

Oral Question Period

Calgary Ring Road

Mr. Rodney: Mr. Speaker, due to tremendous growth in Calgary and area, including of course Calgary-Lougheed, over the past decade, many of my constituents have expressed rather extreme concern about traffic congestion. My questions are for the Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation. Could the minister please update us on the status of this important project?

Mr. Lund: Mr. Speaker, this is a very important road, of course, not only just for the city of Calgary but as we look at the Canamex highway and how this all ties in together. The road, of course, goes through some of the Tsuu T'ina First Nation, so there has to be negotiations with the First Nation, and those negotiations seem to be progressing quite well. There's real motivation on both sides to complete them. However, there's some discussion about the appraised value of the property, and of course that is very important because that relates to what the First Nation is to be paid.

Mr. Rodney: Mr. Speaker, my second question is for the same minister unless he would like his associate minister to be part of the answer. The question is: when will the negotiations conclude – not begin but conclude – with the Tsuu T'ina Nation so that the project can be undergone with construction?

Mr. Lund: Mr. Speaker, as I indicated earlier, the negotiations are moving along quite well. However, I can't give a definite answer on how soon they'll be completed. I can tell the hon. member that a lot of preparatory work is being done, like some of the engineering, some of the public consultation, and some of the functional planning. Of course, the environmental issues are being looked at as we speak. So we're getting in the position where once it's ratified, we'll be able to move forward quite rapidly.

Mr. Rodney: My final question, then, to the same minister: once an agreement is reached with the Tsuu T'ina Nation, can you tell us how long it will be before construction begins and people are actually driving on a ring road in the southwest part of Calgary?

Mr. Lund: Well, as I indicated, a lot of that preparatory work is being done. The actual engineering, of course, the detailed engineering, would take probably six months, maybe a little longer. Then, of course, the contract would have to be tendered. So I would imagine that it would probably be at least a year after the negotiations are completed.