

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ALBERTA

Monday, March 5, 1973

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

PRAYERS

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SELECT COMMITTEES

MR. COOKSON:

Mr. Speaker, as chairman of the Special Committee, I would like to table the various select committees and their members.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

MR. CHAMBERS:

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to introduce to you and on your behalf to the members of this Assembly, a special group of young friends from my constituency of Edmonton Calder. They are from the Lauderdale Junior Adaptation Class. They are accompanied by their teacher, Mr. Davidson and they are seated on the right-hand side of the members gallery. I would like to congratulate them on their interest in observing the proceedings of the Assembly and would ask that they all stand and be recognized by the members of the House.

MR. YURKO:

Mr. Speaker, I have pleasure in introducing to you and through you to the members of the House, twenty-nine Grade 4 students from the Holyrood School in the constituency of Edmonton Gold Bar. These young citizens have come to witness the House in action because they recognize that they are going to be future leaders of the province as they come from the right constituency. Mr. Speaker, these students are here with their teacher, Mrs. Kiehlbauch, and I would ask that they rise and be acknowledged by the members of the House.

FILING RETURNS AND TABLING REPORTS

MR. CRAWFORD:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to table the Annual Report of the Alcoholism and Drug Abuse Commission.

DR. HOHOL:

Mr. Speaker, I should like to file a reply to Question No. 101 requested by the hon. Member for Drumheller on February 20, 1973.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Athabasca Tar Sands

MR. DIXON:

Mr. Speaker, regarding the oil sands I have two questions. One is to the hon. Minister of Mines and Minerals. When is his department going to be in a

position to announce to Syncrude the guidelines that will be laid down in order that that project may go ahead in the near future?

MR. DICKIE:

Mr. Speaker, I think we would have to clarify what he means by guidelines. We have discussed different areas with Syncrude: public participation; environmental matters; the question of royalties; and the overall development of the Athabasca townsite.

On the question of environmental matters, they have now received the guideline. On the question of royalties, we are working on that and I expect to make an announcement relatively shortly dealing with certain aspects that will assist them in the government's thinking on the question of royalties.

MR. DIXON:

Supplementary question on the tar sands, directed to the Minister of Labour, who I believe, Mr. Speaker, would be the appropriate minister. I was wondering what action the minister has taken on Syncrude's request that the government work closely with them to train new people for new jobs. I was thinking of the Native and Metis people in the area, plus other Albertans.

Also, while I'm on my feet, a definition of an Alberta company -- what definition would they give as far as employment is concerned? What guidelines does the government lay down when they hire a so-called Alberta company?

DR. HOHOL:

Mr. Speaker, an excellent question, and one that the company itself, Syncrude, and our government, the Metis Association of Alberta, the Indian Association of Alberta, and within our government, Advanced Education, Mines and Minerals, other departments, and certainly Manpower and Labour, have had extensive meetings and are reaching certain understandings. We're also working on this matter with Ottawa, because of the Indian population that will be employed in this particular project, should final arrangements be such that Syncrude will proceed.

Now, I will be speaking on the budget address, Mr. Speaker, Wednesday or some date thereafter, and intend to treat the matter of manpower with respect to Syncrude and other projects of major proportions in Alberta in some extensive detail. So, if the hon. member will accept the interim information as I give it today, he can look forward to a more detailed statement on this very important matter Wednesday or thereafter.

MR. DIXON:

Mr. Speaker, one final question. I was wondering, has the company guaranteed that if they are given permission to go ahead that they would use these people you would be training?

DR. HOHOL:

Yes, I should have referred to that in my answer. I might say very openly that I have found, and we in government have found, the attitude of Syncrude very positive and very open. They are prepared to participate in the training program which would cost them, in terms of resources of training personnel and even money. So, not only, Mr. Speaker, would they agree to use the local population; they are anxious to do so and would participate in extensive preparation training programs. The question is extremely well put, because the lead time required to study the nature of the job, and then to prepare the programs and the training staff, and find space and equipment and the other inventory that goes into the preparation of the work force is the kind that we must use from this point until Syncrude goes on line. So the question was very well put. The matter of Alberta labour is going to be defined by the immediate neighbourhood -- for example, Fort McMurray, and then extended outward to encompass more and more of Alberta. We hope that we will be able to staff most of the project with Albertans. When that is not the case then clearly we will have to get Canadians.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Shaheen National Resources Inc.

MR. NOTLEY:

I'd like to direct a question to the hon. Minister of Mines and Minerals. Can the minister advise the House when the government plans to meet with the Shaheen interests with respect to their oilsands development project?

MR. DICKIE:

Mr. Speaker, there have been no definite plans for a meeting. I did receive a request to meet with the representatives some time over a month ago. That meeting had to be cancelled. They expressed interest in renewing that meeting. A definite time hasn't been set for that meeting.

MR. NOTLEY:

A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Has the government considered, in view of the controversy of the Shaheen refinery in Newfoundland, sending someone to Newfoundland to discuss the financial operations of that concern in Newfoundland prior to any negotiations in Alberta?

MR. DICKIE:

Mr. Speaker, I would suggest that perhaps that's a little premature at this stage. We do have information, and have watched with interest the developments there. We're not certain of the full extent of their conversations with us, and what they will deal with. I would think after that time we would be in a position to better assess it, and could make a decision after that time.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order please. I regret to inform the House that I have just been told that there is a power failure in the Hansard transcription room. I would therefore ask the House whether it is the wish of the members to continue without being recorded as we did in the pre-Hansard days, or do you wish to take a short adjournment until we see how soon we can get this power failure cured?

MR. HENDERSON:

Mr. Speaker, on our side of the House, we are prepared to proceed with the Oral Question Period.

DR. HORNER:

We're also prepared to go ahead.

MR. SPEAKER:

I take it then that we have the unanimous consent of the House to proceed, because technically we are in violation of the Hansard rule when we are not recording our proceedings.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview with a supplemental.

Shaheen (Cont.)

MR. NOTLEY:

Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the hon. minister. Several days ago, Mr. Minister, you expressed concern that the Shaheen interests were attempting to compete with us in the Chicago market. Have you had an opportunity, subsequent to your statement, to investigate that to see whether or not that is in fact true?

MR. DICKIE:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to correct any impression that I -- I did not make that statement in that way. I did express the interest that I had heard reports there was someone developing a refinery in the St. Lawrence that might compete in the Chicago market. I didn't refer to it as a Shaheen interest because I didn't have knowledge of that and I still don't have knowledge of who the group is.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Edmonton Kingsway, followed by the hon. Member for Calgary Bow.

Nursing Home Facilities

DR. PAPROSKI:

Mr. Speaker, a question to the hon. Minister of Health and Social Development. What is the government's intention of meeting and expanding the nursing home care needs in this province in line with the government's policy or declared desire to provide alternatives to high cost health care facilities?

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please. We have really, on many occasions, at this spring's sittings gone beyond what is ordinarily contemplated for a question period, and certainly within the limits as indicated in Beauchesne.

Strictly speaking, questions which elicit from ministers general policy statements are not in order during the question period. The alternative, which is often used in the House of Commons is for a member to ask a minister whether he is prepared to make a statement on Orders of the Day as to government policy on a certain topic. We have not been able to accommodate all those who have wanted to ask questions for the last few question periods, and one of the reasons is that we are getting a lot of policy statements at considerable length. The other is that we are perhaps allowing too many supplementaries at a time when there are many people waiting to ask questions.

I would suggest that the hon. member might wish to ask the minister whether he would be prepared to make an announcement of this kind on Orders of the Day.

DR. PAPROSKI:

Mr. Speaker, if I may rephrase the question. Are we intending to expand nursing home care facilities? Would that be appropriate?

HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER:

It is appropriate and may I say the sound system is again operating.

MR. CRAWFORD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and just in time too. Mr. Speaker, I did want to say to the hon. Member for Edmonton Kingsway, in all seriousness, the statements of the Provincial Treasurer last Friday evening, which disclosed an increase of over 20 per cent in the overall commitment to nursing home operational costs in Alberta this year, in fact represent in excess of 700 new nursing home beds that will come into active use in Alberta during the fiscal year we are in.

MR. HENDERSON:

Supplemental, Mr. Speaker. How many new beds are to be constructed this year, because most of that relates to construction from last year, I would assume.

MR. CRAWFORD:

Mr. Speaker, naturally the projection for operating costs for this year relates to buildings that were commenced last year and are being opened this year. I don't think I should go into the 1974-75 budget today.

MR. RUSTE:

Supplementary question to the minister. Is any record kept of the applicants desirous of getting into this type of care in the province?

MR. CRAWFORD:

Mr. Speaker, different areas, I think, use different systems. The Edmonton area, for example, has the Ncrwod Board which handles the applications for

admission to nursing homes. I am sure that a lot of private nursing homes maintain their own lists of applicants and the attempt that is being made, for example in Edmonton, would be to have a central office type of thing where all applications would be submitted and then allotted. There would be lists in the hands of those organizations at those offices.

MR. RUSTE:

Supplementary to the minister. Would you consider, then, looking at this so you get an overall provincial picture of it rather than it being broken down in various areas?

MR. CRAWFORD:

Mr. Speaker, I will certainly consider doing my best to get the hon. member that information. It would mean collecting it from a number of boards, but we have done that recently in respect to the waiting lists on senior citizens' lodges and no doubt it could be done for this too.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Members for Edmonton Norwood and Edmonton Kingsway have supplementaries. Perhaps we might return to this topic if we have time at the end of the question period.

The hon. Member for Calgary Bow followed by the hon. Member for Edmonton Strathcona.

Credit Rating Screening

MR. WILSON:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask a question of the hon. Minister of Manpower and Labour. Does the government intend to make pre-screening of credit-rating mailing lists illegal?

DR. HOHOL:

I listened very carefully, Mr. Speaker, but the technical language of the question went, at least partially, past me. I wonder if he could rephrase the question in usable language?

MR. WILSON:

Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Many jurisdictions are now introducing legislation making the pre-screening of credit ratings on mailing lists illegal. Does the Alberta Government intend to follow suit?

DR. HOHOL:

Mr. Speaker, I thought that is what he had asked. I just wanted to make sure that the answer I gave was consistent with the question. It will certainly be considered in new legislation.

MR. WILSON:

Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Does the government have any evidence that such a practice is presently impinging on the privacy of individuals?

DR. HOHOL:

Mr. Speaker, I would not want to go beyond the statements in the reports which I tabled Wednesday last, and to which the hon. member is likely making reference. If not, then possibly when he has opportunity to check the information there, I would be pleased to add further information.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Edmonton Strathcona followed by the hon. Member for Calgary McCall.

Elevator Strike

MR. KOZIAK:

Mr. Speaker, I also have a question to the Minister of Manpower and Labour. Are there any encouraging signs resulting from the recent negotiations between the parties to the elevator strike?

DR. HOHOL:

Mr. Speaker, I have learned not to be encouraged too much by the signs that surround collective bargaining. I am pleased to report -- although the news is not pleasing on this matter -- that the unions representing the elevator constructors and the five major construction companies held bargaining discussions through the mediation services of the Department of Labour of the Government of Alberta. We have been in close touch and the meetings proceeded from last Friday to last night. They broke down in a sense that no agreement was reached, even though on Friday there appeared to be the encouraging signs that the hon. member refers to. No date was set for the convening of a subsequent round of negotiations. One thing that did occur, was that the representatives of the unions stated they would be agreeable to compulsory and binding arbitration.

Let me give this further information, if I may, sir. We are dealing here with a national agreement, and one of the problems we will have to work out is the matter of the provinces giving up their responsibilities for negotiation in this matter to a board of arbitrators across Canada should we decide mutually among the ten provinces to do so. I met this noon hour, from two o'clock to half past two, with Mr. Bruno Schultz, who represents the western provinces in the negotiations in Toronto, and he brought back his report. We were also in touch with Mr. Dickie, the chief mediator for the nation, and we have his report.

At this moment, one of my senior officials is in touch with all the senior labour officials of the ten provinces, and we hope to reach some consensus within a day and a half to two days on what further steps we may take to bring to a halt this national strike, now in its sixth week in Alberta and in its seventh week across the rest of the nation.

MR. HENDERSON:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Do I gather that the government is not contemplating binding arbitration within the jurisdiction of the Province of Alberta?

DR. HOHOL:

Mr. Speaker, the problem of provincial initiatives is certainly one that we have to face up to across the nation, and it involves our responsibilities to our provincial constituents. We approach this problem with full co-operation and a knowledge that any steps we may take provincially with communications at Toronto do not, in fact, jeopardize or prejudice the negotiations at the national level. The fact that the union representatives are prepared to go to collective bargaining indicates that this is one way we may get a national agreement which will solve the strike from coast to coast.

If that isn't possible I can well imagine that the question the hon. Member for Wetaskiwin-Leduc asks would be one that our province would have to consider seriously. We have considered it because that recommendation was made. We have chosen, at this point, to work at the national level. I gave my senior staff instructions to go to Toronto if necessary and work with Mr. Dickie, so at this point Alberta is taking some provincial initiative at the national level. We may have to deal with it at the provincial level exclusively.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Wainwright with a supplementary.

MR. RUSTE:

Yes, a supplementary for the minister. Is there a possibility of an accident, possibly fatal, due to the lack of maintenance in any of these elevators?

DR. HOHOL:

Mr. Speaker, in saying there is always that possibility, I would not wish to be misunderstood. We are in close touch with the management and supervision departments responsible for maintaining the elevators in safe and working order. However, wherever that does not appear to be the case the elevators are closed. To the best of my knowledge this action has not been taken in Alberta up to the present time.

The elevators are so put together and so constructed that the basic maintenance our government provides at the point of installation, and also annual inspections, including those the companies have taken at their initiative, are at this point satisfactory. If that were not the case I would take the steps necessary to make them safe, even if it meant having them closed. I would like to say, while I'm on my feet, that a certain number of buildings, and this has some real consequence to the economy of this province and the labour force, are not being opened -- or at least being rented -- because the elevators are not being installed.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Handicapped Children

MR. HO LEM:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a question for the hon. Minister of Health and Social Development regarding the education and development program for handicapped children at the Alberta Children's Hospital in Calgary. Is it contemplated that this program will be cancelled in the near future?

MR. CRAWFORD:

Mr. Speaker, there are no programs being cancelled at the Alberta Children's Hospital, and to my knowledge it is, of course, under the guidance and leadership of a citizens' board that has been appointed by interested citizens in Calgary. Not long ago, I was able to advise them and the people of Calgary that the government was, in fact, funding substantial increases in support of the Alberta Children's Hospital. So I reiterate that I have no knowledge of any change in their plans that would bring about the result that the hon. member mentioned. The sum of an additional \$750,000 million dollars is to be made available to the hospital this coming year to improve the work they are doing.

MR. HO LEM:

Mr. Speaker, just for a clarification of my question for the minister, over the weekend I did --

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. minister has answered the question, apparently without the assistance of clarification. The hon. Member for Sedgewick-Coronation.

Highway Construction

MR. SORENSON:

Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Highways. In a recent issue of the Consort Enterprise a headline states as follows: "13 miles of Highway 41 to be Built this Summer." True or false?

MR. COPITHORNE:

Mr. Speaker, true.

MR. SORENSON:

A supplementary to the minister. Have you called for tenders on this portion of highway?

MR. COPITHORNE:

False.

[Laughter]

MR. SPEAKER:

May the Chair express extreme appreciation for the admirable brevity of the member and the minister.

The hon. Member for Smoky River, followed by the hon. Member for Bow Valley.

Sturgeon Lake Seismic Operations

MR. MOORE:

Mr. Speaker, a question to the hon. Minister of Lands and Forests. In view of the fact that certain seismic operations will be taking place on the Sturgeon Lake requiring the detonation of dynamite, could the hon. minister inform the House as to what precautions will be taken to ensure environmental and ecological protection on the lake area and the fish in the lake?

DR. WARRACK:

Yes, I can, Mr. Speaker. This matter arose over the weekend and I learned that today through the MLA for Smoky River, Marvin Moore, and also the good offices of the Minister Responsible for Northern Development . . . [Interjections] . . . May I proceed?

The matter in question is a seismic program in the area, as well as over the Sturgeon Lake which is in the constituency of Smoky River, and the conditions are very stringent and lengthy. As a matter of fact, they encompass some four and one-half pages, but the point basically being the concern for the fish habitat of the area. What I have been able to do is this, Mr. Speaker: first I have been able to assure that we will conduct an inspection in advance of any detonation to be sure that the conditions are precisely complied with; secondly that one of our men from the Fish and Wildlife Division will be present during operations related to seismic development; and thirdly, I have learned, Mr. Speaker, that some four years ago the same program was conducted on the same lake with no difficulties regarding the fish habitat matter.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Bow Valley, followed by the hon. Member for Wainwright.

Tax Reduction Program

MR. MANDEVILLE:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct my question to the hon. Minister of Municipal Affairs. Under the new tax reduction program, homeowners qualify for a rebate in relation to the assessment of the home. On a farm home, where the home is not assessed, will these homes be assessed, or what method will you use to give the rebate to the farm assessment?

MR. RUSSELL:

No, Mr. Speaker, there is no intention of assessing any farm buildings. The relief or the benefit will be paid on the assessment that is levied, that is on the land, up to the full assessment value of the \$7,200 ceiling. It is our intention, even if the farmer has non-contiguous parcels which may be in effect even in different municipalities, to still allow him to take enough land to get to the \$7,200 assessment benefit.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Wainwright, followed by the hon. Member for Calgary North Hill.

DES Ban

MR. RUSTE:

Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Agriculture. Has he had any discussion with the Federal Minister of Agriculture in relation to the DES ban that is on in Canada? I understand that certain parts of it will be continued in the States but not fully as we have it here.

DR. HORNER:

Mr. Speaker, we have had pretty extensive discussions with the Federal Department of Agriculture in relation to all growth stimulants. We feel very strongly that because of the ban in Canada meat coming in from the United States should also be banned if they continue to use the implant. I think, as I mentioned in the House a year ago, or as I recall, the para-question of the worldwide use of DES is that if we are going to be in the world meat market, then we should get a better growth stimulant than DES.

I am quite confident our technical people have developed that. As a matter of fact I think a better use of alfalfa products and their better preservation and manufacture, if you like, will substantially take up any loss in regard to not using DES any further. But we have made it know to Mr. Whelan that if, in fact, we are going to have the ban on DES here it should be continued on meat coming into Canada as well.

MR. RUSTE:

A supplementary question to the minister. Have you had any discussions with the other provincial Ministers of Agriculture so that you could maybe clamp down on it, in case it isn't done?

DR. HORNER:

Well, Mr. Speaker, we're very pleased that the hon. Member for Wainwright is now using the words 'clamping down.' If we'd had some clamping down in prior years, we might not be in the position we are in today.

As a matter of fact this matter was discussed at the Ministers' meeting in Halifax last summer in a pretty full and frank way with all of the Ministers of Agriculture in Canada, and at that time the federal minister was there as well -- that's the previous one. But subsequent to that meeting, I've had some discussions with Mr. Whelan, who was in Edmonton, in relation to the things I have just answered.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Calgary North Hill, followed by the hon. Member for Pincher Creek-Crowsnest.

Teachers' Strike Vote

MR. FARRAN:

Mr. Speaker, a question for the hon. Minister of Labour. Mr. Minister would you please explain the circumstances of the strike vote among teachers in Southeast Alberta?

DR. HOHOL:

Mr. Speaker, the situation in the Southeastern Schcol Authorities Association is briefly this. Last week a strike vote of teachers resulted in a strike vote favourable by 73.9 per cent. One would describe it as a low-positive kind of support.

In discussions with both the school trustees and the Alberta Teachers' Association, we were able to arrange for collective bargaining to commence again, beginning tomorrow morning and the mediation staff from our department is on the way to Lethbridge at this moment to meet with the teachers and the school board negotiators. We are hopeful that with the assistance of the mediation staff and being aware of the circumstances that separate the two groups, we should have an agreement sometime soon.

MR. ANDERSON:

Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Has the government any proposals to assist the boards to keep high schools open in the event of a strike?

DR. HOHOL:

That, of course, Mr. Speaker, is hypothetical. As I say, while I'm careful about being encouraged by any kind of optimistic signs when it comes to collective bargaining, it is nevertheless that kind of question, and we'll just assume that we will have a settlement.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Fincher Creek-Crowsnest, followed by the hon. Member for Lacombe.

Recycling Juice Cans

MR. DRAIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and this is to the hon. Minister of the Environment. I've had representations on the matter of juice cans going the same way as pop cans, and I was wondering if you intend to expand the recycling process to include these particular pollutants?

MR. YURKO:

Mr. Speaker, there is an advisory committee to the minister that considers extension of the act to other containers, but I don't believe they have discussed juice cans. But they have discussed oil cans, that is the quart oil can, and I believe that their present recommendation is that the act not be extended at this time.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Lacombe, followed by the hon. Member for Lloydminster.

DREE

MR. COOPER:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask a question of the Minister of Industry and Commerce. In view of the rather serious letter I have had from the Red Deer Chamber of Commerce, I'd like to ask him if his department has had an opportunity to review the DREE program as it affects Alberta and in particular the central part of Alberta?

MR. PEACOCK:

Mr. Speaker, yes, we have, we've reviewed the letter from Red Deer. We have -- as previously mentioned in the House, and by my colleague, the Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs -- discussed the fact that we have had considerable review with the minister, now Mr. Jamieson, and prior to that Mr. Marchand in regard to the DREE program as it applies to the development of industry in Alberta. We are very displeased with the inequities that it creates because of the political boundaries that it has drawn, and we have been assured this program will be reconsidered by the federal government.

Maybe my colleague would like to comment further on it.

MR. COOPER:

Supplementary to the minister. Will your department consider a thrust of assistance in this particular area in view of some of the reactions that you received from the federal government?

MR. PEACOCK:

I think that is a matter of policy and I would refer that to the Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs.

MR. GETTY:

Mr. Speaker, the discussions with the Department of Regional and Economic Expansion have been continuing, I think, favourably. I wouldn't want to take any particular part, though, until we are able to announce something solid.

The problem that the Red Deer people have presented to the government is exactly the problem which the government has expressed in the Legislature and to the federal government on a number of occasions; that is, that once you draw artificial boundaries within the province, while you help some people, you automatically disenfranchise others. So, Mr. Speaker, our negotiations with Ottawa are continuing on a basis in which we would have programs under the Department of Regional Economic Expansion delivered in our province on the basis of merit and not on the basis of any particular artificial boundary.

MR. NOTLEY:

A supplementary question to the hon. minister. Can the hon. minister advise the House what the present status is of the extended special area in northern Alberta, not the original special area, but the extended boundaries?

MR. GETTY:

Mr. Speaker, it is still in effect.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Lesser Slave Lake with a supplementary, followed by the hon. Member for Lloydminster with a question.

MR. BARTON:

Yes Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct my question to the hon. Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs. Has the 1972/73 special area agreement been signed by the province and the federal government for Lesser Slave Lake?

MR. GETTY:

It has been agreed to, Mr. Speaker. I am not sure if the signed documents are back yet from Ottawa.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Crop Chemicals

MR. J. MILLER:

Yes Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct a question to the Minister of Agriculture and it concerns the high cost of avadex and carbyne. For those members who are not farmers, these are chemicals which are used in the control of wild oats. I would ask that the minister investigate the high cost of these materials because anything that he can do to lower the cost would aid those of us who sowed wild oats in the years gone by.

[Laughter]

DR. HORNER:

Mr. Speaker, in regard to the latter part of the hon. member's question, perhaps that should be referred to my colleague in the Department of Health and Social Development.

The actual problem of wild oats is a serious problem in Alberta, as it is across western Canada. As a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, a recent survey by the Canadian Grain Commission suggested we are losing over \$100 million a year because of wild oat infestations in western Canada, so that it becomes a problem of some magnitude and of some concern to the department.

I have had my officials investigate the matter, both with the companies involved and also with the Rural Municipalities Association. I have had some discussions with my colleague in the Department of Industry because if we could get a plant making carbyne in western Canada, and preferably in Alberta, we might be able to reduce substantially the cost of this particular chemical to the farmers of Alberta. We are hopeful that new chemicals now coming on to the market or in their testing stage will also help to reduce the cost of these chemicals to our farmers.

The other one important in this area is treflan, which is used in rapeseed for wild oats control. I am hopeful that we can come up with some joint program with the municipalities that will be helpful in reducing the costs of avadex, carbyne and treflan to the farmers of Alberta.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Edmonton Calder, followed by the hon. Member for Vermilion-Viking.

Bingo Tax

MR. CHAMBERS:

Mr. Speaker, a question to the hon. Minister of Culture, Youth and Recreation. The Amusements Act, which was amended on April 27, 1971 by the former government provides for effective tax of 10 per cent of the gross take in lotteries and this tax is probably ruining the economics of holding charitable bingos which have provided sports facilities for young people as well as many other worthwhile facilities.

Would the minister give consideration to immediately amending this act to provide, instead, for a modest licence fee, or perhaps some other reasonable alternative, instead of this ruinous 10 per cent gross tax brought in by the former government?

MR. SCHMID:

Mr. Speaker, we have had several petitions from organizations regarding this tax and we are seriously considering an amendment or else a change that would at least help an organization to hold a bingo without running into losses.

MR. PURDY:

Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question on this issue to the Attorney General. Will any consideration be given in regard to giving the jurisdiction for licences back to the local RCMP in the local areas instead of people having to write in to your department all the time for licences?

MR. LEITCH:

Mr. Speaker, that's a matter we are giving very careful consideration to, and it is a difficult question. The difficulty with having the various members of a police force throughout the community issue lottery licences is that it's hard to make sure they are all operating on the same guidelines. That's one of the advantages in having them issued by the department -- everyone who applies for a licence gets treated in the same way. But it's certainly something we have been examining and I have not yet made a final decision.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Vermilion-Viking, followed by the hon. Member for Clover Bar.

Snowmobile Legislation

MR. COOPER:

Mr. Speaker, my question is for the hon. Minister of Highways. Is it your intention, Mr. Minister, to introduce new and less restrictive legislation at this session pertaining to the use of snowmobiles?

MR. COPITHORNE:

Mr. Speaker, the answer is no.

MR. COOPER:

Supplementary, Mr. Speaker, to the Minister of Lands and Forests. Is it the intention of your department, Mr. Minister, to change regulations to allow the use of snowmobiles in any of the provincial parks?

DR. WARRACK:

Mr. Speaker, I think I would take the opportunity to answer in two ways. One is that, with respect to provincial parks, as I indicated in a note to the hon. member just at the end of the fall session, we had arranged to have access provisions to the lakes which are a part of provincial parks so that on those lakes snowmobiles could be operated.

Secondly, the last week in November, by a ministerial order through the Department of Lands and Forests, we did make additional areas available for snowmobile use, these being seismic lines that had already been cut in the forested areas and other vacant Crown lands of Alberta. So in that way we had taken a major advance forward with respect to their access in areas where there would not be any conflict with other people.

MR. RUSTE:

Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the Minister of Highways. Is he giving any consideration to the lowering of the licence fee for the snow vehicles?

MR. COPITHORNE:

Mr. Speaker, at this time, no.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Clover Bar, followed by the hon. Member for Calgary Mountain View.

Lure Crop Program

DR. BUCK:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask a question of the hon. Minister of Lands and Forests. In view of the fact that in my area there has been a little bit of conflict between the hunters and the farmers, could the hon. minister inform the House, does he consider that the lure crop program is a success in the Beaver Hill area, and number two, will it continue next year?

DR. WARRACK:

Yes, and yes.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Lesser Slave Lake, followed by the hon. Member for Calgary Mountain View.

MR. BARTON:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I didn't hear my name called so I thought maybe you'd missed me, but my follow-up question is to the hon. minister --

MR. SPEAKER:

I'm trying to avoid calling out the name of the hon. member.

DREE (Cont.)

MR. BARTON:

Will the government be advising the towns and organizations that the agreement has been agreed on, so they can continue with their projects, due to the earliness of the spring?

MR. GETTY:

Mr. Speaker, I assume the hon. member is referring to the DREE agreement?

MR. BARTON:

The Lesser Slave Lake Special Areas Agreement.

MR. GETTY:

Yes, Mr. Speaker, we will do that as early as possible. I should say, Mr. Speaker -- one point I didn't add in discussion of the DREE negotiations earlier -- that the government has not been at all pleased with the slowness of those negotiations. We apologize to the House and certainly to the people as to the extended nature of those negotiations. There have been some problems which were understandable, what with changing the ministers and also the election. The present agreements are extended to the end of 1973. Those agreements, we hope when they terminate, will be replaced by a new method of DREE implementation in the province.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for --

MR. BARTON:

A supplementary question.

MR. SPEAKER:

I wonder if the hon. member might save his supplementary as we're running very short of time and we've covered this topic twice now.

The hon. Member for Calgary Mountain View, followed by the hon. Member for Taber-Warner.

University of Calgary

MR. LUDWIG:

Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the hon. Minister of Advanced Education and he has had notice of this question for some two or three days. In view of the fact that there will be restricted admission to the law faculty at the University of Alberta, is he now prepared to recommend to the government that a Faculty of Law be established at the University of Calgary?

MR. FOSTER:

Mr. Speaker, I don't recall having had notice of this in the past two or three days. If the hon. member's bringing it up in the House at every possible occasion is notice, then, Mr. Speaker, I have had notice on many, many occasions.

I should take this opportunity, Mr. Speaker, to re-state for the record -- in case there is any uncertainty opposite -- the Universities Commission made a decision with respect to the recommendation for a law school for the University of Calgary last fall. The Commission has the jurisdiction to make the recommendation and of course did so. I accepted the recommendation of the Commission for the moment. But upon the dissolution of the Commission I am quite prepared to review its decision and the question of whether or not there should be an additional faculty of law in this province.

MR. LUDWIG:

Mr. Speaker, a supplementary to the hon. minister. From his changed position now, can we assume that he will be supporting the establishment of a law faculty in Calgary?

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please. The hon. minister has plainly answered that question.

The hon. Member for Taber-Warner, followed by the hon. Member for Calgary Millican.

Markets for Alberta Sugar

MR. D. MILLER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the hon. Minister of Agriculture. What steps is the minister taking to encourage all retail outlets in Alberta to sell Alberta sugar? I understand that Alberta sugar is not available in the Peace River and northern areas.

DR. HORNER:

Mr. Speaker, the same steps that we are taking to promote the sale of Alberta products within Alberta, any of which can be grown in Alberta. I can assure the hon. member that we will take steps to improve the penetration of Alberta sugar into the Alberta markets along with other products.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Calgary Millican, followed by the hon. Members for Edmonton Kingsway and Edmonton Norwood with their deferred supplementaries.

Regarding Socialism

MR. DIXON:

Mr. Speaker, my question today is directed to the hon. the Premier. Regarding recent statements he made in Calgary regarding socialism coming into Alberta from other provinces, I was wondering, in light of those statements, what positive steps has the government taken to prevent this?

[Laughter]

MR. LOUGHEED:

Mr. Speaker, the hon. member can rest assured that the statement I made had nothing to do with socialism coming into the province. Of that we have little concern.

What I did say is that we were concerned that the meeting that is proposed to be held this July on western economic opportunities -- which is scheduled by the federal government and will be discussed at the meeting of the Prairie Economic Council at the end of this month -- is established in such a way that the citizens of the Province of Alberta recognize the views of this government with regard to both socialism and free and private enterprise.

MR. DIXON:

Mr. Speaker, a further question to the hon. Premier. What does the government plan to do with the invasion that is already here? I am referring to the recent purchase of the Saskatchewan Government by Intercontinental Packers who own a large plant ...[Laughter]... I'm sorry, Mr. Speaker, I'll clarify it. The purchase of Intercontinental Packers by the Saskatchewan Government. Also, the fact that 45 per cent ... amounts in my way to --

MR. SPEAKER:

Order please. The hon. member is now making a statement rather than asking a question. The question would appear to be complete as far as he has gone.

MR. DIXON:

I would like to ask a further supplementary then. Mr. Speaker, in light of the fact that the Premier of Saskatchewan has announced that the purchase is an integral part of the Saskatchewan Government's development plan, does your government plan any action to prevent the takeover of a large plant at Red Deer?

MR. LOUGHEED:

Mr. Speaker, it is certainly not a subject we have specifically considered, and one that I can respond to in the question period, but one I would be prepared to take notice of. I will note the concern of the hon. member and assess whether there is any appropriate provincial action.

MR. HENDERSON:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker, relating to the inroads of socialism in the province. I wonder if the Premier could also advise us what plans they have through the labour portfolio to deal with the substantial influx of the unemployed labourers from our neighbouring socialistic provinces?

MR. SPEAKER:

Possibly the hon. Leader of the Opposition might invite a ministerial statement on Orders of the Day with regard to that point.

The hon. Member for Edmonton Kingsway with a supplemental, followed by the hon. Member for Edmonton Norwood with another supplemental.

DR. PAPROSKI:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will forfeit my question to another day.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. member for Edmonton Norwood is next on the list anyway with a question.

Assistance for Senior Citizens

MRS. CHICHAK:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is directed to the hon. Minister of Health and Social Development. I wonder if the hon. minister could advise whether senior citizens receiving public assistance will also receive the full benefit of the recently announced increase in federal old age pensions, or will the provincial portions be reduced in view of the federal increase in support as was the practice in the past?

MR. CRAWFORD:

Mr. Speaker, there was one occasion in the past when the additional benefit provided by the Canadian Parliament was then taken off, or to some extent taken off, -- the provincial portion of assistance given to senior citizens. That will not be done in this case, and the senior citizens in Alberta will have the full benefit of new rates as established by the federal government.

Nursing Home Facilities (Cont.)

MRS. CHICHAK:

Mr. Speaker, I wonder if I may revert to the supplemental I had in regard to nursing homes?

MR. SPEAKER:

Will the hon. member do so, and that will complete the Oral Question Period.

MRS. CHICHAK:

Thank you. My supplemental is to the hon. Minister of Health and Social Development. Can the minister advise whether it is his intention to have special care nursing homes to meet the community mental health problem?

MR. CRAWFORD:

Mr. Speaker, there are no plans at the present time to vary the mental health system beyond the sort of outline I have given before, including programs which are extensions of existing institutions. But at the present time, as far as special care nursing homes are concerned, other than the fact that some patients who are discharged from Alberta Hospital, Edmonton, or Alberta Hospital, Ponoka, are cared for after discharge in the regular nursing home system, there is no other special program. It is certainly something that I would be prepared to look at.

Epilepsy Programs

Mr. Speaker, while I am on my feet, I wonder if I could supplement an answer to a question that was asked by the hon. Member for Calgary Bow a few days ago, and it related to his question on public education programs for epilepsy. I think that it would be all right if I told him that the question triggered the interest of the local association to come and see me, which they hadn't done before. I was very glad to see a representative of the local association, and quite frankly learn more, as I did as a result of that, about the problem.

But the information I wanted to give today in regard to public education specifically, is that the department does have a 47-minute film about epilepsy available to the public. It also makes available to the public copies of the publication, "Epilepsy". When further information is requested by the public, it is supplied by the department in the form of copies from another publication called "Patterns of Disease - Epilepsy", which is published by Parke-Davis and Company. Public inquiries on the subject are generally referred to the Edmonton Epilepsy Association located in the Tegler Building. I believe there is, in fact, another association located in Calgary. The association in Edmonton provides about a dozen publications plus an information sheet to any person requesting information. By means of the close contact with the private agency in this field, every attempt is made to avoid duplication in the education feature.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

MINISTERIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

Cabinet Appointments

MR. LOUGHEED:

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased today to announce to the House two important actions respecting the Executive Council of the Government of Alberta.

Subsequent to the drafting of the Budget Speech certain developments have occurred. I have now concluded that it would clearly be in the public interest to have a full Minister of Consumer Affairs. As noted in the Speech from the Throne our analysis of existing administration and policy formulation indicates the need for substantial reform in consumer affairs within provincial jurisdiction. I have over the last week come to the view of the need for a minister of the Executive Council to be charged with the portfolio of Consumer Affairs. This portfolio will consist of a number of branches and operations within various other government departments to be restructured during the next six months under the direct ministerial responsibility of a Minister of Consumer Affairs. The portfolio will involve the Consumer Affairs Branch, the Licencing of Trades and Businesses Branch of the Department of Industry and Commerce, the Insurance Branch of the Attorney General's Department, and the Companies Branch of the Attorney General's Department, together with a number of other branches and divisions.

In due course an act respecting the Minister of Consumer Affairs will be introduced into the Legislature. In the meantime, the minister will operate under the authority of The Public Service Administrative Transfers Act.

The new Minister of Consumer Affairs for the government of Alberta will be the Member for Edson, the hon. Bob Dowling. Mr. Speaker, Mr. Dowling will continue to carry his responsibilities for the government's support and promotion of the tourist industry in the province.

The second announcement, Mr. Speaker, is that circumstances have regretfully created a vacancy as Minister of Telephones and Utilities. I know Len Werry would expect me to name a successor for him as quickly as possible because of the very important work involved in this portfolio. This includes the work Mr. Werry commenced for a new rural natural gas plan; extended area telephone service, a review of the Public Utilities Board operations, and a number of other major projects.

Mr. Speaker, and members of the Legislative Assembly, the new Minister of Telephones and Utilities will be the Member for Calgary North Hill, Mr. Roy Farran.

As the members are no doubt aware, Mr. Farran brings to the post a vast experience in municipal administration, having served for nine years as an alderman in the City of Calgary, during which time he was chairman of their key committees of finance and operations and development.

More recently, Mr. Farran chaired a government task force which in a short 15 months completed very effective reports in the complex area of provincial-municipal financial reform.

I trust all members, Mr. Speaker, will join with me in extending best wishes to Mr. Dowling in his new responsibilities, and to Mr. Farran on his appointment to the Executive Council.

[Applause]

MR. HENDERSON:

I rise, Mr. Speaker, simply to second the congratulations that were expressed by the Premier on the appointment of the two gentlemen to the public offices. I can only say that on our part we will do our best to make their life as interesting as possible. I would hope that this decision, Mr. Premier, won't lead to the necessity of reconstruction of the building to add two more seats in the front row.

MR. DIXON:

Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of privilege to point out that the hon. member, Mr. Ray Speaker, is missing from the House today because his father

passed away today. I thought that all of the members would be interested in the reason why the hon. member is away, Mr. Speaker.

MR. LUDWIG:

Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of privilege to bring to the attention of the House a matter which I consider a very serious breach of responsibility by a minister of the Crown.

I wish first of all to refer to a Motion for a Return which was ordered, I believe, on November 21, moved by myself and seconded by the hon. member, Mr. Ho Lem, that an Order of the Assembly issue for a Return showing location of legally closed road allowances, et cetera.

Now the breach I am alleging, on the part of the Minister of Highways, refers particularly to question No. 4. "Would the minister provide a map upon which are displayed all legally and illegally closed road allowances in Alberta?" The answer I received to question No. 4, was "Not available in map form." Well I must point out to the House that there are maps of closed road allowances in this province. If the hon. Minister of Highways wishes to take issue with me I will provide him with a couple that came from his department, and I don't think that a minister of the Crown who is given an Order of this Assembly can say "Not available." When he is given an order to provide a Return, it's an order to him. It's an order of all of the representatives of this House, and he can't say, "Not available." He had a lot of time to get the information for me.

I believe that this is a breach of his responsibility. I believe that it is in contempt of an order of the House, and I will show you, Mr. Speaker, and the hon. members the kind of maps that are available and where they come from. So I feel that that answer, "Not available in map form" was not an honest one. I certainly feel that this matter ought not to be treated lightly because we have to have some confidence and some respect in our ministers and our government so that when they give an answer --

MR. SPEAKER:

Order please. There is grave doubt in the mind of the Chair whether at this stage in the argument concerning the question of privilege the hon. member is entitled to refer to the answer as being not honest or being dishonest. I think that's anticipating matters too much at this stage of the discussion.

MR. LUDWIG:

May I continue then, Mr. Speaker? I just want to point out to the hon. members that I have in my possession at least two maps entitled River Access Study, Alberta Department of Highways and Transport. It indicates by a legend here "road allowance leased or sold", and another legend "road allowance closed illegally" -- "possible access type", "existing or potential park sites", and it's here. It's a map that originates in the Department of Highways. I believe that the hon. minister is responsible to provide a full and proper answer to the question, and if the maps are not available his instructions were to make them available.

I wish to point out one more question, and I will have to, with all due respect, place another question on the Order Paper to get what I was after. I had explained in my question, Mr. Speaker, that I wanted to know if any of the members possess land on which there are road allowances closed, legally or otherwise. I did not elaborate because I understood that the hon. minister understood, but it says here "not known. Records kept do not show this information." But the order was given that I receive that information, and I would like the hon. minister to explain why he made no effort to obtain it.

MR. COPITHORNE:

Mr. Speaker, the charges that the hon. Member for Calgary McCall makes are very serious --

MR. LUDWIG:

Mountain View.

MR. COPITHORNE:

-- Mountain View and McCall, states are very serious. The information that he required -- if he required the information that he is speaking about I

would have liked the hon. member to have been more specific. He related it on a very wide area, and we tabled in this House all the cards that we have in regard to the roads that are closed.

And when he is speaking of roads being illegally closed, Mr. Speaker, that has some question, because up until the 'forward' government sitting here in the House today, repealed some of the legislation -- The Noxious Weed Act legislation -- the people who owned land, and had road allowances that were not being used beside the land they held, had a responsibility toward that property. And when the hon. Member for Calgary McKnight uses the word, "illegally" -- I heard another word used here in the House the other day, "skulking", and "sinister", this kind of inference, to the rural members particularly, in the Province of Alberta -- I would think, Mr. Speaker, that probably the hon. member owed an apology to those members for making inferences of that kind upon their character.

Mr. Speaker, I want this House to know at this time and I want to respond to some very serious charges that the hon. member has made, the obviously unfounded allegations made by the hon. Member for Calgary Mountain View in a recent speech.

The hon. Member for Calgary Mountain View alleged that I have used my appointment as Minister of Highways and Transport to close, legally or without following the due course of law --

MR. LUDWIG:

Point of order. There is no truth or substance --

MR. SPEAKER:

Order please. Order please.

MR. COPITHORNE:

-- a personal interest. Mr. Speaker, this type of personal assault, in my opinion, must receive immediate clarification.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to make it abundantly clear to the members of this Assembly that I have had absolutely no dealings in any department of this government since September 10, 1971, which are in any way related to the closure or leasing of road allowances on properties in which I have a personal interest.

MR. LUDWIG:

Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order --

DR. HORNER:

Shame, shame.

MR. MINIELY:

Shame, shame.

MR. LUDWIG:

The allegation of the hon. minister is entirely without foundation and fact. I'm saying that he is telling you something that is not true, something that did not originate here, and it does not justify him trying to drag a red herring across the floor of this House by trying to shift the blame to me. I have no intention of withdrawing anything I said, or apologizing. If I do apologize it will have to be for the minister's incompetence and contempt of this House.

DR. HORNER:

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to speak to the point of order, and the shameful way in which the hon. Member for Calgary Mountain View continues to try and do these kinds of things. If you will recall, sir, when the Motion for Return was placed before this House --

MR. LUDWIG:

What kind of things is the hon. Deputy Premier referring to?

MR. SPEAKER:

Order please. If we're going to deal -- there is a question of privilege before the House. It would appear very likely that the Chair will have to take that question under advisement.

I certainly welcome the views of hon. members with regard to the question. But might I suggest that the remarks of hon. members be directed specifically to the question of privilege rather than to the attitudes or actions or conduct of members, on either side of the House, which really are not relevant at all to the discussion, except in the narrow framework of the actual question of privilege itself which involves apparently an insufficient compliance with an Order for a Return.

DR. HORNER:

Mr. Speaker, I was coming to that, but the hon. member, of course, doesn't allow anybody else to make any statements in this House without interruption.

The situation -- and I want the House to recall the day when we passed the Motion for a Return that has been referred to. The hon. Minister of Highways specifically said at that time, that this is a very broad question, and we will give the hon. member all of the information that we have, but whether or not we can give it to him in the detail which he has asked for, is doubtful. He made that condition when the motion was passed.

As a matter of fact, if the hon. member who made the Motion for Return would spend some time studying the language of his motions so that they would be more specific, he would find that he would get all the information he required and in a much better way. I suggest very sincerely, sir, that he should spend some time studying the Rules of this House so that he can do that.

MR. SPEAKER:

Are there any further observations from either side of the House before the hon. Member for Calgary Mountain View concludes his observations with regard to the point of privilege?

MR. YURKO:

Mr. Speaker, in regard to clarification with respect to what in fact was asked for, if my memory serves me correctly the Motion for Return requested that a map be tabled in the House showing the road closures in the Province of Alberta. And the hon. member, the Minister of Highways, answered that there is no such map. And there is no one map showing the entire closures in the province of Alberta. There may be, in fact, a series of regional maps and a series of municipal maps showing two or three of these areas, but this comes to the fact that the hon. member hasn't learned how to ask a question for Motion of Return in this House.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order please.

MR. LUDWIG:

Mr. Speaker, I would now like to respond. The Motion for Return was based on the information on the question on the Order Paper, and if the hon. ministers are now embarrassed about the situation they can resort to technicalities --

MR. SPEAKER:

Order please. Would the hon. member please direct any further remarks to the specific question of privilege, disregarding any observations concerning conduct of the members on either side of the House which are absolutely irrelevant in any debate.

MR. LUDWIG:

Mr. Speaker, Question No. 3. Do any members of the Legislature of Alberta have any interest in land upon which there are legally or illegally closed road allowances in Alberta? The House ordered a reply to this question and the reply got, "Not known, records kept do not show this information." A question requires a minister to make an effort to obtain the information. If you could say that records are not available or not compiled, you could frustrate every question on the Order Paper.

The next question is: "Would the minister provide a map upon which are displayed all legally and illegally closed road allowances in Alberta?" I don't think it is technical to say that if there isn't a map, one map that encompasses the whole province, the question has to be frustrated.

I am still repeating that the hon. minister did not answer my question, the Order for Return as ordered by the House. It is not a question to be answered for me, it's an Order of the Assembly, and I am saying that either he can plead ignorance or he can be in contempt of this House.

And as far as wording a question is concerned, I, Mr. Speaker, believe that it was the kind of question all people understand. If the hon. ministers opposite want to be touchy about some subject requiring me to write questions out very specifically and technically, I can do it to their satisfaction. But this is the kind of language that the hon. Minister of Highways either understands or ought to understand. And I can certainly word a question, and will do so, to find out whether he himself has any land dealing on which there are road allowances. But I am alleging and I am --

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Order, order.

DR. HORNER:

Mr. Speaker, I think that somewhere along the line the hon. member has to come within the bounds of propriety. The hon. Minister of Highways has just made a statement with regard to his interest. For the hon. member to continue to impute motives, as he continues to do so, because he can't come up with any positive programs of his own, and continue with this sort of --

MR. SPEAKER:

Order please.

DR. HORNER:

...accusation, is totally wrong. Mr. Speaker, on a question of privilege, the hon. Minister of Highways has stood in this House and just made a statement, and the hon. Member for Mountain View should retract what he just said.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed, agreed.

MR. LUDWIG:

I would like to complete my remarks, Mr. Speaker. I have no intention of retracting my allegation that I did not get a reply to the Motion for Return, and if the hon. Deputy Premier is sensitive toward criticism he can ask that this whole --

MR. SPEAKER:

Order please. The sensitivity of the hon. Deputy Premier has nothing to do with this question of privilege.

MR. LUDWIG:

Mr. Speaker, I will stand by my allegation that I have not received a reply ordered by this House, and I am saying that the hon. minister is in contempt of the orders of the House --

MR. SPEAKER:

Order please. The question of whether the hon. minister is in contempt of the orders of the House is the question which is now open, and the hon. Member for Calgary Mountain View is not entitled to prejudge it. Has the hon. Member for Calgary Mountain View anything new to add to the debate?

MR. LUDWIG:

Yes, Mr. Speaker. I believe that while I raised the point of privilege the hon. Minister of Highways then countered with another point of privilege. I want to reply to that point of privilege as he has been entitled to reply to the

point I raised. May I proceed in replying to the point of privilege raised by the hon. Minister of Highways?

MR. SPEAKER:

Would the hon. member state specifically what that point of privilege is?

MR. LUDWIG:

The hon. Minister of Highways made some allegation that I had impugned his integrity, that he had gained a benefit from this whole exercise. I deny that I did any such thing and I say what the minister said was entirely unfounded, untrue, and I do not intend to make any apology or any retraction of any sort whatsoever.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Apologize for your accusation.

MR. HENDERSON:

I think a debate on a subject as sensitive as this, that is left to people quoting from memory what specifically happened when the Motion for a Return was ordered by the House, really is not a sound basis on which to proceed. I think the point of the Chair of taking the matter under advisement is well taken. I strongly urge that that's the course of direction the House should pursue.

MR. GETTY:

Mr. Speaker, I just want to say one thing, particularly to the point of privilege. That is the point of quoting a Motion for a Return back to the House and reflecting on whether that Motion for a Return has been exactly answered. It may be, Mr. Speaker, that the House itself is going to have to be a great deal more particular when dealing with Motions for a Return.

I recall that you have discussed, and we have, that members of the House amend, in effect, Motions for a Return, or discuss them, and then do not go into the details to make the words in the actual Motions for a Return reflect those discussions. It's unfortunate that we may actually have to do that. It would be required, I guess, if we are going to have members who are going to try in some way to make allegations about a minister being in contempt of this House, because last Thursday we ran through at least 15 Motions for a Return which all had riders on them. Those riders, by the way, are not reflected.

I recall the discussion, Mr. Speaker, and perhaps you can consider this when you are looking into the whole matter of Motions for a Return whether they should be exactly down to the last word and period, et cetera, and that is that the minister stood up and said he would do everything possible to get information for the member. As a matter of fact, we have an existing Motion for a Return from the hon. member now outstanding. We are doing everything possible. It's going to cost some \$10,000. We are not going to have every last thing that he asked for, but we are doing everything possible to do it. It's just a matter that I think the House should think about rather than get into the kind of allegations the hon. member has. He obviously has nothing else to talk about.

DR. BUCK:

Oh, that's just beautiful.

MR. SPEAKER:

As previously suggested, it would appear appropriate that the Chair should take the question of privilege under consideration. I might mention that when this motion first came to the Order Paper, the Chair had considerable difficulty with it, and was extremely reluctant to have it go on the Order Paper in the form in which it did go on the Order Paper. However, it was allowed. Perhaps the Chair must share some blame for the text of the question as it appeared on the Order Paper. However, I'll deal with that further after I've had a chance to reread the question and the relevant passages from Hansard and from the Journals of the House.

With regard to the matter just brought up by the hon. Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs, I did prepare a memorandum over the weekend which it is my intention to give to the House Leader on both sides with regard to a possible amendment relating to the rules dealing with Motions for a Return.

Subject to precedent to the contrary, it's the opinion of the Chair that a Motion for a Return must stand strictly on its own feet. In other words, it isn't subject to outside interpretation, and that if any conditions are to be made they should be included in the Motion for a Return. However, I'll deal with that further with the memorandum which I propose to share with the two House Leaders. Could we now revert to the usual business of the House?

GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

Mr. Miniely moved, seconded by Mr. Dowling:

That this House approves in general the fiscal policies of the government.

[Adjourned debate: Mr. Dowling]

MR. DOWLING:

Mr. Speaker, since I don't have the stamina of a flamingo or the staying power of a stork at least so far as standing on one leg is concerned, I will obviously have to make my remarks brief. But I do, Mr. Speaker, consider it a real privilege for me to be afforded the opportunity to second the motion to adopt the second budget of this government. It is a privilege also to be a part of the team that developed priorities that are so well accented as the details presented last Friday night.

That team is not, Mr. Speaker, limited to only the 48 members on this side of the House. The priorities were not developed by them alone, but by them in concert with hundreds of Albertans in every part of this province representing every facet of Alberta life.

Mr. Speaker, I would therefore like, very briefly, to review some of the Progressive Conservative policies that were developed over the years, all of which have withstood the test of time, all of which are involved in the Budget Address by the Provincial Treasurer.

First of all the farmer, Mr. Speaker. Our policy has always been that we would improve markets and prices and in so doing improve the net farm income. A priority has been that we would insist in controlling farm costs to improve this cash income, eliminate property taxes, investigate farm machinery price controls, crop insurance revisions and natural gas programs for farmers.

We would involve, Mr. Speaker, the youth of our province as equal participants in the drive to create a better Alberta. We would assist these young people in learning to help themselves as well as their communities.

In the area of native development, Mr. Speaker, we have striven for a better economic structure and well-being for the native people.

In rural Alberta, all the way through our budget of this year and of last, is a thread of strength for rural Alberta. Decentralization of government services -- we are improving the capacity of municipal governments to provide streets, utilities, recreational facilities and so on. We have provided a darn good start on a rural grid road system.

In our metropolitan areas -- we haven't forgotten about them in our policies that were developed in the 1960's -- we emphasize the quality of life, not just growth for growth's sake.

For the homeowner, we believe that we accept as a basic goal of Alberta life a desirability for as many citizens as possible to own their own homes and to make the burden of tax more equitable for the homeowner.

For the work force, we have always believed that job creation and a high level of employment is important, that we should improve programs of training and re-training, and use Alberta manpower in every case where possible.

In the preservation of our citizens' cultural heritage we have always believed that we must preserve the multi-cultural feature of Alberta life and support the ethnic groups and associations across this province.

In environment, a priority item has always been the control of the pollution of air, water and soil. A program of environmental planning to stop pollution at the source has been one of the things we thought about long ago.

Health services for the mentally and physically handicapped, mental health treatment and prevention and community-based services for handicapped children and adults -- these have also been priorities.

The tenth one, Mr. Speaker, of course is the consumer and that involves 1,700,000 Albertans. The challenges are to recognize that the provincial government has a major role to play in protecting consumers in today's free enterprise system and to play a leading role in enacting uniform consumer protection legislation in co-operation with all other provincial governments.

The directions we gave ourselves some years ago were as follows: to establish a bureau responsible to a minister which would administer the various acts pertaining to consumer protection; to enforce existing legislation dealing with misleading advertising and packaging; to develop legislation pertaining to maximum interest charges and penalty clauses in finance contract pay-outs; to legislate adequate consumer goods warranty protection.

We plan to develop co-ordination with other provincial governments in these three ways: in preventing salesmen whose licences have been cancelled in one province from becoming licensed in another province; to accept as evidence, judicial and administrative decisions in one province as if they had been rendered in the home province; and to automatically trigger a 'show-cause' procedure in another province when an action in one province by a consumer affairs registrar or director has been commenced against the company, firm, or person, operating in another province.

So what does the 1973-74 budget say about this platform? It says a number of things, and the first one it says emphatically, Mr. Speaker, is that we have gone a long way in just a year and a half in accomplishing all of these things.

In agriculture -- an 88 per cent increase over 1971-72, with a high emphasis related to irrigation, rehabilitation, and extension services for the family farm -- a 119 per cent increase in this area alone; over 40 per cent increase, Mr. Speaker, in emphasis on marketing, a direct reflection of our platform and the establishment of a marketing branch in the department; a 68 per cent increase in the Family Farm Development portion of the agricultural department.

For the native people, almost a 100 per cent increase. The northern development group is to formulate a comprehensive program for northern development and place greater emphasis on co-ordinating programs for native people. There has been a new Metis housing program announced at a cost of \$1 million, and a water supply program for Metis communities of \$750,000.

For rural Alberta, a rural road program with a budget of \$20 million, a 74 per cent increase over last year, and a new branch of rural utilities, with new programs of natural gas services to Albertans -- one million dollars for assistance here for construction of gas delivery systems. An additional million dollars for assistance to towns and villages for improvements of streets and roads. All of these, in sort of an agricultural way, for rural Alberta.

In the metropolitan areas, for the first time in the history of Alberta, there is a provincial park system for the metropolitan areas of our province. Transportation facility grants for mass transportation application of \$16 million -- a tremendous step in the right direction. And we could go on, Mr. Speaker.

The emphasis on the homeowner and tax-rebate, the work force, the reorganization of the Department of Manpower and Labour to emphasize the manpower aspect. The STEP and the PEP programs, culture, the environment, health services and so on -- they are all familiar and they jump out at you in the Budget Speech.

The budget, Mr. Speaker, in my view, is an indication of our confidence in Alberta. It is a document that spells out in considerable detail as well, our confidence in the people in Alberta.

Most of all to me, it represents an honouring of our commitment to carry forth those programs which we, and the people of Alberta, agree are necessary for Alberta. It is introduced in conjunction with the most buoyant economy since 1969, an economy stronger than the national economy as a whole, stronger because of programs such as those contained in the budget -- the involvement of every Albertan, and making them successful. The budget is indicative, Mr. Speaker, of good management, wise spending, and an emphasis on priorities that really count toward continuing this trend in the years to come.

Now what are we doing in the area of consumer affairs? Well, first of all, I am grateful for the fact that we have established a Consumer Affairs Department and we will be looking very closely at a number of things, first of all obviously, the federal government Commons Special Food Pricing Committee. We will be dealing very extensively with their findings. We will be looking of course, at legislation and regulations both in our province and in neighbouring provinces to determine the directions we should go in establishing this department.

We will also look at educational programs for consumers, not programs that will provide automatically for assistance to someone in difficulty, but programs that will advise the consumers and protect them from problems which arise from insufficient information, misinformation, and perhaps programs that will protect the consumer against himself.

These programs will obviously involve misrepresentation. This type of thing is apparently running rampant in certain areas. It will involve the unscrupulous use of technicalities in agreements and contracts, professional sale pressure tactics, non-performance of warranties, guarantees and so on. However, Mr. Speaker, we must keep in mind that we operate within a free enterprise system, and eventually the decisions must be made by the consumer.

We are aware that this is a difficult problem, a very wide-ranging one. We could even develop a program of educating the consumer on what his legal rights are, and how far he should go in legal areas. But my theory is this, that giving the consumer a little bit of information in law, he might feel he is totally competent to act without seeking some expert advice somewhere along the line.

So the establishment of the consumer affairs portfolio is in keeping with the Progressive Conservative policy which was formulated over the 1960's and indicates our great concern for people, Mr. Speaker, for 1,700,000 Albertans.

We are committed to providing protection, both legislative and otherwise, that would guarantee fair sale practices for both the consumer and the vendor. Our objective is to provide a healthy market atmosphere so consumers and businessmen alike can survive without undue restraint or detriment to either party.

Mr. Speaker, in my cursory examinations of the problems related to consumer protection, it is apparent there is no simple solution to any of them. It is apparent that a master fraud operator, for example, can be organized to such an extent that he is almost indistinguishable from a legitimate operator.

I feel very humble in taking on this task, and delighted with it. I think I will need a great deal of help, not only from my colleagues on this side of the House, but also those on the other side of the House. I will need the assistance of everyone from the manufacturer to the housewife -- and I particularly enjoy the latter part of that.

I would like to thank all my colleagues in particular for this opportunity to contribute some little bit to the government of this province and perhaps to the welfare of Alberta.

Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the Treasurer for a wonderful budget speech, for the excellence of this second Budget speech, and, of course the Premier for his leadership and development of people-programs that involve all of us in Alberta and every square inch of the greatest province in Canada. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. CLARK:

Mr. Speaker, in rising to take part in the budget debate I trust that I be permitted a few comments with regard to the hon. member, Mr. Dowling and perhaps one or two words of advice to the new Minister of Telephones and Utilities.

With regard to the present status of the new Minister of Consumer Affairs' leg might I say -- rather in a jesting manner -- that the homemaker may be safer now than she may be in the future.

But on a serious note I would say to the Premier that I believe you have made a wise decision to move in the direction of a Department of Consumer Affairs, and I believe you have made an equally wise decision in the minister you appointed to head that department.

Mr. Minister, I would now like to recall to you one of the situations I trust you will be able to deal with rather quickly. It is the kind of situation I hope your department will be able to deal with.

Last spring a citizen of Didsbury purchased a pre-built home, made the down payment here in Edmonton and the home was to be finished and ready to be occupied by June 1. Come July 1, August 1 and September 1 the home wasn't anywhere near finished. This individual found he had no recourse other than to get legal advice, eventually. He now finds himself involved in having the expense of good legal advice. But he also has the problem of the company involved having gone bankrupt, and he and his wife and family having to live in other conditions and other circumstances.

I trust you will be able to take some steps in this particular field to deal with people who find themselves in those kinds of circumstances with the kind of advertising that went on in that particular case.

Mr. Speaker, just a word of congratulations to the hon. member, Mr. Farran. He and I have been on the opposite side in a number of arguments and I don't think that will change. But might I say to the hon. member, Mr. Farran, congratulations. One thing I think we can be sure of, the City of Edmonton, Alberta Government Telephones, the utilities companies, and the rural people in this province will get it straight from the horse's mouth when they go to you for questions and answers. And I trust that you will continue to deal with people in that particular manner. That's meant to be a compliment. Just the way the hon. member shook his head, I wasn't sure.

I would like now to make some comments with regard to the budget. I would be somewhat remiss if I didn't say to the Provincial Treasurer that you did an excellent job in bringing down your second budget, sir. There are a number of areas in the budget in which I can agree with you. Obviously there are some areas I am not nearly so enthusiastic about as you are.

First of all I would like to touch on some of the general things that were included in the budget. But before I do that, let me say that it would be very easy in leading off the budget debate from this side of the House to simply compare the things that are proposed in the budget for this year, and those things which were set out in the budget for last year -- to compare figures, to compare staff, and simply make a comparison on that particular basis. I have chosen not to do that on this particular occasion, Mr. Speaker. I have tried more to take the approach of sitting back and trying to get some indication of the direction in which the government is moving, and I have tried to go back and look at some of the speeches the senior members in the government have made over the past number of years. I might even say that I have gone back as far as a publication entitled 'Blueprint for the '70s' and I will have some comments about that as it applies to the direction the government is taking as outlined in this particular budget.

The comments I make initially here this afternoon -- I trust that the Provincial Treasurer and other members will look at those comments on the basis of what the 'now' government members have said in the past about directions that they feel are appropriate to move on in the future.

As far as the Alberta growth road program is concerned, I am pleased to see additional money in that particular area. Somehow that program seemed to have some close association or almost a familiar ring as far as the grid road program is concerned.

In the area of the Executive Council I noticed the office of program co-ordination from a very cursory study in that area. It would seem to me that that particular area may well do some of the things for which Human Resources Development Authority was established initially.

Whether we are re-inventing the wheel or not, the important thing is that there is a need for more co-ordination in the field of people services in this province regardless of the stripe of the government.

In the area of grid roads, whether we call them growth roads, or whether we call them grid roads, I am pleased to see that there is more money available for roads in the rural portion of the province. I am pleased to see that there is additional money being made available for the Alberta Opportunity Fund. I am very disappointed, though, that with the additional money there we will have to go through the arguments time and time again of making it available to the public to know those people and those organizations receiving this type of assistance from the provincial government.

Now I was disappointed to see there was no reference to the amount of money for the Alberta Resources Railroad included in the budget, following the announcement that the Minister of Industry made some time ago.

Over the weekend I tried to decide why this might be so, and I came to the conclusion that perhaps the government had a considerable amount of confidence in the motion on the Order Paper sponsored by Mr. Young and Mr. Appleby, and that that motion would in fact really be a motion of non-confidence in the minister, and so the government perhaps felt that it had to put the money in the budget anyway. I hope that isn't right because it is essential, for the northwestern portion of this province to reach the type of economic development that is possible for it, that the Alberta Resources Railroad be repaired. I believe it has a vital part to play in that particular area.

One deletion in the budget, or an area not covered in the budget I was particularly disappointed about was that there appears to be no assistance for local rural communities who spend a great deal of money and a great deal of individual effort in trying to attract industry and small business to their centres.

Earlier I referred to this 'Blueprint for the '70s' which just happened to be the election platform that the Progressive Conservative party sent out to many people across the province during the 1967 election --

DR. HOHOL:

From us?

MR. CLARK:

No, you didn't send me a copy, I acquired this one. But in the 'Blueprint for the '70s', it talks in terms of the need for industrial development in rural Alberta. And I quote from this particular document: "In this way, the onus for greater promotion of economic development in a particular community is properly left to the volunteer efforts of the community. Such a program" -- and the program being referred to here is a matching dollar for dollar basis, -- "for every dollar that a local community puts up to try to attract local industry, business from other areas to that centre, that the provincial government would match that dollar for dollar." I believe that would be a substantial step forward and it would make it more possible for rural communities in this province to compete. And I trust that next year the government will be able to see its way clear to put this in the budget if it is really serious about the question of getting industry into rural areas of the province. And I sincerely hope that it is.

I can't miss the opportunity to remind the members on both sides of the House of the statements made by the Premier and several members who are now senior members of the Cabinet. Time and time again we heard them say that the province should have a lesser degree of dependency upon natural resources revenue in the province. And I recall the former government being criticized time and time again because of its very large dependency on the natural resources revenue. Simply let me say this, that this government this year, in the budget brought down Friday night, is more dependent upon natural resources revenues this year than it was last year. And let's not any of us kid ourselves, regardless of where we sit in this Assembly, that at this particular time we are in a sellers' market as far as natural resources are concerned in this province. And to a very great degree, whether we like it or not, the economy of this province is going to ebb and flow with the marketing opportunities and potential that are available for our natural resource revenues.

The area of rural utilities -- I'm pleased to see there is \$1 million in that particular program. It's a step forward -- might I say it's a small step, and we've been waiting for a number of months since the initial announcement was made by the Minister of Agriculture that we would be moving in this particular direction.

Mr. Speaker, there is an area I would like to pay special attention to, and that's in the area of the Attorney General's department. On occasions I've been critical of the Attorney General, and I would say to him that I welcome the 55.6 per cent increase in the legal aid program. I think that's very commendable.

I hope, though, the government will not be simply satisfied with broadening the base of a legal aid program in this province. I hope that you will look at a voluntary program where people across the province will be able to acquire through a legal services incorporated, very much like the old MSI program,

protection so that, in fact, people could join this program on a voluntary basis and would then be able to get the kind of legal coverage they could pay for. I think this would be a big step forward.

In doing this, might I also say that I trust the government will give serious consideration to the office of a public defender, and I trust also that the government will watch seriously a number of the experiments that are underway by the federal government now as far as LIP programs are concerned, where storefront legal services are available. I believe this has made a significant contribution, especially in the large urban centres in this province. And I hope before long the province will be moving in that direction and not leave all the initiative to the federal government.

Now there are some areas that I believe should have been touched on in the budget. There seems to be no indication in the budget of a shift from a welfare to an incentive society. We're heard a great deal from members on the other side about the need for a major shift from the welfare programs that that government inherited and we have heard a great deal about incentive programs that would be coming forward. I see nothing in the budget really moving in that particular direction.

I also see absolutely nothing in the budget that would make it possible for a return to local government authority and financial capabilities, that, in fact, they can keep their own house in order. I will have something more to say about that later.

I would say that that's likely the biggest area in the budget which all members of this Assembly have to look at very carefully -- the question of local government; what is happening to hospital boards across this province; what is happening to local health units; what is happening to auxiliary hospital boards; and really what is happening to local government. It is all well and good to say that there is going to be more assistance to local governments this year, but there is not going to be more assistance to local governments. If you take away the amounts that were made available last year to local government in this province in the area of unconditional grants, if you compare that with what is involved in the tax reduction program in the new financial deal for municipalities, municipalities are going to have fewer unconditional grants this year than they had last year. Those are the facts of life, and municipal government in this province will certainly pay the price for that.

In the field of inflation, Mr. Speaker, I had hoped that the government would give more leadership to the people of this province to deal with the very serious question of inflation. The overall government spending program is 13.6 per cent higher than it was a year ago. At the same time, the government is saying to rural municipalities and urban municipalities across this province that while our budget is increasing at 13.6 per cent we want you to keep your budget to an increase of not more than 7.5 per cent. They are also saying to school boards across the province that you keep your spendings to a maximum 7.5 per cent increase but we will increase our budget at 13.6 per cent. They are telling the universities to hold their increase to 9 per cent and the colleges are going to be increasing by 20 per cent according to the budget.

I believe, Mr. Speaker, that the government might well have taken some steps in the course of its budget that would have drawn to the attention of the people in this province the very serious problem of inflation. This budget does nothing, in my judgment, to cool the fires of inflation, and the average wage earner is the fellow who feels that pressure the most. And this budget is going to make that pressure even greater on that particular individual.

In the field of unemployment, Mr. Speaker, the budget itself outlines the lack of success the Conservative government has had in this field. In the budget it says that during the second half of 1972 the rates of unemployment were somewhat above those of a year earlier. And that is a pretty blunt admission.

There is money included in the estimates to expand greatly the research capability of the Department of Labour and Manpower. Before anyone draws the conclusion that by taking on a large number of individuals, competent as they might be, into the Department of Labour, is going to solve those people's unemployment problems -- but it is not going to solve the unemployment problems of people in this province. I am sure many members are aware that the Economic Council of Canada and the federal government went that route not too many years ago and they were not very successful in going that particular route.

Let me also say, Mr. Speaker, that when you deal with the problems of unemployment in this province when the economy is as it is today, you are going

to have people from Manitoba, from Saskatchewan and from other provinces in Canada coming to Alberta. And all the planning you do, all the projections you make, and all the places you have in post-secondary educational institutions, all that thinking is going to be thrown out the window --

AN HON. MEMBER:

Hear, hear!

MR. CLARK:

with the influx of people coming to this province. And we should welcome those people to this province. But, at the same time, in welcoming those people, let us not try to kid ourselves into thinking that if we spend a great deal more money in the Department of Manpower and Labour we are no longer going to have unemployment in this province. That simply will not be the case -- unless the government hires everyone. We have a small start in that direction, but we had a larger start in that direction a year ago.

I was impressed with the proposal made by the Canadian Construction Association to the Economic Council of Canada not long ago. The Canadian Construction Association, in their presentation to the Economic Council of Canada, suggested that the provincial governments might very well get their capital works programs off the ground much earlier in the year. The projects would go to tender perhaps in April or May, with specific provisions in the tender or in the contract that the outside work would be done in the summer and fall so that inside work might be done during the winter months.

I have had the opportunity to discuss this with some people in the construction industry, and they feel that if the Province of Alberta was to move in that direction, if the Minister of Public Works and this Legislature could make it possible that the contracts be awarded very early in the year, and that the work could be done during the summer and the fall, that this step would be a significant contribution to removing the unemployment problems which the construction industry itself readily admits it faces.

In the 'Blueprint for the '70s' that I referred to earlier, one of the proposals in that particular program was that the government would go on a five-year capital works program. I think that would be a step in the right direction. If you go on that five-year capital works program, I see no reason why the tenders and the jobs couldn't be awarded early enough so that the outside construction work could be done during the spring, summer and fall months, and the inside work could be done during the winter. That would be a very substantial step forward to coming to grips with the unemployment problem, especially as far as the construction industry is concerned.

Mr. Speaker, in the field of education, I'd like to say at the outset that I welcome the move the government has taken into the field of early childhood education. I trust that the sizeable portion of this money will be spent in the field of disadvantaged and handicapped young people. I'm also very hopeful that the unique role of volunteers will not be lost in such a program.

But then I must go on, Mr. Speaker, and say that with regard to the 7.5 per cent guideline for the education foundation program, or the revenue school boards will receive from the province, the question school boards seem to be asking is: 7.5 per cent of what? I noticed in the budget speech, Mr. Speaker, that there would no longer be a plebiscite as far as school boards are concerned. Well I remember during the 1970 session of this Assembly, when we debated the question of the plebiscite in The School Act, the present Premier spoke on at least two occasions, and he made the point that in principle the plebiscite was wrong. It was taking the strength away from local government. It was having a second judgment as far as local government was concerned, and that was the gist of the argument. I respected that particular argument. I assumed that that was the position of the Conservative Party as far as plebiscites are concerned. But now when we have the new finance program for school boards announced, we no longer have plebiscites, but we have referendums.

MR. BARTON:

What's the difference?

MR. CLARK:

It's just a very small change in terminology. In fairness, you would have to say that the referendum is not automatic. It could be called by the taxpayers if the taxpayers choose to, but whether it is a plebiscite or whether

it is a referendum it is still going to pass judgment on local school boards. So let's not be caught up on the terminology here. We're going to have referendums in the province now as far as school boards are concerned if they go over the 7.5 per cent guideline.

An area in the budget that surprised and disappointed me - and this is still in the field of education - dealt with the field of educational research. Last year in the budget debate I commented on the phasing out of the Human Resources Research Council, and several other members of the Assembly commented on it, including the minister who was responsible for the Human Resources Research Council. In the course of Estimates last year we were told there would be some consideration for that particular question as far as next year is concerned. Once again, in trying to assess the direction the government is taking, I would like to go back and look at the 'Blue Print for the '70s', which was the Progressive Conservative party platform during the last election.

This is under the field of education and research, and I quote:

We propose to spend not less than one per cent of the education budget on research. The present government's expenditures on educational research to the Human Resources Research Council or otherwise are wholly inadequate. Ontario employs a staff of 400 and spends approximately \$8 million per year on research and education. It intends to double the staff and budget in the immediate future which will increase the expenditures and revenues to more than one per cent of Ontario's education budget.

Alberta's failure to have any adequate research program has led to an alarming number of our top educators being hired away by the Ontario Research Institute. In our view --

And this is once again from the 'Blue Print for the '70s', the Conservative program:

In our view, it is penny wise and dollar foolish to spend approximately one-quarter of Alberta's budget on education and virtually nothing to find out whether we are getting what we should be getting for our money or not.

Now, if that was the feeling of the gentlemen in their 'Blue Print for the '70s', it seems to me that it would be a fair thing to expect in this particular budget. Yet I see nothing in the budget as far as educational research is concerned.

Also there is the question of local autonomy - and I raise this matter at this particular time because it deals with the problems a number of our people are facing in the large urban centres, the cities. A number of people in the large urban centres are going to be facing the prospect of having their children bussed to school this fall, and anyone who thinks this isn't or can't be a contentious issue should simply look south of the border to see some of the problems that have evolved there.

But the 'Now' government's attitude, as far as the 'Blue Print for the '70s' is concerned, is that local autonomy permits the innovation and experimentation essential to the excellence of education, and that the local school boards should not unnecessarily be hampered by the School Buildings Board. One way in which we would encourage the growth of local autonomy is by giving local school boards autonomy to build school rooms beyond the three year projection to which they are now restricted. The 'Now' government is finding out why in fact there was a three year restriction as far as school buildings are concerned. I would say to the government that in the course of looking at this budget and reviewing this budget you might well look at some alternative uses for some of the educational facilities now available in the downtown urban areas of Calgary and Edmonton. You might well rethink your decision to bus a substantial number of young people very sizable distances as far as the cities are concerned.

Mr. Speaker, one of the most glaring changes in education is in the field of post-secondary education, and this involves the move by the provincial government to centralize to a very great degree the control for post-secondary education in this province. Let me go back and review recent events with you for just a few moments.

You will recall that last June the Worth Report, the Commission on Educational Planning, was released to the public, and then, in July, Dr. Worth was made the Deputy Minister of Advanced Education. You will recall that in August of last year the decision was announced to phase out the Universities Commission and the Colleges Commission, and when the minister in the House on

Friday was being questioned about this, he said that he had discussions with a number of people in the academic community but there had been no formal discussions with the boards of governors, the general faculties councils, and those types of groups as far as the decision to phase out the universities and the colleges commissions.

I indicated to the House at that particular time, I felt that was a serious decision because in fact there was no formal consultation between the universities or the colleges in this province, the General Faculties Councils, or the academic staff, the students or the senate.

And last Friday in this House, when we raised the question about the future of the university senates, the point was raised that no one is going to phase out the senates. But I am sure the hon. minister will recall, that the senate of the University of Calgary, being concerned about the direction that post-secondary education was taking, came to Edmonton and met with the Premier and other members of the cabinet on this particular issue of the future of the University of Calgary, and its particular senate.

Now in recent months, the government has been moving ahead in phasing out the Universities Commission and the Colleges Commission. And the minister indicated to us last Friday on questioning, that until last week they had not sat down formally with the boards of governors of the University of Calgary or the University of Alberta, to discuss the legislation that was going to be presented to this Assembly.

I recall in 1966, when the last major revision to The Universities Act took place, that there was in excess of one year's consultation between the University of Alberta, people involved in the University of Alberta at Calgary, as it was called at that particular time, a number of people from the academic community, and from the government.

The important thing for members of the Assembly to keep in mind is that those discussions were carried on in public, that the discussions which led to the formation of the University of Calgary were carried on in public. It is also important to keep in mind that the reports involved -- in taking that step forward and in rewriting the whole University Act -- the reports were tabled in this Assembly so that all the members of the Legislature could have the benefit of the thinking of the people involved insofar as the future of the universities in this province were concerned.

It is a sad reflection, and a very sad comparison in the approach that is now being used and has been used up until last week.

I recall when university legislation and college legislation was to be introduced, during the period of time that I was Minister of Education, the universities, the president, the chairman of the board, representatives of the General Faculties Council, and the students, met with the Minister of Education, and the other institutions. We sat down and we asked each group, "What changes do you think should be made in The Universities Act this year?"

Then to go about it this way, to tell the universities and the colleges that the commissions are going to be phased out, not to meet with them formally until last week, one can't or shouldn't be surprised that the universities and the colleges are upset and asking some pretty serious questions about their academic freedom and where do they go from here.

I would suggest, Mr. Speaker, that the minister and the government rethink seriously their decision to have the Department of Advanced Education take over the responsibilities of the universities and colleges commissions.

There has been a study going on in the Province of Ontario for two years now. It is known as the Wright Study. It deals with the whole question of the future of post-secondary education in that particular province. You know, the present administration deals with budgeting approaches -- if it deals with education or a number of other areas, it has a capacity for seeing what Ontario is doing and then following that along shortly after.

Well, might I try to save the hon. gentlemen and ladies some effort, because the Wright Commission in Ontario, which is looking at the whole future of post-secondary education, is now recommending, Mr. Speaker, that the Province of Ontario, have, yes, a department of post-secondary education and then it is recommending the Ontario Council for University Affairs, and another group, the Ontario Council for College Affairs.

It's significant to point out, Mr. Speaker, that recommended by this Ontario committee, the responsibilities of those councils are comparable to the responsibilities which the Universities Commission and the Colleges Commission have in this province at this particular time.

So I certainly hope for the sake of post-secondary education in this province that we are not going to follow the lead of Ontario. They phased-out their commission form of government in post-secondary education three or four years ago, and now they have come around to the point of view that they should be doing pretty much what we have been doing here in Alberta for a number of years. I hope to goodness that we are not going to blindly follow the lead of the great blue Province of Ontario, then in two or three years come back and have to repeal whatever the minister is going to bring in this year and set up councils of university affairs and councils of colleges affairs.

I think this is one area where we might just well mark time for the year, at the very least. I believe that the government must very seriously consider its position in the field of post-secondary education and the phasing out of the Universities Commission and Colleges Commission and having no buffer between those institutions and the government.

I am very hopeful that when the minister speaks in the House he will indicate to us that there is going to be some sort of a buffer between the government and those institutions, because I'm sure we all recognize the need for academic freedom, academic independence and academic responsibility.

Mr. Speaker, the last area that I would like to touch on deals with the question of local government, and really what is happening to local government in this particular province.

To set the stage for my comments here, Mr. Speaker, I would like to go back to April 21 to April 23, 1971 when we were debating the second reading of Bill No. 28, the bill that imposed a limit on unconditional grants to municipalities.

Mr. Russell, who is now the Minister of Municipal Affairs, talking in the particular debate said about urban growth, "Alberta citizens have a right and a stake in provincial revenue." Then he went on to say, "It's very appropriate that the AUMA appear before the Standing Committee," that Standing Committee being the Standing Committee of this Legislature. Then Mr. Russell actually moved that the question of reorganization of the unconditional grant come before the Committee of the Legislature. That was later defeated.

Then, the Premier taking part in the same debate said, "That open letter by representatives of local government unanimously passed and presented to this government is a strong statement, and in my view valid, and one that should be backed up."

Then the Premier went on to say in the course of his remarks during that debate, "Bill No. 28 is clearly at odds in principle with principle No. 2 in our Guideposts. So if we read Principle No. 2 in the Guidepost of the Conservative party of the province, this is what it says:

We believe in local government in this province wherever practical, in a return of the decision-making process by local councils, school boards and other municipal authorities. We believe that the most democratic form of government is that which is closest to the people.

We believe that the proper role of provincial government is guidance, advice and assistance to local government -- not direction, control and restriction of their affairs.

That is the second guidepost of the Conservative party. That was the position which the 'now' Premier and the 'now' Minister of Municipal Affairs took with regard to imposing a limit on unconditional grants in the 1971 session of the Legislature. And that dealt with one-third of the oil royalties.

The program which has been placed before the people of the province, the tax reduction program, as I see it looks something like this: if you are rich enough to own your own home you'll get back \$216 of your own money. If you are not rich enough to afford your own home, then in fact you will be getting \$116 less, that is if you are living in rented accommodations.

Municipal authorities have been given complicated and conflicting sets of information, and a number of municipal governments in this province don't know where they stand. There are still municipal governments in this province who can't get information from the Department of Municipal Affairs. There are still

municipal governments who don't know the formula which the government is using in setting up their particular program. In fairness, one has to say that the scheme provides some welcome relief to residential property payers, but it does virtually nothing to improve the increasingly serious situation in which municipalities find themselves. And that is the area toward which I would like to direct my remarks, because in the program that the Provincial Treasurer outlined there is nothing that gives municipalities -- local governments -- increased elbow room to come to grips with their particular problems.

A municipality that has a 6 per cent or 7 per cent increase in its payroll, that has some new debentures -- new payments -- coming on this particular year, can do virtually nothing more. In fact some municipalities have to reduce their program to stay within the 7 1/2 percent guideline. It seems to me that as members of this Assembly, regardless of where we sit -- and there are a number of members across the way who have had considerable experience in local government -- we must not allow the government to take away from the municipalities in this province their right to a share of the natural resources revenue. That, since 1966, is a right which the municipalities in this province have had, a right to a share in the natural resources revenue. It was 33 1/3 per cent for some time, and then there was a lid placed on it. The lid was increased somewhat last year, but what we are doing by the one fell swoop of this particular budget, and the legislation to follow, is denying the municipalities any right to a share of the natural resources revenue of this province.

You can appreciate why the municipalities are concerned, Mr. Speaker, because --

MR. SPEAKER:

Is the hon. member able to conclude shortly?

MR. CLARK:

Is it that time already? Yes ...[inaudible]... unfortunately. Mr. Speaker, yes. Might I say that the municipalities are losing their right to the natural resources revenue this year when there has been a 33.5 per cent increase in that revenue. The Mayor of Calgary, when he was speaking to a group at the University of Calgary following the announcement of the tax reduction program, said that the Conservatives talk consultation but they don't practice it, and the Conservatives talk decentralization but they centralize.

Really what is happening with the tax reduction program here, Mr. Speaker, is that municipalities in this province are being stifled, local initiative and local autonomy is being lost, and the people who are in fact going to appear this year as the good guys will be the Provincial Treasurer and the members of the Legislature. Next year, the following year, the problem will become even that much greater as far as local government is concerned in this province. One of the real issues all members have to look at in approving this budget and in voting for this resolution is whether in fact they believe in local government in this province. If they believe in local government in this province then they have some very serious questions to ask as far as the motion is concerned.

The last point I would make, Mr. Speaker, is simply this. The provincial government goes to Ottawa and asks the federal government for block grants -- lump grants -- so that they can come back and handle those grants in a manner which best meets the needs of Alberta. Then the same provincial government says to its municipalities: "No, no longer do we want lump grants. We want to have grants with strings on them so we can pull the strings" And it's the local governments that really end up being the puppets.

MR. DRAIN:

Well, here goes Horatio at the bridge! Firstly, Mr. Speaker, I wish to extend my congratulations to the new Minister of Consumer Affairs, and also to the Minister of Telephones. I certainly welcome the potential that there is in the Department of Consumer Affairs, and we will expect to see great things from the hon. member.

In looking at the budget I would say that this budget represents the building blocks of circumstances. The options that are presented to a Provincial Treasurer, I am very much aware, are not all that flexible because such a large proportion of the budget is represented in fixed costs, and there are no particular options insofar as flexibility is concerned. However there is a certain amount of flexibility in the type of programs that are introduced by the government and herein is where I think this budget has gone wrong.

I've listened to six different budgets being presented in this particular Legislature, and I think truthfully, Mr. Speaker, they have always reflected the options that were available at the time. Looking back a few years when there was such an emphasis on education, they were building up and ploughing into the capital plant of education tremendous expansions in order to accommodate this great surge in education. At that time it was essential to plough this type of money into these facilities. In this particular budget there is not that much emphasis and not that much need. Therefore I do not see any great and startling new things being done by this particular budget except that there has been the opportunity for relocation of priority.

The falling off of the birth rate, by all means, certainly is an indication that there should not be more money spent on schools. Now whether this decline in the birth rate in itself, Mr. Speaker, can be classed as a successful Conservative policy in action, I don't know. I don't know, Mr. Speaker, exactly what Conservatives do in the evening or at night. There cannot be --

AN HON. MEMBER:

There are a lot of us.

MR. DRAIN:

Mr. Speaker, although I want to give the Minister of Agriculture all the credit I possibly can, I don't believe it was exactly within his purview to manipulate the Russian weather in a manner that created the possibility of selling a vast amount of wheat to Russia. If he did, he's got all the potential that the hon. members have given him credit for when they allow the claims that they have made in this particular circumstance. Well if he has this ability, he's the right man in the right place.

Now we have the options in relation to natural resource revenue. It wasn't all that long ago when the hon. Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs would get up and exclaim very loudly about the lack of a policy, why we didn't beat a pathway to Washington to sell our oil -- and all this in a few months. All this has changed and now the world comes to us and they say, sell us your oil, and we suddenly find out we just haven't enough to go around and grease everything the way it should be.

So it appears now that we have reached a situation where we must look at an energy policy, a policy that does not emphasize provincialism but also includes Canadianism. I would like to see some containment in Canada of the lower cost liquid petroleum products which could be reserved, and the high cost tar sands possibly used in the export market.

Now another interesting thing that has been touched on, and which I want to mention in passing, is the two-price gas system. This is justified on the basis that Alberta owns its own resources and hence should receive the owner's interest. This is very reasonable. Other areas, or other provinces have not been as forward thinking as the Province of Alberta has been in the past in retaining the natural resources. And for this reason we see the situation where both the Province of Ontario and the Province of Quebec, despite having a greater degree of resources available than the Province of Alberta has had, are not in that fortunate situation where they can reap the amount of revenue that they should.

I cannot accept the contention that Western Canada does not or has not received extremely large benefits from Canada. I think probably -- far more than most of us realize in this era of talk of western separatism, the alienation of the west and the unfairness of the freight rates, and all of these particular things that are such favourites when we think in terms of the eastern interests as the whipping boy -- that the wrath of Western Canada can be poured down upon. I can think of a couple of interests. Without Sir John A. Macdonald's rail policy which cost central Canada dear, and was very, very difficult to justify, or without the North West Mounted Police, Alberta and the north west would have fallen totally under President Munroe's manifest destiny and we would be waving a different type of flag today. And let us not forget the Ottawa Valley oil policy and the millions it has cost the Ontario taxpayer in order that we would have a market for our Alberta oil. So now we no longer need or have to need a captive market. So we now rattle our sabres, we rationalize the two-price system for natural gas, and accept also the jingoism of the Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs.

Now let's assume just for argument's sake that the two-gas system was a total success, and this would result in the relocation of a tremendous or significant amount or number of industries from central Canada. Just visualize

the economic dislocation that would occur and also consider the backlash that would be represented.

Turning now to the budget and the policy announced therein by the hon. Provincial Treasurer, and reading his press release in which he stated that this was, and I quote -- and I hope the press release is correct -- "this is a hard-nosed business budget." Now what kind of business, Mr. Speaker? I wonder if it is monkey business. This is what I am wondering about. The hon. Provincial Treasurer is far too intelligent to believe what he said, if this is what he has, in fact, said. I think he is trying to fool someone. There are only two people in the circumstances he would want to fool, either the hon. members of the Opposition, and this of course is part of the game, or else the people of the Province of Alberta.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Hear, hear.

MR. DRAIN:

Now getting down to a very serious tone. If there was ever a time, Mr. Speaker, when the people of Alberta looked to government -- the people of Alberta and the people of Canada looked to government for reassurance in these inflationary times and desired confidence in their politicians, the time is the present time. This reassurance is not forthcoming in this budget, Mr. Speaker.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Hear, hear.

MR. DRAIN:

Not when you have had a 13 per cent increase in spending, and there is the urging on the part of government towards the senior government to local government to keep their rate down to 7.5 per cent, in fact, the carrot is going to be pulled right out of the rabbit's pen, if this doesn't occur. This, Mr. Speaker, shows irresponsibility of the leadership on your right. It would have been within the power of the Provincial Treasurer to come out with a balanced budget, by taking into account the \$70 million resource revenue, and by trimming a little fat here and there off the budget. He would have then come out with a package that would have been acceptable to the people of the Province of Alberta. It would have given the people a reassurance of the ability of the politicians to face realities and deal with the crisis, Mr. Speaker, that we have in front of us today in this inflationary thrust.

When the hon. Provincial Treasurer -- and I regret that he is not here -- talks about a hard-nosed business budget, it brings to mind the operations of Wolfson. Some of you fellows who follow the financial pages may have read about him. This Wolfson set up a brain trust in Washington with a research team. The team would research a fat little company, engage in a proxy fight, take control, milk the company dry, and turn it back to the widows and orphans. Now, Mr. Speaker, I'm not saying this is exactly what is happening in these particular circumstances, but I do have my suspicions. What has happened? By fueling the fires of inflation this budget has in effect, encouraged this curse which feeds on the weak, the old, and the poor. And strangely enough, these are the particular areas where the priorities are set up in the budget. Certain things are designed, in effect, to overcome the present deficiencies that do exist in this area.

So, if the hon. Provincial Treasurer can report this as a hard-nosed business budget to a chairman of the board and say, "We have increased the deficit ten per cent, and we have therefore increased interest charges, increased spending, expanded the bureaucracy, increased 'patronism' and 'big-brotherism' towards junior governments, and have fostered more dependence on government hand-outs by the people of the Province of Alberta," Mr. Speaker, I wonder what the chairman of the board would tell the hon. Provincial Treasurer.

DR. BUCK:

He'd fire him. I'm glad he didn't do my books.

MR. DRAIN:

There's another particular area I wondered about in this budget with regard to debts payable and supplementary requisitions. How do these all fit in, and what would the chairman of the board say about those if the hon. Provincial

Treasurer had to report them? I don't think he'd say, "Good old Gordon." He might say something different about that.

However, this is the bad news. There is some good news in this budget, Mr. Speaker, and now that I've given you the bad news, I'll talk about the good news. I dig down and I find that there are a few commendable things in the budget.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Which one? Where did you find them?

MR. DRAIN:

However, I'm not about to become delirious and pound on my desk, as the hon. members on the right have, Mr. Speaker. The hints of an investment proposal, and investment fund -- and I would presume this would be for the tar sands -- how should this be put together? This should be the maximum of debt capital and a minimum of equity capital.

I would look at something like this; 51 per cent corporate, 49 per cent reserve for the people of the province of Alberta, provision for term borrowing to finance Albertans' purchase of shares and debentures of this particular nature, the borrowings underwritten by the province of Alberta and the equity held as a security for this program. This would represent, Mr. Speaker, government leadership at the finest, and something the hon. Provincial Treasurer could be proud of.

Now there is mention of early education and glimmerings that the Department of Education is moving in this particular direction. However, there is a contradiction here. If early education, and if the Worth Report's projections for the future are right, there will be more and more leisure time. Here is where I fail to reconcile in my mind the idea of rushing all these tiny tots into the process of learning. Let them play a little, let them grow up.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Let them stay with their mother.

MR. DRAIN:

Yes. Indeed some sociologists have contended that there has been an adverse effect on young children. A study substantiating this theory was recently made in Sweden.

Perhaps the outcry for early education is just the parental rejection of having their brats around, and I hope that the hon. Minister of Education thinks about this particular thing, because I say this, if we are moving ahead into the time of the year 2,000, there will be more and more redundancy of people insofar as work is concerned, hence there is more time to learn. So I can't get turned on by early ed. at all.

The new program of making a study of unemployment information, labour demand and supply, manpower planning, model and career planning studies is a welcome innovation. At least we will have some information toward what particular areas will require trained personnel in the future.

More emphasis on the mentally and physically handicapped is a genuine plus.

And I also note there is a considerable amount of money allocated for highways. It would be a very practical and pleasing step on the part of the hon. Minister of Highways if he afforded No. 3 Highway, the southern Trans Canada route, the importance that this vital artery deserves. When we look at the British Columbia section and see a first class road and then cross and see this sign; 'Welcome to Alberta, Hon. Premier Peter Lougheed' and the flag of Alberta floating in the breeze -- we have breezes down in the Crowsnest Pass. At that, Mr. Speaker, we have to go around death-defying curves that would challenge the ability of the finest auto racer in the country, if you tried to make them at more than 65 miles an hour.

So, I want the hon. Minister of Highways to join with me in feeling the proper pride for the province he lives in. I want him to show the same type of quality that British Columbia has exemplified in the kind of a road he can build through the Crowsnest Pass, for all Albertans, Mr. Speaker. So, hon. minister, I hope you get out of the brush on that one.

Another particular subject I want to mention, Mr. Speaker, is the matter of multi-culturalism. Now I'm an authority on multi-culturalism because where I come from it is commonplace. You know, I think probably the reason why it has been such a success in our area is there has never been enough of any particular species of nationality gathered together in one place to do any real damage. We have had an encroachment of all the species that have inhabited Canada from the year one. They all come in with the particular parochial view that they are going to stay in their own little nest and "to hell with the world." The first thing they do is build this club -- and so we have in the Crownsnest Pass, abandoned Ukrainian halls, abandoned Polish halls, abandoned Italian halls. And what happened to all these people? There weren't enough of them to fight off the enemies so they said, "Let's join them", and they totally integrated. So, in the Crownsnest Pass, you talk to someone and their name is Jones, and you say, "Your name is Jones?" and they say, "No, no, I'm not not, I'm five-eighths Ukrainian, one part Polish, and the rest of Jones." This is really good. We have total multi-culturalism.

You know, I have got to mention this in passing. Two and a quarter million dollars allocated for the RCMP centennial, probably exceeds the total original cost of bringing this force across the prairies with their whole wagon trains and their Indian guides, and building their forts and hauling their artillery, and setting up. So this is 1973 and this is what has happened.

Now, the new Department of Consumer Affairs, I wonder what this is? Is this another wagon in the government hardware, or is this something that is going to do some good? It may in some cases do some good. At least it will create a few more jobs. It is my sincere hope that this does not function as sort of a core to the Star Chamber. If it does, it will become more of a detriment than an asset.

You know, the idea of government decentralization certainly intrigues me. I wonder how many jobs have been decentralized, 10 or 20? Just think of the potential for rural Alberta if we picked up all the government agencies, put them in a screen and scattered them right across Alberta. Rural Alberta would glow like a rose. There would be room here in Edmonton. There would be no problems with housing or anything else, and I am sure the people of Edmonton would all vote for you next time.

Of course, I can't help 'making a pinch' for Pincher Creek-Crownsnest and saying what a wonderful place for Lands and Forests. There are even trees there, Mr. Speaker. You set the people right up at the bottom and they would work right up to the top.

Another subject which gives me a lot of concern is the coal industry. There are several areas here where government can help. I think probably one of the most important areas would be in the matter of research.

The problem in the coal industry is basically one of production. How do you solve this production problem? Possibly research into hydraulic mining would be the answer. There has been talk about too low a price, but price is really not that essential, price is significant but not the final answer in determining a product. If you have a fixed selling price for a product, and you can work to that price, and you can gear your productivity to the price of the product you are selling -- and all the farm members here know about this because they had to do it for a long while to survive -- this is the answer. Hence, I would like to see some research done by the Research Council of Alberta or the Department of Mines and Minerals, that would look into the more sophisticated methods of coal mining and try to introduce something.

Another area where work can be done is in the area of marketing. Government guidance and certain areas of bringing the buyer and seller together would be something that would probably be very successful. Possibly, the Minister of Agriculture should take on an extra piece of coal as part of his portfolio since he travels worldwide, and I am sure that the hon. Minister of Mines and Minerals would be delighted to go along on a mission like that. He would be very good since he has had considerable experience in the matter of selling cars, and the type of cars that he sold were a type that I wondered about sometimes, but he sold them quite successfully.

So while we look at this coal situation we also have the labour problem which, of course, will solve itself as time goes on.

I take the view that the government should make special efforts to maintain the present operations, but that future operations or developments in the coal industry which will be assessed by the current commission should be assessed very carefully on the basis of economics, environmental impact, and social cost. These are some of the things that should be looked at. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. GETTY:

Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure for me to enter the budget debate. I was sorry, as a matter of fact, that because of a variety of reasons -- the Throne Speech seemed to be short this year -- I missed getting into the Throne Speech discussions.

Despite what some of the members seem to imply, Mr. Speaker, I have always thought that the Throne Speech debate and the Budget Debate are important parts of any provincial Legislature. I'm sure they are in the federal House of Commons too. Because, Mr. Speaker, these debates have been developed through tradition in our parliamentary system, they can, if correctly used, be a public mirror of our province. We can have a presentation of the problems facing Alberta, the views of the people's elected representatives, and how problems can be solved.

Many times in legislatures, I'm sure, future programs of governments have sprung from debates in wide open speeches and Throne and budget debates such as those we have in this Legislature. The beauty of the debates is related to the fact that they are unlimited in their scope. Members can cover any subject they wish. It seems to me that in a province as interesting, challenging and bursting with potential as Alberta, in a year most MLAs would have many subjects, particularly subjects of interest in their constituency, that they might raise in this Legislature.

I've felt that so far in the House this year the potential for these debates has, in fact, been missed. For some reason many members of the opposition have not taken the opportunity to get up and tell the House, and Alberta, about the particular concerns and needs of their constituencies. Of course they are free to choose their own tactics. But so far most have decided to participate in what I consider to be a negative and critical way. They have not taken advantage of this chance to present before the government the things their constituents are concerned about and would like to see changed. I hope that during the budget debate, Mr. Speaker, we might see more emphasis placed on Alberta's needs and aspirations, and less on the politics of accusation.

[Interjections]

Mr. Speaker, I'm glad the members are listening. There has been no question in my mind that we have had several severe cases of sour grapes on the other side. There is some concern, I suppose, when you feel that you have been unceremoniously dumped by the people after 36 years, and maybe they are ungrateful. But I can see it clouding their judgment for a little while, Mr. Speaker, leading them into irresponsible statements, but surely that isn't going to continue forever. Surely there are people on the other side who can approach their duties as MLAs and members of the opposition with a slightly different philosophy than that -- to be constructive rather than destructive, to try to build Alberta and our system of government rather than damage it.

One of the things, Mr. Speaker, that I felt most pleased about during my time in the opposition was the fact that we had decided to deal in programs, policies, priorities and positive alternatives. We decided that we would not deal in accusations, distortions or mud-slinging. We felt that this Legislature, this system and our province would be best served when the Legislative Assembly was a showcase for Alberta, and not a forum for dirt throwing.

DR. BUCK:

What happens in two years --

MR. GETTY:

Normally, Mr. Speaker, there is not much reason to refer to the hon. Member for Clover Bar in this House, but perhaps we will receive the benefit of his comments one of these days.

DR. BUCK:

You'll get it. Just be around Getty.

MR. GETTY:

Mr. Speaker, if the people of this Legislature are not going to work towards strengthening the political system in which we operate, then I am afraid that the young people growing up in Alberta are not going to turn to it for the

solution of the problems they see in the future of our country. I suggest that there are many policies we can debate. There are problems to be solved. Attention to these matters surely is deserved by all members of the House.

As a matter of fact I have been surprised at the hesitancy of some of the members opposite to debate some of the very things which they stood for in the past which have been changed. I am surprised at the lack of defence, or support, or debate that they have made with regard to such things as the phasing out of The Human Resources Research Council, The Human Resources Development Authority, The Alberta Advisory Council, and The Commission System of Advanced Education in the province. I realize that there have been the odd exceptions, but, Mr. Speaker, if you can't support the very things that you supposedly believed in, or if you can't suggest alternatives to them, then it appears that the opposition in this Legislature is surely in the wilderness.

I know all Albertans will be pleased with this budget. But reflecting an urban-riding view, Mr. Speaker, I must say how pleased I was with this budget and with the early assessments of my constituents. In the critical area of assistance to our large metropolitan areas of Edmonton and Calgary, this budget is really impressive.

I would like to quote for the House a statement of the Premier which led, in a way, to many of the policies that are in this budget. It has been stated today by a member of the opposition that perhaps we were interfering with municipal government. But here is a statement of the Government of Alberta.

We believe that if we as a provincial government take a 'hands off' attitude towards growth, our two metropolitan areas of Edmonton and Calgary will grow in a way that will jeopardize the quality of life that we now have in these two cities, and at the same time many smaller centres will be stifled in reaching their potential for growth where growth would be a positive and not a negative factor. We sense the citizens of our large cities want us to take action, not to stop growth but to assure that it is more balanced, more orderly, that our cities do not lose their particularly unique sparkle and vitality through traffic snarls, sheer ugliness of hurried development, pollution hazards, soaring crime rates, loss of privacy and personality.

Mr. Speaker, there is no question that this budget is a follow-up to that statement.

There is one other comment, I think, that should be drawn to the members of the Legislature. Also it should be considered a blueprint for the government's assistance for metropolitan areas.

No matter what action the Government of Alberta takes, the majority of our citizens will be living in the two metropolitan centres. They are entitled to, and in fact they need, more provincial government support. No matter what action the Government of Alberta takes, the majority of our citizens will be living in the two metropolitan centres. They are entitled, in fact they need more provincial government support for transportation, and these needs will be met.

Well, Mr. Speaker, let's consider the facts. A tremendous proportion of this budget is going to help the average homeowner. First, the average guy gets a direct reduction in his property taxes. In effect, in Alberta, the government has been able to provide a significant cut in the average man's annual cost of living. And at the same time, they have been able to increase the average man's disposable income. And because of the \$7,200 ceiling on the assessment, Mr. Speaker, the average man benefits far more in proportion to the wealthy homeowner.

Frankly, this is a period across Canada, when Canadian taxpayers are really expecting increased taxation -- as a matter of fact, Saskatchewan has announced increased taxes this year; the province of Ontario must. But when the average Canadian taxpayer at every turn is facing increased taxes, in Alberta he has a government with the programs to actually reverse this trend.

DR. BUCK:

Those charges are indirect taxes.

MR. GETTY:

It has provided, in conjunction with a two-price gas system and the subsequent heating and gas bills that Albertans will be able to enjoy, two

significant cuts in their annual costs of living. It's a significant reason, Mr. Speaker, to live in Alberta.

Let's consider also, Mr. Speaker, the municipal government's position. Their assistance, approximately \$48 million, is 14 per cent over the 1972 amount from this government. But more significant, it's 26 per cent more than the \$38 million level arbitrarily imposed on municipal governments by the previous administration without warning.

Mr. Speaker, the hon. member, Mr. Clark, from Olds-Didsbury, today mentioned some comments by the Minister of Municipal Affairs when the previous administration was moving to cut the grants to municipalities and no longer allowing the one-third royalties to be the base for those grants. The hon. member never seemed to realize that the present Minister of Municipal Affairs was pointing out that the previous administration had made that decision in the Cabinet room, I would imagine, but without any prior consultation with the municipalities. The argument was not over the figure. The argument was not over the base of how that figure was established. The argument, Mr. Speaker, was that the municipalities never had an opportunity to discuss the matter or in any way have any input or in any way consult with the government before that arbitrary amount was placed on them.

Mr. Speaker, Albertans receive now in municipalities, either directly or through the municipal governments, almost 100 per cent more municipal assistance in tax relief in the past two years from this government, and all accomplished with painstaking consultation with the municipalities, rather than the arbitrary manner of the past administration.

AN HON. MEMBER:

What's the formula?

MR. GETTY:

The increased transportation grants, Mr. Speaker, are welcomed by the cities. I've had an opportunity today at another event to meet with several Edmonton aldermen and they are pleased. They are pleased because this will allow them to start the kind of planning and implementation necessary to achieve a greater quality of urban life. This will allow, as the Premier said, that the cities never lose their unique sparkle and vitality.

An urban citizen can see for the first time that he is getting the kind of attention to his needs never before seen in this province. He can survey these matters along with such things, already reported -- the Commonwealth Games support, the first urban provincial park -- and know that he has finally elected MLAs in this Legislature who understand him and work for him.

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

MR. SPEAKER:

May the hon. minister adjourn the debate?

HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

[Mr. Speaker left the Chair at 5:31 o'clock.]