

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ALBERTA

Thursday, April 27th, 1972

[The House met at 2:30 pm.]

PRAYERS

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair.]

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 57: The Energy Resources  
Conservation Amendment Act, 1972

MR. DICKIE:

Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce a bill, being The Energy Resources Conservation Amendment Act 1972. Hon. members will recall that the administration of The Pipelines Act was transferred from the Department of Mines and Minerals to the Energy Resources Conservation Board on January 1st of this year. The amendment to this Act incorporates the financing arrangements for the administration of The Pipeline Act on the same basis as other acts under the jurisdiction of the Energy Resources Conservation Board whereby 50% of the cost is raised from industry and 50% from appropriation of the government.

[Leave being granted, Bill No. 57 was introduced and read for a first time.]

Bill No. 62: The Maintenance  
and Recovery Amendment Act, 1972

MR. ASHTON:

Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce a bill being The Maintenance and Recovery Amendment Act 1972. The purpose of the act is to improve the procedure for the recovery and awarding of maintenance for children of unmarried parents, and secondly, to create a more effective deterrent against the unlawful disclosure of personal information by increasing the fine. Finally, it permits the department to register caveats against the property of social allowance recipients in cases where the department has expended monies for the improvement of the property.

[Leave being granted, Bill No. 62 was introduced and read for a first time.]

MR. CRAWFORD:

Mr. Speaker, I move seconded by the hon. Minister of Environment, that The Maintenance and Recovery Amendment Act 1972 be placed on the Order Paper under Government Bills and Orders.

[The motion was carried without debate or dissent.]

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Bill No. 63: The Department of  
Highways and Transport Amendment Act, 1972

MR. COPITHORNE:

Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to move a bill, Bill No. 63 entitled The Department of Highways and Transport Amendment Act. This act deals with the transfer of lands from one government department to another. It deals with the increase in the Stock Advance Fund and also this act deals with the ability of my department to explore the reasons for accidents in certain sections of the highways within the Province of Alberta.

[Leave being granted, Bill No. 63 was introduced and read for a first time.]

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

MR. DOAN:

Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to introduce to and through you to the members of this Assembly 100 ambitious students from the River Glen School in Red Deer. Among these students, I would like to make note, is the nephew of a minister of ours, the hon. Helen Hunley. They are also, of course, accompanied by their teachers, Mr. Moss, the vice-principal, Mrs. Saghat and Mr. Spencer. Fourty of these students are in the members gallery and sixty of them are in the public gallery. We appreciate the students' interest in the operation of this Legislature. I would now ask them to stand and be recognized by this Assembly.

MRS. CHICHAK:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce to you and to the Assembly some 50 Grade VII students from the Parkdale school, which is located in the constituency of Edmonton Norwood. They are accompanied by their teacher, Mr. Roy Dillabaugh, and I'd like to say that this is the third class from the Parkdale School, and I think that the teachers should be commended for their interest in the assistance of education by direct observation in the legislative processes. They are in the members' gallery, and I'd like the House to recognize them. Would they please stand.

DR. PAPROSKI:

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce to you and through you to the hon. members of this Assembly some 30 bright, sharp students from St. Joseph High School, located in my constituency of Edmonton Kingsway. They are accompanied by their teacher, Mr. Necyk. I'd like to congratulate them for coming here and looking at the democratic process at work and remind them that in fact, they are only a few years away, if they're not there already, from the time when they'll be able to vote, and as a matter of fact take part as a candidate. I'd ask them to rise now and be recognized in the usual fashion.

MR. KING:

Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to introduce to you and to the members of this Assembly Stan Schumacher who is the hon. Member of Parliament for the federal riding of Palliser. Mr. Schumacher is seated in your gallery, and I ask him to rise and be recognized.

MR. SOFENSON:

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce to you and through you to the members of this Assembly a distinguished guest seated in the

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Speaker's gallery. Mr. Lester Isaman is president of the Consort Chamber of Commerce and president of Highway 41 Association.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Where's that?

MR. SORENSON:

I'll ask Mr. Isaman to stand and be recognized at this time.

MR. HENDERSON:

Suspensions confirmed.

TABLING REPORTS AND FILING RETURNS

MR. HENDERSON:

Mr. Speaker, I wonder if I might make an inquiry as to two returns that have been ordered by this Assembly. On Return No. 111, which was approved by the House on March 7, relative to correspondence on cost-shared programs in the field of health and welfare, I was wondering if we could have a return as to how that report is progressing. Secondly, on Return No. 173, approved by this House on April 13, which deals with the question of orders from the Department of the Environment to industry in the province sometime last fall.

MR. HYNDMAN:

Mr. Speaker, I have made a note of both those returns and I'll take them both under advisement and follow it up with the hon. gentleman.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Rights of Citizens re Credit Records

MR. WILSON:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct a question to the hon. Premier. Is it the intention of the government to introduce legislation at this session, giving citizens the right to inspect their credit records, kept by credit agencies?

MR. LOUGHEED:

Mr. Speaker, that matter is still under consideration in terms of the spring sitting of the House, but it is a matter that is under review by the government. At this moment I can't give a definitive answer.

Use of Electronic Surveillance

MR. WILSON:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Is it the intention of the government to introduce new legislation at this session regarding the use of electronic surveillance?

MR. LOUGHEED:

Again, Mr. Speaker, it is in the same status with regard to the prior question the hon. member asked.

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Natural Gas & Rural Areas

MR. RUSTE:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct a question to the hon. Minister of Agriculture. Is the hon. minister in a position at this time to report further on the feasibility study into the provision of natural gas to rural areas in this province that he reported on earlier in this session?

DR. HORNER:

Yes, Mr. Speaker.

MR. RUSTE:

A supplementary question. Could the hon. minister indicate approximately how long before we could have a report of this kind?

DR. HORNER:

Earlier, Mr. Speaker, I said that I hoped to have the report by the end of the month and that is still the hope.

Possible RCMP Move

MR. FARRAN:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to put a question to the hon. Attorney General. About two weeks ago I asked a question about the threatened move of the RCMP detachment from Magrath to Lethbridge, on which I had received expression of concern from a delegation from the town of Magrath. Have you anything further to report?

MR. LEITCH:

Mr. Speaker, that was a proposal that has come to me from the RCMP and is a continuation of a plan that has been going on for some time in Alberta, whereby they follow a system called 'the Hub System of Policing', which, while I don't want to go into the details of it, has in their view provided a more efficient and less expensive method of policing. I have received some submissions from people in Magrath and persons speaking on behalf of residents of Magrath. I have indicated that I will withhold making a decision on the request from the RCMP until I have had an opportunity to meet with the people from Magrath and to review the problem with them.

Industrial Relations Board

MR. NOTLEY:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct this question to the hon. Minister of Labour. When can the hon. minister advise the House that an appointment will be announced to the vice-chairmanship of the Industrial Relations Board?

DR. HOHOL:

Mr. Speaker, I will be making that announcement during the current sitting of the House.

MR. NOTLEY:

A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker, to the hon. minister. Can the hon. minister advise the Legislature that this appointment will be from the ranks of the Trade Union movement in accordance with past practise?

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DR. HOHOL:

No, I wouldn't make any assurances as to the background of the particular candidate because we have many applications and these are being considered. There are also recommendations being made by legitimate and recognized pressure groups and these will also be considered.

Education Opportunity Bank

MR. CLARK:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct a question to the hon. Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs, and ask him at what stage negotiations are between Alberta and the other provinces of Canada, and the federal government regarding an Education Opportunity Bank?

MR. GETTY:

Mr. Speaker, my department has not carried on any negotiations in that regard. It is possible that one of the two ministers in the government who have to do with education may want to add to that.

Dental Medicare

MR. TAYLOR:

Mr. Speaker, may I direct a question to the hon. Minister without Portfolio in charge of Medicare. Has the government given any consideration to include dentistry in the Medicare program?

MISS HUNLEY:

No, Mr. Speaker, we have not, but I would like to elaborate for just a moment. The Commission and I have been discussing it; we are interested in what is happening in the Province of Quebec. Certainly, it is one more thing we will be considering on that -- the government per se. I have not brought it back to government as a particular decision. I think there are a lot of things we have to look at in health care, but that is one of them.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

MR. HINMAN:

I will refer to notices of motion for a return No. 184. The experienced politician, Mr. Speaker, usually attempts to keep his baser motives from being suspect. It's certainly the mark of an amateur to make them so apparent.

In this motion, in parentheses, there are the words 'caucus committee'. I refer to The Social Credit Act, 1937, being Chapter 10. This committee was appointed by an act of the Legislature, and therefore by no stretch of the imagination can it be called a 'caucus committee'.

I could, Mr. Speaker, move that the words be struck out, but I was wondering if it would not be more appropriate if you would order them struck out.

MR. SPEAKER:

I believe the hon. member is stating a point of order...

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MR. GETTY:

The motion is about to come up for debate. Shouldn't we debate it then?

MR. SPEAKER:

Not today -- perhaps we could advert to it when it comes up in its turn.

MR. HINMAN:

I'm sorry I didn't hear you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Perhaps this could be discussed when it comes up in its turn.

MR. TAYLOR:

On the point of order, the hon. member is making a request to you as Mr. Speaker, and its proper place to do it is under Orders of the Day.

MR. SPEAKER:

The main thing is to have it done, and perhaps it would be just as well to have it done when the subject is before the house.

#### MINISTERIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

MR. DOWLING:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to table a position paper on the Summer Temporary Employment Program, or STEP, as it's referred to. I would like you to note that on the second page it indicates that we will be receiving applications -- from the municipalities in the next two or three weeks.

This paper was prepared some time ago. It still applies, but the applications for assistance have already been received and have been responded to. Those that were approved have been notified of this approval and those that were not approved have also been notified.

I take great pleasure in tabling this position paper.

MR. TOPOLNISKY:

Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to table a program directory, listing provincial and federal government programs. It is hoped that through this directory, the rural residents will be better informed about the programs and services which may be of help to them. The directory is an attempt to bring government closer to people.

MR. HYNDMAN:

Mr. Speaker, I should like to advise the House that very shortly an Order in Council will be passed appointing Friday, June 9th as Farmer's Day in Alberta. I make this announcement somewhat in advance of its being dealt with in Executive Council, because a number of jurisdictions have inquired as to when Farmer's Day would be.

The second Friday in June, this year being June 9th, has been the traditional day for the appointment of Farmer's Day. In previous years there have been a certain number of exceptions to the

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proclamation, which as in the past proclaimed Farmer's Day in all the schools in the Province of Alberta.

The exceptions, which are all the same as in previous years are as follows. The schools of the following districts are excepted and have applied for being excepted from the proclamation:

Edmonton, Calgary, Lethbridge, Medicine Hat, Red Deer, Fort Smith School District No. 3705, Ralston School District No. 4981, Canadian Forces School District No. 4986, Minarski Park School District, No. 5012, Beacon Hill School District No. 4029, and Buffalo Park School District No. 5047.

In addition to these jurisdictions which have specifically requested to be excepted from the operation of these school holidays, the provision will also be made that any other schoolboards who, by resolution, wish to be excepted, can do so.

DR. HOENER:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to just add a comment to what the hon. minister has just said with regard to Farmer's Day. It is our consideration that perhaps a better way could be made to recognize the contribution of agriculture in the Province of Alberta. While we're going along with the idea of a Farmer's Day this year we are giving consideration to the proposal that in place of a Farmer's Day in June we would institute an agricultural week in the fall tied in with Thanksgiving day. I'd appreciate receiving representations from others in the House in regard to that proposal.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, I have an announcement to make with regard to the situation of Purity Dairy Co-op Limited. This co-operative has had a very harried and disruptive life since its formation back in January of 1970. At that time, Mr. Speaker, Purity Dairy Co-op was formed by the necessary 10 people who form a co-operative to take over the affairs of Purity Dairy Limited. It might be of some interest, Mr. Speaker, to note that the original 10 shareholders included two MLAs formerly of this House. In addition to that, as the subsequent financial transactions have shown, the co-operative took over a dairy that was in very serious financial difficulties. In March of 1971 the former government gave an additional \$700,000 guarantee to the co-operative. This was on top of the debt that the co-operative had taken over from Purity Dairy to the treasury branches of some \$700,000. So in effect, Mr. Speaker, when we took office this co-operative was indebted to the Treasury Branch and to the government for \$1,400,000.

The affairs of the Co-operative became very difficult and in December I authorized the institution by the Treasury Branches of a receiver. Since that time the losses have been cut in so far as operating is concerned. It became apparent that it would be necessary to sell the assets of Purity Dairy Co-op Limited if we were to salvage anything for all of the people that were involved. I'm able to announce today, Mr. Speaker, that we can confirm the sale of Purity Dairy Co-op Limited to Palm Dairies Limited. I'm also able to announce, Mr. Speaker, that all of the employees of Purity Dairy Co-operative are being offered employment with Palm. Their pension plans etc are being worked in with that of Palms. I can also say that there has been provision made for the producers so that they will not lose any production opportunity and that they have been paid up-to-date.

In the sale and the settlement of this very vexing matter the Provincial Treasurer will lose approximately \$140,000. We are settling out of court with the other principals involved in regard to the Daly brothers to save a great number of legal involvement and a great deal of potential problems. In addition that \$140,000, Mr. Speaker, includes a payment of \$28,000 to repay all of the

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shareholders by ex gratia payment of their investment in Purity Dairy Co-op. We are doing this, Mr. Speaker, because we believe that the Co-op shouldn't have been allowed to have been formed in the first place having regard to the financial situation that they got into. To cover that situation, the shareholders of the co-operative will be repaid their share price.

I can say, Mr. Speaker, in conclusion, that we feel that this is a very fair settlement for all the parties involved -- the employees and producers have been protected -- that while the provincial treasury is suffering a loss. It's a far smaller loss that we had anticipated earlier. When we took over the government it looked very much like we would have lost the entire guarantee of \$700,000.

QUESTION

MR. LOUGHFED:

Mr. Speaker, with regard to Question No. 185, I would like to ask the hon. Leader of the Opposition if he might make it a Motion for a Return?

185. With the agreement of Mr. Strom, an Order of the Assembly was issued for a Return showing:

- (a) Has the Government of Alberta, since September 10th, 1971, terminated any contracts or agreements, agreed to and signed before September 10th, 1971, with any other government, any company, any agency, any groups, or any individuals, before the contract's or agreement's expiry date?
- (b) if the answer to (a) is yes, please specify the contract or agreement, the date the contract or agreement was signed, the expiry date as specified when the contract was signed, the date the contract or agreement was terminated, and the party with whom the contract or agreement was signed.

MR. GETTY:

Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the hon. Dr. Horner, that Question 186 be made a Motion for a Return.

[The Motion was passed without debate or dissent.]

186. An Order of the Assembly was therefore issued for a Return, showing:

With reference to the Daylight Saving Time advertisement,

- (A) (1) In what daily papers in the province did the said advertisement appear?
  - (2) How many times?
  - (3) What is the total cost?
- (B) (1) In what weekly papers did the advertisement appear?
  - (2) How many times?
  - (3) What is the total cost?

MR. LEITCH:

Mr. Speaker, with regard to that question, it was asked or one similar to it was asked by the hon. Member for Drumheller, of me during the Question Period a day or so ago, and I had said that I thought the advertisement had gone out in all of the dailies and weeklies but I would check on it. I found on checking that the advertisement was in all the dailies and on all of the radio stations within the province but there wasn't an advertisement in the weekly



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newspapers, although I understand they did receive some notice and  
mats in connection with this.

MOTIONS FOR A RETURN

No. 184. Mr. Trynchy proposed the following motion to this Assembly,  
seconded by Mr. J. Miller.

That an Order of the Assembly do issue for a Return showing:

The total amount of money paid to each of the members of the  
Social Credit Board (Caucus Committee) during its years of existence.

MR. HINMAN:

Those two got ahead of the motion being made that I proposed to  
speak on under Orders of the Day. I said at that time I could move  
an amendment to this motion to strike out the words 'Caucus  
Committee'. What I had in mind was to ask you, sir, to have these  
words struck out of the motion because I think they're improper. As  
I pointed out previously, this board was set up by an act of the  
Legislature and could not, by any conceivable means, be considered a  
caucus committee.

DR. HORNER:

Well, Mr. Speaker, I can appreciate the sensitivity the hon.  
Member for Cardston, in regard to the question of a caucus committee.  
Of course what the hon. member didn't say was that the entire slate  
of members appointed to this committee of course were, in fact,  
Social Credit members -- no members of the opposition were on the  
Social Credit Board, nor were these members, members of the Executive  
Council. Now I think if I could borrow the argument of the hon.  
Member for Drumheller, I think he would kind of agree with me that  
that constitutes a caucus committee in his observation. Mr. Speaker,  
although we're not real hard on it and if it's going to bother the  
hon. Member for Cardston a lot, why, we will be quite willing to  
remove the term 'Caucus Committee' from there and go ahead with the  
motion.

MR. TAYLOR:

Mr. Speaker, I would love to agree with the hon. Minister of  
Agriculture but not when his reasoning is so illogical. In the first  
place, there is quite a distinction between having all members on one  
side of the House when the appointment is made under an act passed by  
the Legislature and, secondly, when the members are named to that  
board by a resolution before the Legislature. And compared to simply  
naming a committee from a caucus without even bringing it to the  
Legislature, there is a marked distinction. Really there is no  
comparison at all -- with all respect to my hon. friend. The point  
is that had any member in the opposition in that day wished to do so,  
they had an opportunity to name someone to the Social Credit Board.

AN. HON. MEMBER:

Big deal!

MR. HYNDMAN:

Come off it!

MR. TAYLOR:

But the opposition stated that they did not want to name a  
member to the Social Credit Board. This is the same as any other  
board. I suppose when this government wants to appoint a Legislative  
Committee, if everybody on this side of the House said, 'Thank you

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very much, but nobody on this side will sit', they wouldn't have any choice but to name them all on their own side of the House. But that would be absolutely legal and within the jurisdiction of the government.

But, Mr. Speaker, it's an entirely different thing when it's not even brought to the Legislature, when it's even questionable from our point of view that the section under which they are appointed is even applicable. And again I say, there is no comparison and I really think that the hon. Speaker of the House should consider striking out 'caucus committee', because I'm sure the hon. Premier, and the Deputy Premier and the members of the other side want to be accurate. And that's the only way to be accurate in this particular case.

AN HON. MEMBER:

We do?

MR. GETTY:

Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure how I was feeling about it, but having heard the previous illogical argument, I think I disagree with my hon. colleague. I think the words should probably stay in now.

MR. SPEAKER:

Well, in order to resolve the matter, we'll either have to agree informally that they stay in or come out, or else we'll have to have an amendment. I would suggest that the words are not essential to the motion, but if the hon. members think that the issue requires dealing with in the ordinary way, I would invite someone to move an amendment or perhaps the hon. members would like to suggest informally that we either leave it as it is, or change it.

MR. TRYNCHY:

Mr. Speaker, can I speak to the motion?

MR. SPEAKER:

We're still on a point of order with regard to the motion. I don't think we're debating the motion at all as yet.

Does someone wish to move an amendment?

MR. HINMAN:

Mr. Speaker, I'd hoped that you might find it possible to simply rule that part out of order, because it's inaccurate. But if it isn't, I will move, seconded by the hon. Leader of the Opposition, that the words 'Social Credit Caucus' be struck from the motion -- 'Caucus Committee' -- I'm sorry.

MR. TRYNCHY:

Mr. Speaker, could I speak to the point of order?

AN HON. MEMBER:

It's an amendment now.

MR. TRYNCHY:

An amendment? Well I don't know about the hon. member on the other side -- why he is so touchy about it. But I've read the act over, Mr. Speaker, and in the act, this board was appointed by the Legislative Assembly, which is the same as the task force which was appointed by the Order in Council.

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SOME HON. MEMBERS:

No! No!

AN HON. MEMBER:

Wasn't it appointed by the Cabinet?

MR. TRYNCHY:

I don't think it was.

I'm sorry, Mr. Speaker, that I don't have the act here because I'd like to point out a thing or two in it, but if they are so touchy on it, I wouldn't object to striking out the 'Caucus Committee' because I think that board speaks for itself. And I would like to say that if they want to make the amendment, I'd go along with it, because the whole thing is the same in either case.

MR. SPEAKER:

Is there any further discussion on the amendment? The hon. member for Drayton Valley.

MR. ZANDER:

Mr. Speaker, it is quite obvious that if there was a Liberal or a Conservative at that time in the House, I suppose that the hon. members which are now on the opposite side would have certainly not wanted him on the Social Credit Board. Because certainly the Liberal would not have been very helpful to them, and I think this was the intent and purpose of that type of legislation. Since we had no Hansard in those days past -- I don't know whether any members here now were in this House at that time -- when there was a Social Credit Board, how could a Liberal be appointed to this Board? I think we have to be practical and I think the hon. Member for Cardston knows this. So why are they so touchy about leaving this caucus committee in? This actually is what it was and so intended. It was done by legislation, so I can't see why the gentlemen are so touchy to bring in an amendment. As far as I am concerned -- I don't know what the figures are -- but I am not too much committed to go one way or the other. I would say that it certainly is no indication that it should be taken out. However, I have no objections either way.

MR. FARRAN:

Mr. Chairman, I certainly agree with the hon. Member for Drayton Valley. Our friends on the other side of the House are getting extremely thin-skinned. When they put in questions on the government task forces, they didn't hesitate to put in brackets, 'caucus committee'. Although we pointed out it was inaccurate, we didn't go to the great lengths of having it struck off the Order Paper or removed from a motion. In this particular case, though, the hon. Member for Drayton Valley must be right. What was the Social Credit Board for? It wasn't to promote Liberals or Conservatives, it was to promote Social Crediters. There is no other way. It wasn't a Government of Alberta Board, it was a party board. The contention of the hon. Member for Drumheller as I recall it, was that the task forces were not properly legislative committees because they consisted entirely of Conservatives, that there was no opportunity for a Social Creditor to serve on those task forces, and that they were appointed directly by the Executive Council through the Lieutenant Governor and not by the Assembly as a whole. Well, surely the same must have applied to that Social Credit Board. There was no Liberal member on it. It was, I should say, a situation where this really was a caucus committee. The task forces, in my opinion, are not caucus committees because they are doing the general work of the people of Alberta, recommending on broad policy. But a Social Credit

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Board must have been recommending on some of those strange philosophies and theories of Major Douglas, which I have never been able to understand. That is why this board was a great failure, because it never really communicated the message to anybody in Alberta who could understand it. I have. . .[laughter]. . .I have tried to understand that philosophy for 25 years and still can't understand it. So any money that was spent on this particular caucus committee was certainly wasted.

MR. TAYLOR:

Mr. Speaker, I don't want to prolong the debate but I do think I should make one more attempt to try to point out the difference between the caucus committees as presently constituted on the other side of the House, and the Social Credit Board. There is no comparison between the two. The caucus committees, the task forces on the other side of the House this year, were appointed by the hon. Premier and his Cabinet, without reference to this Legislature -- without reference to this Legislature. The Social Credit Board was appointed by the Legislature, by resolution, under an act passed by the Legislature. Surely there is a great difference between the two, and that is all we are trying to point out. I don't know whether I am explaining it very well, apparently not, because the hon. members don't appear to be getting the point. I wish I had a blackboard so I could draw a picture but we aren't supplied with blackboards. . .[interjections]. But I accept the responsibility, I am not explaining it very well apparently. All I want the hon. members to remember is that the Social Credit Board was appointed by the Legislature, by resolution, and therefore it is not a caucus committee. That is all we are trying to point out. If the hon. members don't want to be accurate, then leave the thing in there. If they want the order to be accurate then it should come out.

The second point I would like to mention -- and I don't know whether I can do this in a short time or not, Mr. Speaker -- is to explain why the Social Credit Board was appointed in the first place. It wasn't to promote Social Credit --

ONE HON. MEMBER:

What did it do, Gordon?

MR. SPEAKER:

I would, with respect, doubt whether this part of the debate is relevant to the amendment. The only thing that is before us now is whether or not we take out the words, 'caucus committee'.

MR. TAYLOR:

I agree, Mr. Speaker, only the hon. Member for Calgary North Hill posed the question as to what the Board was doing and I thought possibly, since he posed the question, you might permit just a very short answer. The answer will be very short, I'm not going into the philosophy of Social Credit. But the Social Credit Board was appointed to improve the economic conditions in this province for everybody, including the Conservatives, the Liberals, the Socialists, the Communists, and the Social Crediters - for everybody. Secondly, it was to try to amass public opinion to show the necessity of changing our financial system in this country to where the people's representatives would control the banks and the banks wouldn't control parliament. Those are two of the primary functions, and if you had given us permission, I would like to spend another 30 minutes on it, but I respect your ruling.

Just one other point I'd like to mention before sitting down. Again, I think we're spending too much time on this. Frankly, over here, we're not too concerned. We're living in the present and the

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future. If the hon. members of the government and the backbenchers - pardon me, not the backbenchers - all of the members of the government, want to live 35 years ago, go ahead, live in the past.

MR. APPLEBY:

Mr. Speaker, I'd just like to disagree most heartily with the hon. Member for Drumheller, because actually there's only one reason that the Social Credit Board was appointed. If you study the history of the Social Credit movement, you'll see that just prior to the appointment of the Social Credit Board, for a number of months, a number of the Social Credit MLA's had created what was known as a group of insurgents within the party, and they had gone to the Premier and said, "Look, if you don't do something about Social Credit, we are going to go across the floor of the House", and so . . .

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please. I really think that if there is a permissible degree of irrelevance with regard to this amendment, we have exceeded it.

MR. FARRAN:

If that contention is true, it is very pertinent, because if it was to...

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please. The hon. member has spoken on the amendment.

MR. HYNDMAN:

Mr. Speaker, in regard to the remarks just made by the hon. Member for Drumheller, he said that the board's purpose was not to promote Social Credit, and yet I note in reading...

MR. SPEAKER:

Is the hon. minister discussing the amendment?

MR. HYNDMAN:

Directly on the amendment! And insofar as this section relates to the amendment, in the following fashion: Section 5 says that,

"The Social Credit Board is authorized to devise ways and means for the conservation, enhancement, advancement and realization of the social credit of the province."

MR. SPEAKER:

With respect to the hon. minister, the remarks are out of order, because they do not relate to whether or not this was a caucus committee.

MR. HYNDMAN:

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, regarding the amendment, and then regarding the remarks by the hon. Member for Drumheller, I think that he has again now amply demonstrated that he is always prepared to have two points of view - the one that is wrong, and his own.

MR. LUDWIG:

Mr. Speaker --

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MR. SPEAKER:

Is this a point of order?

MR. LUDWIG:

Yes, Mr. Speaker. Speaking on the amendment --

MR. SPEAKER:

I'm trying to find out whether the hon. Member for Calgary North Hill has a point of order.

MR. PARRAN:

Mr. Speaker, when I tried to speak to you before, I was not speaking on the amendment. I was trying to speak to the point of order you raised concerning the hon. Member for Athabasca, and I was trying to point out that if the board was formed to solve a dispute within the ranks of the Social Credit party, it was indeed a caucus committee, so it was relevant.

MR. LUDWIG:

Mr. Speaker, I'd just like to make a very brief comment. I'm surprised that the hon. members opposite know so much about what Social Credit stands for, and so little about what they stand for.

May I make a comment? There is so much smog and brush thrown around, it is hard to even comprehend. We know very well what 'Social Credit Board' means, that this is, in fact, a party board. There is no doubt about that. They say this is for programs -- very good. Well, the present government task forces are for programs too, for all the people.

MR. SPEAKER:

Would the hon. member please address his remarks to whether the words 'caucus committee' should come out of the resolution. Are you ready for the question?

MR. TAYLOR:

Mr. Speaker, on a point of privilege, I am going to -- I would like to do something that possibly would be very foreign to anybody on the other side of the House, and to say that if I gave the impression that the Social Credit Board was not to advance Social Credit, I was in error. What I intended to say was that economics was the main thing, but we consider Social Credit and good economics as synonymous.

MR. HYNDMAN:

Mr. Speaker, in reply to the question of privilege, I can only say that again the hon. gentleman from Drumheller has, I think, indicated to us quite clearly that while he used to have the reputation of speaking at great length, he now does have occasional flashes of silence that make his conversation delightful.

MR. HINMAN:

Mr. Speaker, if I may close the debate, I think I recognize that

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MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please. As far as I know, the rule with regard to a mover closing a debate does not apply to amendments. Are you ready for the question?

All those in favour of the motion that the words 'caucus committee' be taken out of the resolution, would you please say 'aye'?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Aye.

MR. SPEAKER:

Those opposed, please say 'no.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

No.

MR. SPEAKER:

I regret that I am not able to assess the balance of votes on the two sides of the House. Would those in favour of the amendment, please stand. This is not a division, this is merely -- Thank you.

Would all those contrary to the amendment and in favour of leaving the words in, please stand.

The amendment is carried. Sorry, I didn't say those words. The amendment is defeated.

Is there any debate on the motion? All those in favour of the motion, please --

MR. HINMAN:

May I close the debate? It isn't my motion, but --

MR. SPEAKER:

I understood there was no discussion on the motion, but if the hon. member wishes to discuss it, the question hasn't been put yet.

I take it that the hon. member would -- Order, please. As far as I know, the hon. member may not close the debate unless there has been an intervening speaker after he spoke the first time. [Interjection] I'm sorry. The hon. Member for Whitecourt moved the motion, so that if anyone would close the debate, it would be he. Is there any discussion on the motion?

All those in favour of the motion, please say 'aye'.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Aye.

MR. SPEAKER:

Those opposed, please say 'no'.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

No.

MR. SPEAKER:

The motion is carried.

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MR. MINIELY:

Mr. Speaker, I must confess the history of this has made it somewhat difficult to obtain all the information in reply to Motion for Return No. 184. However, I do have the partial answer which I am going to table today. If the mover of the motion wishes further information I can do so at a later date. So, I will table partial answer to Motion for Return No. 184.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. minister has indicated that this a partial reply to the motion. As I understand it, once the motion has been carried, it is an Order of the legislature to the government. If the government is not able to comply with the Order, should there be some further disposition made of it?

DR. HORNER:

Mr. Speaker, on the point of order, the hon. Provincial Treasurer said that he has tabled that information which he has readily available, and will table additional information as it becomes available.

HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

MR. TAYLOR:

Mr. Speaker, on the point of order, are there still accounts coming in from the Social Credit Board?

I thought the records were so clear that that's why we got the return so rapidly.

187. Mr. Clark proposed the following motion to this Assembly:  
Seconded by Mr. Taylor.

That an Order of the Assembly do issue for a Return showing:

Copies of all correspondence from municipalities or associations indicating their consent or otherwise, prior to the cancellation of the Alberta Provincial-Municipal Fiscal Commission.

MR. CLARK:

Mr. Speaker, I move Motion 187 standing in my name in the order paper. I trust it will be somewhat less controversial, and there will be more unanimity in the House.

MR. GETTY:

Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Minister of Municipal Affairs, I wonder if the member would be willing to hold this motion for return until he is able to consider it?

MR. CLARK:

Mr. Speaker, I'll agree to let it stand.

HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.



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MR. YURKO:

Mr. Speaker, could I have leave of the assembly to revert to Orders of the Day just for a couple of seconds, to table Sessional Paper No. 173?

HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

MR. YURKO:

Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to table Sessional Paper No. 173.

MR. HENDERSON:

Mr. Speaker, I would hope that the return isn't all made up of press releases.

MOTIONS OTHER THAN GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

Snowmobiles in Provincial Parks

MR. WYSE:

Mr. Speaker, I have pleasure in introducing the following motion to the House, seconded by my good friend the hon. Member for Vermilion-Viking, "Be it resolved that this assembly request the provincial government to amend present regulations in order to permit the use of snowmobiles within provincial parks in restricted areas as designated by the Department of Lands and Forests."

Now, in referring this motion to the House, Mr. Speaker, I would like to make reference to Order in Council No. 1072. The Provincial Park Act-Regulations to Amend the General Regulations.

"The General Regulations filed as Alberta Regulation 305/64, is hereby amended.

The following section is added immediately: 6a) "all travel by vehicle propelled by any power other than muscular power shall be confined to constructed roads and vehicular travel off the roads within the park is prohibited."

Now, Mr. Speaker, I intend to be very, very brief in my remarks this afternoon. Now the passing of this particular Order in Council has certainly caused a lot of grief, a lot of concern to the people of my particular area, the people that have invested hundreds of dollars in these snowmobiles. Of course, I am particularly interested in the people of southern Alberta. I believe that we have a bit of a different situation in southern Alberta, where in the wintertime, in December or January, a chinook could blow in, and the only snow that would be available for these snowmobiles would be in a provincial park. I'm thinking particularly of the Cypress Hills.

I know the hon. minister of the Department of Lands and Forests will say that they do have an alternative area in southern Alberta. But this certainly isn't acceptable to the many people in my area who own these machines. I notice from some of the comments on the other side of the House that a lot of the members agree with me in this particular area.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I'm certainly not suggesting that these machines be allowed to run all over the parks -- I'm against that -- but surely to goodness we can give these snowmobiles some space in our provincial parks.

In this particular motion, we're not setting out any hard-lines, or policy, but a very flexible motion, that it will be, in fact, left up to the Department of Lands and Forests, where, in fact, the

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machines would be allowed. It seems to me that some designated areas or trails could be made, thus allowing access for these machines. I know that in Elkwater Provincial Park, of course the area that I am concerned with, that we could in fact set out some areas where they would do a minimal amount of damage. I agree that most motor vehicles, such as motorcycles and trail bikes operating off the established roads, could in fact create problems of environmental destruction. But I don't believe that this problem exists with snowmobiles. And as I've mentioned we have had a lot of concern.

So at this time, Mr. Speaker I would like to table approximately 500 names on petitions that I have received from the people in southern Alberta -- not only in my area but around Taber and close to Lethbridge -- people are concerned about this particular Order in Council. I might mention here that I had nothing whatsoever to do with drafting these petitions, in fact it was presented to me and I knew nothing about it beforehand. I just want to read a couple of comments from a petition.

One woman says; "The snowmobile is my only form of transportation between my home and the lake." And I guess she's speaking of in the park.

Another man says, "This act has greatly affected my business, station, and cafe operation in the winter months, and this act has taken away two-thirds of my winter business." These people are talking about the businesses that they have in Elkwater Provincial Park.

Now I must stress again that I'm certainly in favour of preserving our provincial parks. But as one of the opposition members already noted, we must make more use of our provincial parks all year round.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the urban people have no doubt felt the effects of the law more than the farm people. It is quite evident, I think, that it is increasingly difficult to find farmers willing to allow entry of these machines. The snowmobile industry in Alberta has certainly grown over the last few years, at least in the sales end. We cannot shut our eyes and say that this does not really exist. The machines are here to stay and it is our responsibility to deal with the problem and give some consideration to them. I suggest we consider their request, and allow them some space in some of our provincial parks.

MR. COOPER:

Mr. Speaker, it is to be expected, seeing I'm seconding the motion, that I certainly think that the use of snowmobiles should be allowed in provincial parks, certainly in restricted areas if necessary. Let the wide open spaces be used for snowmobiling. I might say, Mr. Speaker, that my conclusions on this particular point are based on observations of the activities in the Vermilion Provincial Park. Snowmobiling is now a recognized sport all across western Canada I would say. In my area it's certainly a family sport, something that we like to see. The Vermilion Provincial Park is comprised of some 1,929 acres, and is located right on the town's front doorstep -- just a half mile from the town. I can stand on the front patio of my home and look down into the Vermilion River Valley and the Vermilion Provincial Park. Of course, scores of other residents can do likewise.

I mention that fact to indicate what a handy place it is for family snowmobiling. The Park itself, as I've said, is comprised of over 1,900 acres. There's a five mile lake in the park, it's in quite a deep valley. The north hill is bare of any trees -- quite a challenge to the hill climbing snowmobilers. The southern hill of the boundary of the valley is quite thick with trees, but through

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these trees are numerous old trails that are no longer used for anything. They were at one time used by farmers along the valley. So it's just an ideal spot for snowmobiling by a very large number of people.

You can quite imagine my consternation last fall. I might say that the Park had been used on occasion by the Vermilion Winter Carnival. They've had races there, they've had hill climbing tests and so on -- it is just practically ideal -- and no harm was done to the existing trees or anything else in the park. It has been used on occasion by the Vermilion Winter Games, the winter carnival, they have had races there, they have had hill climbing tests, and so on and no harm was done to the existing trees or anything else in park.

So you can quite well imagine my consternation last fall, after the first snow fall -- and all these snowmobilers were waiting for it -- on going into the park, to be ordered out. Now, in fairness, I might say they could snowmobile on the lake but in order to get to the lake you have to have transportation for their snowmobile machines and very few people in the town had the required transportation.

I understand the regulation was enacted as a result of an incident in a provincial park in the southern part of the province which required some drastic action, and I'm not questioning that prompt and strict action was needed in that particular case. But why punish the whole class for what one person has done, and that is what was done in enacting the regulation. I'm certainly not blaming the present hon. Minister of Lands and Forests for the regulation. I'm also of the opinion that banning snowmobiles in many of our parks certainly wasn't required.

The Vermilion Provincial park, along with 16 others of the 51 provincial parks which we have in the province, is classed as a natural environment recreation area, and to quote from Alberta's Parks Bulletin, this park is stated to be "an area set aside for the primary purpose of outdoor recreation."

In my part of the province, Mr. Speaker, there are no wide open spaces except the Vermilion Provincial Park. The rest is all fenced land -- farm land -- there is just no place to go with snowmobiles except the park, unless you can get permission to go on someone's farm.

This brings me to another point, Mr. Speaker, that of full utilization of our recreation facilities. We have hockey rinks, curling rinks, golf courses, tennis courts, which are used for a portion of the year and the remainder of the year not used. The parks are in the same class. Used for a few months in the summer time and then closed up for possibly seven or eight months of the year, with no use made of them. This is an opportunity to make use of the parks for practically the whole year. To have these parks closed during the winter, when there is a use that they could be put to, just doesn't seem to me to be sensible or justified.

The motion merely asks, Mr. Speaker, to permit the use of snowmobiles within Provincial Parks in restricted areas. I have watched snowmobiling in the Vermilion Park for the last four years and there has been absolutely no damage whatsoever done in any sense of the word. If the developed part of the park was to be posted with "No Snowmobiling" signs I'm quite sure that they would be observed. As it is, they don't go into the camping area anyway.

I certainly do hope that the hon. Minister of Lands and Forests and his department will see fit to allow the use of snowmobiles in Provincial Parks on a restricted basis if necessary, and I am quite sure that by doing this he will make many men, women and children,

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very, very happy. And, incidentally, he will remove quite a source of worry from my shoulders. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. YOUNG:

Mr. Speaker, in rising in this particular debate I would like to, first of all, note that the issue at hand is the use of snowmobiles in Provincial Parks in restricted areas. I would also like to identify a concern that I have had in a number of debates relative to the provision of parks in the Province of Alberta and, in some ways, their connection with our National Parks.

I think that the particular issue that has been brought to our attention today, perhaps allows one to zero-in on my concern a little bit better than some of the others did, because we are being asked to consider a very specific use of a park.

In some of the other debates we have been asked to consider parks near cities or parks generally, provision of parks on a general basis. I think that by looking at a specific use, perhaps I can develop my concern a little bit better. And that is basically this. We're in an age when there is an increasing demand in Alberta -- increasing demand because we have an ever-increasing population -- increasing demand because people have more leisure time for the opportunity to have access to nature for different forms of recreation. To the best of the knowledge that I have at the moment, we badly need to have a very comprehensive plan of just exactly what our requirements are.

We not only have requirements for snowmobiling, I could suggest that there would be a group of people who would be interested in an opportunity to exercise dune buggies for instance; an opportunity to make use of tote goats, motorcycles, and their claim is probably as legitimate as is the claim of snowmobilers, except it's a different season of the year.

Before we adopt a resolution which would suggest that we ought to provide even restricted areas of parks for the specific use of snowmobilers, I would like to have a better grasp of exactly what kind of requirements this province needs in looking to the future in terms of outdoor recreation, and where it needs it. For instance, to get back to the specific case of snowmobilers, the previous two hon. members in speaking to this, have given us illustrations of use of snowmobiles in two different parks. And while I might be inclined not to be too concerned about the park near Vermilion, I might be considerably more concerned about the use of snowmobiles in the provincial park in the Cypress Hills.

The reason for my concern is that I think in the one case the provincial park in Cypress Hills has a use which may not be found in the provincial park in Vermilion. I understand for instance that at Cypress Hills, there is a unique ecology in that region and I think this brings us full face to the question that we must ask, and that is: why were the provincial parks established? And are there enough of them? It seems to me that we will have to face this in order to face up to the demands made in the petitions which the hon. Member for Medicine Hat has received. Just exactly what kind of an area should be restricted? What effect will snowmobiles have on the particular types of flora and fauna which are unique to the Cypress Hills area?

In short, I'm suggesting that we are faced in this province with the need for a total parks policy, a need to identify all of the demands as nearly as we can foresee them, that the public in Alberta and the public which may visit Alberta can make upon provincial parks. What portion of this demand should be the responsibility of the provincial government to provide? It may be that we have a policy in this area -- that the former government had a policy -- and

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if so, I would hope before the conclusion of this debate that some of the members of that government would speak to that policy and describe it for us. Because quite frankly I have been trying to ascertain what the policy was and exactly what kind of an appreciation one ought to have for the demands of our society in the nature of provincial parks.

I am at a loss, at this point in time, except to realize much better than I did before, that we have many developing demands which perhaps weren't apparent 10 years ago or 15 years ago.

We may have demands for parks which are of quite a different nature than the kinds of parks which have been established. It has been suggested, for instance, on a number of occasions that we ought to have parks close to the major cities so that people, in fact, do not travel away from the urban centres in which they live -- at least, I think I heard the figure the other day that about 65% of the people do not go any distance outside those urban centres. For that reason we ought to be providing some tract of nature which remains relatively unspoiled and open so far as concrete is concerned. As soon as we do that, I think we are faced with the demands from the snowmobilers in the wintertime, from the cross-country skiers, from the people who have some hope that they may see the occasional small wild animal -- a rabbit, for instance -- in these areas, and at this point in time I am not sure how compatible snowmobiling is with such things as hospitable climate, hospitable environment for wildlife of that nature. As far as I am personally concerned, snowmobiles are quite noisy and I can imagine that it would drive large game away. But it may be that in some of these areas there is no large game and this needn't be a concern, although I should think it would be a concern for any birds over-wintering in that particular area.

I would, while we are on this particular subject, like to raise an alternative suggestion to the hon. members. I understand that outside of Edmonton to the west, on Highway No. 16, there is in fact a commercial development which, in the winter time, is given over almost uniquely to snowmobilers and I believe one large snowmobile club now. I have to confess that the proprietors -- I assume -- of that particular club sent me some information almost the moment I was elected. I scanned it and put it away and forgot to bring it in with me today. However, if my recall serves me correctly, they had set aside a fairly large area and they are providing certain types of services to snowmobilers -- services which are, I would think, in demand in an urban centre. For instance, they store snowmobiles over the summertime. They are prepared to provide certain upkeep. They have, on that track of land, more than one -- and I am not sure whether it is four or five -- rest stations. Here snowmobilers, in using the courses which have been suggested, can stop. If people are cold they can replenish themselves from a Thermos and box lunches. I assume they are able to attend to any other natural requirements they may have.

It would appear that this course is so laid out that it has the climbs that make snowmobiling interesting -- a course which moves through treed areas and through open areas. In short, these areas challenge the machine, challenge the people who ride the machines, and at the same time expose people to different types of natural environment.

I wonder if this might not be an alternative that could be looked at in some of the other areas. Again, however, I recognize that the hon. Member for Medicine Hat has a particular problem because I think it has been identified for us that the climate in the south part of the province is such that there may only be snow in the Cypress Hills in the park region at certain times of the winter. However, that brings me back to the question I posed a few moments ago, what happens to the unique flora and fauna in that area? I'm quite concerned about this, and quite frankly, if adoption

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of the resolution would imply that we would include in that area the kind of restricted area for snowmobiling that is suggested in the resolution, then I'm not sure I would favour the resolution. As a matter of fact, I'm quite sure that I wouldn't favour the resolution until I could see some studies completed as to the effect that snowmobiling might have on the unique environment that is to be found in the Cypress Hills.

There is no question that for a lot of people snowmobiling is a form of recreation. There is no question, too, that for a lot of people, snowmobiling is something other than a form of recreation and is a darned nuisance. This happens -- at least I get complaints from the citizens in certain parts of the City of Edmonton that they don't like the sound of snowmobiles in the city and I would think this would have to be something we should consider.

Again, I would like to summarize the few comments I have made by saying that, having listened to all the debate, I would be very loathe to have us embark on a policy for the use of parks which considers only the narrow requirements of one form of recreation. I think it's time, in this province, if we haven't had it in past years, that we do establish a comprehensive policy -- a policy which has some regard to the total existing demand and the growing demand for the use of our park system, and that in establishing this policy we ought to have regard to where the parks are located and what particular demands a specific park can meet. Then we would know whether we should establish a restricted area for snowmobiles or not. We ought to consider where the park should be relative to the population centres and their accessibility to the population. This, of course, involves us in Resolution No. 8 on the Order Paper.

While I'm on that particular point, I think it has been highly unfortunate, or so it appears, that the provincial parks system has not been more closely co-ordinated with the national parks system, which includes a portion of the western sections of our province. Because if the total parks system is meeting the requirements for preservation, in certain instances, of pockets of our wilderness area, it is meeting requirements for game preserves. It is meeting requirements for hikers, for campers, for skiers, for boaters, for people who would take pictures of scenery and animal and bird life. So it's a combination of preserving, conserving, meeting recreational demands. I think that we ought to have a total picture of what we need now, what we need in the foreseeable future, how the national parks relate to the provincial parks, and what specific function provincial parks have in meeting these requirements. This is something which none of the resolutions to date has covered in total. I raise it because I feel very strongly on this particular resolution. I think that we could just as well have a resolution on the Order Paper next week which would ask us to set aside certain restricted areas of our parks for the use of Tote-Goats and dune buggies. Maybe it can be the same area, but that is something we can only tell by a thorough, comprehensive look at the overall requirements and facilities at our disposal.

So, with those comments on our park system and the suggestion that there may be an opportunity for commercial developments which we have not explored to date, other than -- to the best of my knowledge -- the one west of the city, I close.

DR. PAPROSKI:

I would like to speak in favour of this resolution, permit the use of snowmobiles within provincial parks in restricted areas as designated by the Department of Lands and Forests. I would like to congratulate the mover, the hon. Member for Medicine Hat-Redcliff, Mr. Wyse, and the seconder, Mr. Cooper, the hon. Member for Vermilion-Viking, for bringing this resolution to the Floor.

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There are a number of items I would like to state. For the hon. members' information there were some half million snowmobiles in use in Canada in 1971. I think this is a very important item -- to control the use of these snowmobiles.

I would limit the snowmobile use even further, not only where they are used, but also the reason for which they are used. One of the hon. members opposite had mentioned already that an elderly lady may require this to mobilize herself to go from one area to another, because of various reasons. I think this is an excellent use for these items.

I would also suggest that maybe the quality of the snowmobiles that are allowed in Alberta should be examined very carefully, because the quality of some of them, as I understand from various people, is not up to standard, and results in certain personal health hazards for the individuals who are using them.

My concern is with snowmobiles generally. If I had my way -- and I haven't got my way -- if I had the power I would probably outlaw them completely from use in the environment. But this is not so, unfortunately. We don't have this power. Since life is an art of compromise, as is politics, we are compromising. I certainly want to be recorded that, in fact, I am compromising.

I would be against snowmobiles for a number of reasons. They are using up that depletable, nonrenewable resource which is at a premium, and despite the fact that we are using this up very rapidly, we go and use recreational toys that are utilizing this very valuable resource. These snowmobiles, in fact, are chasing our wildlife across the country and driving them to exhaustion. I think there is no doubt that this is happening, also, and anyone in favour of environmental control would naturally oppose this use of snowmobiles.

They are interfering with the privacy of the human being, or man. Everybody recognizes, and I think we should all recognize here, that is a great biological need to escape from urbanization, from confusion and noise.

MR. SPEAKER:

Point of order, Mr. Drain?

MR. DRAIN:

The hon. member quoted that he was aware of instances of wildlife being chased to exhaustion. This is one particular theme that I have spent a lot of time exploring, together with his information regarding an area that is loaded with snowmobiles. I have yet been unable to establish a valid incident where this occurred. There is one particular thing about a snowmobile, and that is, it requires snow -- [Interjections] -- I am on a point of order; don't be so impetuous!

DR. PAPROSKI:

I think this is an example that we can see in Alberta. Let me go on, and maybe the hon. member would like to ask me some questions after.

Coming back to the most important point, and that is invasion of privacy -- privacy in the broadest sense -- most of us escape periodically and go into the wilderness areas, lakes, and so forth, to seek the quietness of the natural environment. This is really, truly, being threatened by snowmobile drivers, especially where there are resorts, and of course, there are naturally snowmobiles in those areas.

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These are some of the reasons I would oppose this in an absolute term, but as I stated before, because life is a compromise -- and we have to compromise all the time -- I would be willing to accept this resolution despite the fact that social psychologists have told us repeatedly that this machine is an expression of external power, masculinity, and to remove it, in fact, from an individual, would be analogous to removing, say, a rodeo horse from a cowboy. So, with this item in mind, restriction and control of snowmobiles is a problem. Realizing all this, I suggest that this particular resolution is a good one in that it restricts and controls the use of snowmobiles in certain areas, and I suggest with qualifications, a number of items.

They should review the area, carefully of course -- this has been mentioned by a number of members -- and after satisfactory information is received, ensure that this does not interfere with leisure and privacy in the parks in the particular corridor where the snowmobiles will be used. If we're satisfied that the snowmobiles will not destroy significantly the young trees, seedlings, lawns, and so forth, and that there will be no significant jeopardy to wildlife, and in fact no damage to picnic sites that are used in the other parts of the season -- and there are no hazards to the snowmobile users themselves because of ice and lakes and so forth, that they are protected -- I would support this resolution, and I ask the members of the Assembly to vote in its favour. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

I believe the hon. Member from Sedgewick-Coronation was next, and then the hon. Member from Stony Plain.

MR. SORENSON:

Well, Mr. Speaker, I can certainly understand the concern of the mover and seconder of this motion. Where a park is in close proximity to an urban area it would work out very well. Certainly none of us is against reviewing and changing our parks if it is necessary.

There a number of areas in this motion that I have serious reservations about, and I would agree with the hon. member opposite on some of the points that he brought up. If power toboggans are allowed into our parks in winter, why shouldn't trail bikes, Harley-Davidsons, even planes, and the like, be allowed in the summertime?

I wonder about the garbage. Can we say that it will be scattered only in limited areas? No, I believe we would find it over the four corners of the park.

I believe also that if machines are in the hands of idiots -- and we have to admit we have them on snowmobiles as well as in cars -- they'll destroy young trees, they'll chase animals, and raise particular fury in an area set aside for peace and quietness.

I wonder if it won't bring loaded firearms onto our parks, and this is the number one violation, as far as snowmobiles are concerned -- loaded firearms.

Will it mean giant Pan-Am snowmobile races in our provincial parks? This could be facing us, and if so, is it desirable?

I believe that there are many people that visit our provincial parks even in the wintertime. They come to birdwatch, they come to paint, they come to write poetry, they come to photograph, and so on. It may be taking a narrow view, Mr. Speaker, but I believe that Alberta is large enough that these machines do not have to go into our provincial parks.



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MR. PURDY:

Mr. Speaker, I have to agree with the two hon. members, the mover and the seconder of this resolution. I am faced with much the same situation in my area. We have Wabamun Provincial Park out there, and when this Order in Council was put through, it hit me quite badly. I received numerous petitions to have the parks opened again, which I forwarded to the minister. We received constant phone calls for about three or four days straight until I got the word back to the people of what had happened.

I think the major reason for putting in the restriction was because of the dune buggy damage which was happening in the Cypress Hills, but we are talking about a restricted area in the Cypress Hills -- I stand to be corrected, but I believe we have cattle leases in this part of the park. I'm just wondering what does more damage -- a herd of cattle, or a snowmobile -- ecologically? If we are thinking of using restricted regions, why not use the part of the park that is allowed for cattle leases also for snowmobiling?

The main reason that the people in Wabamun came back to me for help in getting a main route across the park so they could get out to the other areas, was because of the unsafe lake conditions and across the park was the only safe route. In previous years there were a couple of machines that went through the ice out on Moonlight Bay. In fact, as a snowmobile owner myself and belonging to a club out there, I have put a machine through the ice there.

The people that phone me and voice a complaint against the restriction were not only snowmobile owners but residents of the hamlet of Wabamun. Their reason was that snowmobiles are now running around in the school grounds, community grounds and down the back alleys, and these people feel that they should have been allowed in the parks. The complaints that I got from the people was that since the parks are bought by our money they should be used 12 months of the year. This is where we come into the parks policy -- a parks policy must be set up where we can go ahead and find out exactly what our provincial parks are going to be used for, when and why.

I sent a memo a couple of days ago to the hon. Minister of Lands and Forests in regard to snowmobiles. One aspect of snowmobiles which I pointed out to him was that maybe we should start thinking about using our community pastures for snowmobiling. This, in fact, would make the manager a full time employee of the government instead of just during summer months. We could open these community pastures and allow snowmobiles in these. We have a few hazards because of cross fencing and stuff like this, but this is just an area that would have to be undertaken by the management there for safe handling of these machines.

Now the hon. Member for Jasper Place talked about a commercial development. There is one approximately 30 miles west of Edmonton; it encompasses about 700 acres and I think that he filled in the hon. members here fairly well on what is happening in this commercial development. They have various trails in there. I don't know what the admittance fee is or what membership is to this club but it's a good area. It has rolling hills and I would recommend it for anybody who would want to get into this area.

He also talked about the noise of snowmobiles. Well I ask the hon. members which is worse -- a snowmobile or a motorbike? Every time I see a motorbike the noise of it just irks me. I think that we are more used to motorbikes because of them being on the roadways and so on. Usually snowmobiles come under The Snow Vehicle Act which is one of our statutes and they are not allowed on highways or in the ditches after sunset, so I think that restricting them this far is good.

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Some of the members -- I think it was the hon. Member for Edmonton Kingsway -- talked about snowmobilers chasing wild life. Well I concur with the hon. Member for Sedgewick, it's the idiots that have these machines that do this, it isn't the snowmobilers. I think that if snowmobilers belong to a bona fide club we would not have this problem because I believe the Alberta Safety Council regulations are set up so that people, if they want to form a club can go to this organization, pick up information that they need for safe operation and so on. It gets right down to the operators of these machines. Are they eligible or not to actually operate them?

The one last point I want to make is the environmental part of it. I think that there probably is a hazard on the environmental part if they are not used rightly because some of our parks have shrubs and trees which are planted every year. With the substantial snowfall these trees are very seldom hurt. I'm talking from experience because talking to the park wardens in the Wabamun Provincial Park, they say that very little damage is actually done. Once in a while a spruce tree or an evergreen is run over and damaged. So I would ask the members to pass this motion, and maybe we can get the snowmobiles back into restricted areas of our parks.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Pincher Creek Crowsnest.

MR. DRAIN:

Yes, snowmobiles. I guess there's a million and a half reasons in Canada why we have to look at snowmobiles. They're here, they're there, they're all over. I remember in the oil patch we had snowmobiles, seven, eight, nine or ten years ago. At that time I don't think anyone realized the potential and the possibilities that people would see in them and the amount of enjoyment they would get therefrom.

Looking at snowmobiles as such, and looking at the usual application of snowmobiles, which is recreation, I would be very much inclined to agree with the hon. Member for Edmonton Kingsway that we probably could have well survived without the development of the snowmobile. In fact, if you even think of snowmobiles you think of the average cost of snowmobiles. We hear complaints of the costs of health and costs of education; we hear complaints that Canada is not rich enough to buy back their own resources, and we look at a billion and a half dollars that have been plowed into snowmobiles in Canada in the last few years, and you wonder what this story is all about.

However, looking at this resolution as proposed by the hon. Mr. Wyse, the hon. Member for Medicine Hat, and seconded by Mr. Cooper, I think possibly one of the problems of regulations in government is that the regulation is too all encompassing and in many cases does not deal with proper realities. I could probably be able to agree that there are certain areas where no damage would incur from snowmobiles. Now there is a relationship, that is on the basis of how much snow you have when you're using your snowmobile. What is the particular area? There is no question that frozen brush and grass and shrubs, not protected by a cover of snow, when run over by snowmobiles will receive tremendous ecological damage. of snow is certainly going to have a tremendous ecological impact. It is mentioned here, that the relative significance of the damage of snowmobiles in relation to cattle grazing in sensitive areas is probably highly over-estimated. There has been talk of game, and chasing of game by snowmobiles, but there are two factors that a person should take into consideration in assessing this proposition. One is that a snowmobile generally requires snow -- game by nature do not live on snowfalls. There is only one particular species that has the characteristic that is conducive to an environment where snow

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occurs and that is, basically, the moose, which we have in the south and central part of the province.

AN HON. MEMBER:

What about rabbits?

MR. DRAIN:

Rabbits -- never mind the rabbits -- they look after themselves. I'm speaking of the big game species.

You know, it's of interest to the hon. members -- there was a study conducted in my area in the Crowsnest Forest, and we are in forest area -- as to the impact of snowmobiles on the snow and the snow cover. What is the effect of travelling over a road with 150 or 200 or 300 snowmobiles? What is the effect on the runoff? Is this going to have a serious impact on it? After a considerable study it was discovered that the impact was nil.

However, the snowmobile, as such, is a devourer of distance. It's a very poor snowmobile that won't get out and belt along at 75 miles an hour now; so you can be a long way away in a very short time. And I hope that everybody that takes a snowmobile and opens it up has a pair of snowshoes if the snow is deep because he might find it a long walk back. Of course you can overcome this, which they do, by travelling in fives or sixes. Two's or three's are not sufficient because the casualty rate on these particular snowmobiles is so high that usually you have one as sort of a sentinel, running back to bring parts to the other four.

I would be loath to think there would be unbridled and complete lack of control for snowmobiles. I would think, probably, that the idea of community pastures used for this particular recreational endeavour would be ideal. And as I pointed out vast areas of land are required.

There is even an expedition, which the hon. members may have noticed in the paper, which was started some six weeks ago with the object of going to Russia by snowmobile. The last report I got was that they were stranded somewhere in Greenland waiting for parts and they figured that they would be air lifted from there and come back next year when the snow got a little deeper and try it again.

The regrettable thing about this particular motion is the simple fact that the O.C.1072/71 is too all encompassing; it doesn't deal with the particular area. I would think that the hon. Minister of Lands and Forests should have the power in his discretion, and certainly this is the implication of this resolution, to look at this situation, to properly evaluate it, and thereby determine whether this is a proper and specific area where snowmobiles can be operated without any problems. Certainly we have the problem in relation to noise and this, of course, I suppose is part of the fun of snowmobiling.

The hon. Member for Edmonton Kingsway in his remarks inferred that this had psychological implications and he probably is right, but this is sort of self-expressionism...

DR. PAPROSKI:

May I correct the hon. member opposite? Hon. member I didn't infer -- I in fact stated -- it is a fact!

MR. DRAIN:

I stand corrected.

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So I would like to see this resolution passed because it is not totally all encompassing. I would think probably that the basic determination as to whether snowmobiles should be used in any specific area should be the prerogative of the Lands and Forests Department which is as designated by the Department of Lands and Forests.

I don't shudder and say that this should be restricted, that we should view all this with alarm. People were alarmed when the automobile was invented, stories were written and laws were passed. At one time, so history shows, you had to walk on the road waving a red flag and saying, beware, the automobile is coming, and certainly there was a school of thought that said, No: the automobile is not here to stay, we're going back to the horses. Anyone who buys Ford Motor Company stock is making a serious mistake because the fad won't last, it'll be gone. And now we have with us the snowmobile. It's a monstrosity, it's a thing we're going to have to live with and something that people are going to enjoy in spite of themselves.

In my personal thinking, and I have appreciated the fact -- on some several occasions when I had to get out a piece of machinery that was buried in the snow in the bush -- that if you could get on a snowmobile and get there it's I assure you, a lot more satisfactory than snowshoeing, which I have had to do on some occasions also.

So with that in mind, Mr. Speaker, I urge all hon. members before deciding on a very, very firm position on this particular thing, to have regard to the fact that the negative position would not be proper because you have this basic safeguard built in, as designated by the Department of Lands and Forests. I have confidence in the hon. Minister of Lands and Forests, that he will properly take heed of the responsibilities he has to all Albertans.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I earnestly request that all hon. members forthwith bring this to a vote and pass on to the other business of the House with the great expediency that we have shown in our operations thus far in the Legislature.

MR. STROMBERG:

Mr. Speaker, to use the term that the hon. Member for Drumheller uses; I wasn't going to speak but -- sorry hon. member. But when I heard the words, 'peace and quiet in winter', and 'poets', I thought to myself in 40 below weather, I certainly haven't seen any poets in our parks in wintertime. Our parks are dead. They should be used for winter recreation.

The other point, Mr. Speaker, I would like to point out -- I was not going to really speak, I lost a page in my speech and I was in difficulties here -- but, Mr. Speaker, earlier in the session I had the opportunity -- I beg your pardon?

MR. HENDERSON:

You can go on reading it.

MR. STROMBERG:

Oh, thank you, Mr. Henderson. Earlier in this session I had an opportunity to suggest that snowmobiles be allowed in Provincial Parks. Since that point in time, I had the opportunity to discuss this distasteful regulation with the hon. minister and personnel within his Parks Branch. They have come up with many valid and worthy excuses for this objectionable restriction. But in my constituency, when I tried to explain the government's stand on this, I am afraid my defense of the government's stand falls on deaf ears and is viewed with considerable amount of hostility. Mr. Speaker, to account for this hostility, I would like to point out that there are

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approximately 60,000 snowmobiles in this province. The Camrose area is the snowmobile capital of the world.

May I quote from a letter -- and this is where I lost this letter -- from the Alberta Wheat Pool. It basically said that in the Camrose area there was one snowmobile for every 3.2 people. But what I would also like to point out to you, Mr. Speaker, is that with 60,000 snowmobiles in Alberta and with the number increasing yearly, the popularity of this winter sport is certainly not going to fade away. With the cities, towns and villages passing bylaw after bylaw curtailing the use of these snowmobiles, and with more and more farmers concerned with the possibility of a lawsuit on their hands -- and may I point out to you that there is a lawsuit presently before the courts in Calgary from actions resulting from damages caused by a farmer not warning some Calgarians of a fence line -- this leaves very little area that is left in Alberta for snowmobiling that is legal.

So when the people in my constituency get a little up tight, when they cannot, in a sense, use their own Provincial Parks; when they find that they will have to pay for the privilege of using private land; that they are causing no amount of harm to the ecology, I do not blame these good citizens for their use of some choice words of English, especially when you consider that the Big Knife Provincial Park was developed by the community of Forestburg and by the hard work of a former member of this Assembly, Mr. Hillman, and that this park was given free to the Parks Branch. The same holds true for Miquelon Lake Park. Here the Lions Club of Camrose, of which I am a member, purchased 160 acres of property and developed a beach and surrounding area with a considerable amount of sweat and brawn. Altogether, thousands of dollars were raised by the Lions Club for the development of that park. Mr. Speaker, those thousands of dollars were hard earned monies. There were a lot of light bulbs, apple sales, and fund raising projects that went into the development of Miquelon Lake Park. All of this labour and effort was given to the then Minister of Highways for use of a park by Camrosians and the people of Alberta. The then Minister of Highways in his gratitude for this gift from our community, built and paved about ten miles of road, from Highway No. 21 at New Sarepta to Miquelon Lake for the people of Edmonton and left the good people of Camrose the district to drive over some of the hilliest, dustiest, roughest roads to get to their own park. To top it all off, park wardens come up with the story of how much damage is being done to the ecology of Miquelon Lake.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to see some of the evidence of this damage done. I surmise that it consists of some broken branches, willow aspen, and maybe some buck brush, and maybe the broken sleep of some park wardens. Mr. Speaker, in the name of common sense, I strongly urge that this distasteful curtailment of a great winter sport be rescinded.

DR. WARRACK:

Mr. Speaker, I rise at this time knowing that I will not have time to finish my remarks. I do welcome the debate very much. I would first, however, mention that, and perhaps I would call it a point of privilege -- I am not the smoothest guy around in this Legislature, so if that is the wrong terminology, you can correct me -- I think the mover of the motion utilized a petition of some 500 names, which I assume is the correct amount. I wish to ask one really important question and two very minor ones. The minor ones being, what is the timing or date of the petition and secondly, I have not had that petition, have I?

But most of all, and here's the important one, would you be kind enough to read what the petition says. You mentioned some remarks on the part of the people who signed the petition, but I've had recent

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indication in my own constituency with respect to a particular problem in building a swimming pool and a misunderstanding which led to a petition that almost blew the whole thing. I think it's just critical that we know what a petition says when a petition is referred to, so particularly on the third point, would you say what the petition says, that the people signed?

MR. HENDERSON:

He tabled it.

MR. WYSE:

I tabled the petition. You can read it. As far as the date of the petition, it was around January 19th, the same time as I requested a meeting with the delegation that you turned down.

DR. WARRACK:

Did I have the petition? I have not yet seen the petition, right?

MR. WYSE:

Right.

DR. WARRACK:

May I see it please?

MR. TAYLOR:

Let's adjourn while he reads it.

DR. WARRACK:

O.K. The point being that unless the members of the Legislative Assembly know what petition 500, or whatever the number was, that people signed, it's very difficult to appraise its impact and the reason...[Interjections]...If the hon. Member for Wetaskin-Leduc would show the kind of maturity that I expect of him, I'd be happy to proceed on with my remarks.

HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

MR. WYSE:

On a point of order. I'm sure the hon. minister knew that there was a petition and in fact, he refused to meet with a delegation to present this petition in January. It's the principle, is it not?

MR. TAYLOR:

He had three months to read it and he didn't.

DR. WARRACK:

I have it now, thank you, but I had not seen the petition before.

MR. WYSE:

But you did know there was a petition.

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DR. WARRACK:

Yes, but there are a million petitions in Alberta, and it really is helpful to know what the petition says, and that's the reason I asked the question.

AN HON. MEMBER:

The motion has been on the Order Paper.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Yes, for six weeks.

DR. WARRACK:

I'd like to then proceed with just a few remarks, and since it seems to have struck a chord of considerable sensitivity across the way, maybe we can lighten the debate just a bit. I notice that the hon. Member for Edmonton Kingsway was referring to the psychological masculinity overtones of running a snowmobile and I was thinking at the time that if we just had feminine snowmobiles, we'd probably have no difficulty at all.

But, referring specifically to the snowmobiles, now, and I think we can enter the serious part of the debate on this resolution, first of all, I very much welcome the debate on this because it has a great deal of impact on the order of some of the constructive suggestions, made particularly by the hon. Member for Edmonton Jasper Place and a number of the other members on both sides, in terms of just what we do want to have for Provincial Parks. And what they should be like - whether they should be nature oriented to geographic features in a Provincial Park and that the paramount thing might be to preserve those parks. For example, in the Cypress Hills Provincial Park, it's my understanding that that particular area has rocks and other geographic and animal life elements that are not found in other places because the area was not glaciated. It is a unique part of nature that we have here in Alberta. Whether we really want to have our Provincial Parks be nature oriented parks or whether indeed they should be recreation oriented parks or perhaps both - this is the kind of policy situation that we're facing as all members of the Legislative Assembly and indeed the kind of policy situation that I think, ought to have been faced up to a very long time ago.

However, notwithstanding those matters, I think that a number of hon. members, and particularly the mover of the motion, Mr. Wyse, did provide a stinging criticism of the regulations that were passed by the previous cabinet in June, 1971.

I recognize, with respect to the hon. Member for Vermilion-Viking, that these wouldn't surface in terms of people knowing about them unless they read the paper very carefully, or had some other way of knowing when these regulations and restrictions were passed. The regulations refer not only to snowmobiles, but the ATV's, the all terrain vehicles, which include the dune buggies, and so forth, and also trail bikes. The regulations refer to all of the motorized elements when used in the provincial parks.

That is the problem if we want to call it a problem. I don't really think it is so much a problem as a matter of part of the healthy, necessary and ongoing debate about what we want to have in recreation facilities broadly in Alberta. Whether all of these aspects, or only part of them that might relate to nature-oriented parks, relatively intensive but recreation-nature oriented parks, particularly near cities -- such as suggested by the hon. Member for Calgary North Hill, and seconded as I recall, by the hon. Member for Edmonton Norwood -- whether these would be the orientation of the provincial parks services that we would provide, or whether we want to be as we are in some places, in the rodeo business, and the snowmobile racing business and so forth.

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Those points I think were made very well in the form of questions by the hon. Member for Sedgewick-Coronation. I might follow up on one other aspect that he mentioned, that was extremely important -- the matter of firearms. One of the regulations we did pass since September 10, 1971 is a regulation to ban firearms in a fireable position in provincial parks. That is something that was mentioned, is very important, and I think you will be happy to note that that particular prohibition does exist now as of this fall. It is rather important, I think, judging by the way you expressed your concerns.

I must make sure I have the opportunity, and I don't have much time, Mr. Speaker, to give some clarification on the matter of environmental damage. There is environmental damage. It results from not only the situation during the winter, particularly in areas of a limited snowfall where there is a breaking through the snow onto the ground to the environmentally fragile flora and fauna and plant life of the provincial parks. Remember that in many, many cases, this is exactly why we have the provincial parks, but there is another source of environmental damage also . . .

MR. HENDERSON:

Does the hon. minister intend to adjourn the debate, because it is 4:30? If he is going to finish, maybe we could go along with it, but if he is going to adjourn . . .

MR. SPEAKER:

It has just barely come to 4:30. I was going to ask the hon. minister if he could conclude shortly, with leave of the House, or whether he would prefer to adjourn the debate.

DR. WARRACK:

I will be happy to finish this point and then adjourn the debate.

MR. SPEAKER:

Has the hon. minister leave to finish this point he is now --

MR. HENDERSON:

Is he going to adjourn the debate?

MR. SPEAKER:

There is not unanimous agreement, and I must, therefore, ask the hon. minister if he would like to adjourn the debate.

DR. WARRACK:

In the case of that lack of courtesy, Mr. Speaker, I will adjourn the debate.

MR. HENDERSON:

Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. There is no question of lack of courtesy. It is the rules of the House. This House sets aside one hour out of each week for these particular bills. The hon. minister can speak at length on this subject when it comes up again. It is not a matter of courtesy.

DR. WARRACK:

Mr. Speaker, I was not speaking on a bill.



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PUBLIC BILLS AND ORDERS OTHER THAN GOVERNMENT ORDERS  
(Second Reading)

Bill No. 200 An Act to Amend The Legislative Assembly Act  
(Adjourned Debate)

MR. APPLEBY:

Mr. Speaker, when I adjourned debate on this bill some weeks ago I had covered a number of areas, and in order to maintain the sequence of my remarks, I would like to take a few moments to review two of what I consider the important points that I established.

One of these was the fact that -- and one of the hon. members had also, Mr. Speaker, mentioned this one -- that if the province had a rigid election date, this could at some time conflict with the federal election date as well, and as a result there might be some confusion, not only in the mind of the electorate, but also in duties. In many areas some of the people who are election officials for provincial areas also act for federal elections, and this might create difficulty. Also the organizing of various parties, and various candidates would be a strain on many people within the province.

I gave an example of how this had once occurred in the province of Alberta, a provincial election and shortly afterwards a federal election occurred within a week or ten days. To indicate the confusion that had arisen, perhaps, in the minds of the electorate: in the provincial election they voted solidly in one area of provincial ridings contained in a federal riding as well, for one political party, the Social Credit Party, and then a week or ten days later, the same people voted very solidly federally for the Liberal Party as well. I thought this was a good indication of some of the problems that might arise.

The other point I established, Mr. Speaker, was some of the options that would have to be considered by the provincial government if they were boxed in by a rigid election date, in the society in which we live today, the rapid social changes, economic changes, technological changes and so on. The Provincial Government might be faced with the necessity of introducing legislation and trying to get administrative machinery into action to put this legislation into effect, and because of the fact that an election date was approaching they might have to consider one of two things -- either to rush it through and try and get the administration set up because of the fact that there was indeed a necessity for this type of legislation in the province. Another option might be to wait till after the election and then, of course, the people of the province might suffer unnecessary hardships on account of this.

Another option that I mentioned, of course, was one that, faced with this sort of a dilemma or predicament the provincial government could possibly repeal the act that they found so restrictive when it was in effect. I gave an example of how a previous government in Alberta had been faced with this possibility because they had passed an act which was known as The Legislative Recall Act, which allowed them to recall their MLA by petition if they thought he wasn't doing a good job. And because the people in the constituency of Okotoks decided to recall their MLA who was the then premier, Mr. William Aberhart, the Legislature was called into session and the act was repealed.

I don't criticize the previous government for repealing the act. The criticism would have to be of course that the act was ill-considered in the first place and should never have been passed. It just gave an indication of how restrictive on the government process it could be if such a thing was in effect. The restrictions could be equally as much if they had a rigid election date as well. So this I

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think is a very good instance of something that was done in a hasty, ill-considered manner, and it caused difficulties for the government when they were faced with the actual facts of what restrictions had been placed upon them.

Mr. Speaker, the hon. Minister of Agriculture, the deputy premier, in his remarks in this debate mentioned the fact that possibly in one of the numerous addresses he has given across the nation from time to time, he may have at some time mentioned the fact that perhaps there should be a set time between elections.

I think possibly, Mr. Speaker, that perhaps all the members of this Assembly at some time or another have given some thought to this same type of question. But as the hon. deputy premier said in his remarks, having sober second thoughts -- and I hope we're all in that condition right now -- he could see the difficulties that such a rigid election date might create and the problems that could ensue as a result of this.

Certainly the problems and the difficulties are many and they are complex, and there is absolutely no need to create unnecessary difficulties for the process of government because, for the legislatures of this land, the process of government is becoming increasingly more difficult all the time.

Now the hon. Member for Clover Bar -- he's not with us right now -- but he raised a point the other day in his remarks; what are the people of this province saying about this bill? And I thought to myself that this was rather significant because I had gotten into a discussion, Mr. Speaker, with a group of people about this. In fact I had a rough time with this group of people.

I would like to tell the House, Mr. Speaker, just what this conversation was and the way it developed. This one gentleman said to me; "Mr. MLA, is it right that the Province of Alberta spent a million bucks to run that last election in August?" And I had to acknowledge that I thought this was the right figure. He said; "That's quite a lot of money." I said, "That's true." He said, "You mean we spent a million dollars to elect 75 MLAs and send them to Edmonton?" I said, "That's correct." He said, "Well, you know, maybe that's all right. I was kind of pleased," he said this to me, Mr. Speaker, "that we changed the government in this province. I was also kind of pleased that the government seemed to take hold and get down to business in a very good manner. Then they came along to the opening of the session of the Legislature and they had a real good Throne Speech. I thought that was something special." Then he said to me, Mr. Speaker, "And then that budget came out and it looked to me as though they meant business, looked to me like they were really going to get down and do what they said they were going to do. I was pretty happy about everything." And then he said, "All of a sudden, when everything seemed to be going so good, they just stopped right in the middle of it and started talking about when they should have the next election, just seven or eight months after we had spent a million dollars to send all 75 of them into Edmonton to look after the affairs of this province. And if that is all they had to do I think we wasted our money." Well actually the term he used was he thought it "was stupid and ridiculous", and actually I kind of had to agree with him.

But of course, Mr. Speaker, I didn't want to take too much flak on this, so I had to explain to him that this bill was introduced by a private member, by the hon. Member for Wetaskiwin. Actually I have known the hon. Member for Wetaskiwin for some time. He may not remember me but I've talked to him at health unit conventions and so on and I have been quite impressed with his intelligence and ability. I think it's quite disappointing that actually this was the only type of input he could think of to introduce to this Legislature at this period. Really it was rather tragic, but I explained it as well as I

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could and I think my friend perhaps was satisfied; I hope he was anyway.

Actually, Mr. Speaker, I would like to submit to this Assembly that I think this bill is very hastily and poorly conceived; that it covers a matter that is of little or no priority; that there's certainly no urgency in this matter. It's strange that it should be urgent at the present time when the hon. member over there had several years in which he could have introduced this type of legislation. I think I've indicated some of the complications that such a rigid election date could create. I think it's also a fact that if you investigate the journals of the legislatures of the provinces of this country and the House of Commons as well, you would see that this very particular question has arisen from time to time, Mr. Speaker, and there has never been any practical possibility of solution to the suggestion as it is indicated in this bill.

So therefore, Mr. Speaker, I would suggest to this House that we dispose of this item of legislation as quickly as possible and, Mr. Speaker, that we should not support it in any way and also that we should vote on it with a great deal of expediency so that we can get down to attending to some of the things that we were elected for and that we are here to look after.

MR. WILSON:

I agree with the previous speaker that we should vote on this very quickly and I would be very happy, as soon as I have had an opportunity to make a few statements, to vote on it.

Mr. Speaker, It is my contention that the principle of regular elections is the basic issue in this bill. If government members wish to make amendments to Bill No. 200, 'The proposed Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly Act', then so be it: But, the basic principal of regular elections is still the prime consideration.

Most certainly, many citizens have expressed a desire to have provincial elections on a regular basis, including members of this Assembly.

AN. HON. MEMBER:

Why didn't you put it in?

MR. WILSON:

In dealing with principle, particularly among politicians, I feel the general public is entitled to expect continuity.

In other words Mr. Speaker, when a politician makes a public statement of principle, and even more, one of policy, the public should reasonably expect that these utterances will last longer than a few short months. Surely, these simple points are the basics of political integrity. Even more so, Mr. Speaker, when they form the basis of a campaign platform, immediately prior to an election.

On this point I would like to refer to a newspaper article, and I quote:

"Leitch Wants Elections on Fixed Dates

'Alberta's provincial elections should be held on a fixed date every four or five years,' says Merv Leitch, P.C. candidate in Calgary-Egmont."

And it goes on:

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"Today many people want to be actively involved in campaigns," said Mr. Leitch. "When they don't know the election date until 39 days before voting day, they are simply unable to plan their holidays or work so that they can take part in the campaign and vote."

HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

MR. WILSON:

"In this election many people are being deprived of their vote, Mr. Leitch said. He pointed to the cases of people who long ago arranged to be away on holiday on August 30. The advance poll is really no help because it is too close to election day," he said.

'In addition,' said Mr. Leitch, 'it is inconsistent with the whole idea of elections for a government to be able to call an election at a time when it may feel the opposition is least able to present its programs and plans.'

'The purpose of an election is to permit people to listen to both sides and to make a choice,' said Mr. Leitch."

HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

MR. WILSON:

"It works a hardship on the voter to have a system which allows a government to catch the other party by surprise," he said.

Mr. Leitch also noted that a fixed date would result in 'considerable cost savings for all parties' due to orderly presentation of advertising, printing and other campaign materials.

'Of course', said Mr. Leitch, 'there could be circumstances where a defeat of a government in the Provincial Legislature would require an immediate election.'"

That's from the Southside Mirror of August 12, 1971.

Mr. Speaker, that is a most interesting newspaper article and I believe this bill clearly covers all the points Mr. Leitch made prior to the last election.

Further, Mr. Speaker, I have an editorial which I would like to refer to and quote from: It reads, in part, as follows:

"But the most disturbing aspect of the whole scene is not that a spring election was not called. What is disturbing to concerned Albertans is the Socred's use of the election call as part of their campaign strategy. An election should provide the voters with an opportunity to elect their constituency representatives fairly, without facing the disadvantage of manipulation of the election time by the party in office. It is time to put an end to this practice by fixing the election date at regular intervals, unless of course the government is defeated in the House by a vote of non-confidence."

(And I am still quoting) "Peter Lougheed is committed to this reform."

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In this light, the Progressive Conservative principle of 'People before Party' becomes even more meaningful."

MR. MINIELY:

How about your actions?

MR. WILSON:

Now I have another newspaper article, Mr. Speaker, part of which says:

"The election call has no rightful part in a political campaign," Mr. Lougheed said.

Speaking in reference to the Socreds, (and I'm still quoting) having passed a June election after the public had been led to expect one by Mr. Stronach's earlier remarks this year, Mr. Lougheed said that he was committed to the principle of having predetermined election dates set at regular intervals.

'This is the best way to provide the maximum opportunity for the voters to consider the record and positions of all parties and register their approval or disapproval,' he said."

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear.

MR. WILSON:

"Mr. Lougheed added that he feels very strongly that no government should have the power to arbitrarily set election campaign plans. 'An election call should not be used as part of campaign strategy,' he added.

Mr. Lougheed acknowledges that such a reform would be similar to the United States system, but pointed out that a critical difference would be the continuance of the present practice of the government calling an election if it is defeated in the House by a specific vote of non-confidence."

Mr. Speaker, this bill clearly covers all the points raised by Mr. Lougheed in this newspaper article, which I believe, purported to be part of his party's platform.

Mr. Speaker, these last two newspaper articles were part of the Alberta Conservative publication, being Volume 1, No. 12 of July 1971.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Table it.

MR. WILSON:

Because of the source of the articles, Mr. Speaker, I contend they are Lougheed government platform and include every hon. member opposite, including those who have already stated they will vote against this Bill.

Mr. Speaker, if we are to have political integrity, if the public are to ever be able to believe public statements made by the hon. members opposite, then they will unanimously vote in favour of this bill.

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If they don't vote for the bill, Mr. Speaker, how will the public ever know what is sincere and factual, and what is simply empty, hollow words of inexactitude?

Now, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to table the material that I referred to.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear.

MR. LEITCH:

Mr. Speaker, may I say that's the best speech I've heard from the other side of the House, it also considerably shortens the remarks that I was about to make, because the hon. member is quite right that I expressed the views quoted from the newspaper and I still hold those views and very strongly. As a matter of fact I think it's rather appropriate that we debate this bill at the present time because we are now again engaged in that great Canadian past-time of guessing the election date - and for the benefit of hon. members opposite, that is the federal election date I'm referring to.

AN HON. MEMBER:

They were terrified -- the hon. Member for Drumheller that is.

MR. LEITCH:

I should though, quickly correct an impression that the hon. member left, that this was part of the Conservative party platform, it wasn't; it was certainly part of my campaign platform, and it's one as I indicated earlier, I'm firmly convinced is correct.

There are some things in the bill, Mr. Speaker, with which I disagree and I'll come to those in a moment. But I support wholeheartedly the bill and in particular the principle in the bill, of holding elections on a fixed date rather than at the wish of the government in office.

Mr. Speaker, I suggest that this issue should be decided by examining the advantages and disadvantages to the voter of having fixed election dates. Much has been said already about the advantages and disadvantages of fixed election dates in the prior debates on this bill, and I don't want to take up too much of the House's time rehashing those arguments. But there are some things I think that are worth restating and there are a few items that haven't been covered up to this time in the debate.

The first thing is, I think it is very important to the democratic process that we have as many people as possible involved in it, not only in the actual voting but also in the very important election process. What we do by having elections on uncertain dates is make it as difficult as possible for the citizens of the province to become involved in the election process, either as voters or as part of the election campaign workers during election time.

When I think of the difficulty caused by uncertain dates for workers, I can't help but think of the number of people that are involved. I forget the actual number of candidates that were in the last provincial election but I think it would be somewhere in the order of 200. Mr. Speaker, I know that the people working on any particular campaign, vary greatly from candidate to candidate, but I wouldn't be at all surprised if it was something in the order of 20,000 people actually engaged in election work during the last election. That works out to about 100 persons per candidate. When you consider the workers, the employers, the families, and so on, this really brings to a very large number, the people who are

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affected by the period during which the work and election campaign is going on. I can recall, in the last campaign, we all anticipated -- including, I suspect some of the hon. members on the other side -- that we would have an election in the early spring. People who were anxious to work in that election made their plans for the year around the fact that they anticipated being tied up for up to a couple of months during an election campaign in the spring. When there was an uncertainty that existed late into the summer it meant holidays were changed. All of their activities for that year turned on the election date.

For many of them it was a very unhappy experience. I can recall people who worked in my campaign who hadn't been on a vacation for a year or two who tried to schedule the vacations around the election campaign. In a couple of cases they had to return from long distances during the middle of their vacations in order to work in the campaign. There is not the slightest doubt that an uncertain election date makes it much more difficult for the worker to become involved in an election.

To a lesser extent, but also true, is the difficulty that uncertainty places on the voter. That arises in a couple of ways. Having the election occur -- as in the last provincial election -- during the normal vacation period with a very short advance poll, made it very difficult for those people who were coming and going on vacations to get to the election, to cast their ballot. There was a good deal of anger and frustration on the part of many people because they encountered this difficulty in placing their vote during the last election.

There was a great deal of difficulty in preparing a voters list. The enumeration was extremely badly done. I think we all had examples of blocks of people, streets being missed entirely. When that occurred, the people who should have been on the list but weren't on the list, had to go through a great deal of trouble to get on it. That also makes it that much more difficult for them to cast their ballots. There isn't the slightest doubt this causes a good deal of ill will on the part of the voter towards the process of government.

Mr. Speaker, up until now I have spoken about the disadvantages to people who want to work in election campaigns, the disadvantages to the voters. There is another group of people who are also affected by an uncertain election date. That is the people who are involved in an election in the business sense, the people who are concerned with the advertising, with the preparation of signs and things like that. They need to gear up their staffs in order to meet the demand of an election. Again, they are operating in an area of uncertainty. They have trouble planning staff to meet the anticipated demand. They take on new people; the election isn't called and then they have to do something with them. That, too, Mr. Speaker, isn't something that is a small matter for a great many people within the Province of Alberta.

We've heard a good deal of discussion about the disadvantages of having a fixed election date, apart from the one that I'm coming to in a moment, Mr. Speaker. It seems to me that the disadvantages of having an election on a fixed date are very, very minor indeed. Some of them are technical. It has been suggested that there might be a conflict with elections in other places in Canada and that, Mr. Speaker, I think is a technical difficulty, one that's not hard to overcome.

We've talked of the disadvantage of a fixed election date leading to much longer campaigns than we now have, and I'm sure everyone says, "heaven forbid that that should occur." But, Mr. Speaker, I really don't regard that as a very significant disadvantage. Much can be said about it, but I think in actual

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practice it's not a major disadvantage. There are several reasons for that, and I'll only mention a couple of them. First of all, to a greater or lesser extent, campaigning goes on for a long time, whether we have fixed or uncertain election dates. The suggestion that the fixed election date is going to materially increase that period of campaigning is one that I don't think practice has proven to be so. In addition, Mr. Speaker, the person who bores the electorate by an unnecessarily lengthy election campaign is very likely to incur its displeasure and have it expressed at the polls.

In resume on that aspect of my comments, Mr. Speaker, in looking at this issue from the point of view of the voter and I submit to the members of this Assembly that that's the only valid point of view to consider it from, there can't be any doubt but that the advantages flowing to the voter from the fixed election date far, far exceed the disadvantages.

I said in opening my comments that I thought there were some defects in the bill and I'll now just mention two of them. One refers to an election date in June. I'm not at all sure that that is the best date on which to have elections. Almost any date has its pros and cons. I would have thought an election late in the fall, after the harvesting was over, might have been a more appropriate date. The date is a very minor matter indeed. I do think one of the serious deficiencies in the bill is the absence of the right of the government to go to the electorate in something less than the four-year period, if it feels an issue has arisen on which it wants to get an indication of the voter's wishes by an election. It seems to me, Mr. Speaker, that is a very important matter that shouldn't be taken away from the government. There may well arise during the course of the four years something so vital and so important that the government feels it should not act on it without ascertaining the wishes of the people by an election. In that respect, Mr. Speaker, I think the bill is deficient.

Mr. Speaker, there is of course the argument that if you amend the bill to provide that a government can call an election in a period less than that specified in the bill, the argument would run that you've got all the disadvantages of an apparent fixed election date without any of the advantages, because then the government is simply going to call, at its wish, an election in less than the four year period, and we are going to have more elections rather than fewer, or elections, say, every two or three years, rather than every four or five years which is now normally the case. I really wouldn't worry very much about that, Mr. Speaker, because it seems to me that any government that acts in that way runs a very serious risk of justifiably arousing the ire of the voter.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I support the bill. I have very grave reservation about the absence in the bill of a provision permitting the government to call an election in less than the four year period specified in the bill if there arises, in the view of the government, an issue on which it feels so strongly that it wishes to obtain a mandate from the people.

DR. PAPROSKI:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to speak on this bill. I would first comment to the hon. Member for Calgary Bow, that, in fact, you could add me to that list, because I think the principle is right. There is no doubt in my mind. However, it is a principle that should be taken in the broad term of the definition. If there is a principle that results in confusion and harm to the electorate for the many reasons that the various members have enunciated, then I suggest that maybe that principle should be changed. This present principle would be worse; it has to be qualified.



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What I am saying is that although that principle is right, and I agree with it that we should have fixed elections dates, there are other problems that have been very well enunciated by the various members. We need another principle to supercede that principle, and I think this shifting of direction for all concerned is a truer principle. This is responsibility, this is credibility, this is the ability to say "why not?" and do what is right.

Consequently, considering all those factors that have been mentioned, I cannot vote for this bill. I am going to speak against the bill just to re-enforce and to be recorded that I am not opposed to the bill in principle, number one - I am not opposed to the bill because the opposition members brought this up, although I have my doubts why they brought it up. It would benefit the electorate economically and it would benefit the opposition. I would support that if it were possible. But it is not possible for the various reasons that have been enunciated repeatedly.

So with these number of considerations which I will repeat and re-enforce: a preset date for an election provincially must take into consideration the federal government. The confusion that would result if there was an overlapping election is obvious, with respect to the personnel, with respect to the candidates, and so forth and so forth. I even have a personal reason -- I have a bigger brother who is running for member of parliament, and I wouldn't want to have any conflict with him. So my serious concern is truly that, plus the fact ... [Interjection] ... if the hon. member would permit me, please, that as an MLA I truly believe in the opposition. With all this confusion and shuffle that may result the opposition may, in fact, vanish.

I am sure there are other reasons, too, that if you consider this carefully, should be brought in as a priority item and some have been mentioned by the hon. Attorney General, and there are various other amendments that should have been brought in, in conjunction with this, and certainly as a priority. One of these priorities I would mention quickly is to extend the advanced polls. Number two is to have a continuous updated list of names of the electorate so there will not be a mad race to get everybody on the polls, and as a result, have confusion, missed blocks, and so forth.

Another item that has been mentioned -- and just to re-enforce it -- is the option and the right of the government in power to go to the electorate if it so desires. On these points alone, and to avoid confusion and support the other principles that supercede it, I must vote against the bill.

MISS HUNLEY:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to rise just for a moment on this because I would like to see it voted on. I would like to see it disposed of. I just want to reassure the people on the other side, and the public that if the hon. Attorney General votes for, I intend to vote against it, and I really don't think there would be any indication of a split in cabinet solidarity. This is not one of my concerns. I just wanted to make that point quite clear -- that I am opposed to it, and will vote against it, and I think the Attorney General and I will still be able to carry on the best interests of legislation for the people of Alberta. I endorse his arguments. I think they were excellent, and I think it's a great vote of confidence you got from the hon. Member from Calgary Bow. I hope he will always pay close heed to what you say.

MR. LOUGHEED:

Mr. Speaker, in rising to participate in the debate on Bill No. 200, I had waited, as I think all members noted, in the hope that the Leader of the Opposition might participate also in the debate. I

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thought that it would be very interesting to all of us on both sides of the House if we could have an opportunity to hear the views by the leader of the opposition on this bill, and on the principle behind the bill.

There are two, of course, distinct parts to this bill, in terms of my response to it. The first is pretty obvious, and that is that quite clearly, no matter how one might protest, it's been put forth, I think, without too much seriousness, with a certain element of facetiousness.

But on the other hand, it also contains a very important matter. I find, I think, it somewhat amusing that it's put forth so closely in terms of the seating arrangement in the House to the Leader of the Opposition. In fact, immediately on his lap, the bill was presented.

It's the sort of bill that, I would have to frankly admit, if the hon. Member from Wetaskiwin had leaped to his feet a year ago and proposed, I'm not sure what my response would have been in this Legislature. I did note in reference to the remarks made by the member from Calgary Bow -- my colleagues quickly pointed out to me that there was a phrase in there that said something about "at this point of time". I note, too, that he made a reference to the platform and would like to confirm the understanding by the hon. Attorney General that it was not a matter that was contained in the platform.

Of course, in looking at the editorial that has been tabled from the Conservative Newsletter, with regard to the matter, and also comments that I have made, I recognize a certain sensitivity about the subject. I thought I could hardly duck the issue and had to rise, and I hope the Leader of the Opposition feels the same way as I do about the bill.

MR. STROM:

I do.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

MR. LOUGHEED:

So I don't think I can just sit, ignore, abstain, leave the House, or do any of the other things I might like to do. But on the other hand, I recognize that at the time that particular editorial was written, and I was called, I did feel a sense of pretty deep frustration that there was in the province of Alberta, at least in my view, a playing of games with regard to the question of timing of an election, and I was frankly disturbed.

The matter that is before the House on this bill is a matter that is a very, very serious one, despite the way in which it has been presented -- the circumstances -- and I'm not particularly picking at the particular member -- but the timing, the seating arrangement, and the discussion of a year ago regarding when we were going to have an election. However, in looking at the bill, and I'm sure members of both sides of the House have their views and will vote in accordance with their views on the matter, I have thought about it a great deal and listened to the tape.

First of all I would like to say that I believe I'm right in this, that this is the first private member's bill that we are actually bringing to a vote, and the first private member's bill that was, in fact, raised and has been debated. I think that that's a very healthy part of the process of this Legislature.

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The one matter that does trouble me, and I think forces to me to the conclusion that I can't support the bill, has to do with the matter of mandate. I think there are some constitutional questions. There are certain matters involved in committing one's successors to a bill of this nature in terms of agreeing with the principle. There have certainly been the well expressed problems in relation to a federal election at the same time. Perhaps there are some alternatives. Certainly one of the views would be that there should not be political advantage taken in terms of the question of calling a date. I don't think the bill would meet the mover's views if it was really a matter of saying that it not be more than four years. I think that all that has done is, then, reduce it from a constitutional five to a four-year period. Perhaps there is some way of having greater notice, but again that might meet the problems which members have expressed that it would only extend the campaigning period. On the other hand, I seriously put forth the idea to members that there may be a way in which notification of an election and the actual election day could be extended in some way without extending for the entire period a formal campaign situation.

But assessing all of this, there is one compelling matter that, in my view, precludes my voting in favour of this bill. I think a government, particularly in these times -- and as I mentioned in my budget speech I referred to one particular instance -- simply has to be in a position on a particular issue of grave magnitude and importance that arises to seek in terms of public support the backing of the proposals of that administration, and assure that, in fact, it has the backing of the public, even if that time is not a time that fits within the normal election period. Events in the history of Canada have shown that it is very, very difficult to determine when these will occur. So on the basis that it would preclude a government leader from making the important assessment in deciding that it was necessary to seek a basic mandate from the people on a matter of grave urgency and importance to the province, I find that I cannot vote in favour of Bill No. 200.

MR. STROM:

Mr. Speaker, I want to say right at the outset that I am not prodded to my feet necessarily by any of the remarks that have been made. I am just anxious to put on the record a couple of points that are rather personal, but I think that it would be well for the House to have the information.

I want to say that I toyed very seriously at one time with giving an election date well in advance of the 39 days that the act calls for. I did on many, many occasions say that in my view I saw no reason to depart from tradition -- the traditional four year elections -- that we as a party had gone for every time except once. And that I believe was in the year 1940 when the Social Credit Party went five years. Then there was another time when it went three years, and for a very particular purpose. As the hon. Premier has indicated there are circumstances when there may be a need of going to the people and such an occasion arose.

Now I might say, and this is something that I have thought about a great deal, had I had strong personal ambitions maybe I would have viewed it in a different light. I can say honestly to this House, Mr. Speaker, that I have never, at any time in the 17 years that it has been my privilege to serve as a member, had strong personal ambitions. But I have had, and I say this as sincerely as I can, a strong desire to serve in the best way that I could, the people that have elected me to high office. But I recognize, too, that there is a need for providing opportunity for people to determine, at periodic intervals, whether or not they are satisfied with their member. And I have never really felt that it is important that this right to determine an election be held in a manner that provides secrecy. It seems to me, and I want to say very clearly, that I support 100% the

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principle of providing information to the electorate so they can know well in advance when that choice can be made. As far as I am concerned, it is not a matter of trying to place the government, the 'now' government, in an embarrassing position -- which I believe it has done -- but it is something I believe in because I believe that people have a right to know that the matter of secrecy does not really provide any benefits whatsoever, generally speaking.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I just felt that it was very important that I stand up and make the point very clear that I did at one time give very serious consideration to stating it -- and as a matter of fact I'm not sure if there are newsmen sitting in the gallery who may have heard me say that I was contemplating, very seriously considering, doing it. But if this bill was passed then, of course, the point that I am trying to make would become law and this would be the procedure that we would follow.

Mr. Speaker, I am not going to try and debate it in any other way, shape, or form, simply to say that I have enjoyed my years of being a member; I have enjoyed my work; I have tried to carry it out to the best of my responsibilities; to the best of my ability. But as to being extremely concerned of taking advantages of any particular situation, that has not been a personal ambition on my part.

MR. YURKO:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to say a few words on this matter. I think we all recognize that this is a major problem and a major matter, and the only point I wish to make is that I believe, very firmly, that the wrong approach was used to bring this matter to the House. I believe the matter should have been brought in the form of a resolution initially, so that it could have been thrashed out in considerable detail. Subsequently, I believe it should have been referred to a committee so that it could have been examined from every aspect and some knowledge could have been accumulated with respect to what might happen -- and the advantages to the people and the disadvantages to the people -- and then, if there was a need for bringing the matter before the House in the form of a bill, it could have been brought in that way.

As a result, I feel I have to vote against the bill, even though I find the matter very interesting. But in voting against this bill I would just like to suggest that I hope the matter comes before this House again in future years.

MR. SPEAKER:

May the hon. member close the debate?

HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

MR. HENDERSON:

Mr. Speaker, it has been so long since this particular debate started -- some of the comments were made weeks ago -- it might be relevant, although it's rather old straw by now, I think, by and large, the salient points in the pros and cons of this particular bill were presented this afternoon by other speakers.

Before coming to the question of the bill itself I would like to comment on the remarks from the hon. Premier about the bill being somewhat facetious. I would like to assure the hon. Premier that while I am prepared to admit there is this element in it on the other hand, Mr. Speaker, I really suggest that there are a number of factors which the Attorney General for example has touched on, which

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really commends some consideration of this particular approach to Canadian elections.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

MR. HENDERSON:

I, for example -- and I may not endear myself to some of my colleagues on this side of the House -- quite frankly, I got tired myself waiting to find out when the election was going to be, so I took two weeks holidays and thought if I read about it in the paper I'd come home. That stands as a matter of record. I got home just about two days before the election was called. And I think everybody has feelings of this sort, no matter what part of a political campaign they are involved in, or what side they are on.

I do suggest, however, Mr. Speaker -- and I say this maybe somewhat facetiously but in an element of being sincere about it also -- to those on the other side of the House who are of the opinion that the government has a substantial advantage in being able to call the election date at its particular choosing. I'd like to suggest the developments in Canada in the last few years point out a lot of occupational hazards in that regard. I don't know of one recent election where any government has found it was particularly advantageous to call it at their advantage. If one looks back at what has happened in Newfoundland, what's happened in Nova Scotia, what's happened in New Brunswick, what's happened in Saskatchewan, what's happened in Alberta, what's happened in Manitoba -- the only two exceptions in Canada I guess have been the Province of Ontario and the Province of British Columbia, where the government supposedly had a tremendous advantage. And then, of course, it might be argued, Mr. Speaker, that if they had had a fixed date they might have done even better. So I'd like to suggest that the arguments of a partisan nature, which tend to the direction of saying this gives the government some advantage, are very obviously highly over-rated in our Canadian political system.

It's quite apparent when the public, the voters of this country, make up their mind about the type of government they are going to have -- the politicians be damned -- they make a decision and that's it. I don't think the question of giving the government a particular advantage is particularly significant. It certainly might be suggested -- in a facetious manner -- in introducing the bill, we are really trying to protect the government from itself. Maybe you will have to stretch that point quite a distance to see the logic in it, but if one looks again at what has happened in Canada in the last provincial elections, I suspect Mr. Trudeau is making the same fatal mistake as to thinking he is going to use the present situation to his advantage. Everybody is getting sick and tired of hearing in the news about when the federal election is going to be and I suspect the MP's on both sides of the House -- including the hon. member in the gallery -- but if he's gone, maybe he has the same feelings about the subject.

I'd like to suggest, Mr. Speaker, that I can't really find the logic behind the arguments about the constitutionality of it. The BNA Act simply says we must have one every five years. I can't see any reason why it couldn't be done at a shorter interval. I agree with the statements of the Premier and other speakers that there would have to be machinery that on a major issue the government could go to the public. I just don't see any other way around it.

I think it would be of interest to point out that when I originally drafted the bill, in what I thought would be the form that it should take, I quite frankly personally had in mind that the motion about this matter as a matter of confidence would probably

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come from the government, because I don't see how a motion in non-confidence is applicable in this particular exercise. I envisioned that the government would say on a particular issue, in keeping with some of the remarks that have been made, that this is a matter of major policy. They would serve notice on all members of the House, give them notice to think this thing over 24 hours, 48 hours. They would then then bring the matter in and the government could decide. And the Legislature would decide in its usual voting fashion about what the outcome should be. I agree that there has to be machinery. I can only say when the bill came back from the Legislative Council, as I found from the short time I was a minister, what goes in the hopper and what comes out, from a layman's standpoint, often has very little resemblance to the other. And I wanted to get the bill in so I didn't bother going back to Council. The House was already in session, I didn't want to through the exercise again.

I can't accept the arguments of lengthy campaigns as being particularly valid about not accepting the bill. We have fixed municipal election dates in Alberta. It seems to work quite satisfactorily. I have to say, Mr. Speaker, that I certainly wouldn't be one with anything to do with the American system of primaries. That system, I understand, was designed 200 years ago when communications in the nation were substantially poorer than they are now and there might have been some need for it. To those who talked about lengthening the campaign, I suggest the objective should be the opposite. With the instant communications we have around the world today, it might be argued that the 39 days we have for a campaign in Alberta is particularly long. Having sat on the other side of the House and watched the opposition make their many suggestions over a four year period I got the impression the Alberta campaign started four years ago, not just 39 days from the date of proclamation but four years ago.

I see, Mr. Speaker, that the time has run out. I suggest that notwithstanding the various views that have been stated, I think it is a timely subject. There have been criticisms concerning it. I also agree that the present constitutional system that we have has served the people of this province and of Canada well. I would like to suggest that the fact that the bill was introduced in this side of the House also, by no means, indicates any solidarity on this side so far as how the people over here are going to vote. I don't really know and would like to assure the hon. Member for Rocky Mountain House that I would certainly hope that this doesn't interfere with her good working relationship with the Attorney General, because I certainly wouldn't anticipate a question of cabinet solidarity on the particular bill, and appreciate the remarks of the Attorney General. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

It has been moved by the hon. Member for Wetaskiwin-Leduc that Bill No. 200, an Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly Act be read a second time. All those in favour, please say aye.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Aye.

MR. SPEAKER:

And those opposed, please say no.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

No.

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MR. SPEAKER:

I regret that I cannot assess the respective volumes again. Would those in favour of the -- [interjections] -- if you want a division, we won't bother with the count.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

[The Division Bell was rung and the House divided as follows:

For the motion: Messrs.

Anderson	Gruenwald	Notley
Ashton	Henderson	Ruste
Barton	Hinman	Sorenson
Benoit	Ho Lem	Speaker, R.
Clark	Lee	Strom
Cooper	Leitch	Taylor
Dickie	Ludwig	Warrack
Dixon	Mandeville	Wilson
Doan	Miller, D.	Wyse
French		

Against the motion: Messrs.

Adair	Fluker	Miller, J.
Appleby	Foster	Miniely
Backus	Getty	Moore
Batiuk	Ghitter	Paproski
Buckwell	Hansen	Purdy
Chambers	Harle	Schmid
Chichak, Mrs.	Hohol	Stromberg
Cookson	Hunley, Miss	Topolnisky
Copithorne	Hyndman	Trynchy
Crawford	Jamison	Werry
Diachuk	King	Young
Dowling	Koziaak	Yurko
Drain	Lougheed	Zander
Farran	McCrimmon	

Totals            Ayes - 28            Noes - 41]

CLERK:

Mr. Speaker, those in favour of the motion 28; those against 41.

MR. SPEAKER:

I declare the motion lost. The House stands adjourned until 8:00 this evening.

[Mr. Speaker left the Chair at 5:37 pm.]

\* \* \* \* \*

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

ROYAL ASSENT

MR. HYNDMAN:

Mr. Speaker, the hon. Lieutenant Governor will now attend upon the Assembly.

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MR. SPEAKER:

May it please Your Honour, the Legislative Assembly of the Province of Alberta has at its present sitting thereof passed a bill to which, in the name and on behalf of the said Legislative Assembly, I respectfully request Your Honour's assent.

CLERK:

The following is the title of the Bill to which Your Honour's Assent is prayed: Bill No. 39, The Municipalities Assistance Amendment Act, 1972. In Her Majesty's name, His Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor doth assent to this Bill.

[His Honour the Lieutenant Governor left the Assembly.]

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.

[The motion was carried without debate or dissent.]

[Mr. Speaker left the chair at 8:06 p.m.]

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COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

[Mr. Diachuk in the Chair]

Department of the Attorney General (cont.)

MR. DIACHUK:

The Committee of Supply will now come to order.

Appropriation 1252 Bowden Institution (cont.)

Salaries

MR. DIXON:

Mr. Chairman, I'd like to ask the hon. Attorney General a question about the future of Bowden. The hon. member from the constituency in which the Bowden Institute is located, was saying that a lot of the buildings are not in use at the present time, and I just wondered what future plans we had for Bowden? I'm following it up with a question that I asked the other night. Some of the referrals we send to Ponoka -- as far as the criminal acts are concerned -- and I wondered if any consideration was given to that institution because of its close proximity to the Ponoka institution?

MR. LEITCH:

Mr. Chairman, as I indicated in answer to a question asked in the House during the question period, the whole question of the future of the Bowden institution will be under review. I expect to include that in part of the general review of the correctional institutes, which I have indicated I'll start as soon as the present session recesses, but we don't have any firm plans at the moment as to its future. We'll formulate those plans after we've reviewed it. The suggestion the hon. member has raised about using it as a



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facility for maintaining those people who are mentally ill and who are dangerous is one that we'll consider.

MR. DOAN:

Mr. Chairman, supplementary to the question just asked the Attorney General, I would like to ask if it's true that the juvenile section was moved from there, sir, because they thought that it was too isolated a place, and that they should be in a place where they could mix with the crowd? Now this is against my thinking, sir, just to have them moved because of its being an isolated spot. What is your answer to that?

MR. LEITCH:

Well, I'm not sure I can answer the reason as to why they were moved. It occurred before I was in office. I'm not sure whether the Minister of Health and Social Development has any more information on that.

Other Expenses

MR. CLARK:

Mr. Chairman, to the Attorney General, in this period of the time of assessment, you don't expect any change in the staffing pattern of Bowden institution as it is now?

MR. LEITCH:

No.

Appropriation 1252 total agreed to \$1,399,110

Agreed to without debate:

Appropriation 1253 Calgary Correctional Institution \$2,026,030

Appropriation 1254 Fort Saskatchewan Correctional Institution

Fees and Commissions

DR. BUCK:

Mr. Chairman, I would like to ask the hon. minister a question or two and make one or two comments. The first question I'd like to ask the hon. minister is, I happened to be reading the April 1st edition of the Civil Service Association newspaper and there was an article in there by one of your senior civil servants who said something to the effect -- I've just forgotten the quotation exactly, and I forgot the article, but you may be able to enlarge upon it -- the gist of the statement he made was that when the remand centres and detention facilities in Edmonton were completed Fort Saskatchewan would be phased out in 1974 and some of the main cell blocks would be demolished, and it said something to the effect that because of the concrete and the steel rods it would be a difficult job. The people in my area are very, very concerned because they think that this will mean that the Fort Saskatchewan Correctional Institution will be phased out, period. That's the first question that I'd like the hon. minister to enlarge upon and then I have one or two other comments.

MR. LEITCH:

Mr. Chairman, that's not my understanding of the plans for Fort Saskatchewan. Certainly the remand centre that is contemplated that will be built in Edmonton would, in no way, replace the whole of the facilities in Fort Saskatchewan. It would merely take a portion of those people who are now being held in Fort Saskatchewan and hold

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them in the City of Edmonton. But the remand centre is not in any sense a long-term holding facility. It's a short-term holding facility, so it wouldn't replace the facility that's now at Fort Saskatchewan.

DR. BUCK:

Is there any comment on the statement about Mr. Lee -- the man the article mentioned as saying that the demolition crew would be moving in and getting rid of one or two of the old cell blocks in Fort Saskatchewan? Is that so, Mr. Minister?

MR. LEITCH:

That would be dependent upon the building of the remand centre in Edmonton and which would cut down the need for the same size facility in Fort Saskatchewan. But that is sometime down the road because the final plans and specifications are not yet ready for the remand centre in Edmonton and we don't contemplate them being ready until toward the end of this year -- or early next year. Then we have to deal with that building and provide funds in next year's budget and then construction would thereafter have to get under way. It would take two years -- or so I would think -- until the building would be operational. So, any change brought about as a result of the building of the remand centre in Edmonton is a few years down the road.

DR. BUCK:

Another thing I would like the hon. minister to consider in this little game of skill and science we had prior to the election date, as far as negotiations between the civil servants, I happened to get involved in this little dispute, willingly or unwillingly, but out of all of this I could gather -- and I felt very strongly -- that the jail guards and the people who are working in similar conditions should in some way be treated a little differently from the other people in the civil service. I think in their negotiations -- they could still be, of course, part of the civil service -- but in their negotiations they would bargain as a separate group, because their problems are quite unique to the job they have to carry out so far as risk pay goes.

As I say, it is a little difficult to put them in the same kind of pay range as some of the other people in the civil service. This was one of their major gripes, because when you have to go and hold some of these boys in let's say, some of the hardened criminal sections, there is a certain amount of risk. So, if something along this line can be done I am sure the people who are working as guards would certainly feel that they are being more fairly treated.

MR. LEITCH:

The matter of their pay comes within the hon. Minister of Manpower rather than within my department. So I think a response to that particular question should be made by that minister, rather than by me.

DR. BUCK:

In his absence, hon. minister, if it is something the two of you possibly could look at, because this was one of the major gripes. I certainly did give them my support in that, because it is a unique situation with about 540 people involved.

MR. LEITCH:

I think that is a valid point, Mr. Chairman. We will consider it.

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DR. BUCK:

Both to yourself again, and -- where did he go? -- the hon. Minister of Lands and Forests, he was here a minute ago ... here he is. That is my annual pet peeve about not utilizing prisoners on the tree farm in Oliver. As a taxpayer and as a legislator, and also as a humanist, I think we certainly should be able to get these boys over to the tree farm in Oliver. We could save ourselves anywhere from \$80,000 to \$100,000 a year in relatively cheap labour, and the effects of getting these fellows out and getting them gainfully employed would certainly be very therapeutic. So I would certainly like to see the hon. ministers get their heads together on that, and maybe next year I wcn't have to bring it up again.

MR. LEITCH:

We shall get our heads together, Mr. Chairman.

MR. LEE:

I have one small thing I want to bring up. As you may be aware, this year there was a program initiated at the federal penitentiary in Drumheller, where the Southern Alberta Institute of Technology and Mount Royal Ccllege got together and are providing sort of a satellite campus. They are providing courses and so on for the prisoners in this federal penitentiary.

It appeared to me at the time that this would be the type of thing that might be suitable, for instance, under our priority emplyment training program. We had short-term courses of something like 16 weeks, and it would have seemed appropriate to take some of those courses and perhaps put them into our shorter term institutions for some kind of training experience.

I was wondering if you have been able to evaluate, or if your department had the project at Drumheller, and whether you had considered this kind of thing in our institutions?

MR. LEITCH:

That's one of the things that we'll be looking at at the time we're reviewing the entire correctional institute system.

MR. DIXON:

To the hon. Attorney-General, Mr. Chairman, and he probably won't be able to give me the answer tonight, but I had a couple of gentlemen approach me about the subject of safety on the bus that takes the prisoners to Fort Saskatchewan. As you're probably aware, we have the two Mounties 'riding shotgun', sort of thing, on the prisoners. The prisoners are put in a separate cage, and they're handcuffed together, and this gentlemen was asking me what happens if the bus is in a serious accident and overturns, what provisions are made to get those people out of there, if they have the handicap of being handcuffed together, and locked in with no way of getting them out unless the Mounties survive the accident? I said I couldn't answer the question, but I prmised him I'd ask you this.

MR. LEITCH:

Neither can I, but it's something that I will look into. I should say that one of the purposes of the remand centres the one we're building in Calgary now, and the one we're contemplating building in Edmonton, is to cut down on the movement of people from the courts in the city cores out to the institutions, because that movement is a costly thing, and of course, additional cost is the kind of problem you've raised.

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DR. BUCK:

Just one last comment to the hon. minister, and my hon. friend from Banff-Cochrane. I'd like to inform him that I'm very short on the few comments I've had to make, so if he'd just quit heckling and relax -- but anyway, back to business -- the point I'd like to make is that in my association with some of the groups that are within the prison out there, I feel that the community of Fort Saskatchewan itself is not being utilized to the extent it could be as far as day paroles, as far as community involvement goes, and I would certainly like to say to the hon. minister that the new programs that have been started in the last year or two are certainly worthwhile because many of the prisoners now are becoming involved in self-help programs, and are becoming a little more integrated within the community. So my offer to the hon. minister is this: that I'm sure that the people of Fort Saskatchewan, with about 6,000 people in the town and surrounding vicinity, would certainly co-operate in any manner whatsoever to try and help these fellows along. This is the only way that some of them -- unless we get them working within the community -- will probably be back in there. So I would just like to offer the services of my community because we are certainly willing to co-operate in any way we can with your people.

MR. LEITCH:

I have taken note of the hon. member's comments.

MR. FLUKER:

Yes, Mr. Chairman, in regard to the comments of the hon. member across the way, Dr. Buck, about Fort Saskatchewan and the prisoners in Fort Saskatchewan and the way the guards are treated, I might have a few comments on that. I used to work there myself.

I really think that probably the prisoners themselves run our jails nowadays, and I think that's the biggest problem we do have with our civil servants and our guards in the civil service. I think that we should get tougher with them, and when you talk about these fellows being handcuffed and riding in the back of buses and handcuffed in their own little cages, so they should be. What about when they fly an airplane from St. Paul to Edmonton on remand, for just a ride. I think we should have a look at this. A lot of these fellows get picked up just to go for an airplane ride into Edmonton. They spend eight days in Fort Saskatchewan, associate with their fellow -prisoners, fellow men who have been in there and who are hardened criminals, and then that's where they learn, and that's where they meet their jailhouse lawyers, and then they come back and they're real hard. I don't think we're tough enough on them, and I say that we should get tougher. That's my opinion.

And as far as guards are concerned, I think they're doing a real good job. Maybe they should be protected. It isn't the most pleasant place to work sometimes and I think that we should really have a look at these places. I would say this goes for Belmont, the girls' home out at Belmont, and all of them, and I think we should have a look at it.

MR. DIXON:

I have one further question while we are on this subject, Mr. Attorney General. I agree with the hon. member, Mr. Fluker, that some of the guards are very dedicated and over the years have done a good job. I still think in the case of accident through no fault of their own, all those fellows that are handcuffed, it could be their first offence -- they're not all toughened, hardened criminals -- and I think we have some milk of human kindness in us all.

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The question that I would like to ask the Attorney General -- the fact that there are no women's prisons except Fort Saskatchewan in Alberta -- what happens, for example, in a case like Lethbridge or Fort Macleod where a woman may be sentenced to seven days, or four days, or some short sentence? How do you handle that type of prisoner with no facilities in those particular areas?

MR. LEITCH:

I would have to check that for all the areas, but I think they may be held for a short period of time within the cells -- for example the police building in Calgary -- and not taken to an institution unless they have a lengthier sentence.

MR. DIXON:

The reason I asked -- I did have a complaint, Mr. Minister, from one lady prisoner who said; "I happened to be sentenced in Edmonton, so I went and served my three or four days," or whatever it was. But in Lethbridge, apparently, one of the things the magistrates use there is sentence to time in custody and let them off, even if the sentence would have automatically been a few days. So I wonder if you would check and see how they handle it.

MR. FARRAN:

I have just gone into the broad subjects rather than the specifics of the details. The complaint that I normally hear is that there is not enough for the prisoners to do in the jails. They are taught a useful trade, or given much to do apart from playing cribbage, and occasionally they knock each other on the head with a board, and this sort of thing goes on. But I was wondering if the hon. minister would consider the possibility of -- anyway, the prisoners in Spy Hill Jail near Calgary -- doing some useful work which will recover some of the taxpayers' money. What I had in mind was the possibility of operating a sanitary fill site which the city has within a quarter of mile of the jail.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

You had one more comment, Dr. Buck before --

DR. BUCK:

Yes I would like to very briefly comment on the statement that came from the dark ages from the hon. Member for St. Paul. I would like to say that anything we can do to help the lot of the jail guard in Fort Saskatchewan would be very much appreciated by all the people involved. But I would like to say to the hon. member that the people in these jails are exactly that -- they are people -- and so we have to start looking at some type of rehabilitative program. I realize that it's a short stay institution but there are people in there and very, very many native people; some of them have maybe a Grade I or Grade II education and need help. I would like to tell the hon. Member for St. Paul that we have moved out of the dark ages and we're moving even further out of the dark ages as far as penal reform goes. If the hon. member would like to just take a trip through there now and find out some of the things that are being done, I'm sure that possibly his eyes would be opened a little bit and he'd find out that there are people in those institutions.

MR. FLUKER:

I would like to assure the hon. member across the way that I do keep in touch -- I'm quite aware of what's going on -- I might also say, that probably 70% of all the people that are in Fort Saskatchewan are native people -- I wouldn't just exactly say that

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they are of Grade I and II education. We do have some smart ones up there too.

Appropriation 1254 total agreed to \$2,461,870

Agreed to without debate:

<u>Appropriation 1255</u>	Lethbridge Correctional Institute	\$ 957,270
<u>Appropriation 1256</u>	Peace River Correctional Institution	1,064,650

Total Income Account

MR. LUDWIG:

Mr. Chairman, I would like to make a few comments at this time. Firstly I would like to commend the Attorney General for the fact that in the short period as a minister in the House that he has already established the fact that he is a man of principle. Secondly that he is not indulging in the general trend that some other ministers have established that -- oh this isn't done, and that isn't done -- and what has not been done. It's easy to have good hindsight. A lot of people have 20-20 hindsight, but it isn't always possible in the department of this nature to see and project too far ahead either for want of enough research or because of rapidly-changing circumstances. But the fact that the hon. minister has certainly indicated that he is looking forward to the challenge of his position is commendable to say the least.

There are three or four matters that I would like to touch on. The Matthews Report has already been dealt with. I would like to make one comment about it. Whatever the report may mean now, whether the statistics are entirely accurate, or whether they're outdated, the report did bring to the attention of the people and to the attention of the hon. members here that study and research is very vital.

I would like to turn to page 11b and quote very briefly from the bottom of that page -- in any case it's thanks expressed by Dr. Matthews that he was permitted to do this research through the help of the Human Resources Research Council, and I believe, Mr. Chairman, that it's regrettable that a very important group of people -- a very important function -- an institution has been phased out by this government. You can't measure the work and the worth of this kind of a body in terms of dollars and cents -- when you're dealing with human beings, their future, their social, and educational matters.

I also wish to bring to the hon. minister's attention that Dr. Matthews has brought to the attention of the public the tremendous amount of research that is being done throughout the continent of North America on various fields in the area of criminal law and law enforcement. It's an indication that all governments are seriously concerned and they're placing a heavy emphasis on the need for research.

There was a short debate or an exchange of ideas on the operation of magistrates' courts in this province. It's hard to disagree with individual statements because you could certainly find exceptions that fit any kind of reasoning. But I think that from where I look at the operation of magistrates' courts in this province, that we have a lot to be grateful for -- all the good work they do, and all the dedicated men and women, among the police, among the Crown prosecutors, among the defence counsel, the magistrates. One doesn't hear too much about it. But when some little thing goes wrong or when someone becomes disgruntled, or someone doesn't like the sentence he got, or someone's boy was treated differently than someone else's, then you will hear a lot of criticism. We're no different here. The criticism that's levelled is picked up by the

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public -- that's levelled at our magistrates' courts -- is picked up by the public and the public may come to the wrong conclusions, because, as I've said, the good things they do and the tremendous amount of good services they perform on behalf of the people are seldom heard of. And that is probably the way this department has to face many other matters -- the good things it does will never be publicly declared -- but if there should be a complaint everyone will hear about it.

I'm certainly impressed with the level of magistrates we have in this province. I'm speaking for Calgary primarily, they have a fine group of judges that have good backgrounds and have performed a tremendous service. I don't believe that many people are aware of the fact that the majority of all cases -- probably 95% to 98% of all cases are finally disposed of in the magistrates' courts. Notwithstanding what I have said, there is some criticism that ought to be brought to the attention of this House with regard to the operation of our magistrates' courts -- and once more I am talking about Calgary. The impression is often created that there is a log jam in these courts. They have an awful lot of work, magistrates handle from 15 to 25 cases a day and sometimes more if they are short. The impression given to a bystander, to a layman, is that there may be a sort of assembly-line type of justice. I don't believe that that is so but that is an impression that can be given. Although I could not recommend what changes could be made, there is no doubt that something needs to be done to expedite the trial of cases in magistrates' court. Often you get there and all that appears to be happening are remands and adjournments and delays of one type or another, although I admit that they are necessary.

I think that a lot of those who would want to criticize the instance on one occasion, or of one matter that it would pay them to take their children, take their sons and daughters to visit these magistrates' courts and see what happens. If you should sit around and watch what goes on, you will have a much higher opinion of the level of justice that is being administered or meted out in magistrates' courts.

I am aware of the fact that our Attorney General has expressed his views and interest in expediting the legal process and I would like to urge him to focus as much attention as he can towards expediting the hearing of cases in our magistrates courts. I am aware of the fact that the work load is very heavy and that it is hard to be efficient when you are perhaps overworked, but whatever needs to be done, it is my opinion that the public would support the necessary expenses, the necessary expenditure to improve that situation.

I've mentioned the fact that Dr. Matthews has focused attention on that a tremendous amount of research in this field is being done in other jurisdictions and that should work to the advantage of all.

I'd like to bring to the attention of the hon. minister one specific matter that exists in Calgary, I'm sure that he is aware of it. And that concerns one specific association, I'll use the name, it's the Calgary Greek Club. This club was incorporated by reputable people for the purpose of having a cultural and social club. As time went by they were taken over to the extent that legitimate members were not able to renew their memberships, they were threatened with being beaten up if they came back, and, to put it bluntly, the club fell into the hands of crooks, one of whom is being tried now and has perhaps been convicted. I would like to recommend that this club be investigated thoroughly by the Attorney General's Department to see whether something can't be done to prevent this thing from happening again. The Greek community in Calgary is a very reputable and well-established community. They feel embarrassed over what happened to their club. The intention was sincere upon incorporation, the charter members had a good purpose, but the club is now being

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operated as a drinking joint, a gambling joint, and perhaps a sort of gathering centre for criminals. I would like to urge the hon. minister, as I said, to investigate this matter thoroughly and perhaps clear the air as to what happened with regard to that club. In fact I understand that the man who is being tried now for having operated a gambling joint in this club has not only drawn good money from the club, but has also been on welfare so perhaps to that extent something will be done.

Another point that I'd like to raise with the hon. minister is the matter of the engagement of private firms for conducting criminal prosecutions on behalf of the Crown. In looking at the answer tabled to a question I had on the Order Paper, it appears that in Calgary there is certainly a good spread of work being given to all lawyers. I support the stand, that work can be spread around to all lawyers, all law firms who are interested. I am sure that some may not be, but there are a lot of small firms, capable firms who would appreciate being given some of this work.

When I look at the Edmonton list, I notice that much more money has been spent in Edmonton on private firms doing prosecutions. I believe that this has been going on for a number of years. I would like to draw attention to the fact that I think it would be in the public interest to break this kind of an operation up and spread the work around more evenly among the firms who want this kind of work. I am bringing attention to the fact that one firm received \$75,000 last year in legal fees. I am not saying that this firm didn't earn those fees and didn't do a good job, but I am saying that other firms could do an equally good job given the opportunity. I would like to urge the hon. minister to give consideration to this request.

I think that the hon. minister is well aware of the problems which exist and the challenges which face him. The greatest challenge would perhaps be the devising of a means to expedite the trials of criminal actions, criminal cases. I think that nothing much has been said in this session about the serious problem which exists in this province with regard to drug addiction and drug abuses. Although much has been done in this field, throughout North America and in this province, I believe that more can be done. I think that the Attorney General's department is the proper department to take the initiative in this area. The Department of Education has been involved and perhaps the Department of Social Development, but I do believe that the department of the Attorney General is best equipped to research this area and perhaps do more than it is.

Another problem, that was raised by the hon. Member for Calgary McCall, is the infiltration of legitimate business by organized crime. I believe that with gambling -- as I mentioned the Greek Club -- gambling taking a more prominent role in this province, has perhaps brought with it organized crime into the province. That is another field that needs to be watched carefully and action taken promptly when any evidence is produced.

Those are just a few of the remarks that I have in mind, Mr. Minister. I know that there are numerous matters that will be coming up from time to time and, as I stated, I feel that the House has the confidence in the minister to do a tremendous job. Nevertheless, I wish to focus attention on some of the matters which I thought were current and serious to the people of this province.

MRS. CHICHAK:

I am going to make my comments brief. But I feel that perhaps this field belongs to more than just the lawyers in the House so I would like to express some views. . .[interjection]. . . the hon. Member for Calgary Buffalo doesn't agree with me but that is alright. I will still speak my mind.



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There are a few matters I wish to bring to the hon. minister's attention. Some have been partially touched on, one or two have not. I would like to bring to his attention the inequity or the costs that many citizens are being put to by being falsely charged with offences, in some instances, without sufficient facts to back up the charges that are laid. However, the citizen must defend himself and then it is found that in no way could he have been found guilty or involved at all. However, that citizen is being put to the cost of a lawyer and legal proceedings and never recovers it. Very often the expense is great. And in other areas where the citizens or individuals are not correctly identified, often we find similarity in names. Still the citizen must retain a lawyer to plead his case for him. He never recovers the legal costs. I think that this is an area that needs some serious thinking and perhaps some way of handling these matters.

There is another area where citizens are often put to an expense, where there are writs of execution filed against citizens, probably rightly so, but then because of similarity of names, with only perhaps one name or partial name, when land transactions or any transactions take place, they must retain, again, legal counsel and go to the expense to clear their name. This happens time and time again. If it happens to be a name or an individual who rightfully owes the debt and doesn't clear the debt in five, ten, or fifteen years or for a very long period of time -- then the individual with a similar name suffers all of this time in having to go through this expense, time and time again.

There is also the matter of numerous adjournments that take place and witnesses are required to attend. The fees that are paid for witnesses very often don't cover the cost where you must sit and wait for a half-day or a day. You lose your time in pay, lose time, as well, with other things, but you must be there, because you opened your mouth. I think this probably has something to do with the reluctance of many citizens to come to the aid of law enforcers because they find that they are faced with these long periods of time to attend as witnesses, and really they can't afford this. There isn't sufficient compensation for them.

There was a matter that was touched on by the hon. Member for Edmonton Strathcona the other day, but only partially, insofar as line-up in the magistrates courts of very many people, not being able to be handled. There are lawyers who are retained and they have to wait for hours and they charge a very high fee per hour. But my area of concern is not only that, but, as well, the discrimination really that exists against those citizens who either by choice, or because they are not able to afford lawyers to defend them, have to stay there regardless of what time they appear at the court house to have their case heard. They must remain and wait while the lawyers are being called to make their plea, whatever it is. I think that probably a division here would probably be of some assistance in correcting this -- where if a lawyer is retained these cases should be heard separately, and where there are no lawyers...

MR. GHITTER:

A point of order. This House is like a sewing bee tonight, and I'm trying to hear the hon. member and it's so noisy. Would you possibly suggest that it's a little loud and we should pay some respect to the speaker?

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Thank you. Continue, Mrs. Chichak.

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MRS. CHICHAK:

Thank you. I think I only had one or two more comments to make anyway. I'm sorry this sewing bee carried on.

I also had a point to draw with respect to the Land Titles Office, the method of staffing, the programming in carrying out the services, and as well, the method used in overtime and the spread of workload. I know that there have been occasions where some of the senior members have indicated that they would like to see some changes made in that area. However, because certain other senior members did not feel that they wanted to interfere with what has been a very long-standing practice, new ideas or improvements have never been incorporated or even considered. Perhaps the hon. minister would take this under consideration. I think these were some of the points that I wanted to raise. Thank you.

MR. LEE:

I just have one short question here. This is the second year of a program in your department called the the Impaired Drivers' Project, which is a project where people are referred from the courts after losing their licenses and are required to take this particular course and eight hours of instruction. Now this particular course under your department, I understand, is working reasonably well in its second year.

I want to draw your attention, though, to another course of a similar scope which is under the Highways Department. This one is called the Traffic Clinic Project and it's a very similar type of course. It's eight hours long and it goes for four weeks, one night a week. Similar to the Impaired Driving Project, what they try to do, through counselling and discussion processes, is to change the attitudes of bad drivers. The difference, though, is that in the traffic clinic one, they're dealing with people who, through some process, are identified as having bad driving habits. The difficulty that the second program has run into, though, is the question of referral. Whereas the Impaired Driving Project has a direct referral from the courts, the second course, which is, in my opinion at least, of similar scope and similar worth, doesn't have this referral, and perhaps your department might give consideration as to some direction to the magistrates to this kind of a course.

Total Income Account agreed to \$33,143,400

#### HEALTH COMMISSIONS

Appropriation 2402 Alberta Hospital Services Commission -- General Administration

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Is the minister going to make some remarks?

MR. CRAWFORD:

Mr. Chairman, I don't mind whether I make them before or after the hon. member. It does seem to me that the first appropriation, No. 2402, is the one on which I should make some general remarks, and would do so, but my hon. friend had the Floor first. Shall I go ahead?

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Go ahead, Mr. Minister.

MR. CRAWFORD:

Mr. Chairman, I suppose I can start off by first saying the good news. And that is, I am aware that I have addressed the House in

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both the Throne Speech debate and the budget debate, and that this is the time for general remarks. Therefore, I would have made a number of general remarks. Now, the bad news -- I am going to say something anyway. I'll try to make a reasonable balance for hon. members so it won't be repeating things that have perhaps been fully dealt with before.

I thought my introduction to my introduction would be to explain that there are the three health commissions. Hon. members will have observed that the Department of Health and Social Development, of course, appears under a number of separate items from the commissions. Therefore, my remarks at this point will relate to two of the commissions by way of general remarks. Then after the Hospital Services Commission, it is my understanding that hon. Minister Hunley will have some general remarks with regard to the Health Care Insurance Commission. After that I would have no further general remarks on the third of the commissions, the Alcoholism and Drug Abuse one, and would suggest that we simply go ahead with that one, point by point.

Mr. Chairman, I want to remark upon the concept of commissions as an administrative vehicle. It seems to me that when we are looking at the two commissions -- the Hospital Services Commission and the Alcoholism and Drug Abuse Commission, it is within the memory of many members when each of these was a division of the department. Decisions were taken to adopt this alternative administrative method and to create the commissions, and create their terms of reference in two statutes, and to go ahead with a concept which involved the semi-autonomy, administratively speaking, although not as to policy of those commissions.

I had found, I thought, before having the responsibility for these two commissions, that I understood the concept and the intent of that type of administrative organization well enough to be optimistic about their chances of success as compared with doing the same job through the administration of the department, and through government officials as such. My experience since last fall has been such that I do believe, as much as ever, that the commission system of administration in these areas is a satisfactory and useful way to proceed.

Along with commissions, brought with it is the concept, almost by necessity, of the global budgeting technique. I don't think there would be any point in having a commission as opposed to a division of the department if the budgeting was to be done line by line for the commission as it would be for the department. It is meant to allow for the opportunity of economies and other changes to be made from time to time as the experience of the commissioners may suggest, and the flexibility over the period of the fiscal year that comes with a global budgeting. Although the flexibility is not great I have no criticism of it. I think it is useful and is likely to produce the best results.

Mr. Chairman, the general area of responsibility under its act of the Hospital Services Commission first is stated to be the development of a balanced and integrated system of hospitals and related facilities. They have the further responsibility of reviewing the financial needs and cost effectiveness in the system. Hon. members will recall that a bill has been proposed to this session that will clarify the obligation of the Hospital Services Commission in regard to pursuit of cost effective objectives.

In general, the policy of the commission in regard to hospitals is that it starts from the basic assumption that the province has an ample supply of active treatment hospital beds, although the weakness in that fact may be the unsatisfactory nature of the distribution of those beds in some parts of the province. Therefore the intent, in a few words, of the commission would be to provide care through

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facilities that generate a lower per patient day cost. The hoped-for result will be that the overstocking of active treatment beds will be lessened and that by arresting the growth of this high-cost type of facility this high-cost type facility over the next few years, the population growth would catch up with the supply of beds, and that the emphasis during this period should be placed, therefore, on the types of facilities where a lower per patient day cost might be experienced.

I thought I would just mention that in regard to portability of hospital insurance coverage, and the regulations in regard to eligibility, there have been some recent developments. The House may recall that at the time of the health ministers' meeting in December, this was on the agenda. It had been, I understand, for a long time but since that time, meetings have been held as recently as February which have brought about a situation where most provinces have agreed to uniform terms and conditions of eligibility and portability. Now these were not ministers' meetings, they followed from the ministers' meetings and were meetings of officials.

The target date for implementation of the proposals that the provinces now appear to have generally agreed upon, would be July 1, 1972, and in Alberta, a joint committee of members of the Hospital Services Commission and the Health Care Insurance Commission is in the process of revising regulations in that respect.

Mr. Chairman, reference has been made also to the Alberta Health Care study. Its general purpose is to make recommendations to the minister concerning planning, organization and development of an integrated system, but hon. members might be interested in a little more detail in regard to that. My hon. colleague has urged me not to weigh too heavily on the extra details. As soon as I start hearing that hon. gentleman opposite, I'll be even less surprised, but knowing my colleague I understand fully. I think the true explanation of the fact is that if the rest of us were all as healthy as the hon. Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs, we probably wouldn't be all that concerned either.

Mr. Chairman, the Health Care study has been involved in a preliminary analysis of available data concerning Health Care institutions. Data collection and analysis has not reached the stage which permits the statement of any definite recommendations at this point of time. Current utilization of in-patient institutional health services indicates two well-defined referral areas based on the medical school hospital centres in Edmonton and Calgary. Other sub-areas where 80% of the residents who receive institutional care remain in the area, are currently being defined. The significance of that is that catchment areas can be established shows that the majority of the residents receive most of their treatment at a particular centre in their area, as an area is being identified. Current supply of health care institutional beds and the supply of acute care beds, in particular, give strong indication of a surplus position.

A major objective of the study relates to cost containment and the reduction in the rate of escalation of health care costs. A major portion of the total study effort, therefore, is devoted to the establishment of inter-hospital cost comparisons with the purpose of subsequently determining meaningful benefit-cost ratios. That's all I have on the Health Care study, Mr. Chairman.

On the question of budget guidelines for hospitals I thought hon. members might be interested in a few facts. The 1972 review of hospital budgets was conducted having regard, firstly, to establishing an operating budget for each hospital which would maintain a level of care consistent with current standards, and secondly, to control the expansion of services or introduction of new programs.

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Hon. members will also be aware that the overall budget increase has been brought down to an estimated increase of 11.3% over the previous fiscal year, as compared with previous higher increases when related to previous fiscal years. Our total expenditure increase proposed is in the order of \$24 million from approximately \$213 million to \$237 million.

The system that is supported by the budgeting of the Hospital Services Commission is made up of nursing homes -- as outlined in appropriation No. 2403 -- and under appropriation No. 2404, 119 general hospitals, 26 auxiliary hospitals and five federal hospitals -- hospitals where Alberta citizens are admitted for treatment in circumstances where the federal government is not liable for the cost, and therefore it becomes part of the budget of the Hospital Services Commission.

The Hospital Services Commission has grouped active treatment district hospitals, for example, into nine groups depending on the number of beds, and uses this as on the guidelines in setting the global budgets for hospitals of comparable size, although unique circumstances in each case are intended to be recognized. Therefore the rates differ according to how many beds. The nine groups run from the smallest, Group I of 1 - 14 -- that's the smallest size of hospital not the smallest number in the class -- of which there are six, up to Group IX, of which there are also six hospitals of 400 beds or more -- the largest group -- These are active treatment district hospitals and have in the range of 25 to 30 beds of which there are 17. In respect to nursing homes in 1971 a total of 67 were supported. They have 5,521 beds and the interesting occupancy figure of 97%.

In respect to cost-sharing -- the agreement with the federal government under The Hospital Insurance and Diagnostic Services Act recovers for Alberta approximately 49% of approved operating costs of the hospital program. In 1972-73 the estimated recovery would be in the neighbourhood of \$98 million. The agreement with the federal government classifies shareable and non-shareable areas in considerable detail.

In conclusion, with respect to this commission, Mr. Chairman, it would be of some interest perhaps to know the efforts being undertaken at the present time by the Hospital Services Commission to guide and advise individual hospitals on their activities and their costs. In 1972, for the first time, two reports are to be provided to each hospital bi-monthly. The first report provided would be that covering the hospital's experience, that is that particular hospital's experience in the two-month period in question, and another report would be provided at two-month intervals showing the hospitals experience in its operations from January 1st to the date of that report.

In order to assist hospitals -- in that 32 indices are used -- I would just like to give members a slight introduction as to how the indices are used and how they work. For example, each hospital could have its percentage occupancy calculated for it in each of these two reports. The one I have before me is an example. I have not the details on all of the hospitals, but I thought the hon. members would be interested in the example. The one in question shows 79.17% occupancy for that particular hospital for that period from January 1st until the date of the report -- this is one that was done for part of last year -- in fact this one is for all of last year -- this one relates to a Group IX hospital. And other items, apart from occupancy that would be of use to the administration and the medical staff of the hospital, in each case, are items such as: operating room visits per month; radiological examinations per month; laundry pounds per patient day; housekeeping paid hours per rated patient day; linen supplies; radiological services; and so on; dietary services; cost per meal per day (this one, for example, \$2.69 average

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per patient day cost). And when these indices are worked out for each of the nine groups and utilized by the hospitals in each group they have a useful basis of comparison as to their performance. In the long range they should be a very helpful way for all hospitals to know where their cost controls and their increased efficiencies might be found.

Mr. Chairman, going on to the Alcoholism and Drug Abuse Commission. The general remarks I made about administration by commissions applies also to this one. The act under which it is set up requires the Alcoholism and Drug Abuse Commission to consider problems arising from the abuse of various drugs as well as, of course, the alcoholism program, which continues to be the major problem in that area.

The objectives of the commission are to co-ordinate, promote, or provide preventative and rehabilitative services for Albertans who are dependent on alcohol and other drugs.

The commission program includes outpatient and inpatient treatment services as well as education, professional training, community resource development, and research components. Outpatient services are available in Edmonton and Calgary and smaller clinics are operated in Lethbridge and in Red Deer.

Much has been said about the methadone program. Briefly, in Alberta steps were taken to ascertain that only heroin addicts got onto methadone maintenance programs; steps were also taken to control the form in which methadone was prescribed. The commission has told me that they work in close collaboration with the federal government and the medical profession and are operating the methadone program under a subcommittee of the commission, chaired by Dr. L. H. LeRiche, of Edmonton. The commission's approach is exploration of these new areas, with an ongoing assessment of the program as it develops. The program is still at the initial stages of building in controls and many questions are, admittedly, yet to be resolved.

The commission in its emphasis of its work includes prevention as a prime emphasis and also the objective of helping other agencies cope more adequately with alcohol and drug problems, through the commission's training and consultation services. The organization hopes in time to become more decentralized and to increase assistance in smaller cities and smaller communities to cope more adequately with their many drug and alcohol problems.

Another objective of the commission is to offer treatment and training services in better form to natives and to support the native counselling services.

Mr. Chairman, the budget of the commission is proposed to be increased from \$1 million in the last fiscal year to \$1 million in the current fiscal year.

Programs are being extended specifically in the following areas. Firstly the Henwood Treatment Centre is to be increased from 40 to 60 beds. This would make possible a shorter waiting period for alcoholics and would make possible more admissions of drug dependent people, other than alcoholics. Henwood's community and professional training courses would be doubled, that is held weekly rather than bi-weekly. The training program has been much in demand and waiting periods up until this year, have been as long as nine months to be admitted to the programs.

The commission also hopes to begin this year, toward the decentralization spoken of by adding additional staff to Lethbridge and Red Deer, as well as building in additional resource staff in Edmonton and Calgary which are available and competent to work with

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professionals in various community groups in other parts of the province.

Native treatment and educational programs will be enhanced, the commission having hired two staff members for this particular purpose and hopes to improve its liaison with the native counselling service.

The commission will also make limited grants for community - based programs as part of its resource development program.

Now in conclusion on this subject, Mr. Chairman, I must say that I agree with the -- I think the intent -- of the remark of the hon. Member for Calgary Mountain View a few moments ago when he said that this is an area where there is great social concern. He mentioned the possible involvement of the Attorney General's department. I don't know that the emphasis belongs there. I think it does belong with the Alcoholism and Drug Abuse Commission and that the leadership in this field should come from that quarter. In due time I believe it will. I think that the programs, although falling short in some respects up to the present time probably compare, not with the best in the country I would have to say, but compare favourably with most of the other programs in the country, and I think now the opportunity is there to develop and to have superior programs in this area now that a new emphasis, I think, is being brought to it by means of this budget and the increase in the estimate for this commission that is proposed.

Mr. Speaker, I don't think I can easily give words to the sincerity with which I would like to express my feelings on the area in which this particular commission is working. It is fraught with difficulty and frustration for all of those who are working in it and attempting to bring some assistance to those who need it. It is fraught with so much tragedy for the victims, both the users and the other victims of the abuse of alcohol and drugs. I hope that in the future it will be possible, speaking both for myself as minister, to work with the commission to a greater extent and than was possible in the opening months of our administration.

MR. R. SPEAKER:

Mr. Chairman...for the hon. minister. Possibly to help him in the questioning, and going through the Health and Social Development Estimates, possibly I could outline just three objectives that we have in mind in the questioning and, possibly the remarks of the hon. minister directed towards those objectives or purposes. Maybe we could consolidate the information and go through the estimates in that manner.

MR. HENDERSON:

Expeditionously?

MR. R. SPEAKER:

Yes. There are three objectives that we would like to fulfil in the study of the Health and Social Development estimates.

The first one is with regard to the amalgamation of the Health and Social Development Departments. With that objective in mind, what we would like to know basically what the present situation is, and your intentions are. The specific things that we want to look at are the regionalization plan, local autonomy, participation of citizens, decentralization, and co-ordination. Also we would like to discuss the planning component of the department as to how it is working and how you see it fitting in to policy-making and the plans that are ahead. Those are some specific things that we would like to talk about, to support that first objective.

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The second one that we would like to look at in examining the estimates is with regard to cost. There are two specific things. First of all, is it the intention in the coming year to control the costs -- and I think we know part of that answer -- and secondly, what type of techniques and methods will you be using to come to grips with the costs in the coming year? That will be the second objective. The third one we would like to explore as we go through the estimates, is this, we would like to know what you expect to accomplish within the coming year within some of the following programs: mental health, the employment of welfare recipients, the juvenile offenders program, the preventive social service program, and the two areas of the health commission and the hospital commission. Those are the specific things or three objectives -- that we would like to attain in our questioning. Our plan, if this is agreeable with the hon. minister, is to proceed through the votes one by one and where we have questions, we would like to ask them. But in replying to the questions, we would like the hon. minister to keep those three particular points in mind so that we can keep on target and possibly make progress as quickly as possible. I just wanted to set these ground rules, Mr. Chairman. We are prepared to proceed.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Is this acceptable, Mr. Minister?

MR. CRAWFORD:

Yes, I want to thank the hon. member for giving the matter a form that we hope will speed things up too.

MR. FARRAN:

Mr. Chairman, I would like to say a few words on the Alberta Hospital Services Commission. I think that this may well be a convenient tool for administering the hospitals. My hope is, that at least for awhile, the operations of this commission will be under very careful control and scrutiny by the hon. minister and his department. Although you can't separate the budgets for this huge department in the hon. Treasurer's original Budget address, where health and welfare are lumped together, we have to recognize that this is 36% of our entire budget. It runs neck and neck now with education. If you add together the Department of Education and the Department of Advanced Education, education also eats up about 36% of our budget. So between these two departments, they use up some 72% of the entire provincial budget.

This is a field which is definitely looming bigger as a threat to provincial revenues -- even bigger than education which was always considered to be the money-eating monster of recent years. I think it is just too important to leave entirely to an independent commission without any check on detail. In my own city the hospitalization picture is no rosier than it is in any other major metropolitan area in Canada. The costs continue to rise. A few years ago the Province of Alberta excused the municipalities a four mill mandatory levy for a foundation plan for hospitals. Another two mills was added almost simultaneously onto the levy for education, but there was a net gain at that time of two mills by the municipalities. Since then, supplementary requisitions for hospitals have grown to such an extent that they now almost comprise two mills, so we're back, really, to square one, so far as the burden of hospitalization costs are concerned on the cities.

Both education and hospitalization or health are labour-intensive industries. Some 70% of their costs comprise wages; wages either to teachers or nurses, or their other ancillary staff. That means that out of the provincial budget, then, of 72% going to these two departments, some 70% of that huge figure is going for wages. So



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guidelines are most important. I just hope that the Alberta Hospital Services Commission is going to produce a comprehensive manual to cover each type of hospital and give direction on what sort of guidelines they should be following, particularly in regard to the numbers of staff to the numbers of patients or beds. In this field the ratio of nurses to patients is just as important as the ratio of teachers to students in the education field.

In my city, I'll just list some of the problems that exist in the health field. We still have very long waiting lists. They're not as long as they used to be. There used to be waiting lists of over 4,000 at the Calgary General Hospital. In recent years, they have climbed again to around 1,000 and are continuing to climb. Now, I don't believe this is because of any overall bulk shortage of beds in the metropolitan area of Calgary. I think it's mainly because of improper utilization of existing beds. The active beds are occupied by too many chronic or convalescent patients who could be moved on to a different type of bed. So I believe it's essential to expedite the flow from active beds through to auxiliary hospitals or chronic beds, and then on to nursing homes. In order to do this there must be some sort of rationalization of the system. We can't just leave this sort of scattered network of facilities to continue to exist in an uncoordinated manner. There is also a great distortion in the waiting lists between each one of the four major hospitals in Calgary. This again is largely caused by the lack of uniformity over staff privilege granting to doctors. There is no central body that really allocates doctors according to bed supply, which is obviously the way it should be done. Just like the nurses, the doctors should be allocated on a basis of the number of available beds and patients. I believe, myself, that the principle should be more firmly established that the doctor follows the patient rather than the patient following the doctor.

There has been no attempt in our city to have central purchasing for the four hospitals largely supported by provincial funds. There is no central laundry system, no central purchasing for drugs beyond a certain degree. There's been a little improvement in it in the last year or two.

Another problem that exists is the rapid escalation in the number of units performed in radiology and in the laboratories. Every year this goes up in geometrical progression. There's an enormous increase in the number of diagnostic tests done either by X-ray or in the laboratory. I think it's essential that somebody establishes a guideline on how many of these are necessary for each type of complaint for which a patient is admitted.

The next one is the current problem of the pre-empting of active beds by psychiatric patients because of the acceptance -- 100 per cent -- by the government of the Blair report. Of course, the acceptance of the Blair report is a good thing, and it's supported I think by everybody on this side of the House, anyway, but there is going to be a temporary strain on the active hospital system until new facilities are provided, because every psychiatric patient has an argument that he should go to the head of the waiting list and demand an active bed ahead of perhaps somebody who is in for a surgical complaint or something. Because they can always argue that a psychiatric patient is in an emergency condition, and if you don't do something about it, he will commit suicide, slash his wrists or jump out of a window or something like that.

Another thing that is a rising problem in the hospitals and is taking up both bed space and operating room space is the huge number of abortions being performed. Also the number of sterilization operations for both male and female. Whether it is proper that these should all be paid for by the state or not I just don't know, but it is something that somebody should think about.

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The trouble with having just a global budget like this is that I, as a representative of the people of Calgary North Hill, am unable to identify or isolate any of the capital costs for this year for the hospital network. I have no way of seeing whether the Calgary General Hospital is to get its new psychiatric wing and its new obstetrics ward, and its new morgue, whether, as we saw reported in the newspapers, there will be a renovation of the 1928 wing of the Holy Cross Hospital for psychiatric patients and so on. It is presumably there, inside the global budget, but there is no way for a local MLA to be able to measure how much is actually going into his area of jurisdiction.

Another thing I believe is a problem in the hospital field is the total lack of uniformity over the constitutions of hospital boards. In the province of Alberta some hospital trustees are elected, the majority are appointed. Some are paid, most are unpaid; some are controlled by and local municipalities; others are completely uncontrolled and yet have a right to submit a bill for supplementary requisitions without question just the same as the school boards have this right. Yet, of course, they are not elected like school boards; they are appointed members, so there is something here which is getting rather distant from the thought that it is 'government by the people for the people'. If they were elected, perhaps that objection would not exist. It seems strange that an appointed board can go to the elected officials and demand that bills should be paid and they have no right to question those bills.

This clarification of the area of payment of trustees is most important. The hon. Member for Calgary McCall told us the other day that I was correct in assuming that he was being paid a stipend per meeting for the Calgary Auxiliary Hospital and Nursing Home district. Yet, I know the boards I served on, the boards of the Calgary General Hospital and the Holy Cross Hospital -- in my day anyway -- were not paid, so certainly there must be some injustice here. Somebody should lay down what is the proper thing to do. If one appointed board is to be paid a stipend, then so should the others. If you expect the board of the Royal Alex Hospital, a very large hospital in Edmonton, to give their time on a voluntary basis, and yet you pay another board, there is something wrong. So this should be standardized.

Those were just a few thoughts, Mr. Minister. I don't envy your job; you have a huge, huge department. It is like Siamese twins and both of them are problems. I don't expect that anybody is going to be able to solve the problems in this department overnight, but I feel sure that a conscientious start will be made on finding solutions for some of them this year.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

I believe Mrs. Chichak is next and then Mr. Henderson.

MRS. CHICHAK:

Mr. Chairman, just a couple of concerns I would like to express to the hon. minister, mainly dealing with the nursing homes. I have some concerns as regard to The Nursing Homes Act. I have had some difficulty in finding in the act as to who may be appointed to the Auxiliary Hospital-Nursing Homes district boards. My concern is that members who sit on the board may have a conflict of interest, in that if they are administrators of homes I think they cannot be unbiased in their decisions with respect to applications by the private sector. Or as well, there may be members appointed to the board whose political views have been made known, and they are such that they do not endorse the involvement of the private sector. I think that this is something that needs to be taken under consideration.

I've also notice under The Nursing Homes Act that where applications by the private sector have been made and rejected by the

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board, they may be made then to the Lieutenant Governor in Council who may recommend to the district board to approve such an application. However, there's no onus on the part of the board to accept this recommendation and to follow through on it. They can still continue to refuse it whether the grounds are logical or legitimate. I'm bringing this point out because I'm aware of a case at hand at the moment where such an incident has occurred, and the board has not made any indication as to their reason for rejection in all of the data that have been assembled. There does not appear to be any logical reason for refusal of the application in the private sector. I think that it would be beneficial to the government if the private sector become more and more involved in order that less of the public funds need to be used in this area, provided they can meet the standards.

Referring to a comment that the hon. Member for Calgary North Hill made with respect to abortions, whether they should be covered by the state, I would just like to indicate that numerous members of the medical profession have expressed their views as to how they feel on this matter. They have indicated to me that certainly they feel that abortions, unless they are medically recommended for the safety and health of the individual, should not be paid for by the state because there becomes too great an abuse, and the end result very often is harm to the individual wherein too many abortions are performed. This is just a view that has been expressed by numerous members of the medical profession. These are points I wish to bring to your attention.

MR. HENDERSON:

Mr. Chairman, I'd like to make a few comments. I appreciated the hon. minister's remarks, and I would like to deal primarily with some areas which I think are critical to public policy.

I'd like to say at the outset, Mr. Chairman, that my interest in this particular department, the minister's responsibilities, I am sure transcend the question of any element of partisan politics. I would like to suggest some things for the hon. minister's consideration which I think are not going to be particularly popular with certain elements of the public, but with a lot of people. I think as a matter of responsibility that members of this Legislature, not just the government, but members of this Legislature are going to have to look at. I listened with interest to the hon. Mr. Farran's remarks, and I think he obviously brings a lot of background to this particular problem. Certainly I couldn't take fault with anything he said in his comments on this particular suggestion.

I would like to suggest, Mr. Chairman, to the members, that I think the question of the Health Department -- this whole question of Health and Welfare -- is probably about the toughest one in government. Everyone used to think that education was the real headache politically, but I think that's really secondary to the question of health, because the health business touches on every one of the provinces individually. I found we set up Medicare; I wrote more letters than I ever wrote in my life before, during the first three months I was Minister of Medicare. Every individual citizen expects prompt, personal attention from the system, and everybody just doesn't have the same interest in education as they do in the question of health. So it's a very difficult area to deal with; it's a very hot potato, and it's going to get more difficult. I'd like to say personally to the hon. minister that anything we can do personally, or I can do to assist him in making his task more difficult...less difficult -- I don't think he even needs my help to make it more difficult -- I will do. I was certainly pleased to hear his remarks about basic support for the concept of the commission.

I'd like to point out that one of the basic things that prompted me to favour the commission I don't see anything magical about the

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commission as opposed to having a deputy one. But I found in the question of allocating hospitals it's not like trying to allocate funds for school costs. I think I've said this before -- the school system you can crank out a program, count the number of students, the number of teachers, the number of rooms and by and large a Grade VIII classroom is much the same. They may differ in size but it is not much different in Edmonton than it is out in a smaller community other than the question of size. So you can allocate public funds with a formula. But when you get into the area of trying to deal with hospital services you simply can't because there are no two hospitals the same. You can have two hospitals the same size, the same number of doctors in them, but because of the capabilities of the medical profession in the community, the location of the hospital itself, the cost will vary tremendously between two hospitals to the average individual. Looking at the number of beds, the number of doctors, you'd think the cost would be comparable. For example the hospital in Peace River, which provides a lot of medical services to that part of Alberta that the hospitals that size in southern Alberta aren't expected to provide; their operating costs have to be higher. I found that when one was allocating funds and it was directly attached to the minister's office, there was no way that you get a word back to the local authority relative to the reasons they didn't get all the money they wanted, and the question of allocating funds became a big political merry-go-round. It was a 100% full-time job. It's a question of no matter how much money the minister has at his disposal he's never going to have enough. There are always going to be complaints and cries of inadequacy. It's an unending process. I have tremendous confidence in the medical profession to fill every hospital in Alberta without really working too hard at it. There's just no questions about it. So in keeping with that I was also please to hear the minister's comments that the commission has followed through on the concept of global budgets. Because I think one thing about it, it at least gives the local authorities some limited autonomy to make some decision that they didn't have under the previous system.

The question of capital costs of hospitals, I think, is one that really needs re-examination as a provincial policy. One of the reasons why Alberta has the highest per capita supply of hospital beds in Canada, and I quite frankly can't get very sympathetic about the complaints that there aren't enough beds. If Alberta with its active and auxiliary hospital bed supply doesn't have enough beds, I don't know what province has. Up until Ontario, a few months ago, started a publicly-supported nursing home program, Alberta was the only province in Canada that had that program. So statistically we do have the highest per capita supply of beds in Canada. I listened for two and half years to unending propositions about more and more beds, and I find Mr. Speaker, there is a complete lack of any common denominator of what constitutes 'adequate'. I just don't see why it isn't there. Adequacy, I think, is something that we will never determine. I think we have to increasingly start talking in terms of what financial resources we have available collectively with what the people of the Province of Alberta provide themselves. There's just no question about it. The costs that this system monster -- I think I use the word in a general sense -- politicians have created and we have, is going to devour us. It's going to be a far worse problem than in controlling the costs of education because of the highly personal sense of the whole business of health services.

The question of capital cost -- I come back to the fact -- it's my conviction that one of the reasons we have the highest per capita supply of beds in Canada, and while we have beds in areas where we probably shouldn't have them, basically relates to the fact that the province is still paying 100% of the capital cost of construction. And you want to go back to the wealthy Province of Ontario whose per capita expenditure is about par with Alberta. They have a local contribution -- I don't know if it's 25%-30% -- towards the capital costs. And I suggest that this should be considered as a matter of

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public policy -- I don't say government policy, I say legislative policy. I think it should transcend the question of partisan politics because when the government is building hospitals -- auxiliary hospitals, active hospitals, and its program of nursing homes -- and hands them out without any real element of local financial contribution towards the capital costs, well everybody wants to get in line. It sounded like they were crackerjacks. Well Joe got one so let us get one too. And it's human nature. I suggest that the time is really overdue for re-examination of this policy, because I think it would go a long way towards taking the heat off the government for unreasonable demands, to act as a filter to separate frivolous demands -- wants from needs I guess is the simplest way to put it.

I can see a public responsibility from the provincial level to see that each community is guaranteed a minimum level of supply of facilities. I don't know the figure -- something like six or seven active beds sticks in my mind per thousand -- and this has to be rationalized with the question of the more sophisticated type of services which large hospitals in Calgary and Edmonton basically provide for the people of Alberta as a whole. So there has to be some adjustment in this factor.

I can see a provincial responsibility to provide facilities up to this basic level. But I think when the local taxpayer wants to go beyond that he very clearly should be called upon to dip into his pocket a little bit in order to put what he thinks his needs are -- as compared to his wants -- into a proper perspective. And so I would like to go on record very strongly at this time on urging the re-examination of the government's policy in the local contributions towards the capital costs of some of these facilities, where it refers to wants over and above a basic minimum level. I think we have an obligation to provide all the people of the province, as a provincial government, because if we don't, the demands are just going to go on and on and on, and we just simply have not got the money.

The present policy of financing hospital facilities dates back to the original program under which the federal government contributes towards the capital cost, and that money was used up a good number of years ago. And as the hon. minister knows, and as most of the members know, the federal government no longer contributes in any relevant way to any hospital construction costs. Oh, I realize they are putting some money into medical educational facilities in hospitals -- the Calgary Medical School -- and they would have shared and participated in the Centennial Hospital under the medical education program, but for general hospital treatment services they don't.

Very clearly I think myself, if the local taxpayer can't afford to put up the funds where it is his wants he is talking about -- to pay 25% or 30% of the capital cost of building a million dollar hospital -- if he can't afford that, I question whether he should have it. Because two years' operating costs equal the capital cost, and the bare minimum requisition of a mill or two to carry a little of the operating cost strictly is an element that's consistent with the philosophy of local autonomy. It is going to prove troublesome for that particular hospital. And if they have the basic needs met, once again, I think they have a responsibility to contribute a portion towards the capital cost of the construction of these facilities.

I can only say, Mr. Chairman, that regardless of the fact that I face the hon. minister across the floor, I certainly, without hesitation, examine very realistically and support in principle any moves in this direction. Because I'm convinced, regardless of what political strife we may carry individually, we're simply going to

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bankrupt the treasury if we don't start doing some of these things. It's just axiomatic -- I say it is going to be worse than education.

I would like also to ask the hon. minister under the question of controlling hospital costs, as to whether the government has given any consideration to consolidating the Hospital Services and Medicare under one commission? It certainly was my thinking when we set the Hospital Commission up that this should be considered. Ontario, I believe, has set it up that way now, and I think Manitoba has done it. And I think it's inevitable that it will have to be done, regardless of the question of commissions, because there is a need for close integration of policies in these two particular areas. I think it stands as a matter of record on the question of utilization of bed facilities by the private practitioner. I am sure -- at least I will be surprised if my comments don't provoke some difference of opinion from some of the gentlemen of the medical profession on both sides of the House -- that very clearly, the fee schedule in Medicare today pays the doctor to keep people in hospitals. I'm not saying he does it deliberately -- keeping them in there -- but it's certainly much more convenient for the physician to keep a patient in hospital where he can go around and see them all in his morning hospital rounds and so on. There is no question in my mind that the inter-relationship in cost areas between Medicare and hospitals has to be critically examined. I have gathered in the past that the medical profession has some strong exceptions to this but I think it's inevitable that they're going to have to be inter-related. It was this thinking that at least led to the interlocking of the directorship between the two commissions. So I would ask the hon. minister if they have given any consideration to that particular matter.

I would also like to enquire, as a matter of policy, of the hon. minister, as to whether the government have given any consideration or responded to any suggestions on the part of the federal government that the nursing home program should go in as a cost-shared health service. I felt very strongly that it should not be under federal cost shared health services, even though it might have meant some more money in the provincial treasury, and I still feel as a matter of policy, it should not go under cost sharing. There had been suggestions in the past that the government might entertain some suggestions in this regard.

I think on two grounds it isn't desirable, Mr. Chairman. Firstly I think as a matter of principle, I don't know how one can convince the federal government that a provincial government is sincere about its complaints in wanting to get out of the rigid strings and conditions attached to existing cost-shared programs, when we turn around and beat the federal government over the head trying to insist that they take more services into the cost-shared program. It just isn't consistent. I think when we go about trying to push the federal government to participate in additional cost of health services, we really belie any sincerity and credibility at the provincial level of wanting to get out from underneath the restrictions of the terms of federal cost-shared health services. And it's very fundamental to me, and I say it's axiomatic, that if we are going to realistically deal and get the flexibility into the system that is required today to deal with the question of rising costs, we have to get free of these restrictions.

I think there is another reason why it is undesirable to see it going under cost-sharing -- and I am commenting on this because I know Ontario -- particularly now since they've embarked on a provincial policy -- is probably pushing the federal government in that direction. When the federal government comes into the cost-sharing field, the costs of the service goes up. If it is costing \$9 a day total now for a bed per day for a nursing home, if the federal government came in and started paying \$4.50 of it, as sure as I'm standing here, two years from now the cost would be \$13.50 because it

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is almost impossible to resist the political pressures to not pass the money on to the institution. Medicare is an excellent example. Look at Ontario where they did not pass the federal contribution to medicare in the form of reduced premiums to the people of the province, and they were under a lot of pressure on this particular matter, and they still are. So in my view, to bring the Nursing Home program under federal cost-sharing, even if the federal government offered to do it, in the long run I think would not be in the best interests of the people of the province. It would detract from getting out from underneath the restrictions, the framework within which the province has to operate now, as stipulated by the federal government, and it would simply increase the cost.

I would like to close on the one item that was made by Mr. Farran in his remarks, and that's the absolute necessity, in my view, of taking action to consolidate and reduce the number of authorities that exist in the hospital field. I'd like to suggest to the hon. members who may feel this isn't necessary, think of what a tremendous mess the educational system would be if we took every individual school in Alberta and put it under a separate board. Take every individual school in Edmonton and put it in under a separate board, do it in Calgary and throughout the province. Can you imagine the problem you'd have trying to deal with administration of a system functioning under that manner? But that is exactly what we have in the health system. The proliferation of authorities is just beyond imagination, and some of this is the logical consequences of evolution because the health system is basically not something that government started. Practically every service that you can name that exists in the health system was started someplace by private enterprise, by private individuals. Slowly there has been a transfer of these operations and programs into the public sector that is still going on, and it's at a much later state of evolution socially in this country than the educational program is. And so I certainly urge the hon. minister to examine very critically and demonstrate the leadership -- and I don't use the word loosely or in any partisan political sense. It's going to be necessary to deal with that particular problem, but it's a problem that has to be faced up to, it's one I think that is going to require a lot of political courage. I can only say, speaking as the member for Wetaskiwin-Leduc, that it will certainly be my intention as long as I'm a member of this Legislature to support the government -- any government that is prepared to face up to those realities. The number of authorities has got to be reduced. There is just no other way that I think the problem can be approached.

I've run on at some length, but I'd appreciate it if the hon. minister has any relevant comments on any of the items that I've brought up, that he'd care to make. I'd be very pleased to hear them.

MR. CRAWFORD:

Mr. Chairman, I wanted to say first that I think there is validity to the point that bringing in the federal government in additional cost-sharing roles probably leads to increases in overall costs. The reason given -- one of the basic reasons as put forward by the hon. member -- would appear to be a strong factor in that. I am not able, though, to agree with everything that was said in regard to cost-sharing. I think there was a gap in the hon. member's reasoning at one point. I thought he said that the seeking of additional cost-sharing as, for example, in the nursing home program, would belie the fact that you really wanted the federal government out of it, because on the one hand you are asking them to come in and share more, and on the other hand you were saying that you wanted them out. I think really what we are doing in this respect is probably admitting that as long as the present system of sharing exists, that we are prisoners of it, and might just as well have

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whatever share there is that can be had from what are, in fact, the taxes paid by the good citizens of Alberta, which happen to be collected in Ottawa and refunded after their commission is taken off.

I think the consistency of the government's basic program in this regard has been stated several times since last fall by the hon. Premier, by the Provincial Treasurer and by the hon. Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs, when they have said to the federal government and to this House, and publicly of course, that our objective would be to get the federal government out of as many of the areas of sharing as possible, if not substantially all, and to replace the federal contribution with taxing in our own right, in our own province, and for our own purposes and priorities. Until we achieve that, then I reiterate, and really have little more to say on that particular idea than that we are prisoners of the existing system. We don't like it, but we want, in the interests of the people of Alberta and the hard-earned dollars that they have to spend on these programs, to get what funds can be had from that source, so long as that is the source that it must come from.

In regard to --

MR. HENDERSON:

Mr. Chairman, I wonder if I may ask the hon. minister, in making his reply, to clarify a point. I ask the hon. minister, am I to interpret from his remarks -- because I don't want to put words in his mouth -- I conclude really that there are some discussions going on about cost sharing in nursing home programs with the federal government at the present time?

MR. CRAWFORD:

Yes, I would like to come to that next and say that there are two approaches, I believe, under the heading of nursing homes, where sharing might be achieved. One is under the Hospital Insurance and Diagnostic Services Act, where negotiations are being made to redefine in some way, to change the attitude of the federal government in regard to the definition of the hospital service itself, and see if all or part of the services provided in the nursing homes might not be made the subject of sharing because of the nature of them as health services, not strictly of the hospital sense, but akin to the hospital type of treatment.

The other area, of course, is for nursing home patients who are on public assistance. The opportunity is there to have sharing under the Canada Assistance Plan. This is where the hon. member and I, I would think, part ways on whether or not approaches to the federal government for sharing in these two areas are useful at all to the people of Alberta, because my view is that they are useful, and they're useful in the sense that the amount of money involved runs into the millions of dollars, and any -- I suppose the word is saving -- any saving that can be had for the purposes of our own budgeting by revenue from that source is in the interests of the people of the province to have.

MR. HENDERSON:

Mr. Chairman, may I interject another question at the present time to the minister? I can see, philosophically, a substantial difference between sharing under the hospital and diagnostic provisions of the federal legislation as opposed to the Canada Assistance Plan. In the Canada Assistance Plan, as I understand it, you're sharing in costs, in the case of people that are really unable to specifically pay. Whereas it's quite a bit different -- it's like sharing the welfare costs -- as opposed to being locked into a more formal cost-shared program where they just pay in 50% of the bed day cost of the program period. In one you are sharing the cost of the



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people, as I see it, and I can see some merit in the Canada Assistance Plan, but in the other, you're sharing the cost of the program, per se, and I just wonder whether the minister can concur with this approach or not.

MR. CRAWFORD:

I think on the latter point, what I should say is that the Hospital Services Commission is not very far into any negotiations in that area which are indicative of success. It has been an area that we wanted to discuss with them and to clearly understand the attitudes of the federal government, and this is what is in process at the present time. But I acknowledge that it can be very difficult, if not perhaps beyond possibility, to change their attitude in that.

Now, two other points raised by the hon. member, Mr. Chairman, I think I can concur in a very brief way with the suggestion that the number of hospital authorities is too large in the province. We find this in so many things, that the need for a local authority based on the economy and the communications and the transportation fabric of the province of 50 years ago is rather different from what it is today, and therefore, the number of administrative authorities could conceivably be less, and should be, and this is something that I would welcome. But at the same time, we're firmly committed - and I'll comment perhaps on this more in regard to the questions under the departmental estimates regarding regionalization -- we're committed to autonomy on the local level. My view is that if we had to err on the side of autonomy, giving local autonomy too great an emphasis in the minds of some who are efficiency oriented, or if we had to err on the other side and give efficiency to those who are autonomy oriented, we'd be inclined to lean in favour of giving the autonomy and let the other circumstances take care of themselves.

The last point, which is a very interesting question that the hon. member raised, was whether or not consideration was being given to consolidating the two commissions. I think I can begin by saying that there is no plan to do so. That is the clear situation at the present time. However, I would add to that and say that I'm sure it's still an open question in the minds of the government and it's something that, over a period of time, I suppose could see some development.

MR. HENDERSON:

Mr. Chairman, could I ask just one final question, and then I haven't got any more questions at this point in time?

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Fine, and then Dr. Paproski.

MR. HENDERSON:

Last year, Mr. Chairman, we were in the process -- I say we, as the provincial government of the day -- of trying to negotiate with the hospitals in the two major urban centres -- Calgary and Edmonton. We were trying to get a detoxification unit established initially as quickly as possible in each of the two larger metropolitan areas. We were trying to tie this in with a recommendation -- I see the Attorney General isn't in his chair -- that came from one of the recent law reports that had to deal with a medical detention centre for individuals who had been arrested, or a remand centre I guess it was -- a place for people who have been arrested and need medical attention, and who have to be in a restricted treatment facility of some sort. We were trying to make some effort to tie these two together.

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Do any of the hon. members remember the name of this other commission? It reported last year, or two years ago. It involved the transfer of some of the juvenile offender facilities over to Social Development. The McGrath Report is what I was thinking of. I was wondering if the government has made any progress in this regard. I haven't heard or read anything in the paper about it. It was a high priority area, and I would appreciate the hon. minister's comments on it.

MR. CRAWFORD:

Mr. Chairman, with respect to detoxification units for the two major cities in the major metropolitan hospitals, or in one of the major metropolitan hospitals in each city, no progress in that respect has been made. I know it is of importance and many people place a high degree of importance on it. I have not treated it with such a degree of priority as to actively pursue it. It would have to be regarded as one of those areas which is in fact, pending, I suppose, for solution at some point.

The House will recall that in my general remarks I indicated that Belmont was being expanded as to the number of beds by 50%. This should be of some assistance in this connection in Edmonton.

I hear the hon. member interject that that does not provide detoxification. I thought that such programs were available in relation to Belmont. If they are not, then I am mistaken.

MR. HENDERSON:

Mr. Chairman, they may have had some type of programs there, but I think the hon. minister may or may not be aware that one of the recommendations of the Blair Report also dealt with this subject. The government was criticized for accepting acute alcoholics or people in acute states of intoxication at Oliver. I can presume, and have to go along with it, that it is probably still going on in spite of the fact that it is something there was a lot of criticism about, primarily because there was no place else in the city for these people to go. It is a real headache, I realize this. But I would just like to urge the hon. . . . minister. It is one of the needs of the Alcoholism Commission itself, I think, as pointed out on other occasions . . . I would just hope the hon. minister could see fit to examine it, because it isn't a case of being a particularly expensive proposition, or that many beds involved -- we are only talking in terms of 10 or 15 beds in each one of the communities.

I would like to suggest to the hon. minister that we were eyeing very critically the Royal Alex had expressed over a number of years an interest in it and we were examining the merits of trying to convert some of the Aberhart Sanatorium facilities over for this purpose. I can only conclude that the situation really isn't going to improve so far as this problem is concerned until detoxification units are established in our communities.

DR. PAPROSKI:

Mr. Chairman, I would like to know what percentage of the prisoners who go from Fort Saskatchewan to Belmont do have an alcoholic problem, and how many of them just go to Belmont to put in an easy time?

MR. CRAWFORD:

That is a dandy. My experience, Mr. Chairman, with both institutions is almost non-existent. When I say 'almost' I mean that all of the information I have on both relates to my duties as minister. So to be able to say that I know very much at all about

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the percentage of those who would do that, and to be able to answer the hon. Member for St. Paul, I am not able to do that.

DR. PAPROSKI:

Mr. Chairman, I would like to compliment the hon. member opposite for Wetaskiwin-Leduc for giving such a good overview in a responsible matter regarding the various problems that do exist, in fact. And really admitting there is patchwork on patchwork and duplication, quadruplication and many various boards that have to be reorganized and co-ordinated. Last summer, we all know very well, the Department of Health and Social Development was actually amalgamated. Actually in fact, despite this amalgamation, I feel at this juncture, and I think the hon. minister will probably agree, as it is in early stages, there is still a Department of Health and a Department of Social Development which are probably separate.

As a result we have a very significant gap between the two, and the reasons for the gap I think, primarily are that the federal government appropriates funds for health, and for social services, and yet we have many people who are in the in-between area, neither for health per se, nor social services per se, therefore we have this grey area. Certain provinces such as Quebec, New Brunswick, and various Maritime provinces, have taken full advantage of cost-sharing with the federal government, especially in three areas which I'd like to mention. These are just three examples. One is mentally retarded children, the other is rehabilitation occupation therapy, for example, material and crafts for senior citizens, and so on. And it's also possible to get federal cost-sharing in nursing homes, as I have mentioned to the hon. minister, and other institutions to a greater degree for example, in hospitals. In other words, these provinces have taken full advantage of federal-provincial cost-sharing, so that the gap is minimal. Therefore, I would recommend to the hon. minister, for his consideration, to evaluate the various programs that are going on in New Brunswick and Quebec regarding cost-sharing, in order that we can also maximize the federal contribution in this area. And, in fact, of course look at our own problems and our own scene and see if there are any other areas in which we can actually participate in federal-provincial cost-sharing. Otherwise, we as taxpayers, as the hon. minister just stated, are paying twice, not only for the federal-provincial tax which we have to pay, but we have to pay it again to the municipality, and this represents millions of dollars that I feel the citizens should not pay.

I understand that the Alberta Hospital Services Commission -- I stand to be corrected, Mr. Minister, maybe you could correct me on this, or clarify it -- has decreased the amount paid to municipalities by decreasing the budget they submit to them by some 10%, and this is apparently a recent policy. Of course, this is based on the same philosophy as the previous administration had which is "let the municipalities pay a fraction of it or a portion of it, which amounts to millions of dollars, with the belief, in fact, that this increases responsibility on behalf of the citizens in the municipalities." Well, of course, I think this is --

MR. HENDERSON:

Did he say that the present government has a policy of reducing the requisitions that come in from local authority by 10%?

DR. PAPROSKI:

There is a municipal portion that the municipalities pay for hospitalization and I'm asking whether, in fact, the policy has recently been thought about where the budget the municipalities submit to the government, to the Alberta Hospital Services Commission in this case, actually is decreased by another 10% and the

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municipalities are asked to raise this other 10%. Based on the philosophy I have stated, in fact, that with the belief is that the responsibility increases if you pay. Well I submit that this is wrong, and false, because the municipalities, the taxpayer, the citizen, has already paid once, and if he can recapture this through federal-provincial cost-sharing, we should indeed do that.

And over the past ten years, or seven years, if you go back in the figures, the municipal portion and the patient portion of contribution to hospitalization actually represents some \$60 million to \$70 million or \$80 million, depending on how you calculate it, and by failure to take advantage of the federal contribution, the taxpayer, in fact, has to pay this again. This amounts to, roughly doubled, \$120 to \$160 million. Again, these figures are not exact, but they run in this range.

Therefore, may I suggest an immediate review of this department. with a view to establishing co-ordination of services, that is understandable to everyone. Understandable to the administrators in the government, understandable to the communities, the municipalities, and the citizens. These paradoxes, the paradoxical items, the items that are not quite clear and not understandable, result in great frustration to the communities. So if they understand it, and if they comply properly for services for needs to the respective departments that are clearly delineated it greatly improves the situation. I suggest that there should be marked revision of superfluous administration in various government departments, specifically the Department of Health and Social Development, but this applies to all departments of government. And then we have an example here again, looking over the estimates. In the Alberta Hospital Services Commission, maybe it's justifiable, I don't know, but it appears to me that it's not. In 1970-71, when there was no Alberta Hospital Services Commission, \$5 million was spent on administration. In 1972-73 when the Alberta Hospital Services Commission came in, it was \$800,000 plus. In 1971-72 it was \$800,000 plus when the Alberta Hospital Services Commission came in, and now 1972-73, the estimate is \$1.2 million plus which is a total rise of 140% or an average of 46% a year. Now I question this, whether this is valid and this is necessary. For AHSC is providing the same services that the previous hospital service section provided. And I suggest that if there is an increase let it be specifically in the area of field services for hospitals and not in administration per se, in service training in the hospitals, rehabilitation and emphasis on patient care -- physical, mental and social -- in the hospitals.

Of course this applies to all departments in government again. In other words let us clamp down on bureaucracy expenditure -- including top level bureaucracy -- and I'm not criticizing them for their performance, I think their performance is excellent, but there is a tendency in government -- like in any other high-powered departments -- to spend excessively for administration. I would rather see this funding going for increased field service and other items that really count at the community level.

If there's to be research and other items to be carried out, let it be carried out by one department. That one department can carry out the research for the total health services for the entire Department of Health and Social Development. Let's not have another Human Resources Research Council which loses sight of the applied, practical, pragmatic type of research that people know is for programs, not just duplication of research studies that nobody understands and nobody understands how to use.

To this end, may I say Mr. Minister, I say this sincerely, I think you're doing a tremendous job, you are right on beam. The programs that have been brought down by this government are excellent.

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But you have a very large department, a very important department as the hon. member opposite has mentioned. I am convinced that it is too large and too important and too difficult to monitor with the present organizational structure.

Therefore, if we are to respond adequately and effectively to the individual in the community -- and this is the ultimate end -- and even if it costs excessively -- after all, the needs have to be met in health services -- if they are not met in health services where are we going to spend the money? So, I say if we are going to respond to these needs, let's organize and respond to the citizens of Alberta properly, let's allow for co-ordination at the community level; let's allow for adequate support financially with services to make this happen.

And I support you completely when you agree with increased federal-provincial cost-sharing. I think this is very important until there's a new formula or a new type of relationship that we establish with the federal government.

Let's have clear mechanism to know what the existing and changing problems are at the community level so we can respond quickly and truly on an ongoing basis if we can do this then the research has to be minimized because, in fact, research is a response to change. Then, and only then, will we meet the response to the needs of the citizens and will provide optimum services for needs and will provide optional value for each tax dollar.

MR. NOTLEY:

Just as a point of procedure first of all, Mr. Chairman, I take it that we are going to conclude the general discussion on the hospital commission before going on to the medicare commission -- is that correct? Fair enough.

Just a very few observations, Mr. Chairman. First of all I am inclined to agree with the hon. Member for Wetaskiwin-Leduc that the hospital commission concept may be a good one. I think that we all recognize the pressures that come to bear on any government with respect to hospital locations. It seems to me that the commission may be a way of dealing with a more equitable distribution, both of operating costs and capital grants and one less susceptible to political pressure.

I also want to say that the global budgeting approach may also be an improvement. Here I'm just speaking from the discussions I've had with hospital board members in my own constituency who argued that the former grant formula was such that it tended to cause doctors to keep patients in the hospital longer than necessary, because the longer the stay, the longer the convalescence, the better the hospital was off. But the new global approach will probably eliminate that and it's their submission to me in any case that that represents somewhat of an improvement.

Just a word of two on the Research Budget I see in the estimates. I am wondering, Mr. Minister, whether or not we are spending enough on research. It seems to me when you consider the enormous expenditures we are making this year in this department, that 1/5 of 1% of the budget spent on research may be a little small. Now, again, I don't pretend to be any authority in this field but it occurs to me that money spent on research -- to consider the whole area of cost control as to whether we are utilizing our facilities properly -- may be money that will bring back a much, much greater return over the long haul.

The debate has already raised the question of the whole matter of consolidating authorities. I don't want to add too many points to the argument to date, except to say that I think we are kind of

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caught in a bit of a bind here between the practicality of an efficient consolidation of authority, on one hand, and the need for community control on the other, especially if we take the route of developing health and social development centres. It seems to me that the closer we can get this to people, the greater the community control, the better. But at the same time there is the problem that this may increase the multiplicity of boards and commissions and what have you. So I sympathize with the problem that is created here. I think it is one of the very difficult ones that we have to grapple with but we are caught between these two things -- the need for some form of administrative common sense on one hand, opposed to the need to make our boards as sensitive as possible to local control and local interest on the other.

Just a comment or two on health and social development centres. We already have a private member's resolution on that and I haven't had an opportunity to speak on that yet although I think it is coming up in several weeks. By and large I approve of the principle. I do think there are a number of difficulties that we have to iron out but it seems to me that there are many advantages to the community health concept. It is closer to the community, generally more convenient for the people of the community, it involves people in the community, can provide 24-hour emergency service. The medical practitioners can share facilities, records, administrative costs, etc. It seems to me that we have to proceed along that line as quickly as we can.

I should make one observation about the whole matter of cost-sharing. I find myself in agreement with the hon. Member for Edmonton Kingsway when I say that if this money is available, whether we like the details of the arrangements or not -- maybe because I am of Scottish origin I believe we have to get whatever we can. I have no doubt that the government -- even though I may disagree with the philosophical approach they take towards cost-sharing -- I have no doubt the hon. minister will be making a pretty strong representation on changing the various cost-shared programs. I say that by also stressing this I may not agree with the representations he makes, but I have no particular concern that he will be silent. So in this sense, I think we ought to get everything we can on the cost-shared basis. We would be foolish to try and stand on principle at the taxpayers' expense in Alberta.

Just a comment on the whole question of capital expenditures: I know that we do have the highest ratio of beds per population in Alberta of any province in Canada, but I think there are still some areas of the province where we do have a problem and I would be interested in hearing the hon. minister's views on just what capital projects are anticipated in the next five years, just what criteria the government plans to use and to what extent we are going to develop active treatment hospitals in the province. As I say, generally we have an excellent position in this field, but I do think there are still some holes, still some gaps to be filled.

By and large then, Mr. Chairman, I find myself not in a position to be too critical of the hon. minister because I know he's got the most difficult and vexing department of all the departments, one which is really a thankless task. All I can say from my corner of the Legislature here is that I wish him well.

MR. HO LEM:

Mr. Chairman, I'd just like at this time to make one or two comments on some of the comments made by some hon. members of this House, and, first of all, I'd like to speak on the makeup of the various hospital boards; particularly those boards in and around Calgary.

Now in the Calgary Auxilliary Nursing Home Hospital Board of District No. 7, the make-up of this board is by appointment, this is

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true. The appointments are made by city council when it's fully discussed, as I understand, in city council and then approved. I believe that the hon. Member for Calgary North Hill would know very well the procedures that are being followed in the appointments of these boards for the past number of years, having served on city council. And I think that perhaps in regard to my own appointment to this board, I'm sure that the hon. member also knows that I'd been appointed by Calgary City Council and I hope that he did vote in favour of my appointment.

Regarding the comments made as to political appointments, I think this statement is way out, because at the time when I was first appointed, some ten years ago, I don't think anyone on city council really knew of my political feelings at that time or my political position. And this is good because I feel that once we make political appointments to hospital boards it would have a very detrimental effect on all people of Alberta because this shouldn't be done and I'm glad that this isn't done.

MR. FARRAN:

Mr. Chairman, could I rise on a point of order?

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Yes, if Mr. Ho Lem permits it.

MR. FARRAN:

Well I've never made any mention of political appointments. My point was that some are paid and some aren't paid. Some are more equal than others in other words. I've never mentioned political appointments.

MR. HO LEM:

Your point is well taken, I didn't mean to say that you mentioned political appointments, but I believe that the hon. Member for Edmonton Norwood did make such an inference.

MRS. CHICHAK:

Point of order, if I may clear it. I did not say political appointments, I said appointments whose politics were well known and were such that precluded his making an unbiased judgment, in other words, if his politics were such that very clearly indicate that he was not in support of the private sector participating. I did not say political appointments, I was only saying that if an individual were appointed, and that his politics were such, it affected his being able to make clear judgment.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

MR. DRAIN:

I want to say, 'let him who is without sin throw the first rock.'

MR. HO LEM:

Just commenting, Mr. Chairman, on the pay aspect of the various hospital boards throughout Alberta, it is my understanding that all district hospital boards are being paid. Let me assure you that the people who are receiving this pay are not making any money at this game of serving on the hospital boards. For instance, I had to go back to a hospital board meeting on Saturday and it cost me \$40

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return for my expenses. Let me assure you that the pay I received for that trip was far below \$40.

The responsibility of paying for the city hospital boards I feel, rests entirely upon the decision of the various councils concerned. If they wish to pay the hospital board members, that is their prerogative, and I would like to have the hon. minister's opinion regarding this system of appointments to hospital boards, and also his opinions as to the paying of hospital board members. Do you intend to make any changes in these two areas? I think that if you are able to give us some opinion and some direction we may settle this question once and for all.

Now regarding the need for the auxiliary hospitals and nursing homes in Alberta, I feel there is a growing need because of the various methods of treatment of our people. Our people are living longer every day. The waiting lists in the nursing homes at the present time in the Calgary area runs between 200 and 300 in numbers, and even though we do have 16 separate nursing homes comprising some nearly 2,000 beds, there is still this waiting list.

In Calgary we have 700 auxiliary hospital beds. There again, I think the latest waiting list is close to 200. I think that our numbers in auxiliary hospital beds is quite a bit lower than that of Edmonton. But even so, when you consider the work that we have been doing, the turnover of patients in this area, I feel that in the Calgary auxiliary hospitals we are certainly doing a very good job in relieving the active hospital beds by taking these people into the system and then relieving them into the nursing home system of care.

I think the role of the auxiliary hospitals and nursing homes has been changing. I recall some ten years ago that it was considered as a chronic hospital, a hospital designed for custodial care. I feel that by the methods which we have adopted through the years, we are not only keeping them there as a custodial care and offering very limited health delivery services; we are now entering into rehabilitation programs, including therapy programs, physiotherapy, occupational therapy, and we have social programs.

All these are designed to try and get our patients back as quickly as possible in the mainstream of society. I think that we are making some good progress in that area. I feel that because of the influx of people coming into the larger centres we need more facilities of this type. For the next five years we have based our target at five nursing home beds per thousand. Our ratio on auxiliary hospital beds is two beds per thousand. But because of the waiting lists that I have mentioned, I certainly feel that we should re-examine our position so that we can reduce the demands on the active hospitals and thereby reduce our overall hospital costs. I wish that you would take this under consideration.

MR. HENDERSON:

Mr. Chairman, may I make just one comment before the hon. minister goes on, relative to the suggestions that the expenditures on the appropriation are excessive. I heard this argument last year from the Conservative party when we set the commission up. Quite frankly, I suggest to any members of the House who have any questions in their own minds about the merits of this amount of money, I would like to suggest that they get the statement that the federal government puts out on comparative statistics of costs of hospitals and look at it. You will find, for example, in the Province of Ontario -- if my mind serves me right -- that their administrative costs for their commission runs something in the order of five to six per cent of the total expenditures under their jurisdiction. And Saskatchewan was up in the same ball park. Even when we brought the commission in last year and increased the staff substantially, we still stayed well below one per cent. Even with this amount this



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year, it is still half of one per cent of the total expenditures that fall under the jurisdiction of the commission. I make these remarks because I think they are pertinent to the comments made by the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview.

There is possibly one element that needs more emphasis, the question of research, and I don't mean medical research, but I mean organizational research and program research. This was the one area, I think, which we tried to start last year in developing a component in this capacity. I have to say very frankly, and not very proudly, that by and large, that element was missing from the provincial hospital system in past years. But obviously we are going to lay out the framework of determining where we are going as representatives of the people of the Province of Alberta with these programs. There has to be a lot more organizational type of research programs, development research, to go into this area, regardless of whether it is in the form of a commission or whether it is within the departmental structure some place else.

Certainly with regard to the investment that is being made by the people of Alberta in the commission itself relative to their total area of responsibility, I think if any members want to compare it with other provinces, they will probably find they are getting the best bargain in Canada.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Agreed.

DR. PAPROSKI:

Mr. Chairman, I have a comment related to that one statement that the hon. member opposite mentioned. The question I'm asking is, in 1970-71 they had a hospital service section which was providing the services for hospitals. Now, in 1972-73 there is 140% increase, providing the same services. As a matter of fact, I would ask what is the increase specifically for the hospital services section, which is truly the service section, the field service, that helps the people out in the field in hospitals - budgetary advice and advice regarding operation of a hospital and so forth? There must be an increase to that direction, and I grant you that the percentage is small for administration of the total expenditure of the AHSC. It is a department, though, primarily which is administrative and budgetary, and if there are extra services provided in that \$500,000 to \$1,200,000, then I'd like to know that.

MR. CRAWFORD:

Mr. Chairman, if I might I'll begin at the end and go to the beginning with the notes that I have made on remarks made by hon. members. The hon. Member for Calgary McCall asked me, in particular -- apart from making some other observations which I'll take under advisement -- my opinion on the system of appointments and payments of members of hospital boards and whether or not any changes are planned in this area. I don't suppose I need observe that there is sort of a delicate arrangement between the hon. Member for Calgary North Hill and the hon. Member for Calgary McCall -- both representing the fine City of Calgary, and both heavily steeped in the history and the lore of the development of the system over recent years in the City of Calgary -- to spar with each other on this particular point. I have no inclination to enter the fray. I acknowledge that practices have changed over the years in regard to the questions asked about appointments and payments of members. My belief is from the sort of tangential, historical knowledge I've had of it as a member of City Council in Edmonton, that the practice of paying all types of civic boards is more common now than it was not long ago. I think that the hospital boards and related ones are probably included in that, although there may be communities where

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that is not done. I would be very surprised if payments are not made in the City of Edmonton.

In regard to changes, I think that changes in the make-up of boards will likely be made and I recall the observations of the hon. Member for Wetaskiwin-Leduc when he said -- and I've already commented on his remarks -- that the make-up of hospital authorities should reflect the fact that they are too numerous at the present time. I made a few remarks about that but I think the structure in, say the City of Calgary, indeed in the City of Edmonton, and any area which is large enough to have a great complex -- almost a confusion in addition to being a complex -- of authorities within the same metropolitan area, should anticipate changes.

In regard to the manner of appointment, I would say also that changes are possible in that respect, but they are not contemplated immediately. I think that, at the same time, any move that might be made to have a slightly different -- or substantially different -- type of structure, possibly would bring changes in the manner of appointment. However I see no objection to any change in that regard still involving, primarily, the appointments being made by the municipal authority.

In regard to payment of board members, the last thing I wanted to say on that is that I regard it as a strictly local matter. When I was in local government, both in Council and in the Development Appeal Board, all the payments that I got were ones that I voted for myself. I took them and I think this is what people do in those areas. As I say, they are purely local in the city councils in those cities.

The hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview raised two questions, one, whether or not we were spending enough on research.

I think the important thing is that something is now being spent on research. This area, I suppose, like all others, has its own unique features. The comment was made by another hon. member that when we talk of research in regard to the Hospital Services Commission we are not talking of medical research, in which area enormous sums are committed. We are talking of systems research, administrative studies and works that would help to improve the efficiency of operation, either of the administration of the commission -- which is the least costly -- or the administration of the 152 general and auxiliary hospitals, which is the big part of it. I think that for this year enough is being spent on research. And when I comment on the remarks of the hon. Member for Edmonton Kingsway I will give some further elaboration on that point.

In regard to capital projects for the next five years raised by the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview, the intention is not to have any more active treatment hospital construction over the next five years. That is the present view of the Hospital Services Commission. It would seem to be consistent with the observation that has been made, that we are at almost a saturation point in regard to active treatment beds in the province, and have the highest national average.

In regard to others, yes. The extended care types of facilities under construction at the present time do include an auxiliary hospital, the Grandview one in Edmonton, and three substantial nursing homes, one in the City of Calgary -- which I believe is still a matter of some public discussion -- and two in the City of Edmonton that will be in the 200 bed range. Apart from that, I think all I could say is that we are not looking to spending very much on capital in this area out of the overall budget in the next few years, and most careful forward planning must be done. I think the five-year period is a realistic one when looking at the capital expansion of the whole system, because in the short-term, apart from some extended

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care types of facilities, including those under construction that I have referred to, there is no pressing need, in spite of the odd local situation, where there would appear to be some discrepancy between need and what is being provided.

Coming back to the remarks of the hon. Member for Edmonton Kingsway, I want to say a couple of things to my hon. friend. One, I thank him for discussing these matters privately with me as he has done in giving me his views which are valuable, as well as expressing them here as he has done this evening. I want to assure him that in regard to items he has mentioned, such as evaluation of cost-sharing programs in two other provinces, these are indeed a subject of inquiry by my department at the present time and will be pursued to see if there is any further benefit that the people of Alberta might attain from what might be relearned there.

The second thing I want to say to him is that I have no objection at all to him sharpening his knife for the good old Hospital Services Commission, and firing off whatever rounds he thinks are appropriate from time to time. A more perceptive critic, I suppose, one who is professionally knowledgeable as he is in this field would be hard to find. As I say, I am always glad to share views with him. I wondered really, when he was going to get to the question of community health and social development centres when he was making his remarks. Near the end he touched base with it a couple of times in a few of the things he said. So my anticipation was not disappointed in any way.

Coming now to the one other matter which raised a question from the hon. Member from Wetaskiwin-Leduc in the course of Dr. Paproski's remarks, in regard to any decrease of the amount paid to municipalities, no, there is no such policy, of course, of the Hospital Services Commission at the present time. That must be a misapprehension of some sort, the basis of which I couldn't understand. The bulk of the increase -- in fact of some \$23 million -- the bulk of that increase, is indeed going for the cost of providing hospital services in the various hospital districts. That is the answer to that.

I take some issue with the statement that may have been true last year, and I'm not relating it to the period of time the hon. gentlemen opposite were in office any more than I'm relating it to the period following September 10.

Really, what I think I know to be the fact is this, there were indeed two separate departments for Health and Social Development for a period of time after the formal amalgamation took place. I don't think, considering the enormity of the two partners to that particular coalition, that it's surprising at all. It should have been the case for some months after the formal putting-together, approximately one year ago.

The assurance that I want to give at the present time -- and my response to the hon. Member from Edmonton Kingsway -- is that the merger of the department has proceeded since the first of the year with progress which is satisfactory to me.

The other thing will get me into just a little bit of detail now and it may be welcome to some hon. members to be able to deal with the list of items under appropriation 2402 in a bit more detail. This relates partly to the question of research costs which came up a few minutes ago.

In the first item of fees, the increase there is due mainly to the commission's plan to hire consultants in laboratory, X-ray and drug fields working on programs for drug standard controls within the hospitals, and also on the accreditation of laboratories. The final terms of reference, of the consultants and of these research studies

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which have not yet been contracted are still being worked out and in those important areas the commission will be moving into very practical areas of operational research that should be of benefit to the hospital system.

I must say that the increases which appear in the seven categories under 2402 are ones that are reasonable, having regard to the changing role of the commission from departmental establishment to commission establishment and the beginnings of the change-over to that system while at the same time, filling the lack that has been remarked upon of research work in those areas in the past. The increase, substantial as it may appear to be, still does not commit an overly-large sum of money for that, and my feeling would be that in the future, larger sums would be committed for research than the figure of \$106,100 that appears this year.

I should also mention that the substantial study which is being done under the name of the Alberta Health Care study is, to a large extent, not included in any appropriation because of the fact of federal funding. If hon. members wish, I could go on and deal with the other items briefly. Materials and supplies, the increase there is substantially Xerox, and the rental of equipment as well as stationery . . . [Interjection] . . . I'm getting such heart-warming support Mr. Chairman, that I think maybe I'll stop and see if there are any more questions.

Appropriation 2402 total agreed to \$1,233,782

Appropriation 2403 Nursing Homes

MR. RUSTE:

Mr. Chairman, I spoke briefly to the hon. minister on this. It relates to the Wainwright Hospital, where the old active hospital was replaced by a newer one. I'm just wondering whether he's given any consideration to allowing a hospital board in renovating a facility of that type to do it on, say, a labour-cost basis. I think we'd get a pretty reasonable price job done in providing additional nursing home facilities by the members of the board.

MR. CRAWFORD:

Mr. Chairman, I do remember the hon. member mentioning that to me not long ago. Do I understand that the older facility is there and is not being used at the present time? That's the situation? I think all I could say is that I believe I would expect the commission and myself to receive favourably any such proposal, if the facility that is needed and should be provided for the area can be provided in such a way as you have outlined.

Appropriation 2403 total agreed to \$14,003,400

Agreed to without debate:

Appropriation 2404 Hospitalization Benefits Plan \$222,218,800

Appropriation 2410 Alberta Health Care Insurance Commission

MR. HENDERSON:

Mr. Chairman, I would like to make one comment. I made it earlier in one of the debates but I would like to restate it. Certainly urge the government to consider the merits, so far as the Medicare program is concerned, of taking a lump sum approach as to the amount of money we put into Medicare each year. The present arrangement, where the fee schedule times the utilization, an open-end arrangement such as that where all the treasurer has to do is

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find the money to pay the bills -- just can't go on. The costs of it are simply not going to be accepted. And regardless, without criticism to the profession in any way shape or form, it's just human nature to utilize these facilities. I'd like to suggest with a lump sum approach each year that could be negotiated through the commission with the medical profession, there would be a lot more diligence applied within the profession of ferreting out over-utilization within the profession on this service. Because I think there would be an incentive to members within the profession to discipline themselves so far as over-utilization from the professional standpoint is concerned. And I still suggest, Mr. Chairman, that the problem is going to have to be faced-up-to with the increasing costs in this area. The thing that appeals to me about the approach, it's the best way of keeping the bureaucrats out of the internal affairs of the medical profession. If it's done any other way, I don't see how we avoid interference within the profession. So I can only say again, as the hon. Member for Wetaskiwin-Leduc, I can assure the hon. minister that's responsible for this appropriation, if they were to screw up the political courage to tackle this, I would certainly offer my political support.

MR. NOTLEY:

It's my understanding that perhaps we were going to get a brief introduction of this estimate by the hon. minister in charge of the commission. I'm wondering, in view of that, if -- I'm not sure what the hon. Government House Leader had in mind -- does he want us to sit until somewhat later on tonight or could it be held over until tomorrow?

MISS HUNLEY:

Mr. Chairman, I didn't intend to speak very long. From time to time in regard to questions I have attempted to analyze my thoughts on what should happen. We haven't made any changes in policy except the one of which you are all aware. I'm very interested in the observation of the hon. Member from Wetaskiwin-Leduc because certainly I am very concerned as to some approach which will assist in keeping the costs from escalating and I would be very interested in talking to him in some detail about it.

I just wanted to briefly say that the things that are happening -- we're moving into the new building early next year. We are trying to build and improve the data processing system which was started. It's being enlarged and they're working on some changes in that at the present time we hope to make it more efficient. Like the rest of you, I am very concerned about the escalating cost as I said before and, certainly, we will be looking at it with this in mind. If a lump sum payment seems to be the best solution well certainly I am sure we would be very interested in exploring it.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Yes, Mr. Farran?

MR. FARRAN:

Just 30 seconds here. If the package deal or lump sum approach is not followed at an early date, I still believe that the majority of the citizens who say that an authorization slip should be signed before a bill is presented by a doctor, are correct. It's not an insinuation that doctors are dishonest. In business it very frequently happens that people double-bill just through inefficiencies in an office, and I believe that that is maybe only a temporary little brake but it would be helpful and I believe most Albertans would agree with me.

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SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

MR. NOTLEY:

I would ask the Government House Leader what the plan is on this matter because, with all due respect, I think we are dealing with quite an important appropriation -- one which could take a certain amount of time -- and that being the case I think it would be unwise to rush through it.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

MR. HYNDMAN:

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

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Is it agreed?

HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

[Mr. Diachuk left the Chair.]

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[Mr. Speaker in the Chair.]

MR. DIACHUK:

Mr. Speaker, the Committee of Supply has under consideration certain estimates, reports progress, and begs leave to sit again.

MR. SPEAKER:

Having heard the report and the request for leave to sit again, does the House agree to receive the report and to give the Committee leave to sit again?

HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

MR. HYNDMAN:

Mr. Speaker, I do move that the House do now adjourn until tomorrow afternoon at 2:30 o'clock.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Government House Leader has moved that the House now adjourn until tomorrow afternoon at 2:30 o'clock. Do you all agree.

HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER:

The House stands adjourned until 2:30 o'clock tomorrow afternoon.

[The House rose at 10:59 p.m.]