

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ALBERTA

Tuesday, February 20, 1973

[The House met at 2:30 o'clock.]

PRAYERS

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair.]

MINISTERIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

Point of Privilege

MR. LOUGHEED:

Mr. Speaker, yesterday during debate on the Speech from the Throne certain events were started in motion by the statements made in the Legislature by the hon. Member for Drumheller, Mr. Gordon Taylor, which were then taken up by the Leader of the Opposition, Mr. James Henderson, involving disturbing allegations against the government respecting Frank Joseph Edward Davy of the City of Edmonton. Since the House rose last evening -- and because I have had no personal contact with Mr. Davy since assuming office -- I have undertaken as quickly as possible a review of the circumstances. The allegations made by the hon. Member for Drumheller are in our view completely unfounded. However, we feel that the matter should be fully examined.

We have therefore today ordered a Judicial Inquiry into these allegations and this morning the Lieutenant Governor in Council has, pursuant to The Public Inquiries Act, appointed Mr. Justice J.V.H. Milvain, Chief Justice of the Trial Division of the Supreme Court of Alberta, to make an inquiry pursuant to Section 2 of The Public Inquiries Act -- to ascertain the validity or otherwise of the allegations made by the hon. Member for Drumheller as set forth in the Hansard record on February 19, 1973 with respect to Frank Joseph Edward Davy and in particular to inquire:

(1) Whether Frank Joseph Edward Davy was admitted or detained in the Alberta Hospital, Edmonton or elsewhere in Alberta during or about the months of December, 1972 and January, 1973 and if so, the reasons therefore and the circumstances thereof.

(2) Whether any such admission or detention was in accordance with the laws of Canada and Alberta.

(3) Whether there was any misconduct or any improper act on the part of:

(a) any member of the Executive Council of the Province of Alberta; or

(b) any employee, agent or other person acting on behalf of the Government of Alberta; or

(c) the Workmen's Compensation Board of the Province of Alberta or any of its officers or employees or any other person acting on its behalf.

In connection with such admission or detention --

(4) Such other matters as may be deemed relevant by the Commissioner in order to assure a full and fair inquiry and to enable him to make a report and such recommendations as he deems fit.

I have instructed all members of the Executive Council to appear as witnesses if requested by the Chief Justice for the purposes of the inquiry and

would presume, if requested, that all other members of the Legislature would do likewise.

Chief Justice Milvain has agreed to conduct the Judicial Inquiry in the City of Edmonton, commencing Tuesday, March 20, 1973.

The government will, at the request of the Chief Justice, make the necessary arrangements to pay for legal counsel for such persons as the Chief Justice may direct.

MR. HENDERSON:

Mr. Speaker, I want to say that we are pleased to see that the government has seen fit to take direct action on this particular matter, to clear it up once and for all, one way or the other.

MR. SPEAKER:

If there are no other observations on the point of privilege it would appear that if the matter raised by the hon. Premier is a point of privilege, it is not one that requires any action by the Chair.

MR. DIXON:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to get clarification on a point from your office. If we have similar cases to be brought up before the Legislature during this session, will we be barred, as members, from discussing that situation if it overlaps into the field that was discussed yesterday?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. member has raised a point which is maybe of some concern, but I think, as has been observed on one or two occasions in the past, that it is not proper for the Chair to make a ruling on a hypothetical situation and we would have to wait to see what the situation might be and deal with it at that time.

MR. ASHTON:

Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce a bill, being an Act to Amend The Companies Act. The bill relates to the topic of foreign investment and would require that the majority of directors in Alberta companies be Canadian citizens residing in Alberta -- or Canada, I am sorry.

[Leave being granted, Bill No. 200 was introduced and read a first time.]

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

MR. BATIUK:

Mr. Speaker, it gives me pleasure to introduce to you and through you to the members of the Legislative Assembly, 57 Grade 9 students from Two Hills, along with their teachers, Mr. Horbasenko and Mr. Kozmak, and their bus driver, Mr. Kotyshyn. It is notable that these students come from a school where the hon. Minister of Manpower and Labour was principal just a few years ago, and also where the Deputy Speaker had his education. I would ask that the students, along with their teachers and bus driver, rise and be recognized by the House.

DR. HOHOL:

Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to introduce to you sir, and to this Assembly, 90 Grade 5 students from my constituency of Edmonton Belmont. They are from the Glengarry Elementary School, and are accompanied by their classroom teacher, Mrs. Evans. I would ask them to stand in the members gallery and be recognized by this Assembly.

CRAI QUESTION PERIOD

Taxation

MR. HENDERSON:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct a question to the Provincial Treasurer. I wonder if he could advise the House as to whether the provincial government

will be matching the federal government's announced reduction in personal income tax?

MR. MINIELY:

Mr. Speaker, I would advise the hon. Leader of the Opposition to listen carefully on March 2. He doesn't have too long to wait.

MR. HENDERSON:

Mr. Speaker, I'm sorry. He had a lot to say last night. I thought he might have a lot to say today, on the subject.

Equalization Grants

I think possibly the next question might be one that either the Provincial Treasurer or the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs could answer with propriety without involving concerns over the Treasurer's budget.

Could one of the two ministers advise the House as to what consultation, if any, took place between the federal government and the provincial government regarding the federal government's announced intention to increase equalization grants to certain provinces?

MR. GETTY:

Mr. Speaker, inasmuch as the hon. member referred to me, as well as the Provincial Treasurer, I might point out that the matter of equalization grants has been discussed at virtually every federal-provincial finance ministers' meeting. It has been discussed at first ministers' meetings with the Prime Minister. The government was not, to my knowledge, given prior advice as to the final decision of the Minister of Finance before the announcement of his budget.

MR. R. SPEAKER:

Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the minister responsible for consumer affairs. In line with the budget, what steps will the provincial government take to ensure that the Alberta consumer will receive the 12 per cent federal tax benefit in purchasing soft drinks, chocolate bars, children's clothing and footwear?

DR. HOHOL:

Mr. Speaker, this, too, will have to wait until the provincial budget is presented, and possibly longer than that. We will have to wait and see just how Mr. Turner's budget takes effect in the market-place where people buy and sell.

MR. R. SPEAKER:

Mr. Speaker, supplementary. Is the minister saying that they are planning steps in this area?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Edmonton Kingsway, followed by the hon. Member for Lloydminster.

School Buses

DR. PAPROSKI:

Mr. Speaker, a question to the hon. Minister of Highways. In view of the fact that there has been concern expressed by citizens that school bus drivers are not being adequately examined -- for example, trucks are used for examination, rather than school buses -- could the minister assure us that these examinations will be properly conducted in the future, and inform us if there are any problems in this area?

MR. COPITHORNE:

Mr. Speaker, there have been no problems in this area to my knowledge. Some 4,000 school bus operators drive some odd 192,000 miles per day and they have an excellent record. I might add that usually when a school bus driver is being tested, the school bus is brought in and that vehicle is usually used. If it isn't, it is a vehicle of a similar design and in a similar condition. However, we will look into this and see if there is some area for investigation.

DR. BUCK:

A supplementary to the hon. minister. Is there any problem with drivers being too old, or is this left entirely up to the doctor who examines the driver? I have had some complaints saying that a man is possibly too old. Has this been looked at?

MR. COPITHORNE:

Mr. Speaker, the drivers are all special class drivers and they are given a medical examination, so consequently they are in very good health.

MR. HO LEM:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Regarding the bus drivers and their students, what is the maximum length of time that a student is compelled to ride in a bus? Is there any set time? The question that comes to mind is that some of the younger teen-age people are required to get on the bus at 7:00 o'clock and are not returned 'till after 5:00 or 5:30. That's quite a lengthy time.

MR. COPITHORNE:

Mr. Speaker, there is no set time. I think the Department of Education would be the first to agree that, unavoidably, some of the students do spend long hours on the bus route, and this is minimized to the greatest extent throughout the province.

MR. SORENSON:

A supplementary to the hon. minister. Has your department given any thought to providing seat belts in school buses?

MR. COPITHORNE:

Mr. Speaker, we are examining many safety features for the students, including the height of the backs of the seats. We are doing research into this at the present time through the Canada Safety Council.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Ilcydminster, followed by the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview.

Automobile Insurance Board Report

MR. J. MILLER:

Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the hon. Attorney General. Has the Automobile Insurance Board reported to you yet?

MR. LEITCH:

Not yet, Mr. Speaker. I anticipate the report in the immediate future.

MR. J. MILLER:

A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. When the Attorney General gets that report, will he file it with the Legislature?

MR. LEITCH:

Yes, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Industrial Dispute - Red Deer

MR. NOTLEY:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct this question to the hon. Minister of Manpower and Labour. It concerns the industrial dispute in Red Deer between Local 250 of the Brewery Workers, and Ginter's Brewery. In view of the fact that the Industrial Relations Board handed down an award on November 15 ordering

Ginter to take the men back to work, and to date he has not done so, these people have been deprived of employment now for some --

MR. SPEAKER:

Would the hon. member please come directly to the question and ask for information rather than give it.

MR. NOTLEY:

My question, Mr. Speaker, is what steps has the government taken to enforce the award of the Industrial Relations Board?

DR. HOHOL:

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to give information to this Assembly on an important matter. The circumstances are these, that when the Tartan Brewery was completed in the construction phase and ready for production, the owner of the plant closed it, in the sense that he did not proceed to phase 2 to produce the product. In closing the plant he found it necessary to terminate the employment of the construction staff. The circumstance then developed where we have neither a walk-out nor a strike, but a close-down of the operation of the plant.

A second part to this unhappy circumstance at Red Deer, is the matter of the application for certification by a union, being Union Local 250 which was certified by our Board of Industrial Relations. The owner of Tartan Breweries refused to recognize the award of the applicant, because this union happens to also represent Labatt's Brewery in Edmonton. He felt that a local representing a competitor would not be in his best interests. However, the board found the application completely in order and approved it.

The situation at the present time is that there is a conciliation report which will be issued toward the end of this week. In the meantime, the Board of Industrial Relations is asking to hold a re-hearing on a technicality related to the initial conciliation award. These are the circumstances, and the follow-up is a conciliation report which will be issued this week.

MR. NOTLEY:

Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question. In view of the fact that the Unemployment Insurance Commission will not provide benefits to the employees on the ground that this is an industrial dispute, have you had an opportunity to meet with the officials of the Unemployment Insurance Commission to see if perhaps there is some way that the employees can come under the provisions of the Unemployment Insurance Act?

DR. HOHOL:

No, I haven't personally. The issue which the member refers to is a national issue and one of federal policy, Mr. Speaker.

MR. NOTLEY:

I have another supplementary question, Mr. Speaker, either to the hon. Minister of Manpower and Labour or perhaps to the hon. Minister of Industry and Commerce. Is it true that Tartan Breweries have either been given a grant and loan or have been led to understand that they can expect a grant or loan from the provincial government to construct a brewery in Red Deer?

MR. PEACOCK:

Mr. Speaker, under the previous government, Tartan Breweries in Red Deer was awarded a \$500,000 grant.

MR. NOTLEY:

One final supplementary question, Mr. Speaker, to the hon. Attorney General. Can the Attorney General advise the House why the Alberta Liquor Control Board permits Ginter's Brewery to sell imported beer at domestic rates in Alberta, when their Red Deer operation is not under way?

MR. LEITCH:

Yes, Mr. Speaker, I would be happy to deal with that. It goes back to a period shortly after we came into office. We were approached by Tartan Breweries, who were then in the process of building this plant. At that time

they requested permission to sell within Alberta their product which was then being manufactured outside Alberta. This request was contrary to the policy that had existed up to that time. After reviewing it with them, Mr. Speaker, I was of the view that people who were coming into the province to build plants in efforts to provide jobs, should be given the opportunity to introduce their product to the market, so that when the plant came on-stream they would have had the opportunity to build up a demand for their product. They could then keep the plant operating at its capacity, and keep the people who would be working in that plant employed from the time they got started. The alternative was to have them complete the plant, put it on-stream, and then try to build up the market.

For that reason, Mr. Speaker, some months after we came into office the brewery was given permission to bring its product in from other places in Canada, solely for the purpose of introducing it to the Alberta market until they were able to get their plant into operation. I must say that at that time we had anticipated, as a result of discussions with them, that the plant would be in operation long before now. Perhaps many of the members of this Assembly are aware of the various construction problems and things of that nature they have encountered in getting the plant on-stream.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Calgary Mountain View, followed by the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview. May this be the last supplementary on this point. We have covered it at very great length.

MR. LUDWIG:

A supplementary to the hon. Minister of Industry and Tourism. He stated that the Tartan Breweries was awarded \$500,000. Does he know whether this was a loan or a grant?

MR. PEACOCK:

Mr. Speaker, it was a grant.

MR. NOTLEY:

Mr. Speaker, the final supplementary question to the hon. Attorney General. Did the government give any consideration to freezing this right during the last three months that there has in fact been a labour dispute?

MR. LEITCH:

No, Mr. Speaker, that is not something that we have been asked to do. I have already outlined the reasons why this request was originally granted and it may be that there are now circumstances existing which would warrant a review of that decision.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

MR. TAYLOR:

Did I hear your ruling right that there are no more supplementaries on Tartan?

MR. SPEAKER:

We have a considerable list and yesterday, as a result of not having adhered too strictly to the rules, quite a few members did not have a chance to ask their questions. I think we should cut down. I believe we actually exceeded a reasonable number of supplementaries on the last topic.

Taxation (Cont.)

MR. TAYLOR:

Mr. Speaker, in that case I would like to direct a question to the hon. Provincial Treasurer. Will the government assure the people of Alberta that the benefits announced last night (by the hon. minister John Turner) in taxation will not be negated by increases in provincial taxation?

MR. MINIELY:

Mr. Speaker, I assume all the opposition members are going to try to make an effort to attend the budget address on March 2 and at that time it will be clarified for them.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

MR. WYSE:

Yes, Mr. Speaker, --

MR. SPEAKER:

Excuse me, would the hon. member yield? There is a supplementary from the hon. Member for Edmonton Kingsway.

DR. PAPROSKI:

Thank you. Will the hon. Provincial Treasurer admit that the budget is largely the result of the federal Progressive Conservatives' efforts?

[Laughter]

MR. SPEAKER:

Order please.

MR. TAYLOR:

A supplementary to the hon. Provincial Treasurer. Do I take from his answer that there will be a possible increase in provincial income tax?

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Civil Service Wage Negotiations

MR. WYSE:

I would like to direct my question to the hon. Minister of Manpower and Labour. What is the present status of the Government of Alberta and the civil servants regarding wage negotiations at the present time?

DR. HOHOL:

Mr. Speaker, I am happy to report that the negotiations are proceeding. I am sure the hon. member will appreciate and respect the nature of collective bargaining. It is most effective, and best done across the table with the door closed rather than in the media. In other words, I can't discuss detail except to report progress of a continuous round of meetings, and that we are moving forward to a conclusion in the bargaining in the general divisions; and then, of course, there will be special agencies in the other branches. That is the report of progress.

MR. WYSE:

A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Is the government contemplating giving them full bargaining rights, as promised during the last election?

DR. HOHOL:

Mr. Speaker, there have been clear statements on this matter by the hon. the Premier, myself and other members of the government. The bargaining rights to which the gentleman refers were very specific, and were to do with arbitration. As you recall, sir, The Labour Act was amended last spring to include the matter of arbitration binding on both parties, if an agreement isn't usually arrived at.

MR. WYSE:

One supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Did you in fact make a wage offer of 2.4 per cent?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. member's question is out of order in view of the previous answer given by the minister.

The hon. member for

MR. RUSTE:

A supplementary to the hon. minister. In the negotiations, are you looking at a substantial increase in line with the ones that we voted ourselves in this Legislature?

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Student Copies - Alberta Bill of Rights

MR. LUDWIG:

Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the hon. the Premier. Was it the intention of the government to provide all of the high schools in the province with a copy of The Alberta Bill of Rights?

MR. LOUGHEED:

Yes, Mr. Speaker.

MR. LUDWIG:

Has this been done, Mr. Speaker?

MR. LOUGHEED:

No, Mr. Speaker. I believe it is in the process of being arranged.

MR. LUDWIG:

Mr. Speaker, a supplementary to the hon. Premier. In light of what transpired yesterday in the House, would he also consider making a distribution of yesterday's Hansard, together with The Bill of Rights, to all high schools?

MR. LOUGHEED:

No, Mr. Speaker, but what I do recall is the comment made -- or I think it was a suggestion made by the hon. Member for Calgary Millican -- that when we did this that we attach to it The Canadian Bill of Rights, so that both the Canadian Bill of Rights, and The Alberta Bill of Rights -- which create the umbrella involved -- are both undertaken. I believe we are in the process of requesting some concurrence from the federal government which would be required in order to do that.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Calgary Millican followed by the hon. Member for Sedgewick-Coronation.

Attorney General

MR. DIXON:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to direct my question today to the hon. the Attorney General. My question is: on what basis or authority did the hon. the Attorney General direct the officers of the Edmonton Police Force to further interview the convicted murderer, Keith Latta, who is serving a life sentence in the Federal Penitentiary in the Province of Alberta, after he has been dealt with in the highest court in the land, The Supreme Court of Canada?

MR. LEITCH:

Mr. Speaker, I am very happy to be able to respond to that important question, and really the answer is this simple. There have been questions raised, alleging that there was now information available that had not been available at the time of the trial, and at the Court of Appeal hearing of that case. But the most critical feature was that Mr. Latta, himself, requested that he be interviewed by the members of the City of Edmonton Police Force.

Mr. Speaker, as the Attorney General of this province, when there are questions or allegations made that there may be information available which was not available at the trial, I think it incumbent -- and indeed I can't anticipate doing otherwise, than having those matters fully looked into.

Again, when someone who is in an institution requests an interview for the purposes of giving what he has said is information that has a bearing on that, I think it would be a shocking lack of duty not to accept that request.

MR. DIXON:

As a supplementary question, Mr. Speaker, I will really ask two supplementary questions. If the evidence proves that there should be a new trial, would you so direct?

Secondly, my further question, while I am on my feet, Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask a further supplementary question. Does the hon. the Attorney General plan to investigate all convictions of murder in Alberta, if requested to do so, including those who have been executed since 1905?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. member's question is hypothetical on both counts. He said, "If requested to do so."

The hon. Member for Sedgewick-Coronation followed by --

MR. TAYLOR:

A supplementary to the hon. the Attorney General. Does the hon. the Attorney General have the authority to order a new trial?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. member is asking a question of law concerning the law officers of the Crown. As to the authority of the hon. the Attorney General, it is clearly a question of law as to what his authority is.

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

DR. BUCK:

A supplementary, sir, to the hon. Attorney General. In view of the fact that I have about 400 residents of the Province of Alberta in my constituency, would he consider having all these people obtaining an interview from the Attorney General? Because once you set this precedent they would have the right. Will he see these people if they so request?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. member's question is also hypothetical until the 400 have made their requests.

The hon. Member for Sedgewick-Coronation followed by the hon. Member for Highwood.

Rural Roads

MR. SORENSON:

Mr. Speaker, a question to the hon. Minister of Highways and Transport. Many towns and villages find themselves in difficulty because of the elimination of the program for improvement of streets. Is it the government's intention to re-allocate funds for this purpose in 1973?

MR. COPITHORNE:

Mr. Speaker, the hon. Member for Sedgewick-Coronation will have to wait until the budget is brought down in early March.

MR. SORENSON:

A supplementary question, then. Is there any government program which will financially assist these towns and villages at the present time?

MR. COPITHORNE:

Well, Mr. Speaker, no specific amount of money is allotted to help the towns as described by the hon. Member for Sedgewick-Coronation. However, under the secondary roads program we have been able to improve the quality of life in many of these rural towns by providing them with a paved or oiled access, and quite often, when the highway or secondary road goes through the town, we proceed through it with pavement or oil, therefore supplying that town with some of the better qualities of life.

DR. BUCK:

Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Is this a continuation of the previous government's policy to pave and oil roads into these communities, Mr. Minister?

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please! Surely the hon. member can't ask what the previous government's policy was in order to compare.

DR. BUCK:

Well, Mr. Speaker --

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Highwood followed by the hon. Member for Camrose.

School Curriculum

MR. BENOIT:

My question, Mr. Speaker, is addressed to the hon. Minister of Education. I wonder how the hon. minister proposes to deal with the thousands of requests that have come from Albertans asking for a change in the Alberta school curriculum, providing that the creationist viewpoint of the origin of the universe be given equal time and exposure in the schools with that of the evolution and other viewpoints?

MR. HYNDMAN:

Well, Mr. Speaker, the matter has come to my attention, certainly not in the numbers described by the hon. member, but the request is being looked at by the elementary and secondary curriculum board. We had, some months ago, anticipated making a statement in the House about the use of controversial material in the school systems, and we intend to do that sometime during the spring session.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Camrose, followed by the hon. Member for Hanna-Oyen.

Native Friendship Centres

MR. STROMBERG:

Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the hon. Minister Without Portfolio Responsible for Northern Development and Native Affairs. What is the present situation between the province and the Native Friendship Centres?

MR. ADAIR:

Mr. Speaker, at the moment we're reviewing the existing federal-provincial contract with the friendship centres, with the thought of having it terminated to allow the centres to obtain federal funds under the new core funding program.

Working very closely with the office of the Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs, we have had discussions with the federal government about this particular program.

MR. STROMBERG:

Mr. Speaker, may I ask two supplementary questions. Does this apply to all friendship centres in Alberta? And how many friendship centres do we have in our province?

MR. ADAIR:

Yes, Mr. Speaker, this would apply to all the friendship centres in Alberta, and there are eight of these at the moment.

MR. R. SPEAKER:

A supplementary question to the hon. minister. Have any of these friendship centres closed in the last eight months because of a lack of funds?

MR. ADAIR:

Not permanently, to my knowledge, Mr. Speaker. They have had some difficulties for quite some time in their funding, and with the announcement by the federal government last summer, I believe it was, that new core funds could be made available to them, we began a review of the existing federal-provincial program in order to ascertain whether it was best to terminate that and allow them the opportunity to take part -- because, in order to take part in the new program, the existing one had to be terminated.

MR. NOTLEY:

A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. In view of the financial difficulties of the friendship centres, when will the government be able to give them a definitive position as to whether the federal or the provincial grants will be available, and how much?

MR. ADAIR:

Mr. Speaker, I would imagine that should be coming almost momentarily. Possibly you could add to that.

MR. GETTY:

Inasmuch as the hon. member asked me if I could add to the matter, there is a member of the Department of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs in Ottawa today, who is advising the federal government that the Government of Alberta will terminate the existing shared-cost agreement for the native friendship centres and allow the new program to proceed immediately.

MR. BARTON:

A question to the Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs. Will they help or guarantee loans during this transfer of responsibility so that they can continue to be in operation?

MR. GETTY:

I am not sure about the guarantee of loans, Mr. Speaker. I do know, however, that the federal government has advised us that they have the cheques available to forward immediately to the native friendship centres. So I do not really believe there will be a period of time in which loan guarantees are necessary.

MR. NOTLEY:

Will the new program guarantee the friendship centres at least as large a grant as they received last year?

MR. GETTY:

It is difficult to say what the federal government will do in the future in terms of guarantees, Mr. Speaker. Our assessment now is that it will, in fact, provide considerable additional monies.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Hanna-Oyen, followed by the hon. Member for Clover Bar.

Land Assessment

MR. FRENCH:

Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the hon. Minister of Municipal Affairs. What is the current ratio assessment between arable lands and grazing lands?

MR. RUSSELL:

About 3.2, Mr. Speaker.

MR. FRENCH:

A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Is the government considering making a change in this ratio at the present time?

MR. RUSSELL:

Mr. Speaker, that is a question that has been brought to the attention of the Task Force on Provincial and Municipal Financing, and as you know from the portion of the report that dealt with property tax reduction, that particular item was not mentioned. However, we did indicate in the report very clearly that there were more portions to the task force report, which we wanted to deal with as soon as we got this major property tax reduction program into effect over the next few months. And I expect that that is one of the items we will be giving attention to.

MR. FRENCH:

A final supplementary, Mr. Speaker. On page 32 of the interim report it states:

The Task Force will report on this subject as requested by the minister before December 15.

Do I understand that the report has not been received by the minister at this particular time?

MR. RUSSELL:

Mr. Speaker, the final task force report was received by myself on December 15. We very quickly made public the portion concerning the parts we intended to deal with at this session, and those are the parts relating to property tax reduction. I think we have indicated very clearly that the other portions will be made public as we deal with them.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Clover Bar, followed by the hon. Member for Olds-Didsbury.

Utilization Guidelines

DR. BUCK:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask a question of the hon. Minister of Education. My question is will there be a flexibility factor built into the 90 per cent utilization figure where the large communities that are growing very, very rapidly will have some area to manoeuvre? Because, as you are aware, the hon. Member for Ottewell and myself in some of the rapidly growing areas, find that this makes it too inflexible. Will there be some flexibility to this 90 per cent utilization figure for new school buildings?

MR. HYNDMAN:

Mr. Speaker, I think the question relates to the very substantial decline in the birthrate in the Province of Alberta, and also the decline in the number of students appearing at schools, especially in the elementary grades. The general guideline of 90 per cent is a guideline provided to the school boards on the basis that unless and until the utilization of their existing schools approximates 90 per cent no approval for new schools or additions will be made.

Certainly there are exceptions. Fort McMurray comes to mind as one. If any local jurisdiction, county or municipal district, can demonstrate a special situation with regard to the geography and the people mix, we would be prepared to look at it, bearing in mind the manner in which the financing of the school division was carried on in the past. But certainly, the 90 per cent guideline is one which will apply across the province with very few exceptions.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Olds-Didsbury, followed by the hon. Member for Lesser Slave Lake.

Provincial-Municipal Relations

MR. CLARK:

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct my question to the hon. Minister of Municipal Affairs, and ask him why it is that municipal secretaries from both urban and rural communities across the province are unable to get details from officials of the Department of Municipal Affairs regarding the government's announced tax reduction program?

MR. RUSSELL:

Mr. Speaker, I don't think it is quite correct that they are unable to get details. We've made every effort to give out as much information as possible, well in advance of the provincial budget being brought down, so that they can proceed with the preparation of their current municipal budgets. I've met with some groups, as has Mr. Farran and other members of the task force, and we've taken note of their questions. Furthermore, we've encouraged them to write, either to my office or to the department. There is in the mail now an interim news-letter telling them that we have taken note of the variety of questions, or complaints which we have received, and that we will try to answer the questions as quickly as possible.

I mention again the plans that have been made with members of cabinet to meet with the executive of the AUMA, and we're following that up the next day with a workshop with the members of the AAMD&C, the AUMA executive, as well as mayors or representatives of the ten cities. So we are making every effort to proceed as quickly as possible. There are some specific questions being asked -- for example, what was the formula on which the grant was based? -- and we've indicated that information would be made available later. So I don't think that what you inferred was quite correct.

MR. CLARK:

A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. I will rephrase it for the minister: Why are some municipal secretaries and councillors not able to get detailed information from officials of the Department of Municipal Affairs on the interpretation of the announcement made by the Premier? They, in fact, have been told by the department that the department was not involved in the development of the program and does not have the information. Why is this so?

MR. RUSSELL:

Mr. Speaker, I have to repeat again that the information has been made available. It has been given wide distribution and, in fact, we have encouraged the MLAs to work with their local councils and have prepared special information kits for them. I know that many MLAs have effectively worked with their councils in explaining the programs to them. At least, this is true of the hon. members on this side of the House. I don't know about the other side.

Some municipalities have written in to say, "We think the program is great, and we commend your government for doing it." Other municipalities have written in with very specific questions. I've heard from two or more representatives of the same municipality offering different viewpoints and arguing among themselves.

So it really isn't correct to say that information isn't being given. Perhaps the hon. member is saying that there are some department officials who are non-co-operative, but I don't think that's correct either, because as far as I know they are answering all the questions they are able to answer. Some of them are very argumentative, but we are trying to deal with those in the manner that I outlined.

MR. FARRAN:

Supplementary, Mr. Speaker, to the hon. Minister of Municipal Affairs. Was a meeting convened with Mr. Bagnall, the Reeve of Didsbury, to explain in detail to some ten secretary-treasurers from the riding of the hon. Member for Olds-Didsbury --

MR. SPEAKER:

Is the hon. member asking a question, or supplementing the answer?

MR. LUDWIG:

A supplementary to the hon. minister, Mr. Speaker. In view of the hon. minister's remark --

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please. I'm afraid I didn't catch the first part of the hon. member's question, but it seemed he was supplementing the answer.

MR. FARRAN:

Was a meeting held with Mr. Bagnall, the Reeve from Didsbury, to explain the details of the plan to him and ten secretary-treasurers?

MR. RUSSELL:

Yes, there was, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Farran explained the program to them.

MR. CLARK:

On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I'm amazed that the member for Calgary North Hill, after having been to that fine part of the province doesn't recognize that Mr. Bagnall is the Reeve of the County of Mountain View and not of the Town of Didsbury.

MR. LUDWIG:

Mr. Speaker, a supplementary to the Minister of Municipal Affairs. In view of his remark, whether MLAs work with their councils, is it his intention to arrange to convene another meeting between the City of Calgary council and the MLAs of Calgary, as he had undertaken quite some time ago?

MR. RUSSELL:

Mr. Speaker, that was left as a joint responsibility between myself and Alderman Petrasak of the City of Calgary. I have been in touch with him to suggest a convenient date. This was some time ago. Certainly I think now that the House is in session we wouldn't want to meet while the session is taking place, but it has been left in that regard. I really don't think the City of Calgary is very anxious to proceed.

MR. LUDWIG:

Mr. Speaker, a supplementary to the hon. minister. Was he aware of the fact that Mr. Petrasak very recently wondered why the government is no longer interested in meetings and wondered if they were afraid of coming back to Calgary?

MR. SPEAKER:

What Mr. Petrasak is wondering about is a question rather for him than for a member in the House.

I believe the hon. Member for Wainwright has been waiting to ask a supplementary.

MR. RUSTE:

[Inaudible] the information as received by the MLAs, is that identical to what was sent to the municipal bodies?

MR. RUSSELL:

Yes, Mr. Speaker. I think I recall that all members of the Legislature got the special issue of the "Municipal Counsellor" in their kits. The articles in there were written on a more technical basis because they were directed towards municipal elected people or municipal administrative people, as opposed to the general information for the benefit of the public.

MR. SPEAKER:

Might this be the last supplementary on this topic.

MR. TAYLOR:

A supplementary to the Minister of Municipal Affairs. Is the 7.5 per cent ceiling for incentive grants firm, or will there be exceptions made in certain circumstances satisfactory to your department?

MR. RUSSELL:

Mr. Speaker, that is a very good example of one of the items now under current consideration. We had advised the municipalities at the time the program was announced, that they would be free to count their increases on the municipal portion only of their mill rates, because that was the argument put forward to our task force - that it was a municipal portion over which the municipal councillors had control. After a couple of weeks had evolved from the announcement of the plan some of the councillors and councils brought back reactions. They were, in fact, putting propositions forward that perhaps we should let them include the other basic supplementaries. That is, we should let them levy it as well as count it as a base upon which they would then build this 7.5 per cent increase. I think that suggestion has a lot of merit. We are trying to see what effect it will have on the municipalities and are going to get the answer out as quickly as possible to them. I expect that that specific item will be a topic during the workshop which I mentioned.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Lesser Slave Lake, followed by the hon. Member for Drumheller.

Canada Winter Games 1975

MR. BARTON:

Mr. Speaker, my question is to the hon. Minister of Culture, Youth and Recreation. Is the Government of Alberta satisfied as to the Alberta site for the Canada Games?

MR. SCHMID:

[Inaudible] the Minister of National Health and Welfare, the hon. Marc Lalonde and his decision, of course, stands. As we have said previously, we will fully support any one of the sites which will be selected and have now been selected for the Canada Games in 1975.

MR. BARTON:

A supplementary question. Does the minister have any evidence of political gerrymandering as to the decision on the location?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. minister is not required to inquire into the motives of a federal minister.

MR. DRAIN:

Supplementary to the hon. minister and not in a political vein. Mr. Minister, I am wondering whether you will give the same type of substantial assistance to southern Alberta for the furthering of these games, that you are considering for the Edmonton games.

MR. SCHMID:

Mr. Speaker, in reply to that question, when Lethbridge submitted the tender for the Canada Winter Games, they proposed a \$2 million stadium or

sportplex for which they would supply their own finances. They also requested in that submission \$430,000 from the federal government and \$430,000 from the provincial government as the contribution from the senior governments. This contribution, as far as the provincial government is concerned, will be taken to cabinet shortly for its decision.

MR. DRAIN:

Another supplementary to the hon. Minister of Highways and Transport on this particular subject. This is in relation to the fact that some of the winter games -- and I am getting to the question, Mr. Speaker, as rapidly as I can -- what provision is going to be made to improve the access to the areas where the winter games will be held in the foothills and mountains?

MR. COPITHORNE:

Mr. Speaker, I anticipated the question that was asked by the hon. Member for Pincher Creek. We will first have to anticipate what the requirements will be. We have had certain representations from areas in the area of what they already have anticipated they might be.

MR. SPEAKER:

We have about a minute for another question by the hon. Member for Drumheller.

Industrial Dispute -- Red Deer (Cont.)

MR. TAYLOR:

Mr. Speaker, may I address this question to the hon. the Attorney General? Was there any maximum amount of sales given to Tartan at the time you gave them . . . or was the sky the limit?

MR. LEITCH:

No, sir, there was no limitation. As I say, at the time of the original decision which I think was made in the early part of last year, it was then anticipated that the plant would be completed and go on-stream early in the summer, sometime during June. It has been much delayed for a number of reasons, one of which was construction difficulties, but specifically to answer the question, no.

MR. TAYLOR:

Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Have there been any complaints from other based breweries in connection with these sales?

MR. LEITCH:

Yes, Mr. Speaker. When the decision was first made I met with the other brewers who felt that this was a departure from the policy which had existed under the prior administration. I discussed it with them at length, and told them that it was my view that when people were coming into the province, were building these plants, were going to hire Albertans to work, that it was a harsh rule to require them to come in, get their plant in operation, put it on full stream, get people working, and then try to build up a market for their product. It was a much more reasonable approach to give them a reasonable lead time, and as I said, at that time we anticipated it would only be a matter of months within which they could introduce their product into the province so that when the plant was on-stream and employees hired, they would have at least a chance, as a result of their prior introduction of the product, to remain on-stream and keep everyone employed.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

WRITTEN QUESTIONS

100. Mr. Notley asked the government the following question:

- (1) How many meetings have been held by the Automobile Insurance Board and on what dates?
- (2) What types of complaints regarding automobile insurance rates are dealt with by the Automobile Insurance Board and what types by the Supervisor of Insurance?
- (3) How many such complaints have been dealt with by the Board, and how many by the Supervisor of Insurance, since April 1, 1972?
- (4) How many insurance rates have been reduced as a result of activities of the Board, or of the Supervisor of Insurance?

MR. LEITCH:

We accept the question, Mr. Speaker.

101. Mr. Taylor asked the government the following question;

With reference to Public Service Competition #3025-1;

- (a) How many applications were received for this position?
- (b) How many applicants were not Canadian citizens?
- (c) How many applicants who are Canadian citizens have served in the Armed Forces of Canada?
- (d) Was the successful applicant a Canadian citizen?

DR. HOHOL:

We accept the question, Mr. Speaker.

102. Mr. Notley asked the government the following question:

Which companies received fees or commissions under last year's budget estimates of expenditure number 1103, Agricultural Research and what were the amounts?

DR. HORNER:

We accept the question, Mr. Speaker, and I have tabled the answer to the question.

Answer

AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH APPROPRIATION 1103

Fees & Commissions - Code 320
Analysis for the Year Ended March 31, 1972

April 17, 1972	RS70204	Computer Science Canada Ltd.	\$ 166.51
April 19, 1972	RS74901	Agri-Analysis Ltd.	800.00
April 24, 1972	RS75401	Agri-Business Ltd.	7,750.00
May 3, 1972	RS83405	Computer Sciences Canada Ltd.	<u>196.33</u>

Total Per Expenditure & Cash Payments Register \$8,912.84
(March Final)

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

What is the total amount of money paid to each of the members of each of the MLA caucus committees (Task Forces) during 1972?

MR. MINIELY:

We accept the question, Mr. Speaker.

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

- (1) In 1972 what was the total cost of the Select Committee studying the Workmen's Compensation in Alberta?
- (2) (a) What trips outside of the province did this committee or members of this committee make?
(b) Please detail the members making each trip and the total expenses of each member.
- (3) (a) How many times during 1972 was the committee convened?
(b) How many meetings were held?
(c) What are the dates that the meetings were held?
- (4) Have all bills submitted by members in 1972 been paid?
- (5) What was the total cost of the staff attached to the committee in regard to (a) wages, (b) travelling, (c) other expenses?

DR. HOHOL:

We accept the question, Mr. Speaker.

105. Mr. Taylor asked the government the following questions:

What is the total cost of new furniture supplied to the Alberta Government Telephones offices in Edmonton during:

- (1) The year 1971
- (2) The year 1972
- (3) (a) What was done with furniture used by Alberta Government Telephones in its former building?
(b) What was the total purchase value of said furniture?
(c) What was the total depreciated value in 1972 of the said furniture?

MR. WERRY:

We accept the question, Mr. Speaker.

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

What was the total cost of renovations in the East Wing on the third floor of the Legislature Building during 1972, detailing in particular the expenditures in the Council Chamber?

DR. BACKUS:

We accept the question, Mr. Speaker.

111. Mr. Drain asked the government the following questions, which were tabled by Dr. Warrack as follows:

Pertaining to big horn sheep:

- (1) How many non-resident sheep permits were issued in the fall of 1972 for the region north of the Bow River?

Answer: 120

- (2) What was the total number of big horn sheep killed by non-resident

hunters in the fall of 1972?

Answer: 41

- (3) How many sheep licences were issued to residents of the province in 1972?

Answer: 1,000 approximately (final figure not available until the end of the fiscal year).

- (4) What was the total number of sheep killed north of the Bow River by resident hunters?

Answer: 20

- (5) What was the total number of sheep killed south of the Bow River by resident hunters?

Answer: 46

MOTIONS FOR A RETURN

107. Mr. Dixon proposed the following motion to the Assembly, seconded by Mr. Ho Lem.

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

Since September 15, 1971, has any government department, agency or branch, or anyone on behalf of the government, spent any public funds or made other efforts for the purchase, lease, rent or to acquire by any other means furniture, furnishings, antiques, artifacts, sculpture, paintings or other object d'art for the home or residence of any Minister of the Crown, including the Premier or for any member of the Legislative Assembly?

Answer:

After careful investigation in the Department of Public Works and careful inquiry in the Department of Culture, Youth and Recreation and from various agencies, there is no evidence of the expenditure of public funds for the purchase, lease, rent or acquisition of furniture, furnishings, antiques, artifacts, sculpture, paintings or other objects d'art for the homes or residence of any Minister of the Crown, including the Premier, or any member of the Legislative Assembly since September 15, 1971.

MR. DIXON:

Mr. Speaker, I move Motion No. 107 standing in my name on the Order Paper.

DR. BACKUS:

Mr. Speaker, we accept this Motion for a Return and I have the return prepared in answer to this. But to put it in one word the answer is no.

MR. SPEAKER:

All those in favour of the Motion No. 107 please say aye; those opposed please say no.

[The motion was carried.]

108. Mr. Notley proposed the following motion to the Assembly, seconded by Mr. Clark:

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

- (1) The 1947 agreement between the Government of Alberta and Calgary Power.
- (2) The agreement between the present government, represented by the Minister of the Environment Mr. Yurko, and Calgary Power signed on September 28, 1972.

MR. NOTLEY:

Mr. Speaker, I move Motion No. 108 standing in my name on the Order Paper.

MR. YURKO:

Mr. Speaker, the 1947 agreement being referred to is the final licence for the development of water power, and host site, Bow River dated May 14, 1947. This agreement was tabled in this House on November 15, 1972. At the same time, Mr. Speaker, we tabled the contract for the agreement reached between the province and Calgary Power. This was tabled under Sessional Paper No. 548. At that time we also tabled a number of other documents leading up to the agreement that was finally signed and I might say, Mr. Speaker, that copies of all these documents have been in the Clerk's office since November 15, 1972. A copy has also been given to the Official Leader of the Opposition. I think the press had access to the documents and there is one set of the complete documents in the Legislature library.

MR. NOTLEY:

Mr. Speaker, under the circumstance I will withdraw Motion for a Return No. 108 and examine the documents.

MR. SPEAKER:

I take it the hon. member has the unanimous consent of the House to withdraw the motion?

HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER:

The motion is withdrawn.

109. Mr. Dixon proposed the following motion to the Assembly, seconded by Mr. Benoit:

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

- (1) The names of the 80 tourist-oriented individuals and corporations who received loans from the \$50 Million Opportunity Fund in 1972, and the actual location of these tourist-oriented projects.
- (2) The amount of each loan granted, showing the terms on which each loan was made.
- (3) What securities were taken by the government to assure repayment on each loan.
- (4) What qualified appraisers or evaluators were used in every case in approving each loan.
- (5) Details of property or security involved.

MR. DIXON:

Mr. Speaker, I move Motion No. 109 standing in my name on the Order Paper.

MR. DOWLING:

Mr. Speaker, regarding No. 109 we are not able to accept it as it is proposed because under Section 14(2) of The Alberta Opportunity Company Fund Act regulations dated August 16, 1972. It reads as follows:

All information pertaining to individual applications, loans, guarantees of loans, and all the matters of the company's business shall be deemed to be confidential as between the parties concerned and may not be divulged by the company to third parties other than those legally entitled to said information and only with the prior consent of the commercial enterprise concerned.

MR. SPEAKER:

We have a motion before the House, does the House wish to debate the motion or does the hon. minister wish to move an amendment?

MR. DIXON:

Mr. Speaker, taxpayers money is being spent. Maybe if you can clarify to me that there is no money -- if it is the guarantee of a bank loan, I can see that. If we are spending \$50 million in a fund that goes directly out to the people how in the heavens' name --

MR. SPEAKER:

Order please. The hon. member, in actually moving the motion, technically has spoken on it and technically now would be closing the debate. Does the House agree that the hon. member may debate the motion without closing the debate at this point?

HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

MR. DIXON:

Mr. Speaker, I thank you for your notice. I hesitated before I got up because I thought I was closing the debate on the matter. Anyway, the House can decide otherwise, and they have done that.

I would like to point out that where government funds are being spent it is most essential that the hon. members of the Legislature, who are responsible to Albertans for how the funds are being spent, should give us an opportunity to investigate who is getting the money and what it is being spent on. The motion isn't any good if this isn't included.

MR. DOWLING:

Well, perhaps, Mr. Speaker, I can clear the matter up very quickly. If the hon. member would agree to re-submit the Motion for Return without dealing with specifics, I am sure we can provide the information he requires without coming down to the actual detail of who the applicant is. We can give a geographical location, and indicate the percentage of the loan and the amounts totalling in the various areas of the province, without being specific.

MR. DIXON:

Well, Mr. Speaker, it is not too satisfactory, but I think that I will accept the suggestion of the hon. minister if he will guarantee he can give me enough information so that I will be able to follow through my enquiry. Well, I suppose he can't give a guarantee, but I would like to follow the information closely after it is available. Then I will put it on an Order at a later date. I think who we are loaning money to is just as essential as the amount of money we are loaning.

MR. LUDWIG:

Mr. Speaker, I just want to get up on a point of order. I understand that all securities and all government documents for loans are registered in either the Land Titles Office or in the Registry, and how could this be confidential? This is all public information.

MR. SPEAKER:

In order to regularize what is before the House, would someone wish to move an amendment to the motion, this Item 109, to remove the specifics. We are debating it or discussing it as if we were in committee. I think we should get the matter on a regular basis, either as a motion or as an amendment.

MR. DOWLING:

Mr. Speaker, if I might, I wonder if we could rationalize it this way. If the hon. member and I could get together and determine what he is really after, I am sure we could come up with some solution.

MR. TAYLOR:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to adjourn the debate, and then we could all have time to think this over while the two hon. members get together to see if they can come to an agreement.

MR. SPEAKER:

Does the House agree that the hon. Member for Drumheller may adjourn the debate?

HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

MR. LUDWIG:

Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to move Motion No. 110 standing in my name, seconded by the hon. member Mr. Ho Lem. I would like to make a few remarks in support of this motion, Mr. Speaker.

First of all the reason that these questions are proposed at this time was because of my inability to get any kind of a sensible answer from the hon. Minister of Public Works as to what is transpiring with regard to the courthouse cafeteria. I thought that if there ever was a display of ineptness and ignorance of what is going on in the department, the minister excelled in this case. That is the reason for this motion for a return.

I should also like to point out Mr. Speaker, that if the hon. ministers are going to be tight-lipped, when replying to questions, these questions will be lengthier. You know that we want to obtain information, but if we have to be technically accurate in every respect, they can expect questions of four pages in length.

So in my question I want the hon. minister to pay particular attention to the problem of the courthouse cafeteria here in Edmonton. I was advised by the lady in charge that the civil servants are not entitled to bring in their lunches and eat them in that cafeteria. This is a publicly paid government building, yet they presumably gave a contract to Mrs. Lappa that prohibits anyone -- the commissionaires or anyone -- from bringing in lunches and eating them.

I understand that this is the only cafeteria operated in any government building handled in this manner. I was not satisfied with the attitude of the minister in the last fall session, in passing this off as if it was not significant. It is an extremely important matter. This issue has to be cleared and I, for one, will pursue it. I hope that the minister will be sensible enough to give full details as requested. And also I am fully aware of the fact that there are a tremendous number of complaints concerning this operation from other people who are interested.

I would wish, when the minister makes his reply, that he could also give me some details as to the way this thing was tendered. How was it that Mrs. Lappa, who had been after this particular contract before the courthouse was started, apparently lobbied people in government and elsewhere for this contract? I am rather surprised as to how she actually got the contract. Was it done under the tender system with all hands on top of the table, or was there some nonsense in her getting this contract? I think that the minister can stand up and answer us properly -- it's a proper question and I believe that he can't avoid this. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Will you adjourn the debate?

DR. BACKUS:

Mr. Speaker, I will be happy in answering these questions to provide the hon. member with answers as full as possible. In fact I had these answers available at the last session. However, by virtue of the fact that he made no further inquiries, I didn't have the opportunity to give them to him last session.

In answering some of these questions, I would like to draw his attention to one or two matters. It has been the policy of the government, both the previous government and the present government, that cafeteria services for civil

servants are not normally provided in buildings where the private sector does provide dining facilities in the near vicinity. The provision of the cafeteria in the courthouse was not intended as a cafeteria service for the civil servants working there. It was intended as a cafeteria service for the public who would be using the courthouse.

We have, however, drawn up considerable new policies with regard to cafeteria service in all government buildings. These will be brought forward in due course, when they have received consideration by the joint body between the civil service and the government.

The only part of the question, or the return, that I would raise some question on is (7), in which he asks for correspondence. Some of the correspondence may be from private individuals and, therefore, it can not be tabled until permission has been obtained from the individuals to make public their confidential correspondence.

Other than that I have no objection to answering the question.

MR. SPEAKER:

Do I take it that the hon. Minister of Public Works is then moving an amendment to Section (7) of the question?

DR. BACKUS:

I would simply like to move the amendment that part (7) of the question be answered with the added words at the end, "provided permission is obtained."

MR. LUDWIG:

Mr. Speaker, in speaking to this development, I'm not asking for the tabling of any confidential information. But I don't think that complaints concerning the way the government is handling this issue are confidential. People who make complaints like copies, send copies of letters to other MLAs. They want this complaint aired in the house, if they cannot get satisfaction any other way.

And I do not think that the minister ought to start looking for the dodge that he is to reveal something that is confidential. This is an old trick, and I believe the hon. Deputy Premier knows that it is a practice in Ottawa. We do not want any of this nonsense, that it is embarrassing or confidential. I do not go for that, and if we have to investigate these things ourselves, we can do it. But this is the proper place to do it. So as far as confidential material is concerned, nobody can ask for that.

There is nothing confidential, Mr. Speaker, about complaints about the minister's operation, except that it could be embarrassing. But they are not synonymous. I oppose this amendment because the minister is not made a case that complaints concerning his own operation of something that are confidential. If it is confidential, I do not want to hear any more about it. He does not have to reveal it. But all non-confidential materials should be tabled and it is not in his discretion. He has to table all the correspondence if the house so orders.

MR. GETTY:

Mr. Speaker, addressing ourselves to the amendment as proposed by the minister ...

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please! Does the hon. minister wish to second the amendment? It has not been seconded. A seccnder has not been mentioned.

MR. GETTY:

How come he was able to speak on it?

MR. SPEAKER:

Slightly irregular, but I thought we might work our way out of this.

MR. GETTY:

I appreciate, Mr. Speaker, he does need help, yes. But, Mr. Speaker, surely individuals are entitled, when they write letters to any minister or any member of the ...

MR. LUDWIG:

[Interjections]

MR. GETTY:

Mr. Speaker, it seems obvious to me who needs help, Mr. Speaker. It is the member for Mountain View.

[Interjections]

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

MR. GETTY:

He does not want to hear the answer.

MR. LUDWIG:

[Interjections]

MR. GETTY:

Mr. Speaker, I think any Albertan, or I suppose any other individual, who wants to write a letter to the government has the right to expect that that letter will be treated confidentially unless they indicate otherwise. Surely, citizens of our province can write to their government, or to individual ministers, or to MLAs, without expecting that their letters will be tabled in the House and therefore become public -- perhaps printed in a newspaper. It seems to me only reasonable that the minister did not say he would not table; all he said was: "Amend this so that those individuals would have the right to say, 'Yes, I would like it to be public'."

I see absolutely nothing wrong with that amendment and the member for Mountain View's arguments are completely unreasonable when he says that there is anything wrong with that or that these individuals should not be afforded that courtesy and that right. The idea that anybody is dodging anything, Mr. Speaker, by trying to allow those people to first give their approval of letters becoming public, is just completely invalid, but typical of the hon. member.

MR. SPEAKER:

Is there any further debate on the amendment? The text of the amendment as received by the Chair is that Section 7 of this Motion No. 110 be amended by adding the words: "provided consent is given by the author."

Is there any further debate on that amendment?

[The motion was carried.]

MR. SPEAKER:

Is there any further debate on the motion as amended?

MR. LUDWIG:

May I close debate on the motion as amended?

MR. SPEAKER:

May the hon. member close the debate on the motion as amended?

HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

MR. LUDWIG:

Mr. Speaker, I thought I made it plain that I am not interested in confidentiality. I would not urge the Minister of Public Works to start an investigation or the hiring of the RCMP to check on civil servants who are bucking him. I believe I will have to take my answers as I am going to get them.

[The motion was carried.]

112. Mr. Drain proposed, seconded by Mr. Benoit:

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

- (1) Copies of all correspondence from the Alberta Snowmobile Association, and similar groups, to the Minister of Highways and Transport prior to the drafting of the snowmobile regulations.
- (2) The number of complaints received by the Highways Department about snowmobiles.
- (3) The number of stolen snowmobile vehicles reported during the last twelve months.
- (4) The number of reported accidents involving snowmobiles.
- (5) The number of fatal accidents involving snowmobiles.
- (6) The dollar value of damage claims against snowmobile operators.

MR. DRAIN:

Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to move Motion No. 112 standing in my name on the Order Paper, seconded by Mr. Benoit.

I have just a few words as to the rationale behind this particular query. It is basically an attempt, in my mind, to rationalize the Off-Highway Vehicle Act regulation.

It would appear to me, from the representations I have received from my constituency, that these regulations have been made by some back-room bureaucrat, without careful thought, without consideration, and certainly not in the best interests of communication and participatory government which has been enunciated as this particular government's policy.

I question the validity of the snowmobile tax. What I call this is an insidious tax. Prior to these particular regulations there was a registration fee which presumably had been sufficient to cover the matter of registration. There has been, to my knowledge, no apparent use of the funds that will be derived from this particular tax to further the interests of snowmobiling.

In the matter of registration, insofar as automobiles and other types of vehicles are concerned, there is a certain amount of reciprocal payment because of the fact that there are roads to be maintained, traffic signs, bridges, et cetera. But in the case of the snowmobile operator, he is relegated into the position of a poor relation, shoved into the corner, and kicked around by a set of regulations to which he has no opportunity to make representation in any meaningful manner. If I am wrong about this, this motion will certainly bring it out, and I will retract that particular statement.

In spite of the fact that there is a tax of \$10 on the operation of snowmobiles, there is no firm commitment on the part of government as to where these particular vehicles can operate. They can operate on the forest reserve only on the sufferance of the hon. Minister of Lands and Forests. In Quebec and Ontario, at least snowmobiles -- which are licensed in a comparable manner -- do have the use of roads. But I am not suggesting to you, Mr. Speaker, that this is something I would be expounding or advocating, that snowmobiles be allowed on the roads of Alberta.

Another thing that I view with alarm is the manner in which insurance, compulsory insurance, was jammed down the throats of the snowmobile operators. Here was collected a captive market without any protection whatsoever, and handed into the clutches of the insurance companies.

AN HCN. MEMBER:

Agreed. Just terrible.

MR. DRAIN:

The result, of course, is that they were taken for a ride. If the government, in its wisdom, saw fit to make compulsory insurance part of the criteria of operating snowmobiles, without any recourse on the part of those who so own them, then it would have to be their responsibility, in all fairness, to properly see that these victims of big brotherism on the part of this government should be properly protected.

MR. GETTY:

Hear, hear. Agreed.

MR. DRAIN:

This is only reasonable. This is only right.

The insurance companies have used the snowmobile operators in the Province of Alberta with a callousness that is totally reprehensible. When they are approached to handle this particular risk they charge, not a rate compatible with the usage of snowmobiles, which represents 7 to 8 hours per week, 3 months in a year, but on the same basis that they insure an automobile. So equate the total usage and you find you are paying the equivalent of \$200 per machine for the privilege of operating a snowmobile, if you use the ratio of a 12 month coverage.

Another thing that can stand to no reasoning whatsoever is the fact that a snowmobile must now be insured for 12 months of the year. I question this. I would like to get, in this particular return, information specifically to Alberta -- I was remiss when I wrote this particular motion out that I did not specify that the information I required would be for Alberta only. It is not my intention to pursue what happened in Ontario, or Quebec, the eastern United States or any other particular area in the world. I am simply interested in snowmobile operations in the Province of Alberta.

The thing that concerns me, the particular regulation, is the lumping of vehicles, the aspect that these particular vehicles can all be classed as off-the-highway. There are two or three different types of off-the-highway vehicles. A snow vehicle is something that travels on snow. There have been indications -- well, this is not outlined in the particular regulations, gentlemen -- I'm laughing at the regulations too, I can understand why you are laughing. [Interjections] If you want me to talk all afternoon, just keep interrupting me.

I would say that any particular sport, and the snowmobile is a sport vehicle -- is not a work vehicle in the common meaning of the word -- so any sport implies a certain risk.

What is the risk you have to take when you ride horseback? If there were 30,000 people horsebacking their way across the Province of Alberta, visualize the potential hazards they would be facing. Should not big brother be in there protecting them also, loading them up to the top of the neck, and not with horse manure but with insurance? This is part of the stuff we could expect.

If you are going to take a total commitment, insurance should cover everything and everybody, and when I say this, I am not talking and saying that insurance should not be on these particular vehicles. I think that the personal coverage, the public liability coverage should be there. However, in the assessment of the risk, there has not been the proper realization of conditions we have in Alberta where there is no utilization of highways, as they have in Quebec, and you find that the rates are comparable.

Another item I question on this particular subject is, how do you arrive at the particular age when it is suitable for a person to operate a snowmobile? I don't doubt that there would be people over 25 years of age who would be irresponsible with snowmobiles. And then the most peculiar thing of all is this particular section in the act says, "a minor can ride on a snowmobile accompanied by an adult."

Now I don't know who pulled this out of what part of their tureen when they evolved this particular thing, but anyone who has any knowledge of how a snowmobile is steered would realize that it is totally incompatible to use this

particular vehicle as a two-person operation. The reason why is because the steering of a snowmobile is accomplished in the same manner that a stem christie or a parallel christie is made in skiing. Of course most of the hon. members are skiers and they know about parallel christies and stem christies. In other words, you do it with the movement of the body. Obviously, if you are going across a lake covered with ice and you turn your skis on a snowmobile nothing is going to happen; you are going to go straight ahead. So this is accomplished by the particular movement of your body. The average snowmobile is not long enough to accommodate --

MR. SPEAKER:

Order please! The point which is before the House now for debate is whether or not Item 112, this Motion for a Return, should be answered. The hon. member is now discussing the regulations, and snowmobiles in general. May I suggest, with respect, that the hon. member might confine his debate to whether or not the motion should be passed that this information be given in the form of a return.

MR. DRAIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was just slightly anxious that some of the hon. members would question the desirability of having this vital information delivered, and I heed your remarks. Thank you.

MR. COPITHORNE:

Mr. Speaker, I would be very happy to attempt to answer these questions, and I will also include the regulations in the material that will be tabled so that the hon. member can make himself familiar with The Off-Highway Vehicle Act.

MR. LUDWIG:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to make a few comments on this motion. I believe it is a good one, and if anybody needs to become familiar with what is going on in this area, I believe it is the hon. Minister of Highways.

In fact, I attended a meeting of a snowmobile association in his constituency, and there is a tremendous furor about this whole thing in the whole province. Sixty thousand people -- sixty thousand snowmobile owners are not happy because they think the government is trying to regulate something, not in their interest, but are after more money; they are taxing them. The hon. minister probably knows I was there because a lady got up, and I didn't know whether she was hostile or friendly to me. She said, "You know that Copithorne is a better Minister of Highways than Gordon Taylor." Well I said, "I wouldn't say that, how did you arrive at that conclusion?" And she said, "Well, he has managed to get into the hair of more people in 14 months than Taylor did in 20 years." I had to smile and agree with her.

This is what happened, so the hon. minister is remiss in saying that somebody ought to get informed because he ought to get informed. If the river is a mess in any department concerning regulation and the control of a tremendous sporting matter, it is this area, insurance. These people were complaining bitterly that some of them use the snowmobile a few hours a month, and they go into an area where there is no road; there is no expenditure by the government. There is nothing but the wide open country and all they can hurt is themselves if they hit a tree. They can't even hurt the tree. So what happens, the hon. minister's people decide that they want to regulate more people. And that is the problem with the Department of Highways. They can't keep their hands off people. They have to find some way to regulate them, to interfere, and they are annoying a lot of people. And I think that if the snowmobilers gang up on the hon. minister come next election, he is going to be kibbitzing from the sideline.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that all these answers have to be answered by the hon. minister or by another minister of the government and I hope they have the common sense to do what is right by all these people.

MR. RUSTE:

Mr. Speaker, it is not my intention --

MR. SPEAKER:

There may be some question as to whether there should be any further debate on the motion at all. The government has agreed to it; apparently the

information will be forthcoming. There isn't any need apparently to persuade the minister any further, and perhaps the hon. members -- I am not suggesting that they should not be entitled to continue the debate, but they are perhaps bringing forth things that could be brought out on the Throne Speech Debate or the Budget Debate.

MR. DIXON:

Mr. Speaker, I wonder if I could direct a question to the hon. minister, for clarification concerning the tabling of the report. I was wondering if the minister could make every attempt to get the report to the members before this weekend because there are a number of members on both sides of the House planning to attend the Snowmobile Association meeting this weekend. I wondered if the government would consider moving the information ahead so that we may have it for this week if possible.

MR. TAYLOR:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to make just one or two comments. I don't want to discuss insurance or kittycats and so on. There will be a proper time to do that. But I would like to make one or two comments on No. 1 and possibly No. 4.

The Alberta Snowmobile Association is an association of very responsible men and women. This association has been formed to try to co-operate with the government and co-operate with the other people, because there are a number of people in Alberta who just don't like snowmobiles and would like to see them eliminated. But they are not going to go away; they are going to increase. I would like to suggest very close co-operation with the Alberta Snowmobile Association by the Department of Highways and by the government, and with the snowmobile associations of various districts which will result in better legislation and in less misunderstanding. So I would certainly urge the hon. minister and the hon. Attorney General to give of their time to these associations as they are responsible people.

The other point I would like to make is in connection with No. 2, the number of complaints. I would hope that the hon. minister would look at this in a very wide spectrum type of way. Perhaps many of the complaints should properly have gone to the snowmobile insurance division board or to the Attorney General. If it's dealing with the matter of snowmobiles, it would save the time of the House and the time of the Order Paper, if complaints in connection with snowmobile insurance could be dealt with under No. 2.

[The motion was carried.]

MOTIONS OTHER THAN GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

1. Mr. Young proposed the following motion to the Assembly, seconded by Mr. Appleby.

Be it resolved that the Government of Alberta reconsider the decision to enter into an agreement with the Canadian National Railways to repair the flood-damaged portion of the Alberta Resources Railroad until such time as a complete investigation

- (a) of the flood characteristics of the Smoky River,
- (b) of the effect of the development of the coal industry on the Alberta Resources Railroad,
- (c) of the estimates of the cost of repairs

demonstrates that benefits outweigh costs.

MR. YOUNG:

Mr. Speaker, in the last half hour we have heard discussions of mess and taking rides. We have a mess in the Alberta Resources Railroad on which no one can take a ride.

Mr. Speaker, quite a few of my constituents have expressed their concern -- concern that a decision was taken earlier that is indeed unfortunate; a decision which has left the provincial government with a financial albatross around its neck which seems to just keep on growing at the rate of about \$5 million a year, even if we do nothing.

Before repairs are undertaken, I think this situation is grave enough that full explanation and all the information available ought to be detailed to the Legislature. I think in view of the grave situation -- and just to emphasize it for a moment -- the annual increase in the deficit on that railroad now is the equivalent of the value of two months of bituminous coal production in this province. In other words, it takes two months of the value of bituminous coal production in this province just to equal the amount of the deficit of that railroad. That in itself ought to give us concern. I think that in a situation this grave the public deserves as much information as can be provided.

We ought no longer to be satisfied with the curtain of Social Credit silence that prevailed for five years over this matter. Let's get some information.

Mr. Speaker, the current interest on the Alberta Resources Railroad deficit runs at about \$7.5 million per year. In other words, each year this is the amount of money required just to meet the interest charges. The net deficit after subtracting the income generated from the cost of interest charges leaves us about \$5 million of red ink each year. That works out to about \$4.50 per capita. In other words, every last one of us is forking over that much per year.

Now that doesn't sound like very much, but I think the hon. Member for Drumheller, who was formerly responsible for highways and who must have had a share in determining the priorities for transportation decisions in this province in the years gone by, should be concerned in view of his great plea in recent days with respect to the poor citizens of this province, citizens for whom we all feel a very great sympathy and concern. He said that every last dollar should go in that direction. Here we have something that costs each one of them \$4.50 a year. In a family of four or five that is almost \$20 or \$25 a year.

Putting it in a way that the hon. Member for Drumheller will fully appreciate, the total cost of the operation of the Drumheller Valley School Division -- the Starland School Division, I believe it is called -- was a little bit less than one-third of the cost of the deficit, the amount of the annual red ink that we are running out. The hon. Member for Wetaskiwin-Leduc who is not here at the moment, would appreciate that the annual net deficit of the railway is equal to the amount that would operate two county school systems adequate for the County of Leduc.

The hon. Member for Olds-Didsbury would be interested to know that the same would prevail in the case of the County of Mountain View School facilities. It would take two years of that school facility's operations to equal the amount of money currently going down the flue due to the Alberta Resources Railway.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I know that there is some question about the timing of my motion. It appears that it could contain the seeds of considerable embarrassment for the hon. Minister of Industry and Commerce, as well, I suppose, for the Cabinet.

I am confident, however, that the hon. Ministers are courageous enough and humble enough so that if in fact the House should decide that we should not go ahead with the reconstruction of that railway, or the repair of that railway, it would be possible for them to seek an honourable way out of the agreement which has been reached with the CNR. And I think that they have demonstrated their courage in this situation. I must confess that I hesitated quite a while to add to the adversity and the load imposed upon the shoulders of the Minister of Industry and Commerce. He is already carrying something for which there apparently seems to be no answer, so I hesitate to embarrass him further, but I am sure he will be quite equal to the task.

I also realize it is time that members became concerned, that we do not allow ourselves to get into the position that apparently has prevailed in times past. We need to dare to question our cabinet ministers if we feel that there is a matter of grave concern, and I think, in so doing, we develop a better government. Certainly on this side of the House we believe that a strong government can best be assured by inquiring, participating members, and the hon. Premier has demonstrated this, and repeated it time and again. If the opposition is not as effective as it could be, then, of course, it is doubly vital that the members on this side participate to the maximum extent.

Now, last November 1, the Minister of Industry and Commerce did outline to the House certain measures for auditing or evaluating the situation with respect to the Alberta Resources Railway. Sometimes I considered when I was preparing my notes for this speech, that we ought to call it Alberta's Receding Railway,

because if we don't keep pouring gravel and steel on top of it, apparently about 50 miles of it will disappear in three years time.

But the hon. minister did outline measures for audit of the financial structure of the railway, procedures for undertaking engineering studies, an outline of preparation for a legal review of the situation, and for geological studies as well. So far, I'm unaware as to what has resulted from those studies and I would hope that the minister will see fit to participate in the debate, and perhaps to outline to us some of the information gained from those particular studies.

Just to go back a bit in history. The railway started out in 1965 with an estimated cost of about \$30 million -- \$33 million I think it was. There is some correspondence to the effect that the CNR engineers apparently prepared this estimate -- if in fact, it was anything other than just a quick 'guesstimate' -- without doing any location surveys or anything of that nature. In other words, it was a very, very preliminary figure. They subsequently did some location surveys and studies and very quickly raised the cost estimates substantially -- in the order of \$95 million.

Now, from there the actual current situation is, I believe, that the capital debt, or the debt, capital and interest charges accrued to date, amounts in total to approximately \$130 million. In 1972 it was \$126 million; there was about \$5 million of additional red ink due to interest charges. So that would make it approximately \$131 million.

The projection in the hon. minister's statement of last November 1, if one works it out, would indicate that by 1978 we'll have about \$150 million of red ink with respect to the Alberta Resources Railway.

Originally the cost of hauling coal on the railway, was considered in the area of \$1.40 per ton. Subsequently, arrangements were made to allow the haulage of coal at 50 cents per ton, so we ought to have very keen regard to the income situation of the railway. The situation seems as though it may be further aggravated by some problems that the coal industry, especially in the area of Grande Cache, is currently experiencing, and also problems with overseas contracts.

There was a suggestion last November first that the agreement between the ARR and CNR was unclear. I think it is vital to this House that we all know what the position of that agreement is before an irrevocable decision is taken to proceed with the railway.

The press release put out, I believe on January 31 this year, suggests that a division of responsibility has been agreed upon and that the government will undertake, as part of its share, capital improvements such as crossings, culverts and buildings. It is pretty important that we have some idea as to what these may amount to. Are we going to add another million dollars, another five million dollars, another ten million dollars to the red ink we already have?

In other words, there still remain, as far as I personally am concerned, a lot of unanswered questions, questions which I think the minister should be able to answer. Even though we are caught in a situation not of this government's making, I think that it behooves all of us to try to seek the best way out. I am sure that if a courageous decision is required, a decision not to proceed with the railway, then we should be citizens responsible enough citizens, to make that kind of a decision. I do not think that we should allow ourselves, as apparently past cabinets may have done, not to look carefully at priorities, not to look carefully at alternatives of transportation.

You know, one of the questions which keeps coming back to me, every time I look at this Alberta Resources Railway fiasco, is where was the Minister of Highways? Was any consideration ever given to the possibility of truck transport? What kind of an overall transportation system did we have? Or was the minister of the day, in fact, looking through pretty narrow blinders, Mr. Speaker? Was he looking through blinders so narrow that he could see only a small portion of what really would be a total transportation policy? Perhaps he may wish to comment on this later on.

Mr. Speaker, the first point of inquiry I have specifically listed for investigation has to do with the flood characteristics of the Smoky River. The Smoky River in a stretch of 37 miles of road bed, washed out 15 miles of railway in 1972. In 1971, a year and a half approximately after the railway was opened, the run-off that year was sufficient to put the railway out of commission for six weeks. At that time, Mr. Speaker, had the pattern of minor repair

continued, we could have called it the Annually Restored Railway. So I think, in view of this kind of problem with that road bed, some pretty searching questions need to be asked about the geological and hydrological situation of the railway. There is no use repairing something that in fact, is going to cost us more to repair than the value of the product over it.

I have already mentioned the impact of the coal industry on the railway and the fact that our transportation tariffs are low. The industry seems to have some difficulty at the present time and does not seem to have progressed the way it was first thought, apparently, that it might. I think that some consideration -- even though the minister of the day may not have given it consideration at that time -- some consideration should now be given to whether an alternate route of truck transport or roadway transport might not be more economical. Perhaps we could convert the road bed in some way for truck or automobile traffic in a more economical manner than we can repair the railroad.

I have also mentioned, Mr. Speaker, the third point which has to do with cost of repairs. We know that the Canadian National Railway has agreed, apparently, to repair and continue the maintenance of the railroad, at its expense. The concern that I have, and that every member should have, is that the CNR or ARR -- all of it must come out of our pockets as citizens of this country. Let's try to make the decision which is the fairest to all of us in this situation. So we need to know what is the true projected cost of repairs by the CNR, then what are the costs of repairs and other costs to the Alberta Resources Railway, the ones we will end up paying for as a provincial government.

There are some alternatives, I think, which might be open to us. I have suggested that we ought to consider, if it wasn't done before, the possibility of truck transport instead of railway transport.

But I think we could look at the railway a little differently, too. Most of the damage, apparently, is between Grande Cache and Grande Prairie. If we do not repair that portion of the line, will the revenues lost be of a significant nature? Really, that boils down, I guess, to asking if the revenues will be sufficient to meet the cost of repairs of that portion of the line. So far as I am aware at present, there is no hard information generally available to the public on this particular matter. How close is the railway, really, to breaking even in that portion?

There is another way of looking at the railway, and it is one which deserves looking at, but we shouldn't allow ourselves to be carried away by it. It has been suggested that it is a development railway. If we care to look at it in that respect, then we have to look at the potential for development of the resources in the foothills in that particular area. But I'd like to know what that potential is, not some dream that will -- just by putting a railway through -- automatically generate sufficient resource industry, or, if you will, secondary industry, based on those resources in order to make it worthwhile.

It could well be, and may well be, that kind of input in the decision-making process will be sufficient to outweigh the shorter term considerations of costs exceeding benefits. But I say again, I think it's time we stop hoping and start estimating as closely as is possible to do.

I have tried to consider why the government of 1965 went ahead with the Alberta Resources Railway, and I came across -- actually what I came across that may have a bearing on it is, I believe it's called the fourth principle of Social Credit. [Interjection] No, it's maybe worse.

Social Creditors believe that that which is physically possible and desirable can and must be made financially possible. [Interjections] I'm not sure, you know, as an aside whether it is physically possible or physically desirable or if it is physically possible and desirable. In any event, I think the matter should have some further analysis than just being physically possible and desirable. There are lots of things physically possible and lots of things desirable and lots of things that are both physically possible and desirable which are certainly not financially possible and should in no way, in my view, be considered to be financially possible by a government -- by a responsible government. [Interjections] Responsible government, yes, we are. [Interjections]

Since we're talking about responsibility, Mr. Speaker, I am, I wonder who was, if anybody --- as a responsible member of this Legislature, Mr. Speaker, I have to bear in mind now that the Alberta Resources Railway currently has left us with about \$80 of debt per capita in this province. Now, Mr. Speaker, that's about \$350 to my family, that may only be \$80 or \$85 to the hon. Member for

Drumheller, but it is still pretty significant to the rest of us who have other responsibilities.

Mr. Speaker, in closing my portion of this debate I would hope that the debate here on this motion will add additional light to the situation of the Alberta Resources Railway. Heaven knows, that mess needs every bit of light that can be shed upon it. I hope, in the course of the debate, it will be possible for us to come to a considered decision as to what we should do with the railway. If, in fact, it turns out that we have to take the hardest of hard decisions and write it off as a lost cause, then let's be men enough and women enough to do it. Mr. Speaker, I look forward to the contribution of other members on this debate.

MR. BUCKWELL:

Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member would permit a question. You mentioned that there is \$80 per capita to the people of Alberta and you mentioned your own family is \$350. It just sort of intrigued me.

MR. YOUNG:

Mr. Speaker, since I was asked the question, I was speaking in generalities in terms of the \$80 and the \$350. I may have further news to report to the hon. member at a later date. If I do I will announce it.

MR. APPLEBY:

Mr. Speaker, in seconding the motion that is just being proposed by the hon. Member for Edmonton Jasper Place, I would like to say that I feel he has covered the subject in a very excellent manner, done a very comprehensive job. I can see the evidence of his scientific mind in the way he has analyzed the whole situation. I am glad he has done that part of the job as far as this motion is concerned, because I don't intend to pursue that line of reasoning in the remarks I have to make.

While I am in complete accord with the three clauses of the resolution as they are stated, I have to wonder, perhaps if we should not be going quite a bit further in this investigation in some other areas as well. I am thinking particularly of one of the things that my colleague mentioned about the original costs of this railroad, how they escalated from the first estimates to the second, the third, the fourth, until they got completely out of control.

One other thing I would be interested in seeing looked into, would be the actual construction procedures that were used in building this Alberta Resources Railroad. How the bidding was carried out on the tenders, who the contractors were, and in general, what procedures were used in this part of the construction.

However, because this Alberta Resources Railroad became such a topic of discussion in Alberta over the last five or six years, and because people could not actually believe that such a problem could be made to exist by a government that considered itself to be responsible -- of course that has been proved different since then -- I began to wonder if the story was actually true and if the railroad was actually in such a serious condition as it was made out to be. You know, the whole thing, Mr. Speaker, seems something like you would read in "Believe It or Not," or could be called maybe, "The Impossible Dream" or "Impossible Nightmare" or something like that.

When they drilled the last spike in the CPR, when that railroad was completed, they wrote the story of how the West was won. I wonder maybe, when they drilled the last spike in this railroad if the Social Credit party should not have written a sequel called, how the North was lost.

However, thinking all these things over and believing they must be impossible I thought I would like to go out there and take a look at some of this monstrosity myself. I made this remark to my wife and she said, "Well, why don't we go?" So we loaded up our old Volkswagen with a camping outfit and went out into that territory between Grande Cache and Grande Prairie and spent several days there.

I had three motives in fact. I wanted to take a look at this railroad, or so-called railroad; I wanted to look at some of the reforestation areas that the previous government said were coming along nicely and also some of the block timber cutting that had been proceeding in that area. I also thought I might do a little bit of fishing as well. So, away we went.

We got out to that part of the country. It was still raining most of the time. We slid down hills and we scrambled back up and we got scratched and we got bruised and we used our field glasses and I got a pretty good impression of what this railroad looked like in actual fact down there in the valley, Smoky River. I want to assure everybody that the media had not stretched this story one little bit. In fact, it was a lot worse than we had read about in the newspapers. No doubt about that.

Having had some experience in the construction business, there were two personal conclusions that I came to when I examined this portion of the railroad north of Grande Cache. One was that -- and my colleague has mentioned something about the location surveys -- I could not really believe that these surveys had been done with any regard for the future, in the way of climatic or weather conditions.

Actually you wouldn't have to be a technician, you wouldn't have to be an engineer to know that where this railroad was located, you were certainly courting disaster from the elements in the future when the climatic conditions became what they were in 1971-72. And you only have to leave those kinds of opportunities open to mother nature. Once in a while she certainly is going to take full advantage of them, and she certainly took full advantage of the opportunities there.

Many parts of the railroad had been located right on the ancient, alluvial flood plains of the Smoky River, and it was quite obvious what would happen. The first thing was, if it was going to be put in that kind of location the type of construction had to be of the sort that would be able to withstand some of the elements they might expect in the future. Quite apparently this had not been done, and quite apparently there had been no provision for any real reassessment of this after the railroad started to settle.

These are the sorts of things that make you wonder how such a railroad could be built in such a vulnerable location, and how so much money could be spent. So many people who were responsible had not asked the type of questions that are being asked today by my hon. colleague for Edmonton Jasper Place and myself. I am sure, as I stand here in the Legislature right now, and as my hon. colleague stands here today and asks pertinent questions, that had this problem come up when we were in the Legislature we would have wanted to know some of the answers at that time. I can't understand why the hon. members of the government didn't want these questions asked then. It's almost impossible to understand.

We have to wonder about a great many additional things as well. What about the rebuilding cost on this railroad? Are these estimates we have going to be the ones to be accepted as firm-bid prices? In looking at the railroad, that 37 miles and the way it's located, it seems to me there would be only two possible assurances that this would be a stable railroad in the future. One is that it would be moved to higher ground so it would not be subject to flood conditions in the future. The other would be that it would have to be extensively ripped-rapped at if it was to be somewhere in its present location. This is the sort of thing that would have to be done.

If this is so, I cannot see that the CNR estimates of the cost are anywhere near what it would cost to rebuild this railroad. Somebody might say, "So what? The CNR is going to do all of it." Who is paying for the CNR? We never want to lose sight of the fact that whenever costs of government institutions are mentioned, whether local, provincial, or federal, the taxpayers are paying the costs. This is where we have to place the responsibility in the end.

In the end we have to assess this from two view points. We have to say, "What are the long-range possibilities for this? What type of revenue will it produce? Is it a necessary service? What is going to be the value to the Province of Alberta?" We have to compare this to the cost and to what use could be made of these finances if they were put to some other use in the province.

Mr. Speaker, for these reasons I certainly support this motion. I think perhaps it could have gone a little further in looking into some of the past costs and the type of construction. Perhaps these are some of the things that will be revealed anyway, if an investigation comes about, and I think they should be.

Mr. Speaker, before my hon. colleague for Edmonton Beverly left a minute ago he asked me how the fishing was on my trip. To tell the truth, Mr. Speaker, I didn't catch many fish. But I suppose that is kind of understandable because when the Social Credit Government built that railroad I expect they thought they had caught all the fish in Alberta anyway.

MR. DIXON:

Mr. Speaker, I didn't intend to get into this debate today, but after listening to the hon. members, and after doing a little bit of homework last night, I think the trouble with this resolution, Mr. Speaker, is that there has been a lot of political noise made in Ottawa in the last few days. Ever since the Conservative opposition went to Ottawa they are going to say, "Well we are going to have a vote of non-confidence in the government," and the only thing I can see in this resolution is that the hon. members opposite got so disgusted with the leadership of Mr. Stanfield on the non-confidence motion that they thought, "Well, we had better bring one in of our own, with our own government. Maybe that will satisfy the people of Canada." This is what this motion amounts to.

I think it is the first time in the history of the Alberta Legislature that a vote of non-confidence has been brought in by a government that has only been in office 18 months.

MR. DIXON:

You know, if it isn't that, there might be one or two other reasons. I have heard that there are a few members opposite on the back bench. They are awfully anxious to get on the front bench. I can see their frustrations at times -- it shows up quite plainly, and I can see that they have lost a battle in the caucus, so they are bringing it to the floor of the Legislature hoping that the Premier will consider them for a post on the front bench. However, I think that if he stops to analyze the situation, where they are bringing in a non-confidence motion, even if it isn't against their own government, it's against one of their own ministers. So with that type of judgment, I think the Premier had just better hesitate a moment, and look twice to see that he is making the right move, if he does move some of the hon. members to the front bench. Apparently they were ignored, and now they want to use the Legislature to bring their grievance to the floor of the Legislature.

It's really a frustration move, I think, on behalf of the two hon. members, and for anyone that may support this motion. I think so because according to the press release given out on January 31 by the very government opposite they said "reached after long negotiations". It wasn't a quick decision according to their own words. There were a lot of negotiations, and they came up with, what I consider is a reasonable settlement. It looks to me like the government of Alberta will have to pay out a maximum of \$2.5 million in a total cost of somewhere around \$8 million. Now, I think the minister must have given a lot of thought to this before he committed the people of Alberta to even \$2.5 million -- to guarantee that \$2.5 million would be paid.

I believe, if the hon. members want to look through history, there is no railway of any substance in our nation of Canada that has ever made money in the first years of its operation. As a matter of fact, the CNR is still being subsidized heavily and always has been for the last 30 or 40 years, by a direct subsidy from the taxpayers of Canada. We know that in a growing province or in a growing country, if you are going to expand, you need transportation. If we put dollar value on every road that has been built in this province for the use of trucks, as the hon. member has mentioned, or cars, you could use the same kind of statistics and say, "Well, we've lost that much money down the drain."

I saw a press release by the hon. Minister of Highways just the other day, where he said that one road has had to be built three times. You can use any kind of logic that you want to make your point. But I still think that the hon. members opposite should consider the fact that transportation is a vital part of the growth of our province. I think we are wasting time in this House, when we are talking about opportunity funds to build new areas or to restore older areas, if we aren't willing to spend money on transportation because transportation is vital.

Mr. Speaker, I'm surprised that the hon. Minister of Agriculture didn't catch this motion before it came before the House, because I'm sure he would have told the two hon. members that it is, in effect, a non-confidence motion, if not in the government, then in the minister in charge of the department.

Now he is asking these hon. members, Mr. Speaker, to vote on a non-confidence motion on one of their own ministers. There is an easier way of doing it, if you haven't any confidence in your minister, well then, under privilege you can bring in a motion that he be replaced, and maybe the Premier might listen to them, rather than try to bring in this motion saying, "Let's delay the decision; the decision isn't a good one, and so let's delay it."

Well this may be all well and good for the two hon. members opposite, but I don't know how it will go over with the miners in the constituency that Mr. Dowling, the hon. Minister Without Portfolio, represents. If that railway closes down, the mine will close down definitely, and I'm sure, with all credit to the hon. minister, for whom I have much respect, he has been working overtime to try to solve the problems of the mine. But then if we want to finish his discussions, we just close the railway down and he doesn't need to worry about the miners.

I'm surprised at the hon. Minister of Agriculture because I can remember in this House when he was getting up -- "let's do something for the farmers up in the Grand Prairie area so they can get their grain to market at a better rate." And here we have today two hon. members sitting behind him saying, "Let's cut this off, we don't need to worry about any transportation of grain. Let's forget about the miners in Grande Cache, let's forget about the farmers in Grand Prairie and Northwestern Alberta." I just hope that some of the hon. members opposite will have the good sense to vote against this motion, and to urge the hon. minister to go forward with his agreement and get the --

AN HON. MEMBER:

How are you going to vote?

MR. DIXON:

-- get the miners back to work and get the grain moving again, and also to help build this great province of ours. You know --

DR. HORNER:

I wonder if the hon. member will permit a question?

MR. DIXON:

Certainly.

DR. HORNER:

I wonder if the hon. member is aware that the one action of the Alberta Grain Commission, in pricing the structure of barley prices, helped the farmers more in Grand Prairie than the building of the Alberta Resources Railway?

MR. DIXON:

No. I wouldn't dispute any fact like that, hon. minister. What I am trying to say is, why throw up roadblocks? I don't care; we've done a lot of things that have helped the farmers.

AN HON. MEMBER:

I agree with that.

MR. DIXON:

But if the Alberta Resources Railway will get their grain there at a cheaper rate I'm all for it.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Where did you get that rate?

MR. DIXON:

Now, Mr. Speaker, I say this. It is alright to have a lot of hindsight like the hon. members are displaying on the other side of the House, but I am sure we can point out the things already in the 18 months where they probably made some decisions that didn't work out as they had hoped. And if they are in government for any longer length of time than the present term, they'll make a few mistakes. Some of them won't be big ones, but it's easy to go back and say, don't do this and don't do that.

But I still say that transportation is vital to the growth of our province and I think that we should do everything we can to get this railway back in motion again, and as I say, I congratulate the hon. minister. I'm not too happy with some of his press reporters because they spend half the time saying what the former government had done instead of saying what the hon. minister was

doing -- I don't know what that means -- but anyway we don't care who is getting the blame. We want to know who is going to do something about getting the railway back in action, so that the people in the area affected can have the assurance that the railway is going ahead and will be operating normally as soon as the repair work is carried out.

I emphasize again, Mr. Speaker -- and this is one of the reasons that I got on my feet -- that if this motion is passed, it is tantamount to a vote of non-confidence in the government, and, in particular, in the minister. The minister to me is an honourable man and I will be very, very surprised if this motion passes, that he does not resign his seat in this House. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview, followed by the hon. Member for Calgary Mountain View.

MR. NOTLEY:

Mr. Speaker, I welcome this opportunity to take part in what is clearly a totally non-partisan debate. I must agree, however, with the hon. Member for Calgary Millican. It is rather astonishing to see this kind of resolution introduced by two members of the Tory caucus because last fall when the cabinet toured the Peace River country, they made it quite clear on a number of occasions when people questioned them that the question of the ARR repairs was under the most thorough investigation, that the most careful analysis would be given to the matter, and that any decision that would be made would clearly be made only the basis of the most objective assessment of the facts. So, having heard those things from the hon. ministers last fall, I find it rather surprising to see a resolution introduced which suggests that we need a great deal more information and that obviously we should wait a while until we receive that information.

Let me say at the outset, Mr. Speaker, that I am sure with the benefit of hindsight if you were to ask the vast majority of the people in the Peace River country whether or not they would want a 120 million dollars spent today to build them a railway or whether they would prefer that that 120 million dollars be spent on other projects, the vast majority of them would prefer the latter. But that is with the benefit of hindsight. Perhaps it should be noted that we have a study on highways in the North Peace that is quite interesting -- for the equivalent of two years interest on the ARR we could pave the road all the way from Grimshaw to the B.C. border and pave roads into every single community, according to this particular highway study, for the equivalent of two years interest on the ARR. But the fact of the matter is that this is hindsight.

The fact of the matter also is inescapable, Mr. Speaker, that regardless of what we do, even if we say alright, we are not going to repair the ARR, we are going to let the thing go. The fact of the matter remains we still must honour the debenture interest payments. We cannot avoid that responsibility. It exists, whether we like it or not. So that being the case, it seems to me, Mr. Speaker, that the most prudent course would be to ascertain what steps might be taken to make this a paying proposition. I suggest that in looking at the cost benefits it is completely ridiculous to talk about the overall costs, the overall interest costs on the 100 million dollar railway.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please! I am not at all sure that the hon. member is being recorded for Hansard.

MR. NOTLEY:

Are we back in business again? You would not want to miss any of my gems of wisdom for the posterity of the province I am sure, Mr. Speaker.

In any event, the hon. member, in introducing the resolution, talked about the coal industry. But I submit that we would have to look far beyond just the coal industry in the Grande Cache area and examine the potential for developing the north itself, not just talking about the Peace River area. I think we have to look beyond. I am going to describe what I mean in just a moment. But even as you examine the Peace River country itself, there are some obvious features of industrial development that would make a railroad, through the present ARR route very feasible.

It seems to me that if we are going to expand agricultural processing in the north, this is an argument for a ready outlet for the products produced. If

we go ahead, eventually, with the Clear Hills iron ore deposit, the extension of the NAR across Dunvegan up to Worsley, it could make this a very paying proposition and perhaps give us the basis, someday, in Alberta, of an integrated iron and steel industry, especially if we harness the vast power potential at the Peace River at Dunvegan. Admittedly, these are all future possibilities, Mr. Speaker, but when we talk about the long-term potential benefits of the ARR, we surely have to examine them.

Beyond that, let's take a look at still another vital issue affecting northern development and could make the ARR pay. I'm talking about development in the Mackenzie. We have the great debate in Canada over the Mackenzie pipeline, but there are a number of people who argue quite forcefully that we should have a railroad instead. Indeed, Kingston University has commissioned a ground transport study, which documents in quite substantial detail the merits of a railroad. One of the possible advantages of a railroad is that we could, by extending the ARR across Dunvegan, utilize the ARR and make this an indispensable and important cog in our over-all transportation development, not just for the Peace, but for northern Canada as a whole.

These are some of the possibilities any government should be examining, and I would hope, Mr. Speaker, that the government in Alberta will be examining these prospects. No doubt they took at least some of them into consideration when they concluded the agreement announced in the press release of late January.

Let's also remember that we are not just talking about the total debenture interest, as I tried to explain at the beginning of my remarks. We're stuck with that anyway. If we are going to look at the cost benefits, then we should examine the cost of repairing that 37 miles against the benefits to the people involved. It seems to me that if you put it in that context, Mr. Speaker, the government's position is much clearer, and the obvious need to proceed is necessary.

I've raised this at a number of meetings I've held throughout the Peace, and I've found invariably, wherever I've gone -- whether I've been in the Grande Prairie area or throughout my own constituency or over in other parts of the Peace that don't directly benefit from the ARR -- that the people at these meetings say, "Fine, we don't really think that it was a wise expenditure in the first place, but the fact of the matter is that now that it is built, if we are ever to recover the public investment, if we are ever going to properly utilize the facilities that are there, let's clearly make the repairs as called for by the agreement outlined a few weeks ago."

So therefore, Mr. Speaker, I find the resolution introduced by the two hon. members on the backbench a little surprising, and one which I hope this House gives short-shrift. The one point in the resolution that does make some sense is that in rebuilding the railway the CNR would be cognizant of the flooding that took place, and consider engineering changes in the route, if necessary, to make sure that this sort of thing doesn't happen again. I can only assume, since the government took so long to reach a decision on this matter in the first place, that the hon. minister has fully discussed this matter with the CNR and that, in fact, those changes will be made as a result of all the thoughtful investigation that has taken place since the railroad was washed out -- so we were told by the cabinet -- last June.

In general then, Mr. Speaker, the resolution that we have before us is not really the kind of resolution that will get this House anywhere. It seems to me is a partisan resolution which is attempting to find fault with the past government. Why worry about the past government? My friends across the way, the ball is in your court now, your left with the responsibility of governing this province. I think the people of this province are interested in what you are prepared to do. Surely, wasting a good part of the Legislature's time trying to cast reflections on what might have been the mistakes of a former administration, is not really going to get this Legislature anywhere. It is certainly not the kind of responsible attitude which I think voters in this province have a right to expect from their elected representatives.

MR. SPEAKER:

The Chair had previously recognized the hon. Member for Calgary Mountain View, followed by the hon. Minister of Public Works.

MR. LUDWIG:

Mr. Speaker, I am interested to note that both the hon. Minister of Public Works and the hon. Minister of Industry and Tourism are anxious to speak and I

am anxious to hear them. It will be a change to hear them say, and hear what they say in Grande Prairie.

I believe this motion was primarily intended to divert attention from the fact that the Conservatives in this province have got a little more egg on their face than they anticipated, in the short time that they have been in office. Secondly, Mr. Speaker, when they talk about hindsight, I suppose we should have looked at Canadian history, and taken a page out of the Conservative history, and done it the way they did it. We should have, perhaps, given all kinds of mines and minerals to the people who built the railway so that they can live happily ever after, and the people will be paying for it the rest of their lives. I don't believe that looking at the history of the Conservatives in railway building, is at all beneficial to anybody. If we are going to deal with history, I thought some Conservative, who admires their glorious past, might give us a few pages from "The Last Spike" to see how they did it. That would be interesting.

But the hon. members here are interested in history. I believe they can't possibly just say that the railway was a financial loss. I understand that the hon. Minister is spending \$12 million to provide some quick jobs, providing about four months of work for about three or four thousand people. That is money that has to be spent. In looking back, one can hardly say that is money well spent, that they planned well in advance and that this money is well spent. This money is not all well spent, Mr. Speaker. I believe that if you look at the jobs that were provided by the railway, by the construction of this railway, and the spending, and the multiplier effect of what has happened there, you will find that compared to the \$12 million dollars they are spending, on a dollar-for-dollar basis plenty of jobs were provided and there will be more. I believe that the people of this province have a little more faith in opening up the province of Alberta than saying that the railway is not paying for itself.

I would like some hon. member over there to get up and tell me which railway is paying for itself. Or are they advocating that if railways aren't paying for themselves, let's close them down. These are things they are confronted with. The NAR, is it paying for itself? Are some of the railways up north paying for themselves? I'm not in favour of closing them down at all. Nor am I in favour of saying, let's pull the rug from under the people in Grande Prairie, and let them walk from now on, they don't need a railway. I still believe that with good management and some good policy on the part of this government, that country can be opened more and that railway will turn out to be very beneficial. I believe that when we talked about relevant debate that the hon. member Mr. Appleby got into fishing. I didn't want to get into this, but if he is so anxious about fishing I'll have to tell him, as a parting shot, why doesn't he take off to Slave Lake for a couple of weeks and try his luck down there.

DR. BACKUS:

Mr. Speaker, I believe that the Alberta Railway to Resources was a splendid dream, just as it was a dream to establish a railroad linking the East to the West. I am sure, as previous speakers have said, that nobody was expecting that railroad either to pay for itself in the first few years of its operation. Although I imagine there were many sitting in the House in Ottawa at the time it was being conceived in Eastern Canada who were being critical of the money being spent in driving a railway across the western part of Canada.

I believe it was a very real dream and a very sincere effort to establish a link between the south half of the province and the north half of the province and it was seen as a means to encourage the development of the north and persuade industry to develop in this part of Alberta.

Unfortunately, I think perhaps somebody was still dreaming when they were dealing with the wide awake CNR. However, as a result of the floods, our very wide awake Minister of Industry and Commerce has worked extremely hard and for a long period and negotiated in a very business-like manner with the CNR and has reached an agreement to have this railway restored. I believe that we should therefore go ahead with the restoration of this railway as early as possible.

When the railway was first built, I believe the people in the Grande Prairie area, and that part of the West Peace River, did look upon it in an emotional way as well as in a factual way. I think the people up there felt that the rest of the province was cut off from them, or they were cut off from the rest of the province. When they saw the railway being developed in the neighbourhood province travelling up through Dawson Creek and in fact, bringing a good deal of goods and supplies up to that end of the Peace River, they felt even more cut off than they had before. It was therefore with tremendous

satisfaction and tremendous emotional feelings that we saw this shorter connection to the rest of the province.

I think however, with the experience of having it washed out, and the studies and the second looks that people have taken in that area, that they are now looking at this railway in a much more practical and less emotional way. However, I think they are still very conscious of the need for this railway even though it may have been emotional initially.

I think the people up there now look upon this railway in its true light as a very essential link to, not only the rest of the province but to the coast, and they feel a real need of this shorter route to provide definite savings to the farmers in that area and they look upon it as a very essential facility to bring industry into this part of the province.

I think it must be recognized that the railway has, in fact, encouraged two major industries, the coal industry and the pulp industry to develop in this general area. And I think we also recognize that with the more regular train service that will be provided when the pulp mill goes into operation, that other industries already established up there, will possibly start using the ARR for shipping out their plywood and lumber. I think too, it is hoped and expected that other industries will develop in the area. I was sorry that the proposers of the motion were not aware of the potentialities of that area. I would like to mention a few.

The steel industry has expressed a definite interest in the area because of the presence of coking coal and sources of iron ore in the Clear Hills area and in the Pine Point area. Also, the coal trains returning from the coast could pick up iron ore on the way through British Columbia and bring it up to the area. Such a consideration would not even be considered in the absence of a railroad.

Investigations of the area show the presence of certain structural characteristics which are similar to the Colorado Plateau in the United States which has uranium-bearing sedimentary rock. Nobody has actually found uranium up there and it may not be there, but nobody has looked for it and probably would not look for it in the absence of a railway.

I feel that our main development up there is not going to be in the way of minerals along the route of the railway, although there is a large coal deposit between Nose Mountain and the Simouette River. This is high calorie bituminous coal, and is not suitable for the type of use being made of the coal at Grande Cache. However, it is a potential source of energy that some day might provide a cheaper form of electricity, and this too might encourage the development of secondary industries. I don't think the railway would stimulate resource industries in the area. These are already stimulated in forest industries, the coal industry and also some sulphur development. But this is more of a development in secondary industries. The possibility of the development of paper industries, the pulp mill, rapeseed crushing plant, and alfalfa palatizing plants in the area -- all are programs of secondary development that would result in more use being made of a railway, and would probably not develop in the absence of this railway.

Therefore, I feel there is a tremendous future for that part of the country, and a railway, even if it is going to be a loss to the people of the province in dollars and cents, is going to be an essential factor in the development of the northwest.

I would like to re-emphasize the fact, because such a large percentage of the public seems to be unaware of it. They talk about tearing up the railway and putting a road down the rail route. They feel this would answer our problems better. I think it is essential to realize that the money has been spent on the railway, considerably more money than the citizens of Alberta originally anticipated or were told about. The money has been spent on that, and we have to pay off this bill whether we like it or not. There is only one way in which the railway can even partially pay off the costs of this capital investment, and that is by carrying freight. While it remains on the bottom of the Smoky River it is certainly not going to be carrying freight, therefore there is will be no contribution to paying off this debt until that railway is re-opened. In view of the fact that so much excellent work has gone into reaching an agreement to get this re-opened, I think the sooner we get it re-opened the better it will be, not only for the people of the North and the people as a province as a whole but for the ARR.

[Applause]

MR. HENDERSON:

Mr. Speaker, it was indeed enlightening to hear the words of the hon. Minister of Public Works. I am pleased to know that there are a few gentlemen seated opposite who take the affairs of the Province of Alberta a little more seriously than others do.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Hear. Hear.

MR. HENDERSON:

As I examine this resolution, I can only conclude that it has been an exercise in levity, and I think it has fallen flat on its face. As I examine the resolution, and the comments that have been forthcoming by the mover and the seconder, I am led to three or four conclusions.

Firstly, we seem to have a number of gentlemen seated opposite more concerned in looking backward than they are in looking forward, and in that regard I guess we will have to cross the word "Progressive" off the words "Progressive Conservative" party, because certainly this can't be considered a very progressive resolution. In fact, it is largely a waste of time.

Mr. Speaker, I have no doubt that no one is very happy about the fact that the exercise certainly cost more than it had originally been anticipated, and I think even a lawyer with rather elementary engineering knowledge, Mr. Speaker, can appreciate the exercise of building this railroad is much like building a bridge. One doesn't build a bridge half way across a river and say, "We had better shut it down as we can't afford to finish it." The only hope of recouping the original half invested is to finish the job, and this is the responsibility of government.

Turning back to the deduction so far as I read into this particular motion, I also conclude, Mr. Speaker, that it's looking backwards -- the theme of it is looking backwards. And it's certainly in keeping with the tone of the Throne Speech. I think the two have much in common and much ado about the very little the Conservative Party has done. But again, it is looking backwards in keeping with the tone of the Throne debate.

I think it is also in keeping with the fact, Mr. Speaker, of the rather evident hardening of the political arteries already set into the Conservative Party by virtue of the fact -- at least according to press reports, -- that after such a tremendous accomplishment in gaining office. It was a tremendous accomplishment, we accept that, -- that to read the paper of their political convention in Calgary this year, they only had two resolutions and these were referred to some sort of committee. I suggest that the gentlemen who were the mover and seconder should have made this resolution at that convention, and it should have been referred to the same committee. Because that's about where . . . [inaudible] . . . I think the point that may be well taken it certainly does not do any justice to the ministers of the government themselves. This has been actively pointed out by my colleague on my right, and the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview. So, it's really just an entertaining exercise.

I think when one examines the motion itself, -- if one were to really seriously accept that we go ahead with this motion -- if they think that building a railroad was a misuse of public funds then certainly entertaining this resolution would be a further misuse of public funds.

This is quite characteristic of the Smoky River. This was examined before the road was built, and I am sure it was examined once again by the present administration. I can't imagine the CNR, after the embarrassment in which they found themselves in this issue, would be prepared to call another \$5.5 million into it unless they felt it was a good investment.

The question of the effect of the development of the coal industry in the Alberta Resources Railroad: well I think this has been amply illustrated and is pretty well evident.

The estimates of the costs of repairs: I don't challenge the integrity of the people who provided the estimates, and I hope they are realistic. But obviously the real responsibility in this matter, as far as the repair job rests with the CNR, and the settlement arrived at between the government and the CNR illustrates this fact. So far as we are concerned under the terms of the contract, there was never any doubt.

I think if we have any criticism it is facing the fact that it has taken this long to get the matter settled, some nine months. But once again, we understand the predicament the government found itself in, in dealing with this matter immediately on coming into office, or shortly after coming into office.

There is one thing, I think, Mr. Speaker, that should be stated in the remarks, in keeping with the remarks from the hon. Minister of Public Works. Because obviously there is a major need for better diversification of the Peace River economy. Obviously agriculture has got to be a highly risky business in the Peace River district. And there is going to have to be more public money infused into diversifying the economy of that part of the Province of Alberta to brighten up the agricultural prospects, because that part of Alberta has been in really serious economic difficulties for the past several years. Certainly restoring this railroad grade is one major step towards assuring that that diversification will take place. And when somebody stands up and suggests they want to borrow over \$2 1/2 million of the Alberta taxpayers' money to assure that diversification will proceed, I suggest it really doesn't even merit levity in the House, but rather scorn.

It is also a fact, Mr. Speaker, that the motion contradicts people seated on that side of the House, as well as this side. I know a number of members, and I'm sure the government, have condemned the federal government for allowing a number of branch lines throughout the province to close because they are uneconomic and so forth. And here we have a motion suggesting that we should close a line that is of considerable economic significance to the future of a sizeable portion of the country under the jurisdiction, indirectly or directly, of this Legislature.

I think our efforts in trying to convince the federal government that many of the branch railroads in the province are essential to provincial economy destroys the credibility of the existing government in this matter. It destroys the credibility of the previous administration, and it destroys the credibility of members of the present Legislature on both sides who have made some very vociferous protestations to the federal government in this matter.

Coming back to the question of diversification of the Peace River country, I say again that I think there is going to have to be infusion of considerably additional amounts of public money into the Peace River area to promote diversification. I bring it to the attention of the members of the House once again. I'm convinced that the province should get on with the job of planning the harnessing of the hydro potential of the Peace River. There is a tremendous potential there. Let's forget all this nonsense about the Bennett Dam and what it has done to the delta. That's a fact, too, just as the province with the railroad is a fact. But there is a tremendous potential for further diversification in the Peace River to eliminate once and for all these boom or bust problems they had with an agricultural economy. Rather than quibble over this, I think if the members seated opposite had brought a resolution before the House urging the government to proceed post-haste with efforts to see that that potential is developed, it would certainly have been a constructive exercise, because the repair of the railroad in the long term is essential.

Certainly further infusion of public funds is indeed going to be necessary to see that the northern part of Alberta enjoys the same benefits that the southern parts -- particularly our two major urban centres in the southern half of the province -- have enjoyed for many years. There is no reason they should be made to suffer in that regard.

So, Mr. Speaker, I simply conclude by saying that I think the resolution is ill-timed. It was ill-considered; it was ill-presented; it was ill-thought of; and there really isn't very much levity in the matter in the final analysis.

MR. PEACOCK:

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

MR. SPEAKER:

Has the hon. minister leave to adjourn the debate?

HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

MR. HYNDMAN:

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

MR. SPEAKER:

Does the House agree with the hon. Government House Leader's suggestion that it is 5:30?

HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

[Mr. Speaker left the Chair at 5:25 o'clock.]