

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY CP ALBERTA

Friday, May 5th, 1972

(The House met at 2:30 p.m.)

PRAYERS

(Mr. Deputy Speaker in the Chair.)

Point of Privilege

MR. DIXON:

Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of privilege. I am sure all the hon. members of this Legislature are aware of the tragic mine disaster in Kellogg, Idaho, which is on the Montana, Idaho border. I thought it would be a nice gesture and a sincere gesture from all the members of the Legislature and the people of Alberta if we sent the following telegram to the Governor of Idaho.

"Governor Cecil D. Andrus, State Capital Building, Boise, Idaho, USA. The members of the Legislature on behalf of the people of Alberta wish to express their condolences for those bereaved by the tragic disaster which has taken place at the Sunshine Mine. We extend our sincere sympathy to the bereaved families and wish to assure you of our hopes and prayers that attempts to rescue the remaining trapped miners will be successful."

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. DICKIE:

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the government, I certainly would take pleasure in seconding that motion and congratulate the hon. member for introducing the thought to the Members of the Legislature.

MR. NOTLEY:

So that there may be unanimity in the House, I want to take this opportunity to commend the hon. Member for Calgary Millican and to assure the members of the House that the telegram has my whole-hearted support.

HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 2: The Individual Rights Protection Act

MR. GHITTER:

Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce a bill being The Individual Rights Protection Act. I believe, Mr. Speaker, that this bill describes the attitudes and the highest aspirations of all Albertans, in that it enforces the inherent belief of all of us that

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individuals should receive the protection of the law from discriminatory acts and practices of other individuals.

You will note, Mr. Speaker, that Bill No. 1, The Alberta Bill of Rights, which was introduced by the hon. Premier on March 2nd last, has as its primary objective the protection of the individual from the power of the state. This bill is a companion bill to The Bill of Rights, in that it recognizes as a fundamental principle and as a matter of public policy that all Albertans are equal in dignity in rights without regard to race, religious beliefs, colour, sex, age, ancestry, or place of origin.

Mr. Speaker, it is my sincere belief that in Alberta we pride ourselves with the fact that people are readily accepted without prejudice or class distinction. This, by and large, is indeed true. Unfortunately, situations do arise from time to time where discriminatory signs are published or displayed, where accommodation is denied for prejudicial reasons, where employment is denied to a female applicant, where she is expected to receive less pay than that of a male applicant for equal work, where employment is denied persons due to their age, or where trade unions exclude people from membership for discriminatory reasons. This bill is designed to assist Albertans who suffer prejudice due to these discriminatory practices, and in order to overcome these practices, the bill creates the Alberta Human Rights Commission which will have the general administrative responsibility for administering the act. The commission will function primarily in the area of public education to minimize discrimination and to hopefully bring an end to discrimination by negotiation and voluntary settlement.

It should be added, however, Mr. Speaker, that in the event that discriminatory practices cannot be overcome by negotiation and voluntary settlement, that the bill include extensive enforcement provisions which would allow the Alberta Human Rights Commission to proceed with the appointment of a Board of Inquiry. The Board of Inquiry would investigate discriminatory complaints which in turn could result in bringing discriminatory practices before the Supreme Court of Alberta for determination. The Supreme Court has extensive rights to order the cessation of the discrimination, to order damages and compensation and to penalize the party guilty of the discriminatory offence. The bill further repeals, Mr. Speaker, the present Human Rights Act.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, it should be noted and emphasized that this bill, similar to The Alberta Bill of Rights introduced by the hon. Premier, has the effect of over-riding and rendering inoperative any other law of the Province of Alberta that purports to authorize or require the doing of anything prohibited by this act.

It is the intention of the government, Mr. Speaker, to propose that this bill should go through with the concurrence of the members the second reading stage and then to the Committee of the Whole Assembly for their consideration and review, and it should be held at this stage over the summer recess so that interested Albertans and organizations may present their views to the government with respect to this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I humbly present this bill for the consideration of the members of the Assembly who, I know, will join with me and all Albertans in an expression of affirmation of the fundamental principles of individual rights which are contained in this noteworthy legislation.

[Leave being granted, Bill No. 2 was introduced and read a first time.]

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MR. LOUGHEED:

Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the hon. Government House Leader, Bill No. 2, The Individual Rights Protection Act, be placed on the Order Paper under Government Bills and Orders.

[The motion was carried without debate or dissent]

Bill No. 72: The Milk Control Amendment Act, 1972

MR. BATHUK:

Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce a bill, being The Milk Control Amendment Act, 1972. This bill provides the title Milk Control Act be struck out and be replaced with the words The Dairy Board Act. The main purpose of this amendment is to increase the number on this board from three to five, including a cream shipper and a consumer. The new board can handle the milk market-sharing plan which was recently approved by the milk producers of the province. I hope that the members of this Legislature will support this bill.

[Leave being granted, Bill No. 72 was introduced and read a first time.]

DR. HORNER:

Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the hon. Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs, that Bill No. 72, The Milk Control Amendment Act, 1972, be placed on the Order Paper under Government Bills and Orders for consideration.

[The motion was carried without debate or dissent]

Bill No. 209: An Act to Amend The School Act

MR. CLARK:

Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce a bill, being Bill No. 209, An Act to Amend The School Act. This amendment, Mr. Speaker, would make it possible for the Minister of Education, after consultation with Indian representatives in the province and the school boards concerned, to enter into an agreement where Indian people would have representation on school boards in the province.

The bill also makes it possible to set out and make provisions for the length of the appointment, the terms of the representative being on the school board. It also makes provision for setting out the qualifications and the manner of election of an individual to the school board. It also makes it possible to make arrangements for transportation and schooling of Indian children. It also makes provision for the financial arrangements necessary for this type of action. In general, it facilitates what I believe to be a better arrangement as far as education is concerned for Indian young people in this province.

I should emphasize once again, Mr. Speaker, that the hon. minister may enter into this kind of an agreement only after there has been consultation and agreement between representatives of the Indian people and also representatives of the school board concerned.

[Leave being granted, Bill No. 209 was read a first time.]

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

MR. YUPKO:

Mr. Speaker, I have the very great pleasure to introduce to you and to the members of the House, nine young Albertans, but before I do I would like to make some explanatory remarks.

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During the last few months a Name The Lake contest was conducted by the government to find a name for the lake to be formed behind the Big Horn Dam, which will be filled this fall. This was an opportunity for the school children to participate in the history-making process. The contest was conducted in Grades I through IX in all Alberta schools. Students were asked to suggest a name for the lake, and write an essay not to exceed 100 words explaining their choice. Each school selected a grade winner, which they then sent into the department.

In total, 1,910 entries were received, and a panel of three judges selected the best entry from each grade level. These nine names were then forwarded to the Geographic Board of Alberta, which selected the name for the lake. The judges were Mrs. Thomas Bert of Rocky Mountain House, Mr. James MacGregor of Edmonton, former Alberta Power Commissioner, and a noted author, and Mr. Hugh Dempsey of Calgary, director of history for the Glenbow-Alberta Institute.

The following are the winners in each of the grades I through IX:

Grade I, Miss Janet Miller, Alder Flats School, Alder Flats, Alberta, who suggested the Pete Pangman Lake. Janet, would you mind standing?

Grade II, James Hanson, Portsmouth School, Onefour, Alberta. He suggested the David Thompson Lake.

Grade III, Ronald Toews, Botha School, Botha, Alberta. He suggested Lake Walking Eagle.

Grade IV, Jake Jameson, Caroline School, Caroline, Alberta. He suggested Abraham Lake.

Grade V, Miss Grace Gopher, Sunchild O'Chiece School, Rocky Mountain House, Alberta. She suggested Windy Point Lake.

Grade VI, Miss Sandra Cordan, Eckville Senior School, Eckville, Alberta. She suggested Lake Charlotte. By the way, Charlotte was the name of David Thompson's wife.

Grade VII, Miss Dianne Martyniuk, Viscount Bennett Junior High, Richmond Road, Calgary, Alberta. She suggested Lake Wesley.

Grade VIII, Perva Beaver, Reed Ranch School, Olds, Alberta. She suggested Walking Eagle Lake.

Grade IX, Karen Schauerte, Alder Flats School, Alder Flats, Alberta. She suggested Abraham Lake.

Each of these schools attended by the students received a copy of the Atlas of Alberta, and each of the students will receive a \$50 prize, each that is, except the grand prizewinners, and I mean winners in plural.

The Geographic Board picked the names suggested by two students, and each will receive a \$400 prize. They are Karen Shauerte, a Grade IX student at Alder Flats School in Alder Flats, and Jake Jameson, a Grade IV student at Caroline School in Caroline. And the name of the lake will be Abraham Lake in memory of Silas Abraham and the Abraham family, a proud family of Stoney Indians who lived for years in the area of the Bighorn. I would like to read very quickly their essays if I may, to give the House an idea of why they chose the name.

First of all, Jake Jameson's essay.

"I believe that Abraham Lake would be a good name for the man-made lake on the North Saskatchewan River. My reason for

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this is because of the five Stoney Indian children's graves belonging to the Abraham family I have seen near Windy Point many times. These and other Indian graves around this area will be covered by the lake."

Karen Schauerte's essay:

"I think the Big Horn Dam should be named Abraham Lake in memory of Silas Abraham, a Stoney Indian from Morley. Silas Abraham and a number of other Morley Indians hunted and trapped the Kootenay Plains and traded with the Hudson's Bay and the northwest trading companies. Any of the Indians who died were buried on the plains. At least three of these are Abrahams. Some graves will be under flood water. Abraham Lake would be historical, very appropriate, and a tribute to the deceased Indians, especially Silas Abraham who was a good and noble Indian.

Indians, being superstitious, may be appeased by the name Abraham Lake covering the remains of their departed brethren. The great Manitou may smile kindly on the red man's white brother who is flooding a great hunting ground for remembering a great Indian."

I would also ask their parents to stand who are seated in the members' gallery to receive the recognition of the House.

MR. STRONBERG:

Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, I have one introduction of one class. Mr. Speaker, it is always a pleasure for me to introduce some group of students from my constituency. And today we have 30 students from the Forestburg school accompanied by their two teachers, and I will ask this group of students who are in the public gallery, to please stand.

MR. SORENSON:

Mr. Speaker, I wish to introduce to you and through you to the members of this Assembly, 25 Grade IX students from the Killam Public School. They are accompanied today by their teachers, Mrs. Toby Schweitzer, Mr. Ken Wold, and by their bus driver, Mr. Bob Erickson.

The area from which they come is the home of the Manitou Stone, and there are many interested people, including our Minister of Culture, that are endeavouring to bring this stone back to Alberta where it belongs. Killam was featured in Ripley's "Believe it or Not" some time ago. On the town sign it states, "Drive carefully, Avoid Accidents, Killam."

Mr. Speaker, I could cite 101 other things concerning this group and the area, but I don't believe we have the time. They are seated in the members' gallery. At this time I would ask the group to rise and be recognized by the Assembly.

MR. COOPER:

Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure today to introduce to you and to the members of the Legislature, 47 students in Grade VII and VIII from the Village of Innisfree in the constituency of Vermillion-Viking. They are accompanied by two of their teachers, Mrs. Saik, and Miss Melnyk, and by a very special guest, the Mayor of Innisfree, Mr. Bohaichuk. They are seated in the public gallery, and I would ask them to stand at this time and be recognized.

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FILING RETURNS AND TABLING REPORTS

MR. GETTY:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to table for each member of the House a copy of the Foreign Takeover Review policy which was read in the House the other day.

Mr. Speaker, I should explain that a copy of the actual Herb Gray report, which is also coming for each member of the House, is taking a little longer to be delivered, but it will be distributed as soon as it arrives.

MR. ADAIR:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to table the Ninth Annual Report of the Northern Development Council.

MR. RUSSELL:

Mr. Speaker, as ordered by the Assembly, I wish to table Sessional Paper No. 187.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Naming of Highways

MR. SORENSON:

Mr. Speaker, I have a question to the hon. Minister of Highways. Is the hon. minister giving any consideration to the naming of highways other than by just the numbers? In my constituency we have Number 13, 12, 41, 46 and so on.

MR. COPITHORNE:

Mr. Speaker, we have given some consideration to the naming of highways. As the hon. member may know, the Yellowhead route is a recognized route across Western Canada. Now generally the accepted plan of highway identification is by number and this is accepted universally throughout North America.

MR. SORENSON:

A supplementary question to the hon. minister. Would the hon. minister give consideration, in co-operation with the Departments of Education, Culture, Youth and Recreation, and perhaps the Environment to sponsoring a contest for school children to find suitable names for certain provincial highways?

MR. COPITHORNE:

Mr. Speaker, this could bring up quite a difficult situation, firstly because there are many highways in Alberta that are now referred to by name. For instance, the road south is generally referred to by the natives as the Macleod Trail. I can think of the one going west to Banff, referred as the Banff Coach Road, and the one north from Calgary to Edmonton as the Edmonton Trail. These are natural names because they were used in the early days when they had the coach roads in those areas.

MR. SORENSON:

A supplementary question. Is the hon. minister giving any consideration to the re-naming of the Trans-Canada Highway which runs through the minister's constituency as the Copithorne Trail?

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MR. LUDWIG:

Mr. Speaker, a supplementary to the hon. Minister of Highways. In view of the uncertainty that exists in his mind considering the names, doesn't he think it's advisable to seek the help of these very clever students to select proper names, so that we know what the names are?

MR. COPITHORNE:

Mr. Speaker, I have every confidence in the young people of our province in being able to select names. I think they did a real top job as was demonstrated here today.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Highwood, followed by the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview and the hon. Member for Stony Plain.

Canmore Corridor

MR. BENOIT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is addressed to the hon. Minister of Municipal Affairs, but does involve the Department of Lands and Forests. It has to do with the Canmore corridor. Has the government developed a policy for the disposition of land and land use in the Canmore corridor? If so what is the policy? If not when does it propose to develop a policy?

DR. WARRACK:

Mr. Speaker, the question was addressed in several places but I think it might involve myself more than anyone else. I would like to clarify that the land dispositions in the Canmore corridor because of the intensive use now and anticipated use of that recreational and other land-based resource is the subject at this time of a Poothills Land Use Allocations study. That study is for the purpose of determining how we ought, as a government and public of Alberta, to plan the use of the land resource in that area, and in areas north and south of there as well.

The study itself, while it has a relatively broad surface range of focus, does focus on certain individual areas, and at this time we are making no long-term land dispositions in that Canmore Corridor until we have the results of this study as a basis. Now I know the hon. member would want to know when the study is expected to be completed. It is expected to be completed very shortly now, and after we have had an opportunity to assess it, it will be a basis on which we'll try to give a longer term planning of land use in the Canmore corridor.

MR. BENOIT:

One supplemental, Mr. Speaker, if I may; has the government given any consideration to what position it would take if Village Lake Louise were rejected in the Banff National Park and asked to be placed in the Canmore corridor as many people have suggested?

DR. WARRACK:

Not specifically, Mr. Speaker, although that really does come forward as a somewhat hypothetical situation at this time. I think it's one that we do not want to overlook but it does encompass a couple of pretty major things. One is just what the provincial government's policy ought to be respecting national parks in the Province of Alberta, and I think it's fair to say that we're still at

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the outset point, that is about 1911, with respect to the situation in that regard.

The other matter is that in the involvement of anything like Village Lake Louise in concept, regardless of where located in Alberta, I think we need to defer to some of the very important, and I think constructive, discussions that come as a consequence of the hon. member Mr. Ghitter's motion regarding recreation zones in Alberta that this needs to be an integrated kind of packet.

Student Residencies Rents

MR. NOTLEY:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct this question to the hon. Minister of Advanced Education, is the hon. minister aware that there is a rent strike at Michener Park -- the married students' residence at the University of Alberta? And if so, does the government plan any action to deal with this?

MR. FOSTER:

Mr. Speaker, I am not specifically informed that this is the case. I have heard that it is the case, that there are students who are refusing to pay their rent in Michener Park. I'm not specifically aware of the reasons why. I think it has something to do with the level of rent there. I have also heard there are other students who are refusing to pay tuition fees for other reasons. The University of Alberta has not consulted with me on the situation, and since this is an internal matter with the University of Alberta I do not intend to get involved unless requested to do so.

MR. NOTLEY:

Supplementary question, can the hon. minister tell the House why the married student housing is subsidized in Calgary and not at the University of Alberta?

MR. FOSTER:

Well, I assume Mr. Speaker, that the hon. member is saying that the married students' quarters in Calgary are subsidized by the University of Calgary and they are not, in fact, subsidized by the University of Alberta in Edmonton. I'm not specifically aware of the amount of the subsidy, Mr. Speaker. If the hon. member would like, I'd be happy to get this information and report back.

MR. NOTLEY:

Supplementary question, it's my understanding, from talking to several of the residents at Michener Park, that during the last provincial election campaign several of the government members promised a grant in lieu of taxes. Now I'm wondering, now that you've formed the government, whether or not you're giving this proposition any consideration?

MR. FOSTER:

Mr. Speaker, if several members of the Progressive Conservative Party of Alberta made those representations during the election I would suggest that they talk to me, and I'm sure they're going to.

Specifically, Mr. Speaker, this relates to an amendment to The Municipal Taxation Act which I think was brought into this House a year or two ago, and I think it relates, generally, to the matter of taxation and the financing of education. I have suggested to the universities that the matter of exemption of student accommodation on university residences is something that we will consider, but not at

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this session of the Legislature. I think it's part of the package that relates to the review undertaken by the hon. Minister of Municipal Affairs and should be dealt with as a part of that package.

MR. NOTLEY:

One final supplementary question, Mr. Speaker, ...

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER:

I wonder if the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview will be fair; we have quite a list here, and I'll put you on the list for another question.

The hon. Member for Stony Plain

MR. CLARK:

Supplementary question, Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct a question to the hon. Minister of Advanced Education and ask him if he's aware that members, who are now members of the Cabinet, at the session one year ago indicated that if and when they became the government they would, in fact, repeal the legislation which made it possible for some taxation on the students' residences at the universities in Alberta?

MR. FOSTER:

Yes, Mr. Speaker, I have had that particular matter brought to my attention.

MR. CLARK:

Supplementary. What are you doing about it?

AN HON. MEMBER:

Nothing!

MR. FOSTER:

I think, Mr. Speaker, I've answered that question already; it will be dealt with.

MR. HO LEM:

Supplementary question, Mr. Speaker; was there a meeting requested by the students to discuss this matter with you?

MR. FOSTER:

Not as far as I'm aware, Mr. Speaker.

MR. HO LEM:

Was there a meeting requested -- ?

MR. RUSSELL:

Mr. Speaker, the one thing the questioners seem to be overlooking is the fact that the legislation is permissive. If the hon. members on the other side are seeking to get some relief, they should be talking to the members of the Edmonton City Council, not members of this Legislature.

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MR. TAYLOR:

On a point of order, the legislation was permissive last year too.

AN HON. MEMBER:

A great point!

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Stony Plain followed by the hon. Member for Camrose.

Government Staff Turnover

MR. PURDY:

Mr. Speaker, a question for the hon. Minister of Manpower and Labour. Within some government departments the annual turnover was from 30% to 56% the year ending December 31st, 1971. Can you give the House a reason for this? And one department that I'll take an example of is the Alberta Health Commission.

DR. HOHOL:

Mr. Speaker, the Alberta Health Commission is a good example because it falls somewhere in about the middle of the percentage of turnover for the year 1971. It is difficult to explain on examination of the data why there is a high turnover in one department and not so high in another. This is an ongoing kind of study of the office of the Public Commissioner, and we will do long-term and short-term reviews of this problem.

In the Alberta Health Care Commission I would make these comments. First that it is a fairly new service, and on short notice had to be housed somewhere. And without making any value judgments about the choice, the fact of the matter is that the housing for this commission is sub-standard; this used to be a store, a large retail store. So that the number of staff being lodged find themselves in a mezzanine kind of arrangement with desks fairly close together, and it's difficult to work with the telephones and the typewriters going all the time, and people moving through. With the staff in this particular place being for the most part typists and stenographic staff, if they can find more suitable employment without the kind of atmosphere in which they work, then, of course, they will leave. The government clearly recognizes the difficulty for staff to work in this atmosphere, because as you know, sir, a new building, a modern up-to-date one is being built for the commission on the same grounds.

On the matter of turnover, I would make only one further comment, that I think it is fair to say, to you and to the Assembly, that likely business, commerce, governments and other agencies, have to move into a second level of employee-employer type of study. That is what makes the employee, even at the typist and telephone-operator level, know that someone in supervision is aware that she or he is part of the total enterprise. I think this has a good deal to do with staff turnover.

MR. PURDY:

Supplementary to the hon. minister, were there any internal problems, public relations between senior civil servants and clerical staff?

DR. HOHOL:

Mr. Speaker, I would simply answer in general terms, that without being aware of this kind of problem in the particular example that you use, I do not know if that was the case. But in general

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terms, I personally would be surprised if some employees in any enterprise didn't leave because of employee-management problems. This is a personnel function that is a complex and difficult one, and I would have to say that some people, in fact, would leave because of this kind of problem. But short of doing a study, doing research, and getting information which is valid, this would be as far as I could go.

DR. PAPROSKI:

Supplementary question, Mr. Speaker, to the hon. minister, would this high degree of turnover result in administrative inefficiency and a high cost for administration? Would you agree with that?

DR. HOHOL:

Yes, I would, Mr. Speaker. I think all of us know that it takes a certain number of weeks, if not months, depending on the kind and level of service into which the employee enters. And the higher the level of entry, the higher the cost. The lower the level of entry, the less cost.

But certainly the cost of bringing staff in and then having them leave, and seeking and making the actual replacement and retraining is a costly proposition. We hope to reduce this in every way possible. The office of the Public Commissioner, I would feel, is doing a real good job in this area, as he works not only in his own office, but with other heads of departments -- deputies and the ministers themselves.

Battle River Fish Ladder

MR. STROMBERG:

Mr. Speaker, a fishy question to the hon. Minister of Lands and Forests. By one means or another, will you encourage Alberta Power to replace the fish ladder that they have on their dam on the Battle River at Forestburg?

DR. WARRACK:

Mr. Speaker, relatively deep in my recollection I do believe that there has been a situation where this particular fish ladder was destroyed, but my recollection moreover is that it was by flooding or a natural cause kind of situation, and also that it has not been replaced. I do think that the hon. member has a very good point that this ought to be considered. I will have to, in terms of any detail, take a look into the matter, Mr. Speaker.

MR. STROMBERG:

A supplementary to the hon. minister. Since the loss of this fish ladder, local sportsmen in my constituency have informed me that there is a serious depletion of game fish due to the fact that the fish cannot spawn upstream. Would you give consideration that if Alberta Power will not replace this fish ladder that you would stock the reservoir above the dam at Driedmeat Lake but not with suckers?

DR. WARRACK:

I would like to enunciate that this government has a very firm policy not to stock any lakes in Alberta with suckers. But more seriously, Mr. Speaker, I think this is a matter that deserves probably higher priority and intensive attention than it has received in the past and that, in fact, we ought to do the best we can in all places in Alberta to generate the fish habitat situation that fish can reproduce in. Particularly critical is the spawning area, and we should do this in that area as well as others. I would like to have

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an opportunity to look into the matter and see if we can't move forward on that rather quickly.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Calgary North Hill followed by the hon. Member for Calgary Bow and the hon. Member for Bow Valley.

School Curricula

MR. FARRAN:

Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the hon. Minister of Education. Mr. Minister, sir, in view of the widespread concern among parents and advanced education authorities at the poor skills of so many pupils in the basic subjects of simple arithmetic, spelling and writing, do you propose any steps to strengthen the elementary school curriculum?

MR. HYNDMAN:

Mr. Speaker, in that connection I might say that the whole area of elementary education is occupying our attention in a priority way. Without in any way suggesting that there is not a priority attached to secondary education, it is, I think, fair to say there is increasing evidence that the area of elementary education in Grades I to VI perhaps is more important than we realized in the past and that maybe it is during this six year period where the die is basically cast for students. We feel that in future plans, both financial and otherwise, some major changes may be made in the area of the importance of elementary education which some say has been too long on the bottom of the educational totem pole. Certainly the area of curriculum, which is suggested by the hon. gentleman, will be occupying our attention and we will be waiting to see the recommendations of the Commission on Educational Planning in that regard as well.

Consumer Affairs

MR. WILSON:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct a question to the hon. Minister of Labour. Is the Consumer Affairs Branch active in all four of its statutory functions?

DR. HOHOL:

Yes it is, Mr. Speaker. I should just like to comment that within the capabilities of the funding for the budget year, which is \$50,000, there is as much attention paid to each of the four as to any other.

MR. WILSON:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Is it the government policy to put its main financial thrust in this branch behind private sector organizations or increasing government agencies?

DR. HOHOL:

I should like to answer this way, sir, that this is a new service brought in by the prior government and a service with which this government agrees. It has been in office a short time and the long-term services are yet to be determined. We will study this - we are, as a matter of fact, at the present time.

To return to the question, we should like to work with the private sector as much as possible, but there have to be some

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fundamental and basic services provided by the government. One of our purposes is to supplement or fill those areas of services that aren't provided by the Federal Consumer Affairs Department. This is one of our major functions.

MR. WILSON:

Supplementary, Mr. Speaker, is it the intention of the government to continue the policy of providing grants equal to one-third of membership fees to the Calgary and Edmonton Better Business Bureaus?

DR. HOHOL:

Mr. Speaker, this has been done this year, as it has been done in a series of years in the past. This will come under review. One of the things that I would want to make clear, that may not be clear, is that this grant paid to Calgary and to Edmonton, based on membership, is from the Treasury and not from the Consumer Affairs Branch or from the Department of Labour, because if it were the case, we'd be giving to the two Better Business Bureaus what might have been one-third of our own budget, which is all too small at \$50,000. So I do want to be clear in the Assembly, Mr. Speaker, that of the total of \$25,000, \$14,000 to the Edmonton Better Business Bureau and \$11,000 to the Calgary Better Business Bureau are from Treasury and not from the branch.

Student Loans

MR. MANDEVILLE:

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct a question to the hon. Minister of Advanced Education. In light of the legislation that was passed last year, lowering the age of majority from 21 to 18, will your department consider changes in application forms for student loans so that they won't need parental signatures?

MR. FOSTER:

Mr. Speaker, I think that the issue here is not so much a matter of whether you require parental signatures on documents, as it is a question of whether or not parents will be expected to make some sort of contribution financially to the student costs of advanced education. I think the answer to that question, Mr. Speaker, in many, many cases, is very clearly and very definitely yes.

That, Mr. Speaker, is with reference to students who may be regarded as dependent students and not as independent. We're giving some consideration to changing the definition of independent students to include not only students who are married and students who have been in a post-secondary educational institution for some three years, but for students who may have been employed, for example, for a three-year period. There is also provision in the regulations, Mr. Speaker, that would allow the Student Finance Board to grant any student an independent status and therefore would not require that student's parents to make any contribution. But generally, Mr. Speaker, the issue is whether or not we will expect any parental contribution to the costs of that student and in most cases, I think the answer is yes.

If I may take a moment of the House, Mr. Speaker, I'm very much aware of the concern of the student community in this regard. In fact, there was a very excellent brief presented to me not too long ago from the students at SAIT. The student view on this seems to be that if we are legally an adult at the age of 18, why do we then have to call upon our parents to have them make a contribution? I would suggest with great respect to that student body, Mr. Speaker, and to this House, that the matter of whether or not a student is an adult

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at the age of 18 is not terribly relevant to whether or not society should expect the parents of that student to make some contribution to his post-secondary education. I don't think it detracts from them being an adult in any sense whatsoever, and I don't think you can draw a parallel.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Edmonton Jasper Place, followed by the hon. Member for Innisfail and then by the hon. Member for Lesser Slave Lake.

Home Improvement Loans

MR. YOUNG:

Mr. Speaker, my question is to the hon. Minister of Municipal Affairs. Mr. Minister, have you or your department been approached by officials of the City of Edmonton or by representatives of the Canora Neighbourhood Improvement Association, requesting assistance by means of subsidized interest loans or grants for home improvement? The background to the question is that in the Canora neighbourhood of Edmonton, 90% of housing has been classified as poor, and a community group has been working with the city planners, and together they have produced a plan. I'm just wondering whether you've had a request as yet.

MR. RUSSELL:

I can't recall having received such a request, Mr. Speaker.

MR. YOUNG:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker; inasmuch as the plan suggests that such assistance be requested, is there any assistance available now for a special situation such as this? If not, would you give consideration to making such assistance available?

MR. RUSSELL:

Mr. Speaker, I think in a case like this, the proper route to follow would be to process this through the Alberta Housing Corporation, and see if one of its specific programs would be applicable. I have also mentioned that rather major legislation is under review by governments other than ours, and it may well be that that could help that kind of situation in the not too distant future.

Federal Tax Reform Measures

MR. DCAN:

Mr. Speaker, I direct my question to the hon. Provincial Treasurer. You stated, when introducing The Alberta Income Tax Amendment Act, that you had several concerns regarding the federal tax reform on Alberta. Can you advise the members of your major concern?

MR. MINIELY:

Yes, Mr. Speaker. this is a subject which is very close to my heart. I would first like to say that prior to the time that I was in government, I had the opportunity to study the tax reform provisions in considerable detail. I think it is fair to say, Mr. Speaker, that one of my concerns before being Provincial Treasurer of the province, is still one of my concerns, and one of the concerns of our government, that in spite of the fact that --

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MR. LUDWIG:

Mr. Speaker, on a point of order; I believe it has been established by a previous decision that a question concerning a bill should be properly done when the bill is discussed, or on estimates, instead of during the question period.

HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

MR. MINIELY:

Mr. Speaker, if I might carry on --

MR. LUDWIG:

Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, in view of your nodding your head, would you make a ruling on this point of order, please?

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Very well. The hon. Provincial Treasurer, I am sure, will be answering the question that was placed before him, and I hope it wouldn't be too late.

MR. MINIELY:

Mr. Speaker, I think in spite of this, the intent of the question by the hon. member is, what are the concerns of our government with respect to the federal tax reform measures? I think that certainly is a valid question.

To carry on, Mr. Speaker, one of the real concerns is the fact that in spite of a lot of public feeling when tax reform was announced by the federal government, there is still, in our view and in the view of our government, a real concern whether or not, in fact, the incentives are there that are necessary to encourage Albertans and Canadians to invest more in industry and receive a higher equity proportion of industrial development in Alberta, which as you know, is one of our major goals.

I should also say, Mr. Speaker, the concern with respect to the family farm -- one that I had examined personally -- is the fact that the capital gains tax is levied when the estate passes to the son of the farmer. We feel that this discourages the basic way of life in the rural areas, which is that family farms pass to the son.

In the Capital Gains provisions in The Federal Income Tax Act, they exempt the levying of capital gains tax under the act on passing from the father to the wife, but they do not have the same provision with respect to the passing of the farm from the father to the son. That is one which concerns our government.

Generally speaking, there are certain other areas that we are concerned about, but those are certainly two which give us cause for major concern.

Federal-Provincial Cost-Sharing Programs

MR. EARTON:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct a question to the hon. Provincial Treasurer. Is the cost-sharing agreement between the federal and provincial governments for the Lesser Slave Lake special area on a 75% federal, and 25% provincial basis?

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MR. MINIELY:

Mr. Speaker, I am sure that this question arises out of a discussion in the estimates which took place during the course of this week. First, I would like to say, with respect to what is actually in the agreement, that the agreements are primarily 50-50. Some of them vary on the basis of 60% provincial, 40% federal. There is some variance in the various cost-sharing in the Lesser Slave Lake project.

But Mr. Speaker, what I am saying, and what I was saying during the course of the discussion of the estimates, is clearly that the whole problem of cost-sharing programs is exemplified by the very question of the hon. Member for Slave Lake. And that is, when it came down to actually collecting the money under the cost-sharing agreement, we found that many of the periphery projects of the Lesser Slave Lake area -- in the first year of its administration, in fact -- the federal government would not share.

This is the thing that gives real cause for concern under all cost-sharing arrangements. As a result of this, Mr. Speaker, we have had to set up in Treasury a very close cost-accounting system for the Lesser Slave Lake project to ensure that the project and everything that we are going into, is in fact, shared on a 50-50 basis. I can only reiterate again that if this does not exemplify the need for strong coordination of cost-sharing programs through the Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs, I don't know what else does.

MR. BARTON:

Supplementary then, Mr. Speaker; would the hon. minister table the agreements for 1970-71, '71-'72, '72-'73, '73-'74 for the Special Area Agreement?

MR. MINIELY:

Mr. Speaker, I would be happy to, if he would make it a Motion for a Return.

MR. BARTON:

Thank you.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Vermilion-Viking followed by the hon. Member --

MR. APPLEBY:

Would the hon. minister consider diverting some of these funds to other areas that have like needs?

MR. MINIELY:

To respond to that question, I would also say during the course of the discussion of the estimates the same evening that I was referring to, that this is the real problem. Another side of the problem of the whole area of cost-sharing programs is that there are many areas of the province which require development, Mr. Speaker. Certainly we cannot address all the priority of provincial funds to one area, although we recognize the needs of the Slave Lake area. I would emphasize that. But there are other areas we must be concerned about as well.

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Compulsory Auto Insurance

MR. COOPER:

Mr. Speaker, a question for the hon. Minister of Highways. Has the hon. minister received any representations opposing the elimination of a minimum penalty for conviction under the proposed compulsory automobile insurance legislation?

MR. COPITHORNE:

Yes, Mr. Speaker, I have.

MR. COOPER:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker; from whom were the representations received?

MR. COPITHORNE:

Well, mostly from individuals, Mr. Speaker.

MR. COOPER:

Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Did the hon. minister not receive representations from the Insurance Association of Alberta?

MR. COPITHORNE:

Mr. Speaker, I have had representations from several insurance agents and companies throughout the province.

MR. COOPER:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker; as a result of these representations, are amendments being considered to Bill No. 60?

MR. COPITHORNE:

Well, Mr. Speaker, the bill has to go through committee, and at that time, if the debate is adequate and justified, there will then be considerations, as the member well knows, as to whether there will be amendments or not.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Vegreville followed by the hon. Member for Drumheller, and then the hon. Member for Lacombe.

Rental of Low-Cost Housing

MR. BATHUK:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct my question to the hon. Minister of Municipal Affairs. Last year the Alberta Housing Corporation instituted an exploratory program for low-cost housing. I am aware that there are several of these homes that are standing vacant because they could not be sold. Would the hon. minister consider renting these homes to individuals, particularly in Ryley, where the district agriculturalist and also the recreational director, haven't got any accommodation, and they are travelling miles daily to their work? Would the hon. minister consider that these homes could be rented?

MR. RUSSELL:

Well, Mr. Speaker, I think that is an excellent suggestion, and certainly we shouldn't have houses standing empty. As a matter of

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fact, we have canvassed various departments of government to see if they do have staff that would be interested in renting the vacant house at Ryley. Specifically, if there are any members having housing problems, maybe they would be interested too.

Inflation

MR. TAYLOR:

Mr. Speaker, may I direct this question to the hon. Minister of Manpower and Labour? Since inflation is a major concern to Canadians and Albertans, would you say that rising or increased wages is a major item contributing to inflation?

DP. HOHOL:

Mr. Speaker, I think I would prefer to deal with this question in the second reading of The Manpower and Labour Act. To answer adequately it would take more time than the Question Period permits. Because if I said yes, and I would be inclined to say that it's a factor, I would then have to go on and say what the other factors are in all fairness.

MR. TAYLOR:

A supplementary, would you also consider that rising prices are even more responsible than increased wages?

DR. HOHOL:

I would agree that both the items mentioned are part of the problem.

MR. TAYLOR:

A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker, is the government doing anything about stopping the increased rise of prices that is affecting inflation in this province?

MR. MINIELY:

Mr. Speaker, I think I was addressing that. I have some information here which I have been meaning to bring to the attention of hon. members when the proper opportunity arose. It's very interesting. I had indicated in earlier questions in the House on the subject of inflation that the primary responsibility is at the federal level. That does not mean that we are not concerned about it and working with the federal government, as I have said two or three times to members in the Assembly.

It is also interesting to note, though, so that hon. members are aware, that I had indicated earlier that Canada had one of the better records of control of inflation of modern industrialized countries in the world.

Also the Province of Alberta relative to Canada, it is interesting to note that Edmonton and Calgary were only 3.1% higher in the recent year as compared to the national average of 5.3%. So in other words Alberta is even doing better than Canada is and Canada is one of the best in the world. This doesn't mean that we aren't going to watch it. Our government will be watching it closely. I wanted to bring this to your attention to indicate that we are, in fact, keeping on top of this and will be watching it and expressing our concerns to the federal government from time to time.

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MR. TAYLOR:

I appreciate that, Mr. Speaker. It would appear then that the hon. Provincial Treasurer does not agree with the federal Progressive Conservative leader, Mr. Stanfield?

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Lacombe, followed by the hon. Member for Ponoka, and the hon. Member for Calgary Millican.

MR. R. SPEAKER:

Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. I believe I was to follow the hon. Member for Drumheller.

MR. COOKSON:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, ..

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Excuse me, I noticed the hon. member motioning, but I thought you were motioning for my attention to get the hon. Member for Drumheller, not yourself. I apologize.

Farm Vacation Programs

MR. COOKSON:

I would like to ask a question of the hon. Minister of Tourism. In view of the newspaper report by Mr. Swain of Lacombe, who is a former president of the Zone 4 Tourist Association, that the government, in effect, is horning-in on the concept of farm vacation programs, could you tell the Assembly what the government essentially is doing with regards to the farm vacation programs?

MR. DOWLING:

Yes, Mr. Speaker. The government is certainly not horning-in on any program. As the hon. Deputy Premier indicated the other day, considerable work has gone into promoting farm vacations throughout Alberta through the Great West Farm Vacation Organization. We have done nothing directly, but most of it has been homework. We have been in contact with the federal Department of Agriculture people in Alberta, Dr. Horner's Department of Agriculture here and we have had meetings with the Travel Industry Association of Alberta in regard to this. The gentleman you refer to is now the president of the Travel Industry Association of Alberta and I'm surprised that a man who is supposed to be promoting tourism to the extent that I would hope he is, is so parochial. I don't think any ideas to promote tourism are sacred, I'm going to steal them all and see that this province is number one in Canada.

MR. COOKSON:

A supplementary to this, Mr. Speaker, could you advise whether your department is making any contributions financially to zones such as Zone 4?

MR. DOWLING:

Yes, Mr. Speaker, I can say last year the contribution to Zone 4 and five others like it was \$5,000, which is on a contributory basis of 60% contribution from the Alberta Government Travel Bureau, 40% from the zone. We have some interesting facts to present to the hon. members of this House when we deal with our estimates and I don't think anyone will be disappointed. One other point I should make is that to the Travel Industry Association of Alberta we have also made

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a grant of some \$25,000. This is to promote tourism and tourism ideas all across the province.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Calgary Millican followed by the hon. Member for Calgary Mountain View.

Wild Horse Population

MR. DIXON:

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct a question to the hon. Minister of Lands and Forests regarding the wild horse population in Alberta. Is the minister aware of the rapidly declining wild horse population in our province? There's great public concern being expressed that this species may decline. My question to the hon. minister is, is the government or his department considering introducing legislation to protect these animals from extinction because they are a noble animal and a lot of people are anxious to find out if the government is going to propose legislation?

DR. WARRACK:

Mr. Speaker, I recall that perhaps six weeks ago or so the hon. member asked a question on this topic to the hon. Minister of Agriculture, and as a consequence, I've taken some time to inform myself on this. First of all it's not clear to me that we are, in fact, in any situation where there is a danger of extinction and perhaps there is a need for a little closer study and analysis to resolve that very question.

Moreover, I've also learned that in the case of wild horses there are wild horses and domestic horses, and they both belong to what is called the Equus family in the animal kingdom, but the species -- [laughter] Can I finish the day? But in fact the true wild horses in the sense of the animal kingdom are in Asia and the horses that are on the east slopes of the Rockies, particularly in the Edson and the Rocky, Bow, Clearwater forest areas, are not truly wild horses. That's not to say that they're all very tame either. But, in fact, they are the same species as domestic horses. The history of these animals is that they were left when the bottom went out of the mining along the eastern part of the Rockies and they have simply grazed and reproduced since then. I'm really not trying to be funny and -- [Laughter] That's not my worst problem. My problem is when I try to be funny I'm not. [Laughter] -- Someone agrees.

But in any case I did want to investigate this to really determine whether we're dealing with a separate species which would be a much more important consideration than if we're not. And it turns out that, in fact, we're not. The history of it is more or less as I've described it. They are disposed of from time to time, as you know from previous correspondence we've had, by dispositions for wild horse roundups that average 215 per year over the last ten years. These horses are then used for rodeos, which is not usually a good use for wild horses because they have neither the size nor the temperament to be good "bucker-offers". Neither are they particularly good saddle horses and so, in fact, most of them end up being slaughtered, and that was the source of the question to the hon. Minister of Agriculture.

I'm still being as serious as I've been all along. Those were the good points about the preservation policy regarding the wild horses. The difficult points of it are basically true. One of these is that there is some grazing and browse competition with wild life and game, and we might examine what we're prepared to give up in the way of wild life to have additional untamed horses in that area of Alberta.

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The other problem is that they do create quite a difficulty for us in the forestry division with our efforts in reforestation, because an area that has been reforested has at least 400 tree plants with three years growth each. The horses, particularly when they get a little short of feed and are searching for food, tend to paw a great deal and they dig these things out and they really hurt our reforestation problem. Now this is not to say that I wouldn't seriously consider any suggestion about the preservation of any wild life, but so far as I know it's not really a problem in terms of the population, and that they are not nearly extinct, they are not a distinct species, and that, in fact, there are problems with game competition and reforestation if we get too many horses in that particular area of Alberta.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER:

I trust that the hon. Member for Calgary Millican has had his answer. We have just about run out. To be fair, I'd just like to give the hon. Member for Calgary Mountain View and the hon. Member for Lethbridge West, time to ask their questions.

MR. DIXON:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask a supplementary, because --

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER:

I'm sorry -- we just won't have time. It's already after the time. We'll give the hon. Member for Calgary Mountain View the chance to ask his question.

AGT Rates

MR. LUDWIG:

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct a question to the hon. Minister of Telephones. Is there any consideration being given by AGT to increasing rates to subscribers or for increasing rates for services performed by AGT within the next year or two?

MR. WERRY:

Well, Mr. Speaker. Rate review is always under constant consideration by any public or private utility, and I would have to answer in the affirmative that AGT is, in fact, reviewing from month to month and year to year all of their rate structure, both regulated and unregulated rates.

MR. LUDWIG:

Mr. Speaker, in view of the fact that the hon. minister sort of gave us a little beat-around-the-bush. Could he tell us whether there is going to be an increase in rates within the next year or two?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Order, order, order.

MR. WERRY:

Well, Mr. Speaker, that nonsensical question doesn't really require an answer, but I will provide the hon. member with an answer. As I indicated in the House three or four days ago, AGT's long distance revenue was, in fact, 17% higher than had been estimated for the current year, and that included the months of January, February, and March, and is holding true in April. Also our operating expenses

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had decreased by four or five percent, so that, in fact, there would be no rate increase considered for the year 1972.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER:

We have exhausted the question period time.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

MINISTERIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

Pollution Control Division - Regional Offices

MR. YURKO:

Mr. Speaker, I have a short announcement that I would like to make. I would like to say that the Pollution Control Division of my department will open regional offices in Red Deer and Whitecourt and expand the Calgary office. This will ensure that more areas of the province will have direct access to the services offered by the division, while at the same time reducing the cost of these services now being administered from Edmonton. This is in mind with the government's over-all policy.

We are confident that through the decentralization of these services their effectiveness will be increased. The Whitecourt and Red Deer offices will be staffed by a senior technician. His prime responsibility will be the operation of the Air Pollution Control Branch Mobile Rural Monitoring Laboratory, and the maintenance of the branch's rural sampling network. The technician will investigate all complaints in his area, gather samples as required and act as liaison with local agencies and groups. The locations for these offices were chosen on the basis of their proximity to sour gas plants, where much of the sampling is carried out.

The Calgary office will be expanded by the addition of at least one engineer and two additional technicians. At present one senior technician is stationed in Calgary. The senior engineer will be responsible for the division programs in Southern Alberta concentrating in the areas of air and water pollution with some work in municipal sewage and water systems, agricultural chemicals, beverage containers, litter and noise pollution. The rural and urban air monitoring laboratories will be operated from the office and the sampling network in the area will be maintained. Complaints will be investigated, inquiries answered, and enforcement procedures recommended by the Calgary staff.

The regional engineer will also be responsible for being the division's liaison officer with other levels of government, pollution interest groups and industry. It is expected that these offices will be in operation by late summer. But effectively immediately, two students hired for the summer will work out of the Calgary office to conduct stack sampling at industrial plants.

GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

MR. HYNDMAN:

Mr. Speaker, I move that you do now leave the Chair and the Assembly resolve itself into Committee of the Whole for consideration of Resolution No. 2 on the Order Paper, a Bill for an Act being The Agricultural Development Act. His Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor having been informed of the subject matter of the resolution recommends the same for the consideration of the Assembly.

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MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER:

The hon. Mr. Hyndman moves that I do now leave the Chair and the House resolve itself into Committee of the Whole. Do you agree?

HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

[Mr. Deputy Speaker left the Chair at 3:43 pm.]

* * * * *

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

[Mr. Appleby in the Chair.]

MR. CHAIRMAN:

The Committee of the Whole will now come to order to consider the resolution that it is expedient to introduce a Bill for an Act being The Agricultural Development Act. Do you all agree?

HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

MR. HYNDMAN:

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

MR. CHAIRMAN:

The hon. Mr. Hyndman moves that the committee rise and report. Do you all agree?

HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

[Mr. Appleby left the Chair at 3:45 pm]

* * * * *

[Mr. Deputy Speaker resumed the Chair.]

MR. APPLEBY:

Mr. Speaker, the Committee of the Whole has had under consideration the following resolution: that it is expedient to introduce a Bill for an Act being The Agricultural Development Act and begs to report same.

MR. HYNDMAN:

Mr. Speaker, I move the resolution be read a second time.

[Motion being carried, the resolution was read a second time.]

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 73 The Agricultural Development Act

DR. HCFNER:

Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce a bill being The Agricultural Development Act. This act is intended to provide assistance of both a financial and educational nature, with a view to

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improving the quality of rural life in Alberta, helping to preserve the family farm, and making rural centres more viable. The Alberta Farm Purchase Board will be replaced by the Alberta Agricultural Development Corporation operating in a broader sphere and utilizing a special fund of up to \$50 million to achieve the objectives that we have outlined.

[Leave being granted, Bill No. 73 was introduced and read a first time.]

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

MR. HYNEMAN:

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.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER:

The hon. Mr. Hyndman moves that I do now leave the Chair and the House resolve itself into Committee of Supply. Do you all agree?

HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

[Mr. Deputy Speaker left the Chair at 3:46 p.m.]

* * * * *

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

[Mr. Appleby in the Chair.]

Department of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs

MR. CHAIRMAN:

The committee will now come to order for consideration of the estimates in the Department of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs.

MR. TAYLOR:

Mr. Chairman, on a point of information, I wonder if the hon. minister could advise us if he has the answers ready to Order for a Return No. 193, requested by Mr. Barton. Pardon me, not No. 193, No. 190, dealing with some of the estimates. Remember, he requested this be done, if possible, before the estimates were considered. I wonder if that has been done?

MR. GETTY:

What date were those?

MR. TAYLOR:

It was about May 2nd.

MR. GETTY:

Tuesday. I know they're very close to being completed. Some of them, it may be, I could answer verbally.

MR. TAYLOR:

If it was possible to have any that were done this afternoon, would it be possible to do that? Could you check?

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MR. GETTY:

Yes, Mr. Chairman, however again I'd say that I'd be happy to have them on a verbal basis as well, rather than trying to hand out some document, we could talk about them.

Appropriation 3101 Minister's Office

MR. STRCM:

Mr. Chairman, so we don't get some misunderstanding here, does the minister intend to make his comments on No. 3102?

MR. GETTY:

Mr. Speaker, I felt that since we have had a debate on second reading of the bill creating the department, I wasn't going to take the time of the House to go over that information again. Rather, I prefer to respond to any questions that the members may have.

MR. STRCM:

Mr. Chairman, just again, I want to make sure that we'll proceed on the right basis. Shall we use No. 3102 as the vote on which we will make our general remarks at the beginning, and I say that tongue in cheek, because if we got past it we would be at the end, but I would take it that that's the one that we would make our general remarks on.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Are we agreed then we will have the discussion on No. 3102?

HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

Appropriation 3101 total agreed to \$ 40,270

Appropriation 3102 General Administration

MR. STRCM:

Mr. Chairman, I would like then to make a few comments in regard to the estimates that we are considering. First of all, I want to say that I recognize that we have been moving into a changing position as far as our relationship with Ottawa is concerned, and that the number of cost-shared agreements that have been negotiated and entered into within the last number of years dictates that we must find a new mechanism for our relationship with the federal government. I did say, I believe, in one of my talks that I made, and I believe it was on the budget address, that I was not too concerned as to whether or not Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs was made into a department or whether it remained as an agency. I must say that at this point in time, I find that I am changing my mind. I cannot agree at this point in time that it is necessary to set up Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs as a separate department. I say it after very careful thought. I think that it is unnecessary to place a minister in charge of this particular responsibility. And I wanted to make it very clear to the minister who is in charge of this estimate and this department that it's certainly not on any personal basis that I am making my remarks, and I'm sure that he appreciates it. But it is regarding the administration of the duties involved that I make my remarks.

The role of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs has been described as a role of co-ordination. I would accept that definition. I think it is a valid definition. But I would have to

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say this afternoon, Mr. Chairman, that after a great deal of questioning in the House, it has become very, very evident to myself that the hon. minister is not able to carry out the responsibilities of co-ordination in the way that I believe they ought to be carried out. I do not think he has been demonstrating to us that he is able to carry out the role of a co-ordinator. I would cite a number of examples, Mr. Chairman. We asked a number of questions in regard to the agreements on irrigation rehabilitation. I think it was very evident that this was a subject that the hon. minister was not acquainted with. In fact, he was not dealing directly with Ottawa on irrigation rehabilitation. That was the responsibility of the hon. Minister of Agriculture and the hon. Minister of the Environment.

There were some questions asked in regard to the Cyr Lake agreements. I believe the hon. minister replied to a question from the hon. member for that area, that he had not visited the area; he had not been up there. He had left that responsibility to other ministers. But I suggest that if he is going to carry out his role as a co-ordinator, that he must then become personally involved in a number of these areas, because it is impossible otherwise to carry out the role of a co-ordinator.

I am sure there are a number of areas in agriculture that have been negotiated since the new government took office, that have been directly carried out by the hon. Minister of Agriculture. I feel confident that there are some that are presently under way, in which the hon. Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs is having very little, if any, involvement.

I could go on and cite a number of areas. I think there was a question raised not too many days ago in regard to mines and minerals. Again, the question had to be referred to the hon. Minister of Mines and Minerals, and he then had to try to provide the answer. In the area of arrangements, again the hon. Provincial Treasurer has to be directly responsible for that part of the negotiations. I could go on and mention a number of examples where individual departments are, in fact, carrying out their own negotiations.

MR. GETTY:

Mr. Chairman, I want to pass on one bit of information to the hon. member. I don't want to interrupt his train of thought or anything, but he should recall that when questions are passed to ministers, it is not necessarily because they have to be passed -- whether the information is here -- but it is out of respect to the minister who is dealing in the responsibility, that I would not take that responsibility away from him, but allow him to deal with his department.

MR. STRCM:

Mr. Chairman, I appreciate the information that the hon. minister has given, but even in rising to give me this bit of information, he is actually strengthening the argument that I am making, and that is that it is impossible for him as a minister, to be responsible or to be directly informed on the areas that are under consideration by other ministers in the government. And he can say that it is in deference to them and respecting their position, that he is doing it, but we are really discussing whether or not the Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs is able, to direct the negotiations that are taking place between the federal government and provincial government.

Now, I think that it arises in one of the questions that was raised to the Attorney General in regards to negotiations going on between the Attorney General and the Solicitor General of Canada, the hon. Mr. Goyer in regard to the RCMP. Again it was the minister, the

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Attorney General, who was dealing directly with them. Now, the point I am making is, that it has been stated that the hon. Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs speaks for Alberta. Now, really I think that he needs to examine that very closely, because is he in fact speaking for the province? Will it be the Minister of Agriculture, or Deputy Premier, that will be speaking for them when they are in Ottawa, or really, who is the person that is responsible?

Now, I want to follow a little bit another line of thought here, because I can recall, and the hon. Minister may recall this -- although I do not remember whether or not it was following your coming into the House or not -- but Alberta was very critical of Medicare and the implementation of Medicare on a Canada-wide basis. And in our discussions that we had with Ottawa, we pointed out to Ottawa that Alberta had never agreed to it. And the answer that we got was just a little bit surprising to us and yet I have to recognize it as being a fact of life that we must live with. We were told by the Prime Minister that Alberta had, in fact, agreed to Medicare. We were somewhat puzzled when this statement was made, and we said, on what occasion did Alberta ever agree to accept Medicare? And the reply we received was that this plan was determined in the House of Commons, and it was the MPs who represented Alberta in the House of Commons who had agreed to it, and therefore in fact, Alberta had accepted it.

So it leads me to say, who does speak for Alberta in Ottawa? Will it be the MPs? Is it the Premier of our province? Will it be a single minister who is designated to speak for our province, or who in fact is it, that speaks for us? I think we would have to admit that if matters are decided in the House of Commons, then in fact, the MPs who represent our province in the House of Commons will be the ones who are truly our representatives.

And so when we are talking about not liking a certain agreement, and that we would want to change it, I think we have to recognize that there is another area in which decisions are made, in which it is not a matter of direct negotiation between our province and Ottawa.

I think it is well for us to examine very, very closely where some of these decisions are being made relative to certain problems that we will be facing.

I think the hon. minister has made a considerable noise through the media about agreements that have been reached with Ottawa. But, Mr. Chairman, I would have to say quite candidly this afternoon that I am not aware of a single new agreement that has been reached by this government to this point in time.

Mr. Chairman, I want to say too that no effective negotiation can be carried out by the hon. minister when he spends 10 to 15 minutes talking to a minister in Ottawa. This certainly will not lead to effective negotiations. Nor can it be considered a serious discussion.

It is my view that the job of co-ordinating negotiations with Ottawa and having meaningful discussions with them can best be carried out by the heads of government at the Premier to the Prime Minister level, particularly when it falls into the area of policy. It is essential, in my view, that the president or the chairman of the Executive Council should retain this operation, therefore, under his direct supervision.

Another point, Mr. Chairman; I'm not aware of any federal minister of equal status to that which we have set up, so that we can, in fact, consider an intergovernmental affairs minister at the provincial level speaking to his direct counterpart on the federal level.

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Now, Mr. Chairman, I want to make it very clear again that I do recognize that there is a real need for gathering information from Ottawa in respect to programs that are in operation, that affect the provinces. I recognize that there is a need of keeping a record of all agreements of all negotiations that are going on between the province and the federal government. It is important that it be carried out under a policy determined by the government.

But I suggest that a minister representing the government does not have the effective muscle in which to carry out this responsibility because if he is going to, then I suggest that he has to be rated as a super cabinet minister or as a cabinet minister to whom all other cabinet ministers have to be responsible, or otherwise he is in difficulty.

Now, Mr. Chairman, I believe that we are taking the wrong approach by setting up a minister, and it is very evident to me, after listening to the minister attempt to answer questions, that he is sitting in an untenable position where he cannot effectively carry out the responsibilities that have been assigned to him. I suggest that it is necessary at this point in time to re-examine very, very closely the method used to provide the kind of information that is necessary for proper co-ordination.

MR. GETTY:

Mr. Chairman, I appreciate the philosophical nature of the hon. member's arguments. It's the third time now in the House that he has expressed the opinion that the previous administration was right when they had an agency, and that the present administration is wrong when they have a department. But I also appreciate that that is just his opinion, and I don't happen to agree with it, and obviously the government doesn't.

What I found difficult, Mr. Chairman, was to follow his reasoning. I tried to keep notes which would lead me along the argument he was making, but frankly I can't. He started out by saying that he understands there should be this co-ordination, but then he switched, moved to saying I don't have responsibilities for the department and I should have responsibilities for the various departments. We have not, at any time, indicated that this Department of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs would be involved with the responsibilities of program departments.

Then he went on to point out that there was something wrong in that I wasn't there, in a spot where a particular program department was operating. Which would then lead me to believe he was upset that I wasn't doing the minister's job who, in fact, was running the department.

So I can't quite follow his reasoning. He either wants it to be co-ordination or he wants one minister to run all the departments, which obviously is impossible, and we've tried to point out to him that what the department is attempting to do is to co-ordinate, without getting involved in the programs, the necessary activities of each of the Alberta government departments with other governments in Canada and, if necessary, outside of Canada. And that when a minister is involved with the day-to-day operations of his department, I suggest he doesn't have the time to try and stay aware of the various things his colleagues are doing in intergovernmental matters. Nor should it be one of his responsibilities when you have a Department of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs who has that responsibility.

The argument that I was not able to answer questions on things that touched on other ministers' departments, well, I find just completely fallacious because I suppose I could stand up and talk about any minister's department. I suppose the hon. Premier could if

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he wanted to. There's no question in my mind that the Deputy Premier could if he wanted to. And it's obvious that the Provincial Treasurer could if he wanted to. There wouldn't be much sense, as a matter of fact, in going through estimates. Obviously the Provincial Treasurer knows about the money that's spent in any department, so you could have asked all the questions of the Provincial Treasurer. So I just can't follow the argument that the hon. member has tried to place before the House.

His point that there have been no new agreements yet between the Government of Alberta and other governments -- I don't know if he thinks that's good or bad. We certainly haven't rushed to enter into agreements. Our problem, as a matter of fact, has been with living with agreements which we've inherited. I don't say that those things we are trying to do are in a great way different from the previous administration. I have the files and the minutes of meetings and frankly, I see in many cases they were saying what we are saying. However, having said it they still went along and entered into agreements that were opposed to the very things they were saying. I don't know why they did that; but it may be because of a lack of co-ordination. I hope that we can accomplish something in that regard.

Having then said that it was impossible for anybody to do the kind of thing that our department is doing, the hon. member then said that it should be done by the hon. Premier. Well, either it's impossible or it isn't. I think that if it's the policy of this government to take one of those loads off the Premier's shoulders and place it with the responsibilities of a minister, well then, presumably, the hon. Premier will be able to spend his time in many ways other than having to be involved with this matter.

One other argument the hon. member made, and that was that he thought what is being done, in terms of co-ordination, in keeping track of agreements and so on, should be done. And in order to do that he felt there should be an agency. Now as I said in the Throne Speech, we've received the work of the agency and whether the hon. member believes that that is the way to do it or not, the fact of the matter is, it was not happening. We did not receive a co-ordination of agreements, there was nothing there to indicate that in fact this was being done. It appears, as a matter of fact, that if you create an agency, and you have an official, whether it's the Premier's executive assistant or somebody else, who is supposed to be responsible for that agency, that if he doesn't have a position where he is discussing with his fellow cabinet ministers, and sitting around the cabinet table with them, then, unfortunately he just doesn't have a sufficient position to be in the know as to what is going on. And what the whole exercise is about is to make sure that in fact these things are co-ordinated.

I have no hesitation in saying I have nothing against the ability of the people who were in the agency when we took over the administration, except it was obvious that they had not been given the support of the Cabinet that was necessary. I think that support can only be obtained when you have a Cabinet Minister involved.

MR. NOTLEY:

Mr. Chairman, first of all, I want to say that I disagree almost totally with the government's concept of federalism, but I want to say in the second place however, that I do find myself in agreement with most of the minister's remarks here in defending his department.

I say that because I do think if we are going to really look at this question of co-ordination of the various federal and provincial programs that it is necessary to have a full-fledged minister in charge of it. I also submit, and this is perhaps where I differ with the government's approach to federalism, that we are moving into a time when there is going to have to be a much closer relationship

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between the federal and provincial governments. We can talk all we like about withdrawing from cost-shared programs, but I think that it's going to be a long, long wait indeed, and I would suggest that most of us had better not hold our breaths waiting for the federal government to radically change the distribution of powers, and especially their role in the whole cost-shared program scheme that reigns in Canada today.

It's largely for that reason that it seems to me, Mr. Chairman, it is necessary to have a minister at this end, who is in charge, first of all, of making sure that we keep track of just what programs there are, and that we in fact, are playing the best and most efficient role possible in those programs. Because we are all taxpayers, and if there is federal money that we are missing out on, then it seems to me that that is a loss to Alberta taxpayers unless we fully utilize federal programs that are available. I think it is necessary that we have a minister in the Cabinet who is on top of the cost-shared programs.

Secondly, as I mentioned when we discussed this whole question on the second reading of the bill, we are moving into a stage when there will be greater economic planning at both the federal and provincial levels of government. It seems to me, especially with federal fiscal monetary policy, that it is important that we have an ongoing input from the province into the federal policy level. And again, the more that we can institutionalize the co-operation between the federal and provincial levels of government, the more efficient and workable a confederation we achieve.

I believe in the principle of co-operative federalism. I honestly suggest that it's a step that we have taken in the right direction here, even though I will probably disagree with most of the positions that the hon. minister takes. I'm talking about the principle of the department, and quite frankly I think all the other provincial governments will in time have to follow this route because it seems to me that is just the way that federation is heading at this stage. If we think that we can take Canada back 100 years and balkanize this country, I think we're really a little optimistic, to put it mildly. Because as I see it, the trends in the country today are going to demand a very close co-operation between both levels of government. We're going to have a vast multitude of agreements and it requires a minister at the provincial end who is on top of those agreements. So, just a few comments generally.

I want however, to deal more specifically with the whole question of the special areas program in the Peace River country. As the hon. members know, the Lesser Slave Lake special area was set up for a specific purpose. I pointed out the other day in the House that I support the efforts made to initiate rather massive programs in that area of Alberta. Clearly no doubt, it is a have-not district; clearly no doubt, it requires a good deal of funding in order to provide the residents of Lesser Slave Lake with something like equality of opportunity in terms of programs. I commend the former government for this start and I commend the federal government for the Lesser Slave Lake special area program.

My quarrel is not with the original program in the Lesser Slave Lake district, but with the expansion. First of all the boundaries were expanded to include Whitecourt, then expanded to include Grande Prairie, and in the expansion there was a great deal of uncertainty. For example, the second special areas agreement included a very large part of the Peace River country south of the Peace River. Under the terms of that agreement, the federal government must be responsible for the building of large projects, but the province was to be responsible for the funding of smaller projects. Well unfortunately there was a great deal of confusion on the part of local people as to which level of government had responsibility for what. We had, for example, in early March the industrial development co-ordinator in

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Grande Prairie complaining that he wasn't notified that the province was responsible for smaller projects. We had a bit of a hassle over that.

I think perhaps this problem that has resulted from the expansion of the Lesser Slave Lake program just illustrates why I think we need someone on top of the whole question of federal-provincial programs. I want to suggest that part of the difficulties in the Peace River country from this expansion don't strike at the principle of a minister in charge of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs, so much as the fact that we had a changeover in government, and it is reasonable to expect some lead-in time, as the new minister takes over and becomes acquainted with the department and so on.

There is one point, however, that I want to make to the minister now. That is that the Province of British Columbia, according to my understanding, is attempting to get all of the Peace River Bloc included under the DREE program. As a resident of the Peace River country, this concerns me and it concerns a lot of Peace River residents, because if there is confusion about the federal funding on the Alberta side of the border and yet the B.C. government is able to persuade Ottawa to take the B.C. Peace into the DREE program, where you have the grants made available for industrial development and so on, then you are going to be putting Alberta communities at a distinct disadvantage vis-a-vis BC communities in the Peace. Who is going to develop a plant, for example, in Grande Prairie, Alberta if they settle in Dawson Creek, B.C. and they can get a federal grant? Who is going to locate a plant in Fairview, Alberta if they can go to Fort St. John, B.C. and get a grant? This is one of the things that I think does concern a number of residents in the north. I would like to specifically suggest to the minister that perhaps it does require consultation with the B.C. government, so that when you look at the Peace country, you look at one area; two provinces, but one area. And any representation that is made regarding this portion of Alberta, is done in conjunction with the B.C. government. I am sure that most of the hon. members would not want to see Alberta communities put at a competitive disadvantage with B.C. communities.

I am not suggesting that British Columbia is going to be successful in persuading the federal government to bring them under DREE, but I am just saying that we, as the two western provinces, should be working together when it relates to an area that really affects both provinces.

In conclusion, then, Mr. Chairman, I want to say that while I have differences with the government's thrust in terms of their concept of federalism, this is not the time to debate that. I do believe that with the multiplicity of programs that we presently have to deal with, it is important to have a minister in charge of federal and intergovernmental affairs, a person who can speak out on these programs in the Cabinet, a person who has the time to stay abreast of just what programs, in fact, do exist. I think perhaps it is a fair statement that other ministers become so -- and quite properly so -- preoccupied in their ministerial duties that it may be difficult for them to see the overview. On the other hand the suggestion has been made that perhaps the Premier could provide that overview. In a general sense, yes, but again I think that when you consider the many technical agreements that exist between the federal and provincial levels of government, it's probably wise that we have a minister who is specifically charged with that responsibility as well.

DR. PAPROSKI:

Mr. Chairman, I'd just like to make a few remarks. Being a new member, I'd like to speak on a new department. I'd like to congratulate the minister, not only for being the minister of this department, but also for the fact that he has organized this

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department from the outset, as I understand, and has set a new direction, very clearly, in this department. I am confident, and I think we should all be confident, that there is no better person to initiate a new department and to make a new department a success...

HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear.

DR. PAPROSKI:

Thank you. The hon. minister has stated that it is a co-ordinating department. Well, it is just that. I'm sure there will be co-ordination for decision, co-ordination for information, for evaluation, and most important, it will be co-ordination on an ongoing basis - ongoing not only for action for the immediate factors that are under consideration, but to anticipate any action that has to be taken. This will result in wise, calculated direction dealing with the federal and intergovernmental problems and affairs, after careful evaluation. Who can dispute that, and who can argue about that?

Surely any criticism at this stage is premature, when this is, in fact, a new department, and it hasn't had an opportunity to really function completely. In light of this fact, I still would like to give you one example where I had a personal experience in really saving a program for the Province of Alberta and for the people of Alberta by utilizing this department. The minister that was concerned with this particular program was away, and I went to this department, clarified the problem, communicated instantly and got clarification, and in fact, saved a very, very important program.

So I would like to congratulate the minister again, and I offer complete unequivocal support, for this will clear the way for proper communication with not only the federal government, but provinces, on an intergovernmental basis. But even more important, on a world-wide participation basis, because we will know what's going on more clearly world-wide.

MR. KING:

Mr. Chairman, I would just like to ask if these are the estimates in which we would ask why, for example, Alberta's office in Tokyo has not one staff person who speaks Japanese - or perhaps I should say, didn't have last September - or why our office in London, England, nine months after the change in the leadership of the Social Credit party and the premiership of this province, still thought that the former Premier was the Premier of the province, and didn't know who the Leader of the Opposition was, and whether or not these things are reflective of the general state of affairs, or have been in the past reflective of the general state of affairs of Alberta's relationships outside of Alberta?

MR. MINIELY:

Mr. Chairman, I'm going to be very brief. My views are well-known on cost-sharing programs, and I think this is one of the few departments that I would like to take part in the general debate.

The comments of the Leader of the Opposition are very difficult for me to understand as the Provincial Treasurer - as I indicated the other night in the House - because of the problems of provincial budgeting and the problems of control of cost-sharing programs. One thing the Leader of the Opposition referred to was muscle, and how he can possibly compare the ability of a minister of our government in a senior portfolio to control the agreements between our government and the federal government, and in fact, other governments better than an agency - I don't think that question is even in dispute, because I

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think there is obviously much more muscle to the creation of a Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs.

I want to say as the Provincial Treasurer, with a lot of concern for the implications of cost-sharing programs in general in the budget, that to me, the significant breakthrough to controlling this, is contained in the act which has been made available to all members of the Opposition. I would like to read that. It is Section 5(1) of The Department of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs Act. To me, this is a major breakthrough in trying to control the implications of cost-sharing programs on the provincial budget.

"Notwithstanding any other act, an intergovernmental agreement to which this section applies is not binding on the government of Alberta, or any agency or official thereof, unless:

- (a) it is signed on behalf of the government by the Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs, if the agreement is designated by the regulations as an agreement that is to be signed on behalf of the government, by the Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs only, or
- (b) it is signed on behalf of the government by the Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs in addition to any other minister of the Crown, authorized by law to sign it if the agreement is designated by the regulations in that fashion, and lastly
- (c) it is approved by the Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs in any other case."

Now, from my point of view as Provincial Treasurer, I have to say that I am extremely pleased with that particular provision in the act. What it prevents, Mr. Chairman, is each individual department running off and making an agreement with Ottawa without the prior approval and knowledge of the hon. Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs. Some might say that a Provincial Treasurer could do this, but I want to tell you that with the major job we have in the future in terms of budgeting and in terms of financial control, and in terms of improving many areas which we intend improving in the future, frankly, there is no way that I have the time. I am very pleased to see this, and I am very pleased to have a Department of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs, which I anticipate will be a tremendous amount of assistance to me as Provincial Treasurer.

DR. HOHOL:

Mr. Chairman, I too, will be brief, mostly because the case has been made, and in fact, doesn't need to be made, because the proof of the pudding is in the eating, and in the record a year hence. Knowing that the hon. Leader of the Opposition means always what he says, I hope to hear him a year from now saying, "By gosh, that turned out to be a good idea."

As a new user of this particular office -- because I am new in government, and new in Cabinet -- I want to say unequivocally that this was one of the brightest ideas that the hon. Premier brought to this government. Quite apart from the cost-shared programs -- while these will continue, I agree, but at some point they may not, while the relationship and the constant contact that will have to continue between the provinces and Ottawa will go only in one way, Mr. Chairman, and that is to increase.

This is a department that is geared to co-ordinate -- and by definition, this means to bring together the ideas of government, and to direct them towards, and with, Ottawa. So each minister clearly has the direction of his department. The hon. Premier clearly speaks

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for the province, and the hon. Leader of the Opposition, having at one time, been the Premier -- I am mystified as to how he could put the question as to who speaks for Alberta.

In the case of the Department of Manpower, I have, on many occasions, had things to say about what might be the share of the provinces, and what might be the share of Ottawa with respect to function, and with respect to a division of funds. I want to relate this as an example of how the department assists other departments. A series of letters and contacts between the hon. Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs and Ottawa resulted in a meeting of Ottawa's top four officials in the Manpower and Immigration Department, here in Alberta, not in Ottawa. The hon. minister brought these people and myself together, the manpower function and services of departments like that of the hon. Minister of Industry and Commerce and myself, and in fact, the hon. Premier's office. This exchange which each of us would have had to discover on our own as new people -- the time, the effort, that would have gone into this, the mistakes that might have been made, were not, because the hon. Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs knows the people in Ottawa, and knows us, and so by definition the term 'co-ordination' is just that kind, rather than to undertake all the responsibilities of all the departments.

Incidentally, I found the hon. minister very knowledgeable in the matter of the contracts and agreements with respect to Manpower. So quite apart from any kind of politics, and I'm sure that this isn't anyone's concern today, this office is one that is going to strengthen Alberta's position in Ottawa at a time when this is so necessary. How could anyone suggest that this department could do anything but improve the position and the status and the competence of Alberta to deal with Ottawa?

MR. STRCM:

The hon. Member for Edmonton Highlands said that as of last September there was one employee in the Japan office, or in the Tokyo office, and that he could not speak Japanese. Did I hear correctly?

MR. KING:

No, Mr. Chairman, I didn't mention the number of employees in the office because I don't know how many employees there were in the office. What I did say was that I had information from the Canadian Embassy in Japan that the Alberta government office, or the office of the Department of Industry and Commerce in Tokyo, was operated without any staff who spoke Japanese. I don't know how many were involved, but apparently none of them speak Japanese.

MR. STRCM:

Well, Mr. Chairman, I'm not aware of any person that spoke only English in the Alberta office in Tokyo. The name of the man that was in charge was Mr. Iimura, that doesn't sound Swedish or English to me. He spoke very fluent Japanese, and I have spent a number of years in the States with this man, who is, I believe, Japanese born.

AN HON. MEMBER:

You've probably got the wrong country.

MR. LUDWIG:

Mr. Chairman, in view of the rally to defend the department, and I have never known any issue that needs to be defended more than this issue that is before us right now, I would like to ask the hon. minister, or all of them, the question of how would they try, by

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sending the hon. minister down, to overcome a matter which is opposed or supported by all the Members of Parliament in Alberta. And the hon. Leader of the Opposition made the point very clearly that for instance, on Medicare, there was not a Conservative in the whole country, who opposed third reading of The Medicare Act. And we got that courtesy of the Conservatives. Now we are going to send a minister down there to overcome these matters. I believe that the public ought to know that there is some kind of a conflict here, because either he is voting non-confidence in all the MPs we have from Alberta on this issue, or he merely is sort of beating around the bush trying to lend credence and substance to a department that hasn't got it.

I would like to have some comment specifically on this one issue, the cost-sharing problem that we have. The most serious problem we have of cost-sharing is in Medicare. I would like them to -- if they disagree with my statement of facts -- to get the Hansard debates and read off, one by one, the Conservatives who opposed Medicare. We are having the ridiculous situation in Alberta that our MPs with the exception of one, I believe he was a Social Crediter then, before he fell into bad association and suffered by association and declined in prestige after he did this --

AN HON. MEMBER:

He saw the light.

MR. LUDWIG:

-- and petered out as it were, no affront to the Premier, of course. And then, we have this ridiculous situation --

MR. HENDERSON:

Peter is always out.

MR. LUDWIG:

He will be out a lot faster than he thinks.

We have the ridiculous situation, we have a group of Conservatives saying we are going to go to Ottawa and convince the Liberals that our MPs don't talk for us, and our parliamentary system. The hon. Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs is going to go and straighten everything up; they all will be quaking in their boots when he gets there and say, "We are sorry, but your MPs really don't count around here." We have got this ridiculous situation; they are getting themselves into it, they should talk themselves out of it. They are good at that and I would like to hear their individual explanation, and the hon. No. 2 Premier should know something about this, because he has got a lot of experience in parliament. So I think he should lead off and explain why, including the Rt. Hon. John Diefenbaker, he also supported Medicare, gave it to us, and now they are making it look as if we invited it. We had no voice. We had a Conservative voice in Ottawa and that is why we are in trouble. And sending one more Conservative voice down there will get us out of trouble?

MR. KING:

Could I just say that I appreciate the information provided by the Leader of the Opposition, and if my information was incorrect, I'm certainly willing to accept the probability that the former Premier is more informed on the operation of the office than the members of the Embassy so, thank you.

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MR. GETTY:

Mr. Chairman, the hon. member talking about whatever happened in Ottawa and Medicare in the past seems to prefer to deal in the past, and I would just as soon leave him in the past, since that appears to be --

MR. LUDWIG:

Mr. Chairman, on a point of order, the whole issue of cost-sharing programs is in the past, how else can you deal with it?

MR. GETTY:

As a matter of fact the cost-sharing programs that we have to live with, in fact, do come from the past and we have to live with them. But what I wanted to say in a positive way about cost-shared programs was that up to now it appears that the provinces have been enticed by the tremendous preponderance of dollars that the federal government has, compared to the provincial governments, in order to handle their responsibilities. I just wanted to say that the lack of hope that seems to be expressed from the other side that you can't make any progress in this regard is disappointing indeed.

As a matter of fact, at the last meeting of First Ministers we saw a dramatic shift in the Prime Minister's position. Up to that point there had been a pretty solid reaction from the federal government, that in fact they were not going to consider, or work at, the possibility of provinces opting out of cost-shared programs and instead taking with them tax equivalents to handle their responsibilities. In that meeting, I thought one of the most significant things was that the Prime Minister said yes, alright, we'll start the mechanism on the way, to see if we can work out how this can be done. So I refuse to accept the defeatist attitude of the hon. members on the other side in regard to cost-shared programs. As a matter of fact they would do the province, and the people of the province, a great deal more good if, instead of the political bickering that we heard from the hon. Member for Calgary Mountain View today, he got behind the government in this regard, rather than living in the past and trying to bring up his political points.

I might say that the reason for the Prime Minister's shift is that obviously the federal government must reflect the feelings of those who came to that First Ministers' meeting, those who represent a great number of people -- the Premiers -- because they came and expressed themselves and said that no longer did they like these cost-shared programs. I don't want that to be a blanket statement; some of them do like the cost-shared programs -- but there was a growing feeling and a growing strength against the cost-shared programs. That is what you accomplish at federal-provincial meetings. It's true you don't walk into them and change things overnight. But by an expression of your opinions, and by dealing with other provinces, you start the shift and the nudging of the manner in which this country will move in the future by talking at these meetings and expressing your feelings and the way the Canadians feel who have elected you.

So there is no question in my mind that there is a great deal of hope in this area. One of the things that my department will be most involved in is making sure that the other provinces and ourselves are able to compare notes and line up on certain issues so that in fact the federal government will reflect some of the things that we are saying and try to change their positions. It has to be a benefit when you know that the people, as in Alberta, are behind you in this regard.

I think, when we touch briefly on the area system of DREE, I should point out one thing, and that is that the minute you start to have areas in your province which change the groundwork from one to another you are creating problems. That problem is bad enough if

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it's administered and handled by the people who are most aware of the conditions in the province, but you magnify that tremendously when, in fact, those areas are managed and, in many cases determined, by someone as far away as in Ottawa. So we are opposed to those areas. We have to live with those we inherited but we are completely opposed to them.

I can recall the correspondence with the previous administration. Their reaction to the areas was to say, we'll make the entire province of Alberta one. And, of course, that didn't get anywhere because what they were saying at that time was the entire province of Alberta is a depressed area. I think they were going to keep Edmonton and Calgary out of that delineation.

I think, though, that the Department of Regional and Economic Expansion, who are administering these areas, are starting to feel the dissatisfaction that is growing in Canada over the way they are being administered. They are as anxious as we are, because I feel they wish to have those objectives of theirs met in the best way possible. They don't want to do it by fighting with the provinces. So if we are working to come up with a method that will do the job better, and they can see how it will do the job better, then I think we will make a tremendous stride in the ways in which the Department of Regional and Economic Expansion will operate in Alberta.

MR. STROM:

Mr. Chairman, I was very interested in the hon. minister's remarks in regard to the strong support he is getting for his proposals on opting out of cost-shared programs. I'm wondering, would you care to outline the provinces that are supporting Alberta in this stand at this point in time?

MR. GETTY:

Mr. Chairman, there is no question that Ontario and Quebec are in that field. I'm not completely sure on some of them. We have Saskatchewan, which likes some of the programs and some they do not; Manitoba, I'm not sure; British Columbia, well, it's difficult with B.C. to tell. In some cases they would definitely want out and, of course, as all members know, they're even fighting against the equalization scheme which presently exists in Canada.

MR. STROM:

Mr. Chairman, the reason I asked is because I am aware of Quebec and Ontario. We would have to say that in the case of Ontario they waived, in the final analysis, when it came down to a final decision and I'm referring to Medicare, as I'm sure the hon. minister knows. I have never heard the Maritimes, Newfoundland, or British Columbia, or Saskatchewan, or Manitoba, ever suggest that they would want to get out. As a matter of fact, I have to say it was the reverse. That they were always telling us that they wanted to stay in it. I noticed you smiled when it came to trying to determine what British Columbia's position was. There's never been any doubt about their position, and it was not in agreement with Alberta's. I say that quite candidly, they would never support us on this, and this is one of the problems we were facing.

I want to say, again, as has been stated by other members of our side of the House, that we would be happy to support you in a move to get out of it, but that we are simply stating that there is a practical approach that we have to face. We have to face the realities of the situation. So when you mention that there is a marked change -- the ones that you mentioned really do not indicate a marked change to me, Mr. Minister.

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MR. GETTY:

Well, Mr. Chairman, the marked changed, as I mentioned, is the fact that the federal government agreed at the last First Ministers' meeting that they will start the mechanism and investigate the mechanism which will allow the opting out of these programs. It's not easy to determine what your tax points should be and how you'll protect the Maritimes who, I agree, live on the cost-shared programs. But they can stay on them if, in fact, you can come out with an effective opting out program, because those who want in obviously will stay in. If you don't have any programs then there is no need to opt out. Some will be in and some will opt out. But the change is in the federal government's approach. The Prime Minister said, "Alright, it appears there's enough dissatisfaction,

the arguments are being made, let's look into it." And as I say, there is new hope, then, that we can make tremendous strides in this regard.

MR. MINIELY:

Mr. Chairman, I'd just like to add a little to that. I think the hon. members of the opposition are somewhat confused to the extent of thinking that there is not any new method which can be pursued to eliminate cost-sharing programs. The concept for the have-not provinces, that we are starting to investigate now, is the concept of equalized tax points, so that, in fact, when you do make the shuffle, you're not in effect. Simply making it damaging to the have-not provinces.

Now as the hon. minister had indicated, for the first time we are now starting with a continuing committee of officials that is examining that area. I did want to bring out the matter of equalized tax points because this is possibly a way that we can allow even the have-not provinces the opportunity to determine their own priorities and still not necessarily suffer by the elimination of cost-sharing programs.

MR. HENDERSON:

Mr. Chairman, I'd like to suggest the only thing new about this whole exercise is the change in faces from the Province of Alberta, because, of course, there were opting out programs; the federal government let Quebec opt out of the Hospitalization Program several years ago under a special deal. And certainly the federal government agreed over a year and a half ago -- I distinctly remember the media in Ottawa very definitely started examining other options that might be available as far as getting out of shared-cost health programs, and they've come through with a proposition on this. So really the statements that the Prime Minister of Canada is making on the subject are nothing new, they go back a number of years. The argument has always been over the amount of money that is involved. Ottawa has never argued about letting the province get out of these things the argument; is over the amount of money that we're going to get from the federal treasury when we do get out of it.

Now the hon. minister makes the statement, to justify his existence, about the contradictions between stated qualities in the past, and action. And I guess this is quite true. The Medicare business is the best outstanding example of that. The one stating the matter of policy or philosophy, and the other facing realities. And I note right within the new administration the same problem. When the hon. minister got up to make his major speech in this House as minister, he informed us of what a tough stance he was going to take against Ottawa, and that this could cost the taxpayers of Alberta some money. And, it was, of course, the cost-shared programs that we're talking about.

Then, on the other hand, during the questioning of the hon. Minister of Health during estimates, we hear him say it's

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irresponsible for the province not to get in and take advantage of every dollar of cost-shared programs. And I questioned him at some length on the nursing home program, about whether they intended to get this included. "Oh yes, let's get in there and get every dollar out," and so I don't know what this government's policy is on it. The hon. Minister of Health says, get in there and get every nickel we can. The hon. members seated in the back row, getting up and saying the same thing, that we've missed out on \$75 million over ten years, and then we hear the hon. Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs stand up and say in his turn that we're going to miss a lot more if he has his way.

Quite frankly, I agree with the views of the hon. Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs, because I don't think we are going to make any progress on these issues until there is some obvious consistency in the arguments involved. The argument that we should ask Ottawa to give us all the money, but let them continue to collect it, and let us run the programs; of course, nobody is going to pay any attention to that in Ottawa. It's absolutely ridiculous and I think the first thing, if we're to take this department seriously, is that there has to be a little bit of consistency in it.

Now I hear all this talk about co-ordinators and I'm always reminded of the old saw about, well where's the co-ordinators -- the co-ordinators sit between the expeditors, and the expeditors sit between the two co-ordinators. I think if the minister is supposed to be a co-ordinator, the first person he had better co-ordinate is the Premier of the Province of Alberta. We heard him stand up in this House and make statements that were headlined in Alberta, in the Journal and so forth, that Alberta could opt out of constitutional conferences. Instead of Quebec being the odd man out -- next time it could be Alberta. Then about three weeks or a month later, the hon. Premier goes down to Toronto to address the Press Club of Canada or something, and we see a report which comes back in small print where the Premier says, "No Place for Regional Isolationism in Alberta"; at least this is the way I understood the headlines.

How on earth do we expect anybody to take seriously the propositions that the hon. minister is putting forth about all the tremendous progress we are going to make, and all the arguments that we hear from his colleagues to justify the expenditure of this type of money on an exercise which is really nothing other than building bureaucracy on bureaucracy? Then we listen to discussions about who is responsible for negotiating the water irrigation problem in southern Alberta. All we get from the minister is some instruction on how to play poker. He doesn't tell us what the facts are; it is some big secret poker game.

We have witnessed the same thing in some of these other exercises -- and it gets extremely difficult listening on this side of the House to get a clear understanding of what the responsibility of this department is. The leader said he was in an untenable position because he can't fulfill the commitments that have been assigned to him. I would like first of all to find out what the commitments are, because this wonderful bill the hon. Treasurer talked about is nothing other than something to give the authority to the Premier to sign orders in council saying that the hon. Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs can sign certain agreements. An office boy can do that, you don't need a cabinet minister for that exercise. That is all the act says. So what are the responsibilities of the minister? It is just a bit impossible to find out. There have been questions asked all through this session and up to this point in time and questions are going to continue to be asked because there don't seem to be any obvious plans as to what this particular position is supposed to be all about.

I really can't be critical of the minister involved. I think the man that should be answering all these questions is the Premier,

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because he is the man that, in the final analysis, has to make the decisions on a lot of these policy areas, in the final analysis when there is a difference of opinion between two ministers. Obviously there is a difference of opinion between a lot of the ministers seated opposite. We had the hon. Minister of Industry and Commerce standing up some time ago saying he favoured the national park development in Banff and Lake Louise. The next thing we hear is somebody saying well, that was him expressing his personal opinion, and we find from the hon. Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs that he has no opinion on it, and the government has no opinion.

So, how on earth can we really be expected to take seriously what is being said about the importance of this department? It isn't a co-ordinating job. I can only conclude it must be some sort of recording secretary to the Premier. I think the Premier is the man who has to stand up and throw a little bit of light on just exactly what is in his thinking about what this job is supposed to consist of. I don't see how the minister can do anything, because obviously he hasn't been told anything. If we go by the legislation, that is a great big gap -- authority for the Premier to say who can sign documents, and that is exactly all the act consists of.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Read the act.

MR. HENDERSON:

I read the act and there is nothing but a bunch of gobbledygook in it that says the the minister or the Premier can set up regulations -- define regulations as to which minister can sign this piece of paper and which minister can sign that piece of paper. I can well imagine the hon. Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs going to Ottawa to speak to the hon. Minister of Agriculture. That quite frankly is something completely beyond my comprehension. I just don't have that much imagination, Mr. Chairman.

So I would like to hear the Premier, now that he has finally entered the House for his few minutes for today, if he would mind illuminating or throwing a little bit of light on just exactly what the exercise of this appropriation -- this whole department -- is all about.

MR. CLARK:

Mr. Chairman, just following the comments that the hon. Member for Wetaskiwin-Leduc has made, the hon. Treasurer talked about this new department supplying the muscle for Alberta. I find this very amusing, because when the department was established, in some of the minister's early comments he made the point that this department was going to speak for Alberta and was going to speak with a strong voice in Ottawa, and it would have to be reckoned with by the federal government when it was going to make decisions as far as Alberta was concerned.

To my recollection, one of the first things that the federal government has asked the government is 'what is your view on the Village Lake Louise Project?' We have had this waffling around for the best part of three months now, ever since the session started. Mr. Henderson has said that the hon. Minister of Industry and Commerce has expressed apparently personally that he is in favour of the idea. We have the hon. Minister of the Environment who said he is opposed to it. I just wonder if the front bench across the way were the federal government in Ottawa, and they had been told that this new government in Alberta and the Department of Intergovernmental Affairs was really going to speak for Alberta, and on one of the first issues that they ask for your views on, they get

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views from two ministers, but they are just personal opinions and then from the minister responsible, who is really going to cart the muscle, who is really going to have the word and see that Alberta isn't trampled over, "we still can't make up our mind".

The minister said that they should have a period of time when they'd review this, and I think he said that they had something like eight or ten people down at the hearings in Calgary, but the review has been going on for the best part of two months now. Last week it was rather amusing, I thought, when the Prime Minister was in town, in speaking to a group of students at one of the schools he made the point very clearly, 'the Province of Alberta has been asked for their views on the matter,' and he left the thing there.

We can go around and around in this, and in my view, the thing seems to settle down to the Department of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs being not a great deal more nor a great deal less than a middle-man between the various cabinet ministers, the Premier's office and the federal government. For the life of me, I can't understand how the Treasurer can stand up here and say that he thinks the people in the Department of Intergovernmental Affairs will have the ability to assess these kinds of federal-provincial fiscal agreements when he knows very well that the expertise the government has is obviously in the Department of the Provincial Treasurer. And if we're going to duplicate these kind of people over in the Department of Intergovernmental Affairs, that's really cutting the fat out, believe me.

Then, on the question of negotiations with the federal government on cost-shared programs, the hon. Member for Wetaskiwin-Leduc has indicated very clearly that this breakthrough that the hon. Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs talks about, that the Prime Minister stated at the last conference, when he embarked on a whole new program - if you'll go back and read the files as diligently in that area as you have in some others, apparently, you'll find out that the Prime Minister has made statements like that previously.

MR. GETTY:

No.

MR. CLARK:

Yes.

MR. GETTY:

No.

MR. CLARK:

Well, go back and check the files and ask some of the other provinces. Ask the Province of Ontario.

MR. GETTY:

Not with equalized tax agreements.

MR. CLARK:

Oh, baloney.

MR. GETTY:

Want a bet?

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MR. CLARK:

Yes. It's a matter of how many dollars were involved.

MR. GETTY:

That's right.

MR. CLARK:

And you can cut it any way you want it.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Will you kindly address your remarks to the Chair, please - both of you.

MR. CLARK:

Mr. Chairman, however the hon. minister wants to look at the matter, it comes down to a matter of dollars and cents in the end.

MR. GETTY:

I want what I want.

MR. CLARK:

Right, and he can use all the fancy footwork he wants, like he's being chased around in the backfield, but this government hasn't pointed out any blessed breakthrough at all as a result of the operation of this department. It's nothing more than an errand boy for the Premier's office to Ottawa, and when some breakthrough comes from Ottawa, you can bet your last dollar, Mr. Chairman, the Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs isn't going to make the announcement, neither is the No. 2 Premier. The Premier, if he's in the House, will make the announcement.

MR. GETTY:

Mr. Chairman, I'm not sure whether we're supposed to adjourn at five today? Well, I just have one thing I'd like to say, Mr. Chairman, and it has to do with some of the comments the hon. members mentioned, indicating the first thing we were asked about by the federal government was Village Lake Louise. Well, obviously it wasn't, and one of the things we're proudest of -- and I didn't come here today to talk about our accomplishments, I don't think it's necessary; the people of Alberta already know. But one of the things the federal government has done, Mr. Chairman, has been to recognize Alberta in the area of something as important as energy matters. While, as he said, one of the things they asked us about was our view on Village Lake Louise, let's not forget that during the past administration, federal government completely ignored them and didn't even talk to them when they were signing documents affecting the oil production from this province. They totally ignored them, Mr. Chairman, and they ought to be ashamed, rather than complain about Village Lake Louise. You might find, Mr. Chairman, that if they would read the document, the Tentative Natural Resource Revenue Plan, there is a letter in there that shows a greater accomplishment in a few months with the federal government than that old crowd were able to make in some 36 years.

MR. HENDERSON:

That isn't the point. The point is, what did the hon. minister have to do with it?

HON. MEMBERS:

Sit down...Baloney...Sit down...

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MR. HENDERSON:

What did the minister have to do with it?

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Is the hon. member speaking on a point of order?

MR. GETTY:

He just has to sit and take it for a while, Mr. Chairman. Just sit down. As a matter of fact, I thought his performance today was pretty disappointing.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

MR. GETTY:

It's starting to look like he doesn't have nearly the ability I once gave him credit for, Mr. Chairman. Certainly, I have been able to watch him in the House, and he is just not coming through. As a matter of fact, he spends most of his time with personal attacks. It is a disappointment and no credit to the people who elected him.

Now, I understand we agreed to close the House at 5:00, Mr. Chairman. Therefore, I yield the Floor for now.

MR. HYNDMAN:

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

MR. CHAIRMAN:

The hon. minister has moved that the Committee rise, report progress and beg leave to sit again. Do you agree?

HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

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[Mr. Deputy Speaker in the Chair.]

MR. APPLEBY:

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

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Having heard the report and request leave to sit again, is it all agreed?

HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

MR. HYNDMAN:

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

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MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER:

It has been moved by the hon. minister that the House adjourn until Monday afternoon at 2:30 o'clock. Is it agreed?

HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER:

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

[The House rose at 5:08 p.m.]