that farm water grant program.

The small power research and development program is under way, and the program is now fully subscribed. In order to effectively monitor the program and assess whether small power can meet part of the Alberta electric capacity requirements in the future, there will be some dollars allocated for the various studies and the monitoring that's needed to be in place, to see if that in fact can do what we hope it may be able to do, and that is possibly replace one of the future plants down the road, as requested by those who are in the small power producing area. That relates to the three areas: wind production -- and we had a lot of that this afternoon. I was really interested in that for a while there; we could run a couple of windmills for a fair distance with . . .

MR. TAYLOR: As usual, most of it was behind you too.

MR. ADAIR: It depends on which way you're looking, Nick.

I think it's important that we also have within that the hydro and then the bio mass projects. Maybe it was biomass that was piling up in here this afternoon. Really, when it comes right down to it, that program has some very interesting opportunities and possibilities. One of the areas that we'll be working with is with my colleague the Minister of Energy in the area of a possible wind project down in southwestern Alberta. We'll be working very closely with them and with the people in the area to try

and see if we can get that program off the ground.

AN HON. MEMBER: And the MLA.

MR. ADAIR: And the MLA; you're right. The hon. Member for Pincher Creek-Crowsnest has been very strongly supportive of that program all the way through.

This year some of our utility programs have been substantially decreased or reduced in their current budget. The municipal water and sewage assistance program has been decreased by approximately 30 percent from that of 1988-89. This is primarily because in recent years, Mr. Chairman, the major systems have been built, and those that are now being requested are more or less upgrading or refurbishing of existing facilities and not the major regional services that were provided a couple of years ago and are now on stream in the province of Alberta. Although there has been reduced spending in this area in recent years, it's anticipated that the long-term trend may well see us looking for additional dollars down the road or increasing the existing facilities, replacing new ones, as the municipalities in fact judge those necessities at that particular time as they grow. Municipalities are currently displaying good fiscal management, and we're pleased, indeed, with that. The departments will continue to work with the municipal governments to monitor the needs of water and sewer infrastructure.

Another one of the major ongoing programs that we handle within the department is the rural gas program, probably one of the major success stories in the nation, I might even go so far as to say in North America. Actually, we really got it going in earnest in 1973 to ensure that natural gas service was available to all Albertans at a reasonable cost. It has provided, to date, over \$350 million for the construction of natural gas facilities in this province and services to individual farm families, whoever they may be, wherever they may be in the province of Alberta. In addition to that, if they're outside of the franchise area, there is a heating oil and a propane program in place to assist those who for whatever reason are not able to be accessed by the putting in of a pipeline to their particular co-op. This program is maturing. It's one that has a reasonable level of gas services already being implemented, and the budget for this program was therefore reduced this year by about 20 percent from our actual expenditures of last year. We feel quite strongly that the \$9 million budget will meet the needs for the coming year. I would like to point out, Mr. Chairman, that although the department has not introduced any new utility programs for '89-90, we are continually monitoring the programs and the utility industry to ensure that our programs are meeting the needs of all Albertans.

I think with those comments, Mr. Chairman, I now will basically take any questions that may be offered to us from any of the members in the House and thank them for their co-operation in putting together this budget, along with Treasury, in this past year. Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Mr. Minister.

The hon. Member for West Yellowhead.

MR. DOYLE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First, I'd like to congratulate the minister on his reappointment to Transportation and Utilities. Indeed, it's been a pleasure for me over the years to work with him, although we have sometimes had our differences.

Mr. Adair's record in the past has certainly increased the in-

frastructure of Albertans, especially for the municipalities. The continued twinning of Highway 16, Mr. Minister, will certainly make travel on that highway safer and more timely, especially to my riding of West Yellowhead and all across north central Alberta. With three New Democrats living in the rural area of that riding, I think it's very important that we make sure they get back here safely every time.

In addressing the estimates, I hope some of the answers you could clear up for me as a new MLA. In vote 1, except for the Assistant Deputy Minister's Office, 1.3 is certainly fair at a 2.5 percent increase. But the increase for the assistant deputy minister is 12.6 percent for his office, in 1.3.1. Vote 2: again, the senior assistant deputy minister has an increase of 29.5, but perhaps you could explain those estimates.

Construction and improvements of primary and secondary roads and bridges are expensive, but there are many roads in this province that are quite unsafe because of their width and steep grades. I was pleased to hear you, sir, clear up that Highway 63 to Fort McMurray is going to be widened. Again, of course, I've had many complaints of Highway 40 between Hinton and Grande Cache. The estimates for constructing and improving roads in item 2.2 is going up over 8 percent, in part to fulfill, I believe, the election promises. But item 2.4.1, the estimate for maintaining highways, is going down 11 percent from the previous year. I was wondering what the rationale for this decrease is. Does this mean that less money is going into maintaining highways so that the government can keep their commitment and promises to pave the new ones?

I want to say, Mr. Minister, that paving of the secondary highways is certainly going to be a great asset to our infrastructure, and I think we'll work with you as hard and fast as we can to make sure that those roads that are necessary to be paved will not be blocked in any way.

I'm pleased to see that 49.4 percent increase in Campsites and Rest Areas, but perhaps you could share with us where these sites will be. The vehicle inspection stations I surely hope are going to be set up in areas where we can get some of these unsafe vehicles off the highways, to keep them out of our cities and rural areas. Again, in 2.7.1 I would like to hear site specifics as to where the money is going for new ferries and provincial air facilities. I'm not quite clear on those. In 2.8.1, 58.2 percent increase to the assistant deputy minister's office: why was that? Increases to grants: in Grants to Towns and Villages from \$7 million to \$10 million is certainly encouraging for a guy who just sat in council chamber for five years. We saw a lot of that money being spent very wisely in our area.

I'd like to say again, Mr. Minister, that I appreciate your assistance and your staffs assistance as I was named the critic of transportation. They've been most helpful.

The community safe streets grants, with \$7.5 million, will surely address the problem of poor lighting in some municipalities, but I would hope it would address the fairness in where a municipality becomes responsible for the cost of operating those street lights and where the province should pay their fair share, especially in lighting main highways.

I'd like to know, Mr. Minister -- perhaps you did identify the \$5.5 million in Rail Lines to Resources. I believe that was the one to Daishowa.

Utilities Policy Development has a 129.5 percent increase. Will the minister inform this House what this increase is, while a 12.5 percent cut in rural electrification grants? In 4.3.2 there is a 31.4 percent decrease to municipal water and sewage grants

in '89-90, compared with last year. I believe you did say that was because some of those projects were now finished.

In 4.5.4, Small Power Research and Development, you referred to wind power and biomass. I would hope that both yourself and the Minister of Energy would consider exploring the great resources of geothermal that we have in west central Alberta. They use them in many countries, including the U.S., and the potential is there if the government would put some money behind it.

Mr. Minister, the grants for electric price shielding have been increased, but is there any assistance coming from the estimates to help those in remote areas, especially native people who have trap lines? Some live on just a three- or four-acre lot in remote areas year round, yet there is no financing available for them to install electricity. At the same time we are financing small hobby farms and other farms at 3.5 percent over 10 or 25 years.

In summation, Mr. Chairman, I would say that it's just a bit hard for me to criticize a transportation budget. For a guy who travels quite a little bit these days, I certainly am encouraged by all the hard work that's going on Highway 16, and I can assure you that day or night there are people out there working.

Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Whitemud.

MR. WICKMAN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I too want to extend my congratulations to the Minister of Transportation and Utilities.

I want to point out through you, Mr. Chairman, to the minister that I wasn't sure if I was going to be here this evening. Just as I was leaving the house, my son phoned to announce that I'm going to be a grandfather for the first time, which is a very emotional trauma. So if you'll allow me, rather than do the traditional announcement in the *Edmonton Sun* or *Edmonton Journal*, I'll have it recorded in *Hansard* and congratulate my son Ron and his wife, Stacey.

Mr. Chairman, to the minister. I'm going to touch on some areas in transportation, and my colleague from Westlock-Sturgeon will touch on the portions pertaining to utilities. When I look through the budget, Mr. Minister, there are a couple of areas of concern I want to address immediately. Vote 1.3.1, Assistant Deputy Minister's Office, is up 12.6 percent. It's the greatest increase for this program. I would ask if the minister could explain why all the other elements in this vote have increased by less than 3 percent while the assistant deputy minister has increased by almost 12.6 percent.

Again, in vote 2.1.1. we see a significant increase of 29.5 percent to the senior assistant deputy minister's office, while at the same time the assistant deputy minister's budget drops 14.5 percent. Also, Mr. Minister, in vote 2.2, Construction and Improvement of Roads, we see Secondary Highways up 21.9 percent, an increase of \$18 million over last year. This, I have to assume, is your earlier reference to the election promise that had been made to pave secondary roads. Vote 2.8: again we have an increase of 58.2 percent, which applies to the assistant deputy minister's office. In vote 2.9.4. we have grants to towns and villages up 42.9 percent, but urban transportation services have only increased 7.2 percent. Why the difference, Mr. Minister? We have to recognize that the urban centres are having difficulty with infrastructure maintenance. We see that in Edmonton; we see that in Calgary.

Mr. Minister, for some general comments, I want to talk first about citizen participation. I've had truckers who have come up to me and talked about regulations that are being proposed, regulations which affect their livelihood, regulations which would state that they would only be allowed to drive so many hours at one given time and they would have to book off so many hours, or else there'd have to be two drivers in the cab. I'm sure no one would object to attempting to increase safety on the highways by imposing some reasonable limitations such as was done sometime back for drivers within the Edmonton Transit system. But their concern is what they feel is not ample opportunity to participate in that decision-making process and feed into that process where decisions affect them very directly.

On the issue of the secondary road paving, if we go back to the estimates of 1988, it was stated at that time that \$10 million additionally had been allocated to the road program. Is it possible that that was the beginning of the \$18 million dollar first-year portion of this program that was announced during the election? In other words, did we have a process where there were plans to upgrade, to increase, as you stated earlier in reference to the gentlemen sitting up here who had been asking for an upgrading of this? Was that already under way, the mega announcement being done during the election to enhance the government's position, its appeal, particularly to the rural areas?

The figure of \$18 million has been bandied about for the first year without so much as a hint, at least to me, as to what the total costs of the program will be. When we talk in terms of 10 years, what are the costs over those 10 years? There has been some speculation, I believe by the department of transportation -- if I'm not mistaken, by the minister of transportation -- going back as far as 1985, that to pave all secondary roads could cost \$2 billion. Has the department prepared an official estimate of the total costs to paving secondary roads, which is approximately 8,300 kilometres of roadway? How will the upgrading of secondary roads proceed? What will be the priorities? Will it be equally fair throughout the province, no matter what constituency one may represent or one may live in? Will there be priorities that examine traffic fatalities, traffic injuries? I haven't heard any of those comments. Have there been reviews done that would indicate there is a need to pave a particular postsecondary road but maybe not some other postsecondary road because of limited traffic?

Another issue I wish to touch on, Mr. Minister, is the question of gravel trucks. There are problems facing this industry, and I think that was very noticeable by a demonstration that was carried out here just a few days ago. The 5 percent fuel tax imposed in 1987 creates an incredible hardship for the independent driver. There seems to be some discrepancy amongst the government contract rates paid to gravel truckers in various areas.

Also, the question of regulations for multiple-axle trucks: would the minister undertake to review the difficulty, as the shifting of loads can vary the weight on particular axles of those vehicles?

I also want to touch, Mr. Minister, on an area that is not under your responsibility but is very closely related, and that is the question of drunk drivers on the road. I do have to compliment the minister responsible for the initiatives that have been taken to reduce what is becoming an increasing, constant nightmare. We see, in 1987, 26 percent of drivers involved in fatal crashes had consumed alcohol prior to the crash, compared to only 12.2 percent in injury crashes. In other words, the stats point out that if there is a consumption of alcohol, the chances for that acci-

dent to be of a more serious nature leading to death are a much higher proportion, so I do commend the minister for the initiatives that have been taken in that particular area.

I do have a concern, however, about the constitutional question when we talk in terms of the special initiatives that would impact youngsters between the ages of 16 and 18. I would also ask: have officials looked at the possibility of implementing a double licence system? I point out a double licence system because we can draw a scenario where, on one hand, we have a person that is completely dependent on their livelihood, driving a truck or a taxi driver, whatever the situation may be. If that person is charged with impaired driving, convicted, loses the licence, that person's livelihood is pretty well finished, is impacted considerably. On the other hand, if you have a professional person that is not dependent on their vehicle to earn their livelihood, then the penalty is not nearly as severe. So I wonder if the question of a double licence has been looked at, where if a professional driver is convicted for impaired driving in his personal vehicle, only that particular licence that pertains to personal driving would be seized or suspended and allow him to carry on his livelihood, provided the conviction didn't occur as a result of his driving a commercial vehicle.

Another area of concern to me, Mr. Minister, is dangerous goods. Chemical spills on the highways, on the roadways, on the streets, are becoming more and more a public concern. As to the stats, as to whether they are increasing, and as to what rate, I can't be sure, but there is an increasing public concern because of the increased attention that is focused on the environment and dangerous goods. We have situations in the city of Edmonton where we have dangerous goods still being transported throughout the city through the dangerous goods route. It's been planned for years and years that eventually we would see a ring road system that would allow for most dangerous goods to bypass the city. I realize there have been some initial steps taken, but would the minister give consideration to stepping up that program for the city of Edmonton, stepping up the bypass system in the city of Calgary, to allow for most chemical goods to bypass these cities? Many of these areas impacted are residential neighbourhoods where we have dangerous goods being transported within feet of residential properties.

Another question I have on dangerous goods: is the minister aware of a new business in Edmonton, called Custom Air Freight, which has been established to transport dangerous goods by air? Planes transporting these dangerous goods will land in a number of major cities, including Edmonton. Has the minister had his department plan any special monitoring or enforcement procedures that would pertain to the air freighting of these dangerous goods?

The question of seat belt legislation. Again, it's applicable to another department but is related very closely to your particular area of jurisdiction, Mr. Minister. I realize court appeals have made it extremely difficult in this area, but I don't see any additional stepped-up action by the department of transportation as far as education is concerned. Simply because there is a case before the courts does not prohibit the department of transportation from stepping up educational programs to entice people to use their seat belts on a voluntary basis until the whole question of mandatory seat belt legislation is resolved.

Another area of concern, Mr. Minister, is Via Rail. I'm not satisfied with the action that has been taken by this government. The Premier seems to be extremely silent on this issue, and I think we all recognize the potential loss of 1,000 jobs in Ed-

monton, \$25 million in tourist revenues that have been estimated, plus the spin-off losses to the service sector that would impact employees and hotels, restaurants, retail areas, and so on. So I would like to know specifically if you can address it, Mr. Minister. It may be deferred to the minister of economic development, but I would like to have a response as to what steps this government is planning as far as encouraging the federal government, at whatever cost, to ensure that we do not lose Via Rail.

Public transportation within the urban centres throughout the province. We have a program that gives a few dollars per capita to assist the cities in providing public transportation, and there is increased use of public transportation, particularly by disadvantaged groups. I can look at a system, Mr. Minister, such as the Disabled Adult Transportation System within the city of Edmonton that costs somewhere in the neighbourhood of \$12, \$14 per trip, yet the amount of dollars allocated towards assisting municipalities to provide public transportation, particularly towards those disadvantaged groups like the physically disabled, the mentally handicapped, senior citizens, is extremely limited.

Finally, Mr. Minister, I would ask you to address the question of the Rocky Mountain doubles, where we have these vehicles that are hauling multiple trailers, and it has been a concern. My understanding when the program was initially put in place was that it was done on an experimental basis, and there has been ongoing concern expressed about the hazard to other vehicles with the second trailer, the third trailer, that have a tendency to sway into other lanes. So I would venture to say that there is a risk here, and possibly because of the added loads there could be some damaging effects to the highways as well.

Through you, Mr. Chairman, to the Minister. I look forward to your response to these particular questions and any other questions that may be asked.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

The hon. Member for Drayton Valley.

MR. THURBER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I, too, would like to congratulate the minister. I know he's been in this portfolio for some time, but I've always admired his ability to handle any portfolio in a manner that is fair and equitable to all. If that sounds like a bunch of compliments and flowers flowing his way, it is, and I intend to keep them flowing his way. He does things in my constituency that are the most evident and . . .

MR. CHERRY: What do you want? An extra three miles?

MR. THURBER: Yeah, I want an extra three miles.

. . . the most evident things to the constituents that come to me, and they say, "Oh, boy, we got a road." And they're just as happy as can be. So I thank the minister for his continued thoughtfulness in allocating these funds around the province. The policy of this government, as far as I know, has always been to upgrade the secondary roads and the local roads within this province. Had I known before the election that there was going to be an absolute 10-year commitment to pave all secondary roads, I would have worked very seriously even before I was elected to have every road in my constituency designated as a secondary one. I think that would have been a real advantage, and it probably would have gotten me elected by acclamation.

Seriously, when we look at the secondary road structure in Alberta -- and we've been criticized from time to time about

paving all these roads and doing all these things in the country and we're not doing anything in the cities. Again I have to go back to one of my previous statements: when you drive around my constituency and you see all the people that are using the roads, the Albertans that are using them, there's not always a large percentage of them that are rural people. These roads go to a large amount of infrastructure, to forestry projects, to tourism projects, to agriculture, to a variety of other things. So it's not just for rural Alberta that these roads are brought into place. In fact, the money that's spent on infrastructure to the diversification into forest industry and the tourism industry also provides access to these areas for hunters, for campers, for a variety of other people in Alberta.

This government -- and I have to commend the minister again-- has always looked at the safety aspects of any highway, and I have to commend them on working on that continuously. I think a few years ago there were some mistakes, I guess I'll call them, in not being able to actually figure out what kind of traffic was going to be on those roads 10 or 15 years down the road. I firmly believe that his department is doing a better job of that now in trying to determine the amount of traffic and the size of traffic on a road for 10 or 15 years down the way. I commend him for that. At the same time I guess I would have to commend his staff, who have always been very accommodating to me and to all county councillors and reeves and to me as an MLA. They've just been super good to work with, and if they can do things for you, they're ready and willing to go on it.

I'd also like to touch on the Alberta partnership program, where his department sends money out on a partnership basis to the municipalities and to the towns and villages. I've had many, many comments pass my way, and I pass them along to you, Mr. Minister. They're very thankful to have the access to these funds on a partnership basis, and they feel that that is about the way it should go.

There's one other area I'd like to touch on just a little bit: the accessibility and the sympathetic ear that we have had for special circumstances and special conditions, not only on the rural roads but on the resource roads and in the towns and villages. I think that has to continue.

In conclusion of my very short talk here on your estimates, Mr. Minister, I would like to see at some point in the future a larger fund at your personal discretion for use on special circumstances and special conditions that come up from time to time. I can remember several years ago when I was with the county of Wetaskiwin when we were in dire need of some funds to get across the muskeg. We approached the department of transportation, and they were very good about it. They came out and did a job of engineering on it and forwarded us the funds to carry out a good road program in that area. I guess that would be a question, if you like: can you see that coming in the future, where you have personal access and personal discretion on a larger portion of these funds?

Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member for Vegreville.

MR. FOX: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Beginning my comments tonight I would like to take the opportunity to thank the minister for the co-operation that I've enjoyed with him over the last three years. I've found him to be very accommodating, always willing to make time to meet with me as the Member for Vegreville, and to try as best he can to address the concerns of

my constituents. I want to extend that to the staff in the department of transportation, from the deputy minister, whom I've met with on regular occasions and found to be extremely well informed on transportation issues and also very co-operative, and people in the Vermilion regional office, whom I'm in contact with quite frequently, especially in regards to specific concerns that individuals may raise regarding the department of transportation and road construction and easements and drainage and that sort of thing. By and large, I find them to be very attentive and very supportive of the people whom they're out there to serve. I appreciate the help, as an MLA who often brings concerns to their attention.

Like most rural MLAs, I too have a shopping list that I'd like to bring to the minister's attention. There are a number of secondary roads in the Vegreville constituency that are in need of paving. I think it's important to note that they not only need paving but could make good use of paving. These are roads that have been designated as secondary highways in the province of Alberta because they're busy, not because they're just local access roads but because they're used by more than just local traffic. They're often routes that carry large numbers of people from one place in the province to another. I suppose the one that I would refer to first would be secondary road 637 that runs from the town of Lamont east to the village of Hairy Hill and then on to the hamlet of Duvernay. There has been a number of projects on that road over the last three years. My understanding is there's another one this year, that there's going to be approximately 10 miles paved in base course paving from the town of Lamont east, as well as an access road into the hamlet of St. Michael, two miles of which is in my constituency and two miles in my colleague the Member for . . . [interjection]

MR. FOX: Beg your pardon? You're welcome, Member for Redwater-Andrew. I am happy to help anytime I can. Because these roads often traverse constituency lines, and where co-operation can be achieved, it's obvious that it's to the benefit of our constituents.

Anyway, there's a project there. But it will leave about eight miles in between that paved portion and secondary road 855 that is unpaved, and I hope that the minister is as anxious as I to see that paved very soon, if not late this year then early next year. Because 637 is a very important route not only for local people, as I said, but the traveling public going from Edmonton into the Lakeland country, northeastern Alberta, are using 637 more and more. Paving that road would not only be a benefit to the local people, who wouldn't have to cope with the dust, but it would improve the safety aspect as well for the traveling public. So I'd like to make that representation to the minister.

Another road in the area really needs attention, also in the county of Lamont; it's 834, the road that runs south of the village of Chipman between highways 15 and 16. There are about eight or nine miles there. It's been built up to modern gravel standards some seven or eight years ago and is in need of base course paving. I think the need is greater every year. The village of Chipman, people there would certainly appreciate it being paved, and the local people. But the area itself is becoming much busier. There's a lot of very positive tourism and recreation development out in the area. The hon. Associate Minister of Family and Social Services will be aware of the developments out in the Elk Island park area there, where there's a recreation area, the Elk Island federal park, the Beaverhill Lake: a very popular tourist area. So there are more and more reasons

for people to be traveling out there. Certainly paving 834 south of Chipman I hope is high on the minister's list. It's currently number two on the county of Lamont's list, and I'm hoping we can get some commitment from the government to take some action on that road in the very near future.

I would have to say as a general priority for me as the MLA in the Vegreville constituency, now that twinning of the Yellowhead Highway is virtually complete, there are a couple of paving projects yet to be completed that will see the twinning finished from east of the town of Vegreville right up to Highway 36. That means the Yellowhead Highway is completely twinned from there all the way to Edmonton, and the work will be proceeding, as the minister outlined, from there towards Lloydminster. But now that that's virtually complete, I think serious attention has to be paid to the secondary feeder routes, if you will, along the Yellowhead Highway. I think it's very important that communities close to the Yellowhead Highway have paved access from that highway.

I think it's fair to say that's the major east-west transportation route in Alberta now. I believe it's busier than Highway 1, the Trans-Canada Highway. More and more tourist traffic coming there, a lot of good reasons for them to travel that highway, not only the beauty of the mountain parks in my colleague's, the Member for West Yellowhead's, riding. A lot of things in Edmonton to attract people, but there are a lot of things in Vegreville, too, that bring in more and more tourists. I invite all hon. members to the Ukrainian heritage festival this weekend, the Pysanka Festival. You can come and see the egg and celebrate with us. I know my colleague from Lloydminster will likely come and enjoy himself. It's a great festival.

Anyway, people travel that highway. It's getting busier all the time. For the sake of the communities that are close to that highway, I think they need to have paved access from it so it's easier for people who may, for example, be traveling along the Yellowhead, east or west, instead of Highway 15 or 45 north of the Yellowhead or Highway 14 south of the Yellowhead -- easier for them to get into these smaller communities. I've already mentioned the village of Chipman, which I think needs paved access from the Yellowhead Highway. But there are others, and the minister and I have had the opportunity to discuss them on occasion. There's 855, that would bring pavement into Holden, south of the Yellowhead Highway; 857 south of the highway going into the hamlet of Bruce; and 854 south of the Yellowhead Highway that would bring pavement into the village of Ryley. These are all important priorities and ones that I want to again bring to the attention of the hon. minister.

I would like to thank him at this time for a couple of projects that I understand are committed for this year on a couple of those roads. South of the town of Vegreville 857 is getting its final cap this year. I think that's good news, but it increases the pressure from local people to get that base course paving on the portion of 857 that goes down into the hamlet of Bruce because they've seen the Vegreville portion paved twice before theirs gets paved once. I can understand the technical reasons for the department wanting to put that final coat of pavement on there to protect the investment that Albertans have in that base course. You know, they're certainly prioritized and very attentive to the needs of those roads. But I would like to make the case for putting base course on 857 down into the hamlet of Bruce.

I might bring to the minister's attention that a number of these roads that need paving are in the county of Beaver. I'm not sure what the situation is in other counties, but in terms of

the counties that I'm involved with as MLA, the county of Beaver is lagging far behind in terms of the number of miles of paved secondary road and for whatever reason. It's history. I think we've got to look to the future and do what we can to try and make sure that more of the transportation needs of the people in the county of Beaver are addressed. Again, looking at some of these roads, a number of them are paved right up to the county border: 857 south of Vegreville is one; 855 south of Mundare is another where the pavement stops at the county border. I know there needs to be a co-ordination of priorities between counties so they can get these roads paved through. But the end result, for whatever reason, is that several of these roads are paved right up to the border of the county of Beaver and not in Beaver. I'm hoping that in the next two or three years we can get some substantial action on some of these roads in the county of Beaver, because they're important. North and south of the village of Holden 855 has been completely rebuilt to modern gravel standards during this minister's tenure, and I thank him for that. Those are both important projects, and we're moving closer to the time when pavement could actually appear on those roads.

The road that links all of those -- 854 north of Ryley, 855 north of Holden, and 857 north of Bruce -- is a secondary road that's not often mentioned in counties' priorities, either the county of Minburn or the county of Beaver, but it is nonetheless an important route. It's 626, the correction line that would sort of join all of these roads together and eventually, hopefully, be built and paved into the town of Tofield. Then we'd have all of these communities linked by pavement. Tofield, Holden, Ryley, Bruce, Vegreville, and Mundare, with north-south, east-west access. I think it would be extremely beneficial to the economy of the local area to see that done.

It's my understanding, and perhaps the minister could confer, that there is a plan to put the final cap on 834 south of the town of Tofield. I believe that's in the department's plans, but I haven't yet seen a tender. It may have escaped my attention, but my understanding is that that's another road that the department has deemed important to put the final overlay on top of before the base course breaks up to any significant degree. I understand that the department is taking a close look at doing the same on 855 south of the town of Mundare. That road had its base course put on, I believe, five years ago. We're just about running to the limit of its endurance, and the final pavement's going to be needed there sometime soon.

There is a grading project that is going ahead, and I'd like to thank the minister for that. It's 831 from just north of the town of Vegreville into -- I can't call it a hamlet because it's not a hamlet anymore -- Royal Park, ostensibly that road. I'd like to know what the department's plans are for that road. My understanding is that it was originally designated as a secondary road to facilitate the flow of industrial traffic from the city of Edmonton to the heavy oil fields in the Elk Point area. I'm not sure if that's still the department's plan or if there is less of a need now than there was then to have that road completed. Maybe I've got the wrong idea there. I'm just wondering what the minister might say about that because there are some portions that are out of my constituency, but I know the Member for Vermilion-Viking has some miles in his constituency that are slated for construction at some point in the future.

There is another road I'd like to discuss briefly with the minister if I might, Mr. Chairman. I don't have my map in front of me. I believe it's designated 630, Wye Road. It goes from

Lindbrook just west of Tofield up through Sherwood Park into Edmonton. Again, it's an extremely busy road. It runs along the border of my constituency for only a few miles. Perhaps some people might think: "Well, why would the MLA for Vegreville care about that road and lobby for a road that's in somebody else's constituency?" But it's an important road, and it's used by a lot of people. The area west of the town of Tofield is a very densely settled area with acreage development. A lot of those people commute to Edmonton, work in Edmonton, and wanted to move out into the country to enjoy the benefits that country life has to offer, and I'm certainly glad they've done that. Their kids are going to our schools. They're shopping in our communities, and they've had a tremendous impact there. So that puts pressure on that road. I know the Member for Clover Bar has a substantial interest in 630, Wye Road, as well, and I'd just like to bring that to the minister's attention.

A couple of other programs that I'd like to comment on, and if I may, take this opportunity to thank the minister for the new streets improvement program, I believe a carry-on from the street assistance program, that is there to help municipalities on a cost-shared basis with the costs of providing curbs, gutters, sidewalks, street improvements, bridgework, pavement, et cetera. The priorities are determined by the local community. The engineering costs, I believe, are 50-50. The projects have to be submitted for approval to the department, but basically it's a case of the local authorities making some decisions about what they want to do and the government deciding to help them. I took the opportunity to outline the specifics of that program and the amounts of funding committed by the minister to various communities. I've reported on that in the local paper so people would know that this is a good program that's benefiting them, and used that opportunity to thank the minister in print, but I'll do it now in person. It's a good program, and I want to thank you for that.

Another issue that I would like to bring to the minister's attention, Mr. Chairman, is another one he's familiar with. This is where he'd be wearing his hat as minister of utilities, not transportation. It concerns the water supply situation in the hamlet of Duvernay. The minister was very prompt and forthcoming in his commitment to the people there to help fund the construction of a new water transmission system. The water supply in the hamlet was jeopardized by some activities of the chemical plant, and the minister, I think, was very generous in his interpretation of the guidelines of his programs so that he could commit some \$278,000 in funding towards the construction of that water supply system. That's much appreciated, Mr. Minister.

The construction didn't go ahead right away because the project was \$32,000 short. Through some process of negotiation and conversations that I and other people had with the then Minister of the Environment, Dr. Reid, he was able to make a commitment, and I thank him for that, of \$32,000, which meant the project was funded 100 percent. Then the county went through the process of securing easements on the property. A well was drilled. The well is there and capped, ready to be accessed to provide water. The easements have been secured. But now, apparently, the project has been tendered for construction, and the construction costs have come in way over estimate.

I'm not sure how those things occur. I don't have a thorough understanding of the tendering process. I don't know why the engineers didn't come up with a more accurate reflection, be-

cause the minister was prepared to make a commitment based on the figures provided by the engineer. But I do know that the project is now in some jeopardy, and the people in the hamlet of Duvernay still, after over a year, do not have their water supply. It's frustrating to all of us, because I know the government's committed to the project, the local government's committed to the project, the people are committed to the project, but somehow there are many obstacles along the way. I know the minister's as anxious as I to overcome those obstacles.

The county has made representation to him through a letter, hopefully to determine whether or not some additional funding -- or if the original estimate of funding available can be redone based on the new costs. I'm hoping that can occur. I've raised it with the hon. minister's colleague the Minister of the Environment to see what he can do in that regard as well. But I make that representation to the minister and thank him for his response in the past.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member for Lloydminster.

MR. CHERRY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I, too, would like to congratulate the minister on his reappointment. I had the pleasure in the last term to work with him on the roads in the Lloydminster constituency. I also would like, Mr. Minister, to congratulate your staff for the hard work which they do, and the deputy minister up there, Harvey Alton, who's a pleasure to talk with and work with. There's another mile of road for me.

But I would like to go down with a few comments . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order please. Order please, in the committee so the Chair can hear the hon. member.

MR. CHERRY: I would like to start with Highway 16, which is being twinned east. This has certainly been a wonderful day for the people on the east side of the province, and especially -- as we all know, it is the Yellowhead route. One of the things I would like to point out of course, is that when you enter Lloydminster, the twinning stops. There is some construction now in Saskatchewan. Thank God they decided to get a good government in there, one that looks after the people, because over the years their highway system has deteriorated something terrible -- something terrible. So the Progressive Conservative government that's in power there now is trying to pick up the loose ends and get on with the job of having a good highway system in there. [interjection] The hon. Member for Vegreville can say what he wants. I live there; I know. Thank you.

Now, Mr. Minister, I'd like to just briefly comment on the campsites and rest areas throughout the province in general. They are a wonderful addition to our highway system. One of the things I've noticed, traveling throughout the province in some of the areas, is that although it is a good campsite, it's pretty well bare of any trees. I know this may seem like a very small request . . .

MR. TAYLOR: Daishowa got 'em.

MR. CHERRY: Thank you.

But I think that when we are planning and putting them in, more attention should be paid to treeing that campsite and rest area. Because if you go to my constituency out west of Kitscoty, which is a nice campsite, really, on a hot day -- there are a few trees around there now, but they were late in coming.

I think it does offer shade for the travelers. I'm not by any means condemning the campsites. I think they are a great idea; the rest areas also.

I want to next just touch on the resource road grants. I know when I was a councillor with the county of Vermilion River, we certainly counted on our resource road grants. Some areas within the constituency do have a lot heavier volume of traffic, so it is difficult at times, I know, to be able to pinpoint where this heavy traffic area is. Because it's something like in the Legislature; the councillors are certainly all fighting to get as much money as they can also. But I think they are a very, very worthwhile grant. I think if there's one thing in rural Alberta that is a priority, it certainly is our road system, the road network. Talking with rural people, I believe that roads come first, then education and hospitals, but they are a very high priority.

I know, Mr. Minister, that you were out in Lloydminster last fall, and I was certainly happy to have you come out to our constituency. You met with the mayor of the city, Patricia Gulak, and talked about the urban transportation grant which the city is involved in. I know that they appreciate what you and the government are doing for them in Lloydminster. You must remember that in Lloydminster, with a city that is divided, it does prove to have its hardships at times in just where the dollars really flow. I know that this government over the years has looked at Lloydminster as a centre more than as a divided city, so I give you full credit for that.

The farm water grants I think were especially good for rural Alberta, especially good for the farmers. They certainly help in many, many ways. Not everywhere on the farm, I know, you can get water, so a lot of times it is a hardship. It becomes very expensive at times, but with the water grant it does help out and defray some of the costs.

The rural gas program; if I may switch just for a minute, Mr. Minister, over to the rural gas program. I only have the experience, again, from when I was with the county of Vermilion River when the natural gas was put in there; it was in the early '80s. I know, being a farmer myself and signing up for it, what a great thing it was for the rural Alberta people. I think at that time -- he's retired now -- the hon. Larry Shaben was the utilities minister, and he came out to the county several times. We took that on as a county project, and it's worked very, very well. They are a very efficient operation in the county even today. They've branched out, and of course they do service a lot of wells to the north of us, with the oil companies. So it certainly has proven to be not only a great thing for the rural people, but they've been able to make a profit out of it.

The last thing I'd like to touch on is the secondary road program. I know that everybody here this evening knows when we speak about secondary roads what we're talking about -- I hope. Maybe we need to give some a lesson. The secondary road program -- the network, of course, was put in there for heavy volume of traffic or market roads, as I like to say at times. In our constituency we have the major arteries, which are 619, 893 and 897, and 631 to the northwest of us there. Now, some of these secondaries have already been paved, for which full credit must go to the government. I believe that in rural Alberta . . . I was just talking to some of my colleagues before I got up to speak, and I was saying that if you went back 50, 60 years ago -- you know, that was really before my time even, but it must have been quite a day in rural Alberta when there was a family on each quarter section, to be honest with you. Today, of course, you can drive for miles, for miles, without seeing any

family or any headquarters of their farming unit, so that's the difference today.

But the secondary roads are a very vital source to rural Alberta. There can't be too much said about the secondary roads, and I know that in the Lloydminster constituency we are making headway on it. We do need more paving on the secondaries, but I'm hopeful, I'm patient, and I know that this minister and his staff are going to do a great job.

Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member for Westlock-Sturgeon.

MR. TAYLOR: [interjections] Aren't we kind and gentle today.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I, too, want to congratulate the minister on being reappointed. It reminds me of the story of the elderly gentleman, mind you, getting married for the third time. It's obviously a triumph of hope over experience, because I'm not so sure, from the questions being asked, whether he is learning at that fast a clip. But I will say this, Mr. Chairman: after enjoying the roast for the late -- not late; I should say the earlier, he's very much alive -- Member for Clover Bar, if the hon. minister of transport ever wants to entertain the House or go into the entertainment business, he would be a resounding success. He was by far the star of that meet, and they had such illustrious characters as such and such, but I won't go on with that. He was very good.

I'll try to make it fairly short. I also would like to thank the minister for being so co-operative. Even when he turns me down, he has a nice smile and lets me down easy. Nevertheless, I keep after him, and he is smart enough to give me about one out of every 100 requests, so I'll just keep coming back. I am wondering if he can maybe bring me up quickly. I'll stick to my constituency: the Legal to Redwater road, whether we're going to pave it up as far as the Lily Lake road or the game farm this year. I want to thank the minister of forestry for his quick action to make sure studies were done before we put a road through Lily Lake. I know it's considered a slough, but sloughs are homes to ducks, and ducks are getting to be in short supply. So if I may, through the minister, thank his cohort for causing a survey to be made before they could build across the lake, I would like to do so.

I might also suggest, though, that this might point out something. When the MDs send in their requests for changes of roads, it might be wise if the minister of transport asks the ministers of environment and forestry for an okay, or not necessarily for an okay but for a report on it. We would avoid some of this, which was quite embarrassing, I think, to the municipal councillors of the MD, who thought as long as they got the grant from the minister of transport, they could damn well do as they please. I don't think it's their fault -- they've been in the habit of doing it for years -- but with the new interest in environment that we have around Alberta, it may be wise to put a triple key system in so that once you have approved the budget, the other two departments still have to make sure that it doesn't interfere with forestry or environment or resources in some way.

I'm back to 794. With the advent of the pulp mills up around Slave Lake and the free trade, more and more trucking is trying to bypass Edmonton. If you're going to bypass Edmonton to the north and to the west, you have to come around through Devon and up 794, which is still only a secondary road and should be upgraded to Highway 44 to which it connects. A

small secondary road, 794, is expected to connect up the traffic of Highway 2 and the Yellowhead up to 44 and the Slave Lake country, which seems quite unreasonable. I noticed that last year when I asked you about it, you mentioned that the surveys showed that it wasn't quite up on the priority list of conversions. However, mainly through your good officership and your department you have done some surveys which you've returned to me, and I've asked for comparisons which you've tabled in the House from time to time. It shows quite clearly that 794 now carries more trucks than any secondary highway in the province except possibly the one running straight east of Nisku hooking up to Wainwright, Highway 14. So both those highways, it seems to me, should be upgraded so there isn't as much danger to life and limb.

I'd also like to put in two bits on another road in my own constituency, the Sunniebend Road, which goes from the hon. Member for Barrhead's constituency over to the Athabasca constituency but goes through mine in order to join up these two Tory strongholds -- as of now, that is. I have designs for the next election, so I'd like to get them paved while they're still Tory, because they might not be so easy next time. On the other hand, Sunniebend Road has had some swamp sections, heavy muskeg sections. It has cost more to build than normal, and I'd like the Westlock MD to get a little more money. In spite of the fact that they all backed my opponent, I still promised I would ask for more money for them this time around and not take a chippy outlook on it.

I'll wander a little farther afield now. There is the question of a transportation corridor for the proposed Athabasca plant; you know, the one that's getting all the attention, the pulp mill. When you move from Boyle to Grassland, which is really in my hon. friend's constituency but still has some concern, I think, to all Albertans, just what are the plans for putting power lines, highways, and railroads in from Boyle on up north? Are there going to be hearings? How are we going to conduct the process of connecting in that major pulp mill if it is to go ahead, if it gets its environmental clearance and so on and so forth? Because as it stands now, I haven't seen too much on the process of how we're going to put their power corridors into the pulp mill.

Also while we're on the pulp end of it, Mr. Minister, I'm not sure from reading the budget whether the forestry roads and ancillary support systems that we are going to put in for the pulp industry in Peace River, Grande Prairie, and Athabasca are in your budget or in forestry's budget under "development." I'm not sure. Maybe I didn't read it well enough and you could tell me in your kind, charitable way where I can find it.

Going on to other items now, we'll stop for a minute on the Gas Alberta operating budget, for which the annual report was filed fairly recently. Like you, I will agree that it is one of the better things that this government has done. But I'm just wondering whether it was altogether wise to force Gas Alberta to return the accumulated surplus of \$4.3 million to the customers. I'm of the opinion that natural gas is probably as low as it's ever going to be in price right now, and it might have been wiser to reinvest that in buying reserves for the future. And while we're on the system of buying reserves, I notice from that gas report that purchasers that buy Gas Alberta from the producer are still only 32 percent of their needs. They are still buying the balance, which would be 68 percent, from pipeline companies. Well, even Ontario, dirty old Liberal Ontario, is going directly to the producers nowadays and buying its gas, making good

deals on gas and having the pipelines transport it. In general, it's considered in the gas and oil industry, and you might check with your Minister of Energy, that the most expensive place to buy your gas is from the pipeline company, that you will do better buying it from the producer.

So here we have a combined case of \$4.3 million being returned to the customers, and in fact we're still purchasing most of our gas from the pipeline companies: Northwestern Utilities, Canadian Western, TransCanada, Pan-Alberta, Alberta and Southern, and other exporters, plus pre-empted export purchases. So the producer purchases are only 32 percent, and that's on page 3 of your Alberta Transportation and Utilities. You might ask your little gnomes up there just why we don't have Gas Alberta purchasing directly from the producers when the producers are in such dire straits nowadays.

AN HON. MEMBER: They've got to give their friends some profit.

MR. TAYLOR: Pardon? As a matter of fact, it looks like Nova needs the profit anyhow, the way the headlines are reading.

The other area, while I'm on it, and I just read it here . . . I'd just give some consolation to your deputies that produce the Alberta Electric Energy Marketing Agency and Gas Alberta report that some MLAs do read their report. On page 3 of the EEMA report you've talked about your averaging and blending power, which I think is another good feature this government has run into, and what you call the levelization of electric energy. It sounds like Joe Clark wrote this. That's a word I hadn't seen for a while, but it's a good one: levelization of electric energy. I was wondering why we are not able to fit in a little bit more of the small power than we are. Maybe you could give us an estimate of just how much of this total input of power for the province we expect small power to come up with, say, in five years. I'd like to see it get up into the 20, 30 percent category. But I don't know; maybe you have that in plan already. What plans, or how much of that total input? This is where the EEMA process is so good, because you can pool and level and average out.

I think in view of the concern that's being expressed in many areas of the world now, a power that's being generated from hydrocarbons -- whether it's solid ones like coal or liquid ones like diesel fuel or gaseous ones like natural gas, they're all putting carbon dioxide and elements into the air that are aggravating our greenhouse effect. The day may be coming faster than one thinks when we're going to have to cut down on power generated that way, so therefore we should be maybe accelerating the program of the small power producers a bit more than we thought in the past, in case environmentally it becomes almost a must. So I would be very interested in knowing whether your department has any long-term plans for bringing more non hydrocarbon produced power into the total mix in order to beat the so-called environmental concerns that are building. I'd just be interested in what the plans are. I suppose we could always hit uranium at Lake Athabasca and go into atomic power, but we haven't up to now.

Moving onward, I'll try and get caught up here. On the priorities in the paving of secondary roads, I had one question. Are we going to try to use the MD councillors, as we have in the past, to set priorities on the paving program, or are we going to have a new program? I think it has worked quite well with the MDs, although I have been known to get down and arm-twist with them occasionally, but I think having local people fix the

priorities is all right.

If I may go back to a local problem again, if you're writing it down. I was told today, or a couple of days ago, by some of my people in the constituency that want to upgrade highways to secondary quality, not from secondary to primary, which I was talking about with 794 to 44 -- we have, for instance, the extension of 50th Street in northeast Edmonton that connects Highway 37 and Highway 28, which a tremendous amount of people use. They wanted to know how to upgrade it to a secondary highway. I guess they called your department, and maybe some of the people up there -- I don't know; was it maybe you? -- gave the answer and said, "They're not bloody likely to be able to create any more secondary highways." In other words, is the fact that the Premier made the promise that he's going to pave all secondary highways making it impossible for us to rum a legitimate country road into a secondary road in the use of them?

In other words, maybe we should start a new category: secondary road -- post Premier's promise, PPP or something like that. Then you don't have to worry about putting that into your budget to be paved, because what we're having now is that we're getting stuck with dirt and poor gravel roads that everybody is scared to put a number on for fear somebody's going to come out and pave it. It was like in the days of Doc Horner at Barrhead. You didn't dare fall asleep; you'd get paved. Same way it is here now.

While I'm on the road area, I am concerned at the department's effort on how they want to cut down the number of farmers. The ministers of Agriculture have been doing pretty well by foreclosing on them at a great clip, running them off the land. But the way the minister of transport marks these level intersections is doing a pretty good job too. A simple stop sign at two secondary roads intersecting, especially if they're paved and there's no plume of gravel dust to see for miles as you approach, I think is asking for a good many farmers to go on to their reward faster than they intended to.

I've talked to some states in the U.S. on safety plans, and of course they get by with the rumble strips. But the rumble strips up here, because of snowplowing, are not a good idea, and I was wondering if you'd done any thinking on it. One of the ideas one highway engineer down in the deep united south came up with was that you don't have flat intersections anymore. If you can't afford to put in overpasses, you do a T-intersection, which is maybe not so wide. In other words, you have a great big checkerboard sign that your lights pick up or that you come up on, and you see you're going to have to stop. You don't look down the road and see that notch in the trees and, lulled away as you're listening to your Mozart on your eight-track or four-track or whatever it is, go breezing right straight through a sign and take the next two days getting over it as you notice a car was coming from the right or the left just as you got through it. In other words, I think the marking of level intersections is not possible. In fact, in Westlock-Sturgeon we have lost -- I think it's four deaths in the last year, and if you multiply that through the rest of the constituency, I wouldn't be surprised if it's not going on.

Now, you did mention back in 1987 that there was only 15 percent of the primary highways still not paved. I was wondering what percentage that had gone up to now.

I have another specific request. I've had some complaints in the last while by the 4-H people -- who as you and I both know do an excellent job of cleaning up our highways; it's just won-

derful the field day they make as they go out in the country to pick up the garbage in the ditches -- that we are not protecting them well enough on the speeding, and that maybe highways should be signed while they are out working, to slow them down -- or maybe you can move it along as they go. But apparently I've had two family groups complain to me that cars went by at an inordinately high speed while the kids were working the ditches and occasionally coming up on the edge of the road.

Pardon me, Mr. Minister, for looking through some more.

The other thing I found interesting -- there's always something in reading old *Hansards*. Back in May 1987 the then Member for Athabasca-Lac La Biche suggested that all the secondary road system should be paved in the next 10-year period. You answered with a great hee-haw, and said there'd be no money. It's rather interesting the way politics goes. The fellow that brought up the idea originally, loses the election; the Premier that stole the idea, wins the election.

AN HON. MEMBER: Well, sort of.

MR. TAYLOR: Sort of, I guess. I just thought it was rather interesting the way politics works. So any of you people around here don't be too damn smart in the suggestions you make, because you might just lose the next election.

AN HON. MEMBER: Question.

MR. TAYLOR: I think I'm coming close. Why don't you go out to the can for a minute there, and I'll maybe make a . . . I'm sorry. You always told me you had a hollow wooden leg, but I don't know.

The last question to the minister is one I don't think has been touched on: the Alberta Resources Railway. In this era of free trade and expanding trade, have any more studies been done to see whether we couldn't use that as another link to the Pacific? I know we keep subsidizing it. Why not have it do something worth while? Are there any studies being done as to whether or not we could link this to the Pacific coast through the Peace River country?

Thank you very much. [interjection] Go ahead. You have my permission.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member for Highwood.

MR. TANNAS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Congratulations to the hon. minister on his reappointment.

I'd like to underscore the significance of item 2.2 and make some additional points. Contrary to the sentiments expressed by the Member for Westlock-Sturgeon, I'd like to indicate how important the upgrading of the rural secondary roads is to help in the all-weather, safe transportation of grain, forage, livestock, petroleum, sulphur, forest products, gravel, and other commercial and industrial products. It also permits the tourists from not only outside the province but inside, and particularly from the cities, to travel on these roads. Indeed, Mr. Chairman, in my constituency of Highwood two areas under consideration in the secondary road improvement program are prompted almost entirely by the large number of city visitors to the camping and recreation attractions that are in our area.

Tonight I'm wanting to convey that I'm concerned about what provisions you have, Mr. Minister, to cover a problem that has arisen recently in my constituency. Following the revelation

of Calgary's most recent annexation plans a few years ago, there were hearings on potential extensions of the Deerfoot Trail. As recently as March of this year my constituents immediately south of the Bow River were reassured that the various possible extensions were theoretical constructs. That was on the Calgary annexation hearing. However, in April and May several acreage owners found out that there was indeed a proposal for a road running, to their chagrin, right through their properties. They had not been contacted in any direct way by the city of Calgary, not by the municipal district, nor by the Department of Transportation and Utilities.

They found out in April and May in one of three ways: one, their subdivision requests were altered to conform with the proposed extension; two, their subdivision plans were rejected or deferred because of the extension proposal; and three, most upsetting of all, in the case of a widow who was anxious to sell her property following the death of her husband and had an agreement to sell, when the buyer discovered that the Deerfoot Trail would run along the western portion of the property, he withdrew his offer. The widow did not know at that time that the Deerfoot Trail would cross her land, as she was never told in any formal or legal way.

So I have several questions arising from this, and perhaps an observation. One, where in this budget is there money set aside to purchase the right-of-way or to give compensation for loss of property value occasioned by this proposal? Two, where in this budget is there money set aside for the construction of the extension of the Deerfoot Trail beyond the boundaries of Calgary and the annexation boundaries? Three, when will it likely be built? Four, what are the property owners to do in the meantime? There's some significant time line in there. Five, what efforts might be undertaken to contact the people so affected by this plan to apprise them of their rights and to let them know what the construction timetable might be?

The observation, Mr. Minister and Mr. Chairman, would be that hopefully in future, long-term planning that has potential impact on landowners will be communicated in a timely manner so that these people won't run into brick walls and thereby find out about it.

To turn to happier things, the road improvements on 2A to facilitate the traffic at the Cargill and MagCan plants are welcome, and we look forward to the early completion of those improvements. The long delayed completion of Highway 7 between Okotoks and Black Diamond will be welcomed by people of those communities, as well as Turner Valley and Longview. I'd like to see Highway 40 in the south end of the Kananaskis opened earlier in the season, perhaps May 1, or at the latest the Victoria weekend. I'm delighted that there is a priority on completing the four-lane highway south from Calgary to Fort Macleod and on to the U.S. border. As you know, Mr. Minister, the department started this project as recently as 1955, and I'll look forward to its completion in the south end of my constituency this year, in 1989, and of course to seeing it continue on further south to Fort Macleod.

In the far west of my constituency we have Highway 22, which will connect Lundbreck and Highway 3 to Longview and provide the hon. Member for Pincher Creek-Crowsnest with a shortcut to Edmonton. At the present time a significant dust and mud problem exists, depending on whether it's dry or wet, particularly in the Chain Lakes region, which is of course a highly used recreation region, and along the access roads thereto. Although I'd like to see this area paved before the Pincher Creek-

Crowsnest portion is paved, I understand the request came in too late to permit a change in the tendering and contracting process. I am pleased, however, that preparation work on this portion will be accelerated this fall to facilitate completion of this portion as soon as possible next year. Again, roads are a vital part of the economy, and the quality of life in my constituency and the street and road programs are valued by village and town residents.

When the hon. Member for Westlock-Sturgeon ascribed the paving of secondary roads to someone who came from Athabasca-Lac La Biche, I'm afraid he lacked the research capabilities of the Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place, because of course that program goes back to the late '60s and the previous administration, who embarked over 20 years ago on this very program. So none of us can take credit for that, with the possible exception of the man from Little Bow.

Mr. Minister, I'm confident that the important stewardship for Transportation and Utilities is in good hands with you and with the fine people in your department.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

The hon. Member for Rocky Mountain House.

MR. LUND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I, too, want to join in congratulating this minister for being reappointed to his portfolio. I had the opportunity to work with him when I was in the municipal setting, along with working with his staff, and certainly have been very impressed with the fairness and the reasoning that goes into what is going on in the department of transportation.

One of the things I want to mention is how pleased we in my constituency were to see the paving of the secondary roads being fulfilled. I certainly hope that it's the department's intent to work with the local municipalities and have some flexibility in the program. What I'm getting at there, Mr. Chairman, is the problem that we have on a lot of the secondary roads. They've been paved and now need an overlay, as opposed to going out and paving some of the existing graveled ones, and for that matter, some of the secondaries need a lot of upgrading before it's worth putting the pavement on them. So I'm sure that we will be getting that co-operation.

Getting to some specifics in the estimates, I'm very pleased to see in 2.6.2 the Vehicle Inspections Stations being raised by 62.9. Certainly it was evident last year and the year before, particularly in road ban time, that there was some lack of inspections and enforcement of the load restrictions, and certainly it doesn't take very long for these heavy vehicles to do a lot of damage. And, of course, the other area where we have a number of unsafe vehicles on our roads -- I think it's very important that we identify those and have them repaired.

In [2.9.4], Grants to Towns and Villages, a 42.9 percent increase, a \$3 million touch -- that certainly will help a great deal. Many of these towns don't have a tax base that great and find it very difficult to upgrade their streets to a reasonable standard, so that will be welcome news to them.

I suppose it's a little peculiar for a rural MLA to comment on the financial assistance to the urbans, but certainly we recognize how expensive it is to upgrade and keep that infrastructure in place in the urban municipalities. I think it's great that they would be getting an increase of 19.9 percent.

I want to take this opportunity to thank the minister and his department for a number of things that have happened in the

Rocky Mountain House constituency over the last year and are going on this current summer. There have been a number of improvements on Highway 11, which is becoming a very busy road with the oil activities and the tourism expansion that's been going on in the west part of the Rocky constituency. This summer there's been an overlay on Highway 20, which was much needed and very much appreciated. The paving of 761 is completing as we meet here today; I understand that they were completing it. That is an important linkage. The commitment to highway 766 for a paving base course job is very welcome. I understand there's been part of the construction contract let on Highway 12, one that's going to eventually link up Lacombe and Highway 22 and will serve to take a lot of traffic off the other main east-west artery in my constituency, something that will assist a lot of the rural people out in the area as well. Also the commitment to upgrading of Highway 54, particularly from the junction of 22 and 54 east of Caroline on through to west of Caroline. That's becoming a very busy and dangerous road because it's very narrow, and some of the profile is not the best.

I do have one concern, though, and that's when we get to vote 2.4.2, with the primary highway maintenance. I see a reduction of 11.1 percent there. I would be interested to know just exactly how that's going to be accomplished. I've been around surfaced roads long enough to know that if you postpone the maintenance, it ends up costing you a lot more as we get down the way. Very quickly those costs escalate.

I've got one quick question as well, and that's to do with load limits. It's becoming quite an issue around Rocky Mountain House. It was determined that last winter on a frozen roadbed we had two weight restrictions. If you were hauling gravel, it was one; if you were hauling trees, it was another. It's causing a great deal of problem, and I would be interested for the minister to comment on that one.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member for Stony Plain.

MR. WOLOSHTYN: Thank you. [some applause] At least it was appropriate. I'd also like to extend my congratulations to the minister on his reappointment. I do look forward to working with you and your staff, and I hope you look forward to working with me.

I've got a few minor questions relating to the operation of the Department of Transportation and Utilities. One of them has to do with Highway 22 south of Calgary that joins Highway 2 and goes to the little town of -- I think it's Priddis. When the Olympics were on, there were signs there that had "Alternate Route to the Olympics," and I went driving down this alternate route and ended up coming to a closed gate. I didn't know whether the signs were misplaced or the highway was never finished. It's now a four-lane highway. It was required up to the Spruce Meadows definitely for safety reasons, and I would ask if it's going anywhere beyond Priddis. Is it going to go down to Turner Valley, or is it going to eventually go from 66 on to 40 and become an alternate route into the park?

MR. ADAIR: Is that 22?

MR. WOLOSHTYN: Twenty-two, yes. And I believe it then becomes 66 and there's a gap between it and 40.

Vote 2.10 that had the urban moneys: I think it's very commendable that the department recognizes the need for the larger urban areas to maintain their road systems. I would like to ask

the minister if he is aware of the specifics for Edmonton, especially with respect to the ring road project that seems to be on a very, very slow rate of improvement, and also the fact that Edmonton has a proliferation of freeways that don't seem to go anywhere. They start in the middle of someplace and end without getting where they're intended. I won't comment on that.

Vote 2.9 on the grants to towns and villages, the rural grant, I think is quite appropriate. I would hope that the appropriation of these moneys takes into concern first and foremost safety improvements. There are quite a few areas where that could be improved upon.

Another general area one could look at is the standards of construction. In view of the fact that this budget has a total of \$101 million that appears to be earmarked for highway maintenance -- vote 2.2.6 refers to Pavement Rehabilitation, and 2.4.1 to Primary Highways maintenance; the two of them come out to \$100 million -- I would trust that the minister had his free roller coaster ride out west. If he takes Highway 16X, no matter what kind of vehicle, at certain points you get a beautiful ride. It rivals West Edmonton Mall's roller coaster. The part that's distressing is that if you go past Entwistle and look on the one side, the old highway is in very, very good shape in terms of being relatively straight. The new construction is extremely rough. The same can be applied on the 184th Street area of 16X. I have a strong suspicion that in one of our recent spills a contributing factor was the rough road, and as the minister would be well aware, there's a big difference between a semi and a car in terms of picking up the roughness in the highways. I'm wondering if the standards of construction aren't perhaps slipping a little bit, and maybe the minister would like to address, through his department, what kind of standards are adhered to.

As I travel around the province I notice two methods of culvert installation on new grades: one where the culvert is put in beforehand and packed around properly, and the other one where the grade is pushed through, the culvert is dropped into a pile of mud, and you come back two or three years later with a depression. I would suggest to the minister that perhaps that's one area that could be looked at, because I'm sure some of this money is going to repair roads that perhaps if they were built up to standard would not require repair as quickly as they seem to.

A few years ago it used to give me quite a bit of pride to watch the department of highways -- as they were called at that time -- try to raze the growing grass in the ditches and keep it trimmed nice and neat. Unfortunately, now it appears that the grass is allowed to grow into a crop of hay before it's cut. It seems to be done once a year in most parts -- from my observation, at any rate -- very shoddily. I would wonder what's happened to the highway cutting crews and why it is that the size of equipment they seem to be using is triple mowers and they don't do near the job that could be done. I think it's very, very important on our tourist routes especially that we do keep it beautified and appealing to the eye.

Along with maintenance, again I'd have to go along with what some of the previous speakers have said with respect to lights at some of the intersections. I think a further expansion into red lights on top of very large stop signs at major highways might be one way to look at keeping down the accidental intrusion onto primary highways by vehicles, and thus cutting down the number of accidents.

One of the budget items is the roads to resources. Roads and bridges there take up, I believe, close to \$75 million. I think we can appreciate the need for these roads. The question that I

would have to the minister is: how much of an impact on current highway construction does this \$75 million have, or has his plan been planned on and fused into the budget from other sources?

Vote 2.6, which is the moneys that are being allocated for parks and rest stops: the direct question I would have is on a specific item. Would that perhaps include improvements to the dust problem at the provincial park in Wabamun Lake? There's a very extreme problem with dust at, I believe, Kapasiwin beach, Lake Wabamun.

MR. ADAIR: What was the problem?

MR. WOLOSHTYN: Dust. So if the allocation for improvement in campsites and the rest stops -- if in fact there is an allocation to improve on Lake Wabamun.

Again I believe we're going along on this business of the overall highways department. I have a question that's been bothering me for years and years. We do end up putting in quite a few miles of new highways, and we end up eliminating corners in the roads. A good example is the vast improvements in the area around Edson, where some very dangerous curves were eliminated. But unfortunately, the old highways remain there. And I would wonder if the department of transportation has considered removing the old highways, reusing the aggregate by crushing it -- I believe the city of Edmonton does this -- and restoring the old right-of-ways as much as possible to their natural state, whether it be in a farmland or in the forest areas, so that we don't have the ugly, useless old asphalt with the grass growing through it. I would say that that, if it became a part of the program, would be probably quite beneficial in the long run.

I recently had a letter from a young constituent who inquired about bike paths. And I do appreciate the reply the minister gave, but I think this constituent had a very good point. I think that in the course of new highway planning perhaps some sort of thought should be given to incorporating bona fide bike routes on the highways. I don't quite know how or what, but we could look at that, beyond the slightly wider shoulder.

AN HON. MEMBER: Bona fide bike routes? I'm sorry.

MR. WOLOSHTYN: Incorporating into our highway construction, where appropriate, bike paths. Incidentally, that request for the bike paths -- this hon. member said when was the last time I was on a bike. You'd better ask the bike; it bent. But it's not for me. It's for the young and upcoming generation that I make the request.

AN HON. MEMBER: When CCM first built them.

MR. WOLOSHTYN: CCM balloon tires.

The other area to do with the department that I think was worth looking into is the priorities that are set for signage on the major highways. There is the summer village of Edmonton Beach, which is not even mentioned on Highway 16X, although at one time Highway 16 went through it. Yet along the same stretch of highway there are numerous signs referring to private operations such as golf courses and trailer locations and so on. I don't have any problem with the provision of direction to motorists, regardless of where you're taking them to, but I do feel that we should have some special consideration given to identifying our municipalities regardless of how small they are,

especially if that route led through the place at one time.

On a particular constituency highway -- and I think the minister knows the highway I'm going to refer to right away: good old Devon Highway 60 that's been getting built for an eternity; I would hope that one goes on to a successful and speedy conclusion to whichever route it was intended to go. But in mentioning that particular road, there are three intersections that are very hazardous on there, locally identified as Graminia Road, Woodbend Road, and Garden Valley, where the far lane is going to terminate or reduce into a two-lane. I believe Garden Valley is also secondary 627. I think the minister's personal attention to those three areas would be most appropriate.

The last question I have is in reference to the secondary highways. We are getting a fairly decent program of secondary highway paving in the province. However, the question I have is: who is going to be responsible for the policing of the highways in terms of the truck restrictions on them? Is it a provincial matter or a municipal matter?

Did you hear me, Mr. Minister?

MR. ADAIR: Who is responsible for policing of the . . .

MR. WOLOSHTYN: Of the load restrictions, the standards on it. Do you have the people that are involved with the . . .

MR. ADAIR: You're talking about trucks.

MR. WOLOSHTYN: Yes, specifically trucks. You have the people that work out of your vehicle inspection stations and they're responsible for all primary roads. The secondary highways: as the network gets larger, are they a municipal responsibility or the other? If they are a municipal responsibility, is the department willing to assist municipalities who don't have the resources to in fact police these roads?

Mr. Minister, that's my final question. I repeat that I do look forward to working with you and your people in the future, and I look forward to your responses to my questions.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member for Taber-Warner.

MR. BOGLE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I'll make my comments brief in light of the hour. I would like to join other colleagues in the Assembly by congratulating the minister. I believe the minister is the longest serving continuous minister in this government and he certainly handles himself well in terms of the delegations of various groups around the province he has to meet with. There are many, and that's a challenge. I also have a special affinity with the minister in that I had the honour of following him in the native affairs portfolio, only to find some years later that he followed me in the utilities section of the department he now has. So I certainly wish him well in the department.

The Alberta farm water grant program has been alluded to. The only thing I can add to what's been said, Mr. Chairman, is that there are a number of applications in at the present time. I think, as the minister said, we're out of funds now, but I would request that consideration be given to notifying those individuals who meet the criteria of the program; let them know that if they wish to proceed with the works, they may do so, recognizing that the funding will not be provided until the dollars are actually made available. In that way the individual applicants can make a decision whether to proceed with the project now at their

own expense and be reimbursed later or wait until the funding, in fact, is in place.

The development of our rural gas program: a couple of weeks ago the agriculture caucus committee met with the Federation of Alberta Gas Co-ops. What an extremely proud group of individuals represent the various gas co-ops around this province, and they have great reason to be, because with support from the government they have done something that's unique in North America and, indeed, have developed a system that is now being used as an example in other places. The continued support our minister and the department provide in that area is really appreciated.

The water and sewer assistance programs, that have been alluded to, for many of our villages and towns and smaller cities are so important for the development of the infrastructure in those areas.

Just a couple of quick points on the constituency. Secondary road 845 from the town of Coaldale north to the Oldman River I know the department has it down as a priority, as does the county of Lethbridge. One of the main concerns with the road is that with the road-widening and because of the irrigated lands and the lowlands in the area, much of the fill has to be brought in, so it's an expensive road to develop. I know the department is working with the county on that. Secondary road 501 from Cardston through Milk River to a point south of Foremost and then 879 up to Foremost has been a priority of the three MLAs -- that's the MLAs from Cardston, from Cypress-Redcliff, and myself -- as well as the municipal district and the two counties involved. We want to continue with that program.

I'm pleased to see that the road down to Writing-on-Stone park will be paved this year, and that's certainly going to be welcome. Some lights on Highway 3 at Barnwell is an issue which has been addressed by the minister and by officials in the department. There is a great concern because of school-age children who cross the highway regularly there. Some suggestions have been made, and I think we are waiting for a response from a senior official in the department. The twinning of Highway 3 -- we're talking about the highway between Lethbridge and Medicine Hat but primarily the section between Coaldale, as it's now twinned from Lethbridge to Coaldale, and Taber -- is a very important issue in the constituency I represent. That highway carries a lot of traffic, and we're so pleased with the commitments made by the department in terms of the progress in the plans to twin the road, the purchase of necessary rights-of-way so we can get on with that job and see the road brought up to the twin standard. Highway 61, the Wrentham/Skiff area and Foremost: some improvements need to be made on that particular highway as well.

The export highway, which has been alluded to in our Speech from the Throne as well as by the minister tonight, which will eventually see Highway 2 twinned down to Fort Macleod, Highway 3 from Fort Macleod over to Lethbridge, and then Highway 4 from Lethbridge to the border at Coutts, is important. Again, Highway 3 in the constituency I represent is of greater priority because of the traffic it carries. But I would urge the minister to look at two specific requests on the lower end of Highway 4. At Coutts, our international border point, we have a pressing need for some off-highway parking for large cattle liners and semi trucks. There is congestion there. I am hopeful members of the village council will meet with senior officials from the department during next year's Urban Municipalities Association convention to address that issue. In

the town of Milk River, the highway flows through the town. There are a number of restaurants, service stations, and other services that depend on that. We'll soon be opening our new tourist interpretative centre, and that also is important in terms of our long-range planning.

I'd like to conclude my remarks by giving or passing through the minister to the deputy minister of the department, Mr. Harvey Alton, and the senior officials here in Edmonton a big bouquet. They work very, very hard. Harvey Alton and his staff here work very hard in supporting the minister in responding to requests that come in from MLAs, in working with our municipal districts and counties, in working with the towns and cities and villages to provide the best level of services we can given the dollars which are available. I think that as long as we've got people like Harvey Alton at the head of the administrative level in our departments, the departments are in good shape.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. ADAIR: Mr. Chairman, I think when the first question was asked it was last year. I've got to just go back a little bit and talk about the questions that were raised, I believe, relative to the assistant deputy minister's office and the increases that were involved first in the planning and development section. That was the Member for West Yellowhead. That 12.6 percent increase was a result of an adjustment within the department itself, an increase in fixed assets to allow for the EDP equipment in the ADMs office. The Planning and Development division includes the utility policy, the transportation planning policy, and the research and development policy. It's an adjustment of funds within, where if one doesn't get it the other one got it because we moved some people over there, got some of the other equipment in. So that's the first one. That was the 12.6 percent increase that was noted.

The second one in Program Design and Delivery -- that's the 29.5 percent increase -- was a result of the total departmental reorganization, and it brings into this particular one the responsibility for regional operations and engineering and fleet management. They're both in the one area now instead of two areas. In addition to providing for salary adjustments as they may occur within the system itself, it also includes a transfer of a secretary from the ADM of regional transportation, and that accounts for that 29.5 percent increase. If you actually look at the dollar amounts, they're very small in the total sense, and that of course, creates the higher percentage of increase from 235 to 305. Conversely, if you look at the one right underneath that 2.1.2, there was a decrease in the ADM's office as well, and that is as they adjusted from one to the other.

I believe the next question raised was relative to campsites and rest areas. That was 2.6.1, I believe. Funding is increased to provide for an additional rest area and washroom facility, and I might just add, in the sense of answering that question as well, that if it's a campsite along the highway or a rest area along the highway, then in fact we take control of it. If it's a provincial park or the likes of that other than requested, if it's a local road going to that then that is the responsibility of the local municipal authority. Accessing, for example, a provincial park at Wabamun, I believe, was one of the other questions asked. But in this case, where we're talking about the campsites and rest areas, they've been a very effective program. I think from the very first one that was built at Wetaskiwin many, many years ago to the ones we now have at Bassano and Valleyview and Airdrie. I believe, and out west on Highway 16, they have

served the public very, very well indeed.

One of the questions asked by the hon. member was whether there was any possibility that traplines -- I put a question mark, because having some knowledge of traplines and the fact that they were looking for power, most of them are generally in isolated areas where the cost of providing the poles, accessing those, as the hon. member may well know in his capacity of his other life, would become a bit a problem. I would assume the trappers either use small generators or the likes of that that they can obtain, or they use lanterns. I'm just not sure. But I am not aware of any requests that have come to us for any assistance with the power company, because basically those applications would be made to the power companies in the various regions, whether it was Alberta Power or TransAlta Utilities, whatever the case may be.

In the case of the REAs, I believe the question was something to do with the fact that there were acreages that were obtaining loans through the REAs. The only way they would be able to do that is if they are REA members; then they are eligible for those 3 percent loans that are available. Even in the part 2 loans there's one interest free that's part of being a member of the REAs wherever they may be. That's been the case. Of course, one problem that has continually risen is the fact that there's a concern by the REAs that they don't want to be purchased by the power companies, and there's a move by the power companies to, in fact, purchase the REAs. So there's a bit of a saw-off or a balance at that particular point in time.

The Member for Edmonton-Whitemud -- I should congratulate the member. He started by saying he was a grandfather today for the first time. If that's the first time for him, God bless him. [interjection] I was just saying congratulations on being a grandfather, it's starting to show. I say that politely in the sense that as we get older, it's there, and the pride is certainly showing through. Particularly when it's the first time as a grandfather, that's probably a momentous occasion for all of us. I haven't reached that particular one yet, although I have been sort of hinting to my three children at home. I'm not trying to push them.

I think the national safety code . . . There were a number of things the hon. Member for Edmonton-Whitemud moved across the gamut. The federal government is putting in place the national safety code with the co-operation of all the provinces basically and the industry itself. Unbeknownst to a lot of people, the old safety code did involve 10 hours of driving time. It was there and has been there for many, many years. The new one that's being suggested and that we're strongly in favour of is 15 hours, with 13 hours of that driving time. That basically is going to be the western provinces moving in alliance with that. That's Saskatchewan, Alberta, and British Columbia. There has been a concern expressed by the national safety code people about our involvement at that level, slightly different from what the other provinces are doing. But in the interests of the code itself and general safety, there are probably about 20 different points that are being moved through the system starting back on January 1, and we'll carry on for quite some time before we reach the end of that. The biggest one, or the one that had some controversy, was the hours of work and then the use of log books.

One of the things we're looking at is where and how we treat our truckers in the province of Alberta -- those who, in fact, are what I'll call resident truckers, not those that cross the borders -- relative to possible exemptions, some of which were in place

under the old system. We're certainly attempting to try and work with the industry and try and deal with the two sides of that: things like, for example, a 100-mile radius where you wouldn't have to use log books 100 miles from your home base -- 100 kilometres from your home base. I'm the old mile man.

The question you raised relative to \$10 million in last year's budget relative to secondary roads and then \$18 million this year: last year, when we were making our bid to have some additional dollars; it was with the support of the MDs and counties again, because we had reached what we considered to be a dangerously low level of funding down to the \$72 million and we had to start working our way back up to that \$100 million, if it was at all possible, because we were falling behind. Of course, with the advent of the dollars that were put in place for the secondary highway system that's now there, that additional \$18 million this year, that brings us up to the \$100 million level for secondary highway construction. It might be interesting to note that that will probably handle about 646 to 650 kilometres of road this year that could be paved under that \$100 million program.

So if you want to use simple math, and that's probably the most difficult to do, you would then have about 6,500 of 8,000 miles paved if we stay at that \$100 million per year. It's our anticipation that at some point within that 10-year span we're going to have to move up to \$125 million and possibly \$150 million to meet the schedule. So if you've got an average of \$125 million or, let's say, \$150 million, then that's about \$1.5 billion or \$1.25 billion in total for that road program. Now, you can take that into consideration against the Urban Transportation program. Half a billion dollars in three years and half a billion dollars in the next three years is one billion over six years, if that should occur. There are a great number of dollars involved in the construction of roads and the maintenance of roads in the province of Alberta. I think there were a lot of people who really didn't understand the kinds of dollars that we're involved in, first, purchasing land for the right-of-way, then getting into the grading, then getting into the base coursing, and then finally getting into the final lift, all of which, when you total them up, is a tremendous amount of money for almost every mile of road this province has within it.

We have one of the finest road systems, albeit there may be some that are a little wavy in some places as we move with our weight limits. I'm not sure, Mr. Chairman, that I can combine some of these answers and say at this point in time too . . . One of the things that starts to come into the question was raised, I believe, by the hon. Member for Stony Plain: the calibre or the changes, if there are any, in the kinds of construction. I'm not aware of any material changes that take place. You did mention, sir, the fact that there are some culverts put in the muskeg and allowed to 'go. That's called preloading, some of which has to be done in those really wet areas where you, in fact, do that one year, let it sit, and then build the road on it the next year. That's the preloading concept, which has been around for some time and which is being used on 16 west on some of those wet areas out there. Then of course on the dry areas you've got the culvert, that they dig the hole and pack it around. So there are different methods of engineering to put those particular culverts in place by way of either the area that it's extremely wet and they have to go to what I call the preloading concept.

In the area of how we are going to do this program: as we announced at the very start, one of the first things we're going to do is sit down with our regional people and the municipal

authorities and discuss the priorities in their areas. One of the things that's very important to us is the ability to be able to look at what options are open to us. Some of the secondary highways in the province do not have high usage on them. Some of them, for example, may well be 150 vehicles a day, some may be 300 vehicles a day, some 6,000 vehicles a day. When you take into consideration that particular difference alone on, say, cars and then add the truck weights in there, then you have some which will have to be more heavily paved than others. In other words, the standard may be higher on that high usage area, more industrial traffic than on a route has particularly all cars. We're going to attempt to do that. We've tested some of that particular product in the province and it has stood up well. Part of it goes to what is called seal coating. Single seal coat, double seal coat can do the same job as the base course and then the final lift on that. In some of those areas where it's lighter and you still get the same usage -- in other words, you may get six to 10 years of good use, 15 years of good use, maybe 20 years. The average life of a piece of asphalt is roughly around 12 to 15 years in the mean. So we intend to do that. We intend to continue to meet with the MDs and counties and set the priorities and, I might add within that and I'll say it right here, the working of the MLAs as well. Very important indeed for us.

Gravel trucks were raised, and I believe it was the Member for Edson or from West Yellowhead. The gravel trucks with the minimum haul rate in the province of Alberta right now have the highest minimum haul rate of anywhere in Canada: 11.2 cents per tonne kilometer, plus a 73 cent -- I stand to be corrected -- per tonne loading factor. The second highest is Saskatchewan at 10.2 cents and no loading factor. It's been a concern of ours, because when you've got a program in place where you're attempting to assist a segment of the industry and then having that segment of the industry not happy after you've tried to help them, then you've got to look at what alternatives are out there and what are the options. I have said constantly that the best option and the fairest option and the one I would lean to is called the straight tender system. Those who are low, get it; those who aren't, don't. Then you're not subsidizing one unit to help another and having somebody else say I'm prejudiced against whatever the case may be. That's a difficult one when you look at the fact that historically the province of Alberta has supported the gravel trucking industry for many, many, many years, almost 50 years, with a minimum haul rate of some type. One of the biggest pressures I get is to remove it.

Because there is a differential -- and I believe that comes from the Member for Edmonton-Whitemud talking about when you're doing contractor supply work -- that contractor who gets the job has the right to hire the trucks for whatever he can get them for. If it's a provincial highway where we in fact are the ones involved in it, the minimum haul rate applies. In the other case, as was the case here in Edmonton last year, or even this year, if they decide by their wisdom in a negotiation with a contractor to accept something less than the minimum haul rate, that's between the trucker and the contractor. Hopefully that will remain to be in place for many more years to come.

Talking about impaired drivers, the only thing I'll say is that we work very closely with the Solicitor General, who handles most of that. We did have a program that received an award. We did it last Christmas, I believe it was, and it was called *The End of the Road*. It was one where they dropped an egg on the road. We did it in the theatres and did it for one reason: to get to the younger population, who attend shows primarily. It was a

very, very effective program, and we won an award for that one, I might say. Quite an impact when you dropped the egg and, as soon as it hit the asphalt, it blew up and you had asphalt going and somebody said: "That's the end of the road. Don't drink and drive."

Licensing again is the Solicitor General's. One of the things that sort of bothers me, I guess, in the long haul is that professional drivers or anyone -- I'm not sure that as many of them are aware of the fact that it is a privilege to drive and to have a driver's licence in this world we live in. In my mind, there's got to be some changes that have to occur at what's called the attitude level, the attitude of the driver. If you've got someone driving through stop signs, I don't care how many signs you put up or how many red lights you put up, you're going to continue to have some of those people doing that. A combination of either larger stop signs, for my hon. colleague from Westlock-Sturgeon, who was at that function . . . I was really pleased to see you get up and speak, because that was the largest audience you'd had in your lifetime. I said it there and I'll say it again. But I think it's important that we do work together in the sense of trying to rationalize what's the best route. The other important point is that in most of those local intersections, it's the municipal authority's responsibility for those stop signs or whatever they may decide to do.

Dangerous goods was brought up. All of our provincial highways are dangerous goods routes, except within the cities where they're designated by the various cities. Now, there are a number of things that can occur. We work very closely with the people in public safety services and the likes of that to ensure that proper signage is in place. I think we're getting a greater awareness of spills and the likes of that occurring. People are now phoning them in, and those who actually are involved in those spills are making the contact because of the "fear" of getting caught. It's like Check Stop. It's working much better as we go along.

Seat belts. Seat belts are my responsibility. The Act was my responsibility, still is my responsibility, and with the cooperation of the Attorney General the appeal will be heard, I believe, in September. I hope at that particular time, Mr. Chairman, it will be brought back to where it's mandatory, because we have not been able to basically issue tickets. We have attempted to do some work in that area of, I guess, an awareness program -- not as much as I would like to have, and it's simply a case of dollars -- but certainly from the standpoint of when and if that appeal is granted, if it is in fact granted, then we'll be working very quickly, because it will tie in almost to the school bus season of September and we have a very good program that goes on at that particular point in time.

Via Rail is not my responsibility as a builder of roads. Via Rail is a machine that moves goods and services and people, and it becomes the responsibility of Economic Development. But I can say that when I was Minister of Tourism, when the first cut-back occurred and the town of Jasper was attempting to get someone to support them along the way, the province of Alberta was the very first group to support the community of Jasper by providing funds for them and to them to assist in that bid to bring in those people to make the case for keeping it going. I was very much involved with the minister at that time, Mr. Pépin. We had quite a number of discussions. There was a study done by Economic Development at the time that was an excellent one, which indicated some of the options that were open to Via Rail by way of double-deckers and new equipment

and a change in service schedules; for example, every day in the summer time, maybe two times a week or three times a week in the winter time. That study is still very valid today as it was then and hopefully can be used.

Rocky Mountain doubles was a question raised. They're only allowed under special permit, with special requirements regarding the hours of operation, driver training, and safety requirements, plus the fact that all the drivers that are driving those units are the senior drivers. We have very little in the way of any accident reports from that particular operation. It's been working very, very well indeed, and I don't see that changing at this particular point in time. From the standpoint of economics of the units and the safety of the units, they in fact meet all the standards we require of them. That's the Rocky Mountain doubles, and basically I believe they operate on our twin system and have been very effective. The one thing that has been requested of us is the possibility of putting a sign at the back of those units for those underpowered cars who like to pull out and pass anybody and have trouble passing another little underpowered car let alone the 95-foot unit. If there was a sign on the back that said this unit is 95 feet long, start on Monday -- I'm being a bit facetious, but I'm trying to make a point -- it may indeed help some of those drivers. And again it comes back to attitude. I drive a tremendous amount on the roads in Alberta and I see people trying to pass lineups of cars or trucks. The only reason there isn't an accident is that both parties moved over to let that person, whoever they were, go through. You can count them on your hands probably every weekend - at least 10 or 12 or 14 of them -- and your feet too.

Hon. Member for Drayton Valley, thank you for your kind remarks about the department and the people within the department. I think it's important that one of the things we point out is that when we were putting together the secondary highway program, it was the third building block in the system. The number one building block was the Alberta cities partnership program: three years, half a billion dollars. The second one was the towns, villages, and summer villages: an extension of one year from the old five years and \$50 million to six years and \$75 million, again after discussion with those parties at the municipal level, and I believe they're very happy indeed.

The other one that sort of fits in there is the increase. There was a small increase for the MDs, counties in their funding for their roads, and that was a 3 percent increase. What you attempt to try and do there is find a balance, find a balance so that one program doesn't get out of step with the other, and that's what we've attempted to do over the years. The deputy that's been mentioned -- Harvey Alton is that deputy, and I think he's the finest deputy in government. They work very closely with all these municipal people to try and make sure that balance is maintained between the urban situation, the towns, villages, and summer villages, and the counties and MDs.

The resource road program, one of looking at whether we can ensure that there are some dollars. There are some dollars in the resource road program, slightly less than we had last year. The capacity that we have to assist is one where we're trying now to do more cost sharing; in other words, working with the municipal authorities where there may be a road that needs to be changed for whatever reasons, either oil and gas or tourism or the case that comes up in the middle of a budget season and say, "Well, we'd be prepared to work with you on a cost-share basis and try and see how that works." It's been working very well up to this point in time.

To the hon. Member for Vegreville: thanks again for your comments.

Secondary highways. We build them; the municipalities sort of maintain them and operate them. You gave me a list of numbers: 637 east of Lamont, that one is on the books -- we work on the priorities by working with the MDs and counties -- 834, I marked down "not included this year"; 855 has paving south; 857 has paving south; 834 has paving south of Tofield. At one point there was a comment made that the paving was lagging far behind. I'm not about to say which constituency it is, but there are a couple of constituencies that are far less than any other constituency in the paving area in the province. Not mine; mine's done very well. As a matter of fact, I get along very well with the minister.

The comments made about the Duvernay project maybe bothered me a little bit because I thought it was under control, and I'm sorry to hear that those bids have come in. Certainly we'll take another look at what the options are, because we understand the problem that was created there by the fact that there were some problems with the soil as a result of that chemical plant that was in the area there. So I've made a note to check on that to see just what it is.

The Member for Lloydminster. I'm pleased indeed with your comments as well and the work that's going on on 16 east I just made a note also of another road where we had some, what I call, co-operative effort, and that was on a road called the Meridian Road or number 17, where you and I, sir, had to suggest to the minister from Saskatchewan that it was time for him to move. When I say that, George McLeod is a good friend of mine. At a public meeting it was a case of one-upmanship, and I think we one-upped him that time in the sense of getting them to work with it, because that piece of road was starting to go quite rapidly and we were prepared to do something. But when you get on those border roads where part of it's our responsibility and part of it's another province's, they can be a nightmare or they can be a bonus. We've had some of each.

I believe you mentioned the need for more trees around the campsites and rest areas. I've made a note of that to see whether that's a possibility. If anything stops it, I would say it would be dollars, but we may be able to work something out. It would be kind of nice for the dogs to have a tree to work with when they stop. It's a long way between stops in that particular part of our province.

Farm water grants. It's really an interesting program. It's probably, again, one of those really successful ones that has taken off. It started off on the basis of assisting with the drought problem that we had. We increased the amount of money in the program again this year by \$900,000, a 31 percent increase, and I can say that as of today those funds are expended. I believe the hon. Member for Taber-Warner suggested that maybe we write to those and let them know. One of the problems we've got right now is we did that with a number of them. We indicated that they were eligible. Now they're coming back and saying: "I've been eligible for almost a year. What are you doing?" It's going to be a difficult one to look at. We're going to have to watch the climate of this particular summer as well, and if it continues to stay dry in some of the areas, I may have the capacity to go back and suggest to my colleagues that I need some additional funds to help those in the dried out areas particularly, as well as the lineup. We have about 640 applications that we're dealing with right now and probably funds for about half that, so we do have a problem. It's almost like the small

business grants of a couple of years ago, the equity grant program.

The rural gas program. I can't say enough about it, because I think that program, started by our government back in 1973, has been probably one of the most successful programs in North America, if not in the world. I don't know any other place in the world where you can go into the isolated areas of my constituency, for example, in the northwest part of the province and find natural gas in the homes. That's evolved over a good number of years, about \$350 million. They, the members of that co-op executive, are extremely proud about it. Also, they're writing a book, and I might say to everyone here that we assisted that organization to write the book because we felt it was something they wanted to do, it was a good story, and it was worth reading. It may help a lot of other people in the rest of the nation as well as those people who would take that book home and read about some of those people who worked on the program, by name. Because if you recall when the program first started out, one of the difficulties we had was that about the time we announced that, gas prices went up, and it became a real problem for us. But those volunteers stayed with us, and those co-op members worked the program through, and it has become an extremely effective one.

Westlock-Sturgeon. Highway 794 has got a tremendous amount of rehabilitation on it this year, 661, some base paving. He talked about possibly forestry and environment being involved in the program development. That may well work in those rural areas far out, but where you're dealing with the municipality that has basically the right and the opportunity and the obligation to purchase the right-of-way, that's what occurs generally. Because they, as we, are elected at their level. They make the decisions as to what roads they want as number one priority, number two, number three, or whatever the case may be. They also are the ones that make the request to us after they've made that decision for assistance under the normal grant programs.

The Athabasca pulp mill and the road were also mentioned. Speaking about the road itself, the possibility is being looked at right now. I'm aware of I believe three alternatives that are being considered as the possible south access from the mill site to the Boyle area, to the Athabasca area, and to Lac La Biche, because all three are very much involved in that particular one. The Member for Athabasca-Lac La Biche has been in my office a good number of times to try and see just exactly where we're at with that one.

Small power. That's an interesting one, because we presented the Bill a year ago, got it passed by the Legislature, put in place the capacity to allow for 125 megawatts of power to be picked up. Individually and collectively that could be at 2.5 megawatts or at 10 megawatts for pilot projects and anything over that, what we consider to be pilot projects. We had a number of projects that came in. I might say that at the present time the program is oversubscribed, oversubscribed by way of application and an indication that they want to proceed. Of course, we have to approve that first, and then they have to make the application to the ERCB and follow that through. Now, for example, there's one: the project on the Dickson dam. There are four applicants. [The hon. member's speaking time expired]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Would there be agreement of the Assembly to let the minister conclude answering the questions?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. ADAIR: Okay, I'll try and shorten it up so that I'm done by midnight, Mr. Chairman.

In the middle of the small power -- that basically is in place, and it covers wind, water, and biomass. Those are the renewable ones. Wind. Wind.

MR. FOX: We heard some of that in the Assembly this afternoon.

MR. ADAIR: Yes, we did.

Secondary highways. Basically again are the priorities of the municipal districts and counties, and we have an excellent working relationship with them and with our MLAs to work with them as well.

One of the questions that was raised was: how do you get a road moved from a local road to a secondary road? I guess the best way is with a great deal of difficulty. That's the best answer I can give right now, because there's a constant number of requests that come to us for that particular move or for the next move: once you've designated a secondary road, now we'll ask you to take it over. Then you have the total maintenance and operation of that road, whereas right now we build the secondary roads; municipal districts and counties maintain them. So we attempt to keep a balance. When we were putting the program together on the secondary highways, we were basically counting the existing system that's in place. In other words, out of that total of 140,000 kilometres of gravel road and the 14,000-plus that are in place and the 6,600 that are already done, the balance is what we would be working on. Now, that doesn't mean we're going to stop doing secondary roads, building them or taking them over, we'll be adjusting that in concert with the MDs and counties. There may be some that we take over. There may be some that might even possibly be dedesignated, if I can use that term, if they're not being used today as they were initially when they were first designated as secondary roads. We want that option and that capacity to be able to do that in discussions with them, not to tell them but to work with them as to whether that's a possibility.

I think I mentioned the stop signs, and we're prepared to sit down and deal with those with any of the municipal districts if they should request of us something different, keeping in mind the cost of putting in lights at all of these intersections, wherever they may be. I again think it's a combination of possibly bigger signs and driver attitude that would be needed.

The 4-H concerns me too, the question that was raised about not enough signs for safety. We'll certainly take a look at that one because I think that is one of the best programs we've got anywhere in the country. It's not just the 4-H; it's a lot of schoolchildren, air cadets, Girl Guides, whoever the case may be, who do an excellent job of keeping Alberta clean. If I can just give you an idea, this year there were 629 clubs involved. They covered 5,660 miles. They picked up 63,448 bags of garbage. As Albertans we should not be very proud of that particular figure. That obviously means there's a good number of us throwing things out the car window. Some of the things they throw out -- I am confident that every person that works on those programs will not toss garbage into the ditch after they've had to pick up some of the things they've had to.

The Member for Highwood talked about that section of road which is called the Deerfoot extension. It started back in 1982.

As a matter of fact, it was before my time as minister, hon. member. At that particular time transportation and utilities was requested by the MD of Foothills to initiate a study to review the feasibility of extending the Deerfoot Trail south of Highway 22X to Highway 2. The total length of that extension was roughly 10 and a half kilometres, 4.2 of which fell within the city of Calgary boundaries, 1.2 within the MD of Rockyview, and 5.2 in the MD of Foothills. Now, they hired a consultant to do some work as to what was the best route, keeping in mind where the overpasses and the comers and interchanges are on Highway 2. The only site they were able to develop was the one that's been in place since about 1984. They did have public meetings at that time. There were open houses held on March 24, '82, and June 23, '82, with some 170 people at the first one and, I believe, about 100 people at the second one. They looked at and discussed all the alternatives. Now, what may have occurred in the period between 1984 and now is that some of the people are either newer people or those who may not have got to that particular meeting.

What I think I can indicate to the hon. member is that it's our indication right now, in response to the question he raised as to when that might be done, that unless there's some significant change in the economy in the area down there, it's probably 10 to 15 years away before it would be constructed to start with. It may even be 20 years, but I think it would be safe to say 10 to 15 years. About the only other thing I could offer is that if there is someone -- and you mentioned a widow, I believe, that had some property to sell -- we would be prepared to purchase the right-of-way and then remove that from the section so that it was clear, as she or whoever sold the property to someone else, that it was unencumbered, that that piece was there; in other words, that it would be removed. We're not in the position of buying all of the quarter, because we just have some difficulties with that in the sense of acquisition of lands, but I'd be prepared to do that. If you'd like to sit down with me at some point, maybe I'll draft a letter for you that you could use in your discussions with the members down there.

I believe it was the old question -- and I say this with tongue in cheek -- of what we do with Highway 40 in Kananaskis Country and whether it should be opened. It's about 50-50. It doesn't matter which way I go; I would have difficulties from both sides. I was the minister at the time we put Kananaskis Country in place and personally thought that we put the bounds on the closing of the highway from December until June, I believe. We've talked about the possibility of maybe opening it up or keeping it open a little later. In that December/January part one of the difficult areas you get into is in that wintering range that is down there for the elk. That's a problem we're going to have to live with. Certainly there have been many, many requests for us not to change it. I have to say that in the sense that we've had a number of requests to change it -- very close to 50-50. On occasion they go one way or the other.

The hon. Member for Stony Plain -- oh, Rocky Mountain House. I shouldn't miss the good man. Inspection services and stations. You indicated your support for the fact that we needed more of the inspection services in place, and that certainly is the case. I think our safety services division is doing an excellent job. One of the scale sites that we have is a site being constructed for a scale at Slave Lake for this year, and the rest, of course, we'll attempt to -- we are attempting to pick up some additional officers to assist us in that area. When they moved over to me, there were a good number that didn't come. Of

course, we've got an excellent crew there right now, and it's working fairly well.

The concern over the maintenance of primary highways. There is a reduction, and it's been based primarily on the fact that we've had a couple of really good years in the kind of winters we've had, probably four of them in a row. In our discussions with Treasury we took the stance that if they would allow us a basic figure and then use the concept the same as we do for forest fires -- if we have a bad winter, obviously we're going to have to do something with it whether we've got the money in the budget or not. In essence, if you follow, we get that storm that we had the May of two years ago, I believe it was, where we had to put equipment out there and we had to pass the special warrant to be able to have that equipment, because we moved it down from the north to help those in the south by moving the snow and the likes of that at that time. That's the concept we're working on on that one.

The log haul and the gravel trucks: an interesting one indeed. Log haulers have historically had a differential in the sense that they're hauling a long log that gives them both a length problem and sometimes a width problem. In order to assist the industry, we've given them that little bit of a break in the wintertime. We have not done it for gravel trucks or any other vehicle because they are specific weights in particular.

I've got to answer another question that I believe the hon. Member for Edmonton-Whitemud talked about: gravel trucks and the movement of gravel when you load it. The only gravel I'm aware of that moves after you load it would be a washed load; that has the capacity to move with the water that may be still there. Most of the others don't move very much, and if they're overloaded on the back axle, it would be by way of how they were loaded. I think that's something we need to look at in the method of loading that might be there. But in checking with some of the trackers that I know, the only load that might shift would be a wet load, if I can use that, the washed load. That was a question that was raised with me, but I'm prepared to look at it when Mr. Bissett sends me a letter with the issues that he had and did explain to me when we were outside last week.

The hon. Member for Stony Plain. Highway 22 runs from Lundbreck to Highway 16, the entire length. It's a fairly well-used road that still has quite a number of sections on it that need to be paved. I believe there are three sections this year that will be done. It's been a good road, a highly used road, a very scenic road, probably one of the finest in Alberta when we get it completed. I don't remember just exactly what your concern was with it, but I'll talk with you about it after. I had written it down here, and I put the length of it from Lundbreck back to number 16.

All of our grants that are issued take into consideration safety. That's a very important word, and it's not taken lightly within the department. It's a very important factor. When we're looking at what we may be able to do to change either any of our regulations or anything along that line, safety is the number one prime concern.

I mentioned the fact on the culverts about the preloading in the muskeg areas, where we have to push it out and put it in there. As soon as I can get a teacher that's as good as an engineer on preloading . . . You know, when we go like that, I'm not sure what that means, hon. member. It has worked well for us, and we're satisfied with it at this particular point. If you're getting your feet wet, get higher rubber boots.

Now, the maintenance is another one that's a bit of a con-

cent, because it comes down to dollars. We were doing an excellent job a number of years ago, and we've had to cut back because of dollars. One of the other things we've also done is gone to the private sector in some cases, many of whom do an excellent job, some of whom do not. We keep an eye on that particular area and work with them.

You mentioned the dust problem at the -- I believe it's the provincial park at Wabamun. I think it's a local road, and I will check that for you. I'm not sure of that. If it is, then the dust problem becomes the problem of the municipal district in that case. If it's one of our roads, then we'll take it.

I'm just about at the end, and it says: congratulations, you've established a new babbling record.

Bike paths. Bicycling is becoming increasingly popular, there's no question about it. As a matter of fact this year I ended up with about 250 letters actually giving me hell, if I can use that term, Mr. Chairman, for not approving the national cycling championships at Fort McMurray, and I hadn't even had an application yet. I got the letters complaining about it and I had to go to the hon. Member for Fort McMurray and ask him to get ahold of the association to get an application in so we could decide whether we were going to turn it down.

With regard to signage, in short we are looking at signage as it relates primarily to the increased tourism opportunity that we have within the province, and we're doing . . .

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question, question.

MR. ADAIR: You guys are great.

MR. FOX: We're not used to a minister that answers questions; we kind of like it.

MR. ADAIR: You've just made me sit down. I'm doing something wrong.

Taber-Warner, I want to thank you for the comments on the water program and the eligibility and the concern about the droughts that I commented about a little earlier, and the gas program. Certainly from the standpoint of 501, I'm aware of three projects this year on 501. I think the biggest concern was

in the area from Coaldale to Taber, about what and when was that going to be twinned. Was it coming after the twinning down to the border? That was not the case. We indicated very clearly that albeit we may be working on highways 2 and 4 down there, before we hit the 4 south section, we would probably be working very closely with the people of the Coaldale-Taber area.

With that, Mr. Chairman . . .

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question, question.

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

[Motion carried]

[Mr. Deputy Speaker in the Chair]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order please. I ask members to become properly attired.

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

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Having heard the motion of the hon. Member for Lacombe, all those in favour, please say aye.

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Opposed, please say nay. Carried.

MR. STEWART: Mr. Speaker, by way of advice to the members, the business of the House tomorrow afternoon will be the estimates of the Department of Economic Development and Trade.

[At 10:56 p.m. the House adjourned to Wednesday at 2:30 p.m.]

