

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ALBERTA

Thursday, April 20th, 1972

[The House met at 2:30 pm.]

PRAYERS

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair.]

NOTICES OF MOTION

MR. LOUGHEED:

Mr. Speaker, with regard to Notices of Motion, I wonder if I could have the consent of the House -- the Government Motion standing in my name with regard to the Select Committee involving the matters of ownership by Albertans, has inadvertently missed the name of the MLA Mr. Les Young. I would like to have that, if I could, added to the Notice of Motion.

HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

MR. PURDY:

Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to introduce to you and to the hon. Members of this Assembly, 36 Grade IX students, their teacher Mr. Hrasko, and bus driver Mr. McDowell from the Winterburn School. They are seated in the members' gallery. Mr. Speaker, in the public gallery, we have today 25 ladies from the Progressive Conservative constituency of Stony Plain. I would ask that both these groups rise and be recognized by the Assembly.

MR. TAYLOR:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce to you and to the hon. Members of the Assembly, 25 Social Credit women who are here to observe proceedings today. These women are representative of the growing army of Social Credit women -- [laughter] -- across the province. They come from the Stony Plain constituency, and I am sure the hon. Member for Stony Plain wouldn't begrudge a bachelor from Drumheller the pleasure of introducing such beautiful women.

MR. HINMAN:

Mr. Speaker, I rise to introduce to you Mr. Louis Soop who is in the Speaker's Gallery. Mr. Soop is president of the Tribal Employees Association who are meeting in Edmonton tomorrow. He was educated at St. Paul's School and at the Cardston High School, is currently the manager of a very successful Superette owned and operated by the Blood Indians at Standoff. Mr. Soop will please rise and be recognized.

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MR. HYNDMAN:

Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure for me today to introduce to you and all Members of the Assembly, some 30 members of the Grade VI class at Laurier Heights School, accompanied by Mrs. Neuman. They are in the members gallery. As yet their political affiliation is unknown, but I would ask that the Assembly welcome them at this time and that they rise and be recognized.

MR. COOPER:

Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure today to introduce to you and to the hon. Members of the Assembly, 30 Grade X students from the high school at Viking in the Viking-Vermilion constituency. They are accompanied by their teacher Mr. Tom Newcomb. They are seated in the Public Gallery and I would ask them to stand and be recognized.

MR. J. MILLER:

Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to introduce to you and through you to the hon. Members of this Assembly, a group of Boy Scouts and Cubs from Marwayne. They are accompanied by Mr. Lloyd Payne, Mr. Dennis Alward, Mrs. Tupper, Mr. and Mrs. Jerry Hines and their twin daughters. I would ask that they stand and be recognized.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Conservative Policy Manual

MR. R. SPEAKER:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct a question to the hon. Premier. Did your government provide each one of the Deputy Ministers and the senior administrators of the Civil Service with a Conservative policy manual?

MR. LOUGHEED:

Mr. Speaker, I believe the answer to that is yes, we did.

MR. R. SPEAKER:

Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question. Would the hon. Premier agree to tabling that document, as it is in the best interests of the public?

MR. LOUGHEED:

Mr. Speaker, there's no question about the conclusion to the hon. member's question, and we'll take that under advisement.

Oil Allowables

MR. DIXON:

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct a question to the hon. Minister of Mines and Minerals. Is the hon. minister aware of the announcement yesterday by the National Energy Board officials, and by the Federal Minister of Energy and Resources regarding the Mackenzie Valley pipeline to transport Northwest Territories and Arctic oil and gas south, and also a possibility of exporting the Alaska oil and gas by that same line? Mr. Macdonald stated yesterday that increased use of Alberta oil will be sought to take care of any delay in the proposed pipeline construction. My question to the minister, Mr. Speaker, is: has the government had any negotiations or discussions on this matter of increased Alberta production?

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MR. DICKIE:

Mr. Speaker, I have followed with interest the press reports on this. We have had a number of discussions with the Minister of Energy for the federal government, Donald Macdonald, not specifically dealing with the question that's directed by the hon. member, but dealing with this whole question of the negotiations between Canada and the United States. This is one of the reasons why we were interested in this question of consultation and observer status on the energy talks between Canada and the United States.

MR. DIXON:

A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Is the government considering an immediate increase in oil allowables for Alberta producers in any case?

MR. DICKIE:

Mr. Speaker, to my knowledge, there are no plans at the present time for that. That is within the jurisdiction of the Energy Resources Conservation Board. I might, however, add that we are continually pressed for free access to the United States markets and this deals with the whole question of the relationship between Canada and the United States. As I understand the arguments, one of the bargaining points deal with the restrictions, that are, of course, placed on by the United States. One of the arguments they have before lifting the restrictions deals with the question that they consider the supply to Eastern Canada from Venezuela as an insecure source, and there have been suggestions that Canada should build a pipeline to transport the oil to Eastern Canada and store it there. This is a part of the negotiations that are going on. As I understand it, the United States will hold up those restrictions, or have tentatively said they will do that, pending the settlement of those negotiations. It was in that interest that we first explored this question of consultation, because we wished to make sure that the interests of Alberta are properly looked after in negotiations and have continually pressed for consultation at the energy talks between Canada and the United States.

MR. DIXON:

A further supplementary question, Mr. Speaker, to the minister. Owing to the fact that your government has announced that you are going to allow more allowables for oil exploration wells in certain areas of the province, I wondered if this has been taken into consideration as one of the proposals to bring forward an earlier and a larger allowable in the near future.

MR. DICKIE:

Yes, Mr. Speaker, I think we can answer that. We have read with interest the Energy Resources Conservation Board where they have changed the allowable, perhaps not to the satisfaction of everyone, and we are looking at that to see what results can be achieved by further efforts in that area.

Crude Oil Price

MR. DRAIN:

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask the hon. Minister of Mines and Minerals what is the average selling price of Alberta crude oil, f.o.b. wellhead at this time.

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MR. DICKIE:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, the selling price per barrel is \$2.83 1/2 per barrel in Alberta at the present time.

MR. DRAIN:

Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. What is the total amount of money per barrel that accrues to the Provincial Treasurer through royalties, lease rentals and other increments from the oil business?

MR. DICKIE:

Mr. Speaker, I don't have that figure. I would thank the hon. member for giving me notice of the question, but the question I had was, what is the total revenue that accrues to the province, taking in lease rentals, royalty, and crown reserve bids? I have that information if the hon. member wishes it.

MR. DRAIN:

We will pursue that later. There is a price differential between Alberta crude and American crude, f.o.b. the Chicago market. What is the reason for this?

MR. DICKIE:

Mr. Speaker, I would certainly like to take notice of that question.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Calgary Buffalo, followed by the hon. Member for Calgary Bow, and the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview.

MR. NOTLEY:

Supplementary question to the hon. Member for Pincher Creek-Crowsnest. Will the policy paper on the royalty question contain the two very important points raised by the hon. Member for Pincher Creek-Crowsnest, i.e., the amount on a per-barrel basis that we collect on crown lease sales, rentals, and royalties, and (b) the reasons for the price differential between here and Chicago?

MR. DICKIE:

Mr. Speaker, as I said before, I have been reluctant and would ask the hon. members to withhold any questions on our review of natural resource revenue. I would, however, say if the hon. member wishes to have information so that he could properly consider the position paper that would be brought down by the government, we would be glad to accommodate him, to give him that information.

On the specific question he raises, and raised by the hon. Member for Pincher Creek-Crowsnest, I would like specific direction on that question if he is referring to the rentals, royalty and crown reserve sales. The difficulty in making a calculation of that nature does deal with how you calculate the crown reserve sales. If the hon. members are proposing to place on the Order Paper questions along those lines, I would ask that they direct how they would like to treat the crown reserve sales; that is, the income from the crown reserve sales in respect to the calculation of the cost per barrel of oil.

MR. TAYLOR:

Mr. Speaker, supplementary to the hon. Minister of Mines and Minerals. When can the House expect to get this position paper?

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MR. DICKIE:

Mr. Speaker, I believe last Monday the hon. Premier announced that it would be within ten days.

Impaired Drivers' Licenses

MR. GHITTER:

Mr. Speaker, my question is to the hon. Minister of Highways. Possibly the hon. Attorney General might wish to make comment on this question. It arises out of the recent decision of the Supreme Court of Alberta which, I understand, held that the Department of Highways could not return licences to drivers convicted of impaired driving during the period pending the hearing of their appeal to a higher court. This decision results in a very unjust circumstance, in that drivers convicted of impaired driving may suffer the loss of their drivers' licences, although at a later date they might prove their innocence. My question is, is your department, Mr. Minister, considering this decision with a view of taking appropriate steps to overcome this injustice?

MR. COPITHORNE:

Yes, Mr. Speaker, we are considering this point. Maybe the hon. Attorney General would like to make further comment on that. I don't know whether he has something he would like to add to it or not.

MR. LEITCH:

Not really, Mr. Speaker, except the situation that now exists is one that obviously needs to be cured, and the hon. Minister of Highways is about to do that.

Auctioneers' Regulations

MR. WILSON:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct a question to the hon. Minister of Industry. Inasmuch as you have advised this Legislature that you are revising the regulations governing auctioneers, and that they would be available April 1st, when can we expect you to table a copy of the revised regulations?

MR. PEACOCK:

Mr. Speaker, we tabled those yesterday.

MR. WILSON:

Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Does the hon. minister not know that what he tabled yesterday was Alberta Regulation No. 200 for the year 1970?

MR. PEACOCK:

Mr. Speaker, if there was some slip between the transmission of the regulations and what I had in my hand, I will correct it.

Release of Information

MR. WILSON:

Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Would the minister advise what his priorities are when it comes to releasing information. Specifically, does he feel that he should give members of the Legislature information at the earliest possible time when it is available?

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MR. SPEAKER:

Is the hon. member asking the minister for a personal attitude or does he want government policy?

MR. WILSON:

I am asking for his policy on priorities of release of information from his department.

MR. PEACOCK:

I think that goes without saying really. Certainly it would be privy to this Legislature first.

MR. TAYLOR:

Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, I wonder why the hon. minister refused to answer a question yesterday, and then answered it on the radio or television last night? That was really contempt for the Legislature.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

MR. WILSON:

Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Would the minister tell us why, when I asked yesterday a similar question to that asked of him later on television, he refused to answer in the Legislature, but promptly went out of the House and made a lengthy television and press release on the same subject?

MR. PEACOCK:

Mr. Speaker, I don't know what the question is.

MR. WILSON:

Supplementary, Mr. Speaker, for the hon. minister. I would ask him to tell us why, in light of the policy priority he just enunciated, that yesterday he refused to answer a question for me, left the House, and made a television release.

MR. SPEAKER:

The minister has asked which question did he refuse to answer.

MR. WILSON:

Well, if he wants the specific question, it was in relation to the proposed steel mill for Alberta, and coal mining along the Alberta Resources Railroad.

MR. GETTY:

Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, the hon. minister gave quite a detailed answer in that regard yesterday. If the member has some specific privilege he feels was harmed by the minister, he should state the question and the answer and give the minister exactly what he is trying to seek as information now.

MR. TAYLOR:

Mr. Speaker, on the point of order, waving your hand might be a detailed answer to the Progressive Conservatives, but it isn't to anybody else. And that is exactly the way the minister answered that question.

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MR. GETTY:

Well, Mr. Speaker, on the point of order, the member obviously has the responsibility now to point out the question he is referring to, and to point out why he thinks he didn't get it answered. The minister has the right not to answer any questions that he wishes, but he may feel that he has answered.

MR. WILSON:

Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. It was the last question that I asked of the minister yesterday and it reads as follows: "Is it the government's stated desire to see a steel company operating in Alberta, in any way connected to the current situation with McIntyre-Porcupine Mines Ltd.?"

MR. PEACOCK:

Mr. Speaker, in order to clear up this situation, there is no connection between what I was speaking about in this House regarding McIntyre-Porcupine Mines and their loss of \$7,169,000 in the year 1971 concluded December 31, and the ARR railroad and its losses and a steel company. That is what I stated and I stated outside the House. If a steel company decides, we would certainly encourage a steel company in the private sector to move into that area.

Departmental Exams

MR. CLARK:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct a question to the hon. Minister of Education and ask if the government is giving consideration to the removal of Grade XII departmental examinations?

MR. HYNDMAN:

Mr. Speaker, it is interesting that the hon. gentleman opposite should mention that. We are looking at that in addition to many other areas, the whole question in fact of examinations; centralized and departmental examinations or local ones. And the allied question of entrance to universities from high schools in the province is being closely examined by the department right now.

MR. CLARK:

Mr. Speaker, one such interesting question deserves another. I wonder if the government is considering a random testing system across the province at different grade levels?

MR. HYNDMAN:

Yes, Mr. Speaker, as I announced -- I believe it was Tuesday in connection with the ending of Grade IX departmental examinations -- there will be developed a method of random testing or sampling in order to be able to assess the quality of the educational level across the province and hopefully in order to assess whether, for the millions of dollars spent in education, the quality of education being given to children is remaining steady or going up or going down. So this is certainly one of things we're actively looking at as allied to the examination question.

MR. CLARK:

Mr. Speaker, hopefully the third and last interesting question. Will the information from this random testing approach be available to school boards and education organizations as a means of assessing education accountability?

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MR. HYNDMAN:

It may well be, Mr. Speaker. We haven't reached any conclusion or studied that aspect in depth. To the extent that that suggestion would assist in maintaining or increasing the quality of education in the province, it certainly would.

MR. TAYLOR:

Mr. Speaker, a supplementary to the hon. Minister of Education. Could the hon. minister give us the three or four main reasons why Grade IX examinations are being discontinued?

MR. HYNDMAN:

Mr. Speaker, I believe I did give that to the House some three days ago. But I think it would be useful if all hon. members discussed this matter and I would be quite happy to give those answers and debate it more fully under education estimates.

Farm Credit Corporation Loans

MR. NOTLEY:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct this question to the hon. Minister of Agriculture. Is the government, sir, giving any consideration to requests from Peace River farmers regarding a moratorium on farm debts particularly those debts that relate to the purchase of land?

DR. HORNER:

Well, I have been in communication with the farmers in the Peace River country almost on a continuing basis on this very serious problem. Primarily it involves loans that were made by the Farm Credit Corporation, the federal body, and also in relation to municipal taxation. We were able to delay the tax sales in the Peace River country with the co-operation of the hon. Minister in Charge of Northern Development and the hon. Minister of Municipal Affairs for a considerable length of time -- as long as we could under statute. In relation to the foreclosure actions of the Farm Credit Corporation I've made several representations to the regional office here in Edmonton and, in fact, have made specific recommendations and representations to the office in Ottawa. As a result of that I have recently had a visit from the chairman of the Farm Credit Corporation in Ottawa, Mr. George Owen. We had a good discussion in this area and I'm hopeful that we can secure the co-operation of the Farm Credit Corporation to delay foreclosure action for at least a year, until we can attempt to revitalize the agricultural sector and make available additional and alternate sources of credit to the farmers -- not only in the Peace River country but all over Alberta.

MR. NOTLEY:

A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker, to the hon. minister. May I just say by comment that I certainly concur in the efforts that you're taking in this respect. But I wonder, Mr. Speaker, whether the minister -- and this could go either to the hon. Minister of Agriculture or the hon. Provincial Treasurer -- is giving consideration to the resolution passed by District 6, Region 7 of the National Farmers Union. The point that they raise is:

"Be it resolved that the provincial government make monies available through its Treasury Branch to repay past due Federal Farm Credit loans in order that family farms under threat of foreclosure be preserved."

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Now my question -- to either the hon. Minister of Agriculture or the hon. Provincial Treasurer -- is: has any consideration been given to using the Treasury Branch in cases of emergency such as this?

DR. HOENER:

Well, Mr. Speaker, I could answer it first, and perhaps if the hon. Provincial Treasurer has anything to add it would be useful. I say this, that it is our consideration that monies under the Agricultural Development Fund can be used in a reasonable way for the consolidation of debts, which includes the payment of the arrears owing to the Farm Credit Corporation, and I made that point to Mr. Owen in my discussions with him. I intend to make further representations of an official nature to Mr. Owen after our discussions in relation to that. I might add, Mr. Speaker, the question of a moratorium is a very precarious one to take in the agricultural field at this time, because it would severely limit the amount of money that might be available for agricultural credit from the traditional sources, and I would hesitate very much in establishing a moratorium. However, I think in going the other way we can, perhaps, achieve the same result and hopefully continue to have the input of credit that we are going to require in the agricultural field.

Medicine Hat Hospital

MR. WYSE:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct a question to the hon. Minister of Health and Social Development. Has the Alberta Hospital Commission approved a request by the Medicine Hat Hospital Board to put air-conditioning in the Medicine Hat Hospital?

MR. CRAWFORD:

Mr. Speaker, the present policy is to continue the policy of the recent government in connection with matters like that, and although it can be made subject to review from time to time as a matter of general policy, the specific answer in respect to Medicine Hat -- and I have discussed the matter with the chairman of the Hospital Services Commission -- is that the Medicine Hat Hospital District has been advised that if they want to proceed with air-conditioning they are free to do so, but at local cost rather than at provincial cost.

MR. WYSE:

Supplementary question, Mr. Speaker, did this directive come directly from you?

MR. CRAWFORD:

I am perfectly happy, Mr. Speaker, to take full responsibility for it. It was the policy recommended by the commission and I confirmed it.

MR. WYSE:

Supplementary question; when will the government be prepared to meet the commitment of the Conservative party in that area, who said they would install air-conditioning in the hospital now?

MR. CRAWFORD:

Mr. Speaker, as far as I'm concerned, the hon. member is now giving information rather than seeking it.

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MR. TAYLOR:

Supplementary, Mr. Speaker, to the hon. Minister of Health and Social Development. Does a hospital board have to get permission from the hon. minister to spend its own money?

MR. CRAWFORD:

No, Mr. Speaker, but when the budget is established and the request comes forward for additional funds and is put on the basis of a specific use, it is certainly up to the hospital board whether they spend it on that or not, but if the hospital board comes to the conclusion that they can't proceed -- in this case air-conditioning -- and have to have additional funds well then that is the point at which it is resolved.

Farm Credit Corporation Loans (cont.)

MR. BUCKWELL:

Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the hon. Minister of Agriculture on this moratorium. Would loans under The Agricultural Development Loans Act be used to consolidate farm credit corporations?

DR. HORNER:

That is one of the uses that these loans and the other guaranteed loan programs can be put to. There's the consolidation or the bringing up to date of the arrears under FCC loans.

MR. BUCKWELL:

Supplementary, Mr. Speaker, if they can't pay the FCC are the loans under this act going to be much more lenient?

DR. HORNER:

Well, Mr. Speaker, I have said in the House before, my attitude towards the provision of credit to farmers was to sit down with the farmer and work out his cash flow so that he could have a reasonable income and have enough income to pay off his obligations. It isn't our intention to plough him deeper into debt so he can't get out, but rather to try and assist him in finding ways and means in which he can improve his cash flow and his cash income and his ability to repay his obligations.

One of those things, particularly in the Peace River country where they have had a succession of crop failures, is the necessity for the consolidation of debts so that they can clean the slate and hopefully we can work out solutions for these farmers so that they can continue in operation and have a reasonable income.

MR. BUCKWELL:

Supplementary, Mr. Speaker, I agree with the hon. minister's statement but surely there will be some of these farmers that will not qualify possibly under this act. Is the government prepared to help them with the FCC loans because there will be some of them that are a very poor financial risk for both parties.

DR. HORNER:

Well, I would agree, Mr. Speaker. There are some of them that are in very serious financial difficulties because, as I've said, of a series of crop failures, and this sort of thing. I think that if we can -- and we will I would hope, be sitting down with each of them individually to work out a solution to their financial problems. If it's available in the agricultural field in any way, we'll try and

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make it for them in that sense. It may well be that other solutions will also have to be used.

MR. BUCKWELL:

Further supplementary then, Mr. Speaker. Does the hon. minister feel that there are other areas of the province or pockets, other than the Peace River, that might be in a similar situation as far as the FCC is concerned?

DR. HORNER:

Well I think that while the situation in the Peace River may be generally a little bit more severe than it is elsewhere, my correspondence and my information is that this is more a general thing, and certainly the hon. member is quite aware of the serious situation in which, for instance, the potato growers were in and are in in southern Alberta. We developed a particular and special policy for them, and we would hope that in other areas, we could do so also. Again I want to stress though that that policy in regard to the potato growers was keyed to marketing and keyed to the marketing opportunities, so that in fact we didn't just plow them in one step further in the debt field -- and I really want to stress that, Mr. Speaker, that the ability to use their credit wisely and to use it in a practical and in a way that is going to improve their income and improve their ability to repay their obligations has to be the primary consideration in all of these programs.

MR. RUSTE:

Mr. Speaker, a further supplementary to the hon. minister. Has an assessment been made of the amount of money involved in say the Peace River areas, as far as the matter goes?

DR. HORNER:

Well I'm sure that it wouldn't be very difficult to assess the amount of money involved. I think that in the last figures I had on FCC foreclosures for instance, there was something like 85 in process and most of those were in northern Alberta, certainly not all of them in the Peace River country but quite a bit. So it wouldn't be hard to evaluate the amount of money that would be required, but to bring their arrears up to date and to sit down and work out programs using the guaranteed loans or some other particular program is our objective, and we would do it on the basis of across the kitchen table, working out a program for the individual farmer to reassess his financial stability and his ability to repay his obligations, and have an income that is going to be high enough to support his family.

Industries for East Central Alberta

MR. SORENSON:

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct a question to the hon. Minister of Industry. Has the government received any verbal or written request from the East Central Alberta Industrial Committee asking for support to have east central Alberta included as a designated area for industrial development?

MR. PEACOCK:

Yes, we have, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SORENSON:

Supplementary question. Does the Government of Alberta support the inclusion of east central Alberta as a designated area?

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MR. PEACOCK:

Mr. Speaker, I'm getting almost like the hon. Minister of Municipal Affairs. How many times do we have to say that we are in the process of negotiating with the hon. Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs a new program with Ottawa and until we can release that we have nothing to report.

MR. TAYLOR:

Supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. When are we going to get some of the negotiations finished and get some decisions?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear.

MR. SORENSON:

Supplementary question to the minister, is it true that the reason that the brief submitted on two occasions to the hon. minister Mr. Marchand has not received favourable consideration, is due to the fact that the Government of Alberta is not willing to support the submission?

MR. PEACOCK:

Mr. Speaker, it is not. We believe that as far as the present situation with the federal government and the DREE support in the Province of Alberta should be carried on until we negotiate a new deal.

DREE Program

MR. NOTLEY:

Supplementary question, Mr. Speaker, to the hon. Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs. In view of the fact that the DREE program has a potential of crossing boundaries, has the government consulted formally with British Columbia and also the Government of Saskatchewan before making their representations to Ottawa vis-a-vis the DREE program?

MR. GETTY:

We have not discussed the DREE program formally with the Government of British Columbia, Mr. Speaker. We have discussed DREE programs with the Government of Manitoba and the Government of Saskatchewan during the course of meetings with the Premiers of our three provinces. At that time, both those heads of government expressed the feeling that they were very dissatisfied with the operations of the Department of Regional Economic Expansion within their provinces. I think we expressed some dissatisfaction in our province. All of us were anxious to establish some better way of having the objectives of the Department of Regional Economic Expansion attained within our provinces. The Government of Alberta advised them that we would be dealing directly with DREE on the matter and it was pretty obvious the Government of Saskatchewan and the Government of Manitoba would also. I hope that gives the hon. member the information that he requested. We have not formally discussed it with the Province of British Columbia.

MR. NOTLEY:

A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. I raise this by way of explanation because, as you know, the Peace Bloc really encompasses both British Columbia and Alberta. I think that any program that is negotiated must be negotiated in consultation with the Government of

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British Columbia. My question to you, sir, is will you give the House an undertaking that you will consult with the Government of British Columbia, so that the two governments can work in unison in making representation on the DREE program and so that one side of the Peace isn't discriminated against because of plans that might proceed on another side?

MR. GETTY:

Mr. Speaker, I would give the hon. member the undertaking that to do so appeared to be in the best interests of the people of Alberta to do that, then we would certainly do so.

MR. PEACOCK:

A supplementary answer, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wonder if I just may enlarge upon the answer that I gave to the hon. Member for Coronation-Sedgewick. It is for that very reason and the discriminatory attitude of DREE in the Province of Alberta that we want to effect a change. This is what the problem is all about.

MR. BARTON:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker, to the hon. Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs. Have any DREE officials left the Province of Alberta as of September 10th to date?

MR. GETTY:

I am not sure what the hon. member is asking, Mr. Speaker. I am not sure whether you mean have they recalled some people, or cancelled some jobs or have they merely gone on a trip out of the province? Would you explain the question?

MR. BARTON:

From the programming in Alberta.

MR. GETTY:

I don't frankly know. I don't know whether the Department of Regional Economic Expansion is reducing their staff within the Province of Alberta. I might say that I would certainly have no particular objection to that. I feel that the objectives of the Department of Regional Economic Expansion might best be attained within our province, if the responsible departments of the government of Alberta were directing the various projects that would benefit from that program, rather than have somebody in Ottawa, or under the influence of the federal government, trying to determine what the needs are of Albertans.

Invitation to Prime Minister Trudeau

MR. WILSON:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct a question to the hon. Premier. Inasmuch as the hon. Prime Minister Trudeau will be in Edmonton next week, I was wondering if you had, or if you would consider extending an invitation to the Prime Minister to drop into this Legislative Assembly?

MR. LOUGHEED:

Mr. Speaker, I certainly will take that matter under consideration. My understanding of the purpose of the trip of the Prime Minister here has to do with political matters for his party. But it is certainly something that is worthwhile to consider. If

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there is an appropriate way to do that, we would be pleased to look into it.

MR. WILSON:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Do you not feel the expertise of the Prime Minister would be of considerable assistance to members of the Executive Council in fielding opposition members' probing questions?

MR. HYNDMAN:

We're waiting for some.

MR. TAYLOR:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Would the hon. Premier also consider having the Prime Minister of Canada address this Assembly?

MR. GETTY:

Mr. Speaker, because of the interest of the hon. members in the fact that the Prime Minister is making a trip to Alberta, when -- I guess over a month ago -- we became aware of the fact that he was coming, we had discussions with his office, and they felt that because of the pressure of his schedule and the fact that it was -- I'd say -- totally a political trip, it would be very difficult indeed for him to also become involved in any additional duties as the head of the Government of Canada. Nevertheless, I think the question raised by the hon. member is worthy of consideration, and I'm sure that our hon. Premier will, in fact, consider it.

MR. WILSON:

Supplementary, Mr. Speaker, to the hon. Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs. Does he not feel that with Alberta now having television coverage in the Provincial Legislature that it would be of historical significance to have the Prime Minister drop in and say a few words to this august body?

MR. GETTY:

As a matter of fact, yes, I think that would be of some historical significance. In talking to some members of his office, though, I might say that they don't share with you your feeling about the probing nature of the questions.

Rapeseed Crops

MR. RUSTE:

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct a question to the hon. Minister of Agriculture. During the discussions of the estimates of the Department of Agriculture, I understood the minister to indicate that they felt that Alberta's rapeseed acreage would not drop significantly this year. Now a recent release from Canadian Press indicates that Alberta's rapeseed producers will reduce their acreage by some 800,000 acres. Is the minister taking any steps or expressing any concern over this?

DR. HORNER:

Well, Mr. Speaker, I don't recall saying in my estimates that the rapeseed acreage wouldn't go down. As a matter of fact, I think I said that there would be probably a decrease, or at least rapeseed wouldn't be as important in acreage size as it was a year ago, and that that would be taken up by an increased acreage in barley, particularly, hopefully, and some additional acreage in wheat. I

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think we would hope in the future to be able to be much more positive in our advice to farmers in relation to the marketing opportunities in a variety of commodities as time goes along. That's certainly our objective. On the other hand I think that one of the serious situations in regard to the rapeseed acreage that I think I may have mentioned during the estimates was the question of the disease situation -- in root diseases, the army worm and so on -- that tends to be much more severe in fields that are cropped on a continuing basis to rapeseed. Our rapeseed producers are finding out that they have to use crop rotation like any other cereal grain producer, and because of this situation and because of the general marketing conditions, there will be a substantial decrease in the rapeseed acreage. I was primarily talking about the disease situation which is becoming fairly significant in relation to rapeseed generally.

MR. RUSTE:

A supplementary question to the minister. Is he considering something in the line of an incentive payment or a floor price as his colleague at the federal level has done -- Mr. Diefenbaker?

DR. HORNER:

In relation to...

MR. RUSTE:

To the question of rapeseed.

DR. HORNER:

I don't think that the rapeseed growers or the Rapeseed Association are as concerned. Their primary discussions with me have led me to believe that they feel very strongly about looking after their own destiny as much as possible, that they appreciate government assistance where and when they can receive it, but that they would like to be directors of their destiny in the rapeseed industry. You might say, in discussions with the association in Alberta and with the secretary of the Rapeseed Association of Canada, that essentially they were concerned about government input in the research field insofar as the disease field was concerned, and also in regard to the research into new varieties, particularly as variety is important in relation to the geographic areas. In other words, we are working on new varieties that are adapted to the Alberta climate. These are the important things I have learned in my discussions with the rapeseed growers generally. They don't want the Wheat Board to cover them; they want us to assist them in any way we can in their marketing thrust and they require specifically some assistance in relation to disease and to varieties which are related to the province.

Cattle Industry

MR. STROM:

Mr. Speaker, a question to the hon. Minister of Agriculture. Does the Canadian Cattlemen's Association feel that their industry needs support by government?

DR. HORNER:

The hon. Leader of the Opposition is quite aware of what the Canadian Cattlemen's Association is of course saying these days. The Canadian Cattlemen's Association is saying that government should stay out of their business. That is all very nice to a certain degree. I have had some discussions with the Canadian cattlemen, with the Alberta Cattle Commission, and Western Stock Growers. One of the reasons that I mentioned in my estimates in relation to the

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extension of the guaranteed loan for beef cattle to the remainder of the province. I invited hon. members from those areas to give their submissions to me as to their views as to whether or not we should expand the guaranteed loan for beef cattle into that area. I haven't received too many submissions and I would appreciate receiving them. The message from the Canadian Cattlemen's Association is that government shouldn't artificially increase or stimulate the cattle industry.

Invitation to Prime Minister Trudeau (cont.)

MR. TAYLOR:

Supplementary, Mr. Speaker, to the hon. Premier. If Margaret and Justin were to accept my personal invitation to the Legislature, would the hon. Premier go along with the Prime Minister accompanying them?

MR. SPEAKER:

That is a hypothetical question.

Cattle Industry (cont.)

MR. STROM:

Mr. Speaker, a further supplementary question to the hon. Minister of Agriculture. Is he considering withdrawing assistance for the cattle industry in the Province? I am referring to the project that is under way in a portion of the province at the present time.

DR. HORNER:

No, Mr. Speaker. I might say that we think this has had substantial impact in an economic way in the grey wooded soil areas of Alberta. I have promised the hon. Member for Olds-Didsbury that we would include, for instance, the west of the 5th in his constituency, which I think is reasonable. We are trying to keep a close eye on cattle numbers generally in the beef cattle industry. The latest figures I have, as a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, are that beef cattle cows on farms in Alberta are down slightly from a year ago. And so the major impact so far has been a transfer of cattle from one area to another. We haven't had a buildup as yet of cows on farms and ranches in Alberta. We appreciate that it is important to keep this knowledge in mind, and we intend to continue that kind of a survey.

I think it is also important, Mr. Speaker, to say this. We intend that Alberta should continue to maintain its place in the overall Canadian situation in relation to the production of beef.

MR. STROM:

Mr. Speaker, does the hon. minister have any information, or does his department have any information, as to the possibility of export of beef to Japan or to any other area?

DR. HORNER:

We are working on this all the time, and have had various delegations from Japan to Alberta in relation to cuts of meat. I have had discussions with some of the major packers who have had excursions into the Japanese market, both from their plants in Canada, and also with some of them who have plants in Australia. We feel quite strongly that there is a market for ordinary Canadian beef as opposed to Kobe beef in the Japanese market, at a price level above the Australian product. We are working in that area at the

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present time. There have been discussions going on between Japanese interests and processors in Alberta, almost on a continuing basis, to see if we can open up this market. There are problems in relation to transportation, in relation to processing, and we are hopeful that some of our processors will look at the Kryovac chilled method as opposed to the frozen beef or the fresh beef that has been going on trial shipments.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Drayton Valley has been extremely patient.

Invitation to Prime Minister Trudeau (cont.)

MR. ZANDER:

Thank you Mr. Speaker. I have a question to the Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs. If the hon. minister is considering the request of the hon. member for Calgary Bow, if he would also include in the invitation Mrs. Trudeau.

MR. GETTY:

Mr. Speaker, in considering in some more detail the comment made -- and I don't think it was a request -- by the hon. Member for Calgary Bow, that we invite the Prime Minister. It seemed to me that there were some reasons, significant reasons as a matter of fact, why the Prime Minister has not addressed -- and I don't know the historical facts -- very many Legislatures in the various provinces. But there may be some pretty significant reasons why it would be inappropriate. So I don't say we reject it out of hand, but I do think that there should not be a great deal of speculation about doing that until full consideration has been given to the matter, and I'm not sure as to what my own recommendations would be with regard to it.

MR. WILSON:

Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Apparently the Prime Minister's itinerary will take him in and out of Edmonton and the surrounding environs both by car and by helicopter, and so on. It just seemed that because of the forward step that --

[Interruptions from Floor]

MR. SPEAKER:

Order.

MR. WILSON:

...we took in Alberta to include television in our Legislature, I asked you if you did not think that because of the significance of the steps we have taken in this Legislature, that we could invite the Prime Minister to come and address us briefly.

MR. LOUGHEED:

Mr. Speaker, so that this matter may be concluded, my view of the matter is that it would not be appropriate and that we will be prepared, since the matter has been raised, to give it some consideration. We feel it is very important, as we have mentioned from time to time in this Legislature, that there be a government-to-government relationship, and insofar as the situation is raised by the member for Calgary Bow, I think that would lead us into that sort of request possibly being made to the Leader of the Opposition in the Federal House, and a continuing matter of that nature. And frankly, as far as I am concerned, at the moment I do not think it would be

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appropriate either on this trip or on future occasions, but we will give it some further thought.

Alberta Farm Purchase Credit Board

MR. CLARK:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to address a question to the hon. Minister of Agriculture, and ask him if he can give the House some indication when farmers wanting to purchase land through the Alberta Farm Purchase Credit Board can expect that the board will be able to deal with the applications of the funds, about \$7 million, I believe will be available this year.

DR. HORNER:

Mr. Speaker, just as soon as we can get the legislation through the Legislature. The legislation is at the printers -- it has been here for some days, and I am awaiting it -- as soon as it comes it will be introduced, and hopefully we can proceed with it as soon as possible. I would suspect then that that means that capital monies through the new Agricultural Development Fund which will be taking over the Farm Purchase Board would not be available until somewhere around June 1st.

MR. SPEAKER:

The time for the Question Period has passed.

Record of Arsonists

MR. LEITCH:

Mr. Speaker, I wonder if I may be permitted to answer a question asked of me yesterday by the hon. Member for Calgary McCall. He asked whether my department kept a record of arsonists and their movements, and my colleague, the hon. Minister of Labour, has passed to me some information from the Office of the Fire Commissioner which comes within his jurisdiction, to the effect that all suspicious fires are reported to the Fire Commissioner's Office, and that office in conjunction with the local police forces investigates the fires. In addition, the Fire Commissioner's Office does keep a record of the offences of arson, and they do exchange with other provinces information about the movements of known arsonists.

Edmonton-North Battleford Rail Service

MR. PEACOCK:

Mr. Speaker, I wonder if I may give answers to a question posed to me by the hon. Member for Vermilion-Viking yesterday regarding the abandonment of railroad service between Edmonton and North Battleford. At that time I stated that I wasn't aware of it and I might state now to the House that there has been no decision made on whether, and if so when, the matter will be set down for a hearing regarding the abandonment. I think for the information of the House it is rather interesting to point out this, that the CNR and CPR have now applied for abandonment of all passenger services as this procedure is necessary in order to comply with CTC regulations. So that all passenger service in Canada supplied by CNR and CPR are now, as far as the two railroads are concerned, under application for abandonment.

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FILING RETURNS AND TABLING REPORTS

MR. COPITHORNE:

Mr. Speaker, on a Motion for Return to this House by Mr. Benoit and seconded by Mr. Taylor, my apologies for misplacing a part of the documents that I thought were included. I hereby would like to table them.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

MINISTERIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

Forestry Tour

MR. WARRACK:

Mr. Speaker, yesterday all MLA's received a communication from me indicating that we were planning to host in the Department of Lands and Forests, Alberta Forest Service, a forestry tour for four days, of the week June 19th to 22nd. The tentative agenda was attached and I rise now for three reasons: to emphasize and draw to hon. members attention this tour that we have organized for the information of MLA's and to emphasize, personally, that I would very much like to see every single member who possibly can, come with us on this tour. Secondly, Mr. Speaker, I have been asked by a number of people roughly what the costs would be. The cost will be very nominal, on the order of two nights accommodation, and no more than half a dozen meals. Thirdly, Mr. Speaker, for the information of members, as I'm sure they'll find this information on Alberta's timber supply as useful as I have found it, I would like to table in this House a document called the Quota System of Timber Disposal. I asked the Alberta Forest Service to prepare this information and I felt it would be helpful to all members of this Assembly in particular, to have before the forestry tour. So I do now table it and this will come to each member of the Assembly.

QUESTIONS

180. Mr. Taylor asked the government the following question:

What is the detailed breakdown of the following items included in the answer to Question No. 170:

- (1) \$596.05 paid to Mr. Farran?
- (2) \$2,120.68 paid to Dr. Paproski?
- (3) \$408.60 paid to Mr. Moore?

Answer:

- (1) Details of payments to Mr. Farran:
Approved and paid prior to March 31, 1972.

(Sept. 21-23; Oct. 7/71)

Airbus	\$ 34.00	
Taxi	7.00	
Parking	7.00	
Subsistence	48.00	
Meals	<u>5.50</u>	\$101.50

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(Nov. 2, 3/71)		
Airbus	36.00	
Parking	7.50	
Subsistence	25.80	
Mileage -- 30@ \$.13	3.90	
Entertainment	20.00	
Telegram	<u>.60</u>	93.80
(Nov. 23-26/71)		
Airbus	36.00	
Hotel & meals	63.20	
Parking	5.50	
Taxi	8.50	
Office supplies	2.00	
Mileage -- 30@ \$.13	3.90	
Telegram	<u>.60</u>	119.70
(Dec. 16)		
Airbus	36.00	
Mileage	3.90	
Taxi	5.20	
Parking	<u>1.50</u>	46.60
(Sept. 21-23/71)		
Airbus	<u>34.00</u>	34.00
(Jan. 11-12/72)		
Airbus	36.00	
Parking	3.50	
Taxi	2.20	
Hotel	20.25	
Meals	<u>5.00</u>	66.95
(Jan. 28/72)		
Mileage -- 360@ \$.13	39.60	
Hotel	26.05	
Telephone	<u>1.75</u>	67.40
(Feb. 23/72)		
Mileage -- 180@ \$.13	19.80	
Hotel	6.50	
Meals	<u>8.00</u>	<u>34.30</u>
Sub-Total		564.25
Approved for payment subsequent to March 31, 1972.		
(Feb. 29/72)		
Mileage -- 180 @ \$.13	19.80	
Hotel	6.50	
Meals	<u>5.50</u>	<u>31.80</u>
TOTAL		<u>596.05</u>

(2) Details of payments to Dr. Paproski:
Approved for payment subsequent to March 31, 1972

(November, 1971)		
Mileage -- 1625 @ \$.11	178.75	
Subsistence	46.00	
Meals	42.00	
Air Travel	72.00	
Taxis	<u>21.00</u>	359.75

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(December, 1971)		
Mileage -- 1200 @ \$.11	132.00	
Subsistence	79.20	
Meals	60.50	
Trip --Fed'l-Prov.		
Health Ministers Conf.	273.00	
Taxis	<u>34.50</u>	579.20
(January, 1972)		
Mileage -- 1560 @ \$.11	171.60	
Meals	24.00	
Taxis	<u>10.00</u>	205.60
(February, 1972)		
Mileage -- 900 @ \$.11	<u>99.00</u>	99.00
(March, 1972)		
Mileage -- 600 @ \$.11	66.00	
Meals	<u>17.00</u>	<u>83.00</u>
(NOTE: Submitted but not approved or paid: \$794.13)		
		<u>326.55</u>

(3) Details of payments to Mr. Moore:
Approved and paid prior to March 31, 1972

1. Mileage -- 760 @ \$.11	83.60	
Meals	<u>7.00</u>	90.60
2. Mileage -- 680 @ \$.11	61.60	
Subsistence	128.20	
Parking	<u>6.00</u>	195.80
3. Mileage -- 220 @ \$.11	24.20	
Meals	<u>5.00</u>	29.20
4. Mileage -- 500 @ \$.11	55.00	
Subsistence	20.00	
Meals	14.00	
Parking	<u>4.00</u>	<u>93.00</u>
		<u>408.60</u>

MOTIONS OTHER THAN GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

Merit Pay for Teachers

MR. COCKSON:

Mr. Speaker, I rise to move, seconded by the hon. Member for Drayton Valley, a resolution that the government of Alberta give consideration to establishing a differential staffing or merit-pay system, or the like, to reward teachers who demonstrate special competence, energy or ability in improving the quality of our educational system.

I would like to point out first of all to the members of the Assembly that I speak both as a former teacher, a former trustee and at the present time a parent. I have a particular interest in this subject, probably because of some of this background.

I would like to say first of all that I have been disappointed in years past at the lack of action on the part of the former

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government to take some initiative in this particular area. I think it has been a sad mark for education because we have a situation today where our teachers are locked into a lock-step system which pays primarily on experience and on training. The lack of incentive has created a situation where highly qualified and very capable teachers have quit the system because of their disillusionment with this type of pay structure. It has also created a situation where highly incompetent teachers have been able to maintain their income at the expense of the taxpayers.

I think, Mr. Speaker, that the relationship between teachers and parents is probably at its lowest level that it has been in a very, very long time, and perhaps we can lay the blame partly on this rigid type of structure that has been permitted to exist in our school system.

Merit pay has been a subject of long controversy between teachers and trustees. The Alberta Teachers' Association has danced around the subject and charged the trustee or the public, in general, with failing to come up with some situation in which merit pay can be established. I think probably, Mr. Speaker, this is one of the few arguments that has been posed against some form of merit pay in the school system.

I hope that in the few remarks that I have to make I might be able to clarify some of these problems and I hope that all the members of the Assembly will take note of these. I would like to see the members of the opposition, in particular, give some contribution to this particular problem.

Many trustees, of course say that it is possible to establish merit pay. Unfortunately there has been no legal process established which will make it possible. Local boards have been left on their own to negotiate with teachers as to working conditions and income. Merit pay has been long the subject over these tables and I can remember them very vividly, being one of the members on the firing line on both sides of the table. But nothing has ever been resolved; primarily I think because government has never taken the initiative itself to guarantee some right to local government to initiate this type of thing. Often at the local government level we found as trustees that we had to seek advice and direction from the Alberta Teachers' Association almost in advance from government. In fact it was a controversy at times as to which group was, in effect, legislating and directing the country. I hope that our new government might in some way clarify this point that municipal government and school boards are the child of the provincial government. They are assigned the responsibility of being employers of teachers who, in effect, are employees and therefore they should have the freedom and right to move in whichever direction they see fit and desirable to provide a good quality type of education in the system.

Now to point out to the Assembly the fact that many professional groups today do work on a merit-pay system, I collected -- and I hesitate to mention these figures because of the sensitivities of the hon. Member for Edmonton Kingsway -- the type of pay structure established, for example, for general practitioners. If you take the tables for 1971 you will find that general practitioners in 1971, there were some 88 in an area of some \$10,000 to \$20,000. There were 217 in an area of \$20,000 to \$39,000 or \$40,000 -- this is gross -- 259 general practitioners were in the area of \$40,000 to \$60,000 and so on. To indicate to you, I haven't got the dental figures, but perhaps the hon. member opposite might provide those -- to indicate there is even merit pay in pulling teeth.

Psychiatrists in 1971 -- we could use a few of them in this Assembly -- there were ten in the area of \$10,000 to \$20,000; there were 14 in the area of \$20,000 to \$40,000; there were 17 in the area

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of \$60,000 to \$80,000. My point is this, that you do have a merit pay structure in these two professions that I have listed. Even if you go into the areas of non-professional people and if you go into the statistics on farm income which is probably a deceiving figure because it doesn't include all the other, perhaps, hidden forms of income. It does give you an indication of the type of merit pay that is established in even non-professional groups. In 1969, there were some 2,700 people in the area of \$2,000 net income. In that same year there were 4,000 in the area of \$2,000 to \$3,000. There were 5,000 farm people in the area of \$3,000 to \$4,000 net income. I can go on and quote these variable figures. There are incentives built in to practically all professions and non-professions, with the exception of the area of teaching. Still we work on the old lock-step method of payment. My intention in presenting this to you is to make also very clear that I don't think trustees or taxpayers are necessarily interested in reducing teacher income. I think primarily the result would be an increase in teacher income. Certainly it would be to give a range of incomes and eliminate incompetence at one end and give people of outstanding ability some incentive at the other end.

The Alberta Chamber of Commerce -- I have a number of position papers that have been placed before the government and at different times in the history of merit pay. The Chamber of Commerce mentions merit-rating for teacher payment.

"We understand considerable discussion has taken place with regard to merit-rating plans for teachers' remuneration. We trust the delay in implementation is due to the unsuitability of the plan, so we recommend a serious effort be made to develop plans which can be generally accepted by Boards of Trustees and teachers."

I can go on to quote some the advantages and disadvantages, but mainly the general consensus is that a merit-pay system would make a great contribution to education. There is an article in several other magazines that I thought you might be interested in. This is one by H. Gordon Green. H. Gordon Green who teaches at Dawson College in Montreal. You probably are familiar with the articles that he wrote in the Family Herald, and he also has several books to his credit. He says this, and I quote:

"I am sure that the potential of our teachers today is higher than it ever was. The profession is certainly better trained than ever before and although it still has more than its share of misfits and mediocrity, it also attracts some of the most conscientious men and women in Canada. The reason for the poor quality of our teaching then, is not so much in the quality of the profession as it is with the system. Before a teacher ever enters a school, the system has selected him on the basis of two facts only -- his years of experience and his certificates. On these two credentials his pay rate is established. So we are afflicted with a system which takes no account at all of a teacher's personality and his power to communicate. The PhD must always draw the highest pay on the scale even though he may be a completely fogbound individual who doodles all day, with great respect to PhDs. And the lovely little woman who has been mother confessor to two or three generations of youngsters must close up her desk entirely when her humble certificate is no longer good enough."

I would like to suggest to the members of the Assembly that there has been some movement in this area by the Alberta Teachers' Association at their recent convention in Edmonton. The intent, primarily is to weed out, in effect, incompetent teachers. The controversial by-law amendment, which passed following several hours of heated debate, would see the establishment of a five-member Professional Competence Committee. Its job would be to investigate

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cases of alleged gross incompetence among teachers and to recommend that incompetent teachers be decertified. It would protect our members against being judged by people who are not their colleagues, as mentioned. So I point out that although the Teachers' Association has taken, in the past years, a very negative approach towards a merit-pay structure, that there is some movement, primarily because of pressure both politically and by taxpayers, and because of the cost of education, and perhaps because of what is happening in some of our other provinces in regards to the teaching profession.

In conclusion, hon. members of the Assembly, I would like to see some consideration by our government to establishing permissive legislation in The School Act or Labour Act, whichever, so that local boards, may in fact, have the power to initiate their own merit-pay structure. There are some directions given as to how this could be done and by no less a person than Dr. Brownwell who is the United States Commissioner of Education.

In summarizing, I would like to point out a few of his principles which he suggests in order to accomplish merit pay.

- "(1) All staff members need to know the basis upon which their services are evaluated.
- (2) Decisions as to what are the characteristics upon which services will be evaluated which is a job which calls for co-operative participation by teachers, the administration, and the school board."

I would like you to note this, because there is no way that such a system can operate without this very close co-operation.

- "(3) Basis for collecting evidences of merit should be worked out together by the staff, teachers, and administrators.
- (4) More than one person needs to participate in evaluating evidence upon which salary or promotion recommendations are made, in order to reduce, as far as possible, personal bias in interpreting evidence, some of which will inevitably be subjective."

And finally, I felt this was important in his recommendations.

- "(5) It is important that all parties recognize the purpose of a plan of recognition of merit is to provide pupils with the best possible staff and to encourage staff members to give their best services."

Mr. Speaker, these are just a few points that I've gathered. I would welcome general discussion, because of the importance of this matter and because I think that it has been too long delayed in our province. I'm concerned that if we do not move into some of these areas, that our province may have to take some actions that have been taken at the present time in British Columbia, and I think, Saskatchewan too, in effect, limit the power of a professional organization. It's important to bring our school people, our parents and our taxpayers and our teachers back close together. I would recommend that the government consider carefully this type of permissive legislation and put it into effect. If we make mistakes we'll have to rectify them, but it isn't sufficient to say that it won't work because there's no way merit pay can be initiated.

MR. ZANDER:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I certainly concur with the hon. member for Lacombe, and I, as the seconder of this motion, can certainly go along -- having been many years on the county council and school board -- but I believe we have to go into the history of what has

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actually happened to our teaching profession in the past six to eight years.

If we go back to about 1964, '65, '66, in that region, we find that we, the school boards, had no alternative but to accept teachers, regardless of what their teaching capabilities were, as long as they held a certificate, or even held a letter of authority to teach. Consequently we had to include teachers that had to be brought in from other parts of the world to teach in our schools. We arrived at the position where we had possibly accepted all teachers with all types of certificates, which were all possible to obtain, and also teachers with letters of authority to teach in our schools, and we found that the supply was still not meeting the demand of the school boards. Consequently, we had teachers that were borderline cases as to whether they should have a certificate or whether they should not have a certificate.

I can only refer you to my own experience and that is, Mr. Speaker, where we found that a teacher that had a Bachelor of Education degree, who had taught something like 25 to 30 years, commanded a considerable amount of salary, but did not get a refresher course in the modern techniques in the mathematics and sciences, and consequently we had to hire another teacher. This was a much younger teacher at less pay, who had accepted the position to teach mathematics and science. We were not able to fire the teacher or even transfer him or give him a different position. We found our hands, in total, bound by the fact that we could not move in the area that we wished to move. I would say, that today in Alberta, I believe that we have a considerable number of teachers who are in the age group between 59 and 64 who should have been pensioned off a number of years ago, and it possibly would have done the province a great favour.

We have today teachers that are graduating from our universities, that are coming out considerably better prepared and more capable of teaching modern sciences, modern mathematics, and we find that these teachers are not able to be placed. They have to go into other professions, and therefore, they have spent four years in university and have come out and have no employment. And yet, we have teachers who are not capable or as well equipped as the teachers who are now arriving on the scene and are holding jobs by school boards who don't wish them to have these positions but are reluctantly tied by the strings of an organization which they can do nothing about, and they cannot hire these teachers that are better equipped to teach our children.

I think we must recognize that sooner or later these people must leave this organization. I would certainly hope that the ATA, together with the Department of Education, would start an immediate screening process to weed out these teachers that are not carrying the full load of responsibility in the classrooms.

I find that in the years I have been on the school board, in one particular case I could see, out of some 285 teachers, we had something like 20 per cent of our teaching force that I would say were on the border-line of being in a classroom. Yet the school board had no authority, no means of disposing of them and getting some of the teachers whom they would have been so delighted to get if they could only replace them.

I believe the time has come to take a look at the organization, the ATA -- I think it can be worked out. I don't know if we have to go to the extreme -- but I do believe that the hon. Minister of Education, with the co-operation of the ATA and the school boards in particular, must reach a decision sooner or later. It has to be sooner if we are going to try to save some of these teachers who are well qualified coming out of our universities, who are unable to find

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a job because it almost seems it is a closed shop, because we cannot move teachers in the manner that we wish to move them.

I believe a better policing job must be done by the ATA; a screening job has to be done by the Department of Education. I am totally against a screening process by their own organization. If there are borderline cases, there should be personnel in the Department of Education who could screen these people, if they are not able to produce, as all other business in this world is screened as to ability to produce. Certainly, if we can find an employee in our organization who has a permanent job, and he knows he can't be fired, and he can't be laid off, and he is willing to drag his feet -- industry doesn't stand for it -- why should we the people of Alberta, stand for a program whereby we have to accept teachers, and we cannot move around in the area in which the school boards wish to move.

I think every school board in this province is willing to move in a direction to upgrade the teaching ability in the classrooms; they are providing excellent materials; they are building beautiful schools; yet, are providing in some cases inferior teachers for the children of our province. I think we have to take a good hard look at the direction we wish to take. I am sorry the Minister of Education in the former government is not in his seat, because certainly this was brought about by the school authorities many years ago, and it was always frowned on because there were not sufficient teachers. But now we have in the province, I believe, somewhere around 2,000 surplus teachers. I think we should move in that direction, to try to improve the educational standards in our classrooms.

If we continue to allow the organization to stifle the Department of Education or the school board from moving in that direction, then really, what are the school boards for? They are nothing but a tool for the organization, and nothing less. I believe the school boards, in co-operation with the government and the ATA, should certainly work towards this end. I believe the children of this province can certainly expect the best, because we have some prime teachers in this province who are not in classrooms, and will never get there unless some ways and means are found to get them into the classroom. We must try to get rid of some of these whom we do not want in our classrooms.

I think that most of the school boards in convention have expressed the concern of how to move teachers who could not be moved. I believe the time is coming when we as a government, and the Department of Education, and all three organizations should sit down and come up with a program whereby we can put the best people in our classrooms.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Edmonton Highlands.

MR. KING:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in rising to take part in the debate on the resolution, I must say that I feel a little ambiguous about it. On the one hand, I believe firmly that some kind of judgment must be exercised about the quality of the teaching which is provided to young people in the province. I think that the resolution obviously takes a step in that direction. On the other hand, I'm not sure that the resolution suggests the most efficient way of achieving the most useful kind of judgment about the quality of teaching. Any judgment about the quality of the educational experience is necessarily going to be subjective, because it is, in its nature, the decision by an individual or by a group of individuals, about the way in which another individual, or individuals, convey things which we simply

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cannot define clearly and concisely and commonly to everybody in the province.

The subjectivity that is involved in a merit-pay system is the subjectivity which comes from people within the system itself. That is merit pay seems necessarily to imply the judgment of someone within the system by someone else within the system, either someone immediately superior to the teacher, that is the principal or perhaps the guidance counsellor in the school, or someone in the system but more removed from immediate knowledge of what the teacher is doing. That might be someone at the school board level whose job it is to assess all teachers, or it might be a team or a division or a program within the Department of Education. But, in any of these cases, it is still a fact that you have judgment brought on the classroom teachers, by other people who first of all work within the system, secondly, have been trained for the system, and thirdly, are presumably dedicated to the system as it is in its general form. And this is what causes me some concern.

As my brief contribution to the discussion of this resolution, I would like to suggest an alternative. The alternative is still subjective. Its only possible merit if it has one, is that it is subjectivity that is removed from a direct relationship with the system itself. And what I am suggesting is that we judge teachers by our system of financing education, that instead of financing education directly, that we finance the parents of children with something that might be called a tax credit, and that the parents of children, then be authorized to spend this tax credit anywhere in the province where there is, according to uniform provincial criteria, a provincially-approved school system, whether it is in a specific school building or in a church basement, whether it has certain kinds of teachers or other kinds of teachers. I would suggest that it is possible for us to compute what the median per pupil cost of education is at any grade level, that it is possible for us to make this program a little bit more sophisticated by including extra credits for children who are certified in one way or another to have physical, mental, emotional problems or any combination of those.

But it would be possible, therefore, for us to determine how much the parents of a Grade I student would have to spend on the education of that student in the province, and they at that point would be free to spend that, where they thought that their child would receive the best education.

The advantages of this seem to me to be threefold. First of all that it allows for variety. It allows for freedom of choice and freedom of conscience. It would, for example, resolve immediately the question of support of sectarian or private schools which are teaching, using new concepts or at least different concepts of the educational process. It would allow for this freedom of choice at the consumer level, rather than at the professional educators' level.

Secondly, I think that it would recognize quality of instruction. The decision by parents as to where they place their children for education would be based on the judgment of the parents, perhaps as the children were older it would be based on the judgment of the parents in consultation with their children, perhaps at some point it would be based on the children themselves, as to the kind and the quality of instruction that they wanted in terms of social or moral standards, in terms of the clarity and the consistency of the communication within the educational experience and in terms of the relevance of the educational experience to the real world in which they live.

I think the third advantage of this would be that it would make the educational experience immediately reflective of the values and the standards of society. I cannot help but feel that the kind of educational system we presently have is -- to some extent at least --

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isolated from the real world in which we live and that -- to some extent at least -- it lags behind the values and the standards of society at large. I think that the freedom of choice, which would be provided by the opportunity for parents yearly to change the focus of the instruction of their children would make the educational system more immediately reflective of society; it would reduce what has been referred to in sociology as the cultural lag of the educational system.

Now it is a fact that possible disadvantage is that it would encourage teachers to pander to the current interests of children or of adults. It would encourage teachers to say and to teach that which is currently popular. I would say that that's a possibility. I would also say, that based on my experience within our present educational system, that to a certain extent at least, that exists right now.

I would also say that this is a system which has been used in the past. And that while there have been educators who have pandered to the current interests of the society, there have also been exceptions. This was the method of education current at the time of Socrates -- Socrates was this kind of a teacher. Socrates made a contribution -- the age in which he lived made a contribution to our development in spite of the fact that there were also bad teachers at that time who said what they thought society wanted them to say, and did what they thought society wanted them to do. The universities at the time of the life of Sir Francis Bacon operated almost without exception in this manner. The students went to the classes and paid the professors that they wanted to pay. They didn't pay the university, they weren't put into courses by the university and Sir Francis Bacon lived during that time which we call the age of enlightenment; at a time when this was the kind of education which was available to the population.

Very recently, during the lifetime of many of the people in this Assembly, Frank Lloyd Wright, a well-known architect, charged students \$1,000 for the privilege of living with him in his community for one year. In addition to paying him \$1,000 they had to pay all their own living expenses; they had to chop wood for his fireplace, and they had to act in the plays which he wrote and directed -- which I think makes it a considerably higher payment than \$1,000 annually.

But the fact of the matter is that consistently through history this kind of thing has been done. It has not been done during ages of an inward-looking society; it has not been done during times of weakness, or at least it appears to me that this was not the case; it appears rather that this kind of opportunity was offered during an age of the expansion and the development of the cultural understanding of societies to the world around them. I think, in view of that, in view of the rapid change that we're going through in our own society, in view of our real desire to measure the quality of the education that we're getting that this is one alternative that may be considered.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Calgary North Hill please.

MR. FARRAN:

I was most interested in the speech by the hon. Member for Edmonton Highlands. I had thought from what he had said the other day that he believed in cutting education costs by a different form of cutting operations on the parents.

I am generally in favour of the motion. It concerns a topic which is one on the lips of many people throughout the province. First there is a concern over the high and expanding cost of

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education. There is no need to repeat the statistics that show that education is absorbing the lion's share of the provincial and municipal budget. The concern is not only over projections which show that if the current expansion of school budgets is not slowed down they will soon absorb all the resources available to the state. Clearly a determination has to be made and soon as to what percentage of our gross provincial product it is proper to spend on education.

But people are also concerned that they are getting the full dollar value for the dollar spent on education, that the proper benefits are being received for the expensive system we have set up.

I am reminded in this context of that little nursery rhyme about the little pigs -- you know when you count the baby's toes -- "This little pig went to market; this little pig stayed at home; this little pig had roast beef; this little pig had none; and this little pig went wee wee all the way home." Well the first two big toes, I think, are definitely education and health and I am afraid the rest of the state services will soon be represented by the little toes on the other side of the foot. Because the big toes will soon be taking all the milk Mother Alberta has to spare for her litter.

Some 70 per cent of all school costs are attributable to salary. Teachers are highly organized -- what has become more of a trade union than a professional organization. Their union takes every tactical advantage of the splintered jurisdictions of the local school boards, playing off one against the other. And their members are extremely aware of the wage gains made in the other sort of splintered jurisdictions of local government where various civic unions compete with each other for the property tax dollar. A teacher is just as conscious of the wages paid to a policeman or a fireman as he is to wages paid to other people, or to other teachers. The teacher is also conscious of the prestige attached to his profession -- a prestige he tends to measure in dollars.

Of course teachers are aware of the important part they play in molding a nation. And I'm not suggesting there isn't a proper amount of dedication to duty in the teaching profession, because obviously there is. But it's true that at the same time teachers subscribe to all the principles of the trade union, the closed shop, the discipline of the strike call, all the other actions used by unions to support wage demands. They become very impatient with citizens who complain about rising costs and they argue that nothing is too much to pay for a high standard of education, such a very important field, which will reap its own rewards. They find it impossible to put themselves in the minds of, say, the citizens of a small town where the wealthiest citizen is, perhaps, the manager of the local co-op store and perhaps gets a maximum salary of about \$9,000 a year. The average income in a small town would be less than \$5,000 a year. They just can't understand that there could be any resentment of the pretty little teacher in the mini-skirt who comes out from the city into a subsidized house and gets a salary of \$10,500 a year and looks down on the local inhabitants. They just can't understand why there is resentment then of rising wages and rising cost of education.

They resent the municipal councils who resist school budgets in the name of the beleaguered property owners. To them this is the attitude of a reactionary -- prehistoric, narrow-minded, ignorant. To the teacher, there is something almost criminal in the present policy of requiring the school costs above a certain level be submitted to plebiscite. But at the same time, having said all that, there are many dedicated teachers -- and I have some evidence here to prove it -- many dedicated teachers who believe that there should be some fair and unbiased method of assessing the quality of education received for the dollars that are spent. In the current issue of the ATA magazine, there are several articles on accountability. There is one by Mr. K. W. Bride. He ends on a note of cynicism, generally in

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supporting the accountability principle, but he ends with these words:

"I contend that teachers will then react positively and enthusiastically if there is any indication that they will share in the development of a constructive approach for critical examination of school systems. It is not that I am optimistic about the possibility of school authorities suddenly going overboard to implement comprehensive meaningful assessment schemes. I must report that my reading of the accountability barometer indicates that the strong vocal whims have subsided to cautious whispers in all but a few remote regions. The educational climate in this regard is expected to return rapidly to its normal unsettled state."

Well, one of the recognitions is that teaching ability doesn't necessarily come with a degree. Now one of the most vocal directions from which this pressure comes for an assessment of the system, is from the students themselves. And the trend began in our universities, three or four years ago. I think we make a mistake if we think that students are not aware that the huge expansion after the war led Canadian universities to grant tenure to professors who may not have been of first-class quality. They are aware now that the supply of university professors exceeds demand but there is no room at the top because of the tenure system. They are irritated -- from my reading of students' newspapers -- at the number of foreign professors with an inadequate knowledge of English, who may be excellent for general research, may really be very intelligent and very well qualified, but are not always the best teachers for imparting their learning to students.

In our schools we've been through one experimental phase after another. There was a time when the Alberta system had been bitten by extreme Deweyism. There was a time when phonetics were out; there was a time when phonetics were in; there was a time when one brand of new math was taught and that was out; and now there is another brand of new math. There was a time just a few years ago when they bought a textbook written by some professor in B.C. for teaching English by numbers. The emphasis goes to the enterprise system, to the materials research system and then back again. There is emphasis on open schools and then there is a little bit of reaction back to traditional teaching in a closed classroom. Examinations are out -- now they are in -- now they are out again -- grades are out -- then they are in, there is marking on a curve. There is a change in the form of reports the parents receive once every three or four years. Good old Alberta is always experimenting and always innovating in the field of education.

Seldom has the system been measured against other systems; either in Canada, North America, or elsewhere in the English speaking world, or even against other systems in the province, one board against the other. Now I don't believe that there is any way of measuring the competency of a teacher by the judgment of another teacher -- another teacher alone. The only way is to measure the output to the students. Even then, in order to be fair, to do it over a broad cross-section of students over a reasonable period of time and to make allowances for local peculiarities, such as the class size or the type of school or the region. There were many advantages and many reasons why one used to have the examination system of evaluation. It could be done by an unbiased examiner at a distance and some cost but personality considerations were not present and the tests could be reasonably uniform. The education establishment now -- and it is acknowledged by the government -- really the pressure comes largely for psychological reasons. Everybody now frowns upon examination. So we have to fall back on some version of the ancient method of the travelling inspector, who will of course, be subject to human failings, occasional bias, and

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occasional considerations of personality, and the way he perhaps implements set tests that are laid down at a departmental level.

Even here, a fair system of appraisal will be difficult because standards are not uniform throughout the province. Until we get comprehensive manuals on a provincial level which give guidance on such things as teacher-pupil ratio, what support materials there should be in a school, there can be no uniform, fair approach. Under the present system, a hard-pressed school district with a narrow tax base may be able to afford less than a wealthier area. I have quite a bit of evidence here to this effect from a teacher in the riding of my friend from Pincher Creek-Crowsnest. She also comes from my riding but this is where she worked. She is a music teacher, who has a fantastic record. As you all know, there is a great symphony orchestra out at Pincher Creek, and this is a very famous area of Alberta for music. This lady co-ordinated all the music of Lundbreck, Pincher Creek, and so on -- had a big record at the school festival -- she had been laid off, not because she was a poor teacher, not because she failed to produce results -- because she did produce results -- but because the school board figured they had to keep to a 25:1, 26:1 teacher pupil ratio, so they laid off teachers to stay within the 6 per cent increase factor.

This, of course, this business of equating everything with a narrow tax base, contravenes the principle of equality of opportunity for all Albertans, even if it does underline that other principle that everyone is so keen on, of local autonomy and decentralization. Next year, the province intends to assume a larger share of the costs of education. Without so much constraint, the desire to avoid increasing mill rates, there may be even a greater tendency for the education establishment to live beyond the means of the province. There must be a new formula, new guide-lines, new directions. Certainly there will be some areas still left to supplementary requisition, but there will be even a greater need for evaluation, cost benefit studies, for making sure that we get dollar value for dollars spent.

The supply of qualified teachers now exceeds demand. Those who are employed usually get an annual increment of around 4 per cent a year, plus whatever percentage increase the union manages to negotiate. So what is sometimes announced as a 6 per cent increase for teachers, is often a 10 per cent increase when you add in the 4 per cent increment. That is why it was so very difficult to live within the 6 per cent flexibility factor.

There will be a need to replace the present plan for mandatory plebiscites. After exhaustion of the 6 per cent increase with the flexibility factor spread over three years, and the three years comes to an end this year. The limit has just about been reached for the increasing of teacher-pupil ratios, the laying-off of teachers, the reorganization within the system. There has to be an alternative.

In industry, as the hon. Member for Drayton Valley pointed out, annual increments are not automatic. Increments are only awarded if management is satisfied with the employee's productivity. It's common practice, unless it's specified in the work contract, that increments are occasionally postponed because of poor performance. Merit, rather than seniority, prevails at salaried levels throughout industry. It's only in the field of day labour, where hourly rates are specified in a short term union contract, that you get these universal increases for various classifications across the board. You don't usually get it for the salaried staff personnel in corporations.

These are some of the considerations, and I've only spoken in this debate because I know we've got to face up to this problem before 1973.

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DR. PAPROSKI:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to say a few words, just for two or three minutes. I speak today as a parent, primarily, although I've had the privilege and honour of being involved in the profession of medicine -- I re-emphasize that I speak as a parent.

I would like to mention a few items that I think should be considered by the Assembly. The consideration would be firstly, who would measure, or who would be applying this merit system for the teachers? Are they a lay group, a professional group, the peer group themselves, or students?

Another consideration, the merit system itself in principle, I'm afraid, would cause undue stress on our teachers. Why? Because I feel that it would result in overconcern for the teachers to actually show their competence and worse than that, I feel that probably the teachers may very well show off their competence. I think it would cause undue stress to those people who are involved in the assessment themselves, because in fact, it is subjective, and any subjective measurement is very, very difficult.

However, with these concerns, I quickly make some qualifications and I would like to congratulate the hon. Member for Drayton Valley and the hon. Member for Lacombe who moved the resolution. I feel that it is a worthwhile resolution and as a parent again, I feel very strongly that we should have some sort of merit system in our province for our teachers, despite the difficulty I have just mentioned. I feel very strongly about this, but I feel even more strongly that the merit system is a necessity.

I don't think you can draw an analogy, as the hon. Member for Lacombe has stated, that the medical profession, there are doctors who earn more money because, in fact, this must be a merit system. It is a merit system in quantity, not necessarily in quality, although it can be both. This is not truly a merit system, because it is not monitored by anybody outside unless you monitor dollars and cents alone.

So that when we speak of a merit system, we must consider not only quantity of teaching, and I feel this is important because many teachers are involved in increased quantity of workload, and this should be measured -- and easily measured -- and this should be compensated accordingly right now; but also the quality of teaching which is more important, and undoubtedly the most important deserves special merit. There's no doubt about it that after graduation the quality of teaching is measured by dollars and cents to some degree. But it is even more important that the quality is measured on an ongoing basis. This is the most difficult portion of this merit system, although I support it in principle as I have stated. Now how can we measure this?

I have indicated before, it could be measured either by the people, by the students themselves -- and I suspect that the students being a gauge at the lower grades is very difficult -- or by the peer groups. I would support that the peer groups, the profession, in fact, do this monitoring. But let us have a system whereby the profession themselves should expose to the citizens concerned, and it's clearly understood what kind of a system they are going to use, that is the profession themselves. Another additional item would be that the lay people in the community not only should understand what merit system the professional group is using, but should be allowed to have an input regarding that system on a yearly basis. The citizen should know whether this input is being acted on or not acted on. These are my comments. Thank you.

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MR. TOPOLNISKY:

Mr. Speaker, the motion asks that the government give consideration to the establishing of a merit-pay system for teachers. In this it has merit. I'm sure this government will always be open to new ideas, and even to old ones in new disguises. The motion, however, has in it an error, in that it equates differential staffing and merit pay. Differential or differentiating staffing, as it is usually called, is aimed at the most effective organization and deployment of school staffs according to the tasks and functions involved in educating children.

I understand that such organizations are currently being used in numerous schools in Alberta on an experimental basis -- Bishop Carroll, Calgary Separate School Board, Edmonton Public School Board, Lethbridge Public School Board, are examples. These trials will be evaluated and the government will, no doubt, have access to all the information regarding their value in improving the quality of education.

The merit pay proposals had been given a great deal of consideration throughout North America in the last 15 years. They have cost a great deal of time and money. Their findings are available, and therefore certainly do not need to be repeated. The most recent report (1971), an extensive study of the Metropolitan Toronto School Boards is also available. Its recommendations may be need to be repeated. A most recent 1971, an extensive study of the metropolitan Toronto school boards on this matter, are also available. Its recommendations may be equally applicable to Alberta.

The American experience is that such plans are abandoned shortly after they are begun. They are based on the assumption that there have to be on our staffs some less than competent teachers. But we find it is similar in other professions. I believe that all our teachers should have special competence, energy and ability. I note that the Alberta Teachers' Association is proposing some steps towards achieving this objective, through the competence proposals it approved at its recent Annual Representative Assembly.

A great deal more could be said about the results of all the merit-pay attempts, but in essence the experience is that we already know they are extremely costly to operate; they do not work; and they do nothing to improve the quality of education.

MR. SPEAKER:

Would the hon. minister wish to conclude shortly with the leave of the House, or would he prefer to adjourn the debate?

HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER:

Does the House agree that the hon. minister may conclude?

HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

MR. TOPOLNISKY:

Thank you, Mr. speaker.

The resolution proposes expenditure of a large sum of money. A similar investigation cost \$1 million in Utah several years ago, on a matter which has already been dealt with exhaustively.

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With every type of professional job at a premium these days, the natural law of survival of the fittest will surely be the best leveller, without expense and without openly labelling our fellow-man as first-, second-, and third-rate. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. LEE:

Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to adjourn the debate.

MR. SPEAKER:

Has the hon. member leave to adjourn the debate?

HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

PUBLIC BILLS AND ORDERS OTHER THAN GOVERNMENT ORDERS
[Second Reading]

Bill No. 202 An Act to Amend the Election Act

MR. NOTLEY:

Mr. Speaker, I move Bill No. 202 for second reading. In addressing my remarks to second reading on this bill, Mr. Speaker, I would hope that the members of this Assembly will concentrate on the two principles in the bill, discussion of the philosophy of these points, rather than getting bogged down discussing the various details which, if the bill passes second reading, we can discuss in a more detailed way in committee.

The first major principle in the bill is the concept that election expenses should be limited. It is my submission, Mr. Speaker, that it is important in a democratic society that all political points of view should have, as much as possible, equal access to public opinion. The lack of control over the expenditures in an election campaign can lead to a great inequality in the right of political organizations to make their case before the people of the province or the country.

It is a known fact that there is a great disparity in election budgets. Let me cite an example from the last federal campaign, the riding of Calgary South, the winning candidate spent just under \$50,000. By comparison his New Democratic opponent managed to gather together some \$635. Now frankly, without being too concerned about the inequality in that particular case, the fact is that a real disparity exists and, as a consequence, it is important to look at legislation which places some reasonable upper limit on the expenditures in modern political campaigns.

This is even more important, Mr. Speaker, because of the fact that today election campaigning is becoming increasingly expensive -- the public media, television, radio, newspapers, indeed the professional advertising agencies and the great amount of work and professional advice which is increasingly necessary in order to mount a successful modern campaign. All cost a good deal of money. Well, frankly, in many respects I think that perhaps there is a tendency in our society to place too great an emphasis on this type of election campaigning. I for one would like to get back to the good old days when we had public meetings, and I am going to say something about that later.

But the point that must be made here is that modern campaign techniques are extremely expensive, and that when you have an election campaign for one political point of view, have enough funds to take advantage of all the modern techniques and yet another

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political point of view isn't sufficiently funded, you have the kind of disparity that I talked about a moment ago.

Mr. Speaker, one of the principal reasons for limiting election expenses is that, in my view, it would force political parties to move away from what I claim to be an over-dependence on the public media and to get back to the kind of participatory campaigning which to me is basic to the whole democratic process. We all know that the media campaigns make it much easier for politicians today than 40 or 50 years ago. When the United Farmers of Alberta, first won in this province in 1921, it was as a result of a campaign from one end of Alberta to the other, by people like the late Robert Gardner, William Irving, many others I could name who criss-crossed this province and addressed public meetings -- public meetings where they found themselves under fire from those people who differed from their particular political views. Similarly in 1935, when the Social Credit party was successful, again if we look at the record of the 1935 campaign and the years leading up to that campaign, we find that the late Mr. Aberhart and many of the leading figures in the Social Credit party took their case to the people of Alberta in the kind of atmosphere where the people could talk back. It is not easy, Mr. Speaker, to talk back to a television screen, but in the public meeting setting, it involves the give and take which to me is so essential if we are going to have a public opinion which is aware of what's going on and a democracy which is based on citizen participation. Well, Mr. Speaker, I think the need to limit election expenses is, in my submission, a pretty strong one.

Let me go on to discuss the second major principle in this bill, namely that political parties should disclose the source of their contributions. In discussing this principle it's important as I view it that we recognize that a political party is not essentially a private organization in the sense that perhaps a Lions Club is, or an Elks Club or a Women's Auxiliary of the United Church in a particular community -- these organizations which are largely private in nature.

Therefore it's up to the members of these organizations where they get their money and how they spend it, and so on. But a political party is quite different. A political party is a group of people who are asking their fellow citizens to entrust them with the responsibility of governing. As a consequence, a political party is really a public organization. As a consequence, Mr. Speaker, it's my submission that the public has a right to know. If government is going to be accountable, the public has a right to know who is putting up the money, for whatever political party may be running.

I also claim and I'm going to be reading from the Barbeau Report, which was commissioned by the federal government -- I also claim that the reporting of political contributions would have a cleansing affect on the whole political process. I'm not submitting, Mr. Speaker, that the major scandals that we know from reading Canadian history -- the CPR scandal that rocked the first government of Sir John A. MacDonald, or the Beauharnois scandal that was a major political scandal in the early 1930's -- is typical of what is going on, because I don't really believe they are. But I do submit that political contributions -- while they may not act in a corrupt sense -- often have a very influential effect on determining the course of government's action. We have, for example, the statements made by Rene Levesque, who was a member of the Liberal Cabinet in Quebec between the years 1960 - 1966, who made it quite clear, Mr. Speaker, that, in his view, the large contributors had a good deal of indirect influence on the course followed by that government.

Mr. Speaker, the point that I think must be made is that there is really no way of judging, because without full disclosures of where political parties acquire their funds, the public -- which is concerned -- isn't in a position to amass the type of information necessary to find out whether undue influence has taken place. This,

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Mr. Speaker, is one of the reasons why I submit the disclosing of political contributions would have a cleansing effect on the whole process of government. I use the words "cleansing effect", Mr. Speaker, because this was a phrase used over and over again in the American Congress which, as some of the hon. members may know, recently passed a piece of legislation which embraced the principle that I am enunciating now.

Mr. Speaker, one of the most serious arguments against the disclosing of political contributions is one which, quite frankly troubled me at first, and I think troubles all of us somewhat, and will this not infringe on the right to anonymity on the part of the individual donor? Mr. Speaker, I think that you eliminate this by setting some sort of reasonable ceiling - we can argue what that ceiling might be. I say \$50 in this bill. The American Congress has set a figure of \$100. You might say it to be \$500 or \$1000. But I think you eliminate the vast majority of cases by setting a reasonable ceiling. I acknowledge, however, that there may be a problem -- the donor who, for quite legitimate reasons, wants to make a donation of over that ceiling and who is doing it for perfectly legitimate reasons. But, Mr. Speaker, I submit that in most cases we are not really talking about a restriction on human liberty because in most cases it is a matter of convenience. And if it is a matter of convenience then I don't think there's too strong a case. But I acknowledge that there will, however, be some small number of people who will be legitimately denied the right to make contributions of a somewhat larger figure than prescribed in this bill. Well then, how do you justify enforcing disclosure?

I think in the final analysis we must weigh the rights of the many to know; the rights of the many to have a government which is truly accountable on one hand against the right of a few to give anonymous donations over a specific ceiling. Mr. Speaker, quite frankly, one of our responsibilities as we go through the process of determining priorities and passing legislation is to, perhaps, make value judgments and to balance the rights of individuals. It might be nice if we lived in a kind of simple society where we had black and white issues before us but, frankly, in this case it's not a black and white issue. And I think in the final analysis the overwhelming importance of the general public's right to know supercedes the interest of what might be a group of ten or 20 or 50 or 100 people who might otherwise come in this category.

Mr. Speaker, the reason that I submitted this bill is not just because it happens to be a viewpoint I hold very strongly but I think I should point out to the hon. members in this House that we already have a report commissioned by the federal government. It is called the Barbeau Report and it was tabled in the House of Commons in 1966. I would like to outline the members of that commission, Mr. Speaker, for the interest of the House. The Chairman, Mr. Alphonse Barbeau from Montreal, a lawyer, who was the chairman of the committee; Mr. Gordon R. Dryden, a lawyer and secretary-treasurer of the Liberal Federation of Canada; Mr. N. J. Coldwell, former national leader of the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation; Mr. Arthur R. Smith, a business man from Calgary and a man who the hon. members across the way will know has a least more than a fleeting acquaintance with the Conservative Party; and Dr. Norman Ward of Saskatoon, an author and professor of political science at the University of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, the Barbeau Commission examined the whole question of political financing in Canada and discussed the various matters that I have raised today. In this report it based its recommendations on a number of important assumptions and I am going to read these assumptions into the record of our Legislature because I think they are worth noting:

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1. Political parties should be legally recognized and through the doctrine of agency made legally responsible for their actions in raising and spending funds.
2. A degree of financial equality should be established among candidates and among political parties by the extension of certain services and subsidies to all who qualify.
3. An effort should be made to increase public participation in politics by broadening the base of political contributions by tax concessions to donors.
4. Cost of election campaigns should be reduced by shortening the campaign period by placing limitations on expenditures on mass media by candidates and parties, and by prohibiting the payment of poll workers on election day.
5. Public confidence in political financing should be strengthened by requiring candidates and parties to disclose their incomes and expenditures.
6. A registry under the supervision of a registrar should be established to audit and publish the financial reports required, and to enforce the provisions of the proposed Election and Political Finances Act.

I might point out, Mr. Speaker, that in reviewing the recommendations of the Barbeau Report, the Report also said that in the event that the spirit of this legislation was not lived up to, and that if it was broken, that the penalty would be forfeiture of a seat in precisely the same way as I have enunciated in the bill, because I think that if we don't have reasonable penalties outlined in the legislation, all we are doing is engaging in an act of window-dressing. I want to quote from the Barbeau Report dealing with the issue that I talked about a moment ago, namely the disclosures of election finances because this is something which I know concerns, quite legitimately, a number of the members in this House, and I quote from the report.

"Disclosure would assist in educating the public on the need for involvement in the financing of the legitimate though high campaign expenses required in an increasingly complex political system. Disclosure also has a cleansing effect on politics and acts indirectly to reduce campaign expenditures. The committee was told that no candidates or parties would attempt to buy an election if the public were made aware of their tactics. The committee also heard that the fear of public disapproval as a result of disclosure would reduce the possibility of a wealthy candidate overpowering his opponents by the sheer weight of money. Disclosure, the committee was urged, would reduce the mystery surrounding political influence and perhaps elevate the image of political parties and politicians. On the other hand, the committee was told that disclosure is an invasion of privacy and a breach of the principle of the secret ballot since a person would be presumed normally to vote for the candidate or party he supported financially. It was also suggested that the publication of a donor's contribution would subject him to embarrassment from his associates, his employer, and adherents of other political parties. It was argued that a person should be protected from these consequences on the same grounds that are used to support the secret ballot. It was also argued before the committee that a financial contribution is not the same as the privilege of the secret ballot, but an attempt to influence the votes or opinions of others and thus a public act. Electors are consequently entitled to know who is attempting to use financial resources to bring influence on their decision."

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Then, Mr. Speaker, the report balances both the arguments and says:

"The argument both pro and against disclosure have merit, but in the minds of the committee members the need for meaningful disclosure and reporting appears vital if any controls are to be introduced. Therefore in spite of the obvious shortcomings in the present disclosure law, the committee is encouraged to retain the principle as it applies to candidates and extend it to cover political parties."

So said the Barbeau Report tabled in the House of Commons in 1966.

Mr. Speaker, other provinces in Canada have attempted various types of election reforms. In the Province of Manitoba the government there has introduced legislation which has put a limit on the amount that can be spent by individual candidates and by the central offices of the political parties of that province.

In the Province of Quebec, legislation has been introduced which goes somewhat farther than I can in this bill. It allows for public subsidy. I personally favour this kind of approach, but because that would involve a money bill it is not within the purview of a private member to introduce that kind of legislation.

Similarly in the Province of Nova Scotia, the former Conservative government in Nova Scotia introduced election reform legislation and I'm not sure of the exact figures, but on the basis of the number of votes polled by parties in the election in riding by riding that a certain public subsidy is paid. This is not done on a provincial basis but it is done on a constituency basis. So there is some precedent elsewhere in Canada in other provinces, Mr. Speaker, for this type of legislation, or at least the principle of this type of legislation.

I think that it is also worth noting that in the United States, the Congress just several weeks ago finally passed an act which really does the two major things that this bill I'm introducing spells out, namely it limits the amount that political parties can spend. For example, in a presidential election the limit, as I understand it, is ten cents per voter for the presidential election. The other part of the legislation, Mr. Speaker, is that it forces the disclosure of every contribution over \$100.

Frankly, there are some people who say that I tend to be a little anti-American on occasion. I don't really think that is true, but I think that there are many things that we can learn from the great Republic to the south of us. Quite frankly, the action that Congress has taken this year is one we would do well to follow. May I say, Mr. Speaker, that if the men who are running for the presidency of the United States -- the highest elective office in the world -- can accept this kind of legislation, who are we in the Alberta Legislature to resist it?

I also say, Mr. Speaker, that it is interesting to note that Mr. McGovern -- the man who some reporters argue is, if not the leading contender, at least a candidate who has come from obscurity to the point where he is one of the major contenders for the Democratic presidential nomination in the United States -- was the first man to disclose who contributed campaign funds. He disclosed every contribution, all the way from one gentleman who had given him \$25,000 down to a young man in California who was attending, I think, junior high school and had contributed something like \$2 to the McGovern campaign. Frankly, I think Senator McGovern's approach in this respect is laudible, certainly one consistent with the new American legislation, and one which I believe shows a pretty sound

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regard for the public's right to know, and for the need of all public officials to be accountable.

So, Mr. Speaker, I think the two principles that I have outlined are essentially sound and I would ask the hon. members of this Assembly to seriously consider the merit of the points I have made.

MR. KOZIAK:

Mr. Speaker. . .

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Edmonton Strathcona, I believe, was on his feet first.

MR. KOZIAK:

Mr. Speaker, when I first viewed the bill presented to this House -- Bill No. 202 -- the explanatory notes which are provided with the bill somewhat amused me, because here I expected to find another bill based on that old myth that established wealth unfairly influences elections. My approach to the bill was then based on the explanatory remarks. I must point out that some of the remarks made by the hon. member presenting the bill, in his presentation of the bill, were of course, good remarks -- well taken -- and some of my thoughts on the bill have been tempered as a result of these remarks. I also view, with interest, the remarks of my learned friend for the Spirit River-Fairview constituency in connection with his adoration -- if I may call it that -- of that great Republic to the south and the decisions made by the supreme head of that government. I trust that his feelings in that regard will be somewhat tempered when he joins me on the committee dealing with foreign investment.

AN HON. MEMBER:

We'll all drink to that.

MR. KOZIAK:

As I suggested, Mr. Speaker, the explanatory notes at least are based on a myth which I don't think is supportable. I think that if the gentleman will recall the election expenses that were advertised especially for the constituencies of Edmonton Glenora and Edmonton Whitemud by the Social Credit candidates, one can verily see that the amount spent has no bearing on the results of the election.

The bill itself, to my mind, is somewhat inconsistent, Mr. Speaker, because it points out that its purpose is to insure that wealth doesn't influence elections. Yet it doesn't limit the donations from any single individual. The requirement of the bill, insofar as single donations, is that they be disclosed if they exceed a certain amount. So that we may have a situation where a candidate is entirely financed by one single source, financed by one single source, and yet that would be in order, pursuant to the terms of this bill. The unusual thing is that it wouldn't be disclosed to the electorate until after the election, so that the purpose of the bill could hardly be the avowed purpose shown in the explanatory notes.

So really, what we have here, Mr. Speaker, is a bill that will limit the expenses during the course of an election, and secondly, a bill that will require the disclosure of the source of funds after an election. Dealing firstly with the matter of disclosure, I am somewhat concerned by the fact that the limit is placed. I think that we all appreciate that \$50 to one particular individual may be a lot more or a lot less than \$50 to another particular individual. We recognize this fact in our taxation systems, income tax, what have you. Taxation isn't on a sum basis, it's on a percentage basis. So

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that perhaps if we are looking at political donations and at which point they should be disclosed, maybe what we should be looking at is a percentage of a person's income in determining at which point the donation need not be disclosed, and at which point the donation need be disclosed. And as you can anticipate, Mr. Speaker, this is going to create a lot of bookwork which will probably drive candidates away from the possibility of seeking office.

Perhaps the ultimate suggestion might be, Mr. Speaker, that all political donations must be disclosed following an election, and then all people are treated fairly and equally. Now, if you carry that suggestion to its ultimate, then perhaps we should also remove the white screens from the polling booths and remove the secrecy of the ballot. Mr. Speaker, the real fallacy of the bill is that it treats money as the important thing. You know, I look in my back pocket and I've got some of it and I say to myself, where is it coming from? Well, it's from my back pocket.

DR. BUCK:

From task forces.

MR. KOZIAK:

Thank you for your intelligent contribution to the debate. Really, Mr. Speaker, it was put there from some other source. The money which I have in my possession, Mr. Speaker, is the result of personal services for my work, the job that I do. I don't think that there are very many people in this House, Mr. Speaker, in this city or in this province that don't have to rely on their personal services and the rewards for those personal services for their source of funds. I think generally most of the people in this province are in that position. To some degree or another they rely on the rewards for their personal services for their funds. So what really is money? Money represents a commodity that represents something else. It represents those personal services.

When you keep that in mind, we then look at The Election Act and we look at the bill which has been presented here to amend The Election Act. The Election Act that we have now is set up as a machinery which would ensure that elections are handled in as fair a manner as possible, Mr. Speaker, to ensure that each candidate has an opportunity to present his views to the public and the election takes place on as fair and equitable a basis as possible. What we have in this particular bill, Mr. Speaker, is an attempt to remedy a situation where one candidate may have an advantage, whether real or imaginary, because of an additional source of funds not available to the other candidate or candidates. But I say, Mr. Speaker, that that isn't the only test. Because one particular candidate may represent the aged. He may also represent the people who are employed. He may also represent the people who are infirm, people who, either because of their physical incapacities or because of their employment, cannot assist that candidate in the workings of an election campaign. Yet they would like to assist that candidate and attempt to assist him in his ultimate election. Their only choice, if they cannot donate of their services, as enumerated in Section No. 158.1 of the proposed bill, is to donate of money or money's worth.

On the other hand, another candidate in the same election may represent -- perhaps this is an election which is taking place during the summer holidays -- he may represent students and he may represent teachers, both of whom have an enormous amount of free time during the summer holidays. Now we all know what time can do during an election, and what bodies can do during an election. I take my seat in this House, Mr. Speaker, not because of political contributions, but because of the hundreds and hundreds of people who supported me during my election campaign, the people who donated of their time, of their ability, and who worked hard to get me here.

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Mr. Speaker, that particular aspect is what gave me the advantage over the other candidate, not the source of funds, not anything else. It is the fact of the number of people who supported me, and the number of people who were able to come out and support me. I think if we are going to concern ourselves with making sure an election is run so that no candidate is at a disadvantage, and no candidate has an advantage over others, then the bill must also include the value of a person's services based on the time that that person spends in assisting in the election, based on the ability that that person brings with him to the election. How do you value, Mr. Speaker, the time of the provincial leader? How do you value the time of the leader of the government from another province who comes to assist you in your election? How do you value the time of the leader of your party federally who comes to assist you in your election?

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Benny can come to this city and raise \$100 per ticket with his time. Surely, this has some value. If we are really concerned with making sure elections are fought on an equal basis, let us not say to one contender, after he gets into his ring with clubs, that only swords are going to be used in this battle. Because I think this is what we are doing with this bill. We are perhaps creating a disadvantage, giving the advantage to the one or two candidates who can muster the support of manpower to the detriment of another candidate who cannot muster the support of manpower, maybe because of the season; maybe it is seeding time; maybe it is harvest time. I can see numerous reasons. I think if we are going to have a bill which is fair to all, that bill must include the evaluation of time that people donate in working on a campaign, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Pincher Creek-Crowsnest, followed by the hon. Member for Edmonton Jasper Place.

MR. DRAIN:

Mr. Speaker, looking at Bill No. 202 and the format thereof, I do not think that anyone who stops to analyse the basic thinking behind the bill would be overly eager to disregard this bill and what is in it. Certainly, if it ever got to the point where it became a matter of clause-by-clause study I would have my reservations about many sections. But looking at it as a history of democracy and a tree of democracy and how it has grown from the time of Athens and the time of ancient Rome and even to the time of the Magna Carta, when the voting and the processes of democracy, and the right of he who could hold office was predetermined by the prerogatives of birth, and in later time by religion and ancestry, and watching the progress that we have now made. Truly, Mr. Speaker, the tree of democracy has managed to flourish despite the fact that it has been bent by many winds, many winds that have been retrogressive. But in spite of all this, we evolved onward and prosperously further along the road to what true democracy should mean to all of us. The right of people to predetermine the management of their affairs.

So as history evolves, we can look at the history of early elections in Canada and the politician who bought the greatest amount of whiskey won the election, and this is history because I know whereof I speak. I have talked to old timers who have managed to drink vast quantities of liquor for one party and then vote for the other; which is proper democratic justice.

So then, we come to a different era. We come to an era now, and I suppose many of you have read Mr. Huxley's book, '1984' when many of the processes that we take for granted are preprogrammed by the power of the media, by the power of radio, by the power of television, so then, that the purview of thinking that people have becomes more and more limited. Hence, it would be reasonable to

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assume that if Abraham Lincoln started out with his axe and his law book that he borrowed from the library that he walked 25 miles to get, he would have a little more difficulty today in becoming the president of the United States that he didn't have at that particular time.

Certainly, the point that I am trying to make, Mr. Speaker, is that we are now entering a new era that possibly our political thought and our political communication has not kept pace with the modern times that we now presently live in. Certainly we can take a narrow and secular view of this bill. We can say that this may be party oriented, that the little guy has tried to stand up and hit back at the big guy, and then we have now had this particular thought rejected by the last speaker, but I think there is more to it than that, Mr. Speaker. I think probably that we are looking at an era, that through the powers that are available, and I question here today, that if Mr. Nixon did not have the might and power of television behind him, in the last American election, I question very seriously, whether Mr. Nixon today would be President of the United States.

So hence, you can then conclude, he who has the power of the media and all other appurtenances of modern communication in his hand, can thereby predetermine the ultimate result that he is going to have.

I got a note from the hon. member and I'm not going to use it. I think it is discourteous.

DR. HORNER:

Would the hon. member permit a question? Well, he has made some comment how President Nixon would have fared without TV. I wonder if he has any comment as to whether or not Hubert Humphrey didn't come up rather quickly in the election campaign because of TV also?

MR. DRAIN:

Well, he who has the most guns can fire off the most ammunition.

So, I would think that this Bill No. 202 fails in that it goes not far enough. I would say that if it is the responsibility to carry on with our democratic process, I do not think it would be less than right for our society to do other than to accept the responsibilities of the democratic processes. In other words, I would say that these particular processes of communication are vital and necessary for our era and time.

I have already suggested that he who has the largest television fund is bound to the man that rides a winning horse. However, there may be some disagreement on this particular subject; I'm prepared to agree that there may be hon. members who are still thinking back in the 19th century, and of course having been directly involved in hay and oats certainly would make their thinking slightly retrogressive. But however, that may be as it may, Mr. Speaker. I would say that this bill should include -- to be properly accepted by this Legislature, and in order to properly bring the story of parties and the party system to the people of Alberta, we must have communication. In order to have communication we must have the media. Hence, therefore, if people should be on an equal basis there should be equal opportunities. Additionally because of the basically lackadaisical viewpoint that most people have of politicians -- it's a strange thing when politicians stop and realize that, that their little sphere in the world is only important to themselves. It's not basically important to the man who is working out in the oil field, to the man who is cutting logs up in Spirit River or some other particular point -- unless the Legislature or the political system, in its wisdom proceeds to go out and step on this guy's toes and then

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you'll hear from him and hear from him quite loudly. So therefore you must have communication, and I think that this bill should say that a certain amount of money should be allocated to each political party and this should be all that should be spent in any particular election. The format of the amount of money that should be allocated should be on the basis of allowing a proper communication.

MR. YOUNG:

Mr. Speaker, two issues have been outlined by the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview in this debate. The first being that election expenses should be limited and he's advanced a number of reasons for that position. The second being that the source of contributions to political parties in an election campaign should be divulged and he's advanced a number of reasons for that. I would like to comment very briefly on his reasons - at least on some of them.

I could perhaps do that best by asking the hon. gentleman since he seems to have espoused and taken very close to heart the remarks of Rene Levesque concerning the Liberal party in the Province of Quebec, whether he espouses all opinions advanced by Rene Levesque?

He has perhaps distressed me in another way. I had expected that the illustrations for the concern advanced for a proposal of provincial legislation would in fact be illustrated with examples from the Province of Alberta, or at least on a provincial basis. In fact, when I listened I found that the illustration of campaign expenses which was advanced to us is an illustration based upon a federal election, not even a provincial election.

And I submit that the cases are somewhat different, inasmuch as a federal constituency in Alberta is much, much larger than a provincial constituency, in the order of five times I believe it is. So this has established my attitude towards some of the arguments that the hon. member advanced. But he did suggest at one point, when reading from the Barbeau Commission Report, that disclosure of funds would tend to elevate the image of political parties. Well I suggest to the hon. gentleman that I know of one political party that could stand a lot of elevation and if disclosure of funds would do it, it is the cheapest thing he will ever be able to accomplish for that particular party. We had an opportunity to have, in fact, a working demonstration that that particular argument is valid and we haven't seen it when the opportunity did arise. The hon. member declined it.

I would like to suggest that in a discussion of the campaigns conducted by political parties and the resources in those campaigns, that we need to look beyond money. I will use my own case as an illustration. I had a number of people who worked very, very hard for me and I don't know how one would equate the amount of time that they contributed to my party and my particular constituency and to my cause.

AN. HON. MEMBER:

That's good!

MR. YOUNG:

You bet it's good! But I'm suggesting that this is pretty important and I'm suggesting that if, in fact, we're going to be absolutely fair, which I understand is the attempt being made in this legislation, then we would have to try to put some limit on the amount of time that people could contribute.

AN HON. MEMBER:

You're clouding the issue.

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MR. YOUNG:

I'm not clouding the issue at all. I'm suggesting that money will buy time and money will buy resources, but resources may also be contributed and this is an important part of an attempt to equalize the opportunity among parties. I would also suggest to the hon. members that, in fact, whether they have access to this kind of assistance or not depends on a couple of things. The first one being credibility. They must have a candidate who is credible and they must have a party that is credible and a policy which is credible. If they don't have those things they will get neither money nor donated personal resources and I think, in fact, this could be a problem for certain parties in certain circumstances -- and I'll just leave it at that.

I would like to add a bit to the record and I'll refer to the Barbeau Report since it seems to be the main report. I would like to read, first, this:

"In a few unique cases regulation of political financing as affected by the force of attitudes which are wide spread among the citizens of the country, customary controls of this type appear to be effective in Switzerland. In such instances the feeling of the people that election costs should be kept at a moderate level and that contributions should come only from certain acceptable sources appears to be more effective as a control mechanism than any other type of limitations."

So I would like to advance to the Assembly that it seriously consider this point of view, that in fact, it is possible to have more than one source of control. One of them being referred to here is identified as a customary source of control. What the hon. member has proposed is a legislative form of control. On that particular point I'd like to continue from the Barbeau Report:

"Yet a non-legislative system of control appears to be the most effective way to regulate political finance, and its success depends largely on the prior development of a constructive and vigilant attitude on the part of the electorate towards politics and party financing. The success and enforcibility of statutory control must similarly rest on some degree of vigilance on the part of the electorate."

Now on that point, I'd like to suggest that several times during the debate and the contributions from both the hon. gentlemen opposite, I was given the impression that, in fact, the electorate is not vigilant. It was suggested to me by the hon. Member for Pincher Creek-Crowsnest that he who controls or who has greatest access to the media will win the election. Now surely that can not be said by anyone who believes that the electorate is at all vigilant. As a matter of fact, I can't share that attitude, and one reason I can't share it, is because I have a much greater respect for the citizens of this country. And I think that suggestions of that nature, well -- to me they are just a little bit offensive. I just can't find -- they are just plain unacceptable, I'm sorry, from my point of view. I think that any politician has and should respect that the people that he deals with and that he represents, will be watching and will have a point to make, and will be able to see through any slick television job. You may be able to take television and dress something up, but unless you have some substance there, most people will catch on pretty fast and I suggest on that score that my earlier point is worthy of reconsideration. And that is that the party must be credible, the candidate must be credible, and the policy must be credible; and if they are not, there is no amount of weeping and wailing that will get us out of that bind.

On the matter of the maximum amount of money which should be spent, I would like to suggest that this is another debate in

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itself, and I will only say that the Barbeau Commission, again seem to encounter some difficulty in trying to make up its mind. They stated in fact, that:

"The existence of unrealistic laws promotes a cynical attitude on the part of the electorate towards politics, party financing, and attempts at the limitation of money in politics. Elections cost money as does the maintenance of party machinery between elections. These basic facts must be recognized before any attempt to limit either political income or expenditure can be successful. If limitations are unrealistic, evasion will be easy and common. If parties are deprived of income which they feel is vital to the running of a successful campaign, and no alternative sources are provided, the result will likely be evasion of the initial restriction. Similarly, ceilings on expenditures will be evaded if they do not allow candidates or parties to spend enough to permit successful campaigns."

Now, Mr. Speaker, I suggest to you that those last two sentences are pretty important because you arrive immediately at a subjective decision of what is enough to permit a successful campaign. The Barbeau Commission itself, recognized that if the parties don't feel they have enough, then the law becomes unenforceable. I think this is the crux of the whole matter of trying to determine how much money is required to run a successful campaign and how one can control the amount of money spent on a campaign.

Quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, the amount of money suggested in this particular bill, is in my opinion, quite inadequate. It is not a great deal more than I spent in my own personal campaign, but nevertheless, it would be quite inadequate if applied on a provincial basis. So really I am suggesting that on a plain rule or test of practicality the suggestion advanced here just won't work. The amount of money is just simply too low. Since the hon. member who introduced the bill took as the basis for much of his argument, the Barbeau Commission, I would like to toss back to him the suggestion that my argument is also founded on the findings of the Barbeau Commission that if the amount of money isn't realistic it can't be forced, legally or any other way. I don't think we should have bad law.

Mr. Speaker, may we call it 5:30?

MR. SPEAKER:

Is the hon. member indirectly requesting leave to adjourn the debate?

MR. YOUNG:

Yes I am.

MR. SPEAKER:

May the hon. member adjourn the debate?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER:

It being now 5:30 the House stands adjourned until 8:00 this evening.

[Mr. Speaker left the Chair at 5:30pm.]

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[Mr. Speaker resumed the Chair at 8:00 p.m.]

POINT OF PRIVILEGE

MRS. CHICHAK:

On a point of privilege, Mr. Speaker, if I may. In my speech the other day, I misquoted some figures -- they were different from what I had in my notes. I would like to have the consent of the House to have them corrected in Hansard. If you wish I can read out the figures, the differences. Do you want the figures read? Right. In the one instance -- [interjection]

MR. SPEAKER:

No, the figures have already been reported to the Hansard staff and if the House agrees we would like to correct the misreading.

MRS. CHICHAK:

Thank you very much.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

MR. HYNDMAN:

Mr. Speaker, I move that you do now leave the Chair and the Assembly resolve itself into Committee of Supply for consideration of the estimates.

HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

[Mr. Speaker left the Chair.]

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COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

[Mr. Diachuk in the Chair.]

Department of Municipal Affairs (cont.)

Appropriation 2102 General Administration (cont.)

MR. DIACHUK:

The Committee of Supply will come to order. I believe we left off yesterday with Mr. Farran.

MR. FARRAN:

Mr. Chairman, I have nothing to add except that I believe we should proceed with all haste and dispatch.

MR. BENOIT:

What do you say, Mr. Chairman, after he has had his say? I have only one thing that I would like to add to it, and then a couple of questions to the hon. minister in general. I don't want to repeat what was said about the disposition of The Communal Properties Act and action to be taken thereon, except I want to say that I do agree with the comments that were made suggesting that something needs to be done to keep the act from being in a state of suspension. Something that wasn't suggested in connection with it -- at least I

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didn't hear it mentioned -- and that is the possibility of while we are in session, if the act is as bad as some have indicated, and we are not prepared to act upon it immediately, or in the very near future, there is always the possibility of repealing the Act until such time as we are prepared to put forth another act that is purported to be better than the one that presently exists. This may be distasteful to some, but at least it would be action in some direction. There has been a question for a long time as to whether it should be in existence or not and whether the Act was as good as it should be.

In connection with the question, Mr. Minister, I don't know whether you want to answer it now or not, but you made reference in your opening comments to the 10.5 per cent increase in appropriation No. 2105, The Municipalities Assistance Act, referring to it as one of the ones that was higher than average increase. However, the average increase over the whole department is 14.2 per cent, but I was looking only at two in particular, and that was No. 2101 as compared with No. 2109, where there is an average increase of 37 per cent in those two. Those are the ones I would like to have had a little more explanation on. I appreciate the fact that we have covered No. 2102, but while we are in our general remarks comparing it and No. 2109, if we could have an explanation of the increase in both of those, that would be all that I have to remark on at this time, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

MR. RUSSELL:

Mr. Chairman, maybe I could deal with the last questions first while they're still fresh in our minds and then try and go back and deal with the questions that were put to me yesterday. The increase in No. 2101, hon. members, is due primarily to a transfer of vote from my executive assistant, which was formerly under the Executive Council appropriation into the minister's office, so the increase there represents a transfer. The increase in 2109 is primarily increased grants, which are the province's 60 per cent share to the operating expenses of the regional planning commissions in the form of grants, and they've gone up substantially.

Mr. Chairman, I appreciate very much the remarks that have been made with respect to the Department of Municipal Affairs. Some of them, I think, were quite constructive and will be taken into consideration. Others, unfortunately, were quite destructive and as a matter of fact I was quite amazed to hear some of the things I did coming from some of the particular members. I think the biggest disappointment were the remarks made by the Member for Calgary McCall. I had formerly served with the hon. member as an alderman on the City of Calgary, and we each, in our own way, attempted to deal with municipal problems. I wasn't too surprised when I read in the news media that he had been appointed the municipal affairs critic for the opposition caucus and I thought that's a logical choice. But if yesterday's remarks are the best that the hon. member has to offer, then I think he's going to go down as one of the biggest disappointments of this session. I'm particularly disappointed with the way he plays with the English language in a very sly manner, Mr. Chairman. He indicated that the Social Credit government had found it necessary to temporarily freeze the Municipal Assistance Grants, and slid over the words 'temporarily freeze' very quickly. I can see nothing in the Act as put forward by the government of last year that indicates that that freeze was in any way temporary. It was permanent insofar as the way the act was written, and knowing that, the member then went out and sought the nomination of the party that put that in, and then has the audacity to come into this House after we've increased the vote and say it should have been made bigger. Now, if that's the kind of logic and the kind of constructive criticism we're going to get from the Opposition municipal affairs critic, then I think we're probably in for a large disappointment over the coming session.

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The other thing he conveniently ignored was the fact that it was a unilateral decision, made, I think, late in the budget year of the municipal governments, and at a time and in a manner that put them in a very awkward position. I said I was disappointed that I couldn't have made that vote more. I don't think any member in this House would have been happier than myself than to bring in a budget that showed that particular vote substantially more than it was. And I agree with the hon. member. It would be nice if it was more, and he said it should be more, but he didn't tell us how. Would you like to put on extra taxes or increase the deficit, or cut out something else? If you have a suggestion, you tell us how and we'll consider it.

MR. HO LEM:

Mr. Chairman, can I answer to that now?

MR. RUSSELL:

No, I listened to him, I think he can listen to me for a while, Mr. Chairman.

He also was quite disappointed in the fact that we had appointed an MLA task force to carry out the work of the former Maynard Commission and said that the Maynard Commission was well into its work. Mr. Chairman, they had worked exactly one day. Insofar as the other paid Task Force on Urbanization and the Future, I have indicated to the members of this House many times that I think the concept is good, I think the work they're doing is important, and I think the ideas and solutions they're trying to achieve will be of benefit for debate for the members of this House. He criticized the fact that there appears to be not as much municipal participation as he would like to see. I wonder if he realizes the difficulties from certain municipalities in this province insofar as trying to achieve municipal participation. I can only say that the new method that we have given to the Task Force on Urbanization and the Future is a sincere attempt to try and find some method that is acceptable to all the municipalities and will get the job done. He seemed a little concerned that there was not a better liaison between some sort of task force and the municipal levels of government. Of course, I should remind him of the Metropolitan Affairs Committee of Cabinet, which has been very active and has held several meetings with the representatives of the City of Edmonton. It also had a meeting with the City of Calgary, and I think it is well on its way to becoming an effective discussion vehicle.

I really couldn't believe my ears when the hon. Member for Calgary Mountain View -- and he couldn't have been serious -- tried to make the point that I was somehow placing myself above this Legislature insofar as The Communal Properties Act was concerned. He said I had suspended the Act, which is nonsense. He and the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview seemed very concerned with human rights, as did the hon. Member for Drumheller.

Mr. Speaker, I submit, if there was a lawyer on that side of the House, it wouldn't take him very long to recognize what the effect of the human rights legislation will be. If they had a lawyer, surely he could have read the proposed legislation, The Human Rights Act, and ascertained fairly readily what the effect of that would be on The Communal Properties Act.

I appreciated some of the remarks of the hon. Member for Olds-Didsbury. I would disagree with him, naturally, about the fact that we are somehow doing something wrong by not tabling the 'secret reports' as he called them, of the task forces.

Mr. Speaker, the new vote in my department contains the result of the interim report of the MLA Task Force on Provincial-Municipal

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Financing. I refer to vote No. 2111 The Senior Citizen's Shelter Act. That kind of proposed legislation and proposed vote is here for the consideration of the hon. members, and it is a direct result of a preliminary or interim report which we received from that task force. So although it is true that you will not be getting the first or complete reports of the government task forces to its government members, you will be getting the effects of the recommendations, and before any action is taken on those reports which affect legislation or budgeting, the members will all be asked to contribute their remarks to them.

I think he is, again, taking a little bit of liberty with semantics, but that is OK. I think he went a little bit too far on the vote of the Task Force on Urbanization and the Future in his comments, because I don't think he could have been aware of the details as to how that Vote is made up, or I don't think he would have said the things he did.

The hon. members Mr. Moore and Mr. French asked me about certain revenues obtained from the improvement districts and the special areas. Mr. Speaker, first of all, for the improvement districts, all of Appropriation No. 2116, that is roughly \$507,000, represents revenue which goes back to the provincial government. Also part of Appropriation No. 2102, for administrative purposes -- and this is for the hon. Member for Hanna-Oyen -- there is about \$710,000 from those two votes accruing to the revenues. There are also revenues of about \$50,000 from Mobile Equipment licensing. This is not Mobile Homes, this is Mobile Equipment Licensing.

The other one you asked about, Special Areas, all of Appropriation No. 2118, \$340,000 represents revenue as again in the case of the improvement district, a part of Appropriation No. 2102, about another \$30,000, making \$370,000. For the hon. Member for Hanna-Oyen, if he adds the \$370,000 figure to the \$710,000 figure, I think he will get roughly the figure he was asking about in the revenue portion of the budget.

Mr. Speaker, there was a great deal of comment with respect to our proposed new Senior Citizen's Shelter assistance program, and I have to say that I agree with some of the remarks that were made. There are going to be certain administrative difficulties, as with any new program. The vote that you're being asked to approve represents for the first year of this new program, an educated guess taken to the best of our ability, based on samplings, averagings, and based on prorating the numbers of senior citizens whom we think have been applying for the Homeowners Tax Discount Plan. Insofar as the philosophy of this program is concerned, there's been a great deal of debate with respect to the fact that somehow isn't related to means. Mr. Chairman, it's not intended to. The basic philosophy of this program is that property tax should not support the basic costs of education. That is the basic philosophy of it.

In this first year of the program, the attempt is to remove the burden of the education portion of the property tax load from our senior citizens. It would have been nice, as I say, in this first year, to be able to do it for everyone; that's impossible to do until the effects of the public hearings that are proposed are held and known; until the MLA task force has completed its work, and until several pieces of legislation have been rewritten. But in any case, I think this first year in aiming at the senior citizens, and those are in main the ones who are trapped by inflation, and by low fixed incomes. Those are the citizens that will benefit. I think there's also another philosophy which I find quite easy to accept, and that is if you're a senior citizen and you've reached the age of 65, you've paid for education costs long enough. So on two good reasons, number one, that property tax shouldn't support it, and number two, that age shouldn't support it, I find no difficulty in proposing this to the Legislature without any sort of a means test.

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I suppose one could argue, that in a way, it does relate as the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview was trying to point out, in an ability to pay. At one time, and in some cases, the ownership of property does to some degree represent an ability to pay. I think when the property tax system was first introduced to the province that was true to a very high degree. Of course, it isn't any more, so I don't want to stress that argument too much although one could say that, indirectly, it is. The hon. Member for Drumheller waxed eloquently again, as he's so able to do, about the fact that he didn't like the \$50 flat rental fee of assistance that was being paid to our senior citizens. And he brought up two points, number one --

MR. TAYLOR:

On a point of order, I didn't say I didn't like it. I didn't make that statement at all.

MR. RUSSELL:

Okay, you didn't like the way we had proposed it, or the way we were intending to administer it. I'm going to deal with your points. I found it a little hard to accept his arguments. He talked about unscrupulous landlords and about how they would probably leap at the opportunity of raising rents when it became known that this \$50 assistance was going to be forthcoming. And yet it's less than a year that a certain government that I can recall proposed giving everybody \$1,000 to try and buy a home, and this of course was going to do nothing towards increasing the costs of homes. Builders weren't going to pass this \$1,000 on. And yet, he sees great danger in us dealing with \$50 a year, so when you're dealing with that kind of logic, it's a bit difficult to reply to it.

Another thing that the hon. member spent some time talking about was the fact that if a couple lived in a senior citizens' lodge they wouldn't get it, yet if somebody lived in an apartment they would get it. Mr. Chairman, I thought the text below Vote No. 2111 made it clear that the intent of the thrust of the assistance program was to help with the education portion of property taxes for our senior citizens. In one case -- if they own property and in another case if they rent. Now senior citizens who are living in senior citizens' lodges do not pay education property taxes. So they have full relief from that at the present time and the effect of this particular vote, this \$2 million, is an attempt to bring those who do not live in lodges on some sort of closer equity basis to those that are in the lodges. So they already have 100 per cent relief from the education portion of the tax that this particular program is supposed to be helping with.

The hon. Member for Calgary Bow posed several questions and because of their nature I was pleased to be able to get them in writing and get the statistical data fairly accurately for him, I believe, in the interim since yesterday. But before going on to that there was one item I would like to deal with that I think was of a fairly serious nature because of the things that were said yesterday by the hon. Member for Drumheller. I'm referring to his remarks concerning The Communal Properties Act, the dismissal of the board and the way in which the new government has dealt with that legislation. He made reference to the fact that our Executive Council could have easily rescinded the Order in Council dealing with the Verdant Valley application. He also made reference to the fact that he had usually worked with the officials of his department whenever there was a major decision or major research to be done.

Now, Mr. Chairman, ordinarily that kind of thing wouldn't bother me, but the fact of the matter is that we were sworn into office on September 10th and on the following Monday, September 13th, we were faced with the prospect of rescinding an Order in Council approving a Hutterite colony that had been passed by the previous government on

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September 8th. I want to take a few moments to tell the hon. members the details of that particular application, the recommendation of the board, emphasize the timing of what the previous government did and lay the facts before you.

My first day in office, and I'm speaking of that Monday early in September, my Deputy Minister came to me very concerned about the fact that the previous government in their last 48 hours in office had passed an Order in Council establishing a new Hutterite colony, after, in fact, they had been voted out of office - but that was not why he was concerned. He was concerned because of the strong, strong recommendations of the Communal Properties Board that that particular colony not be approved. He had also added his memorandum to that recommendation of the Communal Properties Board chairman, that that colony not be approved and I'm speaking of the West Raley colony and there were four strong reasons why that should not have been approved. Mr. Chairman, I found out since then enough about how that request for the Order in Council was prepared, at the instruction of the hon. Member for Little Bow. How the government going out of office - 48 hours before they were out of office and eight days after the results of the election - hastily approved that Hutterite colony. I can tell you we spent several anxious days and a lot of time in consultation trying to find out if we could, in fact, rescind that particular order passed by the previous government, because of the seriousness of what we considered they had done. And then for me in December and now again during this session, to have to listen to the remarks about how easily we could have rescinded the order establishing, on the recommendation of the Communal Properties Board, that colony in Verdant Valley, really amazes me. And, of course, Mr. Chairman, the controversy regarding the Verdant Valley colony really raged about the fact that the chairman of the board, Mr. Breach, had written a letter on February 15, 1971 to the MD of Starland, and the letter has been referred to, pointing out the fact that as far as he was concerned there would never be another colony in that particular MD. This was the piece of information that was not relayed to the new government when they considered the submission and the report of the chairman endorsing a second colony for a period of four weeks, and that is how long that item was under consideration.

Mr. Speaker, that letter of February 15th went to Mr. Merritt, the Secretary-Treasurer of the MD of Starland and there were copies sent to five people, five other parties, and it is interesting to note who those other parties were and at what point they chose to make known the fact that they were aware of that letter. Mr. Morris, the other member of the Communal Properties Board received a copy, Mr. Morrison, the Deputy Minister of the Department of Municipal Affairs received a copy, Mr. Fred Colburne, the former Minister of Municipal Affairs received a copy; the other two people who received copies were Mr. French and Mr. Gordon Taylor. Mr. Taylor brought the letter to our attention April 19th, 1972.

Now Mr. Speaker, I have the hon. member's letter and his concern was opposed to that colony. There's no question about it and I assured him in writing that his concern would be given consideration and it was, along with all the other letters for and against the establishment of the colony. The MLA's letter was considered but I am puzzled as to why he didn't bring this particular letter to our attention.

MR. TAYLOR:

Would it have made any difference?

MR. RUSSELL:

Yes, it certainly would have.

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MR. TAYLOR:

There were reasons --

MR. RUSSELL:

All the reasons except that one, Mr. Chairman. It is a pretty important reason.

MR. TAYLOR:

[Reply inaudible.]

MR. RUSSELL:

Anyway, Mr. Chairman, I want to make the point. Ordinarily I wouldn't bother responding to the comments that were made about The Communal Properties Act, I think we should get on with the estimates, but because of the serious nature of the problem that we face, I have spent considerable time since this letter was made known to me wondering what on earth was in the back files of government relating to the Communal Properties Board, and I have got a pretty good picture of the hon. member's opinion and response to the activities of the Hutterites from reading inter-governmental memorandums and I realize that those things cannot be tabled. But I just want to tell them I am not fooled or misled one bit by his remarks to the House.

I would now like to deal with the questions that were put forth by the hon. Member for Calgary Bow and just to refresh the hon. member's memory, I will --

MR. STROM:

Mr. Chairman, will the hon. minister permit me to make a statement on the West Raley colony at this time?

MR. RUSSELL:

I was rather patient yesterday for three hours listening to the other hon. members.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Would you like to finish first Mr. Minister?

MR. RUSSELL:

Yes I would.

MR. STROM:

Let him finish but I'm just serving notice right now that he has not given the facts as they are.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

The Chair will recognize further debate.

MR. TAYLOR:

We just don't want any confusion.

MR. RUSSELL:

If they are that earth-shattering, let him say...

MR. STROM:

I'd like to, Mr. Chairman. Inasmuch as the hon. minister has referred to some facts surrounding the decision that was made on the

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West Raley colony, I feel it is rather important that we should put the record straight. He suggests that this was a decision that we made after the election.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

MR. STROM:

And this is correct. I wonder if he is aware of the fact that this was one of the items that I discussed with his leader before we made a decision.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear.

MR. STROM:

And he agreed that we ought to make the decision before we left office. Does he also realize that the particular municipality involved passed a resolution OK'ing the application? There was a petition --

AN HON. MEMBER:

Where is it?

MR. STROM:

-- signed by scores of neighbours and farmers of that area who supported it. He is simply using it at this point in time to try and confuse the issue that really has no relationship whatsoever and I would suggest that it is pretty important, Mr. Chairman, that we view this particular application in its true light and not try to bring it in to confuse another issue that really has no relationship to it.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear.

MR. RUSSELL:

Well, Mr. Chairman, just so long as they are willing to treat that decision the way they want us to treat ours --

MR. HENDERSON:

Treat the decision -- what decision?

MR. RUSSELL:

Mr. Chairman, the hon. Leader of the Opposition didn't add anything new. I have read the file and I know what went on --

MR. HENDERSON:

Why didn't you say it?

MR. RUSSELL:

It went back for several months -- and I'm aware of the petition and the letters for and against, and it was immediately after --

MR. HENDERSON:

Why didn't you say so?

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MR. STROM:

Why didn't you make that clear to the House?

MR. RUSSELL:

I'd made it quite clear we had gone into the --

[Interjections]

MR. FARRAN:

Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. I know the hon. minister has got under their skins, but could we just have one at a time so we can hear what is going on?

MR. STROM:

As far as I'm concerned -- nobody gets under my skin, but I will insist that we have [Laughter]. Now they can laugh, but we shall insist on having the truth.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Very well, we'll try and keep a little order in here so that the hon. minister can finish his presentation.

MR. RUSSELL:

Well, Mr. Chairman, you know it would be so easy to table the report of the Communal Properties Board if you want to know.

MR. HENDERSON:

Well -- we're not arguing about it!

MR. RUSSELL:

Oh, I'm arguing about it -- don't say nobody is -- I am.

A HON. MEMBER:

You're making an issue -- nobody's arguing that!

MR. RUSSELL:

Well all right if they want to continue this -- I've got lots of time.

Mr. Chairman, there were four very strong reasons why that colony should not have been established. This has nothing to do with the ordinary kinds of reasons that you find that are tied emotionally or economically to some area when a new colony goes in. These are four basic guidelines and it's bad enough if one of them is broken, but there were four here.

First of all the parcels that were included in the application could not conveniently be consolidated into a neat package, and that's one guideline the Communal Properties Board uses. These make a fairly tidy consolidated package and the West Raley colony does not.

Secondly, it was too close to other established colonies, and there is a minimum distance the Board attempts to maintain. The MD already had five colonies which is considered by rule of thumb too many. For some years the Board had attempted to keep the establishment of new colonies south of the line running east-west through the City of Calgary to a minimum. In other words, no more

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new colonies in that line across the province at that point, and the members across there that were in government know what those guidelines were.

May I suggest on September 8th, against the advice of the Board, against the advice of the guidelines, and against the advice of the Deputy Minister, you went ahead anyway -- and then had the audacity to come in here and talk to me about rescinding.

MR. TAYLOR:

Do you speak for your own Premier?

AN HON. MEMBER:

Who makes your decisions?

MR. RUSSELL:

I would now like to respond to the questions that were put to me by the hon. Member for Calgary Bow. Mr. Chairman, he asked, in the first instance, about some questions relating to specific programs of the Alberta Housing Corporation with regard to numbers. I will have to read his questions again and then give the answers. His first question was:

"Could we give a comparison for last year as to the coming year for the construction of senior citizens' housing, student housing, experimental low-cost housing, public housing, and half-way housing on a unit basis?"

It is a little difficult to do this on a unit basis, Mr. Chairman, and I am sure the hon. member, because of the business he is in, will appreciate what I am trying to explain with respect to cash flow and the actual capital budget of the corporation. There is rather a complex cash flow in and out, particularly with respect to monies received from Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation, monies that may have been approved several months previously for a specific program. In fact there are projects that are approved in one budget year and yet not commenced until the next year, so you often get an unbalanced picture insofar as units are concerned. That is particularly evident this year because although the capital budget is substantially up, the unit count of new starts is down, because it is a continuing accelerating thing. As you know, the corporation is a fairly new corporation and its building program is now starting to go on its upward cycle. So the incremental portion is what I am going to give you and it contradicts the actual monies going in. The '71 capital budget for the Alberta Housing Corporation was \$30.7 million, and this year we are proposing \$40.5 million, so the overall figures would lead you to believe a substantial increase, and yet most of the programs are essentially the same, insofar as the increments are concerned. For example, in 1971, 747 units of senior citizen housing started as an anticipated 721 starts on senior citizen housing, so though we have increased that particular vote by a million, the count is down by about 20. Student housing 1971, 732 units; 1972 anticipated 250 units. Experimental housing 1971, there were six units; there are no specific experimental home programs for '72 start other than some approvals for direct lending under the direct lending programs that are being approved. There is a very interesting pre-formed plastic house, for instance, going ahead under that program. Public housing 1971, 878 units, and the anticipated 1972 start is 680 units. The half-way houses we call community residences -- and there were ten projects commenced in 1971 -- and we anticipate 20 projects to start, mainly in the area of Mentally Retarded Children's Association housing.

Secondly, the hon. member asked for my comments, whether or not I subscribe to the philosophy that industry and commerce in our

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province have an obligation and responsibility to help provide for the costs of education. I assume he wants my own philosophy. It is definitely yes -- a strong yes -- for two reasons. Number one, because of the unequal distribution of industry and commerce throughout the province, particularly as it relates to the assessment basis of our different municipal levels of government; and secondly, at least in paying property taxes, if they are going to pay for education, they do have the opportunity to pass it on, whereas the residential taxpayer they doesn't.

His next question, "Is it the government policy to try and limit the size of Edmonton and Calgary?" Yes. The next question, "I would like him to advise how many direct loans were made by the Alberta Housing Corporation and the average size of those loans for new housing?" Under the direct lending program which was commenced about last May or June to the end of December, there were 349 loans given; 77 for new construction, 266 for the purchase of older existing homes and six for home improvements. The average amount of the Home Improvement Loan was \$3,564 and the average amount on purchase of new and existing homes was \$15,112.

"How many loans were made under the New Life for Old Neighbourhoods Program?" None. There were no applications received. This was a fairly new program announced last spring, using urban renewal funds, which are no longer available. Edmonton and Calgary specifically were asked for submissions, and I'm advised that a week ago Calgary submitted two -- one for the Inglewood-Ramsey area, and one for Bowness. The City of Edmonton is still considering their program. Calgary's submissions are being considered, and I hope within the next few weeks to be able to make a further announcement with respect to pending legislation regarding that program.

The member's next question was, "What is the government's policy on senior citizen housing, particularly in regard to cottage development versus highrise?" Mr. Chairman, I think both kinds of facilities are needed and the criticisms we hear directed against each kind of facility I think are rather well taken. Usually the cottage type of development tends to be put out at the edge of the city, or the edge of the urban areas, and it is criticised for the fact that it's remote or away from the scene of action. Usually, if you do put the facility where the action is, that is in the downtown core, and I'm speaking of the cities now, it tends to be a highrise, and then you get the usual comments about older people being uneasy about highrise living. No guideline is absolutely hard and fast. I think we have to continue with both kinds of programs.

He asked a question about a letter sent by the Calgary Mobile Homeowners' Association, wanting to know about provisions for an appeal of the assessment or license fee imposed on mobile home owners. All our members may not be aware, but rather than charging a flat fee for mobile homes as has been the tradition in the past, because of legislation that was passed by the Legislature last year, this year mobile homes are being assessed. That legislation omitted a rule for appeal as the ordinary homeowner does, so we'll have to bring that in, probably this fall when the amendments to The Municipal Government Act are being introduced. It's not proposed to bring that act into the spring session so we'll have to wait till the fall session to bring that in.

He asked another question about the economic life of a mobile home with respect to the depreciation schedule. Mr. Chairman, this will have to be resolved on the basis of one year's experience, plus discussion with those who are involved in either manufacturing mobile homes or living in them, because it's a new program. The depreciation schedule was amended once on the advice of the Mobile Homeowners' Associations that we did hear from. It was reduced from 40 to 25 years, and they've requested us to look at it again and we will when the program has had one year to work.

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He asked again about the penalty for nonpayment. And the only penalty, if this is one of these offences, because it's new legislation that isn't covered other than by a general clause in The Municipal Government Act, Clause 4-11, which provides for a penalty of six months in jail or \$500 and certainly there seems to be some leeway in that, but I think that does need clarification and certainly I would hope that nobody would ever be given six months for not paying their mobile home license fee.

I don't really understand your question regarding changes in the operation of the regional planning commissions. There are no changes contemplated this year. I have said that next year we hope to bring in a completely new Planning Act. Hopefully, the regional planning commissions will have put their proposed amendments and suggestions into that new act.

His last question was, he wanted the government's position with respect to the role that private enterprise should play in housing and land development. I hope the hon. member has noticed -- I think it is Motion No. 12 on today's Order Paper -- where one of our members is putting forth a proposition for discussion by the Legislature, that government should not own any public housing, but in fact, private enterprise should supply it all. As far as I am personally concerned, I would like to see government in the business of owning no houses, and for them all to be provided by private enterprise. But Mr. Chairman, I think one of the facts of life is that there are some Albertans requiring homes that private enterprise will just never provide. I think this is particularly true in the Metis areas in the north, in some pockets of extreme poverty, in certain situations with respect to senior citizens, and for low-income groups. I would hope that private enterprise would take a look at all fields of housing, and just take as active a role as they want to take.

I believe, Mr. Chairman, that answers the questions and remarks that were put to me up to this time.

MR. HO LEM:

I am sorry my introductory remarks may have hurt the feelings or got under the skin of the hon. minister. Through my associations with the hon. minister during our little stint on council, I have always known that he was pretty good at giving it. Now, it is a great surprise to me to find that while he can give it, he can't seem to take it. This to me, certainly, is the real disappointment to this side of the House.

I feel that one of my major roles as a member of the Opposition is to criticise and particularly, if these criticisms are justified. If I only do that during this session, in addition to getting under the hon. minister's skin, I feel that at least my efforts wouldn't be a disappointment. Perhaps it may be a disappointment to you, sir, but certainly not to the citizens of Alberta, and that is what really counts to me.

Regarding the hon. minister's mention of my statement regarding the freezing of the \$38 million in the municipal grants. Of course this is temporary, because this year we find that it has gone up to \$42 million. It wasn't a fixed thing. While it has gone up to \$42 million, I would even say that it should even go up to \$57 million. If this were based on the one-third of the royalties of the previous year, you would find it closer to \$57 million than \$42 million. You say how --

MR. CHAIRMAN:

He has a point of order. What is your point of order, Mr. Farran?

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MR. FARRAN:

My point of order is that this incorrect figure is being bandied about again. It started with the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview. One-third of \$142 million is \$47 million, not \$57 million. They keep saying this.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Carry on Mr. Ho Lem.

MR. HO LEM:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Regarding how will we get the money to increase this grant? I don't think it should be too difficult for the government in that they have borrowed \$200 million. Certainly, somewhere in that sum they should be able to give more consideration to the cities than the municipalities.

I wonder if we might have an explanation on Appropriation No. 2101, under Other Expenses. In 1971-72 there was an allocation of some \$6,000 for other expenses. I know that we have dealt with No. 2101, but I wonder if I might have a point of clarification here. In 1971-72 the amount under Other Expenses was some \$6,000. That included a sum for the purchase of a new car. I don't know if since the election the department has purchased a new car or not. However, under this year's estimates we find that under Other Expenses the amount is \$5,000. Does that include an amount for the purchase of a new car?

MR. RUSSELL:

No, Mr. Chairman, last year in last year's budget, there was \$4,200 for the purchase of a car. As the hon. member knows, all departmental cars are traded in every two years on a rotating basis. And, last year happened to be the year for municipal affairs.

MR. HO LEM:

In other words, this \$5,010 this year is really an increase of possibly over \$4,000 for other expenses, which I feel is way too high.

MR. RUSSELL:

Well, if he wants a breakdown of the \$5,010, he should have spoken up when we called a vote. There's a whopping big entertainment allotment, \$50, \$130 for fees and commissions, \$550 for office materials and supplies, miscellaneous \$20, \$50 for postage, repair of office machines \$60, telephone and telegraph bills \$1,150, and \$3,000 for travelling expenses.

MR. HENDERSON:

Mr. Chairman, I'd just like to offer one or two comments to the hon. minister on the question of The Communal Properties Act. Before I do, I'd like to preface my remarks by saying that I think this subject is indeed one that is a poor subject for a partisan political exercise. I think it's a very difficult question, Mr. Chairman, and it's one in which there is nothing but political lumps in it for no matter who has responsibility for dealing with it. I don't know anything about the details, quite frankly, of either of the two questions we discussed, but I think that's somewhat irrelevant to the basic question of The Communal Properties Board. I'd like to say, Mr. Chairman, in my mind there's no question -- and I've always felt this way -- that clearly the legislation as it stands is

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discriminatory. But I'd like to point out to the hon. minister my concern in this matter and I'm not going to be critical and say the government made a mistake in suspending the Communal Properties Board or not, because I am not aware of the fact that they took into account when they made that decision.

The decision may be sound, but there are one or two aspects about it that do concern me, and I'd like to very sincerely suggest that the hon. minister and the government should give the matter some further consideration. The hon. minister mentioned the question of The Human Rights Act. If The Human Rights Act were going to be brought in at this session, and it was going to over-ride The Communal Properties Act, I would have no objection to it. I could then accept the statements of the hon. minister about the intent of The Human Rights Act. But, the fact of the matter is, Mr. Chairman, it isn't going to come in at this session and The Human Rights Act in itself, in spite of the government's intentions, isn't going to resolve the question for the short term until the Legislative Committee reports, and the government then takes some other course of action, or the Legislature does, on the question of what if anything should be done to replace the Communal Properties Board.

But I do think the government very seriously should either reconsider or explain to the members of the House as to why they have chosen the course of action that they have followed, of suspending the Board and leaving the question in limbo because The Communal Properties Act very clearly singled out a particular group of people for particular treatment, and it was restrictive.

But the present action of the government leaves the question high and dry. I seriously suggest it is in the public interest and is particularly in the interest of the Hutterian Brethren themselves and the citizens in the districts where these communities are a problem at times, that we have a pretty clear understanding of just where the government is going on the issue.

I'd like to say, Mr. Chairman, and I'm not saying that this is the government position on the matter, but there are the questions it raises. I don't know, for example, from the action the government has taken on suspending the board, not receiving any applications, whether this means they're taking all the strings off the question of the communal properties and they're in favour of unlimited expansion of the colonies. I don't know from the action they've taken -- it leaves it up in the air. Or do they favour or is it the policy that there are still going to be some restrictions? I don't know this either. I have to look at the government's state of policy on corporate farming and in the final analysis I can't see too much difference as far as land ownership is concerned between the question of corporate farming, a single individual owning several tens of thousand acres of land, and communal Hutterite colonies so far as land ownership is concerned. When one goes beyond that, as a matter of public policy, it gets a matter of making decisions emotionally. This is where The Communal Properties Act really came from. I would like to suggest again, I'm not saying the government has made a mistake, because I don't know all the factors they took into account in making the decision that has created the present circumstances, where there's a great deal of public confusion as to where we're going.

But I do think, Mr. Chairman, in general that governments aren't infallible; they start making mistakes the day they go into office and I think I can say they are still making mistakes the day they go out of office. I don't think this should be a factor so far as the government's attitude towards re-examining their basic decision because of the albeit limited rights that the present legislation does grant to the Hutterian Brethren. I would like to call upon the hon. minister to give us an explanation for the basis of their decision as to where this matter is going, so that the people

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involved, the Hutterian Brethren and the people in these districts, have some idea of what the government's basic policy is. I would also like to suggest that if we can't do this Mr. Chairman, that I think that we owe it basically to the people involved, to do something to activate the board until the new legislation comes in or the recommendations of the legislative committee come in so that we can deal with these applications in areas where there are no bones of contention over them. Or the government should let it be known that they are not going to have any objection to forming more colonies. Now I suspect the latter suggestion -- no more colonies -- isn't probably a realistic one in view of the fact that the government has set up the legislative committee to invite recommendations from the public, through the committee to the Legislature, on what legislation, if any, should replace the act.

In a very sincere manner, Mr. Chairman, with a question of partisan politics completely aside, I would strongly urge the government to seriously reconsider the decision to suspend the board until we deal with the question of what's to replace the legislation sometime in the fall. I think it's most unreasonable and unfair to leave this matter sitting for another six months so far as all the people involved on both sides of the arguments are concerned. So I am very interested in hearing the hon. minister respond to the comments I have just made.

MR. RUSSELL:

Well, Mr. Chairman, those are certainly the first words of sanity respecting this very difficult problem that have emanated from the other side. I think that the propositions that the hon. member has just put to us are very fair and deserve to be asked and certainly deserved to be answered.

We have to understand, I think, a certain number of basic important facts. The Hutterite problem -- and there's no question it is a problem -- differs dramatically with respect to various geographic positions in the province. It's very easy for the hon. member for Spirit River-Fairview, where there aren't any Hutterites, to say abolish the Act. It's not so easy when you get down to Little Bow or the Drumheller area to take that attitude because it just wouldn't work. So I don't think there's any one policy that is that simple that would work for the province as a whole.

I was very concerned about the right of individual Hutterites as they are affected by this act, and of course what we've done in the suspension of the Board's activities doesn't affect the individual rights of Hutterites. At least an individual Hutterite can still buy, sell, or lease land. And they are doing this, I understand, all the time. Sunshine Ranch is one outstanding example of where this is going on.

Where they are being delayed -- and I say before all the members of the House that I gather that they have accepted this delay until about November -- is to what action this Legislature is going to take with respect to the Act.

The important word in the Act to me is communal. If you remember the book that was published last year by the Human Resources Research Council, "Taking a Long Look into the Future," just prior to the time the last session commenced, you'll recall that there was a section in there with respect to communal living and what Alberta could probably expect in the way of communal pattern of living in the province up to the year 2000. They see a fairly dramatic increase in this way of living, not just with respect to Hutterites; as a matter of fact, I think they referred specifically to the upper middle income class -- people who are trying to get away from urban life, and by communal living achieve what they think is a better environment.

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We have contacted other political jurisdictions in North America that have Hutterite colonies within them and some of them, there are some in the northwest United States, in Manitoba, and Saskatchewan -- and although Saskatchewan, for instance, purports to have no special legislation, they do, in fact, have an unwritten understanding -- and they admit this, an unwritten understanding -- which, when you analyze it, is almost identical to what the present Alberta Communal Property Act is.

I gather from my conversations with the Hutterite Brethren who were in, that they themselves want some kind of control with respect to the communes that are established, so I think what the legislature has to do, while the Human Rights Act is in front of the citizens of Alberta this summer, our legislative committee has to deal with the problem of the communal use of land. I am being very careful to emphasize the extraction of the word "Hutterite" from that term, the communal use of land. If we can come to grips with that problem -- get our Human Rights Act through, -- we will have achieved something very substantial.

MR. HENDERSON:

I would just like to ask the minister two questions. Firstly, we are aware of this arrangement in Saskatchewan. I would like to ask the minister, does he have an understanding with the Hutterite Brethren in the various colonies that in the interim period they are not going out and buying up land as individuals? I am sure that the Minister knows that some of this has happened and created problems with the legislation. In effect, colonies may be established through the back door. Does he have some sort of commitment from the Brethren that they will not be doing this? It may be that we are begging the issue by not facing up to the fact that it would be better to have a board as far as public policy is concerned; and, in the interim, continue to deal with applications.

Secondly, in light of the minister's statement about what is satisfactory in the North, it is a geographical problem as well. Would he consider then drawing a line in the province that would differentiate in this and, say north of Edmonton, they would still consider applications in the interim period, and have a board to deal with northern applications until the recommendations of the legislative committee come in. This would still at least leave the door opened a little bit for these people to establish colonies where there is no public dispute over it. I would appreciate it if the minister would respond to this.

MR. RUSSELL:

Mr. Chairman, I suppose that is one route that could be followed if there was heavy pressure to reconstitute the Board. There has not been. There were three applications pending or in the state of being gotten ready to be submitted. Having talked with the real estate agents and lawyers and buyers and sellers involved in those three transactions, the word got around quite quickly I am sure throughout the Hutterite communities to what we had done. I am certainly reluctant to appoint a board on a temporary or interim basis. The arrangement that we have at the present time seems to be working. I don't think we can ask for it to hold for many months, but it seems to have been accepted and that is why I am eager for the Legislature to deal with the problem through its standing committee and through the legislation.

MR. TAYLOR:

When I was speaking yesterday, I pleaded with the minister to endeavour to find some avenue which would be fair to both the farmers and to the Hutterian Brethren. I don't think that it is beyond the

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ability, or anything else, for the government to find a way to deal with this, pending a final settlement.

When we say that the individual's rights are being protected, I have every reason to question that. The only way an individual Hutterian Brethren can protect what he considers his rights is to break his own faith. It certainly isn't very good when we make people break their own religion in order to do something indirectly that they can't do directly. They don't believe in holding land in the name of an individual Hutterian Brethren. But we are now forcing them to do that, when in effect they are colonies and when they get in their own name, the colony moves on.

I'm a little amazed at statements of the hon. minister about the acceptance of this by Hutterian Brethren, because I have received a letter -- even today -- stating that there is a lot of activity in one of the areas in my constituency with the Hutterian Brethren or their lawyers or land buyers, interviewing farmers in this area. And the farmers are concerned. They don't know where they stand; they don't know what the government will do; if Hutterian Brethren say, "Well, we'll just simply go out and buy land like anybody else," the word has got around that the act is inoperative. Is there an act, or is there not an act? And if the hon. members want to be fair, they should put themselves in the position of the Hutterian Brethren and farmers who could well believe that, from what they have read in the newspapers that the act is frozen. They don't know whether there is an act or whether there is not an act. Everything has been frozen until the Legislative Committee brings in a report. I suggest that this is not fair to the Hutterian Brethren, and it is not fair to the farmers who want to sell their land, or those who do not want to sell their land, within any area of this province. Surely there is some avenue, either by the appointment of a temporary chairman of the board, or through dividing the province as the hon. Member for Wetaskiwin-Leduc has just suggested -- or perhaps some other avenue, -- but surely there is some avenue that would enable the Hutterian Brethren to make their application and have it dealt with, whether it is accepted or rejected. Certainly I don't think we can go on month after month and say, "We are simply freezing the act."

Another thing that bothers me a great deal is what would the government do if the Hutterian Brethren now go out and buy land? I suppose the registrar of land could not register the title, but could the money change hands? Could they, in effect, take the land, take possession of the land under some type of bill of sale? This is contrary to The Communal Property Act, but they understand The Communal Property Act is inoperative. What would happen if the colonies now suddenly decide to expand in all directions? Well, if they do there is going to be some terrific chaos in some of the areas of Alberta. But while I believe in protecting the rights of the Hutterian Brethren, I also believe in protecting the rights of the rest of the citizens as well -- they all have rights -- and when you say they can't even have an avenue in which to apply, we're asking for very severe problems. And I would again plead with the government and urge the government to find some avenue to deal with these applications now -- even if it's on a temporary basis -- until the Legislative Committee does bring in a report.

Secondly, I'd like to make one other statement. The hon. minister appeared to think it was my responsibility to get all the facts before him, before the government made a decision. Now I didn't understand that I had such an important part to play in the decisions of the government. I did bring to the hon. minister the fact that Starland Municipal District was too small to support another colony. Exactly, in other words from what Mr. Breech himself had said -- too small to support two colonies. The hon. minister told me that he had studied the file carefully before making any decision and, if I recall rightly, he said he submitted the file or

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the pertinent important items of the file to every Cabinet minister prior to a decision being made. Well, if that is so, I would just like to bring one letter that is on the file to your attention. If the hon. ministers can read this and not realize that there shouldn't have been another colony in Starland, I am simply amazed. This is a letter from Mr. Breech, the chairman, so a copy would be on your own file. What is more, it is dated August 17, 1971, and it says:

"Re: Communal Property Act and Municipal District of Starland No. 47"

I will read the whole letter so that you will know exactly what is in it.

"In answer to the questions asked in your memorandum of August 13th, and dealing first with the distance between colonies, there has been no statutory provision setting a minimum distance between colonies since 1960, when the restriction of 40 miles between new colonies was rescinded. Since that time, the recommendations of the board to the Minister of Municipal Affairs have been based on a policy requiring a minimum of 15 miles between colonies at their maximum acreage. In regard to the application now being processed concerning a proposed new colony and municipal district of Starland No. 47, I have noted that the lands in question are approximately 13 miles from lands held by the applicant, the Hand Hills Hutterian Brethren. If approved, the new colony might expand in any desired direction until it reached its maximum prescribed acreage."

This isn't in the letter but one could add, 'then consequently reducing that 13 miles which is already below the policy of the board.' I go on reading:

"With respect to the Municipal District of Starland No. 47, the report of the Department of Municipal Affairs states, this municipality contains a total of 641,708 acres, of which 558,842 acres are assessable."

May I read that again:

". . . contains a total of 641,708 acres, of which 558,842 acres are assessable. This compares with the County of Vulcan, which contains 1,650,165 acres with an assessable acreage of 1,092,054 acres."

Double that of Starland -- that isn't in the letter -- I'm saying, double that of Starland. I go on reading:

"The County of Vulcan has two colonies, which we deem sufficient. In the writer's opinion, one colony is all that should be permitted in the Municipal District of Starland. I believe the Board will agree with this view of the matter."

And that is the end of the quote. Now, when the hon. minister says he wasn't aware, it means he didn't read the file if he wasn't aware. If he read the file he gave me misinformation when he said he went carefully over the file. I would like to suggest again that this is a terrible blunder on the part of the government, and the government should admit that. Pulling all the red herring across the path about some other colony, or something the other government did, isn't going to reduce this blunder one iota. This is a blunder on the part of the hon. minister and the government, and it stands out conspicuously as a blunder.

I just want to say one word about the other particular one. If the hon. minister felt that the government made a mistake, even though the Premier of the province suggested to our leader that we deal with it, and Mr. Strom gave that information to the Cabinet when

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we questioned dealing with this, in the days before we were going out of office. The new Premier, Mr. Lougheed thinks we should deal with this. So we co-operated. Now the hon. minister -- [interjections] -- well, sure we co-operated. Let's be sensible. Mr. Strom raised the point with the Premier, with Mr. Lougheed, and Mr. Lougheed said, "We'll appreciate it if you would deal with it." Surely to goodness, the people on that side are going to be a little bit fair at least.

DR. BUCK:

They don't like making decisions.

MR. TAYLOR:

But if they felt thus, the matter was dealt with to the best of the ability of the Cabinet at that time --

DR. HORNER:

They didn't have any ability.

MR. TAYLOR:

Well, I know, but we're not all as smart as you are. We realize we have some limitations. You, apparently don't realize you have, and yet you make blunders like this. You don't even read the file. So don't shout your abilities too loud, until you perform and show that you are able to read the English language. But let's go back to the point. If the government, and if the hon. minister felt the previous government had made a mistake, why didn't your cabinet rescind the order? You have full authority to do so. Didn't you have the courage to do it?

DR. BUCK:

No, that's not the reason.

MR. TAYLOR:

Now he stands up and says it was wrong on four points. Why didn't you rescind the order? There's full authority to rescind an order. Oh, no, because you didn't want to take the responsibility.

DR. BUCK:

Right.

MR. TAYLOR:

You were afraid of what would happen. That was why. And now you come up here with some red herring and give us four reasons why it shouldn't have been granted by the previous government. And of the four reasons, notice what they were? It wasn't a neat package. And I suppose it's a neat package in the Verdant Valley area. I don't see very much neatness about that package. It's too close. Here's one that was closer than what the regulations said -- two miles, at least, closer. But you didn't mind passing that one. No, the reasons didn't matter there. And there were five colonies in the other one and there was only one in this one. But you certainly had the information that one was enough. There's only two in the municipality with double the assessment of acres. If you're going to start dealing with south of Calgary and north of Calgary, that one, of course, didn't qualify. There are certainly two points, and certainly one very major point, why this application of the Hand Hills Hutterian Brethren should not have been accepted. So, in concluding this, as far as I'm concerned, I simply challenge the hon. minister, if he is going out telling people that that's a people's government, and that they contact the people, let him table the

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representations for and against this application. Let him table the application and see how many didn't want it from that entire area and the handful who did want it. Let's see where the handful that did want it, lived. Both municipal councils unanimously opposed it. At least 100 people, and maybe 200 -- I haven't got your file -- opposed it. I don't know how many other people. I say that if the hon. minister is trying to pretend now that they did the right thing, let them deal with the same criteria they're now accusing the previous government of. These two colonies are too close. There are a number of other reasons that I dealt with the other day. Well, again I want to say that in fairness to the Hutterites and to the people, I think the government has a responsibility to make some avenue available so that the Hutterian Brethren can make applications and know where they are, and so that the farmers of this province who want to sell, and who don't want to sell, will know where they stand.

Now, I'd like to deal with one other point -- while I'm on my feet -- with which the minister dealt a moment or two ago. That is in connection with The Senior Citizen's Shelter Act. I suggested the other day that there was discrimination on the part of the government in regard to senior citizens, because they are going to assist in the rental of senior citizens who live in apartments, but would not assist in the rental of senior citizens who lived in lodges or in nursing homes, and some of whom were paying more than those who were paying rent in apartments. So, this is discriminatory. It's discriminating against some of the senior citizens. Now, what was the answer of the minister today? He says the people in the lodges and the nursing homes own no property. Well, do the renters in the apartment buildings own property?

MR. RUSSELL:

That's not what I said.

MR. TAYLOR:

That's what you just said. Look at Hansard -- they own no property. I will be glad to listen to your statement. If I misunderstood you, I will be happy, because this doesn't make sense the way it came across here. When you say that senior citizens in apartments are going to get some assistance in their rental, and that senior citizens in lodges and in nursing homes are not going to get any assistance, this doesn't make sense. This is not a sound policy.

AN HON. MEMBER:

They pay property tax.

MR. TAYLOR:

Certainly, they pay rent. Of course, they are paying property tax indirectly -- [Interjections] -- You can justify your conscience that way if you like, but anybody living -- many people in nursing homes own property -- [Interjections] -- What do you mean, they don't own property? I can name you people in nursing homes -- [Interjections] -- You can talk to yourself if you like. It is not going to satisfy the senior citizens in the nursing homes and in the lodges, I'll tell you that -- [Laughter] --

You can laugh too. You are the ones who were talking about helping all of the senior citizens. Now you say, "We are only going to help some of them." If they own property and are in the nursing home, they don't get any help. Of course they have property, and some of it is coming under The Tax Recovery Act. Others will come under The Tax Recovery Act if they don't get some assistance.

Surely, if we are going to help those who have rents to pay, then it should be "pay" for all of the senior citizens, not just some

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of them. I say this policy is discriminatory and highly discriminatory, and unless you do the same thing for people in the nursing homes as you do for people in apartment buildings, you are not being fair to the senior citizens in this province.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Give it up.

AN HON. MEMBER:

How about those with \$100,000?

MR. RUSSELL:

I thought we had put this debate on the basis of reason and logic, based on the facts, when the hon. Member for Wetaskiwin-Leduc got into the debate. It is just impossible to respond to comments like those from the last member. He keeps saying, "The Act has been suspended." It hasn't. There is a permissive clause in the Act that allows for the appointment of the board. There is no board. The Act is in effect. Can you understand that? There are several clauses to the Act; the Act has not been suspended; only the Legislature can repeal that Act; there is no such move in thought in this session; we have not appointed a board under the permissive clause of the Act. So please don't say the Act has been suspended, and then base an argument on that.

With respect to the file dealing with the Verdant Valley colony, I have the copy of the letter. It is not included in the application; it is a personal letter from Mr. Breech, chairman of the Communal Property Board to the hon. Gordon Taylor, written August 17th. It was not in the file of that application; it had nothing to do with the application. The letters for and against the application, the report of the Communal Properties Board, the aerial photographs, and the maps, constituted the file. There is no personal letter from the chairman of the board to the hon. Gordon Taylor. I have that letter now. It was after Mr. Merritt telephoned me, with his concern about the previous letter of February 15th, that we had all these things dug up. But we, as a new government, had no way of knowing that you had received this personal letter from the chairman of the board.

Now, dealing with the matter of the renter's assistance, Mr. Chairman, again I repeat the objective of The Senior Citizen's Shelter Assistance is to relieve senior citizens from the education portion of the burden of property taxes. Nursing homes, senior citizen lodges do not pay property taxes for the education foundation. They pay nothing. So the people in there now, pay nothing toward that education foundation. They have 100 per cent excuse from that. Our \$50 payment to people who do not live within those facilities is an attempt to bring the situation into a more equitable term of reference. So it's not a question of whether or not the person in the lodge or in the nursing home owns property and happens to be an inhabitant of the facility I mentioned at the time. The question is whether or not a portion of their daily rate is used for the education portion of the property tax, just as a portion of, a renters' rent is used for education taxation. And, that's all. It's that simple. So we shouldn't get off into these other things when we're trying to consider the estimates, because they really don't have anything to do with it.

MR. NOTLEY:

I have a couple of questions further to the questions raised by the Hon. member for Wetaskiwin-Leduc. I wonder if the hon. minister could be a little more specific about the report of this legislative

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committee investigating alternatives to The Communal Property Act. For example, can he assure the house that the report will be made to the fall session. The reason I say this is that if we don't have a report in the fall session and it's delayed until the spring session, in actual fact, the rights of the Hutterian Brethren that existed under the old act are going to be in a state of suspense for a period of somewhat more than a year. And my question to you is, are you prepared to give us an undertaking, or in a position to give us an undertaking, that the committee will be able to submit to the Legislature a report and that your department following from that report will be able to submit the legislation?

Now, the second question. There's really no doubt and I think we all recognize that we're dealing with an extremely complex issue. But it seems to me -- and this is no disrespect to the people, the hon. members who are on this legislative committee -- that just throwing this out to the Legislative Committee is not really the answer either. And my question here is has the government considered a tentative position paper to examine the alternatives, and to submit this as a starting point for the legislative committee?

MR. RUSSELL:

Mr. Chairman, I think those are fair questions. First of all I can't give an undertaking that the committee will report by the fall session. I can say this. The terms of reference that will be put before the Legislature for the committee will include the request that the committee report by the fall session. So this is the intention. The terms of reference for the committee are being fairly carefully considered, and this is one of the reasons why the motion dealing with the appointment of a committee hasn't been placed before the Legislature yet, because there is still some aspect of the terms of reference on which we're getting advice. Insofar as a position paper is concerned, the answer is no, we would hope that the terms of reference would give the Committee some specific guidelines.

MR. STROM:

Mr. Chairman, I certainly appreciate the very sensitive nature of this particular subject, and I don't intend to enter into any debate on it, but I am a little concerned as to whether or not the hon. minister has by suggestion or otherwise, tried to indicate to the Hutterian Brethren that if any change would be forthcoming, has he indicated to them that whether there would be an improvement in the situation or are they left with any understanding as to what the Hon. Minister feels might happen? My reason for asking is I appreciate that the hon. minister has suggested that he has received agreement from them that they will wait but nevertheless I recognize the anxiousness on the part of some people to become involved in land deals with the Hutterian Brethren and they may not be totally responsible for getting themselves a deal. There has to be a seller and there has to be a buyer.

In this interim period are they going to be prepared to wait if they feel that there may be tougher regulations coming along? Or have you in fact suggested that in your opinion you think there might be an easing of the regulation?

MR. RUSSELL:

Well, Mr. Chairman, I don't want to leave the Legislature with the impression that I have the tacit agreement of every Hutterite in the province to do this, because I haven't spoken with all of them. I'm saying I sense that in the discussions I've had, either with them or their agents or the way the news seems to have gotten around, that they have accepted this period for a few months. They are aware of the Human Rights Act, I know that. And they are aware of the effect this will have on them as a religious sect. They've indicated to me, the ones that spoke to me, that they favour some kind of control.

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Certainly I think that I've tried to indicate that the method we've used in the past has probably reached the limit of its usefulness and we should be reviewing it. Unless we make it better there's no point of the review, so in those broad terms that's the only way it's been put to them and really I sense it's an uneasy acceptance of the moratorium period. But I think the Legislature will have to act by the fall.

MR. TAYLOR:

Mr. Chairman, in connection with The Communal Property Act - when the hon. minister says that the only thing they are doing is not appointing a board, I have to say the whole act revolves around the appointment of a board. The act is actually inoperative unless there is a board. There's nothing else in the act that's very pertinent. So really when the board is not appointed then the act becomes inoperative. And again I suggest that the government take a look at some avenue in order to deal with this particular item.

There are only two other questions I would like to ask in connection with vote No. 2111. One is, do private nursing homes not pay educational tax? And secondly, did your own Task Force not recommend that the guests in lodges and in nursing homes be given the same benefits as the others?

DR. MCCRIMMON:

Mr. Chairman, I would like to reply to the question, if I may. I would like to clear up one or two points on this \$50 a year to renters and the feeling that there's a discriminatory effect on the inmates of old-age homes.

Now in point of fact the residents of the old-age homes are presently being subsidized to the rate of about \$35 a month. This is brought about by the fact that a home for 50 people now costs in the neighbourhood of \$400,000 to \$500,000. Now prime interest rate on that runs in the neighbourhood of \$25,000. And you divide that by 50 and you get in the neighbourhood of \$400 or \$500 a year for each of the inmates in that home. Now that's a direct subsidy from this government and from the previous government to the same effect in the neighbourhood of \$35 to \$40 a month. So when the renter gets \$50 a year this is more of an equalizer than it is to give the person who is in the home an additional \$5 a month to make it up to \$40 or \$45 rather than the \$35 to \$40 that under straight economics he is presently getting. In nursing homes, I believe, the subsidy is \$6 to \$6.50 a day, which runs to \$180 to \$200 a month subsidy.

MR. DIXON:

Mr. Dix -- Mr. Chairman -- I'm really in bad shape, Mr. Chairman, talking to myself -- I better not start answering myself.

Mr. Chairman, I was most interested tonight in hearing the hon. minister talk about The Communal Properties Act because I'm one person in the House that can stand up and criticize the act and say -- I've said over the years -- that it should have been done away with a long time ago.

This act came into force when we were concerned -- and this is prior to my time in the House -- shortly after the war. It first came about from the Canadian Legion who were objecting to the fact that Hutterites were buying up land, and returned men couldn't either buy the land or the Hutterites were in effect raising the price of the land. So I think maybe at that time, with a lot of pressure from the public, the government did bring in this Communal Properties Act and I felt that when that act should have been brought in, I think it would have been wise if the government at that time had said, we're only going to put it in for a five-year period, or a four-year period

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until the veterans returning from the war will have every opportunity to buy land.

There is less reason for this act to be on the books today than ever in our history. It seems strange to me that we have this type of act on our books when deserters and draft dodgers from the United States can be landed immigrants here in our country of Canada and can buy all the land they want. The people that we are dealing with here, the Hutterite Brethren, were all born right here in our own province, all of them, because they have been here for generations. I think we should give some serious consideration to doing away with the act altogether because I cannot see how we can stand up here and have the hon. Premier introduce a Bill of Rights -- and then we are going to set up a committee to see how we are going to control a certain section of our society. It just doesn't make sense.

We also have to face the fact that in all these cases we are always going to have trouble -- because it is the same -- and I am going to refer to the drug trade. You have a willing buyer and a willing seller. And whenever you have that, it is awfully hard to bring down legislation that is going to solve the problem. You know I have heard it so many times, and have talked to individuals, and after they have sold their land to the Hutterite Brethren and when their neighbour goes after them, what does he usually say, "I didn't know, some land developer or real estate promoter came along and I didn't know that it was going to be used for a Hutterite colony or I wouldn't have signed it." Well if you went around to him and said, "Well, why don't you try and break it?" he would say, "Oh, no, we'll let it go." We have seen it, time and time again, this very thing happen. It is the type of legislation where there is a lot of money involved, and whenever there is a lot of money involved and a willing buyer and a willing seller, it is awfully hard to prevent this type of thing from causing problems throughout the years.

But basically, Mr. Chairman, I think we should give consideration to doing away with the act altogether because -- as the hon. Minister of Agriculture I am sure will agree with me -- it is getting harder and harder to find manpower to work on our farms. People don't want to work on the farm as hired men anymore; that's a thing of the past. These people are excellent farmers and a change in our modern society to corporation farmers, I think is more justification for doing away with this act. I think the government should give serious consideration before it even sets up a committee to investigate doing away with the legislation as it is today. I think this type of legislation can only be justified if we have The War Measures Act or some other drastic act before us. That's the only type that you can never justify -- when it interferes with the right of citizens to buy or sell their land.

One or two other points that I would like to touch on Mr. Minister; I am a bit concerned by the statement you made yesterday that you are going to recommend to the Legislature that the specific use of land, those permits that were issued to developers are going to be cancelled, or at least given a certain time to develop, or revert back. This is another thing that I think is very, very serious because the people who have bought that type of property paid for it with the idea that they could develop, and when they decided they could develop they paid a premium price in most cases, so if a government comes along and cancels those development permits, of course, it drastically affects the land and the investment that these people have put in. And many features that enter into this, for example, I doubt if the City of Edmonton or the City of Calgary is going to see too many huge high rise apartments go up as we've seen in the last couple of years, because the market is gradually catching up with demand, and as it is gradually being caught up, and we're getting vacant suites, if anybody has got a large development going, and even if he has obtained a piece of land, he's going to hesitate before he decides to build. And, of course, the mortgage companies,

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they come along and they say to him: "Well we're not going to give you the mortgage until the situation clears up". So if there is any change in that specific act, I think we should give it very, very serious consideration. There aren't that many special development permits out now -- specific-use permits I should say. But I think we should certainly look at that before we change this particular act. And I think in the case where the hon. Premier got up here the other day and made a great deal about the fact that they couldn't change the particular royalties because of a contract -- here we're going to bring in a piece of legislation that does the very thing that he said he couldn't do.

There are one or two other things here that I'd like to touch on too. I wonder, Mr. Minister -- and I know you are most interested in this -- in our low-rental housing schemes or subsidized-rental schemes, I wonder if you have ever considered not only bringing in the low-income group into this type of housing, but try -- as they are doing in some of the States -- Massachusetts -- where people in all walks of life are in a particular type of suite, or type of apartment, where the low rental people who are subsidized, can be in that same apartment. This way it will stop the sort of ghetto idea where a particular place has just low-rental people in it and nothing else, and I think this doesn't augur well to make a happy and viable community.

Before I sit down, Mr. Chairman, I'd like to ask the hon. minister, what happened. I believe that his municipal task force had more power than the hon. minister. I'm surprised that he listened to the recommendations that we're going to subsidize people over 65 living in mansions -- and we were arguing here a few minutes ago about \$50 rental rebate to those who rent -- but I think there's real discrimination when some people over 65 can have a subsidy or rebate of over \$700 or \$800 dollars because they happen to live in a house that is worth an awful lot of money, and if that isn't ability to pay, I think that somebody who is living in a \$100,000 to \$75,000, or even a \$50,000 or \$40,000 house at their age is usually paid for, and they have the ability to pay the taxes -- so I think that he received some bad recommendations from the task force, and I was a little disappointed. I thought he might change his idea and change his recommendation apparently that the task force gave him, and went along and said: "Lookit fellas, that's a wonderful idea, but we've got to be a little fair about it. I think that we should try and subsidize to a greater extent those in the lower income bracket, rather than worry about those that have lots of money and therefore ability to pay."

And so, Mr. Chairman, with those few remarks, thank you.

MR. BARTON:

Mr. Chairman, I apologize for being late tonight but I dumped a tea kettle on my foot. And it was rather hot --

MR. CHAIRMAN:

That wasn't the minister's fault, was it?

MR. BARTON:

I apologize and I'd like to direct a couple of questions to the hon. minister. One is -- an offer to the disaster fund issued by the hon. Minister of Agriculture during his budget. I was just wondering -- in most floods in towns and in cities, the people usually survive because they have other sources of income. They can go back to work, they can clean up their basements on the basis of insurance, but last year and over the years -- in the seven years that I've been in the Lesser Slave Lake area and in the hon. Minister of Agriculture's riding -- we have had several floods. I really think there is a

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difference between a farmer and a flood in the city because of the fact that he has a steady income monthly. When a farmer's land is flooded he establishes his income on a yearly basis, putting in the crop. Then a flood comes along, and he is actually set back two years. And I was wondering in that special vote by the Provincial Treasurer if your department could possibly set up a fund to relieve the tax of the particular farmers that are flooded, especially in the Paddle River area, the Swan River area, and the East Prairie area, so that not a direct order to the ID's to lift a tax where the responsibility is to the ID's. I think the ID's, or counties, or municipalities, wherever the flood happens in, can't really negotiate a tax relief towards the farmer. In my area we had a ten-year assessment, and in some areas the taxes on the particular farms doubled and tripled. I know that Unifarm presented this very same brief to the hon. Minister of Agriculture from my area. I was just wondering -- as far as the Disaster Fund that the hon. minister of Agriculture is asking for input in, this is one small area. It is enough so that the farmers can at least buy seed or pay their input to putting the crop in.

The next one is the new legislation on the assessment of owners of mobile trailers. Is it appointed by the local ID's or municipalities, or the towns for the assessment of the actual mobile trailer? I think in my area there seems to be quite a problem. They are running around measuring up trailers -- some from the hitches, and some from the actual length of the trailer, and are not actually going inside of the house. So I think there is a little area there that you could possibly look into.

The third point is regarding the hon. Member for Calgary North Hill -- how he so artistically defended his Conservative task force and did a pretty good snow job as to getting into the government's cookie jar.

MR. RUSSELL:

I will just comment very, very briefly -- because of the way time is going by -- with respect to the remarks that were offered. First of all, the idea of rental subsidy and privately-owned apartments to get away from the ghetto thing, I think is exactly another good reason for government getting out of the proposition of building identifiable public-housing projects. I agree with you for that very idea, aside from the involvement of the private sector which I mentioned earlier to the other hon. Member for Calgary Bow.

Insofar as these people -- I don't know where they all are, because most of the senior citizens' doors I knocked on were having the other kind of problems -- but I didn't realize Alberta was so full of senior citizens living in \$100,000 mansions. Despite that fact, I don't know how many there are -- I think there are more of the other kind -- the principle of this legislation or this program is not how much, but what is the tax being collected for? I have said it several times before. This is an attempt to get away from loading a residential property with the costs of education. If a fellow has lived in this fantastic mansion until the age of 65, presumably he has paid a pretty hefty whack of education tax over the years, and the relief I think -- I subscribe to the theory -- is in direct proportion to the way he has been paying all his life. I think it is perfectly fair in that regard.

With respect to some sort of means test relating it to income, I think that is one of the specific weaknesses of the Manitoba plan that the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview mentioned, because if there is one thing many of our senior citizens seem to have difficulty with, it is filling out these darn computerized and horribly-complicated forms that seem to be a part of modern society. We like to get away from that kind of thing as far as possible.

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With respect to the hon. member, Mr. Barton, and his suggestion about relieving farmers who are affected by flooding, I should emphasize that the vote of the Emergency Measures Organization, which deals with disasters, used to be in this department. It has been moved to the Executive Council for the very reason that we feel it has a broader aspect than just relating to the Department of Municipal Affairs. So the direct financial contribution through Vote No 1440 might be obtained that way if there is severe damage done. The other way in which an individual might obtain relief is if he appeals this assessment due to any kind of disaster like that.

Your question with respect to trailers -- it's the assessors on the staff of the provincial government, or else, in the case of the cities, it's the regular city assessors who are assessing the trailers and we have heard about these things they're doing -- some are including the hitches and some aren't. This is the first year of the program. There's no appeal process built in. That's something we have to bring in when we bring in The Municipal Government Act, but we're aware of the problems and we intend to deal with them.

MR. BARTON:

I think you misunderstood my point on the relief to the farmers as far as taxation, which is municipal affairs, right? -- the ID's or the counties, or whatever it is. Now I realize it's an emergency measure, but I was just replying to the hon. Minister of Agriculture as to a point to develop an Emergency Disaster Fund. I think your department does have a responsibility in this area. I just throw it out as a suggestion.

MR. RUSSELL:

Yes, there are various techniques allowed in the legislation, Mr. Chairman, whereby final agreements can be made to settle taxes that are deemed uncollectable in their full amount, or having your assessment reduced because of some disaster, where within limits you can delay tax recovery and tax sales, and relief through various agricultural department programs and the Emergency Measures Organization. All these things should, I think, fairly effectively deal with the situation you mentioned.

MR. DIXON:

Mr. Minister, through the Chair, I wonder if you would comment on this point which I failed to mention when I was speaking. I was wondering if we are going to insist on carrying on The Communal Property Act -- and forgetting about Hutterites and all other people as far as communal property is concerned -- I was wondering if you'd ever considered zoning certain parts of our province into communal or commercial type of farming, separate from the other. This may be an answer to some of the problems that we are faced with, especially with the Hutterite Brethren, and it also would spread them around, maybe to areas just like we do in the city where we won't allow anything but commercial or some other use. I think the time has come when we're going to have to apply this to the rural areas as far as the type of operations that are carried on -- in particular farms in Alberta, many of which are just factories rather than farms.

MR. RUSSELL:

Yes, as a matter of fact, I have mentioned that, and if you'll check the press releases or the news stories just after the board was released, you'll find specific reference to that, and as a matter of fact, the editorial reaction was bad towards that suggestion -- I kind of got clobbered, but I think it's a good idea.

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MR. FRENCH:

Mr. Chairman, with respect to the question I asked yesterday, I wonder if the hon. minister could give us the information again. I couldn't write it down as quickly as you were giving it.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Would you repeat the question?

MR. FRENCH:

What I'm trying to ascertain -- maybe the minister could just ask me -- when I made my calculations prior to discussion of your estimates, it would appear to me that there is a larger recovery from the salaries in the special areas than what they have been in previous years. Do I have your assurance that the only recovery will be the actual salaries paid in the special areas?

MR. RUSSELL:

Well, I understand, Mr. French, from talking to our department accountant that there's a reason under The Public Service Act to bring all of these people who are dealing with the administration in the special areas under that particular scheme. So, out of that appropriation part of the appropriation under No. 2101 -- there's about \$30,000 in this year's estimates for that. You add that onto the appropriation No. 2118 of \$340,000, and you come up with the \$370,000. Now how the \$30,000 this year compares to last year, I don't know. I imagine it would be in the same ratio roughly. There's a 4 per cent or 5 per cent increase but I'd have to go back and check that for you. I don't have that breakdown.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Is that satisfactory, Mr. French?

MR. FRENCH:

Yes, although I should draw the hon. minister's attention to the fact that on page 52 -- I see the hon. Provincial Treasurer is not in tonight -- in the budget address there is a recovery of \$1,260,000 and when you add all the figures you have given tonight, there is still a discrepancy of \$X. I can't give you the \$X because I couldn't get your figures.

MR. RUSSELL:

Mr. Chairman, there is the same appropriation for the improvement districts, \$710,000. Then there is a variety of miscellaneous fees. I mentioned the biggest one, the Mobile Equipment licencing; 5 per cent of the licence fee is collected on the stuff collected, and \$50,000, so when you add them up you actually come to \$1.5 million and something. Those are small items, but if you are concerned about the two major administrative ones for the ID and the special areas, that is what the figures are -- \$710,000 for the ID's, \$370,000 for the special areas.

MR. FRENCH:

It is not my intention, Mr. Chairman, to pursue this. I would like to make a recommendation to the hon. minister that possibly in future years he could use part of the procedure we used in previous years, and I refer to the estimate book from last year in which there was a breakdown actually on page 13 of last year's estimates which gave you some information. That wasn't available to us and that was the reason for the questions this year.

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MR. COOPER:

Mr. Chairman, I would like to draw the attention of the hon. minister to the matter of county boundaries. These were settled some 20 years ago, and since that time there have been changing travel patterns, centralization and a decided trend toward regionalization, if you would call it that. This all makes county boundaries unrealistic from the school attendance standpoint. I am quite well aware that the matter of county boundaries is not one that can be changed without considerable review and study. I am not even saying there are many cases like that. It so happens I have one of them. So I am very cognizant of it.

I would ask that you, Mr. Minister, confer with the hon. Minister of Education, who knows my trouble spots quite well and just take a look at the matter of county boundaries.

MR. HO LEM:

Mr. Chairman, I have a few questions to the hon. minister. The first question is, how much and where in this department are the allocations for payment to government MLA's other than the hon. minister? The second question is regarding the ministerial assistant. Is he a civil servant, or is he on contract?

MR. RUSSELL:

The assistant is under exactly the same arrangement as the former ministers. There is a sort of a master order in council that affects all these fellows, and they are under contract. So he is under contract, he is not a civil servant. The only difference is they all used to be in the Executive Council. This year it has been separated out to the various offices.

There is no vote in here for payment to any MLA's. The expenses for the MLA Task Force on Provincial-Municipal Financing is in No. 2103.

MR. HO LEM:

Regarding No. 2103, will the cities be eligible for commissions, the city staff on research work for this type of research?

MR. RUSSELL:

I am sorry, I didn't hear the question.

MR. HO LEM:

This account was No. 1403 last year under the Executive Council. The cities will be interested to know the details of how and what the \$115,000 for fees and commissions will be spent. Will city staff be eligible for research grants from this?

MR. RUSSELL:

No, that is specifically for the Task Force on Urbanization and the Future. Included in that, and it seems a most logical one to put it in, under task force work, is the budget expenses for the MLA Task Force on Provincial-Municipal Financing. But fees and commissions are for Mr. Marlyn and anybody he may contract under the Task Force on Urbanization and the Future.

MR. HO LEM:

Will the cities be able to present topics to this task force?

MR. RUSSELL:

Yes, that is the whole purpose of it.

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MR. STROM:

Mr. Chairman, I have a couple of questions. (1) Is any consideration being given by the hon. minister or his department to changing the status of improvement districts? I am thinking, of course, of the operation that we have had now for a few years where they operate under advisory committees directly under the department.

MR. RUSSELL:

Not this year, Mr. Chairman.

MR. STROM:

The second one is, I am wondering whether or not -- and the hon. Member for Vermilion raised it to a certain extent -- but is any consideration being given to a review of boundaries? I make the same point that because of the number of years since we've had a boundary review there may be some inequities that are building up between various municipalities, and I'm thinking particularly of the size of them as it relates to total assessment.

MR. RUSSELL:

I think we're going to be faced with this problem very shortly. There's been a number of complaints or requests for consideration of change from various areas throughout the province, and of course the most dramatic one deals with the City of Edmonton and their proposed expansions which will do great damage to the existing size of the neighbouring counties, so if we deal with it it would have to be, I think, on a provincial basis. I know the hon. Minister of Education is getting the same kind of complaint the hon. Member for Vermilion-Viking alluded to. I think we'll have to deal with it. I believe it was 1959 that the last one was done.

MR. STROM:

The next question actually relates to the improvement districts to a certain extent. In the north there are a number of services provided by different departments, and in my view there has been considerable difficulty in getting the co-ordination between departments and I'm wondering if your department has been giving any consideration to providing greater co-ordination between the services provided to some of these northern areas?

MR. RUSSELL:

Yes, we have, Mr. Chairman, because that's a kind of thing that really manifests itself in the most annoying way. Dr. Bouvier mentioned a while ago the question of garbage collection in Fort Chip. I can think of various services regarding housing in some of our northern areas, or the installation of utility systems, and I think there's room for improvement and greater co-ordination and this assessment is being carried out at the present time.

MR. STROM:

Carried out by your department, or by a combination of personnel from several departments. Just how is it being handled at the present time?

MR. RUSSELL:

It's only just begun, and it's being done on a departmental personnel basis. For instance, I mentioned the question with respect to housing. Personnel in the Alberta Housing Corporation conferred, for example, with personnel in Lands and Forests and they

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straightened out one problem with respect to housing maintenance. And it's that kind of thing we're going through.

MR. STROM:

Mr. Chairman, the last question I wanted to raise -- I have checked through here and I don't seem to find anything that deals with northern development. Will that be found under Executive Council? I didn't go through them closely. Where do we find them in the estimates? Under Executive Council? Fine.

MR. WILSON:

Mr. Chairman, would the hon. minister elaborate on how he proposes to control the size of Calgary and Edmonton by population, by acreage, things of that nature?

MR. RUSSELL:

I don't think we can control the population. I was referring specifically to the physical size and as you know I mentioned just a moment ago we've been asked to determine the physical boundaries of Edmonton -- Calgary hasn't made that request yet. Presumably before too long, in our first term in office, we'll be dealing with both cities.

MR. MOORE:

Mr. Chairman, I'd just like to make a couple of points. First of all, I'd like to thank the hon. minister for his explanation of the vote with respect to improvement districts and the special areas. It's been a matter of concern to me for some years in that a lot of the general public and a number of people who in fact are members of this Legislative Assembly have suggested that the provincial government was paying all of the costs of administration in improvement districts and special areas and I'm happy that you've made it a matter of record that it is the cash taken out of taxation derived from those areas. That point is cleared up.

The other point that I would like to make is following up the hon. Leader of the Opposition's question in regard to advisory boards and improvement districts. Having been a member on one it's my opinion that most of them are just not functioning in the manner that they are intended to function when they were set up by the previous government. What I'm saying is, that in my view, they are just not having the input into the affairs of that individual district that they should have. I would like to suggest to the hon. minister that I agree too, that we should in the near future be having a look at the concept and the operation of advisory boards in relation -- not only to your department -- but to that other department that has a major amount of work to do in improvement districts, and that is the Department of Highways.

MR. STROM:

Mr. Chairman, if I might just make a point in regard to the advisory committees. I appreciate what the hon. Member for Smoky River has said in regard to the possibility of greater input. But I suggest that if we're thinking in terms of giving them greater responsibility in the operation of their affairs, the hon. minister then ought to very seriously give consideration to placing them on the same status as municipalities or counties. Because it is my view that they are still enjoying a greater degree of help from the provincial government and that in some cases there is really not too much difference between their operation and a municipality, except in the assistance that they are getting from the provincial government. I think that it has worked very well, but if the government is giving serious consideration to giving them an increased responsibility or a

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greater input then I think at that time we ought to review very carefully as to whether or not they should not be looking at giving them municipal status, or at least giving them greater responsibility in accepting some of the costs of operation. Now you have suggested that the costs are, in fact, taken from the taxpayers of that area, but of course the very name "improvement district" and "special areas" indicates that there has been a special status enjoyed by them for many, many years. I think it has served well, but if you are looking at changing it, then I would suggest that we should be giving consideration to placing them on municipal status.

MR. ZANDER:

Mr. Chairman, I think probably I have to agree that the fragmentations of pieces of ID's that are now adjoining municipalities and counties, I believe the amount of monies that are spent in there -- and probably there are some subsidies by the government through the Department of Highways and also through the Department of Municipal Affairs -- I know that there are a considerable number of rich ID's. But since the last boundary change in the province -- the commission sat in 1954 -- there has been no major revision in the boundaries. And as the hon. member opposite said some moments ago, I think we have to take a look at the pattern of change. The trading areas have changed, communities have changed, and services have changed in various areas of communities. I can only think of my constituency where we have -- I brought this to the attention of the hon. minister and a numerous amount of meetings have been held in regards to the question of services at 50 and 60 and 70 miles away -- it doesn't really make for good functioning of local government. I do believe that we should have a look at the boundaries, the situation of the municipalities and the counties. And at least in some of the areas where the fragmentation of ID's exist that they should be absorbed into the county or municipal system of government. I do believe that it would make for a better uniformity and a better feeling amongst the people that they are governing themselves.

I have to agree with the hon. Member for Smoky River when he says they are enjoying little better services, but it is also out of the provincial government. The members on the advisory committee certainly do not have as much control regarding public works and education as they would like to have, and I think they should have some type of self government, maybe not in all cases, but certainly in some of the areas I think we should have another look at it.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Mr. Ruste --

MR. RUSTE:

Mr. Chairman, I received some representation from a local Legion branch dealing with the VLA regulations where a veteran must have at least one-half an acre of land on which to build a residence. My understanding is that they have until 1974 to do this and now they are claiming that there are no subdivisions of that size in many of the urban areas that are available to them. My question is, could you or your department do something in this regard as far as they are concerned? The second point that I would like to raise is that in the administration of the department of municipal affairs, what steps are you taking in the field of de-centralization?

MR. RUSSELL:

Well this year there are no steps being taken with respect to de-centralization. As I said this is kind of a hold-the-line this year as far as the administration of the department is concerned. With respect to your VLA problem, this is the first instance that I

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have heard of such a difficulty facing anybody. If you would like to give me the letter, we will see if anything can be done about it.

Appropriation 2101 Total agreed to \$ 660,380

Appropriation 2103 Task Force On Urbanization and The Future

MR. CLARK:

Mr. Chairman, the Minister said I wouldn't have made the remarks I did if I had known what was in the vote. Now is the perfect time for him to explain what was in the vote.

MR. RUSSELL:

Mr. Speaker, I didn't want to give him the impression the way that the budget is set out that there is a 33 1/3 per cent increase in the vote because there are two misleading things.

Number one, last year's figure was not for a full year. It was for two-thirds of a year because the task force started a third of the way through the fiscal year. So really, to get a full year's vote for the Task Force on Urbanization, you would have to add another one-third onto the \$150,000 and get \$225,000 so the \$200,000 is a decrease below that. Then in addition to that, there is included in that figure the expenses for the MLA task force on municipal financing that they will incur this fiscal year, and that is estimated as near as we can determine at somewhere around \$34,500, which again is out of that, so it is not the increase that it appears to be.

MR. CLARK:

Mr. Chairman, with those explanations I have become involved in some additional comments just so that we clearly understand about No. 2103. This isn't only the Task Force on Urbanization and the Future that was established about a year ago in co-operation with the ten cities. A co-ordinator was appointed, then it was agreed that the ten cities would appoint four directors to work along with the minister and this would be the guiding force in this task force. The task force is the one in co-operation with cities on urbanization. You are telling us now that there is approximately \$150,000 in the estimates we are now considering for that task force?

MR. RUSSELL:

I'll go through it if you want to know how it is made up. \$150,000 represents two-thirds of the full budget so a full budget would be \$225,000. When we took this step early this year to reorganize the thing as far as method was concerned we asked Mr. Marlyn to achieve a 75 per cent reduction in the budget, so a full budget would actually be 25 per cent of a full year which is about \$57,000. When they --

MR. CLARK:

-- Got \$57,000 --

MR. RUSSELL:

-- When the same task force director and Mr. Marlyn considered that request, they came back with a counter proposal and said: "Can we extend the committee system rather than the appointed co-ordinator for one-quarter of the year, that is until the end of June? For that we need \$61,800 to operate the task force committees under Peter Boothroyd for three months." So we agreed to that \$61,800. We then added on about 75 per cent for three-quarters of the year for the reduced full amount of \$57,000, which is about another \$42,000. So

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to carry them on, Mr. Marlyn, for nine months on the reduced budget, needs about \$42,700, Peter Boothroyd and the committees need about \$61,800; so that leaves \$104,000 for the Task Force on Urbanization and the Future. That is exclusive of any trust funds to which the cities have contributed, and that trust fund is under review at the moment, and I'll remark on that in a minute.

So we're asking here for \$200,000; we have specifically allocated \$104,000, so that leaves \$96,000 unallocated. Because the way the Budget Estimates have been going and the desire to pin these MLA task force votes down to a specific vote, I think this is the appropriate one to put Mr. Farran and his committee members in, so we'll always know it's there and the amending Order in Council will be drawn up to do that. They are now under a general one for the Legislative Assembly, but I think this one will be more specific. So as a result of the budget discussions we are doing that. So \$35,000 for his task force off the \$96,000 excess, leaves about \$61,000 unaccounted for. We had indicated that Mr. Marlyn is to commission private consultants. There is no way telling how many, or at what stage, or when their billings will come in, but we feel fairly assured that that \$61,000 will safely carry us through the majority of consulting fees that we will be faced with. If we go beyond that we'll simply have to consider a special warrant situation on a special consultant basis.

MR. HO LEM:

Mr. Chairman, \$35,000 for the Farran task force on provincial municipal fiscal programs. Now the statement made by Mr. Farran, one or two days ago, regarding the expenditures already expended for this purpose, was only \$900 -- or was it \$3,000 the other day that you made --

MR. FARRAN:

Are you asking me?

MR. HO LEM:

Yes.

MR. FARRAN:

Well, Mr. Chairman, I said we had a budget for \$50,000, and I doubted if we spent any more than about \$3,000, but that was including last year -- we started on September 10th. The hon. minister is talking about the Estimates for the year, beginning April 1st, 1972.

MR. HO LEM:

Would you care to make a breakdown of this \$35,000?

MR. RUSSELL:

Yes. By way of explanation -- that task force has been working over two fiscal years -- it started work October 7th, and it's a bit different than the other task forces because its members are all independently wealthy and can afford to work for nothing -- that's one difference -- yes -- they don't get paid anything for the time they are putting in -- let's not misunderstand anything there.

But the budget that was broken down or accepted by Executive Council, for October 7th to March 31st of this year was \$15,700, and for April 1st of this year until March 31st, 1973, \$34,500, making a total of \$50,200, and that's broken down -- and I'll give you each fiscal year breakdown.

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	<u>1972</u>	<u>1973</u>
Secretarial Services	\$2,500	\$6,000
Travel, Hotel, and Meals	5,000	12,000
Consultants Fees for Rural Urban		
Financing	4,000	9,000
Telephones, Stationery and Advertising	1,200	1,500
Miscellaneous, Contingency, etc.	<u>3,000</u>	<u>6,000</u>
	15,700	34,500
Total	\$50,200	

I should point out that this task force has an office in the Bowlen Building; it has a permanent secretary; it's hiring people; it proposes to hold public hearings; it has fairly high telephone and stationery expenses. So those are the kind of expenses we are looking at.

MR. TAYLOR:

Mr. Chairman, regarding expenses, is there some type of guide that shows how much may be charged for travelling and for subsistence?

MR. RUSSELL:

The Order in Council stipulates that they apply for expenses on the basis of a certain classification of the Civil Service. I would have to go to the Order in Council to get that classification, but it is laid out.

MR. TAYLOR:

In connection with that point, how come some are being paid 13 cents per mile and others are being paid 11 cents per mile?

MR. FARRAN:

Mr. Chairman, the original task force on Provincial-Municipal Fiscal arrangements was set up by Order in Council. Its expenses were to be paid on a similar basis to a normal civil servant, which was at 13 cents a mile. The other task forces were set up in a different Order in Council -- I think it was appropriation 1902 -- which set out travel expenses to be only 11 cents a mile. So on this one task force it was on one basis, and the other task force it was on the other. Why it came out that way I don't know. One was 13 cents, the other was 11 cents.

MR. TAYLOR:

Is there some way of making this uniform? I can't see why one task force should be paid more?

MR. NOTLEY:

I'm just going to follow up on that. It struck me that there was a difference there. I wanted to ask the hon. minister about the consulting fees in this case -- \$4,000 and \$9,000 -- whether he could explain just who is being contracted for in this case and what the arrangements are?

MR. RUSSELL:

It was to contract an economist who specialized in municipal financing. Another person that has just been hired is a graduate economy student who is doing some of the office work in Calgary for the task force. It is that kind of person.

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MR. CLARK:

In just following along on this, I understand that the secretary or research person that the task force has is a person -- I shouldn't say on loan but that perhaps is as good a term as any -- from the Department of Municipal Affairs -- Mr. Melnyk I believe is the name. Where do we find his money?

MR. RUSSELL:

That is not in here. He has been seconded from the department for a year and he is on regular salary in the department.

MR. CLARK:

Can you give me some indication what his salary is -- ballpark?

MR. RUSSELL:

I don't know. I think it is in the neighbourhood of \$11,000 but I am not sure.

MR. CLARK:

Would you consider me overly presumptuous if I were to say that we can add about another \$15,000 or \$20,000 on to the cost of the task force? I am asking the hon. minister. I am sure you will consider me presumptuous. I am sure the hon. minister might not.

MR. RUSSELL:

Once in awhile you get to give good news. They are well below the estimated projected expenditures so far on the basis of their six month's work to date.

MR. CLARK:

It would be a fair statement to say that the person who had been seconded from the Department of Municipal Affairs is being paid out of the Department of Municipal Affairs -- likely out of the vote dealing with assessors. Is that right?

MR. RUSSELL:

Yes, I think so. It is inevitable that he would have been used a lot of the time anyway, because of his duties and his knowledge. What we have done is take him in full-time.

MR. CLARK:

I'm just following along. What approach did the province make to the federal government concerning federal input, I think, through the Federal Department of Urban Affairs?

MR. RUSSELL:

For the MLA task force, nothing. For the Task Force on Urbanization and the Future, we carried on for awhile the valiant efforts of my predecessor, Mr. Colborne, and I am just convinced we are never going to see that federal cheque.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Very well. Mr. Barton?

MR. BARTON:

While we are on the MLA Task Force, are they intending on holding any hearings on the north country at all?

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MR. FARRAN:

Not right now.

MR. BARTON:

We have no problems in urban --

MR. FARRAN:

[Comments not recorded]

MR. BARTON:

I appreciate that.

MR. DIXON:

Mr. Chairman, I wonder if I could ask the minister a question regarding the MLA task force. Are they being paid out of public funds? It's always been my impression as a parliamentarian that reports of these committees, especially when you call them MLA task forces which should come back to the Legislature, I cannot see by what justification you have of holding up these reports. In other words, anything that's paid for out of the public purse should be at least open to public scrutiny and in particular by this Legislature. Now, I'm just wondering by what reason the government decides that we cannot have a copy of these reports.

DR. HORNER:

It's pretty obvious that a committee that's dealing with the subject of taxation, it would be completely wrong on their part or on the government's part to make them public prior to their use in a budgeting process. Once that budgeting process is before the Legislature, then they become the property of the Legislature. I'm sure the hon. Member for Calgary Millican would appreciate that if a committee report deals with recommendations or policy inputs in relation to taxation, it becomes pretty important that that not be made public till such time as the budgeting process is made public in this Legislature.

MR. MINIELY:

Mr. Chairman, just to answer the hon. Member for Olds-Didsbury, the gentleman's name in question is Mr. Peter Melnyk. He's a municipal assessor IV, and his salary provision in the current year's estimates is \$13,801.

MR. DIXON:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In answer to the question the hon. Minister of Agriculture is asking -- by your reasoning, Mr. Minister, this policy of the MLA task force is automatically government policy, because otherwise the Cabinet could say this is just a task force. This has nothing to do with government policy. So that's why I can't see why these can't be made public. And I think if the public are paying for them, they should be brought before this Legislature.

DR. HORNER:

The hon. member well knows that there have been all kinds of reports commissioned by the government in previous years -- all kinds of them -- enough, as the hon. Member for Cardston said, to go from here to the top of the dome, that are not made public because they are confidential information on occasion. Once they are used and once they are developed into public policy then they become public,

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but they certainly aren't disclosed ahead of time, because it would be completely improper to do so.

MR. DIXON:

Mr. Minister, in answer to that, through the Chair, we are all elected here, whether we're on this side of the House or that side of the House.

DR. HORNER:

We're the government.

MR. DIXON:

It doesn't make any difference whether you are the government or whether you aren't the government.

DR. HORNER:

It does so.

MR. DIXON:

It certainly does not!

DR. HORNER:

Yes it does.

MR. DIXON:

You call these MLA task forces, and I'm sure that if you do some research, you will find that you are treading on very thin ground, using the argument that they cannot be made public. After all, they're MLA's, we're MLA's, and if we were being paid for a report, then you could ask for that report.

MR. RUSSELL:

Mr. Chairman, I just want to suggest here for a moment that for goodness sakes, you have dealing right now with interim recommendations from that task force and that's The Senior Citizen's Shelter Assistance Act. That came out of our task force. Before Christmas the government acted on senior citizen medicare. That was as a result of the studies of that task force. So you can comment all you like at the proper time, but the initial report to government, to be considered by government prior to being placed before the Legislature and being voted on, follows a procedure and there's -- as my hon. colleague said -- a zillion examples that have gone before.

AN HON. MEMBER:

I don't know why you're so upset.

MR. CLARK:

Mr. Chairman, then to the acting Premier, once the MLA task force has finished its work and the government has used its recommendations and brings forward legislation based on those recommendations, the MLA's task force report will then be the property of the House. Is that a fair assessment of what you said?

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DR. HORNER:

It's the property of the government. It will deal with it as it would deal with any other report that it asks for in relation to these areas. The hon. member knows -- he's been a member of an Executive Council. In certain places it can be made public and if it's possible to be made public, it will be. But there are other cases in which it wouldn't be made public. He appreciates that.

MR. CLARK:

Yes, I appreciate it very much, and that's why I'm amazed, because it would seem to me that from your earlier remarks, you said once the government had dealt with a policy and developed a policy, then you indicated -- at least I took from what you said -- that then the government would be prepared to make the information available. Would the government be prepared to make the information available?

DR. HORNER:

Certainly, we would be able to make the information available. Whether or not they would be able to make the report public again depends upon the consideration of the Executive Council. I point out again to the hon. member that the task force is a policy consideration group of this government. It makes recommendations to the Executive Council. The Executive Council is charged with developing policy and financial administration and policy for the province.

MR. CLARK:

I appreciate the lesson. Under what circumstances, then, would you not be in a position to table the report?

DR. HORNER:

That would be hypothetical, Mr. Chairman. I don't know.

MR. CLARK:

I don't know either, and that is why I asked the question. After the task force has finished its work, you have dealt with the recommendations and developed your policy. For the life of me I can't see what in the world could be in that report that could embarrass any government. You wouldn't be prepared to table it. Then, Mr. Chairman, would the acting Premier be prepared to consider making available to the Legislature those recommendations that you dealt with so far as senior citizens today?

DR. HORNER:

No, Mr. Chairman, for a number of reasons, obviously. The bill isn't before this Legislature as yet. We will consider it, and we will consider the question of whether or not the final reports will be made public. It may well be that down the road additional public discussion will be required in this field, because it is a pretty complicated and pretty detailed field. As I say, I am not, in any way, going to commit the government on what it is going to do down the road in relation to the report that may or may not be tabled.

MR. CLARK:

May I ask one last question? The hon. minister said there were a number of reasons why, at this time, he couldn't make public the recommendations and the material as far as senior citizens is concerned. I appreciate you wouldn't want to do that until after the bill is introduced but what are the other reasons after the bill is introduced that you can't make it public?

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DR. HORNER:

There may be financial implications, Mr. Chairman. There may be financial or other implications in relation to the work. I am sure the government will consider, after the bill is brought forward, the question of whether or not the recommendations of the task force can, in fact, be made public.

MR. CLARK:

Mr. Chairman, for the hon. minister to say there may be financial implications and there may be this and there may be that, doggone it, they have the recommendations now. They know whether there are financial implications --

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Mr. Clark, I believe the deputy Premier has answered that. I can't see you proceeding further with the same question.

MR. BENOIT:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I was going to ask how many people were on the task force. The other point I was going to make was that it seems, if I recall correctly, in the last three or four years there have been some rather loud complaints about alleged leaks out of the Legislative Assembly committees. People didn't want leaks. While the two may not be compared, it seems obvious that we don't want things getting out task force or Legislative Assembly committees.

MR. FARRAN:

That is the whole point, Mr. Chairman. There haven't been any leaks, and I understand this is the complaint. You must understand that the task force is not the Cabinet. All we do is give the Cabinet the options. It is the Executive Council that makes the policy. You seem to be assuming that everything the task force says will be accepted, but they might give five or six different options, which eventually, the Cabinet decides on. Why should those options be made available to everyone when perhaps they are turned down for various reasons?

MR. CLARK:

Why shouldn't they?

MR. STROM:

Mr. Chairman, did I understand the hon. minister correctly when he said that we are presently reviewing in -- I'm not sure which vote it is here, but it is the one, yes -- in No. 2111, we are in fact dealing with a recommendation of the MLA task force?

MR. RUSSELL:

Yes, that is one of the recommendations we have received from them so far.

MR. STROM:

I think I am making my point then at the right appropriation when I say this, that I am amazed that we have this simple explanation of what a caucus committee is doing. What the hon. minister is saying to us, in fact, is this that some of their members within their party have made certain recommendations to the Executive Council which they have accepted and have implemented into legislation and government policy. And up to that point, I have to say, Mr. Chairman, that I am in complete agreement. We have never at any time questioned that this is not a proper procedure. What we

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have said is that we believe that it is wrong for the government to believe that it has a right to pay their caucus for making those kinds of recommendations, because I want to say to the hon. members of this House that we have had numerous recommendations over the years, made by caucus committees of our party, after they have had time to investigate, to check it out, all for the payment for their indemnity that they receive as MLA's, accepting it as part of their responsibility. This is the point we have been making repeatedly. And here I have the hon. minister standing up in his place tonight and saying that all we have here is a recommendation that we find in No. 2111, and they are paying their members for bringing that kind of a recommendation to the House. I say that this is absolutely wrong in principle, and if that's all we get out of it, it is nothing different from what we've had previously, the only difference being that they are now being paid for doing it.

DR. HORNER:

Mr. Chairman, the hon. Leader of the Opposition, of course is distorting, and is completely erroneous in what he has just said. Let's be very clear once and for all, Mr. Chairman. The hon. Minister of Public Works read out specifically what the amount of funds were being used for. Not one penny of those funds is being used to pay any member of this Legislature. Not one penny! The hon. Leader of the Opposition and some of those associated with him apparently can't get over the idea that the people of this province didn't appreciate what they were doing, didn't appreciate the kind of leadership they were being given, didn't appreciate the fact that they could budget one-quarter of a million dollars for the study of municipal-provincial finance. Carried out by whom? By party hacks! And then he has the effrontery to stand up and suggest that there is something wrong in a government using the talent that the people of Alberta sent to this Legislature.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

No. No.

DR. HORNER:

He stands up, Mr. Chairman, and continues to probe, by sometimes proper means and sometimes improper means, he flaunts the rules of this House in a number of occasions, to do this, to continue his attack on the fact that we believed in the knowledge, the intelligence, the sincerity, the integrity of the members of the Legislature that have been elected to this Legislature to govern; to govern by the people of Alberta, not by the Social Credit Party, not by the -- [Interjection] -- Well, that's at least several percentage more than the last Social Credit government had -- several percentage more -- and the Member for Wetaskiwin-Leduc never did have any concept of what good government was anyway. Let's put it to bed. We are a government of 48 members. We are going to be using members that are not members of the Executive Council to have a hand in the policy development of this government. We're going to be doing that without paying them any additional indemnity, without paying them any additional money at all. We're asking them to give their time, which they have done very freely. In return for that, we've said that we would pick up in a nominal way the expenses that they've incurred.

Surely, Mr. Chairman, the savings to the government, to the people of the province of Alberta in relation to the Municipal-Provincial Finance Task Force alone, is in the neighbourhood of \$200,000 of savings of the people's money.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear.

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DR. HORNER:

On top of that, Mr. Chairman, the ability and the knowledge that we have in our task force on this particular subject is about ten times what the ability and knowledge was of the people that were appointed to the hack committee by the former government. We have had about enough of the innuendo and the kind of sneaky attack by the Leader of the Opposition in regard to this matter. We haven't hid it; we have said that we are doing it, and we intend to continue to do it.

MR. HENDERSON:

Mr. Chairman, a point of order - the hon. minister in his own estimate admitted he had it hidden. I asked him a question --

MR. CHAIRMAN:

I'm sorry, Mr. Henderson, that has been dealt with, let's deal with this estimate here please.

[Interjections]

I'm sorry gentlemen, deal with No.2103, please. I think Mr. Strom spoke on No.2103 and I would hope that Dr. Horner is speaking on No.2103 --

[Interjections]

-- Please.

DR. HORNER:

They'll have lots of chances. I know the hon. Leader of the Opposition said nobody gets under his skin -- but he's starting to put a little, Mr. Chairman. Maybe that's a little different --

[Interjections]

. . . through inadvertence and I apologize to the hon. Member for Wainwright in regard to that and we will table in this House a pretty detailed budget in relation to the minimal amount of money that the task force is being issued. We're talking about the one on municipal finance at the moment. And I make the point again, Mr. Chairman, that this change in direction from the previous commission that was set up as a task force not only saved the Province of Alberta \$200,000 but gave us talents and ability that there weren't in the other commission. It wasn't there. And to suggest, as I said earlier, Mr. Chairman, to continue this innuendo, to continue the thing because they're playing a political game, we say very plainly -- we're using our members as part of the government -- we say it plainly that they deserve, at least, to have their out-of-pocket expenses covered for work that they are doing which is outside, and over, and above representing their constituencies, and that's it in a nutshell, Mr. Chairman.

As a matter of fact, Mr. Chairman, if they want to talk about points of order -- and I didn't want to bring this up until I was concluding -- the fact is, Mr. Chairman, they're out of order anyway. Because the whole matter was dealt with once in this session on the Throne Speech debate by an amendment that they brought in and was dealt with.

As I've said, Mr. Chairman, I saved that until the last because I wanted to deal with it again, because I'm sick and tired of the innuendos, the breaking of the rules, the -- [Interjections] -- All right, you want to have a little political fight? Let's have one. I'm ready -- are you?

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MR. STROM:

Mr. Chairman, I certainly have enjoyed the speech that the hon. Minister of Agriculture has just given. I have missed that -- we used to hear that on a regular basis when he sat on this side. As a matter of fact, if there's any man in this House who has the ability to flaunt the rules and do it more often than any other member, it's the hon. Minister of Agriculture.

For him to suggest that I am always flaunting the rules, Mr. Chairman, I suggest that anytime you find that I am not following according to the rules, I'll be happy to have you call me to order, and I'll be happy to conform to your rule. I think that if there's any member in this House who has done less debating with the hon. Speaker, or with the Chairman, it is myself -- because I respect the procedures that we follow in this House, and the rules of debate. But I certainly think that we have witnessed tonight a demonstration of trying to cover up something that is not right -- by waving arms and shouting. And, Mr. Chairman, I simply say this, that as far as I'm concerned, if I see something that I believe to be wrong, I intend to deal with it -- not only in this House, but I want to make the same kind of a statement as the hon. Minister of Agriculture used to make -- it is my intention to tell the people of this province of what is being done -- and he made it on many occasions as he well knows.

DR. HORNER:

My intentions were good.

MR. STROM:

Now, Mr. Chairman, he suggested that I was talking about money that was used in 2111 for paying task forces. I did not say that. Because I am well aware that the hon. Minister of Municipal Affairs, in replying to a question raised by our side of the House, stated very clearly that the monies to pay for the task forces would come out of 2103. So that was not the point that I was making. What I was saying was -- and I repeat it again -- that the recommendation made by the Task Force is found in one of the votes in this department under 2111 -- as the hon. minister himself suggested. I merely stated, Mr. Chairman, that during our term of office we had numerous recommendations such as this which appeared in various programs of the government, recommendations that came from our caucus, from our members, for which they were not paid one cent of extra money. Now the hon. Minister of Agriculture is starting to make comparisons as to the value of each and he can do that all he wants to. I suggest that every member in this house is here because the people within their constituency elected them, and I for one don't intend to cast aspersions on the reasons for them being here. They are here because they have been elected by the people within their constituency, and I accept them as their representative, even as the hon. Minister of Agriculture. But for him to start casting reflections on the ability of members, I say is going pretty far and stooping to low politics, and I have no intention of doing it. I accept every member in this house for their right to be here because they are elected. But again, Mr. Chairman, I have to say as far as the point of order is concerned, if it appears here as a dollar that is being spent, we have a right to discuss it and for the hon. minister to stand up and suggest that we cannot talk about it, because it has been discussed once, is certainly taking it way out.

DR. HORNER:

The hon. Leader of the Opposition again, as he used to do over the past years, tries to put words in my mouth. He made two obvious errors in the last two sentences. They are both wrong and they are both not what I said at all. I have no objection to him discussing

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it. What I did object to, and what I object to again, is the innuendo that he uses, that we are trying to hide something, or do something wrong, and I say to him again, he can discuss it from now until next July if he would like to.

MR. STROM:

I suggest that the hon. Minister of Agriculture had better go back and read the transcript. I do not recall making any mention of anything being hidden, but he must have a guilty conscience because he keeps referring to it all the time. [Interjections]

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Can I have order?

DR. HORNER:

Mr. Chairman, the hon. Leader of the Opposition again continues to infer what I didn't say.

He said that the hon. members over there weren't as smart as these, initially, and I was talking about the commission that his government has appointed, not about any hon. member that was elected here.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Can I have some order here?

DR. HORNER:

Nobody suggested -- I am talking about the innuendo, and the deliberate misuse of the rules of this legislature to continue that political innuendo.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Fine, Dr. Horner and Mr. Strom, I sincerely appreciate your debate but I think that when it comes to Appropriation 2103, both of you hon. gentlemen are debating the principles back and forth, not the Task Force on Urbanization or any other task force here or any expenses. I think Mr. Clark did ask some questions and when I said that some of those questions had been asked already and answered -- and he is repeating the same question -- I would only hope that we don't go back to debating the principle of the task force and I sincerely hope that I have the assembly's support here. Debate every principle you want here, but not the principle of the task force because I am convinced this has already been debated in the assembly in the presence of the Speaker. Now the question of the work of the task force I feel, yes, whatever this task force under this department is doing, fine, but not the principle of this task force.

MR. TAYLOR:

Mr. Chairman, this is a great time to say that, after listening to the tirade of the hon. Deputy Premier.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Mr. Taylor, I appreciate that, both sides had their chance.

MR. TAYLOR:

Well there are a few things that I want to say and when the hon. Deputy Premier says that they are hiding nothing, I want to ask them, why didn't they show these items in these various estimates? Why aren't they shown? "Task Force on Urbanization and the Future" --

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and then we are told that there is \$35,000 in there for the caucus committee. If that is not hiding it, what is?

AN HON. MEMBER:

The minister gave you an answer.

MR. TAYLOR:

Yes, but why isn't it shown here? Why did we have to ask about it?

MR. RUSSELL:

Can I answer that?

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Yes, Mr. Minister.

MR. RUSSELL:

I tried to make it very clear in drawing the hon. member Mr. Clark's attention to the fact that 2103 is not what it appeared. I stood up and I explained down to the last secretary's monthly salary what was in it, and I said why we are doing it this way, because since the Legislature has commenced the debate on the budget, it is obvious that they want to know where each task force is. They have been asking this on every department. If you have the Order in Council establishing the task force we're discussing now, it shows their expenses coming out, I think it's 1903 -- Legislative Assembly 1902 -- it's being put in here so you know where it is now.

MR. HENDERSON:

Grants? Is it being hidden?

MR. RUSSELL:

It's not being hidden, and I've said every penny that we have budgeted for is on record in Hansard. I'm telling you why it's here and I don't know why you insist on getting so upset. What do you want to know? We're not hiding anything.

MR. HENDERSON:

Why don't you volunteer it?

MR. RUSSELL:

You know --

MR. TAYLOR:

You know, the hon. minister's statement that the vote isn't what it appears and that's why we're concerned -- it isn't what it appears. And another thing that I'd like to deal with too. I see now the difference between a legislative committee and a caucus committee. The legislative committee is paid with public funds, and the information is made public. The caucus committee is paid with public funds and the information is kept secret -- and not made public. Now, they are being paid with public funds.

MR. COOKSON:

Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. The hon. member knows very well that these are not caucus committees, he's been told that for the last three months, that he referred to the MLA task force --

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MR. CHAIRMAN:

Order! order! order! Mr. Taylor! Mr. Taylor! Mr. Taylor! Again I would have to rule you are debating the principle of this task force. If you have any questions on this task force falling under Appropriation 2103, please ask -- but not the principle of the task force. I'm sure that the Speaker of this Assembly would back me on this that the principle of the task forces have been debated. Any questions or clarification you wish on 2103 with regards to task force, please continue.

MR. TAYLOR:

Mr. Chairman, I've got some other things to say about it too. The hon. Deputy Premier again mentioned that they were going to do this in spite of anything, in spite of everybody, and he suggested that the people gave him the mandate to do this. This was never mentioned during the election campaign -- never mentioned -- and when he talks about the majority -- actually they are a minority government --

AN HON. MEMBER:

So are you!

MR. TAYLOR:

Yes, you got less than 50 per cent of the total vote, so don't try to highhand us and fool the people that you are representing everybody. But I will tell you this -- you're spending everybody's money, everybody's money -- and the people are entitled to see where that money's going and what it's accomplishing; and another thing, the hon. Deputy Premier stands up and says, "we're saving \$200,000." How do we know how much they're saving?

AN HON. MEMBER:

See the report.

MR. TAYLOR:

Maybe what they are saving is one thing, maybe it isn't; we don't know. We don't even know what the caucus committee is doing. Maybe they are being overpaid -- maybe they are being underpaid -- I don't know; but when you talk about saving \$200,000 -- here there is \$35,000 in this particular vote. In the hon. Minister of Agriculture's vote he said there was less than \$10,000, so I suppose there is \$9,000 there. We don't know how many more thousands are scattered about until we get through the estimates. What makes them assume we are saving \$200,000? But assume we were. Let's save the \$200,000 -- let's save it -- and let's save the additional \$35,000. If it's good to save, that's what we're worried about -- that's what we want to do -- to save the people's money. Take out the lard, as the hon. Premier said when he was campaigning, and as the hon. Deputy Premier said. Take off the fat; that's how we'll do it. They didn't say they'd borrow \$200 million -- now they want to take out the fat. Lets talk about taking out the fat -- here's \$35,000 you can take out -- and that's a lot of fat! And the work can still be done without anything suffering at all. Mr. Chairman, this is a great Family Compact -- an example of a great Family Compact. Because a government has been elected to office, they think now all the money belongs to the Progressive Conservatives of the province -- they forget it belongs to all of the people. There is not another party in Canada that has had the gall and the audacity to do the type of things this government is doing, to pay their own caucus committees with public money and not make the information available, but to pay their caucus committees with public money -- the great misuse of public funds -- that is what it is.

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MR. MINIELY:

Mr. Chairman -- Mr. Chairman -- Mr. Chairman, we may as well have it on record now. The opposition has been making this tirade for the last -- practically since the session opened -- on this total of \$56,500 -- [interjections] -- because that is what the total is going to be.

MR. ZANDER:

The hon. Member for Drumheller stated he was objecting to the \$35,000 when the previous Order in Council that was passed by that government gave their friends, their buddies, \$30,000 for a chairman and \$26,000 for each member on that force. This is exactly what happened. I don't think he wants to recall that.

MR. TAYLOR:

Mr. Chairman, there hasn't been a government in Canada that started out with the patronage that this government is starting, so don't start talking about buddies.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

No, no.

MR. TAYLOR:

The hon. Deputy Premier gets up and says how many PC's have been appointed to a grain commission -- talk about buddies, what's that! They didn't win the election -- so they get a job. Talk about buddies, how could you get more "buddier" than what you are, appointing your own PC members. What is more, the Cabinet doesn't even accept your own recommendations. One member himself told me yesterday that he made a recommendation that the Cabinet didn't accept. They paid for it though -- paying well. So don't talk about buddy and patronage until you clean up your own back yard.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear.

MR. FARRAN:

Gosh, that act really gets to me! When I think of the government that existed until September 10th last year, never in the history of provincial governments, in the Dominion of Canada, has there been a provincial government like the last one, where money was no object, where every boy -- [interjections] -- every boy who was a friend of the party got a job, where patronage ran from one end of the province to the other -- [interjections] -- easy come, easy go. You threw away the money and the shekels here -- [interjections] -- \$3 billion dollars from 1947 to 1972!

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Order, order, Mr. Farran! Just one moment. Both sides are again debating all areas that could possibly come under this Municipal Affairs Department. Please try to stick to Appropriation No. 2103.

MR. FARRAN:

Well, all right. I'll come down from the heights to a little more practical point. The hon. Member for Drumheller compared the MLA task forces to legislative committees. In point of fact, the MLA task forces are underprivileged. The hon. members on the task force on which I serve are not allowed to serve on legislative committees

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because we would be too busy. On legislative committees you will all be paid and you will get expenses as well. And you know that! You know that on the task forces we are not getting a cent of pay. You will get them on legislative committees though -- [interjections] -- you will take it -- all right, if you don't want it, then don't take it.

MR. HENDERSON:

On a point of order, the hon. member is completely out of order. He is trying to lead the House to believe that everyone on this side of the House is on a legislative committee. His arguments are absolutely irrelevant.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

No, he is just pointing out, I believe -- Mr. Farran continue and finish up.

MR. FARRAN:

I'm pointing out that a lot of them are on legislative committees and they are going to accept a per diem stipend which is over and above any expenses. Then -- your're Simon pure on that side of the House, eh? Well, we have the hon. Member for Calgary McCall who is the municipal critic. For seven years I sat on hospital boards without a penny of remuneration or any extra pay, because I realized that I was being paid as an alderman. I didn't get any extra pay for being on a hospital board. The hon. Member for Calgary McCall serves as a chairman of the Calgary Auxiliary Hospital and Nursing Home district. He accepts a payment, not expenses but a payment per meeting for his meetings on that board in addition to his stipend as a Social Credit MLA.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Oh no!

MR. HO LEM:

Mr. Chairman, for the information of the hon. member, I would like him to know that when I was elected as an MLA and when I came into this House, one of my first duties I considered was to see the hon. Minister of Health and Social Welfare to discuss with him my position as chairman of the District No. 7 Auxiliary Hospital Board. At that time he said to me that he saw no conflict and if and when he feels there should be a change in his thinking, that he would certainly contact me first, and he would not make a political issue out of this thing as you are doing now.

MR. FARRAN:

I say now -- look, I apologize --

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Mr. Farran --

MR. FARRAN:

Let me go on --

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Mr. Farran, you have raised --

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MR. HENDERSON:

That's got nothing to do with it, absolutely nothing.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Order, order please. I appreciate you raised it. Anything else on Appropriation 2103? Mr. Ho Lem replied to it. I extended to both of you the courtesy. Anything else on Appropriation 2103?

MR. FARRAN:

Well, if we can get right down to the estimates, I am happy enough to go along, if they will get off it.

MR. HO LEM:

I hope that is the last we'll hear from the hon. member regarding my position on the board, because this has been presented to the House on two occasions and as yet I haven't heard from the hon. minister responsible for this, and I assumed that this would be all right.

MR. FARRAN:

It's not all right.

MR. BARTON:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I can't accept the task force's recommendation that they will not travel in the north and meet the people. We have very, very severe problems, just as severe as they are in the south. There is over one-third of the province up there with five MLA's, and I'd appreciate you considering at least going up into one of the communities so we can present some of our problems.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Mr. Minister, are you taking that under consideration?

MR. BUSSELL:

Mr. Chairman, I think it was the intention -- if this Legislature ever finishes its business and gets out -- to conduct public hearings throughout the province. Certainly the point the hon. member has made is well taken.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Very well.

MR. BARTON:

Thank you. Can I be assured --

MR. TAYLOR:

I'd like to ask the hon. minister a question in connection with legislative committees. Do not the same rules apply for members on both sides of the House, and are there not always a majority of government members on a government legislative committee?

MR. MINIELY:

Yes.

MR. TAYLOR:

Well, I wish you would tell Mr. Farran.

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MR. RUSSELL:

[Groan]

MR. DIXON:

Mr. Chairman, I think I was responsible for starting this.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Mr. Dixon, are you going to finish it now?

MR. DIXON:

Yes.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

OK.

MR. DIXON:

I'd like to have the opportunity at least to answer some of the charges that were made. The thing that amuses me, and I'm speaking to this vote, Mr. Chairman, was that we heard in this House as recently as two days ago that this was part of the 'now' government's program -- this apparent rebate for senior citizens. And yet we have to set up committees at the cost of \$35,000 for expenses, and this is why I question it. In answer to the hon. minister, you're not arguing and I'm not arguing about setting up a committee as long as it's not paid.

MR. MINIELY:

It's not paid.

[Interjections.]

MR. DIXON:

Now, just a minute, hon. members, you know there were a lot of fellows during the war that were called dollar-a-year men, but their expenses were fairly high.

DR. HORNER:

Oh, come off it -- 11 cents a mile?

MR. DIXON:

Now, I'm sure, Mr. Chairman, that if the legislation had allowed -- and I think this is where the hon. members opposite got caught up in legislative procedure -- when they were put on this task force they thought they were going to be able to get allowances and expenditures.

DR. HORNER:

No, they didn't.

MR. DIXON:

And then they found out that they couldn't, so they settled for expenditures. And I think --

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MR. YURKO:

Mr. Chairman, there's no foundation to that statement at all and I think the hon. member should have the decency to withdraw that statement --

MR. HENDERSON:

Oh, no.

MR. YURKO:

-- because it shouldn't be on the record.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

I agree with the hon. minister. It is a hypothetical accusation, Mr. Dixon.

MR. HENDERSON:

I -- I -- I wasn't going to make the . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN:

It is Mr. Henderson. Mr. Dixon had the floor first.

DR. HORNER:

You should learn some courtesy.

MR. HENDERSON:

I'm sorry, that's a hypothetical thing and it should be withdrawn; I say it is absolute nonsense.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Mr. Dixon --

MR. DIXON:

Hon. members, I don't mean to get this wrong. If the hon. minister gets up and says, no, that's good enough for me. I'm sorry I've ruffled your feathers, but I'm telling you this that I think in our parliamentary system, when we're all elected as MLA's for both sides of the House --

MR. FARRAN:

We're the government.

MR. DIXON:

You're still an MLA, hon. member, just the same as any of the rest of us. You just happen to have a Conservative tag on you and the hon. member at the other end has an NDP tag.

DR. BUCK:

Agreed.

MR. DIXON:

Now, if we're going to be fair in this legislation, and we're going to pay expenses, well then I think the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview should be on a task force to find out whether Alberta needs a little more socialism. It's just as fair as that. And I think we should have it over here to say, well, we should have some more free competitive enterprise and pay us some expenses. I'll be

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glad to go to Ottawa and explain to some of the members down there how I feel about free competitive enterprise and bring reports back here. I think that we've just attacked the fact that the legislation allows for members to be paid expenses and they've taken full advantage of it.

MR. TAYLOR:

It's not even a legislative committee.

MR. DIXON:

And it's not even a legislative committee, they're straight caucus committees. I know there's no necessity for them when I read what the Conservatives said when they were running for election. They said, we're having a meeting in Camrose to set up a task force to show us what to do when we get into government. Well you're in government now and now you've got to get a lot of money to find out whether you've got a policy or not. This, to me, is wrong. There's no reason why an MLA on the opposite side of the House should be paid his expenses when a member on this side of the House is not -- I'm interested in several things. I'd like to take a trip somewhere to find out how they operate the oil industry, say in Manitoba or Saskatchewan, and come back here --

DR. HOHOL:

We'll send you.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Mr. Dixon. I'm sorry, but again you're debating the principle of task forces.

MR. DIXON:

All right, I'll bring it back to the task force on Municipal Affairs. I'd like to go to Manitoba and have my expenses paid --

AN HON. MEMBER:

We'll give you a one way ticket.

MR. DIXON:

. . . or even Japan. They may have a good municipal government over there. But I am telling you it is wrong; it is absolutely wrong to raid the public treasury -- and the thing that annoys me the most is the fact that these reports aren't even going to be made public to the Legislature -- these reports are being paid for, the expenses are being paid for, by the people of this province -- we demand that of everyone else who deals with the provincial government. We are not afraid to get up and ask about information and have it filed -- and it is filed. But apparently the Task Force on Municipal Affairs is not going to be as open as even the great municipal task force of the former government that you raved so much about tonight. We could have asked for interim reports and we would have gotten them, and the opposition could have asked for them. I will answer all kinds of questions as soon as I am through. The thing that is wrong about this whole thing is that the Treasury is being raided for a purpose that is not right.

MR. FARRAN:

Do you think the task force -- there are five of us -- should go out to Lesser Slave Lake or do you think we should hold back on the expenses and save the government money? Do you think we should go out there or not?

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MR. DIXON:

Hon. member, let us put it this way. The hon. minister mentioned tonight, Mr. Chairman, that you gentlemen on that task force were all well fixed and that is why you didn't get any allowance. So why don't we carry it a step further and say you don't get any expenses, and see how many trips you make to Lesser Slave Lake.

MR. BARTON:

I wouldn't ask them to go to Lesser Slave Lake. I'd request them to go to Wabasca between the two reserves where there is a problem.

MR. RUSSELL:

I think that last speech by the hon. member, Mr. Dixon, was about one of the most unbecoming series of remarks I have ever heard.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Oh, oh!

MR. RUSSELL:

Listen, for the last four years I have watched and observed an attitude in this Legislature -- and I don't know how it grew up -- of cheapness and meanness and smallness of thinking that we are attempting to sweep away with a good big clean broom.

I don't know why it is -- and I am speaking with respect to members on both sides of the House -- that traditionally, over the years in Alberta, the position and the treatment of an MLA has been second-class -- [Interjections] -- Yes it has --

MR. HENDERSON:

Mr. Chairman, that is a matter of opinion. I sat as a backbencher in this House and I reject completely --

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Let the hon. minister finish, please.

MR. HENDERSON:

He stands up and makes a statement like that, that broad sweeping --

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Order, Mr. Henderson. Let the hon. minister finish, please.

MR. HENDERSON:

Absolute nonsense!

MR. RUSSELL:

Mr. Chairman, this started with the provision of office accommodation. I will be the first to say it. I think every MLA, whatever his party, if he is elected by the citizens of Alberta, deserves the privacy of an office, and a desk and a telephone to work at. The opposition quarters weren't very good when --

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MR. HENDERSON:

Mr. Chairman, what has this to do with appropriations? We hear these holier-than-thou statements on the other side of the House from Mr. Humility himself, about the fact that we abuse the orders of the House. Then we have a minister of the Crown standing up and compounding the felony, making statements --

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Just a moment, Mr. Henderson. Order! The hon. minister is replying to Mr. Dixon. I granted Mr. Dixon the courtesy, and now the hon. minister is replying. I hope we can get to the vote soon.

MR. HENDERSON:

Mr. Chairman, this appropriation has nothing to do whatever with the question of a desk for the members of this Legislature. I presume it is under the Legislative Assembly vote. I hear criticisms levied from the other side of the House about not sticking to the appropriation, I hear the Chairman give us a lecture about sticking to the principle of the resolution. We can't stick to the principle of it on this question because we don't know what the caucus committees are doing, and they are going to file reports so all that leaves us to talk about is the --

MR. CHAIRMAN:

I am sorry, Mr. Henderson. The hon. minister has the floor. Mr. Minister would you please reply to Mr. Dixon and in the area of 2103?

MR. RUSSELL:

Mr. Chairman, we are dealing with a vote that deals with the expenses of an MLA task force. As I say, I am just appalled at the attitude that seems to pervade in this building with respect to how elected people should be treated. It started with their office accommodation. It pervaded up to the cafeteria on the fifth floor, which had to be one of the --

MR. HENDERSON:

On a point of order, this has nothing to do with this appropriation. Obviously, the way the government is going to treat their backbenchers with pork barrel politics is well established. Let the minister say it has nothing to do with this particular appropriation. Nothing whatever.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Please continue, Mr. Russell.

MR. RUSSELL:

Mr. Chairman, I repeat, I'm just appalled at the traditional way in which our MLA's have been treated, whether it's the provision of office space, whether it's the provision of a place to eat a meal or take their guests or their constituents -- the way that the commissaires that look after their cars were treated, not even given shelter from the Edmonton winters until a couple of years ago. It even pervades the Cabinet room, you know. The cheapness of that room -- the most modern thing in that is the paper Treasury Branch calendar stuck on the wall with a thumbtack. We bring our MLA's up here, you know, and we sit them through a session, and then if you've

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been good on the last day of school you get to line up in the clerk's office --

MR. HENDERSON:

This is absolute nonsense. We don't need an elementary lecture from the minister as to what big fellows the government are in spending the public money on members of the Legislature. This has absolutely nothing to do with it. You'd think it was his money!

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Order! Order! Mr. Henderson, are you getting to the point?

MR. HENDERSON:

He's wasting the taxpayers' dollars and he stands up and gives this side a schoolboy lecture -- absolutely ridiculous!

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Mr. Minister, please continue.

MR. RUSSELL:

I'd be finished without the interruptions. I'm nearly finished. You know, I've seen MLA's on both sides of the House creeping around the Corona Hotel in an attempt to live on their daily stipend.

MR. HENDERSON:

Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. That fact of the Corona Hotel -- is there something wrong with it? That's what it sounds like.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Mr. Henderson, order! The minister has indicated he would be finished by now. Let's give him a chance to finish.

MR. HENDERSON:

What's wrong with the Corona Hotel?

OTHER HON. MEMBERS:

[Confusion]

MR. HO LEM:

Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. I happen to be one of those people at the Corona Hotel, and I find nothing wrong with it.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Please continue.

MR. HENDERSON:

Maybe some of us like to live at the Corona Hotel.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Please, order!

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MR. RUSSELL:

When I heard the howl that went up when the ministers without portfolio were raised about \$4,800 a year -- you know, Mr. Chairman, you can get more than that on Unemployment Insurance, and yet some people think it's wicked for us to pay our ministers without portfolio more than you can collect on unemployment insurance. The hon. Member for Lethbridge, Mr. Gruenwald, stated that this was the cheapest outfit he'd ever worked for, and it sure manifests itself in many pronouncements.

Mr. Chairman, we announced the formation of our task forces many months ago, and I think the proposed list of legislative committees has also been made known, so there's been ample opportunity for anybody that thinks that all the great things they want to do, like going to Winnipeg or China, aren't covered in those task forces or legislative committees. The terms have been set out. If you look at the budget, you'll see that the Leader of the Opposition had his office expenses raised by 58 per cent. I'm asking you now, what are your needs? What are your needs? We've heard about these great task forces --

MR. HENDERSON:

Mr. Chairman, back to the point of order. This has absolutely nothing to do with the minister's appropriation.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

I believe, I may be corrected, but I believe the minister is asking what are your needs, with regard to the task force to look at.

MR. HENDERSON:

Let's do it under the Legislative Assembly vote. I'm not an employee of the Department of Municipal Affairs.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

No, no. The needs of your constituency that this task force could look at. Would you continue, please.

MR. HENDERSON:

He's completely out of order.

MR. RUSSELL:

Mr. Chairman, I'm just saying that there's a new attitude with the new government. We believe that if an MLA does something, he shouldn't necessarily make a lot of money, but he shouldn't be out of pocket, for goodness sake, and on your side too. And as I've said, we've given ample notice of our task forces. The expenses they'll be paid, they are paid nothing in the way of stipend or salary. We've set up the list of legislative committees and we've listened to you screech and squawk since the Legislature convened, and I haven't heard one positive comment about what you guys would do if you set up your own task forces. You've never asked the Legislature for the money, but you have consistently knocked ours.

In conclusion, the only thing I can say is I can really easily understand why the past government chose a dinosaur for their modern advertising symbol.

MR. CLARK:

Mr. Chairman, I think after the remarks by the hon. Minister of Municipal Affairs I would be very surprised if I heard you, sir, in the course of these estimates or others, call anyone to order. A few moments ago you were calling Mr. Henderson to order, and Mr. Taylor

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to order for wandering around the pasture. The hon. minister didn't wander around the pasture - he wandered around the whole blooming province.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Thank you Mr. Clark.

Fees and Commissions

MR. RUSTE:

Mr. Chairman, I sat back and listened with a great deal of interest to references to past programs and so on. I've sat in this Legislature for many, many years. I've sat as an MLA and in the front bench and I know the input put in by members of the Legislative Assembly. I know also that they, as individuals, are paid a sessional indemnity which includes so much broken down as the expenses and the balances are paid. I submit, Mr. Chairman, that this is what we are arguing about. And as far as I'm concerned we have a government - the now government that professes open government - here we have a committee that's paid of their backbenchers, that's getting additional money - be it expenses or whatever it might be - to determine policy that members of this Assembly before determined without -- or submitted without any additional pay. I submit, Mr. Chairman, that for a government that has said openly and widely; "We cut fat out of government," here we have an example of not cutting fat out of government -- now we have the Horner-Lougheed pork barrel.

MR. FARRAN:

Mr. Chairman, just one minute. I know what's wrong -- we've got to be sympathetic -- they just can't take defeat. They're poor losers, and it hurts and it's hurting badly and we can see it tonight -- they're just crying, crying in their beer.

MR. TAYLOR:

Mr. Chairman, I think that has to be answered. This is nothing whatsoever to do with that point at all. If the hon. member thinks he's going to pull a herring across the road to try and get us diverted from the item we're talking about he's got another mistake coming -- [laughter] -- another thought coming.

SOME HON. MEMBER:

You were right the first time.

MR. TAYLOR:

Yes, they're going to be just as wrong as they were in misusing public money. And when the hon. Minister of Municipal Affairs gets away from the point and tries to pretend MLA's are being treated badly -- there's hundreds of people in this province who don't have \$7,200 a year to live on, hundreds of them, maybe thousands. So let's not think that we're treated badly. I think MLAs are treated pretty well in this province, and they're being treated even better on the other side when they can get their expenses every time they move into Edmonton -- at public expense.

Appropriation 2103 total agreed to \$ 200,000

Appropriation 2104 Liaison Office

Materials and Supplies

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MR. RUSTE:

Mr. Chairman, in this vote, is this the one where the municipal councillor is published and sent out and other information? All that will be sent to members of the Legislature as it has been in the past?

MR. RUSSELL:

Yes.

MR. COOPER:

Mr. Chairman, the Liaison Office provides public relations -- does this provide for news releases outside the province or is it all within the department?

MR. RUSSELL:

No, this is all the information and liaison within the department. The two main facets it deals with are the compilation of the annual report and its distribution and the municipal councillor, as Mr. Ruste mentioned. There's just Mr. Hurst and one secretary in this vote.

MR. COOPER:

Are there no weekly news releases to the weekly press for instance?

MR. RUSSELL:

Yes, there's the odd one. We put out an information bulletin on the winter works program, for instance, when it was announced for the municipalities. Are you not on the mailing list?

MR. COOPER:

I don't appear to be.

MR. HO LEM:

Under this vote I see that the materials and supplies have been tripled. Will we be getting additional publications?

MR. RUSSELL:

No, that's the additional costs of the annual report - the materials for that.

Appropriation 2104 total agreed to \$ 23,300

The following appropriations were agreed to without debate:

<u>Appropriation 2105</u>	The Municipalities Assistance Act Grant	\$ 42,000
<u>Appropriation 2106</u>	Alberta Assessment Appeal Board	74,850
<u>Appropriation 2107</u>	Assessment Commissioner and Alberta	191,510
	Assessment Equalization Board	
<u>Appropriation 2109</u>	Provincial Planning Board	822,230
<u>Appropriation 2110</u>	Homeowners Tax Discount Act	

MR. RUSTE:

Mr. Chairman?

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Yes, Mr. Ruste.

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MR. RUSTE:

A question to the hon. minister. Were there many applications coming in that were too late for the December 31st deadline on this, last year?

MR. RUSSELL:

Yes, there were. I had quite a few complaints about that and that is something we are going to have to look at again this year because a number of people missed it despite our publicity.

MR. RUSTE:

Another question on that too. This goes into the changing pattern in farm operations where you get the family farm; where the father has his own independent home on the farm and one or two sons may have the same or a daughter who is married to the neighbour boy or something like that. Is there any consideration being given to this, that in the economy of the overall operation it is logical to build or have their homes in one area yet have a sizeable operation that reaches out quite far? Now in this situation I understand they are entitled to one and one only homeowners land discount. Is there any consideration given to extending that because of, say, the changing times which necessitates this type of an operation rather than the old set-up?

MR. RUSSELL:

No, Mr. Chairman, this vote represents only carrying on the Homeowner's Tax Discount in its present form for this year.

MR. RUSTE:

Will you look at the others?

MR. RUSSELL:

Yes.

Appropriation 2110 total agreed to \$25,100,000

The following was agreed to without debate:

Appropriation 2111 Senior Citizen's Shelter Act \$2,500,000

Appropriation 2115 Municipal Inspection Branch

MR. CLARK:

Could we return to 2111 for just a moment please? Could the hon. minister give us some indication when we could expect this legislation in the House?

MR. RUSSELL:

I think the way the printing is going it will probably be about two and a half weeks. We are trying to bring all the bills in in printed form rather than the mimeographed way. I think it's better.

MR. CLARK:

It might be better -- for the government -- but would the hon. minister consider rethinking his position on that in light of the discussion there has been on it? If you could introduce the bill and get mimeographed copies of it, it really would be helpful because I am sure many members on this side have had a number of questions about the bill and you yourself have said in the Question Period you

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would sooner not make any comments on it until it is in the House, and if it is going to be two and a half more weeks I hope to gosh we're not going to be here too much longer after that.

MR. RUSSELL:

Yes, Mr. Chairman, I think that is a fair comment and I'll see if I can't bring it in sooner.

Appropriation 2115 total agreed to 222,030

The following were agreed to without debate:

<u>Appropriation 2116</u>	Field Service Branch	\$ 507,020
<u>Appropriation 2117</u>	Assessment Branch	1,996,200
<u>Appropriation 2118</u>	Special Areas Board	340,475
<u>Appropriation 2119</u>	Town Planning	393,165
<u>Appropriation 2120</u>	Local Authorities Board	123,730

Appropriation 2123 Alberta Housing Act

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Mr. Ho Lem.

MR. HO LEM:

I was wondering why the salary positions aren't listed here under this vote.

MR. RUSSELL:

Mr. Chairman, this is rather unusual. The way the Alberta Housing Corporation is financed, it's only the operational deficit which goes back as a vote to the Department of Municipal Affairs. The deficits, that is the operating deficits, include grants, so that is why it is shown that way.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Mr. King.

MR. KING:

I have the annual report of the Alberta Housing Corporation and from it I'd like to raise a number of questions or points that the hon. minister could reply to all at once.

This first one is whether or not any consideration has been given to grouping senior citizens' housing together with low-cost housing, that is housing which is rent-geared to income. I might say that the apparent experience with the Greater Edmonton Foundation in Edmonton has been that with a limited number of units available for rent by senior citizens, but there is no guarantee whatsoever that the occupants of this limited accommodation will be the people most in need of housing, and similarly that for many people on limited incomes, as senior citizens frequently are, the rent that the accommodation provided by the Greater Edmonton Foundation is not a very realistic proportion of their monthly income, and for many senior citizens they'd be better off in a rent-geared-to-income project.

If that's not possible, I'd like to suggest that from personal experience with the Greater Edmonton Foundation, the Alberta Housing Corporation might seriously consider some more stringent guidelines insofar as they are providing assistance to senior citizens' foundations, such as the Greater Edmonton Foundation. There is in this municipality, at least, a propensity to -- maybe secrecy is too

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strong a word -- but to the belief that the operations of the Greater Edmonton Foundation are of interest only to the people who are on the board of directors, and that the rest of the citizens of the city either don't have an interest, or don't have any particular reason to have information about the operations of the Greater Edmonton Foundation. I just don't approve of that; I think that if we're providing money to the Greater Edmonton Foundation, there should be some certainty that information about their operation will be available to the public.

I have been in Fort Chipewyan, I have seen what is referred to as 'northern housing', built by the Alberta Housing Corporation. I would be interested in knowing why new houses were built in Fort Chipewyan off the water and sewage lines and yet within a block of them. I'd also be interested in knowing why, if the Department of Municipal Affairs is going to extend the water and the sewage line in Fort Chipewyan, these houses were built without any provision for indoor plumbing.

With respect to the section on experimental housing. I have a copy of a section of a task force report that was done by Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation, in which it said that the experimental housing program of the Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation had across the country as a whole been almost a total failure and they mentioned particularly two projects in Alberta -- one in Edmonton and one in Calgary. I would be interested in knowing what the experience of the Alberta Housing Corporation was in co-operation with CMHC on the experimental housing program. The information in the annual report seems more laudatory than the information in the task force report of CMHC.

MR. RUSSELL:

Yes, well I can deal with each of those briefly, Mr. Chairman.

First of all the grouping of senior citizen accommodation in rents-geared-to-income is an excellent idea. It has happened by design to a great deal in Ontario, and by accident in certain parts of Alberta. Members who were here last year will recall that this matter was discussed -- I can say that the board of the Alberta Housing Corporation does have the matter under consideration with respect to the best way, and this deals with your second point too, not only how the rents should most logically be charged, but what the guidelines should be for financial assistance for building needs.

As you know, many foundations or non-profit organizations do make applications for the one-third capital grant, and we've noticed, building up a catalogue of these things, that there is quite a variance in the unit cost, so I think in the future the foundations will need some sort of grants.

I can't answer the questions about the northern houses in Fort Chip. I know what the reason is in Fort Vermilion, but I'd have to bring the Fort Chip information back to you.

Insofar as the experimental housing failure across the country, I have read that CMHC report and of the \$200 million that was allotted, not all of it was taken up. I think it is a general consensus that the majority of the houses were not really innovative. They were small, or they were cheap in the sense that they had cut costs. There weren't any really dramatic innovative changes. In that regard, I don't know how we will continue. We will have to look at some new dramatic way of producing houses. I note, with a great deal of interest, the Ontario Housing Corporation is going into modular components, either built of wood frame, or cast in concrete, and used either stacked on top of each other or lined up in rows beside each other. I say the Alberta Housing Corporation has approved direct loans on a very interesting and unique type of

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manufactured plastic house, and we hope to get some of those up in the Edmonton area. Beyond that, our experimental program is just in a beginning stage really.

MR. RUSTE:

Mr. Chairman, to the hon. minister. What is available for low-cost housing in small villages -- I am thinking of the smaller ones in small village development -- and then development capital as well, for reconstruction? Is there anything available for that in our smaller centres?

MR. RUSSELL:

Yes, the smaller centres are all eligible. In fact, the Corporation is fairly sympathetic towards looking at public housing programs for them. There are a number already, and we hope to see more, but that is where you get the subsidized rents. Insofar as home ownership is concerned, there is the subsidized rental program for low income or lower middle income groups -- the two groups -- with the interest subsidy. Of course there is also the direct lending program, either for building a new house or acquiring an existing one or making improvements to an existing house.

MR. WILSON:

Mr. Chairman, to the hon. minister. You will recall under Motion for Return No. 157, we had a motion made by Mr. Ho Lem and seconded by myself, asking for quite a bit of information regarding the activities of the Alberta Housing Corporation in regards to the number of housing units which they participated in last year. How many various housing authorities actually administered houses which the Alberta Housing Corporation had financially participated in, how many units were vacant -- things of this nature. That motion for return was withdrawn at your request and we would still like to get some of that information, if not in the form that we asked for it, in whatever form you have it. We are not particularly adamant about the exact way that we listed it there, but we would like to know something more about the activities of the Alberta Housing Corporation and I am concerned about the number of vacant units which the Alberta Housing Corporation has financially participated in, which are spread around the province, and under what housing authorities they are managed. When your executive assistant phoned me this morning and asked for additional information on what questions I would have for you today, I reminded him of this and he indicated that perhaps you would have the information tonight. I appreciate that you answered my questions that I raised specifically yesterday, but do you have additional information that you would like to table for us this evening. If not would you give us your undertaking that you would supply it? I am not interested in putting you to a lot of expense and time and trouble, but I would like to know something about the volume of housing units in the various categories and the dollars involved and the vacancies in the houses that are finished construction. So if you could answer that and tell us also when you might be able to supply that information if you don't have it with you this evening.

Secondly, are there any estimates anywhere in the Municipal Affairs to help pay for the cost of the operation of the airplanes in the Lands and Forests Department? I think that it was mentioned earlier that the Lands and Forests Department administers the airplanes and has transfer accounts with other departments. I was wondering if your department has any estimates for airplanes, and if so, where are they and how much?

MR. RUSSELL:

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First of all, with respect to your Motion for a Return that you referred to earlier, I think I indicated to you and Mr. Ho Lem that if I had some idea of the categories of housing or what exactly it was you wanted, we could probably get it. The difficulty was that the way it was written, to interpret it that way involves many thousands of housing units which the province has by way of staff housing, senior citizen housing, housing in which we have a direct loan involved, public housing, halfway housing, northern housing, and you can appreciate the difficulty in those thousands of units in determining which are vacant and under whose authority they are. The other questions you asked -- the offer still holds true that if you and Mr. Ho Lem want to come to the office we will work out a Motion for a Return and get it for you in the way you want it, but just off-hand tonight I don't think I could give it to you, especially the question relating to vacancies, because there are so many thousands of units involved.

The only reference there is to aircraft -- the Alberta Housing Corporation operating deficit is taken up by the Department of Municipal Affairs, so if part of it is aircraft rental that could apportioned to the deficit, it would be in here. Aircraft rental in this year's budget is \$63,000.

MR. WILSON:

Does that include the operating expenses?

MR. RUSSELL:

Well, that's the rental of the aircraft from the Department of Lands and Forests. You can appreciate there's a high degree of use by corporation staff members throughout the whole northern half of the province. They do most of their travelling by air. It's really an intergovernment or interdepartmental billing. In other words, the corporation is renting from Lands and Forests and that's the charge.

MR. WILSON:

Further to the question about housing and vacancies -- does your department know, or does the Alberta Housing Corporation know how many units that are built and completed with Alberta Housing Corporation funds are vacant in the province?

MR. RUSSELL:

Well, again when you say "with corporation funds" I think I indicated there is somewhere in excess of 300 private loans out which are financed with Alberta Housing Corporation funds. These are individual houses all over the province. To check on any given day which ones are vacant is quite a job. There are also the hundreds of public housing units, and the accommodation vacancy rate in there changes daily. So it's difficult pinning down the vacancy rate for all housing units, because there's literally thousands of units involved.

MR. WILSON:

OK, let's take public housing, then, just to be very specific, public housing units that have been built with Alberta Housing Corporation funds, that have been empty for over a year -- never occupied in other words. Would you have that information, or would you have it for housing that has been completed for over six months and never been occupied?

MR. RUSSELL:

I think we could get it very easily. It's just a question of making a series of phone calls to those housing authorities

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throughout the province and getting them to take their count that day and report back to you.

MR. WILSON:

Would you be able to supply us with a list of the total number of housing authorities and the names of those housing authorities with which the Alberta Housing Corporation does business?

MR. RUSSELL:

Yes, we can get that.

MR. WILSON:

Agreed.

MR. DIXON:

I wonder if I could ask the hon. minister a question regarding the Ogden area. There is quite a series of houses there, and they ran into structural problems where some of the people did not want to move into them because there was only one door, and they took exception to that. I couldn't answer the question I was asked the other day, and I was wondering if the hon. minister could check into this matter to see if they did come under Alberta Housing Corporation and why they aren't being occupied. There are quite a large group of them south of the old Ogden hostel.

The other question I would like to ask the hon. minister -- and this is more for information on how the program is going -- but under one of the housing programs as far as mortgages are concerned, if a person has been turned down by -- is it two conventional mortgage companies, I believe the legislation allows -- then they can apply to Alberta Housing. I suppose most of those mortgages are being asked for, say, in the rural areas rather than the city areas, and I was wondering if there had been an increase, though, in the city areas which I am naturally more interested in. Has there been an increase in that type of mortgage by Alberta Housing?

MR. RUSSELL:

I don't think there has been any significant change. The reason for the refusal by CMHC and one other conventional lender is to try and discourage from borrowing the limited AHC funds, those people who might be able to get funds from a conventional lender. Actually, the conventional lenders prefer to loan to the lower risk applicants, and they prefer to loan in the metropolitan areas. So the bulk of the loans tend to go to groups outside those classifications.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Agreed on 2123?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

MR. KING:

Three more quick questions. The City of Edmonton has protested that the Alberta Housing Corporation apparently unilaterally decided that it would maintain an equity position in public housing units, and that was a change in policy last summer or last fall. They were in communication with the minister, and I am wondering if there has been any change in that situation?

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The second question is that I have been associated with groups, and am aware of other groups in the province which have been interested in developing mixed housing developments, that is, where with one financial package they might finance a development, partly out of one section of The National Housing Act, partly under another section of The National Housing Act, and partly using subsidized interest rates or some other assistance from the AHC. Neither the AHC nor CMHC have appeared too amenable to this kind of thing in the past, that is mixing housing opportunities in a single development.

I would like your comment on that, and I would like your comment on the third question. Has anything been suggested to the federal government about them simply providing the money, and the provincial government administering all programs for housing in the province, rather than the duplication which exists now between the federal and provincial governments?

MR. RUSSELL:

As far as the equity position on public housing is concerned, this is a very serious matter. All municipalities throughout the province except Calgary and Edmonton have accepted the position previously taken by the corporation -- about last June, I think. We have had some difficulty with the cities of Edmonton and Calgary, and there is an ongoing debate with them. The problem deals with the matter of rent subsidization and what the projections looking toward the year 1980 are. They are pretty scary.

We have had a number of discussions with civic officials. The way the matter stands at the moment, there is disagreement on the policy; there is agreement on the fact that Edmonton, Calgary and the Alberta Housing Corporation will each appoint delegates -- and they have done this -- to a joint committee to try to work this out on a situation that is agreeable to all parties but the disagreement today still exists.

Insofar as mixed housing is concerned, I can only say that there is a variety of these kinds of applications coming forward as many people have new ideas for housing. Unfortunately, the funds of the Housing Corporation aren't limitless, and priorities have to be established, so we are able to actually try very few of them. Very few of the new ones are given a chance, but that is something the corporation is looking at.

Incidentally, I should mention with respect to the corporation, we have recently expanded the board of directors, and I am quite enthusiastic about our larger board. They are breaking down into sub-committees and we are holding more regular meetings. It is my hope that the corporation will increase and improve its activities, and be something that we can all be very proud of.

Insofar as federal jurisdiction is concerned in this field, I am aware of the duplication that exists. I noted that our hon. Premier made reference to this and whose responsibility it should be in his speech in Toronto yesterday. I can only say that that matter is also a matter of continuing ongoing discussions.

Appropriation 2123 total agreed to

\$4,530,095

Total Income Account

MR. STROM:

Mr. Chairman, I was wondering if the committee would agree to hold this open, this particular appropriation? I am sure that the hon. members will agree that this was a courtesy that was extended on many, many occasions when requested. I see no reason why it shouldn't be permitted.

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DR. HORNER:

I think we have had a pretty substantial debate, Mr. Chairman, in relation to the department. I can't understand why the hon. Leader of the Opposition has reasonable reason for holding it. There are a number of legislative matters that are involved in the area, on which there will be additional adequate time for debate. It seems to me that if the hon. Leader can give me the reason for holding, I would be glad to consider it.

MR. HENDERSON:

Mr. Chairman, I don't really think we have to give a reason. The government isn't going to do anything overnight in the matter. We are simply asking to hold the item until tomorrow afternoon. It is a government member's day, it will be the first item of business when we go into committee, and we would like to ask that it be held up until then, and we will dispose of it first thing when we go into committee tomorrow afternoon.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

I gather that the wish of the Assembly is to continue the total income account then. Mr. Strom, any comment?

MR. STROM:

Is the committee saying they are going to deny the House the right to hold it up then?

MR. RUSSELL:

There is no misunderstanding. I don't want to cut off any questions or debate. We are just saying we will sit here until 3:00 o'clock if you want to finish. Let us keep going, we are so nearly finished.

MR. STROM:

Mr. Chairman, I realize that the government has the muscle to do whatever they want to. I am not going to suggest for a moment they haven't. I am simply making a request that it be held open, it is quite possible that after we have had a chance to look at it again, it will go right through. But I am just making a reasonable request. If the government decide that they don't want to, certainly they can bulldoze their way through. That is their privilege, but I am simply making a request at this time.

DR. HORNER:

Mr. Chairman, the hon. Leader of the Opposition is now making innuendo again about bulldozing and so on. We have sat here and had a good debate in the whole field. If the hon. Leader can give me a reasonable reason why he wants to hold it, we will consider it. He hasn't given me any reason other than he wants to keep it over until tomorrow. And really, that's no reason.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Are there any more questions? I would gather the feeling of the Assembly is to continue the debate and get their final approval on the total income accounts. Are there any other questions?

MR. HENDERSON:

We aren't going to vote the appropriation. I would like to make a motion to the effect that the appropriation for this department in

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total be reduced in the amount of \$35,000 as it specifically relates to Appropriation 2103.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Do you have the motion written out, Mr. Henderson? I know it is recorded, but just in case somebody asks me for it -- is the motion quite clear? All in favour of the motion as presented by Mr. Henderson, please say, 'aye'.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Aye.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

All those against, please say, 'no'.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

No.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

I would declare the motion defeated.

[A recorded vote was called for.]

All those in favour of the motion please stand and the Clerk will count. Thank you. All those against, please stand. The recorded vote was 18 in favour, 29 opposed. I declare the motion defeated.

MR. TAYLOR:

Mr. Chairman, we request a recorded vote and we challenge that ruling.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

I'm sorry, Mr. Taylor, I don't know of any rules that require a recorded vote in committee.

MR. TAYLOR:

Mr. Chairman, if the Speaker is called in, then the vote is taken -- it is no longer in the committee. We request the Speaker be brought in and we have a recorded vote, which is perfectly within our rights.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

In other words you wish to move that we report to the Speaker?

MR. TAYLOR:

And have a recorded vote -- yes.

DR. HORNER:

Mr. Chairman, the hon. member is quite correct. His procedure is a little bit erratic, but --

MR. CHAIRMAN:

The motion is proper here now.

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MR. HENDERSON:

We have a little trouble adjusting to the rules of running the government. We haven't quite learned all the ground rules.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Thank you. All those in favour of the motion as presented by --
[Comments.]

DR. HORNER:

On the motion - it's an appeal of your ruling and it's automatic that the Speaker then comes in and takes the recorded vote.

[Mr. Chairman left the Chair.]

* * * * *

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair.]

MR. DIACHUK:

Mr. Speaker, the Committee of Supply has a motion placed before you for a recorded vote, on a motion presented by the hon. Member for Wetaskiwin-Leduc.

MR. SPEAKER:

I assume that we may take the motion as read.

HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

MR. HENDERSON:

Mr. Speaker, would it be in order just to repeat the motion for the benefit of the Speaker? Is it necessary?

[Dr. Horner shook his head.]

[Mr. Speaker rang the division bell. After an interval of about two minutes --]

MR. SPEAKER:

We have made a slight slip in procedure here, I think. All those in favour of the motion please say "aye".

All those opposed please say "no".

I declare the noes to have it.

[A number of members rose thereby calling for a recorded vote. Mr. Speaker, again rang the division bell. Upon a vote being taken the House divided as follows:

For the Motion: Messrs.

Anderson	Drain	Ruste
Barton	French	Speaker, R.
Benoit	Henderson	Strom
Buckwell	Ho Lem	Taylor
Clark	Mandeville	Wilson
Cooper	Miller, D.	Wyse
Dixon	Notley	

Against the Motion: Messrs.

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Adair	Ghitter	Miniely
Appleby	Hansen	Moore
Ashton	Harle	Peacock
Backus	Horner	Russell
Chambers	Hunley, Miss	Schmid
Chichak, Mrs.	Jamison	Trynchy
Cookson	King	Warrack
Diachuk	Lee	Werry
Farran	McCrimmon	Young
Fluker	Miller, J.	Zander

Totals: Ayes - 20 Noes - 30]

MR. SPEAKER:

I declare the noes to have it.

I take it that the House is still in Committee and that --

DR. HORNER:

Mr. Speaker, I move that you do now leave the Chair for the House to go into Committee so --

MR. SPEAKER:

If the motion is considered to be necessary. Do you all agree that the Speaker do now leave the Chair and the House re-resolve itself into Committee?

HON MEMBERS:

Agreed.

[Mr. Speaker left the Chair.]

* * * * *

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

[Mr. Diachuk in the Chair.]

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Total Income Account -- yes Mr. Ho Lem?

MR. HO LEM:

This is concerning salaried positions. There are 440 salaried positions in this department and that is the same as the year before. The total increase, however, is over \$400,000. Can the hon. minister kindly explain the reason for this large increase?

MR. RUSSELL:

Yes, there were double increments in salary raises from last year that are now in effect for the coming fiscal year.

MR. HO LEM:

What percentage does it represent in total?

MR. RUSSELL:

10 per cent.

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MR. HO LEM:

I think that perhaps it's closer to 12 per cent in total.

MR. MINIELY:

Mr. Chairman, last July, as I think many hon. members on the other side are aware, the former government negotiated a salary agreement with the civil service. That agreement was in two stages, one was a 6 per cent increment and the other was 4 1/2 per cent, I believe, increment or very close to that.

MR. MINIELY:

Every department does have some reclassifications that go on in positions which are positions that are reclassified upwards. So the two increments that are involved and the general reclassification system within the civil service, account for the total that you're talking about.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Very well, any further questions? Fine.

Total Income Account agreed to \$81,696,275

DR. HORNER:

Mr. Chairman, I move that the Committee rise and report and ask leave to sit again.

HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

[Mr. Diachuk left the Chair.]

* * * * *

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair 12:14 a.m.]

MR. DIACHUK:

Mr. Speaker, the Committee of Supply has considered certain Estimates, reports progress, and begs leave to sit again.

MR. SPEAKER:

Having heard the report and the request for leave to sit again, do you all agree?

HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

DR. HORNER:

Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn until tomorrow afternoon at 2:30 p.m.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Deputy Premier has moved that the House adjourn until this afternoon at half past two. Do you all agree?

HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

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MR. SPEAKER:

The House stands adjourned until 2:30 p.m. this afternoon.

[The House rose at 12:15 am.]