

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ALBERTA

Thursday, February 22, 1973

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

PRAYERS

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair.]

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

DR. PAPROSKI:

Mr. Speaker, I take great pleasure in introducing to you and through you to the members of this Assembly some 35 students, accompanied by their instructors Mr. Joe Belanger and Mr. Dennis McFarlane, who are located in the members gallery. They are from that famous school -- that famous teaching facility located in my constituency -- known as NAIT. I would like to welcome them, and also congratulate them on taking a day off to look at the democratic process in action.

MR. YOUNG:

Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure today to introduce to you and through you to the members of this Assembly, some 40 Grade 9 students from the Calvin Christian School, in my constituency. Calvin Christian draws students from quite a large section of the city. These students are here today with some of the staff members and I would ask them to stand and be recognized by the Assembly.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Highways Ministers Conference

MR. HENDERSON:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to address a question to the Minister of Highways. It is our understanding there was a conference recently of the prairie highways ministers in Saskatchewan. Did the minister send a representative to that meeting?

MR. COPITHORNE:

Mr. Speaker, the answer is no.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Planning Act Amendments

MR. WILSON:

I would like to address a question to the hon. Minister of Municipal Affairs. Is it your intention to introduce extensive amendments to The Planning Act at this session of the Legislature?

MR. RUSSELL:

Mr. Speaker, it looks as if some amendments to the existing Planning Act will be introduced. We are trying to keep them to the very minimum.

As you know, I had indicated earlier that it was our hope to get the new Planning Act tabled in this session this spring and leave it till the fall session, so the public and interested groups would have a chance to look at it. We were still receiving representations from various groups until the end of December in response to our invitations for submissions with respect to the new act. I am not very optimistic about the chances of our being able to get a well-written act in for first reading this spring. So we now have under consideration the possibility of bringing in a minimum number of amendments to the existing Planning Act at this session.

MR. WILSON:

Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Will those various industry organizations and professions be given an opportunity for input when you do bring in the whole new act?

MR. RUSSELL:

Yes, there has been considerable input already as well as two public hearings. That is the idea of bringing the act in at one session and passing it at the next, so there will be several months of time available to anyone who is interested to make observations.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Smoky River Dam

MR. NOTLEY:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to address my question to the Minister of the Environment. Is it true that the government is planning the construction of a flood-control dam across the Smoky River?

MR. YURKO:

Mr. Speaker, looking at all aspects of the Alberta Resources Railway, I asked my department to investigate how the Smoky River could be managed to provide some form of protection to the railway when, in fact, it was rebuilt. So what we have done thus far is take a look at this aspect of the Smoky River. We have produced a pretty massive report in this regard. I subsequently referred the report to Calgary Power, as well as to Canadian Utilities, and asked them for their comments in regard to tying the management of the Smoky River with the possibility of hydro power development; so the situation rests there at this time. It's simply a matter of study.

MR. NOTLEY:

Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question. Is it true that Fish and Wildlife were given 24 hours to prepare an environmental impact study on the possibilities of flooding in the area?

MR. YURKO:

Mr. Speaker, I am not aware that the Fish and Game Association was brought in on this matter at all. As a matter of fact, we did this entirely as a departmental report. I then sent it out to the two power companies asking them for their comments in regard to the possibility of tying protection in with hydro installations.

MR. NOTLEY:

Mr. Speaker, just as a matter of correction, I didn't say the Fish and Game Association. I said Fish and Wildlife -- a department of government.

MR. YURKO:

Well Mr. Speaker, this whole matter is at such a preliminary stage of review that before any decision is made we have a series of interdepartmental committees -- one being the Conservation and Utilization Committee -- and at some point in time every department is brought in on any project like this. But it is much too premature to bring in other departments in regard to some of these studies we are making.

MR. NOTLEY:

One final supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Is the minister in any position to give the House an idea at this stage of how much flooding would take place in the Willmore Wilderness Park, if such a project were proceeded with?

MR. YURKO:

Well, Mr. Speaker, the report prepared by the Department of the Environment is something that is going to be made public in this House. I was going to make it public, but the Minister of Industry felt it was more appropriate to make it public in regard to his remarks, and he will certainly table that document. Then the hon. member will have an opportunity to see just what the extent of the study has been.

But as I indicated, it is certainly just a preliminary study at this time to determine if there were any possibilities in terms of protecting the railroad from Grande Cache downstream by virtue of building either an impoundment dam to regulate the flow or else an impoundment dam with a power site included. The whole matter is very, very preliminary at this time, and if we go ahead with it, far more study and examination will take place in regard to cost-benefit analysis, technical feasibility, fish and game, environmental matters, and so forth.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Calgary Mountain View, followed by the hon. Member for Stony Plain.

Gasoline Prices

MR. LUDWIG:

Mr. Speaker, my question is to the hon. Provincial Treasurer. In view of the fact that gasoline and fuel oil prices went up in the province recently, and in view of the fact that the government is indicating that it will extract about \$180 million from the mines and mineral industry, is it the intention of the government to perhaps reduce the gasoline tax to pass on the benefits to the people of the province?

MR. MINIELY:

Mr. Speaker, I can tell the opposition is waiting with a great deal of anticipation for March 2. I don't know why they are having difficulty restraining themselves.

MR. LUDWIG:

Mr. Speaker, I doubt whether this is a question that the --

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please! Order, please! It is completely out of order for the member to reflect on an answer given by a minister and I would again refer him to annotation No. 171 of Beauchesne.

MR. LUDWIG:

Supplementary question, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

There is some doubt as to whether there can be a supplementary to something which was not a question.

MR. LUDWIG:

Mr. Speaker, I then wish to rephrase my question. Is it the intention of the government to reduce at all the gasoline tax in the province at the present time?

AN HON. MEMBER:

Wait till March 2.

MR. MINIELY:

Mr. Speaker, I don't know how many times I can tell them, that on March 2 I will be presenting this government's budget for the coming fiscal year. At that time all these matters will be clarified.

MR. LUDWIG:

Doesn't the minister know what is in the budget by now?

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

The Hon. Member for Stony Plain followed by the Hon. Member for Calgary Millican.

Federal-Provincial Bilingual Program

MR. PURDY:

I have a question for the Minister of Advanced Education. It is in regard to the recent announcement made last week between the federal and provincial governments that funds would be available for the promotion of bilingualism. Will any provincial funds be put into this program?

MR. FOSTER:

Mr. Speaker, the answer to that is no, except on a special project basis. This is fully funded by the federal government providing teacher bursaries, scholarships and travel funds. There is provision under the arrangement we have with the federal government, however, for special projects. Either the federal government will fund them entirely or jointly with ourselves. However, we have approved no such special projects to date.

MR. PURDY:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Will other languages be recognized -- say German or Ukrainian -- other than the French language?

MR. FOSTER:

Well, Mr. Speaker, this program, initiated by the federal government, arises as a result of recognition of the fact that constitutionally, legally, and historically, we are a bilingual nation. We would have no jurisdiction in providing additional funds for third and fourth language instruction. Of course, we are concerned that second, third, and fourth language instruction in anything beyond English and French be made available to students and adults in Alberta through their universities and colleges. But we don't directly fund any such programs.

DR. PAPROSKI:

Mr. Minister, have you inquired whether there are, in fact, funds from the federal government for languages other than French and English?

MR. FOSTER:

No, Mr. Speaker, I have not. But I would be happy to pursue this matter.

MR. TAYLOR:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Is the hon. minister convinced that this bilingual instruction, starting at the high school age, will create a people who can speak two languages?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. member is not entitled to ask a minister for an expression of personal opinion.

MR. TAYLOR:

Mr. Speaker, is this the opinion of the government? They are following a policy, and what I am trying to find out is whether the government thinks this is going to be a worthwhile policy in view of what has happened in the past.

MR. FOSTER:

Mr. Speaker, all I can answer is from a very personal point of view, and to say that I sincerely wish that I had had the opportunity to learn a second language from about Grade 4 on. And I am delighted if that opportunity exists for people in the public school system today.

[Applause]

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Calgary Millican followed by the hon. Member for Drumheller.

Calgary Aldermen Investigation

MR. DIXON:

Mr. Speaker, my question today is directed to the hon. Premier, regarding the government investigation of two Calgary aldermen, Alderman Tom Priddle and Alderman Ross Alger of the City of Calgary, by The Alberta Human Rights Commission. In light of this case, is the government planning any legislation that will protect an elected official from making statements in committee or in council within the confines of a city hall?

MR. LOUGHEED:

Mr. Speaker, the answer to that would be no, but certainly we will watch with interest the report that we receive from the Human Rights Commission on the matter. At this stage all I have are the newspaper reports I have read.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Purple Gas Abuses

MR. TAYLOR:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to direct a question to the hon. Provincial Treasurer and it does not involve the budget. Has the government devised any safeguards aimed at eliminating abuses in the use of tax-free purple gasoline?

MR. MINIELY:

Mr. Speaker, the hon. Member for Drumheller asked me that question in the last session. I think I indicated at that time that we want to proceed in this area with a great deal of caution because the government certainly has concern with any area of collection of government revenues, whether it be fuel oil tax or other areas of revenue in which we are aware there are some abuses by citizens.

I indicated at that time that I would also be very concerned that we don't move too rapidly in enforcement in any of these areas where you over-enforce and thereby create real and perhaps unnecessary hardships upon all of our citizens or a segment of the Alberta population.

So it is not a matter, Mr. Speaker, in reply to the hon. member's question, that I intend moving on quickly without a good deal of examination -- because I think there is need for caution.

MR. TAYLOR:

Mr. Speaker, a supplementary. Has the hon. minister identified some of the main items of abuse at this time?

MR. MINIELY:

Yes, Mr. Speaker. I am aware of abuses, and I get reports of abuses, but, Mr. Speaker, I can only say that I know of a lot of abuses in income tax. We are talking about human rights. The opposition, Mr. Speaker, has had a lot to say about human rights; we have said a lot about human rights. Certainly I feel that this is an area in which you are starting to border on human rights if you

over-enforce government collection procedures or government enforcement procedures.

So, again, I can only say that while I have the matter under review, I am not going to move too rapidly on it.

MR. TAYLOR:

Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Would the hon. Provincial Treasurer agree that unless those who abuse this are apprehended quickly, it is very unfair to those who are obeying the law?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. member is making a statement in the nature of debate.

DR. BUCK:

I have a supplementary, Mr. Speaker. How extensive are the prosecutions under this fuel oil tax section?

MR. LEITCH:

Well, Mr. Speaker, I would simply have to gather some statistics on that. I certainly can't answer it from any information that I carry around with me.

MR. SPEAKER:

Possibly the hon. member could put that question on the Order Paper.

MR. TAYLOR:

A supplementary to the hon. Provincial Treasurer. Has the Provincial Treasurer any idea of how long this is going to take? Will it be one year, three years, four years, ten years? Has he any indication of what time is involved?

MR. MINIELY:

Mr. Speaker, really I am trying to -- I know the hon. Member for Drumheller sometimes has a hard time comprehending -- but I am trying to say, Mr. Speaker, that in income tax, people have been abusing the law since the time it was implemented. They have also been abusing other government taxes from the time they were implemented. Certainly we want to have these things under review, but I am not prepared to over-enforce or create an enforcement procedure which is going to over-assert this authority of government for the sake of eliminating every abuse in the government collection procedure. That is what I am saying. I am not going to put a time limit on it, either, because I am going to tread carefully in this area.

MR. SPEAKER:

Is this a supplementary? I think we have exhausted this subject. We have had about seven questions on it.

MR. HENDERSON:

[Inaudible]

MR. SPEAKER:

Then perhaps it might come up again after all the members who are already waiting with their questions have had their chance.

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

Provincial Auditor

MR. HO LEM:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question today is directed to the hon. the Premier. Mr. Premier, will the appointment of a new Provincial Auditor be made soon?

MR. LOUGHEED:

Mr. Speaker, I think we announced at the time we presented Mr. Huckvale to the House upon his retirement, that we would have an acting Provincial Auditor, Mr. Rogers, for some period of time, and that it might be as much as 12 months before we actually made the appointment of a provincial auditor. We intend to have a public advertisement in due course with regard to the matter, but we are not moving on a particular appointment anything earlier than within a time frame of one year.

MR. HO LEM:

Mr. Speaker, a supplementary. The House was assured that a legislative committee would be set up to provide some guidelines and terms of reference for this position. Is that not true or has that been changed, and will there be a legislative committee set?

MR. LOUGHEED:

Mr. Speaker, I am not familiar with that particular point. Perhaps the Provincial Treasurer could respond to it.

MR. MINIELY:

I'm sorry, Mr. Speaker. Would the hon. member repeat the question?

MR. HO LEM:

Yes, was the House assured that a legislative committee would be set up to provide for some of the terms of reference and guidelines for the position, and also in establishing what procedures would be used in the method of hiring this new person?

MR. MINIELY:

No, Mr. Speaker. At the present time, as the Premier indicated, we have filled the position with an acting Provincial Auditor, Mr. Rogers. At the present time we have not set any terms of reference relative to the permanent appointment of the position or relative to the Provincial Auditor's function in the future.

However, I would say that I know the Premier and I are personally interested in the suggestions of anyone knowledgeable in the area of finance, and knowledgeable in the area of auditing in the Province of Alberta who would be prepared to advise us what they think should be the role of the provincial auditor in the future. Also, we encourage qualified people anyone may know -- and any members may know -- to apply.

I would say one important overriding principle that I would commend to all hon. members; that the provincial auditor is one person whose independence of position must be maintained. I know the Premier and I feel that it is very important that this is maintained; he reports to the Legislative Assembly. So to that degree we are interested in the best qualified person we can obtain, but by the same token I think it has to be available to everyone.

I think the government feels it should not exercise, totally, the influence on who the replacement of the Provincial Auditor might be; we recommend him to the Legislative Assembly.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. member -- Is this a supplementary?

MR. HO LEM:

In view of your statement, I am just wondering whether you, in your position as Provincial Treasurer, would be precluded from the committee that is going to set the guidelines, for obvious reasons?

MR. MINIELY:

Mr. Speaker, I am not sure that a committee to set the guidelines is even necessarily a proper concept. Once an auditor is appointed, his independence is even such that he must report on the basis that he feels he should report to the Legislative Assembly. I think there would have to be a great deal of consideration given by the Premier and by myself before we decided that a

committee of the Legislature should in any way unduly restrict the activities of the Provincial Auditor. Perhaps we will take it under advisement, Mr. Speaker.

MR. HO LEM:

A supplementary, I hope the Provincial Treasurer will see my concern that there is room for criticism. If you --

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. member is debating, this is not a supplementary question. The hon. Member for Calgary Millican with a supplementary.

MR. DIXON:

A supplementary question to the Provincial Treasurer, Mr. Speaker. I was wondering what action the government has taken on the two suggestions that the Provincial Auditor left with us when he retired. I refer to his concern about the rising debt within our province, and secondly, the unlawful transfer of trust funds in our province to the general revenue. What action has been taken by this government?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. member is asking for a statement -- for an answer. ...[Interjections]... Order please. He is asking with regard to something that is a matter of general policy, which is specifically ruled out in 171 of Beauchesne and which is a subject which can be aired completely when the budget is being debated. Otherwise we are going to be dealing with the topic here in the question period, and dealing with it again when the budget debate comes up.

Pre-Audit System

MR. WILSON:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker, to the hon. Provincial Treasurer. Is the government committed to continuation of a pre-audit system?

MR. MINIELY:

Mr. Speaker, I have just indicated to the hon. member, and all hon. members on both sides of the House that we are interested in the views of citizens in the Province of Alberta, particularly those who have expertise and knowledge in the area. The government is not committed either way at the present time, and I don't think that anyone in this House would feel there should always be a permanent commitment and that we should not analyze old ways of doing things or look at new ways of doing things.

But in doing so I think it is important that we have the input of the most knowledgeable people, not only in this House but in the Province of Alberta, in the field and in the area. So in answer to the question, I am not committed either way at the present time.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. member -- is this --?

MR. DIXON:

I was wondering if I might direct a supplementary to the hon. minister ---

MR. SPEAKER:

Might this be the last supplementary. We have had a great series of supplementaries on this topic?

Trust Funds

MR. DIXON:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My supplementary question is, have the trust funds been transferred back to general account, those that were taken out? Have the trust funds been replaced back in the trust funds from the general account?

MR. MINIELY:

Mr. Speaker, the first thing that I would like to say to the hon. member in reply to this, is that I consider my major responsibility as Provincial Treasurer --

MR. SPEAKER:

Order please. Would the hon. Minister please come directly to the answer.

MR. MINIELY:

Mr. Speaker, the Attorney General and I, along with the Legislative Council and the Provincial Auditor, are ensuring, basically, at all times when we manage cash funds, that we are adhering to law, where there is a proper and true trust interest. Mr. Speaker, this becomes a question of law, when there is a trust interest and when there is not a trust interest, which I am not capable of answering in the House. I certainly will say that, at all times, I will manage funds that are in the public interest of Alberta, and ensure that they are used efficiently for the citizens of this province.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Highwood, followed by the hon. Member for Macleod.

Education Finance Plan

MR. BENOIT:

My question is to the hon. Minister of Education, Mr. Speaker. Will the Minister of Education, under the new education finance plan for 1973 to 1975, be considering making any changes in this plan to allow more flexibility in the supplementary requisition area having regard to those school districts that have been more frugal in their spending in 1970 to 1973?

MR. HYNDMAN:

Yes, Mr. Speaker. There are changes, as have previously been announced, in the manner in which the supplementary requisition can be raised by local school boards.

There will continue to be a control guide-line by the government with respect to the degree and percentage of rise each year in the supplementary requisition. Seven and one-half per cent is the basic formula, but the details of it are somewhat different. I would suggest that if the hon. member's school division or school board has a particular interest as to how this is going to affect them, if he will provide me with that information, I would be happy to follow it up for him.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Macleod, followed by the hon. Member for Wainwright.

Irrigation and Rehabilitation

MR. BUCKWELL:

Mr. Speaker, a question for the hon. Minister of Environment. Last week, the federal Minister of Agriculture spoke to the Irrigation Project Association in Lethbridge regarding irrigation and rehabilitation. Have you or any of your colleagues had any formal or informal discussion with the Hon. Eugene Whelan regarding an agreement in this matter?

MR. YURKO:

Mr. Speaker, I have had no discussions with Mr. Whelan on this matter.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. member for --

MR. WYSE:

A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Is the provincial government, then, maintaining its original position on the matter?

MR. YURKO:

Mr. Speaker, the matter is under active negotiation.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Wainwright, followed by the hon. Member for Clover Bar.

Food Prices

MR. RUSTE:

My question is to the hon. Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs. Has any representation been made or will representation be made by the government to the federal Committee on Food Prices?

MR. GETTY:

Mr. Speaker, I believe this has been raised in the House before, and that the hon. Premier mentioned it was the intention of the government in fact to make a presentation before the federal Committee on Food Prices.

MR. RUSTE:

A supplementary question. Has it been made to this point?

MR. GETTY:

No, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Clover Bar, followed by the hon. Member for Pincher Creek-Crowsnest.

Hunting Regulations

DR. BUCK:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to address a question to the hon. Minister of Lands and Forests. Has your department, in consultation with the municipalities or counties, resolved the problem of hunting in the areas around the major population centres?

DR. WARRACK:

Mr. Speaker, this is really a sensitive and an important problem the member raises. There are strong representations from really three different groups in Alberta, one being the sportsman, -- and if I may do so, I would distinguish the sportsman from the vandal shooter, who really causes the problem; secondly, the landowner; and thirdly, the municipalities.

We have had these representations from all of them and you might have noted that in the 1972 Game Regulations we did include some prohibitions on the shooting of firearms from roads. This has helped the situation a considerable amount. But I really would be the first to admit that that is not a complete solution and we are working on it the best we can. It is a really difficult situation. It is an important question.

DR. BUCK:

Supplementary to the Minister of Municipal Affairs. Are the counties within their rights to ban hunting? Or are they ultra vires?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. member is asking for a legal opinion.

DR. BUCK:

I'll rephrase that. Will the Department of Municipal Affairs be giving a directive to the counties as far as hunting goes in these areas?

MR. RUSSELL:

No, they won't be giving any directives, Mr. Speaker. The municipalities that have invoked the appropriate section, relating to the discharge of firearms within the municipalities, are acting properly under the act in its existing form.

MR. PURDY:

Supplementary, Mr. Speaker, to the Minister of Lands and Forests. Have you any information of how effectively the program is working in the County of Parkland re banning of firearms along highways and roads?

DR. WARRACK:

Mr. Speaker, I think really, the answer in part depends on which side of the issue you ask about. I know that the sportsmen are concerned and feel it is a problem. On the other hand, the municipality feels that it has alleviated the problem to a considerable extent.

I am really not sure that I could make a judgment beyond those two kinds of representations that I have had.

DR. BUCK:

A short supplementary to the hon. Minister of Lands and Forests. In the areas we set out, where they are using shotgun slugs and bows and arrows, how has this worked out in an area like that east of Sherwood Park?

DR. WARRACK:

I think that particular matter has been working out more successfully in recent months than a year ago, or two years ago, just judging from the fact that both the frequency and intensity of the mail on the matter that I have had, has been less.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Pincher Creek-Crowsnest, followed by the hon. Member for Olds-Didsbury.

Well-Log Information

MR. DRAIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the hon. Minister of Mines and Minerals. Is well-log information eventually made available to the Department of Mines and Minerals? And is this catalogued by your department?

MR. DICKIE:

Mr. Speaker, it is. I'm not sure exactly how the cataloguing takes place, so I'll have to check that for the hon. member, and let him know on that point.

MR. DRAIN:

Does any information indicate the possibilities of the availability of geothermal developments in Alberta?

MR. DICKIE:

Mr. Speaker, I wouldn't like to comment on that from the logs. But I can say to the hon. member that representation has been made to our department on that. Those who have made representation to our department have indicated they feel there is a basis for doing exploratory work in that area.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Olds-Didsbury, followed by the hon. Member for Lethbridge East.

Mobile Homeowner Insurance

MR. CLARK:

Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Attorney General. I would like to ask the Attorney General if either his office, or the office of the Superintendent of Insurance, has investigated the alleged tripling of insurance rates for mobile homeowners in the province?

MR. LEITCH:

I would have to make inquiries of the office of the Superintendent of Insurance, Mr. Speaker. I'm not aware of any.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Lethbridge East, followed by the hon. Member for Vermilion-Viking.

Grain Elevator -- Lethbridge

MR. ANDERSON:

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct a question to the Minister of Agriculture. Is the provincial government negotiating with the federal government to purchase or lease the government elevator in Lethbridge?

DR. HORNER:

No, Mr. Speaker, not at this time.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Incompleted Houses -- Vermilion

MR. COOPER:

Mr. Speaker, my questions are for the Minister of Municipal Affairs. Is the hon. minister aware that construction of some 15 very much needed houses in Vermilion, financed through the Alberta Housing Corporation, came to a stop sometime ago due to financial difficulties of the construction company? Each of these homes is approximately one-half to two-thirds completed?

MR. RUSSELL:

No, I wasn't aware of that particular situation, but if the hon. member would like to discuss it with me at the end of today's session, I would be pleased to follow it up for him.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Hanna-Oyen, followed by the hon. Member for Medicine Hat-Redcliff.

Co-terminus Boundary Committee

MR. FRENCH:

Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Municipal Affairs. When will the co-terminus boundary commission be established?

MR. RUSSELL:

Mr. Speaker, it is not a commission, it is an advisory committee, and there is a slight, but important difference. It is in the process of being formed now. It will be a five-member committee, with membership invited from the ASTA, AAMD & C, and the AUMA; in addition to those three organizations, one citizen at large, plus one permanent chairman. I would hope that the organizations I mentioned would nominate their members and we could then discuss and consult upon a chairman who would be acceptable to all the parties. It is that stage we are at now.

MR. FRENCH:

Supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. With respect to the appointments of public at large, would the minister appreciate recommendations from the the public?

MR. RUSSELL:

Certainly, Mr. Speaker.

MR. FRENCH:

Supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. When would the minister anticipate that all recommendations will be considered, or what is the time element involved, and when would you want these recommendations?

MR. RUSSELL:

Well, if the hon. member has one he could give it to me tomorrow. We would like to get the committee functioning as quickly as possible. The organizations I mentioned have sent in their replies and, in fact, we have the one member from the AUMA nominated. The others are waiting for their monthly directors' meetings. But it is our hope to get the committee functioning as quickly as possible.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Civil Service Association

MR. WYSE:

Yes, Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct a question to the hon. the Premier. Does the government agree with recent statements of the Civil Service Association that there exists a major morale problem within their ranks?

MR. LOUGHEED:

Mr. Speaker, I will refer the question for clarification and response to the Minister of Manpower and Labour whose responsibilities are involved.

DR. HOHOL:

Mr. Speaker, I am not aware of allegations or a statement officially from the president or the executive or the membership. In a large organization such as ours, or even in smaller organizations like family units and the boy scouts and so on you are going to have some problems. But the problems are healthy ones and to the best of my knowledge the morale of the Civil Service is in top shape.

MR. WYSE:

Supplementary question to the Premier then, again. Did the Premier receive a telegram from the Civil Service Association, advising of the morale problem, and what did it state?

MR. LOUGHEED:

Mr. Speaker, I will have to check my records over the course of the evening and respond on that question tomorrow.

MR. WYSE:

Supplementary question, then, Mr. Speaker. Did the telegram say --

MR. LUDWIG:

If morale is as high as the hon. minister --

MR. SPEAKER:

Order please! If that is the hon. member's supplementary, I would suggest that he proceed with the main question for which he is next on the list.

MR. LUDWIG:

My supplementary question to the hon. minister is, is he helping the Civil Service draft those advertisements in the paper that are addressed to the Premier?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Calgary Bow --

MR. LUDWIG:

I want to move, I want to ask my question. Now that was a supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

[Interjections]

DR. HOHOL:

Obviously, Mr. Speaker I would not assist the Civil Service local, the Calgary local of the Civil Service Association, in drafting telegrams to the hon. the Premier with respect to ongoing collective bargaining! And as I said on the floor of the House two or three days ago, my view and the view of the government, and my experience in collective bargaining, is that it is most successful and most effective when it is done in private behind closed doors. The telegrams sent out are deemed to be an approach to influence or to effect certain conclusions with respect to collective bargaining. Obviously I wouldn't be party to sending to ourselves a series of telegrams criticizing our end of the negotiations.

DR. PAPROSKI:

Mr. Speaker, a supplementary to the hon. Minister of Manpower. Is it not true that the morale of the Civil Service reached its lowest level by August 30, -- ?

MR. SPEAKER:

Order please! The hon. member is clearly making a debating statement.

MR. WYSE:

To the Minister of Manpower and Labour. When did the contract with the Civil Service expire?

DR. HOHOL:

Mr. Speaker, the contract between the Civil Service Association of Alberta and the Government of Alberta expired on the last day of December, 1972.

MR. WYSE:

One supplementary question, then. When can we expect these negotiations to be completed?

MR. SPEAKER:

Surely the hon. member can't expect the minister to embark into the realm of prophecy. The hon. Member for Calgary Bow -- is this a supplementary?

DR. BUCK:

Yes, Mr. Speaker. It is a supplementary to the Minister of Labour and Manpower. Are the gaol guards negotiating under the entire perusal of the CSA or are they negotiating separately?

DR. HOHOL:

Mr. Speaker, I have two comments. One is the classification that the hon. gentleman is inquiring about, a division called correctional officers. This is extremely important, and something that was important even before we were the government. It was one of the issues in dispute at the time as to what they were called. That is for the record, and I think it is important. The other is that the negotiations are in several divisions, one of which is the one he asked about, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Calgary Bow, followed by the hon. Member for Drumheller.

Conflict of Interest

MR. LUDWIG:

Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I was under the impression you had indicated I had the next question. I had directed a supplementary to the Minister of Labour, and then I seem to have been lost in the shuffle. I still would like to direct my question, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The Chair was in some doubt as to whether the seriousness of the hon. member's question indicated it to be a supplementary or a main question.

MR. LUDWIG:

I intended it to be a supplementary, Sir. May I proceed with my main question? I have a question to the hon. Premier. Is it his intention to bring in any legislation this session dealing with conflict of interest of ministers?

MR. LOUGHEED:

Mr. Speaker, it is not my intention to bring in legislation, but I believe toward the latter stages of the spring session I should have a statement for the House on the matter. But it will be a statement and not legislation.

MR. LUDWIG:

Would it perhaps be a statement of guidelines to the ministers as to how they should act in this regard?

MR. LOUGHEED:

I would obviously presume that the member would take from my remarks that that's what was intended.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Calgary Bow, followed by the hon. Member for Drumheller.

Programs for Epileptics

MR. WILSON:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct a question to the hon. Minister of Health and Social Development. Are you planning any new educational programs which would help correct public misunderstanding of epilepsy?

MR. CRAWFORD:

Mr. Speaker, I would have to say that up until this moment that was a subject I hadn't given consideration to. I would be pleased to hear whatever it is that has inspired the hon. member's interest in the subject. If representations are being made, I would certainly want to see them and would be glad to learn more of them.

MR. WILSON:

Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Do any public-education programs presently exist on the subject of epilepsy in your department?

MR. CRAWFORD:

Mr. Speaker, I couldn't call forward for the hon. member the details of everything that is put forth through the Health Education Branch of the department, but I would be pleased to get that information with regard to epilepsy and provide it.

MR. WILSON:

Supplementary, Mr. Speaker, to the hon. Minister of Highways. Is it the government policy to refuse drivers' licences to all epileptics?

MR. SPEAKER:

The Chair is unable to see the connection between the supplementary and the main question.

MR. WILSON:

On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, the subject is the problems of epileptics and so I was directing it to the Minister of Highways --

MR. SPEAKER:

Would the hon. member proceed with his question?

MR. COPITHORNE:

Mr. Speaker, in regard to the question asked by the hon. Member for Calgary Bow, the people who have a history of epilepsy are quite often refused drivers' licences until they have had a satisfactory record from the doctors of at least two years of no recurrence of epileptic seizures.

MR. WILSON:

Supplementary, Mr. Speaker, to the hon. Minister of Manpower and Labour. Does your department have any employment programs for epileptics?

DR. HOHOL:

Mr. Speaker, I commend the question and the subject. Without specific reference to epileptics -- our department, in conjunction with the Minister Without Portfolio from Rocky Mountain House, the office of the Public Service Commissioner and other departments -- is much concerned. We do work in this area and give special consideration to plans and programs for the handicapped that are under way. You will recall that this question came up on the floor of the House, also the former question by the same hon. member with respect to the employment of handicapped people. The government is working with industry and labour within and outside the building and is conscientiously and with proper consideration handling this problem. I appreciate the question very much.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Drumheller followed by the hon. Member for Edmonton Kingsway.

Impaired-driving Convictions

MR. TAYLOR:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to address a question to the Attorney General. Is the Attorney General in line with the reasoning of the Provincial Treasurer, and in the interests of human rights as outlined by the Provincial Treasurer, going to go easy on enforcing the impaired-driving sections of The Highway Traffic Act?

MR. LEITCH:

Mr. Speaker, I am quite often astonished by the agility with which the hon. Member for Drumheller jumps from one statement to another conclusion. It demonstrates a great muscular capacity but I am not so sure about that other essential capacity ... [laughter]

Really, Mr. Speaker, there are obviously different levels of enforcement of the laws within the Province of Alberta, some of which are primarily enforced as a result of complaints. There are others, and there is a level of enforcements which is much lower than the level of enforcement one might expect for what are considered very, very serious laws, the breach of which would have very, very serious social consequences, such as drug trafficking and things of that nature. So when we look at a level of enforcement we must examine the nature of the law we are enforcing and then assess what level of enforcement ought to be used.

MR. TAYLOR:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker, to the Attorney General. Do you consider the cheating of the Provincial Treasury a minor offence?

MR. LEITCH:

He is jumping again --

[Laughter]

MR. TAYLOR:

The people are jumping too!

MR. SPEAKER:

We have time only for the question of the hon. Member for Edmonton Kingsway.

Law Enforcement

MR. HENDERSON:

I might just ask a quick supplemental. And I think the supplemental would be in order, Mr. Speaker, in view of the discussion which has taken place. Is the House to gather quite seriously, Mr. Speaker, that some of the laws of the Province of Alberta may not be enforced as they have been in the past, due to the Alberta Human Rights Bill or the interpretations and implications of it? This was the implication left by the Treasurer and we would like a clarification of it.

MR. LEITCH:

No, Mr. Speaker, that's not right at all.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Edmonton Kingsway.

Highway No. 2 Lighting

DR. PAPROSKI:

Mr. Speaker, a question to the hon. Minister of Highways. There has been concern expressed by citizens in Edmonton that the lighting on Highway No. 2 from Edmonton to the International Airport is not satisfactory. I wonder if the hon. minister is contemplating any improvement in that matter?

MR. COPITHORNE:

Well, Mr. Speaker, I have had no presentations to me on this subject, I have had no complaints at all.

DR. PAPROSKI:

Mr. Speaker. If I received the complaints, could I direct them to you and would this prompt you maybe to investigate the matter?

Oil Nomination Figures

MR. HENDERSON:

On a Point of Privilege, relating to an answer from the Minister of Mines yesterday. He indicated he would provide to the House information regarding the magnitude of March nominations of Alberta crude as compared to ... [inaudible] ...

MR. SPEAKER:

May the hon. Minister of Mines and Minerals have the leave of the House to continue the question period sufficiently to give this information?

HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

MR. DICKIE:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On the interesting question the hon. Leader of the Opposition raised yesterday, concerning figures, I didn't have the exact figures then, but I checked later on and do have them now. I would like to read them. January was 1,715,000 barrels; February, 1,743,000; March, 1,737,000; April, 1,619,000; and May, 1,643,000.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

MINISTERIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

MR. LOUGHEED:

Mr. Speaker, in rising under Orders of the Day, I have an announcement that I would like to make to members of the Assembly.

Since assuming office in September 1971, our government has been concerned with the development of the new town of Grande Cache, which now has a population of close to 4,000 citizens. As the members of this Assembly are well aware, this community has experienced problems from the outset, despite substantial expenditure of public monies in terms of social capital and facilities. Many of our ministers have made site visits to the community, together with the MLA, the hon. Bob Dowling, in an attempt to better understand the history and the circumstances of its development and the various possible options open to the government by way of government policy and program. Our government has been frustrated in its attempt to determine appropriate courses of action to solve these problems by a lack of information and hard facts regarding the history of the development of this community, so that the degree of provincial government responsibility and obligations can be accurately assessed.

We have been seeking out over the course of the past ten days an outstanding Albertan who might assist us in this matter, and the Lieutenant Governor in Council has therefore ordered this morning a public inquiry, under The Public Inquiries Act, which provides for a public inquiry into a matter which by the commission is declared to be a matter of public concern.

I would like to note, Mr. Speaker, the distinction between a judicial inquiry involving a member of the Bench, as mentioned a few days ago, and a public inquiry. The former involves a question of allegations and a public inquiry, in our view, involves essentially a fact-finding request with request for recommendations.

Mr. Speaker, we have appointed Mr. N.R. Crump of the City of Calgary to act as the Chief Commissioner (to make the inquiry and to report thereon). The Commission will consist of two additional members who will be appointed shortly -- one of whom we anticipate will have a labour background.

The request for a public inquiry was made to us from a number of sources, including the delegation from the Alberta Federation of Labour, some weeks ago.

The terms of reference of the commission are to investigate the entire history and circumstances of the development of the new town of Grande Cache, and in particular to

1. ascertain any undertaking, commitment, or representation given by the previous or present government administrations to any company, group, association or person which could involve a continuing responsibility for public funds upon the Alberta government;
2. determine the extent of the representations or undertakings made by McIntyre Porcupine Mines Ltd. to any employee or group of employees as to long-term employment security or any other representations or undertakings made by the company, either to employees, to the citizens of the community, or to the government;
3. determine the economic viability of the operation of McIntyre Porcupine Mines Ltd. and of the community itself, and make recommendations as to steps which could be taken to strengthen such economic viability, which should include a review of the pricing provisions of contracts for the sale of coal, the cost of production and a review of the reports supporting management's decision to make major changes in policies affecting production;

4. review as soon as possible the application of McIntyre Porcupine Mines Ltd., presently before the Energy Resources Conservation Board, to open No. 9 mine and present an interim report from the commission on a recommended course of action regarding No. 9 mine;
5. review the actions taken to date by both the previous and present government administrations in providing support and public funds for this community, and to recommend to the government alternative courses for future government policy and programs for this community.

Mr. Speaker, we will ask the Commissioners, because of the urgency of the situation, to report as quickly as possible. Mr. Crump has estimated that, subject to the length of any public hearing and discussion with the other commissioners, the final report should be completed during this summer.

In the meantime, we have assured representatives of all interested parties of the continued support by the provincial government to maintain the viability of this community, pending receipt of the Commissioners' report.

We have also written to the president of McIntyre Porcupine, expressing our concern at the lack of notice of the layoffs of the employees. We are also making a renewed request for them to provide us with data regarding the re-negotiation of contract prices for the sale of coal from the mine to Japanese interests. We have offered, as a government, to assist McIntyre Porcupine in any attempt at upward re-negotiation of the price for the product.

Mr. Speaker, we have concurrently specifically requested the Alberta Energy Resources Conservation Board to provide us -- because of their statutory responsibilities in the coal industry -- with a supplementary report as to the long-term economic viability of the coal industry in the province, including the operations at Grande Cache. This, Mr. Speaker, would also include the matter raised in the House yesterday with regard to Ontario. Our Resource Development Committee of Cabinet has spent considerable time on this issue and requires the overview by the board to assist in any long-term planning which will strengthen this important Alberta industry.

We are concerned, Mr. Speaker, however, with regard to any continuing obligations of the provincial government which provide a disproportionate share of funds received from the taxpayers of Alberta to any one community; and we await the Commissioners' report before making a decision in this regard.

MR. HENDERSON:

Mr. Speaker, I would simply say that in view of all the difficulties that this particular part of Alberta has encountered in the past few years - problems with the railroad, problems with technology in the mine, problems with marketing, and problems with labour - the inquiry will serve a useful public purpose, and hopefully will concentrate on looking to the future of the operation, rather than a non-productive review of the past. --[Interjections]-- The future is pretty tough too.

WRITTEN QUESTIONS

119. Mr. Henderson asked the government the following question:

What are the government's guidelines as to waiver of sulphur extraction requirements for gas plants processing sour gas?

MOTIONS FOR A RETURN

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.

[Adjourned debate: Mr. Taylor]

MR. TAYLOR:

Mr. Speaker, in connection with Motion for a Return No. 109 I would like to make a few comments. The question involved is asking for information, including the names of 80 tourist-oriented individuals and corporations who received loans from the \$50 million Opportunity Fund in 1972, the location of these tourist-oriented projects, the amount of each loan, and the securities that were given. I think these are the points that are open for debate.

I would start with the axiom, Mr. Speaker, that when public money is loaned the people or the owners of that money are entitled to know the conditions; the people to whom it is loaned, et cetera. I would differentiate on this point from those who borrow from a bank. They are not borrowing public money. Or those who borrow from a treasury branch are borrowing the depositor's money.

MR. LEE:

A point of order, Mr. Speaker, ...[Inaudible]...I would suggest that if the hon. member wishes to debate this particular issue he should place it on the Order Paper under private members motions, as we have done to one of our motions. I object to this kind of imposition on private members day on private members motions.

MR. TAYLOR:

On the point of order, this is a motion before the Legislature and surely we have the right to debate a motion before the Legislature. Is the hon. member trying to stop free speech?

MR. SPEAKER:

In the absence of any authority to the contrary, I must rule that the hon. Member for Drumheller's remarks are perfectly in order in this debate.

MR. TAYLOR:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And now before we were so rudely interrupted, I was saying that there is an axiom --

[Interjections]

MR. TAYLOR:

Before I was interrupted -

MR. SPEAKER:

Order.

MR. HYNDMAN:

I was suggesting, Mr. Speaker, that when a point of order is made, it isn't obviously a rude point of order, and I suggest that the hon. member knows better.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. member is conducting a post-mortem on a remark which has already been withdrawn.

MR. HENDERSON:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to draw to the attention of the House that the gentlemen on this side at least, make their retractions on the day on which the event takes place.

MR. TAYLOR:

Mr. Speaker, I humbly apologize. I didn't know their skin was quite so thin. OK.

Well to get back to the debate, Mr. Speaker. I was trying to say that there is a difference between borrowing public money - money that belongs to the people of the province - and money that belongs to a bank or treasury branch. I think there is quite a difference. In this case, the money being loaned belongs to all of the people of the province. While the government is responsible for its own policies, the members of this Legislature are sent here by the people to make sure that their money is properly expended. If we are denied the basis of the loans -- the people to whom the loans are made, and the purposes for which the loans are made and their details -- then the members of the Legislature are unable properly to do the job for which they are responsible.

I would suggest that the very fact this is public money being loaned puts it in the category that makes it right and proper for the members of this Legislature, and the people themselves, through the press and the media, to know to whom this money is being loaned, and why.

Perhaps one of the major reasons is that when public money is loaned, irrespective of what government is in power, there is always a possibility of that money being loaned through political pressure. Whether it is this government, or the federal government, or previous governments in the province, political pressure is exercised in a province by many people of all political stripes, and some of no political stripes. They exert pressures in order to secure money. And the very fact that that is a possibility, even if it is only a remote possibility, would put the government in a very dubious position if it said, "We are not going to make this information available to the public at large whose money it is we are loaning, or to the members of the Legislature who are responsible to certain constituencies."

Another reason why this should be made public is that this money is loaned in some cases for businesses that are in competition with established businesses. So here is public money being loaned to build a business or manufacturing concern that may well be a viable competitor with those who have earned their own money, or who have borrowed from other sources, and who are now in business. Surely, this shouldn't be kept a secret. We should know what businesses receive these loans and the areas covered. We will then see if a competitive business is going to be adversely affected, because there is no purpose in getting new businesses if we don't hold on to the old businesses that are already there.

Consequently, there is another very important reason why this information should be made public. I would suggest that when the government guarantees a loan to a bank this is in a slightly different category. That money is not being taken out of public funds. In cases like that I am doubtful whether the Legislature or the general public would have to know what securities are lodged with the bank, and so on. But if that loan should fail, and the government then must provide the money to fulfill the terms of that guarantee, then the public of the province is entitled to know all details, to find out if the government did take adequate steps to protect this before they made the guarantee.

I would suggest in that case that the public interest is served if we go into that at the time the government is called upon to pay. Now I would suggest, as precedents, that the federal government has made this very, very clear when it is loaning public money to various individuals across this country every summer and every year to encourage employment.

There is no secrecy about this money, with regard to whom it is loaned, or the purposes for which it is loaned -- even many purposes with which you and I may completely disagree. Some purposes in Toronto which I heard the federal conservative members take violent exception to were made public; everybody in Canada knows that the Canadian government loaned money to these organizations, and to individuals. It is not kept secret. This is public money, and they are out doing various jobs. The names of the three young men from Nova Scotia who made the check up on the amount of litter across the highways of Canada were made public, and also the amount of money they received. There was no secret about that. And so there is plenty of precedent in making this type of thing public.

The feed loans, I believe, in this province are made public. Anyone who wants to know can find out the amount of the loan given in feed loans.

So, Mr. Speaker, I would argue that this resolution is in order and that the government is not under any obligation to withhold this information, simply because the regulations say that this should not take place. The regulations surely do not take precedence over the authority of the government, or the authority of this Legislature.

Furthermore, the members of this Legislature have no say as to what went into the regulations, or what didn't go into the regulations. But it is public money; that is the axiom upon which I am basing my argument. It is public money, and surely the owners of that money should have the right to know the people to whom it is loaned, the reasons and the purposes for which it is loaned, et cetera.

MR. KOZIAK:

Mr. Speaker, would the hon. Member for Drumheller permit a question? Would you, in making that argument, extend that same reasoning if the question required, as an example, the disclosure, first of all, of all individuals who had received loans from the Alberta Housing Corporation for homes?

And secondly, would the hon. gentleman follow the same line of reasoning for a question which would request the disclosure of all citizens of Alberta who had received welfare grants during the same period of time, on the basis that it was an expenditure of public money?

MR. TAYLOR:

Mr. Speaker, I would suggest that this information should be made available to the members at all times. We are responsible for this money and if there are abuses on welfare, how is an hon. member of this Legislature going to try to correct it or deal with it, if he doesn't even know the situation? That point is very evident: in our constituencies we do know, and we have no difficulty finding out, how much money people are getting on welfare. But there are many sources from which to get that, including the Department of Welfare, and I think this information should be made available. I don't think it should be published in the papers in order to embarrass an individual. But at times even that might be a proper procedure. If a person is taking public welfare when he has a job and so on, this is tantamount to stealing. If we don't hesitate to publish the names of people who get caught robbing a bank, why should we protect those who try to rob the public treasury? Yes, I would go that far, certainly in regard to loans on the corporation. If it is public money, yes, I think it should be made public.

MR. KOZIAK:

Mr. Speaker, one further question if the hon. gentleman will permit it. I presume -

MR. SPEAKER:

There is some question as to whether a supplementary is permitted at a time of this kind. However, if the hon. ... Has the hon. member the leave of the House to put this additional question?

HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

MR. KOZIAK:

Would the hon. Member for Drumheller agree with me that if an answer were given to the Motion for Return 109, this would become public knowledge available to the press and to whomever would like to use it?

MR. TAYLOR:

I think this type of information should become public knowledge and be made available to the press and to all the people whose money it is.

MR. KOZIAK:

The same reasoning would apply to --

MR. SPEAKER:

Order please!

MR. HENDERSON:

Mr. Speaker, I think if the hon. member has some opinions, he should get up and state them himself. I think Mr. Taylor on our side has made his views known on the subject, and we are getting into an exercise in legal cross-examination, which is somewhat out of order.

[Interjections]

MR. HENDERSON:

I do not intend, Mr. Speaker, to repeat the statements of my colleague, the Member for Drumheller. But I think, Mr. Speaker, there is a very fundamental principle involved in this. Firstly, we are talking about \$50 million. We are not talking about money which is handed out through civil servants throughout the province, in dealing with the question of welfare recipients. We are talking about a business transaction, a business exercise.

I think the main implication, to be very direct and blunt about it, is that an operation involving this amount of money, in this manner -- under a veil of secrecy, as has been stated in more polite words by the Member for Drumheller -- is highly amenable to the concerns and fears of what is commonly called pork-barrel politics, something which this country hasn't experienced too much compared to the country that is south of us.

And it is public money we are considering. If the government had set the program up to make the money available through the Treasury Branches, for example, I could go along with the argument that there should be an element of secrecy attached to it, since it would be associated with a banking transaction.

But I don't think it is in the government's interests; it certainly isn't in the public interest; and I don't think it is in the interest of the Legislature, to have this particular doubt raised on this particular program. The principle is unsound when it comes to the administration of a \$50 million account under a veil of secrecy.

I think there is one more fundamental reason involved, Mr. Speaker, as to why the information should be made public, not only because of the implications of political manipulation, which I suggest can be extremely dangerous to the government itself, simply for its political longevity, and I really don't wish it. But I think I would not like to see this happen -- to see any of the gentlemen involved losing their seats, or the government losing office -- because of the possibility that is presented in the regulations under this particular legislation. I point out that it wasn't included in the bill. And certainly I would say if there had been any expectation that we would witness an Order in Council coming forth and declaring a cloak of secrecy over \$50 million provincial fund, is something that would never have occurred to us in the worst stretches of our imagination. It never occurred to us.

A restriction such as this, or secrecy such as this, should have been in the bill, where it could have been publicly examined in this Legislature before an action such as this took place. But it was not. It was done by Order in Council. The arguments that are now being presented, justifying the veil of secrecy, should have been debated in this Assembly when the bill was before the House because it is a dangerous departure from past practices in this particular area of public administration.

DR. HORNER:

On a point of order, I am sure the hon. Leader of the Opposition would want to be very correct in what he is saying, when he says it is a past practice. If he will recall, during the previous government we had several motions on the Order Paper for names and we were always refused these names...

MR. LUDWIG:

Mr. Speaker, he is not on a point of order.

MR. SPEAKER:

Will the hon. member continue his speech, please.

MR. HENDERSON:

Mr. Speaker, I understand the Deputy Premier does not like the fact that we are criticizing this particular matter. And it should be criticized. If the government has had ...

DR. HORNER:

On a point of order ...

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please.

DR. HORNER:

An hon. member surely has the right to correct another hon. member when he makes an obvious mis-statement. I'm making the correction that we, when we were in opposition, had several Motions for a Return denied us of a similar nature, because of a similar argument. Now I find it rather surprising that both hon. gentlemen, who were members of that Executive Council, and who refused us that information, are now taking the other side of the argument.

MR. LUDWIG:

On a point of order, the remark made by the Deputy Premier is simply untrue and he knows it.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please. Order, please.

DR. HORNER:

Mr. Speaker, I'm sorry, but the hon. Member for Calgary Mountain View has now become unparliamentary because of his lack of knowledge. I demand a retraction.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please. The hon. Member for Calgary Mountain View. We will deal with this first, and then we will go back to the point of order.

The hon. Member for Calgary Mountain View has accused the hon. Deputy Premier of making an untrue remark, and making it knowingly. And I would suggest that perhaps the hon. Member for Calgary Mountain View might wish to take advantage of the opportunity I am about to give him to deal with this matter further.

MR. LUDWIG:

Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the technicality of the ruling. I said he did it knowingly. I will withdraw that "knowingly" part, but I will say that I can produce Votes and Proceedings --

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please. The member ... [Interjections] ... Order, please. The hon. member has withdrawn the offensive words. That concludes the matter, and it is not an opportunity for further debate.

MR. LUDWIG:

Well, he said it unknowingly.

MR. SPEAKER:

With regard to the point of order, there is great difficulty for the Chair to test the validity of a point of order which is raised on an allegation that another speaker in the debate is mis-stating facts, or not dealing correctly with facts. And there is great doubt in my mind as to whether such controversy concerning whether facts are true or not may constitute a valid point of order.

I would suggest to the hon. Deputy Premier that if he wishes to deal with those facts, he may do so in the course of the debate.

MR. LUDWIG:

Wrong again, Horner.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please.

MR. HENDERSON:

Mr. Speaker, notwithstanding the interruptions from the Deputy Premier -- and I understand his desire not to see the debate continue -- so far as the contents of his remarks, Mr. Speaker --

DR. HORNER:

Point of order. This is a valid point of order in that he is imputing motive -- that I don't want to see the debate continue. I'm happy to see the debate continue.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

So, sit down then.

DR. HORNER:

I'm very interested in the hon. member's abrupt change of position since he came out of government.

MR. SPEAKER:

Would the hon. Opposition House Leader please confine his continuation of the debate to the subject under debate, rather than to the motives of the members opposite.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Agreed.

MR. HENDERSON:

Yes, Mr. Speaker, I'm glad the Deputy Premier has changed his mind. On this particular question, Mr. Speaker ...

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please. These posthumous remarks concerning orders or rulings of the Chair, as I have mentioned during the 1972 session, are out of order and make the work of the Chair more difficult than it need be.

MR. HENDERSON:

Mr. Speaker, in all deference to you, and I accept your recommendation, when an obvious statement is being made which is --

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please. That matter is closed. If the hon. Leader of the Opposition wishes to continue the debate, the floor is his.

MR. HENDERSON:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On the basic question; what we are discussing, Mr. Speaker, is an item inserted into regulations by the Lieutenant Governor in Council, which places a veil of secrecy over a \$50 million fund of public money. It isn't a question of whether it is internal correspondence between departments and so on that should be tabled, in which the government can exercise some discretion. What is under debate at the moment is the basic principle of whether \$50 million of public money -- being used for public purposes, being handed out in tens of thousands of dollars for various undertakings in the province -- should not be subject to public examination. I pointed out, Mr. Speaker, that it raises a very serious implication of pork-barrel politics -- political influence. I'm not saying this is the case -- that it has happened --

and I'm not saying it's going to happen, but I'm certainly saying it makes it very attractive for it to happen when one carries out an operation of this magnitude under a guise of secrecy.

I suggest Mr. Speaker, that there is another very legitimate reason why the information should be made available publicly. Under this fund, public money is being used to subsidize business and industry in competition with industries and businesses that already exist within the community or in the province. It raises the very serious question of unfair business practices in this regard. Why should one entrepreneur sink or swim on his own hook through regular financial institutions? Why should another enjoy the benefits of loans in substantial thousands of dollars of public money. The public money being used to subsidize this operation is in competition with that competing on the open market place to establish their businesses.

To suggest that it isn't in the public interest to divulge the money, Mr. Speaker, is extremely unsound. There is a very dangerous precedent established in this particular approach to handling the affairs of the people of the Province of Alberta.

I suggest, Mr. Speaker, it is in the public interest that the government seriously reconsider approaching this particular operation in this manner. I can appreciate, Mr. Speaker, that if the intent and purpose of the fund is to be achieved, there are going to be losses and risks attached to it. I don't quarrel with this, because I think if the fund is going to deal with the achieving of the potential for development in rural areas, it has to take some risks, and there have to be some losses attached to it.

What we are saying now, Mr. Speaker, under this, is that not even this information presumably would be available. So, Mr. Speaker, I suggest that the government is on extremely dangerous ground in leaving itself open for accusations of political manipulation of this amount of money. It's on extremely dangerous ground when it drops a cloak of secrecy over the question of utilization of public funds for subsidization of established trades and businesses elsewhere in the province. I think that the government itself would find that the fund is going to be far more acceptable to the people of the Province of Alberta in the long run, far less susceptible to suspicion, and far more successful in achieving the goals and objectives that the fund established, if it is open to public scrutiny and public criticism from the start.

The DREE programs, for example, which the Province of Alberta as a government has been extremely critical of -- all this information is public. The suggestion, for example, that Imperial Oil should have received \$10 million as a grant to establish a fertilizer plant at Redwater should have been kept secret because it is public money, is just incomprehensible. I question the grant and principle in the first place, but at least the information was made public.

I suggest, Mr. Speaker, that if the government is of the opinion that there is a need for secrecy in this particular area, there are other ways and means through the established financial institutions by which they could administer this program. They don't have to bring it directly under the operation of the Provincial Treasury. It can be done through these other institutions. I would think ground rules could be formulated to administer and meet the basic objective in the same manner, along with provincial guarantees; it wouldn't raise this particular matter because some third party would be examining the relative merits in the administration of it. But when it is brought completely under the direction of the government, and where there is a fair amount of ministerial discretion in the loans that are made, and the implication of government subsidies establishing industries and businesses in competition with those which have established their activities on the open market, the whole procedure is fraught with many perils. And, the government should re-examine it's basic attitude in the matter.

I come back, in closing, Mr. Speaker, to the principle contained indirectly in this particular motion. The regulation that it relates to should have been included in the bill presented before the House. We wouldn't be having this argument after the fact; the government could have weighed the pros and cons of it at that time. Inserting a practice such as this into legislation through the channel of the Orders of the Lieutenant Governor in Council is a highly questionable one which the government has to re-examine.

MR. KING:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to make a few remarks on this particular resolution. Some of the comments from the hon. members opposite have to be

dealt with very much like a tangle of string. It is difficult to find the beginning, and even more difficult to find the end.

The members have made three points I would like to deal with. They have, first of all, confused the granting of loans with the giving of grants. To say that what the federal government does with the Local Initiatives Program or with grants under DREE, is not to say that the same thing should be done with a loan. The one economic activity is the giving of a grant which is certainly not going to be recovered; the other is a provision of a loan which we have every expectation will be recovered. They are not equivalent economic activities.

The second thing that concerns me is the declaration that the granting of loans and the financial affairs or activities of companies which deal with the provincial government should be made public. And I make the distinction between making this information public and making it available to the members of the Legislature. I don't believe on the one hand that it has been said that this information is unavailable to a member of the Legislature who might approach the Minister of Industry and Commerce privately, relative to the activity of a particular company.

AN HON. MEMBER:

That is baloney.

MR. KING:

But I do, on the other hand, believe there are some serious questions about whether or not this information should be dealt with in such a way as to make it available not only to the members of the Legislature, to the government or the opposition, but also to the public at large. The argument drawn by some members of the opposition would be analogous in my view to the suggestion that were I a shareholder in the Toronto Dominion Bank, I would have a right to know what loans had been granted by that bank --

MR. HENDERSON:

I wonder if I may ask the hon. member a question? It is relevant to the debate, Mr. Speaker. Would the hon. member consider it? Would you agree?

MR. KING:

It doesn't sound like a point of order, but I certainly would be willing to listen to a question.

MR. HENDERSON:

I don't think the hon. member, Mr. Speaker, has read the regulation. I think it is relevant to the debate --

MR. SPEAKER:

Is the hon. Leader of the Opposition debating or asking a question?

MR. HENDERSON:

[inaudible]

MR. SPEAKER:

Surely, the time to do that would have been during debate. If the hon. member has a question, it is in order if the member speaking allows it, but otherwise it is not in order.

MR. HENDERSON:

May I address a question to the speaker then, Mr. Speaker?

MR. KING:

Mr. Speaker, if any of the hon. members opposite can contribute to my education this afternoon, it would be a pleasant variation on their normal activities.

MR. HENDERSON:

Mr. Speaker, is the hon. member aware that the regulations specifically state that the information can only be revealed by the company to third parties -- other than those legally entitled to such information -- only with the prior consent of the commercial enterprise concerned?

MR. KING:

That, Mr. Speaker, was the third point that I wanted to come to, and must be one of the few times in the history of the Social Credit party that they have ever anticipated anything.

The argument made by some of the hon. members opposite struck me as being analogous to the contention that were I a shareholder in the Toronto Dominion Bank -- or any other -- I would have a right to know to whom that bank had made loans. It is a fact that the directors of the bank may discover to whom the bank has made loans, but it is not an extension of the right of the directors to know that they should have the right to communicate that to the public or by any means to have it made public information. I don't think that the loaning of money by the government to an individual should any more be public knowledge than is the loaning of money by a bank to an individual.

The third thing that concerned me was the importance of the issue. I think my concern would best be expressed by the belief that it should be dealt with in full debate on a resolution of general application, rather than debating a specific situation. What we are talking about is the right of privacy which the individual enjoys, vis-a-vis the government.

We have discussed earlier in this session, and in previous sessions, the fact that departments and agencies of government have accumulated, and continue to accumulate, tremendous amounts of information about an individual. The question is, whether or not having made a decision with respect to the Alberta Opportunity Company, it can rationally be extended to the information which is available to other departments about other citizens of the province.

I really must ask, in all seriousness, what is the difference between a loan of \$30,000, which may be made by the Alberta Opportunity Company to an individual who is in competition with other businessmen in his community, and the granting of a \$30,000 mortgage by the Alberta Housing Corporation to an individual in a community who has received that mortgage from the Alberta Housing Corporation in preference to the mortgage money which might have been made available by a commercial bank or by a trust company. What is the difference between loaning money to a corporation --

MR. HENDERSON:

He can't get it through the regular institutions.

MR. KING:

What is the difference between making money available to a welfare recipient, as a grant, as a transfer of income, and making money available to a corporation as a loan which you expect to recover?

I was extremely disturbed to hear the hon. Member for Drumheller say that he believed that the receipt of welfare should be general knowledge in the community in at least some circumstances, and that he himself had a number of sources, some of which included the Department of Health and Social Development, from whom he could -- it appeared at will -- find out whether or not a person was receiving welfare, and if so, how much. In my 20 months as a member of the Legislative Assembly I have never been able to discover whether or not a person was receiving welfare and how much, except by the consent of the individual involved. I would hope that there is no variation on that practice for any other member of the Legislature, regardless of how long he has been in this House or what his connections might be with the Civil Service.

DR. BUCK:

Merv will find out for you.

MR. KING:

The issue, Mr. Speaker, seems to me to be much more important and much more comprehensive of the activity of government than a simple involvement of the Alberta Opportunity Company. I don't think that the issue of the privacy of the

individual, vis-a-vis the government, can be given adequate consideration in a debate on this particular order. And if, indeed, it concerns the hon. members opposite, then I would suggest they introduce a resolution into the Assembly which would deal with the matter in its general terms, rather than particularly.

MR. LUDWIG:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to make a few comments concerning this motion. First of all, it would be interesting to know how much of this information is already public. I'm sure that in the ordinary course of business, if a loan is made from the opportunity fund perhaps good business sense prevails and security is taken preferably by way of mortgage. This is already public knowledge. It can be searched in the Land Titles Office of this province. You pay a search ticket, and you can search and get a copy of the mortgage. So that is now something that we have.

If, indeed, the loan is secured against chattels, that is also registered in the registry. It cannot be confidential. If I wanted to I could search anybody's name in the court house, including the hon. member, Mr. King, although I don't suppose he owes any money, liens, mortgages, or anything against his name. If he thinks this is confidential he hasn't been around a court house, to find out whether he has liens, chattel mortgages, or anything against his name. If he thinks this is confidential then he hasn't been around a court house. I can search everyone, every firm, every individual, partnership or anything, anyone who has a loan or a judgment against him. This is all recorded in places for people to see with whom they are dealing. So let's not get too --

MR. GHITTER:

Would the hon. member permit a question?

MR. LUDWIG:

So that is one factor we have to deal with. But I am concerned about our responsibility in this House. I want to know whether the three members who just spoke from the other side, whether they formed a corporation and borrowed some money from this corporation? Is the opposition entitled to know whether there is a little bit of payola or a little bit of pork-barrelling -- ?

DR. HERNER:

Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, the hon. member is now imputing something of really a gross --

[Interjections]

The Legislative Assembly Act specifically prohibits a member of the Legislative Assembly from doing just what the hon. member suggests. He is --

MR. SPEAKER:

Order please! The Chair has been listening very closely to the remarks of the hon. member and is unable to detect anything that has been out of order thus far.

MR. LUDWIG:

Mr. Speaker, with respect, the Deputy Premier has been out of order so often he is becoming a chronic case.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order please! The hon. member may continue his speech if he wishes to deal with the topic under debate.

MR. LUDWIG:

I wish to, Mr. Speaker, without interruption. We, as the opposition, have a right to know how public funds are spent. I have stated that pork barrelling, especially with the old-line parties, has not been unheard of in this country. We have heard about it. We have heard of horses on the payroll. We have even heard of some Munsinger parties being thrown, and all sorts of stuff. The opposition has to know this, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, when the hon. Deputy Premier is heckling me, I want to tell him that the Conservatives have aroused more suspicion as to their operation in 14 months than we have in 36 years, and he should know it by now.

I wish to proceed, Mr. Speaker. We have the right to know these things. \$50 million, and next year it could be \$100 million, and it could be \$200 million. The province is growing, and the money may be needed, but I don't think there should be a cloak of secrecy or a veil beyond which anybody can go, because I am saying, Mr. Speaker, that the way this regulation reads now, if there were a run on the funds for some reason and some crook got involved with it, who would know? Would the Conservatives reveal their own short-comings? I doubt it very much. In fact, I am sure they wouldn't.

We have a responsibility here. We are all elected. A Conservative may want to know what is happening. He may want to know why John Doe got a loan in Barrhead, and for the same reason somebody couldn't get one in Stettler. Shouldn't he know that? Maybe not.

DR. HORNER:

Would the hon. member permit a question? Does he believe that the Treasury Branch should also make their loans public?

MR. HENDERSON:

They're not loaning public money.

MR. LUDWIG:

Mr. Speaker, that's just the point. But Treasury Branches, when they loan money, register the documents. We know exactly what is happening.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order please! Would the hon. member allow the hon. Member for Calgary Buffalo to state a point of order?

MR. GHITTER:

I would like to suggest to the hon. Member for Calgary Mountain View on a point of order that he is showing favouritism of one member to another.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order please! The hon. Member for Calgary Mountain View does not necessarily share the impartiality of the Chair.

MR. LUDWIG:

Mr. Speaker, I did not use any names when I said that some hon. members may get together and do a little bit of pork-barrelling, so the hon. member ought not to feel left out. In any event, Mr. Speaker, there is a principle involved. Do we trust the Conservatives, the party, setting up a corporation which I didn't believe in to begin with, to handle public funds and keep it secret?

You know, even the best kept secrets can leak out, and you people, the hon. members over there, might be under serious suspicion. When I am saying that, I am not accusing you of pork-barrelling, but the set-up is there. It can be done. So therefore, why the confidentiality? Are you protecting yourself, or are you protecting the corporations? The corporations, when they go for credit, might have another loan. A corporation might want another loan after it got one from the Opportunity Fund. They have to reveal all details when they go to borrow money. Those who borrow money know that you give information to credit firms, banks, loan companies, including the Opportunity Fund.

I'm saying that this regulation was a clear-cut case of legislation by regulation, something that the hon. members fought very hard when they were on this side -- legislation by regulation. I suppose you could regulate it so that nobody would ever hear anymore about it, and that does give rise to suspicion, Mr. Speaker. I'm not suggesting that they did anything wrong, but I am entitled to suspect them. If they are going to keep it secret, then all the more reason why we want to keep it wide open. And, therefore, I support the motion; I believe that the hon. members have not made a case that a Motion for a Return ought not to be made, and I'm urging hon. members to support this motion.

[Several members rose at once.]

DR. BUCK:

One at a time -- that's better.

MR. PEACOCK:

Mr. Speaker, in rising to speak against this motion, and I think I must do so, I'm not overly sensitive to what has been said here in the House. But since I am the minister responsible for administering this particular fund, I feel I should say in my own defence a few things that maybe the House is not aware of.

No loan is made without a board, and that board, I think, has been announced in this House. It is public; there is a representative from Edmonton, by the name of Bob Chapman; there is one from Calgary by the name of Scotty Grant; both sit in on all these loans.

The loans, first of all, as has been stated, are loans, not grants, and they are at above-prime rate. So, there is no great advantage in dealing with the Opportunity Fund in order to identify, or as suggested by the hon. member of the opposition, because the Opportunity Fund would naturally attract them as an area of last resort, or because it had a lower rate of interest than the conventional lender.

There is a statement once a year that we issue in which we have to account to this House as to the viability of the fund and the performance of it.

I have, and certainly my offices to the best of my ability, never denied any member of this Legislature from identifying, or checking, or seeing personally any of the loans that have been made. Now the reasons I might give for putting in the regulation Section 14 -- 2 are to avoid the very exposure and political barrage that such a fund would receive in the House today; to conform to the general standards of commercial common lending practices, to avoid any prejudice, at least in the realm of our thinking and identifying this regulation; to avoid any prejudice coming back to the borrower through public knowledge of his affairs, and to avoid in any way our clients being less competitive, by reason of any public knowledge of a source of funding than anybody else.

Now, on the other hand I recognize some of the concerns expressed by the opposition. I feel that to make this fund perform in the philosophy enunciated in this House at its introduction some time ago, it should be with some degree of confidentiality, that loans are made out of the Opportunity Fund.

I believe that, because they are public funds, the members of this House -

MR. LUDWIG:

Would the hon. minister allow a question please --

DR. HORNER:

No.

MR. LUDWIG:

I didn't ask you, I asked the speaker.

MR. PEACOCK:

As I suggested, it is possible for any member of this House, and certainly I extend it at this time, to review the records of the Opportunity Fund and to whom the loans are made.

More than that I would only close with the suggestion that my good friend and my colleague, Mr. King, succinctly stated and identified the problem today, in my opinion, that if we are going to debate this issue, it should be in a different form and brought back as a resolution.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

No, no.

MR. LUDWIG:

Would the hon. minister allow a question please?

MR. LUDWIG:

In view of the fact, Mr. Minister, that it is possible for the government, through this corporation set up in this act, actually to end up running a business that has borrowed money from the fund, do you think that all ought to be confidential?

MR. PEACOCK:

To answer the question, while the latitude of the regulations is such that we have fairly broad areas in which to move, I would suggest, as I previously stated, if there is any question, by any member in this House, of any area to which the funds have been extended, that he can check them out either within my offices or the funds offices. And if it is a question, bring it back to the House -- that is if he thinks it should be public knowledge.

MR. LUDWIG:

Then you are supporting the motion?

MR. MINIELY:

Mr. Speaker, seeing that we are discussing the disposal of public funds and the extent of that disposal to the Legislature, I feel I have a responsibility to outline certain basic things for the information of the members in the House.

The disclosure of the expenditure of public funds is, without question, a paramount recognition that any legislature should have. And this is unquestioned. However, Mr. Speaker, I would like to review in the case of the Alberta Opportunity Company, what happens in the flow of the legislative approvals in this case. I do not want any members to think that there is any intention at all, in this, to preclude information this Legislature should have from being presented to the Assembly.

Firstly, -- as the hon. Member for Edmonton Highlands indicated -- the funds are loans. They are not in the first instance, in any stretch of the imagination, public expenditure funds.

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, these loans, if they become bad, are reported to all the members of the Assembly by the Provincial Auditor. So Members of the Assembly receive full information on all loans of the Alberta Opportunity Company which become doubtful as to the collection. Mr. Speaker, when the loans cannot be collected, there is a public document, order-in-council which is passed by the cabinet indicating publicly the accounts that are written off and have not been able to be collected.

Now the point that I want to stress is this, that the only time, and the only stage where there is actual public expenditure, is at the stage when the account is not collectable. That is at the stage where the Provincial Auditor has reported to this Legislature that the account is not collectable, reported to the cabinet that the account is not collectable, and in fact the cabinet has had to pass an order-in-council that the account is not collectable and it is public information to all.

I think, Mr. Speaker, when you consider that this element is in there, that the issue of confidentiality until the stage where it does in fact become a public expenditure is an important principle that all of us have to consider. I don't think in any way it should be handled as a political football, because in fact the information, Mr. Speaker, is available at the point where it doesn't become a public expenditure. And that is the issue that is of concern here today.

MR. LUDWIG:

Would the hon. minister permit a question please, Mr. Speaker?

MR. MINIELY:

Yes, Mr. Speaker.

MR. LUDWIG:

In granting loans under the Opportunity Fund what securities are taken and registered? Are mortgages, chattel mortgages and titles hypothecated? What security is taken and registered?

MR. MINIELY:

Mr. Speaker, I think that the hon. member is asking a question which is a red herring because with respect to loans the Provincial Auditor examines, at the time the adequacy of security taken. If the security is not adequate and is not in compliance with the act, he reports upon the inadequacy of security. It is indicated in the Public Accounts.

The point I am trying to stress is that if there is any concern regarding the expenditure of public funds in any of these accounts, don't forget that in the first instance the advances to the Alberta Opportunity Company, or to any revolving fund, are not in fact voted as public expenditure. They become voted at the time the account is not collectable by the province. Then the Legislature ratifies it.

MR. LUDWIG:

Mr. Speaker, I think the hon. member missed my question. I was just interested in whether they are taking securities and in what form -- chattel mortgage or mortgage -- not whether it is a good risk or not. I just wanted to know what documents are registered now that give the thing away, anyway? In the procedure of getting a loan from the Opportunity Fund, what documents do you take and register as security?

MR. MINIELY:

I still think, Mr. Speaker, that this is not the issue. Under the act the company is allowed to accept certain kinds of security in exchange for the loans. The adequacy of that security is examined by the Provincial Auditor. An individual member --

[Interjections]

-- an individual member may be able to determine, because he has access to certain information, the documents that have been registered relative to security for a loan. But that is a big difference, Mr. Speaker, a big difference between total public disclosure in a public forum of all loans made when in fact, that loan may be perfectly good -- may be totally repaid -- and no expenditure of public funds is involved. And then I think the issue of confidentiality is a major one.

MR. NOTLEY:

Mr. Speaker, I wonder if I could ask another question of the hon. Provincial Treasurer. It is my understanding under the Alberta Opportunities Fund, that principal and interest can be deferred up to 30 months. Now clearly there is at least the possibility that we will lose some interest as a result of interest rates going up as a result of this. Would you not consider that an indirect expenditure at least? Is it not also part of the plan, that counselling service will be provided to the recipients of these loans? Is there not some public expenditure in that feature of the scheme?

MR. MINIELY:

Mr. Speaker, the annual operating expenditures of the Alberta Opportunity Company, taking the second question first -- the counselling that's involved, the annual administration of the fund, is presented in the Public Accounts every year. All hon. members have an opportunity to examine the operating expenditures of the corporation and to make comments, and critical ones if they so desire.

With respect to the deferrment of interest -- there is a deferrment of interest -- but that simply says that you don't have to pay the interest today. But it still compounds. So there is no public expenditure involved in that, any more than there is public expenditure involved in a situation where today you give a certain interest rate and six months from now general interest rates have risen on other things. At the present time the Legislature is not receiving a report on what you might deem, if you like, some kind of loss because we didn't receive the total yield on interest rates. When I took over as Provincial Treasurer in this province we had a lot of investments that were yielding five per cent. One could say those were public expenditures because today's yield on interest is eight per cent.

But what I am trying to get at is the basic issue, Mr. Speaker, and I think it is an important one. I don't think it should be used as any kind of a political football that whenever there is any public expenditure involved with

the Alberta Opportunity Company, this Legislature receives a full report by the Provincial Auditor. I think you are treading on dangerous ground, if you say this is all going to be public, when there is no public expenditure, but simply a loan.

MR. SPEAKER:

I believe the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview claimed the floor.

MR. NOTLEY:

I asked my question.

MR. SPEAKER:

Then it is the hon. Member for Calgary North Hill.

MR. FARRAN:

Mr. Speaker, I can see merit on both sides of this argument. We'll look at it first of all from the point of view of the borrower. If he goes to the Opportunity Fund, presumably it is sometimes because this, to him anyway, is a lending source of last resort. If he had been able to go to a regular lending source he might not have thought of coming here, even though there might be a slightly preferential rate on interest. If he went to a normal bank, there would be no question of the details being disclosed in public. If he went to the IDB it wouldn't be disclosed. If he went to Roynat they wouldn't disclose it. So, if he chooses to go this way and the details of his loan are publicized, his competitors may be able to measure his financial strength and use it to their advantage. This is a dog-eat-dog world and there is no doubt that businessmen would take this approach. The very fact that we are going into this field, I presume, means that it was not being covered adequately by the regular lending sources. Otherwise, we wouldn't be in the business of attempting to diversify industry in the province by setting up this opportunity company with a \$50 million fund.

But it is true, as the hon. Member for Calgary Mountain View says, that the collateral arrangements will have to be publicized -- they always are -- they are if they are made with anyone. Dun and Bradstreet will report to all and sundry in the business world if a chattel mortgage has been taken, if there was an assignment of accounts receivable, and so on. They will not though -- if the borrowing is from a regular source -- give the exact details of the loan. I don't suppose we are interested in publicizing these loans, from the point of view of drawing attention to distinctions which some people may think are invidious with people tumbling over themselves to get a loan and saying, "Well, Joe got a loan and I didn't" -- and yet the reasons are probably confidential.

There are probably very good reasons for not giving one guy a loan as compared with another. He may just be a poor manager, a poor risk, or his enterprise may not have been sound. You don't want to make all those details public.

The DREE grants however, and loans from the federal government, were finally made public after pressure in the federal field. There was a time when they were not too keen to say how much and where they had loaned federal money to industry. This has been a point of controversy in the federal government and this information is now being made public. I think it's 4:30 Mr. Speaker. Can I have leave to adjourn debate?

MR. SPEAKER:

Might we just postpone the hon. member's request for leave to adjourn the debate for a moment. The next order of business would be Bill No. 200, which has not yet been printed. Does the House wish to deal with that bill, notwithstanding that it has not been printed? Or is there some alternative proposal from the House as to what goes on now?

MR. FARRAN:

Well, I have a lot more to say so I'd rather adjourn debate, Mr. Speaker, if the other members agree, because it is just 4:30 and this is the normal time we do it.

MR. HENDERSON:

Mr. Speaker, we'd be quite agreeable to continue with the debate on the motion.

MR. SPEAKER:

I take it then, there is unanimous agreement in the House that we continue the debate for the remainder of the afternoon, or until the question is put.

HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER:

Under those circumstances, it isn't necessary then for the hon. member to adjourn the debate.

MR. FARRAN:

In other words, I've got to go on?

[Laughter]

Where did we get to? We got to the point of Joe Doaks in Barrhead saying, "Why didn't I get a loan, when some guy in Drumheller got one for the same sort of business?" Well, I say the confidential reasons for not granting such a loan obviously could not be made public.

The main trouble with the motion so far as I'm concerned is not the principle, although I may differ here with some of my colleagues. I think that perhaps there is an argument that where there is public money being loaned on a new program, the names of the recipients at least should be made public. But, where I think it is wrong, and in error, is the great detail that is contained in the Motion for a Return. You start from the bottom. I don't believe it would be proper to reveal the details of property or security, because, apart from what is registered under a mortgage and available through normal listing in Dun and Bradstreet, it would be utterly unfair to list a fellow's life insurance policies, his wife's mortgaging a farm, and all the other sort of things - the stocks and bonds he may have placed as collateral with the opportunity company. I think this again would be revealing too much information that could be valuable to a competitor.

Going up to the next one, No. 4, what qualified appraisers or evaluators were used in every case in approving each loan? Well that, of course, is hamstringing to much too great an extent this new Opportunity Company. Why would they have to give that sort of information? An IDB loan is granted after an employee of the IDB, sometimes called a business engineer, goes in and makes an evaluation of the business, but I can't see the point of asking for that kind of detail in respect to every one of 80 loans. I think it is really almost an insult to the new Alberta Opportunity Company to ask for that information.

No. 3 is much the same. What securities were taken? Now this is the sort of information that a bank would never reveal unless there was a subpoena from the courts or a request perhaps -- I think the Department of National Revenue has a right to ask for this on a confidential basis. Certainly that sort of thing in our free enterprise world would not be made public in such great detail. It is really trespassing on the rights of a private property owner and completely unfair to ask for it in that sort of detail.

The amount of each loan granted showing the terms on what each loan was made -- I don't know about the details of the terms apart perhaps from the rate of interest and the length of the loan -- I would have thought perhaps it might have been proper to have listed the amount of the loan granted, only because it is dealing with public funds in a new enterprise. And here I am obviously differing from some of my colleagues on this side of the House.

The actual location of these tourist-oriented projects -- well I think that is pretty unfair too. That is giving some information to competitors which may not be proper, but I certainly have some feelings. You know, you see the disadvantages on the one hand and the advantages on the other. I have mixed feelings over it, but I have thought that perhaps it is proper to list the recipients and the amount of the loan granted.

However, before any decision is made on this in a hasty way on a Motion for a Return, I think we ought to look at the procedures now followed by other provinces that have this kind of a fund. What do they do in Manitoba, for instance, which has had a similar fund to this for a number of years? What difficulties have resulted? How much public disclosure of details has taken place there, and has it caused a lot of problems to new businesses?

I think you must remember that a lot of the people who will be borrowing this money will perhaps be in business for the first time. We are trying to diversify industry through the rural areas, and a lot of these fellows will be pretty wet behind the ears as businessmen. This is why we are taking such a risk that perhaps other more orthodox lending institutions wouldn't take. We are taking it in the interests of diversifying business through the rural areas. So if you handicap these guys from the start by letting every competitor from one end of the province to the other know every little detail about him, you may not be doing him a kindness and you may in the end be causing the Opportunity Company to lose money on the loan.

I think we should look at what has happened not only in Manitoba, but also in Newfoundland, Ontario and Quebec, where there are similar development corporations making loans in the interests of job-providing industry and tax-producing industry in their provinces. I think people who rush into it in this sort of way perhaps don't realize how intensely competitive industry is. It is not only hard to get it, it is easy to kill it too. The thought here presumably is that you are giving seed-money to something that will grow, and in order to grow it you have to nurture it; you have to give it a little bit of fertilizer; you have to give it its chance in the sun. Otherwise it will just wither on the vine. So I think you have to be terribly careful when you ask for these details for some political motive -- careful that you are not washing out the baby with the bathwater, because this is an extremely delicate area.

I know that the hon. Member for Calgary McCall, who is a small businessman like I was, knows what I am talking about. But I do think that there is some merit, at least in the beginning, of listing the recipients of the loans, because this is a lot of money, and a lot of questions are going to be asked as to the validity of the scheme. Perhaps we would not have lost the Snow Ridge ski resort on the Kananaskis road if there had been an opportunity fund which was a little more understanding than the IDB was. They foreclosed and so on. Perhaps if the terms of any loan made by the Opportunity Fund -- Mr. Bullock of Okanagan Helicopters, and that ski resort generally -- had been made public he might have been knocked out even more quickly by his competitors in other parts of the mountain.

Anyway, I don't know how to go on this one. I think it can do some damage, and yet I can see that there is some justice in the request for information. So I am going to sit down now and turn it over to the hon. Deputy Premier.

DR. HORNER:

Mr. Speaker, I want to take part in this debate for a number of reasons. First of all, I want to re-emphasize what the Minister of Industry and Commerce has said, that the books of the company are available and open to the hon. members of the Legislature. That's completely different from making a public statement as they have asked in this order. It gives them the same kind of information and protection --

MR. HENDERSON:

The regulations don't allow that.

DR. HORNER:

The hon. Leader of the Opposition had his say, I'm going to have mine.

They also tried to impute, Mr. Speaker, the usual thing that we get from the Member for Calgary Mountain View about the old-line parties, patronage and all the rest of it. That was one of the great whitewashes the people of Alberta had for 36 years -- that the Social Credit never did any patronage -- they wouldn't sink to anything like this, which was pure and simple nonsense, Mr. Speaker. I could list at some length some patronage handed out by the former government, some political roads built, some Orders-in-Council passed in the middle of August, 1971, Mr. Speaker, when certain hon. members opposite were in slightly deep political trouble. They quickly passed Orders-in-Council for no good reason and gave out money -- the money of the people of Alberta -- in locations according to how well it would suit their political purposes, and how many votes they might gain by it.

MR. LUDWIG:

Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. I have an idea that the hon. Deputy Premier is a very confused man and he can't prove anything he said. I think he is telling us an untruth, Mr. Speaker. He can't prove what he says.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. member hasn't a point of order; that is a point of debate.

DR. HORNER:

Mr. Speaker, in response to the hon. member and his challenge, I shall table in this House tomorrow, because I don't have it on my desk, an Order-in-Council passed by the previous government in August, 1971 in which they gave out a grant of \$15,000 in an area for strictly political reasons in the middle of an election campaign, and it is generally acknowledged as such.

In addition to that, if they want some more proof, Mr. Speaker, I wouldn't think that my hon. friend for Calgary Mountain View would be so unintelligent as to think I was going to say something like that and not be able to back it up. They may make irresponsible statements over there, Mr. Speaker, and not be able to back them up, but I'm saying something I can back up --

MR. LUDWIG:

Mr. Speaker, a point of order. The Deputy Premier is making an allegation that is untrue. An Order-in-Council is public knowledge so he's telling --

MR. SPEAKER:

Order please! As I mentioned earlier this afternoon, the Chair is unable to construct points of order out of conflicts or allegations of fact. Would the hon. member please allow the Deputy Premier to continue his speech.

MR. LUDWIG:

He's misleading the House.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order please!

DR. HORNER:

Mr. Speaker, I know it doesn't relate to the motion or the order, but the people who brought the matter forward -- and the information of pork-barrel politics, I believe the words were -- were my hon. friends over there. Now if they want to start this kind of a ball game then they better stay and play, or go on home. You know, as Harry Truman told them, "If it's too hot in the kitchen, go home."

They tried to intimate the question for political purposes only. I find that rather strange from the hclier-than-thou party that used to suggest they never did anything for political purposes. It was only other people who did that. It is rather amusing that they are now doing everything possible for political purposes, and sometimes being fairly irresponsible about it.

I would like to know from them if they think that this kind of thing should be made public, or whether or not they believe that the name of every farmer who receives a loan under The Agricultural Development Fund should also be publicized?

MR. LUDWIG:

Would the hon. Minister permit a question, Mr. Speaker?

DR. HORNER:

Yes.

MR. LUDWIG:

Referring to the statement made by him, would everything that a farmer borrowed be made public? How would he keep a foreclosure action secret?

DR. HORNER:

That's not what I said, Mr. Speaker. I am sorry that the hon. Member for Calgary Mountain View is so unintelligent that he can't understand what I am saying.

The question I asked was: is it their view that all of the loans of The Agricultural Development Fund should be made public?

Is it their view that all of these things should be public knowledge to everyone, and to have no confidentiality whatsoever? If that's their view I would like to know it, and I would hope that the Leader of the Opposition would say so, because I think that farmers generally would be very apprehensive about that kind of public disclosure.

I think that in addition to that --

[Interjections]

I am sorry that my friend has to leave, Mr. Speaker, but maybe we can carry on a more intelligent debate now. So they had better make their position very clear, Mr. Speaker.

The essence of setting up boards to operate The Opportunity Company, or The Agricultural Development Fund was to take it out of the realm of politics, and allow these boards, under general guidelines, to make loans for the purposes for which they were intended.

The hon. gentlemen now have a different attitude than they had when they were in government because we were forced, Mr. Speaker, on occasion to change our Motions to Return, to deliberately delete the names involved in loans from The Alberta Commercial Corporation, I refer specifically to Sessional Paper 166 of the 1968 Session.

MR. HENDERSON:

[Interjection]

DR. HORNER:

Yes, we did. Ah, my hon. friend hasn't a very good memory either because if he recalls, we immediately changed our motion to read numbers instead of names, and I refer him to pages 52 and 92 of the Journals of 1968. We accepted the position with regard to confidentiality.

My hon. friend from Calgary North Hill talked about the Industrial Development Bank. Of course, the Industrial Development Bank is in a great many ways the federal counterpart, or similar to the Opportunity Company or, as it was before, The Alberta Commercial Corporation in its variety of operations. Surely, as my colleague the Provincial Treasurer has pointed out, the question of when the money is spent is when the loan is in default.

Now there are lots of problems that can be placed in relation to, you know, what type of confidentiality is required. It is an entirely different matter from posting in a public document the names and the amounts and all of the details here, as vis-a-vis the question of having the House aware of how the fund is operating and the general guidelines under which it is operating.

I can't see, for the life of me, Mr. Speaker, how we can have a fund that is going to be useful if we have this kind of public disclosure on everybody's action. The net result of that will be that nobody will use it because their names will appear in the paper that they have received this, that and everything else.

I suggest that it will really defeat the actual objectives of the fund in trying to bring industry into rural Alberta.

I think that the attempt by the Opposition this afternoon, Mr. Speaker, to intimate that there is some suspicion and leave a cloud over the government is a totally political operation on their part, and has to be dispelled.

We believe that we have good people running these funds. We believe there is lots of opportunity for members on both sides of the House to pursue with some vigour, if they wish, how the funds are operating, and what monies have been used for in regard to the Public Accounts, in regard to other methods of

receiving returns. But I don't think for a moment we'd be acting in a responsible way to accept the motion as it now stands.

I would also point out that at the time the motion was put, the hon. Minister Responsible for Tourism suggested that he would get most of the information for the hon. members if they so desired, but that he didn't feel that he should give that much detail in a public document. I think that is a fair and reasonable position for the government to have taken and I see nothing wrong with it whatsoever.

MR. HENDERSON:

Is the Deputy Premier prepared to amend the regulations so that what he has indicated could be done, would be done so far as members are concerned? Because the way I read the regulation, Mr. Speaker, I just don't see how that is possible.

DR. HORNER:

Mr. Speaker, if the regulation needs to be amended so that the hon. members of the Legislature can have what the hon. Minister of Industry and Commerce said that he would do, then that can be done and will be done. But the question of making it a public document is an entirely different matter.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Cardston, followed by the hon. Member for Edmonton Strathcona.

MR. HINMAN:

Mr. Speaker, it has been very interesting for me to hear the hon. Deputy Premier justifying thievery just because there are thieves.

I think what we have before us today is a little different from the interpretations given by a lot of people. In the first place I think we have to recognize that the motive of the government in providing this fund is not necessarily the motive of the fellow who is going to do the borrowing. I don't think the fellow who is going to borrow money to get into the tourist industry is concerned with whether he does the province a good turn or not, he is interested in whether or not he will make a profit out of the tourist industry.

I think there are a few other things. The hon. Member for Edmonton Highlands suggested that maybe the members could go and get the information privately. Now the members are not under any oath of secrecy for that kind of information, and the worst kind of information that can get out is this word passed from one to another, this rumour kind of thing. I just don't like to think that we need to get information that way.

Now this has been compared with house mortgages. These are different things completely. A house mortgage is registered, anybody can find out about it. I think in all sincerity we are concerned that certain information be not made public.

I don't think we have a right to ask to see the financial statement somebody makes in an application telling about his assets, his liabilities in particular. I don't think we have a right to ask that particularly if the loan were turned down. I'm not concerned that we know about his insurance policies, but most of the things asked for here become public knowledge automatically, except that you have to go search them out.

Now there is another point. We have asked on this side for a return at this time. That doesn't mean we are going to ask every six months for the Opportunity Fund to display to the public by tabling all the loans made.

But I want to point out a few other things. In the first place this is not a common ordinary kind of loan. If these people could get the money anywhere else, they wouldn't be coming to the Opportunity Fund. We recognize that this is a high risk field, and I think we all appreciate the sincerity of the government saying: "It's a risk worth taking." We take these risks all the time in government, in the hope that we are going to promote, in the end, the best interests of the province. And I think we recognize that perhaps in making a few tourist industry people pretty prosperous, we're going to add to the general prosperity of the people and that is all fine with me. When the government provides a benefit, never mind what benefit it is, whether it is hospitalization or medical care or anything else, we expect the people to take advantage of it

and we expect them to know that we take advantage of it. You cannot go very well into a senior citizens home without everybody knowing it. You cannot very well go to a hospital and keep it secret. These are taking government benefits and nobody expects to keep them private and I think we ought to have the same attitude toward this kind of a loan.

We have set up an Opportunity Fund, we have outlined the purposes, and therefore I think that this request might be modified by taking out some of the terms in there. I agree with the hon. member Mr. Farran that maybe we have gone too far. But I think it is only reasonable to expect those people who want to take advantage of specific legislation in the loan field for specific purposes under specific terms, to be frank enough to say "I went to the government, I got the loan, I am thankful for it and I have every intention of making it work." Now if you tied that condition to it, I don't think you would cut out one single application.

As I mentioned, these people already had a chance to go to all the other lending institutions. If they want to get in business and they could not do it in any other way, then they ought to be very frank and appreciate the opportunity provided by the government in this instance. I am all for it.

The hon. Member for Calgary North Hill was worrying about the competitors getting information. That does not worry me at all. There will be no information until the loan is made. When the loan is made, you can bet the fellow that gets it will be in a hurry to get going, and the competitors will know all about it. He might even put up a sign and advertise in advance. So I don't think this is a matter of getting competition; if it were, it simply points out the fact that this particular case really did not need the help. If there were competitors ready to fill the bill, ready to see that this tourist service was made, then it was not very serious that this man did or did not get the loan.

Now my proposition is simply this. I think we do not want to disclose what ought to be private information such as financial statements, lists of other mortgages, or that your mother in law is willing to endorse this, and things of that nature. The other types of security are already open to the public, so we are not disclosing anything.

I think when the government passes a bill creating a fund like this, that nobody ought to be ashamed of saying that he is taking advantage of it or ought to expect that nobody else will know about it. And for that reason, I would support the motion, though, as I have said, I think probably 3, 4, 5 could have been deleted without making very much difference. I don't think that information very pertinent. The terms of the loan have to confirm with the act and the regulations; we all ought to accept that. But I certainly see no reason to turn down this request for a return on the grounds that there is justification in unfair disclosure.

MR. GETTY:

I have a question, Mr. Speaker, if the member will accept one. Could you advise me how you feel about the present regulation in regard to people who came in asking for the loans, and knew about it; wouldn't we in fact be now making something public that which they were entitled to think was not public when they first came?

MR. HINMAN:

Mr. Speaker, I think the hon. member has a point there that maybe we ought to consider. If truly any of them were aware of that part of the regulation and depended on it, we might be in breach. But I doubt that that is the case.

MR. KOZIAK:

Mr. Speaker, in rising to take part in this debate, I would like to consider the position, as has the hon. Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs, of the individuals who have made applications for and received loans from the Alberta Opportunity Fund. And I don't think that we should, in discussing this motion, restrict ourselves to just that area where those individuals and corporations who have received or who are tourist oriented. What we are considering here is a principle which applies to all business transacted by this fund, regardless of the nature of business for which these loans are taken out.

That, first of all, brings us to the position of the individuals who made the application to the fund. Perhaps, and the truth may be as the hon. Member for Cardston has pointed out, this is a financial house of last resort; that,

notwithstanding what conditions were imposed upon these individuals or corporations at the time the application was made, they would have been willing to comply just so they could make this application, as it was the last resort. However, as the hon. Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs has pointed out, at the time these people made their application, and at the time they received the loan, they were under the impression that they were not doing so in a fish bowl; that the information they were supplying to the fund was not going to be available to the world.

Perhaps that wish and that condition should be honoured, Mr. Speaker. If, after having given information and after making an application on such a condition, these individuals find that this information was given in a fish bowl, they might withdraw their application. I think that's the first and most important point we are concerned with here -- the impression under which this information was given.

Secondly, and again I say that we must consider this as a principle, and not related only to the tourist-oriented trade, there are applications made to the fund by people who have processes; a special bear trap which they work to develop and produce; filing cabinets; a feed operation which has a particularly secret formula. Perhaps some of these formulae haven't been patented; some of the processes haven't been patented.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Patent them.

MR. KOZIAK:

That must have hit some sort of nerve, because I saw about six people responding.

[Interjections]

So Mr. Speaker, when making their application, these individuals or corporations would have to disclose to the officer considering it, and of course to the fund -- and this information would then be recorded -- the details of the business they are in, the productions they are considering, their markets, and what have you, because, of course, one of the considerations made by the directors who consider the application is the viability of the particular application, of the particular economic enterprise.

Mr. Speaker, if this principle is violated at this level, it could just as easily be violated at some other level, so that additional information can be sought -- not only the names of the individuals who have sought loans from the government, but also additional information.

Basically speaking, under Item No. 2 of the Order we could, if we applied this Motion for a Return to a person involved in a manufacturing process, find that it was the manufacturing process, the patents, the process itself which was part of the security offered for this loan; in answering such an Order for a Return, all this would be disclosed to the world at large.

MR. R. SPEAKER:

It would not.

MR. LUDWIG:

What for?

MR. KOZIAK:

I won't repeat some of the comments, with which I agree, of the hon. Member for Calgary North Hill with regard to some of the information an individual must give, such as his personal net worth, sources of income, the net worth and source of income of guarantors, etcetera. These have already been dealt with.

But I might point out, in answer to the comments phrased in question form by the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview, that if we are going to consider counselling as an expenditure of public funds, then doesn't that equally apply to those people who make applications and are turned down? In effect, there is an expenditure of public funds in considering the application of a person whose application was refused; in fact, there is counselling in saying that particular business of yours won't work. The argument would extend equally to that level, which would mean that we could easily request in an order of this nature that

the names of all the people who had applied but were refused also be disclosed, together with a description of such security and property they had tendered. What concerns me a great deal, Mr. Speaker, is the suggestion by the hon. Member for Drumheller when dealing with this principle, this principle of confidentiality, that even in the case of welfare, it would be wise to disclose all recipients of welfare.

Now I see that the hon. member has returned, and I have on numerous occasions listened to a number of speeches, emotional speeches, by the hon. Member for Drumheller. I think that when we take a look at the whole idea of welfare and why a government involves itself in assisting some of the unfortunate citizens of the province who are not able to economically look after themselves, one of the important things that we want to consider is that we don't, in assisting them economically, destroy them socially and psychologically. I am sure that none of us here would like to see in a classroom the children in a particular grade pointing out one or two or more children of the same class. I'm sure that the hon. Member for Drumheller will agree with me because he often refers in his speeches to the boys and girls, that those boys and girls are on welfare, because that could destroy those children. So I don't think, in all honesty, that the hon. Member for Drumheller would pursue the principle that the public disclosure of welfare recipients, the names of welfare recipients, and the amounts that they receive would be a good service. I think that that same principle applies equally here. In this particular case, we are not involved with grants, we are not involved with expenditures, we are involved in loans on a commercial basis. It is a -- there is a return, a rent for that money that is being paid by the recipient of that loan. Until such time as that loan is in default, and this was capably dealt with by the Provincial Treasurer, it is really no concern of ours. Once the loan comes into default then there is a problem, but until that time it is a financial transaction, there is a rent being paid, there is no expenditure of public funds.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Minister for Tourism caught the Chair's eye a while ago.

MR. LUDWIG:

I thought the hon. Minister of Tourism had already spoken in this debate.

MR. SPEAKER:

The Clerk is not here and I am not aware that he has, and I shall have to leave that to the conscience of the hon. Minister for Tourism.

MR. DOWLING:

Well, Mr. Speaker, I did make some remarks by way of attempting to clarify the situation and I hope that I could answer the question. It wasn't in the debate. It wasn't after the hon. Member for Drumheller made his motion to adjourn.

MR. DIXON:

Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, I would have no objection, as a mover of the motion, if the House would agree that we hear the minister because in all fairness to the minister, he only mentioned the fact that he couldn't comply with the request. And if the House so agrees, I have no objection.

HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER:

I take it then that the House unanimously agrees. Whether or not the minister requires the consent is another question, but in any event the way is clear.

MR. DOWLING:

Thank you very much, hon. members, and Mr. Speaker. I just wanted all members to be assured that I am very anxious that this material get into your hands. I am not interested at all in divulging anything that would be of a confidential nature and be of some harm to the company or the individual who has

made application for a loan or has received one. So I would propose, Mr. Speaker, the following motion, or the following amendment.

Hon. Minister Dowling proposed to the Assembly, seconded by the hon. Minister Hyndman:

That the Motion No. 109 be amended by:

- (1) deleting paragraph 1, and, renumbering paragraphs 2, 3, 4, and 5 as paragraphs 1, 2, 3, and 4 respectively.
- (2) by amending new paragraph 1 to read:

"the amount of each Alberta Opportunity Company tourist-oriented loan granted, including the actual location of such projects and the terms under which each loan was made."

I hope you can read my writing, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, since the hon. Minister, Mr. Hyndman, isn't here, I wonder if I could --

MR. SPEAKER:

I take it then that the amendment is moved by the hon. Minister for Tourism, seconded by the hon. Minister for Industry and Commerce.

MR. DOWLING:

Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER:

Is the House content with the statement of the amendment as made by the hon. minister, or shall I read it?

MR. HENDERSON:

Mr. Speaker, if I can't have a copy of it I would at least like you to read it.

AN HON. MEMBER:

There is a copy right there.

[Mr. Henderson was handed a copy of the amendment.]

MR. SPEAKER:

It has been moved by the hon. Minister for Tourism, seconded by the hon. Minister of Industry and Commerce, that Motion No. 109 be amended:

- 1) by deleting paragraph No. 1, and renumbering paragraphs 2, 3, 4, and 5 as paragraphs 1, 2, 3, and 4 respectively, and
- 2) by amending paragraph 2 to read "the amount of each Alberta Opportunity Company tourist oriented, loan granted including the actual location of such projects and the terms under which each loan was made."

Does the hon. minister wish to continue the debate on the amendment?

MR. DOWLING:

No, just an apology for the quality of the writing, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Is there any further debate on the amendment?

MR. GHITTER:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to speak to the amendment and I am very pleased that the hon. Minister Responsible for Tourism saw fit to come forward with a very sensible amendment.

Mr. Speaker, I must say as I hear the debate dealing with the Opportunity Fund, that I am somewhat concerned at the shift that I have seen in our opposition members this year. It seems that with the new Leader of the Opposition with whom we are now dealing, what was said last year in this Assembly has no bearing, Mr. Speaker.

MR. LUDWIG:

On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. A person who is not a mover or a seconder of a motion has to stick strictly to the amendment and not debate the main motion. I believe that is well known.

MR. GHITTER:

Mr. Speaker, on the point of order, I am very surprised at the prophetic attitude adopted by the hon. Member for Mountain View. I haven't said anything yet and already he is judging what it is going to be.

[Laughter]

MR. LUDWIG:

He probably won't say anything, Mr. Speaker, but the point --

MR. SPEAKER:

Order please! With respect to the hon. Member for Calgary Mountain View, the rules of relevance, apart from being difficult to apply, cannot be applied too strictly, and as I understood the hon. member's remarks he was indicating in relation to the amendment some alleged inconsistency on the other side of the House.

MR. GHITTER:

May I continue, Mr. Speaker?

Mr. Speaker, what I am referring to when I discussed the inconsistency, is that it seems the members of the Loyal Opposition have been very concerned today that certain matters relating to government loans should not be hidden under a cloak of secrecy, to use their phrase. Yet how well I remember the night in this Legislature last year when a very heated debate on The Brand Act turned into an uproar, and I remember the hon. Member for Macleod and standing up indignantly and saying, "Those cattle are going to be branded so the farmers will look at the cattle and see the brands, and they are going to know that a loan was obtained from Dr. Horner, and it is going to publicize Dr. Horner throughout the province, and that is terrible." How indignant those members were. They said, "What about the privacy of the farm? What about the family farm? What about what is happening in the rural community, those poor cattle suffering the brand?"

[Laughter]

But Mr. Speaker, what do we hear today from the hon. member? Privacy? Don't be silly. The free enterprise party, spoke so fervently that evening when the hon. Member, Mr. Peacock introduced the Opportunity Fund. The free enterprise party has now stood up and said, "Who cares about these people making these applications for these loans?" If they are going to come to the government they can't do so in privacy. Their affairs must be known throughout the land, so that any competitor, any snooper, whoever it might be, can walk into this Legislature, can search the records, as if he were searching the land registry at the Land Titles Office -- and I'm surprised the hon. Member for Calgary Mountain View knows where the Land Titles Office is -- so that all would be known, Mr. Speaker. I think this is a serious situation, Mr. Speaker, notwithstanding the inconsistencies of the opposition as they come into this new session with a new House Leader, and a new point of view apparently.

But what really are their valid reasons for suggesting what they have in this motion? Certainly all we have heard from them are suggestions of a cloak of secrecy, political manipulation, a little bit of payola and pork-barrelling. Those are the positive arguments, Mr. Speaker, that we have heard this afternoon

from the members of the Opposition. If ever I have heard arguments of negativism from the opposition -- and we've heard it on occasion in this Legislature -- we are hearing it this afternoon. There has not been one valid, positive point expressed by the members of the opposition in support of this motion.

Certainly, this afternoon the hon. Minister of Tourism saw fit to accept, in a very generous, compromising way, an amendment that will allow certain facts to become public information if this motion be accepted by the members of this Legislature.

Certainly, no one can reasonably be concerned with the original motion that talked in terms of the names of the 80 tourist-oriented individuals and corporations et cetera. But I think it is fair to suggest that the amount of the loans that are tourist-oriented and the loan granted and the terms should be made public knowledge. This is only commonsense in dealing in public funds. But let us never get into the position, in dealing with an opportunity fund, Mr. Speaker, whereby we are endeavouring to encourage private enterprise; that we are endeavouring to expand the industrial base of this province. In dealing with business let us never get into the area where a man cannot come to this government and deal in confidence, knowing that his affairs will be dealt with in confidence by the minister in charge -- who I'm sure deals on that basis -- and by this government, and for that matter by all members of this Assembly.

For when the day arrives that a man cannot come to government in confidence, and make applications for loans in confidence, and cannot feel confident in the government that what he is saying to them will be dealt with in confidence, then the whole basis of an opportunity fund will fail, and the whole attitude behind it, about which we are all concerned, will be detrimental, and certainly we won't even find a place to put the \$50 million.

MR. HENDERSON:

Wrong, wrong!

MR. GHITTER:

I would suggest that the amendment, and I commend the hon. Minister of Tourism for presenting it, is one that should meet with the favour of all members of this Assembly.

MR. DIXON:

Mr. Speaker, in speaking to the amendment, I am really surprised. The hon. member talked about a change of attitude, because unfortunately he was not in the House not too many years ago. I have The Edmonton Journal here of February 20, 1968, and the hon. Minister of Agriculture, the Deputy Premier, was demanding on Tuesday, February 20 that the government disclose whether it had made any public funds available to Atco Industries in Calgary, which is one of the most successful industries in our province. The answer he got there was no, there were no public funds involved. So maybe Atco has a complaint that their business was kicked around in the House.

Now we will even go to a larger corporation to remind the hon. members opposite. It wasn't too many years ago that this government, or the former government I should say, loaned \$30 million to Calgary Power, interest free to build a dam for the purposes of power, irrigation and recreation. What happens? The hon. Minister of Agriculture, the now Deputy Premier, gets up and demands an inquiry, and we spent day and hours here, going through what I consider just an exercise. It didn't prove anything. It just proved that they shouldn't have said anything about it because everything was above-board.

[Interjections]

So you see ...

[Interjections]

...and when people start talking about comparing this with welfare payments -- well I'll go along with an amendment that we do not disclose anybody's name who gets less than a thousand dollars. I am sure that will take care of every welfare payment -- the highest in any month, in the history of the province. So I'm not worried about that, but I am concerned, as a member of the Legislature, when public funds are being spent. Now if the Legislature cannot question them, and cannot ask for a return -- well, we are in serious trouble as far as our

parliamentary system is concerned, because this is why we are sent here. We are not arguing about a guaranteed loan some bank puts up, because in that case the bank is the loser, and not the government.

[Interjections]

I would like to remind the hon. members too, of the different acts that have been passed. We have The Industrial Development Incentive Act plus the regulations, and there is nothing in there that says nothing can be confidential unless the parties decide that it should be made public.

I think the very fact that if some company, and I am talking about corporations, comes to the government for a loan, they should be prepared -- they should go in with the full knowledge that when they are dealing with the government -- which is really the Legislature -- their business could become public, and there is nothing confidential about it. The only confidentiality that I know of in Canada, is the federal house when it comes to national security, but in all others it's not confidential if public money is being spent. So I see no reason why the government will not go along with this resolution, and why it is attempting to amend it at this time.

A moment ago, the hon. member opposite was mentioning that it would be bad because people will find out, and it will hurt their business -- or something about patents that they have. Nobody is asking about patents. Nobody is even asking how they are running their business. All we want to know is; who got the money, how much, and in what area is it going to be spent. This is what we are asking. We are not asking if he is going to beat his wife, or if he is going to use his motel for other than legitimate purposes. We are not asking anything like that. We are just asking for facts.

If you are going to worry about being exposed to the public when you are borrowing money from the government, I think the first thing you should do is not borrow money from the government. I would urge the government to reconsider this, because it's the only regulation, that I know, that prohibits the disclosure of public funds being spent. We have had the excuse both in the amendment, and also in the motion that, "Well, it's not really money being spent, it's a loan." But that is like trying to catch the horse after it has left the barn. We want to find out what is going on. All we are asking is that the government come forward, in a straightforward way, and tell the people of Alberta, and this Legislature, who are these people who are getting all this so-called great assistance from the opportunity fund.

As has been pointed out earlier, somebody tried to point out the difference between a mortgage, and a loan. Well, I think there is a great deal of difference between some chap who comes along and wants to borrow money to promote a business, and some Alberta individual looking for a mortgage on his own personal house. I don't think there is any comparison at all. It's not even in the same ballpark. I say this hon. members; that we are very very anxious to have open government on this side, just as well as over on your side. And I say that if you don't vote for this motion, you are not in favour of open government. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Edmonton Jasper Place had caught the Chair's eye earlier.

MR. YOUNG:

I wonder if the hon. member who has just spoken would permit a question? Are you for or against the amendment?

MR. DIXON:

Oh, I'm sorry I didn't make it clear. I am against the amendment.

MR. YOUNG:

Mr. Speaker, I have listened with considerable interest to this debate. The one thing that has impressed me particularly, and I am afraid that it is the only thing that has impressed me, has been the rather negative attitude which has been demonstrated throughout, the suggestion that the hon. gentlemen of the opposition do not, for instance, seem to have a great deal of credibility for our public servants who operate and carry out our regulations. I can now

understand, Mr. Speaker, why there was a question with respect to the morale of the public service earlier in the day. They knew it would be lower by night than it was at the time the question would be answered.

DR. BUCK:

Read this article, Les.

[Dr. Buck held up a piece of paper.]

MR. YOUNG:

Afterwards I shall do that Walter.

I can also understand why there seems to be some confusion on that side of the House. I recollect quite clearly in an earlier day in this particular Legislature, a question by one of the front benchers as to whether in fact, a loan or a grant had been issued to Tartan Breweries in Red Deer. The gentleman who asked the question was a member of the cabinet. As a member of the cabinet he had ample opportunity to know what was going on back in those days. Now to suggest that he needs, vitally needs, is really concerned, just can hardly do without the information to protect the public interest --

MR. HENDERSON:

He did.

MR. YOUNG:

- - He now suggests that he needs this information very badly. What is he going to do with it when he gets it? He couldn't use the information he had when he was in office.

MR. CLARK:

You have less than five minutes.

MR. YOUNG:

There is a bit of confusion too crept in this afternoon with respect to the difference between loans and grants. I can understand some confusion here, but I thought we had corrected it last year. I thought that we were the government, who in fact, were responsible for legislation to get the provincial government out of the business of giving grants to industrial operations, and that it was the gentlemen on the other side, some of whom -- a few remain -- who were in cabinet at the time that that legislation came in.

MR. LUDWIG:

Which you'll never be.

MR. YOUNG:

Well, I have a greater likelihood of being there than you do Albert.

[Laughter]

AN HCN. MEMBER:

Don't count on it.

MR. YOUNG:

Pardon? The other item that has come to my attention this afternoon, Mr. Speaker, that gives me great cause for alarm -- great cause for alarm...

AN HCN. MEMBER:

What's that?

MR. YOUNG:

I've heard hon. members this afternoon say that they consider it part of their responsibility as members of the Legislature, and part of their prerogative as members of the Legislature, to be able to go around and to know who is getting welfare, and for what reasons. Mr. Speaker, in my opinion this

is the kind of activity I refer to as skulking around into private individual's business. I don't consider in my situation I want any part of it.

The welfare operation, the provisions for social assistance, as set up in this province, provide for some rules and regulations -- rules and regulations made to try to be equitable, to try to be fair, both to the people who are in need, to the people who must foot the bill, and between the people who are in need. And also to the persons who must administer. If indeed there is any question about whether or not someone is receiving his adequate due, or getting too much, there is a provision for a committee of citizens --

MR. TAYLOR:

How do they know?

MR. YOUNG:

When a citizen comes to me who is in need, or who has a complaint, I advise him to contact a certain office of the government, the Social Development Office which will explain to him the provision for an appeal to this board of citizens and initiate the procedure, if he wishes -

MR. TAYLOR:

Why should they have to?

MR. YOUNG:

That way I have no need, personally, to get involved in the details and all of the personal information which has to do with welfare and social assistance

I firmly believe that is the way it should be. Because, when members of this Legislature go skulking around, looking for personal information and trying to get all kinds of family details and relaying these with the people who are administrative, civil servants of this province -- who are administering our programs -- then we need to worry. Because, then we will get involved in political pork-barrelling, and influence, and all these other things.

And I can see what must be going on in some constituencies right now, in view of some of the remarks that have been made earlier in this debate, this afternoon. I, for one, am deeply concerned and somewhat appalled that this situation can be allowed to exist.

Mr. Speaker, may I call it 5:30 and adjourn the debate.

MR. SPEAKER:

I take it the hon. member...

MR. LUDWIG:

The debate has not been adjourned, it has not been.

[Interjections]

MR. YOUNG:

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker ...

[Interjections]

MR. SPEAKER:

Order please. May the Chair place a liberal construction on the request to call it 5:30. Since it was already 5:30, the import of the remark must have been a request to adjourn the debate.

MR. YOUNG:

Mr. Speaker, if I may rise on a point of privilege. I had indeed asked to call it 5:30, and requested leave to adjourn the debate.

[Interjections]

MR. YOUNG:

Yes, I did. Yes, I did.

MR. SPEAKER:

May the hon. member have leave to adjourn the debate?

HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

MR. HYNDMAN:

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

MR. SPEAKER:

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

HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

[The House rose at 5:31 o'clock.]