

November 21, 1972

ALBERTA HANSARD

79-29

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ALBERTA

Tuesday Afternoon, November 21, 1972

[The House met at 2:30 p.m.]

PRAYERS

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair.]

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SELECT COMMITTEES

Standing Committee on Private Bills, Standing Orders, and Printing

MR. ASHTON:

Mr. Speaker, the Standing Committee on Private Bills, Standing Orders, and Printing, wishes to report that two letters have been received, one from the Institute of Accredited Public Accountants, the other from the Society of Industrial Accountants of Alberta, in which they request that Private Bills Nos. 5 and 9 not be proceeded with. I will table those two letters. The standing committee recommends that the fees less the cost of printing be refunded with respect to Private Bills No. 5 and No. 9.

MR. LUDWIG:

Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. With regard to that recommendation made by the hon. member, I believe those two bills were before the House. I do not recall a motion of the assembly to refer the bills back to the committee. I am under the impression that it will require a motion to refer the bills which were brought into this House, back to the committee before the committee can act on them again. That is just a point of order I think should be cleared before we deal with this matter. It is irregular procedure.

MR. ASHTON:

On the point of order, Mr. Speaker, I suggest there is nothing irregular about it. The committee has not changed its position from its previous recommendation that the bills be proceeded with and, of course, they cannot now recommend that they cannot be proceeded with. It is up to the House to decide whether or not to continue with the two bills. All we're recommending is that the two fees be refunded, which is quite separate from the question of whether or not they be proceeded with.

MR. SPEAKER:

Having heard the report of the chairman of the committee, I take it there is no proceeding that we need at this stage. So, if the hon. member wants to raise his point of order he can raise it later.

NOTICES OF MOTION

Report of the Standing Committee on
Private Bills, Standing Orders, and Printing

MR. HYNDMAN:

Mr. Speaker, I wish to give oral notice that tomorrow, Wednesday, November 22, I will move, seconded by the hon. Provincial Treasurer that the Report of the Standing Committee on Private Bills, Standing Orders, and Printing regarding Private Bills Nos. 5 and 9 be received and concurred in.

79-30

ALBERTA HANSARD

November 21st 1972

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

MR. STEOM:

Mr. Speaker, I take great pleasure in introducing to you and through you to the hon. members in the House, a man who spent a number of years in this legislature, a man whom I have the highest personal regard for, and I might say who has taught me a lot about the recognition of the needs of humanity and how we can best serve them; a man who served as the Minister of Welfare for a number of years. I refer, of course, to the Honourable Mr. Jorgenson who is sitting in the Speaker's Gallery. I would ask him to rise and be recognized.

DE. HOHOL:

Mr. Speaker, I am happy to introduce the fifth visiting class from my constituency of Edmonton Belmont. In the members' gallery there are 31 students from the J.J. Bowlen Grade IX class, accompanied by teachers, Miss Gay Abrey and J. LeClergh. I would ask them to rise and be recognized by this assembly.

MR. SCHMID:

Mr. Speaker, I wish to introduce to you and through you to members of this assembly 54 young ladies and gentlemen from Grade VI of St. James School in my constituency of Edmonton Avonmore. They are accompanied by their teachers, Miss Bonne and Mr. Dagenais. They are on both sides of the galleries. I would like them to rise now and be recognized.

FILING RETURNS AND TABLING REPORTS

MR. CRAWFORD:

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to file copies of the report on child foster care, known as the Report of the Catcio Committee.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Opposition House Leader, followed by the hon. Member for Lac La Biche-McMurray.

Government Vehicle Insurance

MR. TAYLOR:

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to address a question to the hon. Provincial Treasurer. In view of the statement that you made concerning the 1,100 vehicles not covered by insurance, how could this be when the policy had a blanket basic fleet endorsement attached to same?

MR. MINIELY:

Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure how the hon. member interpreted my statement. The policy did not specifically include a number of vehicles. I believe I said that there were a few hundred vehicles which were not specifically included, as they had not been inventoried and had, in fact, not been listed on the policy. I don't believe that at that time, Mr. Speaker, there was any statement regarding coverage. There is a blanket coverage, but the policy had also not been rated on a unit basis. In the past it had been rated on an experience-rating basis. So there were really two factors involved, Mr. Speaker. One was the fact that we switched it to a unit rating, which was more advantageous to the province; the second was the fact that by switching it to a unit rating, we then had to include all units which previously had not been specifically included in the policy.

MR. TAYLOR:

Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Then in the last full fiscal year, every government vehicle was insured?

MR. MINIELY:

Well, Mr. Speaker, I think that would be a proper statement except it is somewhat misleading in the fact that, as I have mentioned earlier, the rating of the policy which previously had been done on an experience-rated basis worked to a disadvantage to the province. The province was paying a higher premium per

November 21, 1972

ALBERTA HANSARD

79-31

unit than would have been the case had all units been specifically included in the policy on a unit basis.

MR. TAYLOR:

Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. In connection with the poorly rated charge, is the rating not being done now by exactly the same people that did the rating previously, either CUA or the Guardian Company?

MR. MINIELY:

No, I believe, Mr. Speaker, that this is incorrect. The responsibility that is placed with the insurance company is usually placed with the insurance agent to ensure that the policy is properly drawn up and to the best advantage of the client. That is one of the prime purposes for having agents in the insurance field -- to service the client properly and adequately.

MR. TAYLOR:

I disagree, but this is not the time to say so. I would like to emphasize one point, though, through a question, since a lot of people --

MR. SPEAKER:

Is the hon. member asking a question?

MR. TAYLOR:

I am asking a question, sir; yes, Mr. Speaker. Since a lot of people took from the answer yesterday that the government is operating some 1100 vehicles that were not covered, would the hon. minister again definitely clarify this that through the endorsement on the policy, every government vehicle was covered and carried a pink card?

MR. MINIELY:

Well again, Mr. Speaker, I would have to say that that is somewhat misleading. You cannot answer the question that way, because although they were covered in the pool, they were not covered in the unit rating basis. When we switched to the unit rating basis, each specific vehicle was worked out to the best advantage of the problem. So I have answered the question the best way I can, Mr. Speaker.

MR. TAYLOR:

Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. If any one of those vehicles had an accident, would the claim not be accepted by the --

MR. SPEAKER:

That is a question of law and possibly interpretation of the policy, which is probably not suitable for the question period.

MR. TAYLOR:

Point of order. The people outside who are now saying the government makes us carry insurance and didn't cover its own vehicles are incorrect, because every vehicle was covered through the actual --

MR. SPEAKER:

Actually the whole series of questions has been designed to rebutt a statement by the hon. minister and consequently is in the nature of debate. As to whether or not vehicles were covered by an insurance policy must clearly be a question of law. If the hon. member wishes to have the policy tabled no doubt he has means of obtaining that end.

The hon. Member for Lac La Biche -- Oh, supplementary.

MR. DIXON:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker to the hon. the Provincial Treasurer. Regarding the former agents who, apparently, were agents for Guardian Insurance Co. for over 50 years; was there any reason given to the government that they did not want Farrell Agencies to act on their behalf?

79-32

ALBERTA HANSARD

November 21st 1972

MR. MINIELY:

Mr. Speaker, as I said in the tabled answer, I looked at the facts that were available to me as Provincial Treasurer in September of 1971, which was about 30 days before this policy was due to expire. The facts that were in front of me at that time were as follows: There was an Order in Council in 1962 which had appointed an insurance company in spite of the fact that it was not the low tender. That had existed for nine years, up until the time that I was reviewing the situation.

Secondly, the time factor in assessing the tendering situation; we were faced with two advices provided to me, which appeared reasonable at the time. One was the fact that the policy was expiring in 30 days. In fact we did not have sufficient time to tender the policy, to properly call for tenders, and the policy would therefore expire. The second was the fact that tendering had been tried in the past, as I indicated in the tabled answer, and had not proven satisfactory.

Mr. Speaker, I really think that the hon. member could draw his own conclusions. Those were the facts in front of me at that time. I felt that, in view of those facts, it was the new government's prerogative to look at a new approach to insurance.

MR. SPEAKER:

The Chair suggests that this should be the last supplementary on this question. We have dealt with it at great length, it has been the subject in answer to a question on the Order Paper and as it has been dealt with more fully, it is beyond the scope of the question period.

MR. DIXON:

My supplementary question is, Mr. Minister, regarding the carrier, Guardian Insurance. I get an indication from the minister opposite that there was a mishandling of the policies, so therefore the agent and the carrier should both be tied in together for mishandling. Wasn't there any concern expressed at the time that we are reinsured again by a company which apparently didn't do a thorough job?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. member's question is again clearly in the nature of debate but the Chair will leave it up to the minister whether or not he wishes to deal with it.

MR. MINIELY:

Well, Mr. Speaker, I say again that the insurance company is required to write a policy on the basis of an agent examining a client's account and drawing up the terms in the contract, and particularly in the rating side that would be most beneficial to his client.

Mr. Speaker, this was the approach that was taken to it. It is not my position to cast reflection on anyone in this situation except to say those were the facts that were made available to me at the time this arose. Again I would say that we felt, with these facts which I had outlined, that there was a need for a re-assessment of the manner in which insurance was handled. Subsequently, as I also indicated, this proved in the long run to be wise, because we did find that, in fact, the policy had been rated on a basis which worked to the disadvantage of the province in terms of the cost of insurance per vehicle. Mr. Speaker, I can't say any more than that.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Lac La Biche-McMurray followed by the hon. Member for Highwood.

Fort McMurray Highway

DR. BOUVIER:

Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Highways. The minister has been quoted in recent news reports as holding the Fort McMurray Highway in high priority. I was wondering if the minister at this time could advise if a target date has been set for the completion of the paving on this road?

November 21, 1972

ALBERTA HANSARD

79-33

MR. COPITHORNE:

Mr. Speaker, yes we do put a very high priority on the Fort McMurray road, and we have a target date somewhere in the neighbourhood of 1975-76, if the budget is sufficient to warrant the development of that highway.

MR. LUDWIG:

Mr. Speaker, how did the Kananaskis Highway displace the high priority of the highway going --

MR. SPEAKER:

That is not a supplementary question, it is debate. It is out of order.

DR. BOUVIER:

A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. I was wondering if the minister had also given consideration to the Peace River road from the Fort McMurray highway to the airport in Fort McMurray?

MR. COPITHORNE:

Well, Mr. Speaker, every consideration will be given to an area of that much importance, with consideration of all the industrial developments that will be in there and the amount of people employed.

While I am on my feet Mr. Speaker, I would like to reply to a question that was asked yesterday by the hon. Member for Calgary McCall.

MR. LUDWIG:

Mountain View.

Suspended Drivers Lists

MR. COPITHORNE:

I received information from an editorial broadcast over an Edmonton radio station in regard to the booklet that was referred to by the radio program and by the hon. gentleman from Calgary Mountain View. The information was given to me third-hand, and referred to the list of suspended drivers which is produced by the Department of Highways and Transport.

It was alleged that a certain car rental agency in Edmonton had in their possession three editions of the official suspension list. Unfortunately the information I received gave volume numbers as 80, 81, and 82. These books expired some two years ago. I now find that the books in question apparently were numbered 89, 90, and 94. Number 94 is currently in use, and although I had no intention of misleading the House, I nevertheless apologize for having done so. These books have been compiled and issued quarterly since February 15, 1949 to all law enforcement agencies, motor licensing issuing offices, and motor vehicle branch offices. If it is considered desirable to place controls on the disposition of these books we could develop different systems of serializing them and asking for their return, but we are also looking at the possibility of whether they are needed at all.

MR. LUDWIG:

I have a supplementary for the minister, Mr. Speaker. Does the hon. minister consider this information confidential, and what has he done to make sure that this does not happen again, and that this information is kept confidential?

MR. COPITHORNE:

Well, actually the hon. gentlemen from across the way knows that a great number of them are already published in the paper with the infractions that are taken, and are made in order to receive the suspensions. This is something that we are going to ascertain -- whether it is necessary that they are actually a confidential document and the ways of handling them. So at this time we are giving every consideration to the handling of them in the future.

79-34

ALBERTA HANSARD

November 21st 1972

Fort McMurray Highway (cont)

DR. BUCK:

Mr. Speaker, getting back to Dr. Bouvier's highway, just for the information of the members of the legislature, hon. minister, can you indicate to the House how many miles of the Fort McMurray highway are not completed yet? Just so we have some idea.

MR. COPITHORNE:

Mr. Speaker, to be exact at this time, I wouldn't be able to give the exact mileage --

DR. BUCK:

Not in yards, in miles.

MR. COPITHORNE:

Or yards either.

DR. BUCK:

A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Is it 50 miles or 150 miles -- just a ball park figure?

AN HON. MEMBER:

Put it on the Order Paper!

DR. BUCK:

Surely he knows that.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order please! Order please! It is out of order to comment on the minister's answer, as clearly laid down in Beauchesne. The hon. Member for Highwood, followed by the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview.

Kananaskis Highway

MR. BENOIT:

Mr. Speaker, my question is also to the hon. Minister of Highways. Was the priority for the Kananaskis road, from Seebe on, based on a traffic count or on some other basis? If it was on a traffic count, would the hon. minister be able to tell us what the traffic count was?

MR. COPITHORNE:

Again that priority was determined by several factors. Several weekends were recorded at the ranger station with a traffic count of over 3,000 automobiles. Also considered were the preservation of the environment in the area from dust pollution and the development of areas for people to enjoy the environment in an orderly fashion before it was out of hand and could not be returned. These were some of the values that were weighed in making that decision.

MR. TAYLOR:

A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker, to the hon. Minister of Highways. Was the summer traffic, as outlined in the report you tabled in the House, not 320 in 1971?

MR. COPITHORNE:

I am not sure exactly what the hon. Member for Drumheller is referring to. I know that I tabled something, but I forget what it was exactly.

MR. TAYLOR:

If I might say, the hon. minister tabled a report on the Kananaskis highway, and in that report he included the traffic counts, and that traffic count indicated that the summer traffic in 1971 was 320 vehicles per day.

November 21, 1972

ALBERTA HANSARD

79-35

MR. COPITHORNE:

Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure whether the hon. member is giving me information or whether he is trying to get information. But perhaps on an average it may well have been that over a period of time. I referred to the 3,000 count being on the weekend when most people have time to go and enjoy relaxation and holidays.

MR. TAYLOR:

A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Is priority based on one weekend or --

MR. SPEAKER:

Order please! Order please! The hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview, followed by the hon. Member for Smoky River.

Agriculture Technical Studies

MR. NOTLEY:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct this question to the hon. Minister of Agriculture. Last week you indicated that the technical studies between the Province of Alberta and the Federal Government were bearing fruit and that you might have some announcement with respect to Peace River farmers and the rather difficult circumstances they face. Are you in a position to make an announcement today, and if not today when will it be made this week?

DR. HOENER:

Mr. Speaker, we have formally asked Ottawa to assist in a program of cash grants on an acreage basis to any farmer in Alberta who has been hurt by inclement weather. Now we've asked the federal government to assist on the same basis that they have in Ontario and Quebec in regard to the crop failures that they had there. We're hoping for an early answer, but because of the unsettled situation in the cabinet in Ottawa, I'm not sure when we'll be able to get an answer. In addition to that, Mr. Speaker, I've already announced in the House that we will be doing a number of other things in relation to that area. We hope to get an answer then from the federal government as soon as possible in relation to the cash grants. We hope to get an answer from them as soon as possible in relation to the cash advances on unharvested grain. We know that P.F.R.A. is active in the area, and we're keeping a close watch on the entire P.F.R.A. operation in Alberta.

We've already announced that we would have a feed-freight assistance program. We have now surveyed the province in relation to supplies, for both feed grain and forage, and can provide that kind of information. Mr. Lang has already extended the unit quotas to the end of the year. We'll be meeting with the financial institutions later this week to try and get a commitment from them to put off the farmers' commitments so far as is possible. Rehabilitation loans and other activities under the Agricultural Development Corporation will continue, and as announced by my colleagues, certain winter programs will be undertaken to provide off-farm jobs. As soon as we have confirmation or otherwise from the federal government we'll make an early announcement in relation to that situation.

MR. NOTLEY:

A question, Mr. Speaker. In dealing with the discussions with the financial institutions, is the minister in any position to give some idea as to whether any announcement might be made in this respect, because this is a matter that is concerning a lot of northern farmers at the moment.

79-36

ALBERTA HANSARD

November 21st 1972

DR. HOFNER:

Well, Mr. Speaker, in addition to what I've outlined and as part of answering the hon. member's question, I think there was another further question in relation to tax recovery sale in the north country, and that my colleague, the Minister of Municipal Affairs, had already announced that these had been postponed as so far as possible under the statute. In relation to meeting with the financial institutions, I'm afraid that I can't make any commitment as to what their commitment will be, so I'm having some difficulty. But as soon as we have some information in that area, we'll announce it.

MR. STROM:

A question to the hon. Minister of Agriculture. How was the position of the Peace River farmers determined? Was that on a farm-to-farm survey, or was it on a spot-check list?

DR. HOFNER:

Well on that, and also on the information we received from the two farm organizations who are very active in the area; and in addition to that, a very good report that I received from one of the farm leaders in the Sunset House area.

MR. STROM:

I'm sorry Mr. Speaker, I missed that. Did the hon. minister say on a farm-to-farm survey?

[Dr. Horner nodded affirmatively.]

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Smoky River followed by the hon. Member for Olds-Didsbury.

National Poultry Marketing Plan

MR. MOORE:

A question to the hon. Deputy Premier, the Minister of Agriculture, again. With respect to the negotiations that are presently going on in Ottawa toward a national poultry marketing plan, has Alberta signed that plan? If so, did the other provinces and the federal government also sign?

DR. HOFNER:

The national egg plan has now been signed, as of yesterday, by all of the provinces involved, and we hope that that ends the chicken and egg war, Mr. Speaker!

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Olds-Didsbury followed by the hon. Member for Sedgewick-Corcoran.

Energy Uses in Alberta

MR. CLARK:

Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Telephones, but perhaps in his absence, directed to the Premier; he could farm it out as he sees fit. At what stage is the government's consideration of a uniform price structure for electricity across the province?

MR. LOUGHEED:

The government is awaiting a report on the Energy Resources Conservation Board which I believe will be available in January. It has to deal with the hearing held regarding the whole question of the various uses of energy in this province. When we've got that report with its recommendation, the government will give consideration to the matters posed in the hon. member's question.

November 21, 1972

ALBERTA HANSARD

79-37

MR. CLARK:

Supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. When the Minister of Utilities spoke to the Calgary Chamber of Commerce on November 3, he indicated that the concept of a uniform price structure for electricity across the province was a policy decision the government had made. Is that a factual statement?

MR. LOUGHEED:

Mr. Speaker, I think that is a question that perhaps the hon. minister can answer specifically. There is a study in addition to the Energy Resources Conservation Board, with regard to the electric energy needs of the province. It is underway and is just in the process of being launched.

As far as the specific remarks are concerned, I'll bring it to his attention if the House is still in session, and have him respond to it.

MR. CLARK:

One last supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Then the government has not committed itself, from a policy standpoint, to a uniform price structure for electricity across the province at this time?

MR. LOUGHEED:

Again, Mr. Speaker, I'll bring that specific point to his attention when he returns.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Sedgewick-Coronation followed by the hon. Member for Bow Valley.

Rural Development Symbol

MR. SORENSON:

Mr. Speaker, my question is to the hon. Minister of Rural Development. Mr. Minister has your department given any consideration to the issuance of a symbol for rural development -- something which would incorporate the essential ingredients of making rural Alberta a better place in which to live and work?

MR. TOFOLNISKY:

Mr. Speaker, I think rural Alberta has many ingredients and as far as the portion that we are looking at, at the present time, we have an on going radio program trying to revitalize the struggling rural areas -- they are trying to slow down urbanization in Alberta, and we're trying to depict life styles in Alberta that we would like to conserve. Also, we are trying to expose the potentials in the residential, agricultural and industrial areas in rural Alberta.

MR. SORENSON:

Supplementary. I was thinking of a symbol. The 4-H movement has a symbol, and there is a new Alberta symbol. I was just wondering about a symbol for rural development.

MR. TOFOLNISKY:

Mr. Speaker, that is a good suggestion. I will take that under advisement.

MR. BUCKWELL:

Mr. Speaker, if we get one more 'Horner' in the federal government, would 4-H apply then?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Bow Valley followed by the hon. Member for Calgary Bow.

79-38

ALBERTA HANSARD

November 21st 1972

Highway Traffic Act

MR. MANDEVILLE:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct my question to the hon. Minister of Highways and Transport. You introduced a bill, Bill No. 113, to amend The Highway Traffic Act. My question is, will you be dealing with this bill at this session of the legislature?

MR. COPITHORNE:

Mr. Speaker, we will not be dealing with this bill at this session.

MR. MANDEVILLE:

Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the hon. the Attorney General. There is one section of this bill, Section 208(1) that would permit Alberta legislation to dovetail into The Criminal Code amendment made in 1972. Will provincial judges be able to issue restricted licences until this amendment is dealt with in the House?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. member is actually asking for a legal opinion.

MR. LEITCH:

Well, Mr. Speaker, in view of the importance of the question, I'd be pleased to answer it. The provincial judges' jurisdiction to issue those kinds of licences flows from the federal legislation in the Criminal Code, and, of course, they can issue temporary driving privileges as provided for by the code. There is a provision in The Vehicles Highway Traffic Act which suspends the licence for a period of six months -- say for an impaired driving conviction -- but there is not now any legislation, under any Criminal Code provision, under which someone could be charged who is driving during that six month period, but while permitted by the order of the provincial judge, because the Criminal Code section under which those charges used to be laid has now gone.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Elected Representatives on Provincial Payroll

MR. WILSON:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct a question to the hon. Premier. Do you concur with a statement made yesterday at 5:20 p.m. in the House by the hon. Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs?

MR. LOUGHEED:

Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is trying to play games in the question period. I fully concur with the remarks made and the statement made by the hon. Minister.

MR. WILSON:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker, to the hon. Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs. Are you not aware of a provincial government cheque processed --

MR. SPEAKER:

Would the hon. member try to adopt the custom of addressing his remarks to the Chair which ordinarily involves the use of the third person.

MR. WILSON:

I'm very sorry, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to the hon. Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs. Is he aware of a provincial government cheque processed in September, 1972 payable to Mr. Joe Clark of Edson?

November 21, 1972

ALBERTA HANSARD

79-39

MR. GETTY:

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Clark, as I've pointed out, did some work during the summer for the government on a contract basis through a partnership that he has with another individual. Some five of them did some work for the Alberta Economic Mission to Japan. I assume that the cheque may have been processed sometime after that. He did the work and it was all finished, Mr. Speaker. I'm not sure how long it takes the treasury or auditor's department to finally get cheques out.

MR. WILSON:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Is the hon. minister saying that there was only one cheque from the provincial government payable to Mr. Joe Clark?

MR. GETTY:

Mr. Speaker, I don't know. I don't know whether it came in pieces or all at once.

MR. WILSON:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Would the hon. minister now make a public statement itemizing all work authored or researched for the provincial government --

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Put it on the Order Paper!

DR. HOEFNER:

Mr. Speaker, on a point of order --

MR. SPEAKER:

This is clearly a question --

DR. HOEFNER:

This is out of order and the hon. minister should not be told how to operate.

MR. SPEAKER:

There was a possibility, of course, that the hon. minister might have known about a specific cheque. The last supplemental is definitely one that would be designed for the Order Paper.

The hon. Member for Calgary Mountain View followed by the hon. member --

MR. HO LEM:

Mr. Speaker, will the hon. minister then table a copy of the specific advice to Mr. Clark that he would not any longer be considered for creative writing if an election was called?

AN HON. MEMBER:

Oh, come on!

MR. SPEAKER:

This business arises out of the previous question. The recollection of the Chair is that, if there was a statement of policy, there was no reference to any specific advice of that kind having been given any of these hon. members.

MR. LUDWIG:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Would the hon. minister advise who were the other five consultants on this mission to Japan besides Joe Clark?

MR. SPEAKER:

Would the hon. Member for Calgary Mountain View kindly collaborate with the hon. Member for Calgary Bow in phrasing a question for the Order Paper?

79-40

ALBERTA HANSARD

November 21st 1972

The hon. Member for Calgary Mountain View followed by the hon. Member for Medicine Hat-Redcliff.

Worth Report

MR. LUDWIG:

Mr. Speaker, in view of the fact that the Worth Report was touted as one of the major items of business --

MR. SPEAKER:

Order please! The hon. member's question is clearly out of order. It contains innuendo and probably infringes under at least three or four sub-headings of Citation 171 of Beauchesne.

MR. LUDWIG:

Mr. Speaker, I appreciate your ruling. I was not aware of how sensitive the government is at this --

MR. SPEAKER:

Order please! The hon. member's comments on rulings from the Chair are completely out of order and a breach of the privileges of the House.

MR. LUDWIG:

I have a question to the hon. Minister of Advanced Education. Is it the intention of the government to bring forth or allow further debate on the Worth Report during this session?

MR. FOSTER:

Mr. Speaker, although I am not unwilling to answer the question from the hon. gentleman opposite, I think, however, it would be better directed to the hon. House Leader.

MR. LUDWIG:

Mr. Speaker, the same question is directed to the hon. Government House Leader.

MR. HYNDMAN:

Mr. Speaker, we have had two full nights' debate on the report. Perhaps -- but I would have to say at this point I would doubt it -- depending on how business is conducted over the next day or two.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Medicine Hat-Redcliffe, followed by the hon. Member for Edmonton Kingsway.

DREE

MR. WYSE:

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct a question to the hon. Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs. It relates to his answer to a question yesterday regarding DREE. Is the government taking the position that Ottawa should not offer preferential assistance to any community? In other words a company wishing to locate in Medicine Hat or Lethbridge should not receive a grant unless a grant is also given to a company wishing to locate in, say, Edmonton or Calgary. What is the government's statement on that?

AN HON. MEMBER:

Or Lacombe!

DR. HOFNER:

That's quite a number of difficult questions.

November 21, 1972

ALBERTA HANSARD

79-41

MR. GETTY:

Mr. Speaker, the government feels that any grant should be given on the merits of any particular situation.

MR. WYSE:

A supplementary question then, Mr. Speaker. Has the government specifically asked Ottawa to eliminate that portion of the DREE designated area which lies within Alberta's border?

MR. GETTY:

Mr. Speaker, we have negotiated with the federal government's Department of Regional and Economic Expansion to remove all areas at some time in the future so that no part of Alberta will arbitrarily be treated differently from another part.

MR. NCTLEY:

Supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. In view of the concern over the workings of DREE, can we expect a position paper to be tabled in this legislature during the spring session on the government approach to the Department of Regional Economic Expansion?

MR. GETTY:

Mr. Speaker, I have spoken in the House quite a few times about DREE and our negotiations with them. The concern about DREE -- I'm not sure whether it is the federal government's concern about DREE or the provincial government's concern about DREE -- as far as the provincial government's concern, though, I have expressed our concern many times in the House.

MR. TAYLOR:

Supplementary, Mr. Speaker, to the hon. Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs. Would the acceptance of that policy by the Canadian government mean that there would be no DREE money for the province of Alberta?

MR. GETTY:

No, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Medicine Hat-Redcliffe with a supplementary, followed by the hon. Member for Edmonton Kingsway.

MR. WYSE:

Has the government consulted with Medicine Hat or Lethbridge or the towns that are in the designated area concerning whether it should be eliminated?

MR. GETTY:

Mr. Speaker, the member doesn't seem to understand that these towns and communities which he is mentioning would still be completely eligible for grants, based on merit.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Edmonton Kingsway, followed by the hon. Member for Wetaskiwin-Leduc.

Restricted Movies

DR. PAFROSKI:

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct a question to the hon. Minister of Culture, Youth and Recreation. What is the present position of the government on allowing or not allowing restricted adult movies to appear on television? I refer specifically to two movies, "John and Mary," and "Prudence and the Pill," that were shown last Saturday and Sunday at 9:00 p.m. respectively.

79-42

ALBERTA HANSARD

November 21st 1972

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. member is probably aware that television is a matter not under the jurisdiction of this government. If he wishes to rephrase the question to deal with representations or something, that kind of question might be in order.

MR. SCHMID:

I assume the hon. member may be asking about the classification we have on these movies in Alberta. In one instance, he may be referring to a movie where a maid absconded with some medicine from her lady employer and found out nine months later that the medicine was aspirin! The medicine was placed there in the first place by her lady employer's husband who was not fulfilling his marital duties. He actually placed the medicine in his wife's medicine cabinet because he felt that she was engaging in extramarital illegal activities -- [Laughter] -- anyway, Mr. Speaker, this really was classified as restricted adult as far as the province was concerned.

However, the second one, 'John and Mary,' Mary' in 1969 was classified, I understand, as restricted adult and was then reclassified later on as adult, not suitable for children.

MR. SPEAKER:

A question which causes an hon. minister to lose his composure is not necessarily out of order.

The hon. Member for Wetaskiwin-Leduc followed by the hon. Member for Calgary McCall.

Sesame Street

MR. HENDERSON:

Mr. Speaker, I dispaired of the fact that I was going to get the floor and I wrote the question to the hon. Minister of Education, but I got half an answer. I would like to ask the other 'half' Minister of Education for the other half of the answer. I wonder if the Minister of Advanced Education would advise if he has had any requests from groups or organizations relative to public financial support or provincial financial support for the TV show 'Sesame Street'?

MR. FOSTER:

Mr. Speaker, to be sure I understand the question. Have I had any requests from groups or institutions for public financial support for Sesame Street, in other words, to provide assistance to our local broadcasters to run 'Sesame Street' who would otherwise not run it because of 'economic hardship?' No.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Calgary McCall followed by the hon. Member for Highwood.

Travelling Cabinet Committees

MR. HO LEM:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct a question to the hon. the Premier. What is the purpose of the cabinet committee in going to Fort McMurray, and what do they hope to accomplish on this short visit?

November 21, 1972

ALBERTA HANSARD

79-43

MR. LOUGHEED:

Mr. Speaker, as I have said a number of times before in the legislature, it is the view of our administration that the ministers should be moving extensively throughout the province and not merely be in a position where they are getting documents in their office in the capital. As a government we are particularly concerned. We found this was most effective when we went to Grande Prairie for a cabinet meeting and we spread throughout the entire area.

There are a number of developing problems, as the Minister of Municipal Affairs has pointed out, with regard to an area such as Fort McMurray. We have inherited a complete absence of any sort of effective planning, any sort of long-range thinking with regard to the Fort McMurray area. The situation can't be dealt with on a band-aid basis; we've got to make some long-term plans. When you make long-term plans of that nature, particularly when you are dealing with a community that is in the status of Fort McMurray -- and I am sure the hon. member would concur -- it is extremely important that you see these things on site. I want to assure the hon. member and all hon. members of the Legislative Assembly that we intend to be a government that is on the move!

MR. HO LEM:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Are there any conflicts as to the selection of development sites between the town council's proposal and that of the government proposal?

MR. LOUGHEED:

Mr. Speaker, I am sure that is a possibility. Our government is daily involved in the matter of dealing with conflicts in terms of different views that are expressed in the best interests of the people of Alberta. It is our responsibility as a government to make decisions, and to make decisions in the best interests of the people of Alberta and we intend to make them in this case.

MR. HO LEM:

Mr. Speaker, another supplementary. Do you feel, Mr. Premier, that this all-powerful seven-member cabinet committee would be able to assure the people that there will be positive commitments in regard to the financial burdens which are now facing the town of Fort McMurray?

MR. LOUGHEED:

Mr. Speaker, that is going to be very difficult for us to do, because we have inherited a situation in that community that is most disturbing to us. We spent an entire evening in cabinet during the month of August with regard to the whole Fort McMurray area. I was frankly appalled when I heard the reports, at the absence of planning that had gone on. It is a very serious situation because we hopefully will be moving towards very large scale development over the next decade in the tar sands. For that reason, that area can be involved in very extensive expansion in terms of a large number of people. This, of course, creates a great deal of pressure on the people that are employed in the area, and also in terms of the service industries that are involved. It is going to be very difficult for us on a short-term basis to meet all of the needs and all of the demands in the Fort McMurray area. I am, however, completely confident that this administration's view of the matter, its site inspection, the number of people in the various departments that are working on this particular matter, will lead at least in the medium term, to some very major improvements.

MR. HO LEM:

Supplementary Mr. Speaker. How do you propose that we could encourage the people to go into further long range planning when the recommendation which the government has proposed is in direct conflict with the proposal now put forth by the town council of Fort McMurray, and having consideration that this plan was already in the making as long as two years ago?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Order!

MR. LOUGHEED:

Well, Mr. Speaker, I think that my assessment of the facts are entirely different from the hon. member's.

79-44

ALBERTA HANSARD

November 21st 1972

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Clover Bar with a supplementary, followed by the hon. Member for Highwood.

DR. BUCK:

Just a short supplementary question to the hon. Premier. In view of the fact that you have been doing all these wonderful things, I would like to know just how many areas these cabinet committees covered this fall, how many various communities they visited?

MR. LOUGHFEED:

Well, Mr. Speaker, the extent of the travelling by the ministers is something that I described in some detail in my remarks when the fall session opened on October 25, and I don't believe the hon. member wants me to repeat in detail the extent of that travelling.

I would like to point out that, in addition to the cabinet committee of rural development that will be going into Fort McMurray with some seven cabinet members on Thursday, and in addition to the Grande Prairie cabinet meeting in which we, I think, visited some three dozen communities, there is a constant -- and this is within the province, distinguished from travel outside of the province -- and very extensive amount of travel by the ministers throughout the province. I, frankly, am going to be disturbed if that doesn't continue -- in fact accelerate -- because I am fully of the view that if we operate on the basis of a government always being in the position of everybody having to bring all problems here and we don't see these problems first hand, we don't get an understanding of what they are. I don't think that is in the public interest. I think as an administration wanting to be responsive to the people -- not always succeeding but certainly trying -- that is the way we want to do it and we will continue to be on the move!

DR. BUCK:

Supplementary --

MR. SPEAKER:

The time for the question period has ended and we have the hon. Member for Highwood.

DR. BUCK:

Well, Mr. Speaker --

MR. SPEAKER:

Possibly the supplementary could be asked tomorrow.

DR. BUCK:

Supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Order, Order!

DR. BUCK:

Mr. Speaker, the hon. Premier didn't answer my question.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. member is not entitled to insist on an answer. It is very clearly laid down in Beauchesne. The hon. Member for Highwood and then we will have to conclude the question period.

DR. BUCK:

Mr. Speaker, on a point of privilege, the Premier misinterpreted my question. I asked about cabinet committees; he did not answer on cabinet committees, Mr. Speaker.

November 21, 1972

ALBERTA HANSARD

79-45

MR. SPEAKER:

Perhaps the hon. member could in that event replace the question tomorrow and have it dealt with further. The hon. Member for Highwood.

Post-Secondary Education

MR. BENOIT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a question to the Minister of Post-Secondary Education. Is it the minister's intention to table for each member of the legislature a copy of the Colleges Commission's master plan on non-university post-secondary education, which is available this week?

MR. FOSTER:

Mr. Speaker, it wasn't my intention to table the report, but if there are some members of the House who are interested in receiving a copy of it I would be very pleased to accommodate them.

MR. CRAWFORD:

Mr. Speaker, the question period has ended, but I wonder if I could ask the House's leave to deal with two questions that were asked in recent days, and which I have answers for now that I wasn't able to give previously.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

Alberta Health Care Insurance

MR. CRAWFORD:

Mr. Speaker, the first question was asked by the hon. Member for Drayton Valley who asked about the practice of the province in recovering damages where medical and hospital benefits are covered by the provincial plan, and where there has been a situation like an automobile accident where an insurance company in the private sector is also liable for payment. His question related to whether or not we recover on behalf of the people of Alberta some or all of those funds. The answer is, Mr. Speaker, that in regard to insured services for medicare those are not recovered. That is the situation of the legislation at the present time, although it is under review.

In regard to hospital costs, Alberta recovers approximately \$440,000 a year under this system. That amount is shared with the federal government after it is collected because of the fact that the federal government is a partner to the agreement under which the hospital coverage is given. That, Mr. Speaker, answers that question.

Hanson Labs

The other one is also an important question. The hon. Member for Olds-Didsbury asked about the operations of the Hanson Lab in Alberta and the effect, if any, of the fact that a firm -- which is not primarily resident in Alberta -- I think it was referred to as an American firm, it's a least an Ontario or Quebec firm if not an American firm by the name of Smith, Kline and French -- has purchased shares in the Hanson company. I would like to make four points in responding to that, Mr. Speaker. This is based on information which I will provide more fully to the hon. member by tabling copies of letters that have been received from Dr. Samuel Hanson and Associates Labs, and also from the Registrar of the College of Physicians and Surgeons, both letters provided through the Hospital Services Commission.

The first of the four points that I wanted to make is that Dr. Hanson does say that new groups of pathologists continue to enter the field in Alberta in the last two years. Considering the amount of opportunity there is to enter this particular field, we are invited to draw the conclusion that the competition factor is still there.

The second point is that at the present time in the City of Edmonton -- and no reference is made in this letter to the entire provincial picture -- there would be -- there would be in addition to them four other private medical laboratories operating in the city. I suggest also that bears upon the question of competition.

79-46

ALBERTA HANSARD

November 21st 1972

In regard to fee schedules -- there was a question of the possibly undercutting of fees -- Dr. Hanson says they do abide by the Alberta Health Care Insurance Commission schedule of benefits. He makes the statement that they have always adhered to it -- these are the charges they are entitled to make for laboratory services.

The Registrar of the College of Physicians and Surgeons provided us with a detailed statement of the principles by which the college gives its approval of laboratories to practice in the field of pathology and other related fields in the Province of Alberta, and points out that under their guidelines a corporation itself cannot practice -- this relates to the question of ownership by another corporation -- and a corporation cannot be associated in the practice of medicine.

I think the hon. member will note, from the information I will now table (and provide him with an extra copy) that it was the holding companies, not the operating companies, in regard to which there was a share transaction.

If there is further information of interest to hon. members in regard to this matter I would be glad to provide that too. I would like to table the correspondence.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

MINISTERIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

DR. WARRACK:

Mr. Speaker, I wish to advise all members of the House that Bill No. 107 on the Order Paper under second reading will not be proceeded with during this 1972 legislative session. All hon. members will have received an interim report of the Select Committee on Foreign Investment dealing with the matter of private and public lands that considered Bill No. 107 on the Order Paper in the period of time during the spring and the fall sittings of this legislature. They will note that in that report the committee did accept, in principle, the view that Canadian lands should be owned and controlled by Canadians. At the same time they had expressed concern as to the legal manner in which such a policy could be followed and in further deliberation on those concerns in the interim report, supplementary dated November 9, the committee recommended that Bill No. 107 not be proceeded with at this time. So this is the case.

I would like to take the opportunity to thank all members of that committee for their active efforts in regard to the matter of Bill No. 107, and particularly its chairman, the hon. Member for Edmonton Strathcona, Mr. Julian Koziak, and at the same time say, Mr. Speaker, that I'm certainly open to all comments and suggestions from all hon. members on this important matter.

QUESTIONS

Uninsured Vehicles

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

1. How many vehicles are operating on the highways and streets of Alberta without public liability and property damage insurance?
2. How many spot-checks to determine the number of uninsured vehicles that were in operation were held in Alberta during 1972 and what were the results of each?
3. How many convictions for driving a vehicle without P.L. & F.D. insurance have been obtained between January 1, 1972 and October 31, 1972?

MR. LEITCH:

Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER:

I take it the government agrees to the question?

HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

November 21, 1972

ALBERTA HANSARD

79-47

River Road Hinton West

249. Mr. Taylor asked the government the following question which was answered by Mr. Copithorne as follows:

1. Has the Department of Highways completed the widening of the River Road Hinton West this year as indicated in reply to Question No. 168?

Answer: As previously replied to Question 168, there is no plan to widen the road. A completely separate, parallel service road will be built to provide access to residences and to be used by school bus traffic. The log hauling trucks will not use this road.

2. If not, how much work has been completed on the portion of the road coming under the jurisdiction of the Department of Highways?

Answer: Survey, design and purchase of right-of-way has been completed for the parallel service road.

3. If not, when will the work be completed?

Answer: Weather permitting, our schedule is for construction to be completed on the portion of the road coming under the jurisdiction of the Department of Highways by December 10. The Town of Hinton have about 3/4 mile of their road to complete.

4. Is the Department considering the stoppage of log-hauling trucks each school day between 7:45 a.m. to 8:15 a.m. and from 3:50 p.m. to 4:20 p.m., in order to safeguard the lives of the boys and girls riding in school buses?

Answer: As previously replied to Question 168, all log trucks stop to allow school buses to pass during the hours of 7:30 a.m. to 8:00 a.m. and from 3:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., during school days.

MR. COPITHORNE:

I agree to this question, Mr. Speaker. I have the answer and would like to table it.

MOTIONS FOR A RETURN

Government Advertising

246. Mr. Ludwig proposed the following motion to the Assembly, seconded by Mr. Wilson.

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

- (1) How much money has been spent on government advertising since September 10th, 1971. Please itemize all advertising expenditures by the Government of Alberta, naming all individuals and agencies to which funds have been paid.
- (2) Who is responsible for awarding of government advertising contracts in the Publicity Bureau?
- (3) How much has been paid to Art Smith of Calgary, Alberta, or to any association or firm with which he is associated, for advertising since September 10th, 1971?
- (4) Please table all correspondence dealing with government advertising and advertising by any government agencies, since September 10th, 1971.

[Debate adjourned by Mr. Ludwig]

MR. LUDWIG:

Mr. Speaker, I adjourned debate on this motion and the only observation I wish to make is the hon. Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs expressed serious concern about the draftsmanship of this motion. In particular he objected to the words, "Publicity Bureau" being used in Clause 2. I admit that the words ought to be "Public Affairs Bureau". I had used the word "Publicity Bureau" in a question to the hon. minister and apparently he understood but I am submitting, Mr. Speaker, that amending of motions is something that is quite

79-48

ALBERTA HANSARD

November 21st 1972

common in this legislature. My motion on telephones was amended and it's a proper thing to do. I believe that this motion is information which is of interest to the hon. members and to the public, and therefore I request that the hon. members support this Motion for a Return, but substitute in Clause 2 for "Publicity Bureau" the words "Public Affairs Bureau", so that the minister will now understand what I am asking.

MR. SPEAKER:

Unless the hon. member has the unanimous vote of the House, I question whether the motion can be amended in that fashion.

HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

MR. GETTY:

Mr. Speaker, if he's going to amend it to correct it, he should amend it correctly. It's the Bureau of Public Affairs.

MR. SPEAKER:

Is the House prepared to accept the informal method of amending a motion by substituting "Bureau of Public Affairs" for "publicity bureau"?

HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER:

Are you ready for the question?

[The motion as amended was carried.]

MR. GETTY:

Mr. Speaker, when we originally discussed this Motion for a Return, we pointed out that it would be very difficult to get some of the information, but that we would try and get some as quickly as possible and get the others if the House agreed with the motion. Therefore, I have been able to get all the information pertaining to the Bureau of Public Affairs which came into being on April 1st, 1972, Mr. Speaker. That information pertaining to the Bureau of Public Affairs, I will file now, and make every effort to get all of the other information which means going through all the other government departments, and we will do that as quickly as possible.

MR. LUDWIG:

Mr. Speaker, will the hon. minister then forward the material to me, or how will I get it?

MR. GETTY:

I'll get it.

Cultural Heritage Conference Resolutions

247. Mr. Clark proposed the following motion to the assembly, seconded by Mr. Ludwig:

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

All the resolutions that were passed at the Cultural Heritage Conference held in June of 1972.

[The motion was carried.]

MR. SCHMID:

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to provide the information requested.

November 21, 1972

ALBERTA HANSARD

79-49

MR. SPEAKER:

In keeping with the suggestion made in the House the other day, would the hon. minister care to name for the record, the material he is tabling?

MR. SCHMID:

Mr. Speaker, I am happy to submit to the House recommendations as submitted by The Alberta Cultural Heritage Conference of June, 1972.

Closed Road Allowances

250. Mr. Ludwig proposed the following motion to the assembly, seconded by Mr. Ho Lem.

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

- (1) Please give the locations of all legally closed road allowances in Alberta which have been opened to public use since September 10th, 1971.
- (2) Please give the locations of all illegally closed road allowances in Alberta which have been opened to public use since September 10th, 1971.
- (3) Do any members of the Legislature of Alberta have any interest in land upon which there are legally or illegally closed road allowances in Alberta?
- (4) Would the minister provide a map upon which are displayed all legally and illegally closed road allowances in Alberta.
- (5) Please table all correspondence received by the government and replies to said correspondence, dealing with the issue of legally or illegally closed road allowances since September 10th, 1972.

MR. LUDWIG:

This is a current issue, it certainly concerns a great number of people in the province, and I'm referring to 'closed road allowances', both legally and illegally closed. I'm aware of the fact that the hon. Minister of Highways may want me to be more specific with regard to Question No. 3, but I would like to explain why I worded it the way it is worded.

The question is as follows: "Do any members of the Legislature of Alberta have any interest in land upon which there are legally or illegally closed road allowances in Alberta?"

By this I meant, whether any M.L.A.s own land which is fenced in, upon which there are road allowances, legally or illegally closed. I know that I could be more specific and request that we list road allowances which are contiguous with, or adjacent to, land owned by M.L.A.s if any, and also, if they own an interest in land that may straddle a road allowance which is legally or illegally closed, but I believe that the question could be understood in the manner in which it is written, and I am recommending that the motion be accepted as it appears on the Order Paper, Mr. Speaker.

MR. FARRAN:

Speaking to the motion, Mr. Speaker. I don't know why the hon. Member for Calgary Mountain View should think that any cabinet minister on this side has a crystal ball. I wonder why he didn't ask, in addition to a report on all the illegally closed road allowances in the Province of Alberta, together with a map, why he didn't put in such questions as how many periods there are in a bottle of ink, or how long is a piece of string, or how high is the sky; all important questions like that.

What does interest me is the wording of the first question: "Please give the locations of all legally closed road allowances in Alberta which have been open to public use since September 10, 1971." In other words, he is saying, "How much of the mess that was built up in 35 years prior to September 10, 1971 has been fixed up since; how many of the road allowances that we closed across the province have since been opened." If this is what he means then it is going to be most interesting. But I hope the hon. minister will answer this question in full.

79-50

ALBERTA HANSARD

November 21st 1972

MR. TAYLOR:

Mr. Chairman, following the remarks of the hon. Member for Calgary North, I feel I have to say one or two items in connection with this matter. In the first place, the hon. minister, when he answered a question previously, gave identical information that was included in an engineering report of some two years ago. We had a further discussion on the floor of the House and the hon. minister stated he would bring back a revised opinion or statement. He hasn't yet done that. Following that report, instructions were issued to the municipality to get rid of all illegally closed road allowances, and they were either to be opened or leased properly; we would not tolerate illegally closed road allowances. Furthermore, we started on a program of opening ten road allowances in that general area every year. Ten were officially opened the first year and ten were on the verge of being opened the year in which the government was defeated. The information that is requested is logical and sensible. We want to know whether that program has been discontinued or thrown out, or proceeded with. I think the question is logical in that the Return is a sensible one indeed.

MR. GETTY:

Mr. Speaker, I think the hon. minister wants to answer this as fully as it is capable of being answered. But when the hon. member now stands up and talks about something being logical and sensible I think we have to draw attention to the fact that how does any cabinet minister on this side know what lands, or interest in lands, are owned by any M.L.A. in the House? Certainly, Mr. Speaker, that isn't filed anywhere. A member can hold an interest in lands in a variety of ways and it doesn't appear anywhere. I can't see the logic or sense in No. 3 at all. I'm sure the hon. minister is going to do everything possible to answer it, but I don't think we should grace this Motion for a Return with the words 'logical' or 'sensible'.

MR. TAYLOR:

Mr. Chairman, if I may reply to the hon. minister --

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

No, no!

MR. TAYLOR:

Oh, you don't want the answer.

DR. HOFNER:

I beg your pardon, but on a point of order, Mr. Speaker. The hon. member has already spoken in this debate.

MR. TAYLOR:

On a point of order. The ownership of every road allowance is known.

AN HON. MEMBER:

By you?

MR. TAYLOR:

Of course it is --

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Order please! I wonder if we would let the hon. Minister of Highways reply. He has been wanting to get up and reply to this.

MR. COPITHORNE:

Mr. Speaker, I would be very happy to answer these questions that have been laid out by the hon. member, to the best of my department's ability.

MR. LUDWIG:

Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to close debate on the remarks on this Motion. I will particularly --

November 21, 1972

ALBERTA HANSARD

79-51

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Has the hon. member leave to close the debate?

HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

MR. LUDWIG:

I suggest that the ministers haven't got a crystal ball. I suggest that the hon. member, Mr. Farran, has an apple and he should do his polishing outside the legislature.

Mr. Speaker, I think that the observation made by the hon. Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs that the ownership of land by the M.L.A.s is not known -- but I wish to point out, as the hon. Member for Drumheller had, that every closed road allowance is well tabulated. I happen to have a map, which is not up-to-date, and I happen to have a location of all these. This should be up-dated. All the information is available in the Department of Highways, together with reports, commentaries, minutes of meetings, etc. So there isn't very much to be done to get the information to me except to up-date the material. But I would recommend that in the event that any minister owns land -- and I'm not suggesting that he does, on which there is an illegally or legally closed road allowance, I believe it is in the public interest that that information be tabled.

AN HON. MEMBER:

What is an illegally closed road allowance?

MR. LUDWIG:

Ask the hon. Minister of Highways. He should be able to tell you, or perhaps you shouldn't ask him, because he probably can't -- [Interjection] You've had your chance to speak, Mr. Premier No. 2, why didn't you take it?

Mr. Speaker, I therefore move that this motion is in the public interest and I urge the hon. members to support it.

[The motion was carried.]

MR. WILSON:

Point of order, Mr. Speaker. I was wondering if the hon. Government House Leader could advise as to whether or not we could expect the answers to Motion for a Return No. 238, which has been agreed to?

MR. GETTY:

As a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, Motion No. 238 was delivered to my desk just after the time the Clerk was going through the period that I could have tabled the report. Since it is now in, if the House would agree, I would be very pleased to table it right now.

HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

MR. HYNDMAN:

Mr. Speaker, concerning business of the House this afternoon and from this point forward, a couple of days ago I asked the hon. Opposition House Leader if he might wish to consider using the balance of today for government business, and I would like to thank him for his assistance in endeavouring to do just that. Accordingly, I would like to ask leave of the House to move, at this point, that we now proceed to Government Motions, with a view to going first to Government Motion No. 3 on crop insurance and then to 4, 5, and 6. First I would like to ask leave of the House to proceed to do that at this time.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Has the hon. Government House Leader received unanimous approval for changing the procedure and to go into Government Motions Nos. 3, 4, and 5?

79-52

ALBERTA HANSARD

November 21st 1972

HCN. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

MR. HYNDMAN:

I move, Mr. Speaker, seconded by the hon. Provincial Treasurer, that the House now move to Government Motions on the Order Paper, beginning with Motion No. 3.

[The motion was carried.]

GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

Crop Insurance and Weather Modification

3. Hon. Dr. HOFNER proposed, seconded by Mr. STROMBERG:

Be it resolved that the Interim Report of the Select Committee on Crop Insurance and Weather Modification be received.

DR. HOFNER:

Mr. Speaker, it gives me a great deal of pleasure to move that the interim report of the Select Committee on Crop Insurance and Weather Modification be received. Speaking briefly to the motion, I would first of all like to thank the members of the committee who are not members of the Legislative Assembly for the very valuable contribution that they have made. We do appreciate their time and effort in a very complicated business such as crop insurance.

It might be wise to point out that this is a very comprehensive report, and recommends a pretty major change in the type of crop insurance program that we have in Alberta. Certainly the experience we have had over the years in Alberta indicates that a fairly substantial change in crop insurance is required if we are going to have something that is going to do the job. It seems to me that if we could have a reasonable and useful crop insurance program that was universally accepted, it would relieve farmers of a great deal of uncertainty and would be the stepping stone to such things as a better grain stabilization program on the federal level, and would also be the cornerstone for a substantial change in rural Alberta in maintaining farm income in a basic sort of way.

As I have said, I want to thank the members of the committee, both M.L.A.s and non-M.L.A.s, for their assistance in a very difficult area, and to assure them that all of the recommendations that they have made will be given very serious consideration by the government. Certainly the whole problem of weather modification is also one that has had its controversy over the years, particularly in Alberta, but at the same time Alberta has led Canada, certainly, in research on hail. It became bogged down and perhaps the interpretation of how one used that research and whether or not in fact the question of weather modification was a useful exercise. I accept the opinion of the committee that weather modification may prove useful and I again say that the government will give very serious consideration on an early date to their recommendations.

I think, Mr. Speaker, that is all I can say at this time in moving the motion that the report be received. We will give every one of their recommendations very close consideration and having regard to the question of budgetary implications that are involved, the negotiations that must take place with the federal government in relation to crop insurance; I can assure them we will move as quickly as possible in this area.

MR. STROMBERG:

Mr. Speaker, in rising to second the motion, I too would like to offer, on behalf of the M.L.A.s who served on this committee, our sincere appreciation to John Langelier of Falher, John Sawiak of Vegreville who is the Vice President of Unifarm, Robin Wallace of Manla, and Jim Christie of Trochu.

Mr. Speaker, these men gave up a lot of time from farming; committee work, ... and time, and I would like to point out to you that these four men are successful practical farmers in their own districts who at one time or another carried crop insurance, but due to the impracticability of the program, had dropped these contracts. Mr. Speaker, they were not alone for in Alberta last year, approximately 1800 farmers dropped their contracts and the year before that, 1500 farmers. The handwriting was on the wall for the crop insurance program.

November 21, 1972

ALBERTA HANSARD

79-53

Mr. Speaker, I would like to point out that the value of all crops in Alberta last year was \$560 million and this year will probably approach \$750 million to the economy of this province. Mr. Speaker, relate this \$750 million to the economy of Alberta and with no stretch of the imagination, if a crop failure occurs in a given area without the majority of our farmers being covered by crop insurance, it will be a disaster. Mr. Speaker, Alberta farmers need crop insurance that they can afford. Mr. Speaker, about 20 per cent of our farmers last year partook in crop insurance programs, while in Manitoba the figure was 70 per cent. Our committee was of the opinion that to get the information we needed, we had to direct the complaining to the practical. As much information and discussion as possible and an opportunity for questioning was needed, and also, in a sense, new interest in the subject. Information type meetings were therefore a must. Mr. Speaker, to keep pace with the government's policy of decentralization, our information meetings were held in the small communities throughout Alberta. We expected no farmer to drive downtown in Edmonton or Calgary, spend hours looking for parking, and then spend additional hours trying to find an address. Our information meetings were held in the following places: Three Hills and Olds, mainly for that area that is known as the 'hail belt of Alberta', Lacombe and Forestburg for east central Alberta, Leduc and Westlock for that portion of northern Alberta north of Edmonton, Grande Prairie, Falher, Fort Vermilion and Fairview for the Peace River area; Vermilion and St. Paul for the northeast part of the province; and Vulcan, Lethbridge and Brooks for southern Alberta.

Mr. Speaker, our hearings were held a month later at Brooks, Three Hills, Olds, Leduc, Barrhead, Forestburg, Falher and Vermilion. The result of these information meetings and hearings was 91 well thought out, high quality briefs, plus a number of written copies for presentation. Our committee asked several questions of each farmer. The audience was encouraged to take part in discussions with questions and comments.

Mr. Speaker, this report on crop insurance and weather modification is a report from the farmers of Alberta; what they want, what they need, what they believe should be done, and what they would be willing to pay for, a program that is practicable, workable, and possible.

Mr. Speaker, in regard to the second part of our report dealing with weather modification, I would like to point out that in the area of Olds, Three Hills and Calgary, weather is the only topic that two farmers meeting each other on their main street can not talk about without getting into a fight or an argument.

Mr. Speaker, at the Olds and Three Hills meeting, this committee heard views from individual farmers, university professors, researchers, the Research Council of Alberta, farm organizations, the Alberta Weather Modification Co-op, the rate payers protection associations, counties in the area, McGill University, Toronto University, Atmospheric Service, and interested individuals.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to point that the damage of hail last year in Alberta was \$40 million. Hail strikes urban areas as well as rural. Mr. Speaker, this report is written in such a way that a farmer can understand it. As the Member for Fort McLeod so ably put it the other night, "There are no 35 cent words in this report."

Mr. Speaker, if the 23 recommendations listed on the back page of this report are adopted by this assembly, we will go a long way to putting agriculture on a sound basis in our province.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview followed by the hon. Member for Bow Valley.

MR. NOTLEY:

Mr. Speaker, at the outset I want to congratulate the committee on submitting what is my judgment an first class report. There are just several observations I would like to make, Mr. Speaker, with respect to the report.

One really is impressed with the need for a sensible crop insurance scheme, when one sees first-hand the problem of desperately bad harvesting conditions or the problems posed by the weather. This was brought forcibly to my attention this fall with the dreadful harvesting conditions in the Peace River country. One of the points that came out at a rather large public meeting in my constituency attended by several hundred farmers was just how many of the people in the room actually had crop insurance. Out of approximately 200 people

79-54

ALBERTA HANSARD

November 21st 1972

attending, only 8 or 9 of the farmers put up their hands. I think this is perhaps an indication that the crop insurance scheme in the province has just not done the job. It hasn't been satisfactory for the farmers.

I think most of us will agree that rather than dealing with interim emergency measures when conditions such as the weather problems in the Peace, a far better approach is to develop a viable crop insurance scheme. So, I am pleased to see that this report contains a number of pretty practical recommendations, which would be attractive to farmers in the Peace, especially making rapeseed a major crop.

I think another feature of the report that would be important is the request that the federal government pay 50 per cent of the premiums and the province assume all administration costs. It is necessary that the package which is offered the farmer be comprehensive enough and at a premium price that makes some sense.

Again at this meeting we spent some time discussing crop insurance and I was impressed with the number of farmers who got up and who had taken the trouble actually to do a pretty close cost benefit analysis of the existing crop insurance scheme and just concluded that there was no way in which it would pay them to take out the existing plan. But the recommendations that we have before us today would go a long way towards improving crop insurance. So I would certainly hope that the government will move on this as quickly as possible. I might point out that when I received the report I took the trouble to send out copies to quite a number of the farm people in my constituency and throughout the north, and I am sure members of the committee would be interested to know that the reaction I received to the report was almost universally favourable.

Mr. Speaker, I would be a little remiss if I didn't make some observations dealing with the second part of the report; that portion concerning weather modification. Here again, I wholeheartedly endorse the recommendations in the report. I remember quite clearly, when I was going to high school, the beginnings of Alberta's experiments with weather modification. In 1956, in the municipal district of Mountain View, a number of farmers attempted to persuade their fellow ratepayers to set up a hail insurance or a hail suppression operation, and my father was quite active among the farmers who were promoting hail suppression. It was one of those issues which split the community asunder. There were those who wanted to experiment with hail suppression and there were other people who were concerned saying that, good heavens you just can't do anything with the weather, and this is almost a plot of sorts. So we had quite a debate, and I recall the disappointment of the promoters of this particular scheme when the ratepayers went to the polls and rejected it. But that didn't stop them, and it is worth noting, Mr. Speaker, that the people who were in favour of hail suppression then went out to their fellow farmers and collected something in the neighbourhood of \$20,000, so that the initial hail suppression venture could begin in that part of Alberta.

I certainly believe that the five year hail suppression program, as recommended by the committee, is an excellent one. When we look at the fact that central Alberta has pioneered in this area at very considerable cost to the farmers involved, to have the province fund this program for a period of five years is not an unreasonable proposition at all.

Having been born and raised in central Alberta and realizing the ferocious impact of hail storms and the impact that had on a community, there is just no doubt that if we can move towards some form of weather modification this would do a great deal to provide some basic stability in that part of the province. I think the figure that the hon. Member for Camrose cited of some \$40 million damage done last year through hail storms is in itself a pretty clear cut indication of the dimension of the problem and an indication that we have to take whatever reasonable steps we can to deal with it. So I feel that the proposals -- both No. 22 and No. 23 -- are certainly overdue and should be endorsed by all the members in this legislature.

In general, Mr. Speaker, I am sure there is no way that we can bring in a crop insurance scheme, which is going to please everybody in the province. There are always going to be difficulties, nevertheless the recommendations that we have before us go, in my view at any rate, a fair distance towards setting up the kind of conditions necessary to develop a really comprehensive package at a reasonable price for Alberta farmers. I would just conclude by expressing the hope that the government will put this report very high on its agenda for the 1973 session and move quickly, so that we can see the benefits transferred as quickly as possible to the farmers of Alberta.

November 21, 1972

ALBERTA HANSARD

79-55

MR. MANDEVILLE:

Mr. Speaker, as a member of this committee, I would just like to make a few remarks. First I would like to say that I certainly enjoyed working with every member of this committee; it was most harmonious. I would certainly have to say that it was a most non-political committee, and I enjoyed this.

I also endorse what the mover and the seconder remarked, that our farm members made a large contribution to this report. They were knowledgeable and participated in this program and were able to help us in many, many ways. I'd also be remiss, Mr. Speaker, if I didn't congratulate or show my appreciation to our congenial chairman of this committee. I enjoyed working with him, and I'm certain everyone who worked with him enjoyed it and the manner in which he handled it. It was certainly much appreciated by myself. I was very satisfied with the way the meetings were set up and the way that they were handled and the way everyone had an input and had the privilege of giving all they could towards this report. And at the meetings we held throughout this province, I could see that we had a very keen interest in this topic of crop insurance, and I think that the input from our farmers showed us that they want us to make some changes. This is exactly what our chairman said, this is a report from the farmers of the Province of Alberta. That was well worded because that is what the report is.

I realize this report is recommending a lot of real dramatic changes in the field of crop insurance. However, I think that if we are going to have crop insurance, it has to be made available to every farmer in the province, and it has got to be acceptable to each farmer. And especially the one recommendation that we have in this report, that the federal government pay 50 per cent of the premium and the provincial government pay for all of the administration. In light of this, I certainly think that we've got to come up with a program that is acceptable to all Albertans.

I would just like, Mr. Speaker, to make a few points on insurance for specialized crops and irrigated areas. At this particular time we do not have any insurance in the irrigated areas of the province and I certainly think that we've got to come up with a program that will fit these areas. At the present time in the irrigated areas, we can't summer fallow like they do on dry land because we can't afford to summer fallow. We have to grow many legumes and forage crops. Therefore, we've got to have some type of insurance to protect us in this one area of legumes and forage crops. We have overcome our major problem which is drought in the irrigated areas. However, we do have other hazards. We have aphids and we have hail, which is a big hazard in the irrigated areas. In the eastern irrigation districts, now more than ever, we are getting involved in secondary industry such as dehydrating our alfalfa hay, or pelleting our alfalfa hay, and therefore we have to have some type of protection to give us some assurance that we are going to be able to have continuity and supply for these particular plants. I'll agree these wafering plants and dehydrating plants have taken some of the risk out of our legume crops where we were cutting our hay three and four times a year, and this does certainly take some of the risk from the crop.

In the irrigated areas we do have many more special crops. We have carrots, we have onions, parsnips, radishes, and we got to come up with some type of an insurance program that's going to be workable in these areas. It is hard to come up with a program because there is so much capital put up to grow these particular crops. However, in the irrigated areas we have got to diversify and we have got to grow this type of crop. If we did have insurance we could diversify further as far as our irrigated areas are concerned. And I do think that we do have to do this in our irrigated areas. At the present time we are realizing too much on grain which we can't do, and we have to get into our more specialized crops and into our foreign markets with our product, because we can certainly grow a product in Alberta that's second to none when it comes to our vegetables.

A prime example that we have had in the last two years is our potato industry. We have had two bad years back-to-back in the potato industry, and we have no form of insurance to guarantee that our potato growers can continue growing potatoes. We had dry years and our crops were very unfavourable.

I do appreciate the program that our hon. Minister of Agriculture came up with -- guaranteed loans for the potato growers -- and I want to assure him that I endorse the program 100 per cent and I can almost assure you that you are not going to have any losses in this particular field. In my own particular area many loans have been approved there, and they have been a great asset to the potato industry. And if we had some type of an insurance program, possibly we

79-56

ALBERTA HANSARD

November 21st 1972

wouldn't have to come up with this type of a loan for our agricultural industry as far as our row crops are concerned.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I would just like to say, Recommendation No. 1 in this report really came home to us. That is the recommendation that the unit to be insured should be on a quarter-section, and should include spot losses, not less than a ten acre spot. This is going to be costly, but when we questioned the farmers on this they agreed that they were willing to pay more money if they had a program that was acceptable. We're going to have to have pre-harvest inspection in order to implement this Recommendation No. 1. But I think I can say, in all fairness, at every hearing that we attended, this really came home to the committee. This is the one change that has got to be made so that it is going to be acceptable to all the farmers in the province.

Recommendation No. 2 was another recommendation that was brought up at many of our meetings, and that is that our crop insurance be based on a six to a ten year average. At the present time we have the 25 year average, and many of our farmers felt that the 25 year average had outlived its usefulness, and that we should go to a six to a ten year average. Also the recommendation that the federal government pay 50 per cent of the premiums and the provincial government pay for all the administration came up at almost all our meetings.

Just one final word, Mr. Speaker, on weather modification, something that I had very little knowledge of when I started on this committee. But in attending the meetings at Olds and Three Hills, I found that the research in Alberta has been very, very successful. In talking to the farmers, I find that they want to go ahead with the program; they feel they should have a program that will fit in with our research and start a five year program in the field of weather modification. And the many, many farmers that I spoke to, just about unanimously agreed that we should be into a program. However, before getting involved in this, I did hear many remarks that weather modification wasn't acceptable to the farmers. But I certainly didn't find this in the meetings that I attended. I did find that some of our scientists seemed to be more concerned with the research aspect of it than they were with going into a program. But the farmers certainly indicated to me, Mr. Speaker, that it is time we got into a program of weather modification.

MR. CLARK:

Mr. Speaker, in rising to make a few comments regarding the report on the Special Committee on Crop Insurance and Weather Modification, I certainly associate myself with the remarks made by the hon. member, Mr. Mandeville, as far as the working of the committee is concerned.

The second area I will touch upon for just a moment is the question of crop insurance. I, once again, would heartily agree with the comments made by the hon. member, Mr. Mandeville, when he talked in terms of the first three, and especially the first two recommendations; that the insurable unit will be a quarter-section that includes spot loss. Unless the corporation can see its way clear to move in this direction, I don't believe there will be the overwhelming support for the crop insurance program that is available if that option is made possible to farmers in the province.

The second biggest complaint that came up in the course of most of the hearings was the question of the 25-year average. At the hearings I attended, there wasn't one where this question of the reliability of the 25-year average came up. Without question, the desire to move back to a five and ten-year average on the individual quarter-section certainly carried the judgment of the farmers present.

In making comments at this time -- I see the hon. Provincial Treasurer is here and also the hon. Minister of Agriculture -- if we're really going to make any changes in this program that is going to make it acceptable to farmers across the province, the first two recommendations, I believe, are the most important. The other recommendations, yes, are certainly important, but if we don't move on the first two recommendations, then I don't think on an across-the-province basis that the program is going to carry the judgment of farmers.

The third recommendation deals with the federal government asked to pay 50 per cent of the premiums and the provincial government to pay all the administrative costs. In the course of some of the discussions we had, it was indicated to us within the last year or two that the federal government had made an offer to pick up half the premiums as far as crop insurance was concerned, as long as they were satisfied from the actuarial standpoint. I think that the federal government, in spite of what has happened in the recent federal election, hopefully may still be willing to take up 50 per cent of the premiums,

November 21, 1972

ALBERTA HANSARD

79-57

if satisfied on an actuarial basis. Then this would leave to the province the question of the administration of the program in the province. The federal officials to whom we spoke, I thought made an excellent point, when they said that the administrative cost in Alberta was the lowest of any province in Canada. And yet in other provinces in Canada, where they're presently sharing the cost of administration, they move to this quarter-section, or even, under some circumstances, a smaller loss basis. So the federal government seems very interested in getting out of paying half the costs of administration, or a portion of the costs of administration, and leaving this to the province and letting the province design that kind of program they felt meets the needs of the province. I strongly support that recommendation.

There are two recommendations you will find in the report, as far as crop insurance is concerned, that I am less enthusiastic about. One is the matter of having elevator managers as corporation agents. From the elevator agents to whom I have talked, they're not nearly as enthusiastic perhaps as some of us on the committee were for that particular recommendation. The second recommendation I am not that enthusiastic about is the idea that we should license crop insurance and hail insurance adjusters in the province.

However, be that as it may, I'd like now to move on to the question of weather modification, and say that in the particular area that I represent, we have the unfortunate distinction of being the worst hail area in the province. The Didsbury area, in its very sober moments, can say that it is the fourth or fifth worst hail area in the world. We don't advertise that very much. In recent years this hasn't been the case, and I think a number of people in the area will certainly give a portion of the credit to the work that is being done in the field of weather modification.

At the hearings we held, especially in Olds and Three Hills, I expected a great deal of fireworks between the people who had been ardent hail suppression supporters for the last ten years, and some of the people who have, on almost every occasion, opposed the program. In the questioning at Three Hills, I was careful to ask (and other members were too) those representatives of the Ratepayers' Protection Organization who have, over a period of many years actively fought the commercial hail suppression program in the area, and for the first time, they said that they were in favour of the kind of hail research and hail work that was being done by the Alberta Research Council. To me, this was the first time that we had both groups come out and say at the same meeting, one, we feel there is a need for work to be done in this area as far as weather modification is concerned, and secondly, we support the kind of work which the Research Council has been carrying out.

As far as the committee work on weather modification was concerned, that was perhaps the highlight, because as has been mentioned by the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview -- and the question of weather modification in that area has been a very, very contentious issue, to say the least -- we have now got to the point where those people who have, year after year, opposed the commercial hail suppression program are now prepared to say, yes, we must move in this area. I think the timing couldn't be better.

When we are going to move on the question of a five year suppression program, I would even go so far as to make a plea to the Minister of Agriculture that in establishing the body that is going to be responsible for doing this five-year program and the research involved, it is very vital that we involve not only the people who have been strong supporters of the commercial hail suppression program in the area, but also some of those people who have, as of late, become more enthusiastic about the idea of weather modification. I naturally add that we should include some of the people who have been involved in the actual research program that has been going on through the Research Council of Alberta.

When this committee is established, or this organization is set up, at a very early time it is important that a criteria for evaluation be established, because in the course of the hearings we heard several times one group say that the program has been successful, where another group will say the program hasn't been successful -- this was the commercial hail suppression program. The basic reason for this difference of opinion was because both groups were operating from a different standpoint of evaluation. One group could point to hail records in the area for the past number of years and use those as indications of their success; and the other group just wouldn't accept the evaluation which had been done by the commercial people at all. So it is vital that when an organization is being established to run this five-year suppression program, that the people who have been strong supporters of the commercial weather modification program be involved. It is also important that those people who have been not that enthusiastic about the program, but who are now prepared to

79-58

ALBERTA HANSARD

November 21st 1972

go along and support the program, have representation involved, and certainly representation from the people who have been involved in research as far as the province is concerned.

The fourth point that I'd like to make, Mr. Speaker, is that I think it fair to say that the committee rushed its work so that the recommendations on crop insurance and the recommendations on weather modification could be available for this particular fall session. A number of the recommendations, as far as crop insurance is concerned, can be implemented without legislation. I would hope that the Minister of Agriculture and the government would look at the recommendations quickly and that they would be in a position to give a green light to the Alberta Crop Insurance Corporation to move on the recommendations of the legislative committee. Very few of the recommendations entail legislation. I appreciate that there is need for negotiation with the federal government, but certainly in the discussions we have had with officials from the federal government I got the feeling that they would be more than passingly receptive to a number of the major changes recommended here.

On the question of weather modification, I assure the minister that I, for one, would not be critical of any leg work that he might do between now and February or March when the next session starts to get this hail suppression program operational so that it could be operational for the 1973 year.

MR. ZANDER:

Mr. Speaker, the history of crop insurance in Alberta has been met with mixed feelings by the farmers of Alberta. One of the problems seems to have come about by the difference between the black soils and the grey wooded soils and the brown soils. I can remember back many years ago arguing with the committee on the benefits as to the amount of monies paid. This is probably why, on the whole, most of the farmers after being in crop insurance for one year have moved away from crop insurance because the benefits they have derived therefrom were not very much.

If we look at the recommendations in the report, Mr. Speaker, we have to agree that certainly this is a step in the right direction, something that was long in coming, and certainly should have been dealt with much sooner than it has been. I certainly hope that we, the government, will act on some of the recommendations, if not in total. When we look at the comparison of the benefits derived and the premiums paid, we in the grey soils in the northern and western parts of the province, must pay -- if my memory serves me right, I believe it was \$1.32 per acre for a \$19 coverage for wheat -- while in a similar area in the black zones the benefits were almost \$30 an acre and they were paying a similar amount or less.

It has to be recognized that the farmers in the grey wooded soils have to take better care of their soils. The cost of management is far greater if they are to receive on a rewarded return from their harvest, and most of the costs that have not been calculated are taken care of by the previous government.

One more thing I would like to bring in, Mr. Speaker, and that is, I have to agree that Recommendations Nos. 1 and 2 have to be considered. I think they are of prime importance. But I think probably Recommendation No. 21 is something that we should really look at. I think in the past, the five-member board has not operated too well.

May I make a suggestion here that in this proposed seven-member board, I think the four they mention in there shall be farmers with a farmer appointed as the chairman. I wholeheartedly agree with that. But I do believe there is room in this recommendation that one man of this board should come from the federal field. I think there has to be better co-operation between the provincial and the federal governments. There has to be better communication as to what we farmers in the province of Alberta desire. I would really suggest, Mr. Speaker, that we consider this one move, although I think the recommendation is not bad, and I certainly hope that one member of the board would be from the federal field to give us better communication with the federal government.

The committee has done a wonderful job and I commend it. I have studied the report and I think if we can implement at least some of the recommendations of this report then we have gone a long way toward bringing about a better insurance program for the farmers and their crops in the Province of Alberta.

MR. TRYNCHY:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just a few words on this crop insurance. I endorse it 100 per cent. I would like to point out to the members how this will

November 21, 1972

ALBERTA HANSARD

79-59

affect the people in my constituency. The first year we had crop insurance 85 per cent of the farmers in my area were covered. It got so that in the third year they were down to 30 per cent. There was definitely a need for a revision of this crop insurance. The recommendations that are put out by the committee are recommendations that I endorse entirely. Some of them are things I have been trying to get across to the Alberta Hail Board for a number of years.

Number 1, spot losses are very essential. Some farmers have land spread over a lot of areas and it is just about impossible to expect the farmer to lose half his crop and not get anything for it when the other half would offset his losses. The individual farmer's average is also something I approve of. One thing that really will help in the areas of the I.D.S is having all areas of the province covered by crop insurance. I think this should have been done a long time ago.

Another point I would like to bring up is that rapeseed is going to be included, and I endorse this too, as rapeseed is now becoming one of our major crops in Alberta.

The recommendation of changing the cancellation date to March 31st is one all farmers will approve. There is one point that I would like to bring out, one that I am really concerned about and that is elevator managers being able to sell insurance. I have to disagree somewhat with the member opposite, being an elevator manager for 20 years before getting into this so-called racket --

DR. BUCK:

Speak for yourself!

MR. TRYNCHY:

We were forced to collect premiums for the Hail Board and crop insurance for years and what we got in return was a \$2 gift at the end of the year. I really don't think that is the way to operate and I hope that the committee will recommend this, and that every elevator manager sell insurance because that is where the farmers go and he is the man they trust. That is one thing I insist that we do if the hon. minister, Dr. Hcrner, or whoever, is going to put this into effect.

The other portion that I would like to talk about is The Lien Act, and paying back of the lien. I endorse the payment of half the monies because many times in my office when I was on the job the full lien payment cheque was gone and they had nothing to buy groceries with, or anything else. This is something that is very important in communities where they are starting off, and this is one of the areas on which I want to commend the committee.

There are a number of other points I could bring up, but due to the time and other members wanting to speak, I just want to say that the committee did a tremendous job, and I support it all the way. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Cardston has pre-empted the floor by a semaphore signal given some time ago.

MR. HINMAN:

Thank you Mr. Speaker. This whole matter of all-risk insurance subsidized pretty heavily by the government touches a principle that I think has become pretty important to me. I choose to call it sort of preferential welfare, forced on the farmers by our insistence that it be made acceptable to them whether they like it or not. I think the history of it indicates that never yet has there been a scheme which was acceptable to all the farmers, simply because there are so many areas in the province which have seldom, if ever, qualified for any benefits. So that only in those areas where hail has been common, or other risks have been extreme, have the farmers found it wise to do so. What we are doing when we say 'all risk' is saying that if a crop is lost by frost it can be covered by insurance. If it is lost by pests, it can be covered by insurance.

I am going to discuss briefly some of the problems that this is going to bring up. But chiefly I want to talk about the subsidy which is indicated in the third section. I think in spite of the hon. Minister of Agriculture's concern about the family farm, bigness is going on. I think we have to look to corporation farming as something that will take place unless we can find a suitable means to prevent it

79-60

ALBERTA HANSARD

November 21st 1972

Such things as this type of crop insurance are certainly not going to deter it in any way. If you are going to subsidize all the farmers up to 60 or 70 per cent of the cost of the program of insurance, how can you then not justify some percentage of automobile insurance, some percentage of accident insurance? We have gone a long way in health insurance by at least paying a good share of the costs of medical services and hospitalization. But how far are we going to go in this thinly disguised welfarism that is implied in such acts as this?

In the first place, if you take all-risk insurance are you not going to encourage farmers to plant too late in areas where the frost-free season is already short? How are you going to penalize them? Are you not going to encourage them to plant crops which are skeptical in certain areas, more than they would otherwise if there were no crop insurance on it. Are you going to encourage them in many areas to do poor farming, simply hoping that they will be bailed out by nature in the form of some risk or other.

One other point about this kind of thing is that it tends to help the rich progressively. The bigger you farm, the higher yield you are able to get by good management, if you wish, or good soil, and the more you can gain from this program if there does come a disaster of any kind. It's getting so that the farmer lives poorly -- as it has been put in another report -- but dies rich. The price of land goes up; the price of everything goes up, so that he who could hardly make a living on the farm is able to sell it to somebody -- usually some bigger farmer or some city fellow -- for such a sum that he can live much better off the interest of his investment. Are we going to help this along by this kind of a thing?

Now we all know that when the government agrees to pay all administration costs you can think up a thousand ways in which the administration is not satisfactory, in which it has to be increased. This is a pretty labour intensive business, this administration, and its going to be successively more costly. I just say that I find it hard to justify this kind of welfare program.

What are some of the results then of all crop insurance if we accept Recommendation No. 3? Well, in the first place, it is going to encourage bigness, because as you take the risk out of farming you invite those people who have considerable sums of money and considerable backing to get into it. The same result as you get from such things as marketing boards; you take the risk out; you average it out and who can afford better than those people who have corporations or who have large holdings to take advantage of it? You are going to encourage poor practices in many areas, unwise crop choices in certain other areas.

Now as far as weather modification goes, there are very many people who can be just as badly hurt by hail as farmers can. Whole roads have been washed out when contractors were under the necessity of replacing them. Are you going to cover these people? I could go on in that vein but I don't intend to do it. All I am going to say is that I am against the principle of the government paying 50 per cent; I'm against the principle of the government agreeing to pay the total cost of administration which it does not control. There is nothing in the recommendations that indicate any differential of rate, and so I suggest that some wise farmer might decide to go to Didsbury and pray for hail. The best way in the world to take advantage of these programs.

My point is simply this that I don't think agriculture is any longer a baby industry, one in danger of extinction, one which brings a poor quality of life to any considerable number of people. I think it is wrong to penalize all the people in other industries to the extent that we will be penalizing them if we go, as a country, for 50 per cent of the cost and as a province for the total administrative cost. I think that certainly we have a welfare program that already looks after anybody who suffers a disaster. From the Department of Agriculture he can get seed advances; he can borrow money that nobody else can borrow under various loan programs. We have guarantees at the bank so he can do farm improvements. Haven't we gone just about far enough?

Insurance, basically, is the idea that if you spread the risk it makes it a little easier for people to provide for themselves in case of disaster. In my area of the province there is a line right past my farm where the hail on one side was 10 per cent and on the other side 6 per cent. Yet I never knew of a hail storm to take any cognizance of that particular section line in going across. These are all problems of administration.

To come back to my point, I am not in favour my point. I am not in favour of an all-risk, all-risk insurance policy at the expense of the people to benefit a very small minority of farmers who might need it and who could

November 21, 1972

ALBERTA HANSARD

79-61

legitimately say that they could not provide it for themselves, especially when we have so many other ways of protecting them.

MR. MOORE:

Mr. Speaker, I want, first of all, like many of the other members, to thank the non-M.L.A. members of the committee who gave so much of their time during the summer months, and members of the legislature who were members of the committee, for the tremendous co-operation we all received on the committee, and, as a member opposite put it, "for the very non-political way", in which all of those on the committee attacked the problem of all-risk crop insurance and weather modification.

A couple of observations about the work of the committee as we travelled across Alberta. I think it's safe to say we all realized very quickly -- if we hadn't already known -- that the present all-risk crop insurance program was just simply not adequate, and that many farmers who had taken the program were rapidly dropping it and others were simply not interested in being involved at all. So that set the stage, Mr. Speaker, for a complete review of the crop insurance problem with the aim of making it into a program that could cover all of the eventualities that might happen to a farmer's crop between planting and harvest, in the hope that somehow we could provide a program that would be reasonably attractive to him so that he would buy it without having to have it forced on him. This would provide a return on the capital he had invested in his crop, in the event of such disasters as we had this year, like hail and particularly snow storms, preventing him from harvesting that crop.

Going through the report, Mr. Speaker, I think that other members have touched on items 1, 2 and 3, and I would frankly say that they are without question, the most integral and important parts of the report. I think in practically every meeting we held throughout the province, farmers suggested to us that the insured area should be on a quarter-section basis, and many of them suggested that it should include spot losses. Item No. 2, that the insurance premium for all-risk crop insurance be based on a farmer's own six to ten year average was expressed to us in almost all of the meetings too. It was pointed out that those farmers who practise very good management fertilizing and seeding at proper times, and who have been practising for years good tillage methods -- are discriminated against when they're lumped in with a group of farmers who are perhaps not using as good practices for various reasons. So it was felt by the committee, and I'm sure all of the farmers throughout the province, that a farmer's own individual average would be a much fairer way of determining his over-all crop insurance requirements.

Recommendation No. 3, was thrown out by the federal government, I believe, a year or two ago. Their representatives indicated to the committee that although they are not firmly committed to accept the proposal that they pay 50 per cent of the all-risk crop insurance premium and the province pay 100 per cent, they are certainly willing to consider any submissions that we in Alberta might make in that regard. Some of the members, Mr. Speaker, have suggested that the hon. Minister of Agriculture should concur and give the green light to this report and implement it as soon as possible. I think all of the members of the committee feel that way. I want however, to mention that the first three items, are the very basis, in my opinion, of the entire report which have to be discussed with the federal government. In recognizing that they are contributing a considerable amount to the cost of this program, you have to recognize that they, in fact, do have some input in determining what kind of a program it is going to be. Presently, in regard to many crops, some provinces have some hesitation and doubt about insuring on a quarter-section basis and insuring spot losses. I think they have some concern about the kind of average we have in respect to a farmer's own individual year.

What I want to leave with the members of the legislature is, Mr. Speaker, that in spite of the desire of the committee, in spite of the desire of the Legislative Assembly, in spite of the desire of the government and the Minister of Agriculture here in Alberta, it will require some very careful, and probably steady negotiation between now and the next crop year with federal government authorities, with the federal minister -- whoever he may be -- and his department in order to implement the entire contents of this report.

There are a couple of other things that I would like to mention very quickly, Mr. Speaker. From meetings at both Olds and Three Hills, where we discussed and heard views from various sources on weather modification, I, like many of the other members, was in a learning role in that we were observing and learning things about which we had little knowledge before. I want to say in passing, that I was very impressed with the tremendous amount of work that has been done, much of it gratis and at great sacrifice to individuals by members

79-62

ALBERTA HANSARD

November 21st 1972

of such organizations as the Alberta Weather Modification Co-op over the past 12 to 14 years. Certainly those people deserve a great deal of credit for having pioneered the venture of weather modification in Alberta.

I'd like to make one or two comments, Mr. Speaker, in regard to some of the remarks that have been made by the hon. Member for Cardston. I was a little surprised Mr. Speaker, that the hon. member, to me, sounded just a little bit like some Ontario industrialist. I'm surprised that a member who represents a largely agriculture-oriented rural constituency would suggest that agriculture and the farmers of this province are being subsidized too much. I'm surprised, Mr. Speaker, to hear those statements from a man who should recognize that the farm machinery industry in this country has been subsidized to a very large extent by assistance of tariffs and so on and have been developed in Ottawa. I'm surprised to hear that when you recognize that the freight structure in this country which the hon. member, Mr. Peacock, has spoken about many times, is definitely geared and subsidized to the advantage of provinces farther to the east and to provinces which are on water.

Mr. Speaker, I don't believe that anyone here can in all honesty stand and say in this assembly we in Alberta have, in past years, subsidized the farmers of this province too much. When you consider that the total budget for the Department of Agriculture for many years in this province was less than two per cent of the total annual budget, I just don't see how you can say those things.

The final point I'd like to make, Mr. Speaker, is in relation to a subject that the committee suggested we would like more time to deal with. That is the subject of wildlife damage, particularly during the very recent crop year and the delays we had in harvesting during 1972. Many members in this House, I am sure, have received complaints from farmers across the province who have had their crops badly damaged by migratory bird game, particularly ducks and geese. They put in claims to the Wildlife Damage Fund and received what I would consider a very small part of the actual cost it was to that individual farmer. As many of you know, that fund ran short of money in years past and a percentage was paid; when the actual amount per acre that was paid was only \$15, only a percentage of that was paid. So that is an area, Mr. Speaker, where I hope the committee will be able during the winter session of the legislature, to make some positive recommendations with regard to wildlife damage.

It is my view that a damage that is suffered by farmers in Alberta that should rightfully be paid for from three or four different sources. Certainly the hunters and the sportsmen in the Province of Alberta have made a fairly significant contribution to that fund through their purchase of hunting licences. I think the federal government, without question, which has legislation that controls migratory birds should have a fairly large degree of responsibility in this area, certainly much larger than they presently admit to have.

I also think, Mr. Speaker, that in a province like Alberta, where we have the breeding grounds for many of the waterfowl in North America, that hunters throughout the rest of Canada should be contributing somewhat to our crop losses here in Alberta.

Certainly last but not least, we should be making a determined effort here in Alberta to get organizations such as Ducks Unlimited, which operate in the United States of America, and sportsmen in the United States who are keenly interested in the harvesting of ducks and geese, to make a substantial contribution to the payment of crop damage in Alberta where we have the breeding grounds for almost all of the migratory bird game population that passes through much of the United States.

I hope by just making those few remarks, Mr. Speaker, about the Wildlife Damage Program Fund, to give some food for thought for the interim before the committee has considered this very important area, and for all of those who might be concerned. With those comments, Mr. Speaker, I want to close by saying that I, too, would hope that the hon. Minister of Agriculture would act with all haste in opening negotiations with Ottawa and the Alberta Crop Insurance Corporation relative to the establishment of all of the recommendations in this report.

MR. HANSEN:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to add a little bit, as I have been on the committee. I would like to thank the rest of the committee for being so easy to work with and for the way in which the committee got along together.

November 21, 1972

ALBERTA HANSARD

79-63

Most of the points have already been covered. The first three have already been well-covered. There was one point on elevator agents on which I would like to make a comment. There are already a certain number of elevator agents -- I think there are one or two -- selling insurance. It is not new, but it was put in the report so that it could be enlarged upon and made use of.

One thing I would like to stress is the supervision of adjusters, both for hail and crop insurance. I think this is one of the things in the program in the past that hasn't been done to the best advantage of the farmer and also the corporation. Because, if you get adjusters in the same area who don't adjust on the same scale, there are always hard feelings. I would highly recommend supervision of adjusters in the field, more than they have had in the past, and especially more than they have this year.

Another thing brought in and recommended in this committee was to set fire insurance -- which goes along with hail insurance -- to the end of October instead of the end of September, because if you have a fire it is always late in the fall. That is the most dangerous time as far as crops are concerned. Another thing I whole-heartedly agree with is the lien where you only pay half, which was already mentioned by the hon. member, Mr. Trynchy. Another thing in this recommendation is an appeal board. I think a farmer should have the right to go back and appeal to an outside party, and not have to go to the same people you are dealing with.

It is also recommended in this report that a yearly conference be instituted between the federal, the provincial, and the senior staff, which I think will tie them all closer together and result in a much better organization. Another thing I would like to mention is the set-up of the board itself. The recommendations are in the report for a seven-man board instead of a five-man board; that four will be farmers and none of them will be associated with the administration of people, they will be non-employees.

I was quite surprised to hear the hon. member across the way saying a few minutes ago that it was a welfare system, because I think the member before me made it quite plain that we don't feel that the farmers are subsidized to this extent. After all, if you do away with all the family farms in Alberta, it is going to be awfully hard for industries in the small towns to survive.

Another thing I'd just like to touch on -- the time is passing -- is wildlife. I think that is one thing that will have to be really looked into, to come up with a feasible plan to pay the farmers for the damage they are receiving. As The Wildlife Act stands now, you can have a 40 bushel to the acre crop, and the ducks can come in and destroy it all, and the farmer will get \$15 in the end, and that will be it. Worse than that, if the money that is in the fund runs out, his \$15 could drop to \$12 or \$10 or whatever amount is spread evenly among the farmers that have claims. If wildlife such as ducks and other animals that bother crops are going to be protected to the extent they are today, I feel that if it isn't the government that looks after the problem, it will have to be someone such as the Fish and Game Association, or someone else. Because over the years I have been in fields that have been completely wiped out by ducks. A lot of people can't realize that when ducks move into a 30-acre field, it only takes a couple of days to clean it right out, if there are enough of them.

Time is passing, so I won't take any more time. I would just like to thank the rest of the committee I worked with and hope that the minister takes these points to heart and does something about them.

MR. TAYLOR:

Mr. Speaker, I don't want to take very long, but I want to say a word or two in connection with the report. I'd like to commend the committee on this report. I think the committee did an excellent job of pin-pointing the items that were worrying the farmers, and then finding solutions for those items. I think that is the proper function of a legislative committee. So, I'd like to commend the committee on the work it did in bringing a positive solution to problems that are of concern.

Secondly, I have no difficulty at all in supporting the report. I think it is an excellent report, and I hope that the government will be able to accept it and see its way clear to putting it into effect.

The farmer is in a different category from almost any other group. The farmer has no say about the things he buys -- the prices are set -- and the farmer has little say in connection with the price of things he sells -- the prices are set for him. Yet, the foodstuffs that he produces, whether it is

79-64

ALBERTA HANSARD

November 21st 1972

beef or pork or vegetables or what have you, have a direct bearing on the standard of living of everybody else in the country. Consequently, if the people of the country and the province are going to get the best and the lowest possible price for foodstuffs -- and I think this is an objective -- with the producer receiving a fair return for his work and his labour, then there is going to have to be some consideration given to controlling those things over which he has no control.

When we talk about the weather, the farmer has to gamble with the weather. He has no say whether it is going to be an early spring or late spring, an early fall or a late fall. He has no say whether he is in the hail belt or when he might be stricken with hail or early frost or Bertha Army Worms or grasshoppers, etc. These are items over which he has little or no control. This again, is different from many other places. So I think there is the objective of trying to enable the farmer to produce foodstuffs at the lowest possible cost, and providing insurance, with some of the cost being borne by the public treasury of Canada and the province, I think is absolutely sound and absolutely right.

I believe that everybody in the country profits when the farmer is able to save his crop, and is able to produce at a lower price than he otherwise would. It means that the people in the city are going to get their food, their beef, their pork, their vegetables, everything they eat at a better price than they otherwise would. I can see nothing wrong whatever, in the recommendation that the Canadian government should provide part of the funds to pay for risk crop insurance, or that the provincial government with money belonging to all of the people should pay part of that cost too. I think this is absolutely sound and in the interest of the people whether they are on the farm, or in the town or in the city. I can't follow the arguments of those who think that the people in the city are not going to get a benefit from having a proper system of crop insurance. They will get a benefit through lower food costs.

Just let the family farm disappear, Mr. Speaker, and then the people in the city will realize that the price they pay for foodstuffs will be all the market will bear. Our surest guarantee of getting the best possible price for foodstuffs is to keep the family farm, keep as much competition as exists in the family farm and one of the best ways of making sure that price stays low is for the government to help to pay for the costs over which the farmer has no control, and doing this by paying for crop insurance.

I might also say that I am a believer in weather modification. I was sceptical for a while when I used to sit on the Research Council and I was sceptical when I heard very elaborate plans enunciated by some people. But I was converted a number of years ago when I was in the Carbon area one day in July. It was a hot summer day and I suddenly saw a storm coming up. That storm produced a hail storm in no minutes flat and before I knew it the top of my car was being pounded with huge hail stones. But as I went eastward the hail stones almost suddenly turned into sleet, flaky snow. I found out later that the plane had been into the cloud and was seeding it with silver iodide, so instead of falling as huge stones that even dented a car -- let alone destroyed crops and killed chickens and even small livestock -- here it was falling as a soft, velvety snow. I say I became converted to weather modification; it was just a case of learning how and when to seed the clouds and to get control of this type of thing.

I don't follow the argument either, that by controlling the weather in one area you send the storm someplace else. I just don't follow that at all. It's not logical. What they are doing is changing the type of storm from a hail storm to a soft snow storm and that is what weather modification is all about. So again, whether a farmer is in a hail storm area or hail zone area, he can do nothing whatever about that. It is something completely beyond his control and every crop that is saved adds to the gross national product of this country and adds to the amount of food in this country.

So, Mr. Speaker, I support this report, I commend the committee for it, and I too, hope the government will be able to implement the report at the earliest possible time.

MR. RUSTE:

Mr. Speaker, I don't intend to take too long but I too would like to commend the members of the committee for the report. Certainly I feel in listening to the member's report to this assembly on the holding of the meetings and so on, that this represents the wishes of those involved, the farmers of Alberta.

November 21, 1972

ALBERTA HANSARD

79-65

I certainly don't feel that this is a matter of subsidies. I think that if you are going to relate this to subsidies there are maybe some of those in the front who are in the professional field, and it would take hundreds of years for a farmer to get the amount of subsidies that some of them have gotten in their educational field.

This report suggests several changes. There are no less than 23 particular ones listed. I think it is in the ball park now with the Minister of Agriculture, and I would hope that he takes this under his wing at this time and acts on it as quickly as possible. Certainly the farmers will judge this report by the implementation of those parts that are carried out. I would further urge that the minister get as much of this announced before January 31 because that is the deadline date for farmers who wish to opt out to have the opportunity to do that under the present set up.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, I would like to commend the members for the report and ask that the government consider it and take action as quickly as possible.

MR. SPEAKER:

May the hon. Deputy Premier close the debate?

HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

DR. HOFNER:

Mr. Speaker, very briefly I would like to thank everybody who has taken part in the debate on the report. In a general way we concur that we need a new crop insurance scheme in Alberta because if you are talking about disasters, one of the real disasters that we have lived through is the old crop insurance scheme that we had here before.

Another disaster that the Social Credit Party is going to have to live through is the hon. Member for Cardston when he starts talking like that and shows that lack of understanding of primary agricultural policies within Alberta and within Canada. I am truly dumbfounded almost that I would hear that in a legislature in Alberta. I am sure that if he would listen to the hon. Member for Drumheller and some others on his own side -- but I could spend a couple of hours outlining very succinctly why the general purse should be paying for a substantial portion of insurance premiums for farmers in relation to crops.

Anybody who cares to do a little bit of reading with regard to the kind of subsidies that there are around the world with our competitors, in relation to transportation, in relation to direct subsidies; into markets in which we are competing without those subsidies surely can't get up and say what the hon. Member for Cardston said in relation to crop insurance. I think he got carried away with the anti-welfare kick, and should come back down to ground and start talking agricultural policy. In my view, crop insurance isn't welfare but is something that we require and we require it very badly.

We require a system which will be universally acceptable, which will give some production and income guarantees in relation to what they have to put into it. People can say you are talking about guaranteed income. Not at all because there is a great deal of money that has to go into the planning of a crop prior to ever receiving any income. What we are really saying in a crop insurance scheme is that we are assuring the farmer that he at least will get back some of the inputs that he put in there -- not that we are going to give him a guaranteed net income program. So I would hope that all would vote for the motion concurring in the report. I can assure the House that we will move as quickly as federal negotiations will allow us, to come up with a new and better crop insurance scheme for Alberta.

[The motion was carried.]

79-66

ALBERTA HANSARD

November 21st 1972

Privileges and Elections Committee Report

4. Mr. Hyndman proposed to the assembly, seconded by Mr. Chambers:

Be it resolved that the report of the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections be received and concurred in.

MR. HYNDMAN:

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to move, seconded by the hon. Member for Edmonton Calder, Mr. Chambers, that the report of the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections be received and concurred in. I believe the report represents an excellent piece of work in this area. I think the recommendations made are thoughtful and well considered, as all good reforms should be, and that they go a good distance toward up-dating and modernizing the procedures in the assembly.

Mr. Speaker, I would like at the outset to thank the chairman of the committee Mr. Appleby, the hon. Member for Athabasca, for his very efficient convening of the five meetings held by the committee and piloting those meetings through sometimes stormy waters. I think he did provide informed leadership and was responsible to a very large extent for the very useful report we have before us.

Also, Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the committee, thanks should go to you, Your Honour, for participating in a rather unique event in committees, participating in the work which we did and giving us the benefit of your advice from an objective and new vantage point.

Also I think the fact that the Clerk of the Assembly, Clerk Assistant and Legislative Counsel, Mr. Acorn, were on the committee was a useful exercise. They gave us the benefit of their special expertise and perspective regarding the problems which were dealt with.

Mr. Speaker, there are three motions on the Order Paper which deal with the recommendations made in the committee report, being Motions No. 4, 5 and 6. Motion No. 4 calls for the report to be received and concurred in. Motion No. 5 on page 2 of today's Order Paper relates to changes proposed for the second session of the 17th Legislature and changes which are temporary for that session only. There are three changes proposed there; one dealing with procedure respecting estimates, another with money bills, and another with the way in which bills would be dealt with in Committee of the Whole Assembly.

Resolution No. 6 is different from the previous ones in the sense that it proposes permanent changes to the rules and in that case relating to three rules: No. 23, adjournment of the House on matters of urgent importance; and Rule 36 relating to notice, and a new rule after Rule 56 relating to, and in effect just cleaning up the method by which public bills are introduced by private members.

I suggest, Mr. Speaker, we probably won't get through this debate by 5:30 o'clock but we should begin to develop and hear the reactions of members on the various recommendations. I mentioned the ones which are contained in the Resolutions No. 5 and 6, but there are a number of others to which the committee addressed itself. Those in particular related to the responsibility of the Speaker with regard to Hansard and a report on Hansard is incorporated as part of the report. The report as it deals with the library indicates that the Speaker has plans for improving the library from the point of view of extra research manpower and telex connections with other libraries.

There was a recommendation that the procedure for introduction of visitors not be changed and, as the report notes, after three motions were proposed, all of which were defeated, that may give rise to some debate on the motion.

The amendment to the original motion which set up the committee regarding possible transportation arrangements was dealt with by the committee which felt there was a high cost involved if there was to be monies voted by the legislature for air passes. I believe that was particularly with regard to air travel in Alberta on Pacific Western Airlines, CP Air and Time Airlines. That may rise to discussion as well.

The committee was charged with the responsibility of assessing the adequacy of the rules from the point of view of fall sittings. I think the only matter there which might usefully be commented upon are the tentative Friday hours which were -- members will recall -- introduced solely for this fall session from 1:00 o'clock to 4:30 o'clock and whether or not they are or have been adequate should be a subject for comment by members.

November 21, 1972

ALBERTA HANSARD

79-67

I believe, Mr. Speaker, that we should be moving into this motion now. I would look forward to the comments of all hon. members. I believe they should remember that the committee comprised of something over 20 members gave very serious consideration to all the matters raised and which appear in the report. I would be happy to attempt to answer questions as best as I could in concluding the debate.

MR. HENDERSON:

Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, I would appreciate clarification by the hon. Government House Leader, relevant to this resolution and its wording in the implications for the debate on Resolutions Nos. 5 and 6. I want to be certain that in ruling on Resolution No. 4 it does not preclude discussion in amendments to Resolutions 5 and 6, because as I read the report and read Resolution No. 4 technically, having the words 'and concurred in,' could be interpreted as binding the House to everything that's in the report. I would assume that it isn't the government's intention to do so. If it does, we're going to have a real interesting time over here for quite a while yet probably, and I can't help but wonder, Mr. Speaker, if it is not the government's intention to see some interpretation placed on Resolution No. 4, whether it would not be in order to strike out the words, 'and concurred in' at the end of the motion. I would say, in advance, as an indication to the Government House Leader, that it's our general opinion that the recommendations in Resolutions Nos. 5 and 6 would be supported in principle, I think, by the substantial majority of members on this side of the House. So it isn't with the view of trying to avoid a debate on Resolutions Nos. 5 and 6, but rather to be sure that we don't circumscribe an effective debate, and particularly an opportunity to move amendments on Resolutions Nos. 5 and 6.

MR. HYNDMAN:

On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I think that is a fair point, because the problem was initially raised by legislative council who pointed out that with regard to Resolution No. 4, it was not possible to make amendments to that Resolution and that is the reason why he recommended it and we have put on 5 and 6. I would say for the government that we would view any part of the report as capable of being discussed under 5 and 6, and any amendments being made with regard to the report under 5 and 6, either the matters set forth in 5 and 6 or any other new amendments proposed.

I think the purpose of beginning the debate with Motion No. 4 was to enable the House's consideration of that motion to cover some recommendations that the committee had not made in 5 and 6. For example, there is a recommendation that, if possible, members give two hours notice to the Speaker alone with regard to raising a question of privilege and adjourning the House for a matter of urgent debate. That would not be covered and the assembly, in effect, would not have given any point of view on that if we simply dealt with 5 and 6. But I can certainly assure all members that, as far as we're concerned, the specific matters referred to in 5 and 6 override the general Motion No. 4 and that every latitude and debate on all three should be allowed in my view.

MR. HENDERSON:

I accept the interpretation of the hon. House Leader, but I wanted just to be explicit about it because then there is no going over it for confusion. It is my intention to address myself specifically to the motion itself, of which I have no particular comments to make at this time. But I would like to move the amendment that the words 'and concurred in' be struck out at the end of Resolution No. 4 and then there is no confusion in the matter relative to the debate and procedure on Resolutions 5 and 6.

MR. SPEAKER:

If a suggestion from the Chair might be in order, perhaps it isn't, having regard to the observation made by the hon. Government House Leader, would it suffice if we were to have an amendment to Resolution No. 4 to the effect that without, however, limiting debate or amendment with respect to resolutions so and so.

MR. CLARK:

In seconding the amendment made by Mr. Henderson, I just have one observation on the comment that you made. I appreciate the point that you are making; however, I do think that you would be in a stronger position if we simply remove the 'and concurred in' from the motion, and then this doesn't tie

79-68

ALBERTA HANSARD

November 21st 1972

any member of the assembly to any specific recommendations that are in the committee's report.

MR. TAYLOR:

Mr. Speaker, speaking on the point of order. I think there is much merit in the motion to strike out 'and concurred in'. I notice here there are a number of items on which the committee itself didn't give a definite recommendation, and there are some items where it did -- with which I don't happen to agree. Now if we're going to concur in this report, it means that generally speaking you accept everything that is in this report. I don't think the government should be in that position, and I don't think we should be in that position. We can deal with specific items as we will be doing in the other two items, and surely at this time all we want to do is receive this report and have the opportunity to debate anything that happens to be in it that is not included in the other amendment. So I think there is much merit in having this section struck out.

MR. SPEAKER:

Is there any debate on the amendment? I haven't copies for the two sides of the House, but the amendment, I am sure all hon. members agree, would have the effect of striking out the last three words of Resolution No. 4 and ending it with the word 'received'.

MR. APPELBY:

Mr. Speaker, possibly it would be in order, but we would also have to have another motion accepting the recommendations that are not part of the changes in the House rules and proceedings, or the suggested sessional changes for next year.

MR. BENOIT:

Mr. Speaker, I have only one question to raise and it might be dealt with while we are dealing with this. We have four motions here, the first one -- I'm referring to the Order Paper, Mr. Speaker -- the first one asks to be 'received and concurred', and the next two are just 'received', and then this one comes again 'received and concurred'. I honestly can't follow the distinction between concurring in some and not in others. I would like clarification on that if I might.

MR. HYNDMAN:

Mr. Speaker, speaking to the amendment, I wonder, insofar as there is some concern as to the effect of all three of these motions and the net result of either 'concurring in' or 'receiving' them, whether or not we could leave the amendment as it is now and then all of us could consider it over the supper hour and come back at 8:00 o'clock and continue at that time. So I would accordingly beg leave to adjourn debate on the amendment.

[The motion was carried.]

MR. HYNDMAN:

I move we call it 5:30, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Having heard the motion by the hon. Government House Leader, do you all agree?

HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER:

The House stands adjourned until 8:00 o'clock this evening.

[The House rose at 5:24 p.m.]