

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ALBERTA

Tuesday, March 27, 1973

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

PRAYERS

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

MR. ASHTON:

Mr. Speaker, I beg leave that the following petitions be read and received.

The Society of Industrial Accountants of Alberta for an Act, being The Society of Industrial Accountants of Alberta Act, 1973;

E. J. Bethell, I. F. Csabay, D. H. Hildebrant, Charles Brown, G. D. Meades, J. D. Scott, R. J. Leonard and D. H. Parson for An Act to Incorporate The Certified General Accountants Association of Alberta;

Doug Clark, President of the Institute of Accredited Public Accountants, Alberta Chapter, for An Act to Incorporate the Institute of Accredited Public Accountants of Alberta;

O. Paul Thomas, F. R. Erick Mulder, Dr. Phillip J. Kendal, Andrew C. Gunning, Fredrick J. Hand, and Edward C. Glover for An Act to Incorporate The Grand Chapter of Royal Arch Masons of Alberta;

Ronald Henry Jenkins and Stanley Bradshaw Laing for An Act to amend The Calgary Community Foundation Act;

Canadian Union College for An Act to amend the Canadian Union College Act;

Irene McDougall for An Act to Incorporate The Grand Chapter of Alberta, Order of The Eastern Star;

The Knights of Columbus Club for An Act to amend The Knights of Columbus Club Act;

Sister Gabrielle Fortier, F. J., Sister Pauline Magnan, F. J., and Sister Ellen Martin, F. J., for An Act to Incorporate St. Vincent's Hospital;

Edward E. Bishop, Kenneth A. McKenzie, Thomas Jackson, James E. Redmond and Patrick M. Bentley for An Act to Incorporate Westbank Golf and Country Club;

The Alberta Wheat Pool for An Act to amend The Alberta Wheat Pool Act, 1970;

Ted Breithkreitz, Marjorie Thompson, Harvey Amthor, Barbara Amthor, Fred Kluin and Nellie Gilbertson for An Act to Incorporate the Fort Assiniboine Agricultural Association;

United Missionary Church for An Act to amend An Act to Incorporate the Mennonite Brethren in Christ Church.

MR. SPEAKER:

Having heard the motion by the hon. Member for Edmonton Ottewell, do you all agree?

HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

[The motion was carried.]

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 210 An Act to amend The School Act

MR. DIACHUK:

Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce a bill, being An Act to amend The School Act. The intent of this amendment is as a result of the resolutions passed in last fall's conventions by two Alberta associations. The Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties and the Alberta School Trustees' Association last fall passed an emergent resolution and subsequently have made this their policy No. 161 of The Alberta School Trustees' Association. The intent here is to relieve or exonerate the teacher or principal from the legal responsibility for authorizing medical care, emergent medical care, in the absence of a parent.

[Leave being granted, bill No. 210 was introduced and read a first time.]

MR. HENDERSON:

Mr. Speaker, just on a brief point of order. I wonder if the Government House Leader or the Premier could advise as to whether it's the government's intention to introduce any amount of significant legislation in this session. There has been not too much forthcoming thus far from the government side and we naturally are becoming somewhat concerned if there is major legislation to be introduced by the government. Could we have some indication of whether it will be forthcoming in the next few days?

MR. HYNDMAN:

Certainly, Mr. Speaker. I think if members will look at the Order Paper, there already are some very significant items of legislation and items of the same or even greater significance will be on the Order Paper and introduced before very long.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

MR. LOUGHEED:

Mr. Speaker, I have the pleasure today to introduce to you and through you to the members of the Legislative Assembly, some 120 Scouts from Calgary. I have been given to understand they are from various constituencies in Calgary, but primarily from Calgary West. They are accompanied by their Scout director, Mr. Kevin Wallace, by Mr. Stan Dundas and by a group of troop scouters who are with them. They are in both the public gallery and the members gallery. They have had a visit with the Lieutenant Governor. They are pleased to be here today, and I wish they would rise and be recognized by the House.

MR. NOTLEY:

I'm very pleased to be able to introduce to you and through you to the members of the House a member of the federal House of Commons who has the rather arduous task of representing one-third of Canada. I'm referring to the hon. Member for the Northwest Territories, Mr. Wally Firth. He is sitting in your gallery. I would ask him to stand and be recognized by the members of this Assembly.

MR. DIACHUK:

Mr. Speaker, I wish to take the opportunity to introduce to you and through you to the members of this Assembly a group of some 46 students from my constituency from the St. Leo School. They are accompanied by two teachers, Mr. T. Tymo and Miss B. Babiak. They are seated in the public gallery. I would like to ask them to stand and be recognized by the Assembly.

MR. YOUNG:

Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce to you and through you to the members of the House some 30 students from the McQueen School. These students are in Grade 6 and they are here today as part of their Social Studies class, which is currently studying Life in the Middle Ages --

[Laughter]

-- particularly the contrast -- and I'm not sure after last night that there is so much -- between government in the Middle Ages and government today. Mr. Speaker, it is a special pleasure for me because normally I breakfast with one of the little girls, but today for some reason I didn't have that pleasure, so I may see her when she stands. I would ask them to rise and be recognized, with their teachers, Mr. D. R. McLeod, Mrs. D. Spisak, and a parent, Mrs. Rose.

FILING RETURNS AND TABLING REPORTS

MR. YURKO:

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to lay on the table Sessional Paper No. 192, which is the environmental guidelines given Syncrude for the development of the Alberta tar sands.

MR. HENDERSON:

Before we go into Oral Question Period, on a point of order, I wonder if I could just ask the Government House Leader a general question or two regarding the matter of Returns? By my count, there are something like 70 Motions for a Return that have been approved by the House. I think there have been 12, or 13 with this one today, that have been tabled. I would draw to the attention of the Government House Leader that over 55 of the Motions for a Return have been approved by the House and outstanding for some three weeks or more now.

Since a number of them are relevant to some of the discussions going on in study of the Estimates and so forth, I wonder if the Government House Leader could examine the returns that are outstanding with a view to seeing if anything can be done to expedite some of them since we wouldn't want to be holding up proceedings in committee by virtue of absence of the information.

MR. HYNDMAN:

We will certainly have a look at them, Mr. Speaker. Some of them are those which require a great deal of information, others maybe not so much and we will certainly look at them with a view to seeing if this process can be expedited.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Southern Alberta Teachers' Strike

MR. HENDERSON:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If I may, I would now like to address a question to the Minister of Manpower and Labour. Could the minister advise the House if there have been any new developments in the school teachers' strike in southern Alberta, any new developments in the matter of collective bargaining and settling the issue?

DR. HOHOL:

There are no new developments, Mr. Speaker, other than the fact that each party has met with its principals. I was recently, concluding shortly before 2:30, with the mediation staff. We are going to meet with the various principals to the dispute, some this afternoon and some this evening.

Part of the mediation staff will be back in Calgary this afternoon, other mediation staff will be there tonight and the chairman of The Board of Industrial Relations will be there tomorrow.

We have a proposal that was prepared by the mediation staff and we shall offer this to the two sides in an attempt to mediate the dispute on the basis of our prepared memorandum of agreement that we feel is fair and reasonable to both sides.

MR. STROM:

Mr. Speaker, if I may ask a supplementary question to the hon. minister. Would the hon. minister know whether the ATA bargaining on behalf of teachers has settled for less than what the trustees in other areas, or in some other area, than what the trustees have offered in this particular case?

DR. HOHOL:

Mr. Speaker, the hon. member asked a very important question in the sense it was a crucial one in the negotiations and the mediation that ensued. One of the problems was that the Southern Alberta School Authorities Association works on a school year. All the other zones set out for negotiation purposes for employers in Alberta have been on a calendar year. And so the comparisons of this particular proposal, or any series of proposals from either side, was very difficult to compare with those in other parts of the province.

MR. STROM:

Mr. Speaker, a further supplementary. Is the hon. minister saying then, in his opinion it would be difficult to state there has been settlement for less in any other area because of this difference?

DR. HOHOL:

It would be difficult, sir, on any one of the clauses. Very clearly one could say that settlements have been made for less or for more, but taking the whole package and very few packages are the same, because in addition to the salary bid -- and those are not always the same, some for example might pay for 10 years of experience, others might pay for 11 years of experience, some might pay for different years of training -- there is also the matter of fringe benefits and these are always very, very difficult to compare.

MR. SPEAKER:

Might this be the last supplementary on this point.

MR. GRUENWALD:

Supplementary, Mr. Speaker, to the Minister of Manpower and Labour, or possibly the Minister of Education if he chooses. Are you contemplating legislation in this session or in the near future that would prohibit the involuntary closing of schools for long periods of time because of strikes?

DR. HOHOL:

This, of course, Mr. Speaker, would anticipate the Labour Act amendments which will be brought to the House for first, second and final reading during the spring sitting. Theoretically we would consider and are considering every proposal that has been brought to us. It is, in a speculative way, unlikely that particular one would be in the initial amendments at least.

#### Environmental Guidelines

MR. HENDERSON:

Mr. Speaker, I wonder if I may address a further question to the Minister of the Environment? I wonder if the minister could advise the House as to whether there has been an indication from Syncrude as to the general concurrence or acceptance of the environmental guidelines that are referred to in the Return that was tabled today?

MR. YURKO:

The guidelines are fairly general in some areas, and in terms of land reclamation the guidelines do, in fact, anticipate some legislation. So in this regard there is discussion with Syncrude on a number of points in some depth. But I think I would be fair in saying there is general understanding between Syncrude and the department that these basically are the guidelines that are going to be followed in terms of constructing and approving the final plan.

MR. HENDERSON:

Supplemental, Mr. Speaker. I wonder if the minister could advise the House regarding the proposal or the application that is before the Energy Board now to change over from burning coke to gas as a fuel source. Is that decision in any

way related to the environmental problems that were related to using the coke for fuel primarily as it relates to the high sulphur content in coke?

MR. YURKO:

Yes, Mr. Speaker, the coke does, in fact, contain very high sulphur and there are fairly rigid requirements in terms of sulphur discharge. I wouldn't want to suggest that the department influence the decision by Syncrude in switching from coke to natural gas, but I would probably suggest that in examining the criteria and recognizing that there will be a number of plants in the area and the need to keep sulphur concentrations down to reasonable value, it may, in fact, influence their decision. But again I wouldn't want to suggest that I'm aware of any knowledge which made them make this decision from coke to natural gas.

MR. HENDERSON:

A further supplemental, Mr. Speaker. I wonder if the minister could advise the House as to whether he or his department has had any discussions with Great Canadian Oil Sands relative to their continuing utilization of coke as a plant fuel as opposed to gas?

MR. YURKO:

We are having continuing discussions with Great Canadian Oil Sands in regard to their environmental problems. I wouldn't want to suggest that we had a specific discussion with regard to this matter. I am sure it was touched on and that the department has discussed it, but whether or not any matters resolved from this, I just don't know at this time. I would have to check and find out.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

#### Alberta Gasoline Prices

MR. DIXON:

I would like to direct my question today to the hon. Minister of Industry and Commerce. It is regarding some complaints of service station operators in my constituency. Last November 14, the hon. minister said that he would be making an announcement after studying further the MacKenzie Report on gasoline prices and other problems. I was wondering if the minister could enlarge on any decisions they have made regarding the gasoline pricing situation in Alberta.

MR. PEACOCK:

Mr. Speaker, I should like to preface my answers to this question with two acknowledgements. First I would like to thank the hon. Member for Calgary Millican for the advance notice, and second to advise the House, by the gracious consent of the Minister of Consumer Affairs under whose department this issue now resides, the hon. Mr. Dowling has suggested that I carry on with the work my department has initiated in relation to this MacKenzie Report.

I would like to report to the House the success that we had encountered in having dialogue with the integrated oil companies over the terms of the lease. From that dialogue the acceptance of a guideline that our department established was acceptable both to the lessee and lessor. We felt that in the area of gasoline prices we might apply the same principles, with that thought in mind we initiated some preliminary meetings with the integrated oil companies, of which we have had two.

We also have had a meeting with ARR or ARA -- it's on my mind -- the ARA in regard to their concern covering the method of retailing gasoline from the refinery to the pump. This has developed a program in which we have established a questionnaire, which is in three parts, to the various types of integrated oil companies that are in the marketing business.

The questions contain the following, for example, "with respect to the sales of fuel oil made by the refinery division of your company, show the names of the purchasers," et cetera, et cetera, then the kind of branded outlets to commercial accounts and to bulk dealers and other accounts and the prices that they buy at. And finally, in accumulation of this questionnaire we anticipate having a meeting on June 1 in which we will be able to identify the problems

that are facing the retail marketing people of the gasoline industry today. Thank you.

MR. DIXON:

Mr. Speaker, do I take it from the hon. minister then, that there won't any action as far as any directives to oil companies regarding sending their gasoline to the different outlets until at least June 1?

MR. PEACOCK:

That's right, Mr. Speaker. It will take until that time to accumulate all the data, information and facts pertaining to the pricing structures.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

MR. NOTLEY:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the hon. Minister of Industry and Commerce a supplementary question if I could, before raising my other question. Mr. Minister have you had an opportunity in your department to assess the other aspects of the MacKenzie Report, especially those aspects that relate to the pricing mechanism of gasoline in the province?

MR. PEACOCK:

Yes, Mr. Speaker, that is under review also.

MR. NOTLEY:

A supplementary question. Will there be an announcement made with respect to when this review will be completed? Will there be a statement submitted to the spring session?

MR. PEACOCK:

Mr. Speaker, I can't anticipate when that review will be completed but certainly when it is completed we will make it known.

#### Emergency Crop Assistance Program

MR. NOTLEY:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct this question to the Minister of Agriculture. Can the Minister of Agriculture advise the House what the present status is of the federal government's contribution towards the emergency crop assistance program for Alberta farmers? Have they paid the money? Are they in the process of paying the money? What is the present status?

DR. HORNER:

I don't believe they have paid the money yet, Mr. Speaker, and I will check for the hon. member to see what the exact status is. As we send out our cheques we are notifying the federal government and we are still having some argument with relation to the federal government as to what part of Alberta they are going to pay their assistance in and we hope to get that cleared as well.

MR. NOTLEY:

A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. In view of the fact that cheques were sent out to British Columbia farmers on March 21, can the minister advise why British Columbia farmers have been paid by the federal government and not Alberta farmers?

DR. HORNER:

I would think the obvious answer, Mr. Speaker, is that the British Columbia farmers were paid on a provincial basis -- a different basis than they were paid in Alberta. They are paid across the board in British Columbia on a \$2 an acre basis, as I understand it, up to 400 acres without regard to whether or not they had harvested any crop.

In Alberta, because as we went further east the crop conditions became better, we had to have some sort of graduation and we paid on the basis of 75

per cent of the unharvested crop. I rather suspect that is the reason that British Columbia farmers have their federal cheques ahead of ours.

MR. NOTLEY:

One further supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Can the Minister of Agriculture advise what the position of the Alberta Government is with respect to a proposal from British Columbia? I understand that an interest-free loan of \$10 an acre up to \$5,000 for the forgivable principal clause be considered by the federal government as supplementary assistance to the present program?

DR. HCRNER:

I haven't had direct communication from the minister in British Columbia with regard to the proposal to the federal government. However, the regional director of the National Farmer's Union in the Peace River country was in to see me and conveyed that view of the hon. Mr. Stupich, and I am quite willing to consider it and add support at the federal level in relation to what further assistance might come from the federal government.

We are also working in the department in relation to programs which will come into effect early in April to assist our farmers in those areas and other areas in Alberta to get their crop in in the spring.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Speech from the Premier

MR. SORENSON:

Mr. Speaker, my question is to the hon. Premier. When can we expect a major speech from the Premier? In the last session we had, among others, a Budget Speech and The State of the Province Address, but there has been a strange quiet prevailing this year.

MR. LOUGHEED:

Mr. Speaker, my intention is, as I have said previously, to participate in the Budget Debate. I intend to participate at a meeting in Winnipeg this coming weekend and the results of that meeting may have some bearing on remarks that I might make in the Legislature. In addition to that, Premier Davis is visiting our fair province of Alberta on April 3, and I would be interested in his remarks and his observations. It may be that some of the remarks that he makes are of such a nature that I would like to respond to them, both here in the Legislature and elsewhere.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Olds-Didsbury, followed by the hon. Member for Vermilion-Viking.

Thalidomide Babies

MR. CLARK:

Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Health and Social Development. As a word of background, I would say it is as a result of a telephone call I received this morning from a constituent of mine. The people involved have a youngster who is considered as a thalidomide baby. The question revolves around this: will the minister or the very senior officials in his department be meeting with representatives of a legal firm from Chicago in the very early part of April regarding pending legal cases in Great Britain and the United States -- especially Illinois?

MR. CRAWFORD:

Mr. Speaker, I suppose the hon. member's question relates to whether or not we will be obtaining advice as to how some of these cases are handled in other jurisdictions and how they are being handled in some other parts of the world in order that people who have a similar problem here may gain some guidance. I do not know of a meeting planned by officials of mine. I do not have one arranged myself with legal experts in regard to thalidomide, but I will be glad to check

into it with the officials and see what their program, if any, is in that direction.

MR. CLARK:

A supplementary question to the minister, Mr. Speaker. Is the minister aware that parents of these unfortunate children are receiving letters from a legal firm in Chicago offering their services and at the same time saying to the parents that they are meeting with officials from your department to explore this whole area?

MR. CRAWFORD:

I didn't know, Mr. Speaker. The question is now fully clarified. I was not personally aware that one or more Alberta families have in fact received such letters. I don't have any real comment to make on the fact, but it will be one I will look into. I would be pleased -- I might just say -- if the hon. member wanted to provide me with information in regard to that family and the correspondence.

MR. CLARK:

Could I just ask one last supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. When the minister is looking at this whole area, would the minister consider the possibility of lending either the legal services of his department or the Attorney General's department to the parents involved so that they would have this type of background or backup to help them in arriving at decisions before they become involved or do not become involved with this legal firm from the United States?

MR. CRAWFORD:

Well, Mr. Speaker, I think that the involvement, knowing now not so much what to respond with as far as health is concerned. but so far as the accustomed way of the practice of law in the Province of Alberta is concerned -- it strikes me as a real curiosity that solicitors who may not be licenced or registered to practice in Alberta would be behaving the way the hon. member mentions. That being so, it may be a matter of the public interest to have Albertans advised as to how they should receive overtures from that type of source.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Department of Consumer Affairs

MR. COOPER:

Mr. Speaker, my question is for the hon. Minister of Consumer Affairs, and I'm sorry to cause him to stand on his sore foot at this time.

Mr. Minister, will your new Department of Consumer Affairs carry out public relations or advertising campaigns to advise consumers as to the availability of help from the department?

MR. DOWLING:

Yes, Mr. Speaker, this is one of the areas we are looking into very extensively. I should say at this time that we have written to the various jurisdictions in Canada, including the federal government to determine what legislation is presently on the books, what they are proposing, and later on after the session is over, some of the people in the new branches that I will have responsibility for, will be visiting the jurisdictions which we suggest have something to offer us to determine what parts of their legislation we might consider for our own department.

This particular aspect of the department is being looked into very extensively.

MR. COOPER:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Will your department have sufficient scope or power to challenge big business interests that quite often are claimed to be behind unfair market practices?



MR. DOWLING:

Well, yes, of course, Mr. Speaker, it has the power of the government, which I think is very extensive, and we will use it with discretion wherever we think it is necessary.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Lethbridge East, followed by the hon. Member for Macleod.

Personalized Licence Plates

MR. ANDERSON:

Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Highways and Transport. Can we expect your department to review the matter of personalized licence plates available at additional cost, such as is the practice in Ontario, as well as in American jurisdictions, such as California and Oregon?

MR. COPITHORNE:

Mr. Speaker, I would like the hon. gentleman to speak a little clearer, I didn't catch all of his question.

MR. ANDERSON:

Can we expect your department to review the matter of personalized licence plates available at an additional cost, such as is the practice in Ontario as well as in American jurisdictions such as California and Oregon? And I'm referring to an article that was in the paper.

MR. COPITHORNE:

Mr. Speaker, we have carried out considerable review, and also in respect to requests that have been made. It's under consideration.

MR. ANDERSON:

A supplementary. At what cost could this personalized service be made available to the automobile owners in Alberta?

MR. COPITHORNE:

Mr. Speaker, at this time it would be considerably more than the present cost of their licence plates.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Provincial Meat Inspection

MR. BUCKWELL:

Mr. Speaker, a question to the Minister of Agriculture. Has the provincial meat inspection begun generally throughout the province?

DR. HORNER:

I don't know whether I could say 'generally', Mr. Speaker. The meat inspection has begun in a certain number of selected plants and will gradually increase until we cover all of them.

MR. BUCKWELL:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. I understand the department is looking for lay inspectors, and I think the minister is aware that the pay schedule is \$1,000 less than the federal rates, but I wonder, could you give consideration to having lay inspectors at the larger plants, say immediately, because of their high volume?

DR. HORNER:

Yes, Mr. Speaker, we'll give that consideration. As a matter of fact there were a certain number of lay inspectors under training, and I'll see where they are and whether or not we kept them.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Highwood, followed by the hon. Member for Little Bow.

Environmental Conservation Authority

MR. BENOIT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the hon. Minister of the Environment. Mr. Minister, the question was referred yesterday to you, and it has to do with the Environmental Conservation Authority hearings with regard to the eastern slopes areas. Have those dates been set by the Authority at this time?

MR. YURKO:

Yes, Mr. Speaker, tentative dates have, in fact, been set. I believe they start on June 22, but I'd have to check that and refresh my memory on it.

MR. BENOIT:

Does the minister have a list of those dates available that can be dispatched to those who might want them?

MR. YURKO:

Yes, Mr. Speaker, I shall see that they are dispatched to the House either this afternoon or tomorrow.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Teachers' Strike - Effect on Students

MR. R. SPEAKER:

Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Education. Will the Grade 12 students in the southern Alberta strike area lose any school credits for subjects because of their reduced school attendance? In other words, is there a minimum number of days which students must be in attendance to get their credits or subjects? The question comes from a number of parents in the southern Alberta area who are concerned because their children missed a number of days prior to the strike starting because of illness and other reasons.

MR. HYNDMAN:

No, Mr. Speaker, I don't believe they would be under any disadvantage of that kind.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Food Prices

MR. RUSTE:

Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Agriculture. During yesterday's question period I asked the minister a question regarding the government's submission to the federal government special committee on food prices. Have you had an opportunity at this time to look into that and report?

DR. HORNER:

No, Mr. Speaker, I haven't had an opportunity yet.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Training of Ambulance Personnel

DR. PAERCSKI:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is a question to the hon. Minister of Health and Social Development. What is the government doing to ensure that there is uniformity in the training of ambulance personnel across the province, in view of the fact that these people are frequently the first line of defence in illness and accidents, and in view of the fact that there is a wide discrepancy across the province in their training?

MR. CRAWFORD:

Mr. Speaker, the discrepancy in the ability is something that is an established fact in the system as it is operated at the present time. There have been recent improvements -- I believe it was last spring that the first graduating class of medical or paramedical personnel, I have forgotten the exact name that they have given them, but who are primarily ambulance attendants and deal with emergency situations -- the first class was graduated from SAIT last year. There is no doubt in my mind that that type of training program upgrades the quality of that type of care. I know that the major operators in Edmonton have long had an in-house type of training program where they do make every sincere effort to keep their people up to date and, if possible, to upgrade the actual skills of individual attendants.

Now, ambulance services in much of the rest of the province are very scattered and, of course, in all cases are administered locally and not by the province. I would say that the provincial policy on it is to encourage the continued upgrading wherever possible, although we know full well that in some remote areas it is not possible to demand too high a standard in view of the fact that the people who are handling it there are very often ones who are doing it more out of necessity and out of their willingness to serve, than they are out of the fact that it is a well-paid occupation, which it is not.

DR. PAPROSKI:

A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Is the minister aware though that there is a very significant discrepancy between the urban and urban, as well as the rural and urban? And in view of that, would the minister undertake a review of this particular area, because there have been complaints from various segments of the province with the concern that a person is not trained and, as a result, there may be some definite hazard to people.

MR. CRAWFORD:

Mr. Speaker, I certainly don't hesitate in any way to undertake a review of the situation. I think both in the hon. member's question and in my response we've already recognized the fact that there are indeed discrepancies. There are historic and long-standing reasons for them and the situation is hopefully improving even if in some cases it is not all that rapid.

DR. PAPROSKI:

Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. This relates to the policy of the government regarding provision of ambulance service for people in cities or out in the country who have no funds and are not registered under social allowance, social assistance or any other program. What is the policy of the government regarding payment of ambulance service for these people in view of the fact that the ambulance has to pick them up despite the fact that they have no funds? Would the Department of Health and Social Development, in fact, pay for this, or undertake to pay for these services?

MR. CRAWFORD:

Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure what the precise arrangements are in Calgary since they came up with their new program one to two years ago where the ambulance services are provided by the fire department there. But if I am not mistaken, the City of Edmonton does maintain a contract with the major provider of ambulance services here, under which deficits are met by the City of Edmonton.

MR. BUCKWELL:

Supplementary to the minister. Are there any regulations to qualify for an ambulance service, such as minimum requirements or the equipment used in ambulances?

MR. CRAWFORD:

Mr. Speaker, I'd be glad to check into the question of specific regulations. I can only speak from memory and not from full knowledge of the question of regulations. I do know that in some areas the arrangements are very ad hoc and very casual, and I only know that because I encountered that as the fact. But as to regulations themselves, I'll be glad to check into it.

DR. PAPROSKI:

One more supplementary, Mr. Speaker. If there is no deficit, in fact, for the City of Edmonton to pick up the tab for those services provided for transients and so forth, would the minister undertake to review this also to ensure that the ambulance service is not hesitant to, in fact, provide service for these people?

MR. CRAWFORD:

Mr. Speaker, I think that any approach in that regard should be made by the City of Edmonton. My first reaction is that I would be hesitant to involve the government in any area where it is not already involved, and which is being served by another government -- in this case, the City of Edmonton. I don't know the status of the contract in regard to services, which was at one time quite familiar to me. But on the assumption that it is still operational, there really is no difficulty on the whole in ambulance service for persons who are not otherwise covered.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Calgary Millican, followed by the hon. Member for Olds-Didsbury.

#### Licence Plates

MR. DIXON:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the hon. Minister of Highways and Transport. Does the minister plan to allow an extension of the motor vehicles licence purchases beyond March 31 of this year -- the deadline for the new plates?

MR. COPITHORNE:

Yes, Mr. Speaker, we'll be extending it to the end of April.

MR. GRUENWALD:

Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. I'm wondering why there is a deadline of March 31, when it has never been adhered to. Can you answer that?

MR. COPITHORNE:

Mr. Speaker, one of these days when we get a mean feeling on we'll surprise people.

MR. DIXON:

Mr. Speaker, I'll have to ask a supplementary question then. You are not going to get mean between now and March 31?

MR. COPITHORNE:

Mr. Speaker, I have a most benevolent feeling about me at this time.

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School Buses

MR. CLARK:

Mr. Speaker, in light of the minister's most benevolent feeling, might I ask him, is your department considering regulations regarding the resale of used school buses?

MR. COPITHORNE:

Not at this time, Mr. Speaker.

MR. CLARK:

Is the minister giving any consideration to the question of seat belts as being mandatory in school buses?

MR. COPITHORNE:

Mr. Speaker, we're looking at that particular aspect. It is not a requirement that is set out by the Canadian Safety Standards, and it would probably have to come from that area to start with, but it could be made a mandatory thing for Alberta as well.

Mr. Speaker, I might also add that through the research that has been done into seat belts as a safety factor for the safety of school children, at this time there are other factors that are probably more critical to the safety of children in school buses. One of them is the height of the seats. There has been a considerable amount of research done at this moment in that regard.

MR. CLARK:

Mr. Speaker, could I ask the minister another supplementary question then. Is his department giving any consideration to requiring that school bus drivers either take a first aid course or have first aid qualifications prior to obtaining a licence?

MR. COPITHORNE:

Mr. Speaker, we are continually reviewing safety features in the transportation of children to and from school. As you know, this province has a very fine record in the transportation of school children to and from their everyday classes and we are continually looking at safety features and safety practices.

MR. CLARK:

Mr. Speaker, to the minister, are you giving consideration at this time to the requirement for a driver to have some sort of first aid certification before he is able to get a licence?

MR. COPITHORNE:

Mr. Speaker, I answered, to start with, in a positive manner that we are considering many different programs and that one would probably be included in it as well.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Taber-Warner with a supplementary, followed by the hon. Member for Edmonton Kingsway with another supplementary.

Highway 36

MR. D. MILLER:

Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary for the hon. benevolent Minister of Highways. While he is in this attitude, Mr. Speaker, I wonder if he would consider finishing the 6.5 miles on Highway 36 south of Taber?

MR. COPITHORNE:

Mr. Speaker, there is sometimes a very sharp contrast of division in my congenial ability to be congenial.

[Laughter]

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School Bus Drivers

DR. PAPROSKI:

Mr. Speaker, another question to the hon. benevolent minister. It is a follow-up on the question I had asked earlier in the session, Mr. Minister, regarding the fact that there was a question whether school bus drivers were examined in school buses or other vehicles, including cars and trucks. Have you checked that out and, in fact, assured yourself that this is not happening?

MR. COPITHORNE:

Mr. Speaker, generally the school bus drivers have been examined in school buses but there have been occasions when they have been examined in a similar vehicle.

There are many things that go into licencing a school bus driver for safety. One of the things that is probably most prevalent and most important is his attitude towards the children, which is pretty hard to appraise by an examiner with an empty bus. This is a very important feature because sometimes in a school bus when there are a lot of young people feeling jubilant coming home from school, maybe jubilant going to school as well, they have differences of opinion. It is kind of hard to keep control in the front when you are driving a school bus. I think it is very important that the school bus operator's attitude towards these young people is very first class, because this could probably contribute more to the safe arrival at school and back, particularly if the bus driver has an excellent knowledge of highway practices.

MR. SPEAKER:

Might this be the final supplementary on the subject of benevolence or buses.

DR. PAPROSKI:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In view of the fact the minister is keenly aware of the attitude relationship between the bus driver and the students, and this is an important factor, would the hon. minister consider having some type of a program to be sure that these bus drivers are in tune with the usual high school and children's problems in school buses?

MR. COPITHORNE:

Well, that is a pretty difficult question to answer, Mr. Speaker, because firstly most of the school bus drivers want the job and understand the requirements, the patience that is required and that probably is the greatest feature of their ability to cope with the situations they are faced with day to day.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Olds-Edsberry followed by the hon. Member for Highwood.

MR. CLARK:

Mr. Speaker, I just asked my question.

DR. PAPROSKI:

One comment for the record --

MR. SPEAKER:

We have gone really quite far afield and in a number of instances gone way beyond the rules in both the questions and the answers.

DR. PAPROSKI:

Sorry, Mr. Speaker, thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Olds-Edsberry's question has been put. The hon. Member for Highwood.

Confidentiality of Files

MR. BENOIT:

Mine, Mr. Speaker, is addressed to the Minister of Health and Social Development. I am looking at him.

The government has maintained a fairly high degree of confidentiality so far as the files of recipients of social assistance and health care are concerned. I am asking the minister if that same degree of confidentiality is maintained after a recipient has been charged and found guilty of defrauding the government, or also with regard to the situation where doctors may have been charged and found guilty of defrauding the government?

MR. CRAWFORD:

Mr. Speaker, that isn't the sort of the subject upon which any policy as such applies. I think I can only comment on what the situation would normally be. And that is that where a prosecution was successful there would be publicity in the sense that if the media cared to report it, they could report the proceedings of the court. Now that is the sort of the publicity that people who are guilty of that type of fraud on the public do get and hon. members will have noticed from time to time such reports do appear. It is in no sense a disclosure of the file as such, it is a disclosure of proceedings that have taken place in court and been recorded.

MR. BENOIT:

Supplementary, just one. If it is to the advantage of the public and a deterrent for others, would the minister permit the files to be inspected in cases of that kind?

MR. CRAWFORD:

Mr. Speaker, I think that we have to be careful to make sure that the sanctions of the law don't go any farther than necessary against any person who is found guilty of an offence. When the matter is in the hands of the judge and a fine is levied -- and I know the point the hon. member is making in regard to the good effect it should have on others to deter them from doing the same thing -- but my feeling is that good effect wouldn't be added to by disclosing anything which had been previously confidential, that the good effect on other members of the public can indeed be achieved where the case is an appropriate one, a good, stiff fine and an order for repayment of the monies wrongfully received which is also commonly obtained.

I think if those things are publicized, if the fines aren't too light -- sometimes they are but generally they are not -- that is the sort of publicity there should be and that is the sort of publicity which should have a good effect.

Emergency Crop Assistance Program (Cont.)

DR. HERNER:

Mr. Speaker, could I just add to clarify the question that was asked earlier with regard to the federal payment. I am now advised by my department that what I thought was in fact true is true. As we make our payments the list goes to Ottawa and federal payments should be going out in Alberta as well as in British Columbia.

Environmental Conservation Authority (Cont.)

MR. YURKO:

Mr. Speaker, if I might answer more fully the question that was asked of me a little earlier. I would like to give the House the dates of the hearings by the authority.

The Oldman River Basin hearings are going to be held on June 11 in Coleman, June 13 and 14 in Lethbridge. The Bow River Basin hearings are on June 22 and 23 in Canmore, and June 18, 19 and 20 in Calgary. The North Saskatchewan River Basin, June 26 at Rocky Mountain House and June 28 and 29 at Red Deer, the Athabasca River basin July 3 at Hinton and July 5, 6 and 7 in Edmonton. The Smoky River Basin July 10 at Grande Cache, and July 12 and 13 at Grande Prairie.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

## MINISTERIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

MR. PEACOCK:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to announce the appointment of Edward A. Clarke as managing director of the Alberta Opportunity Company.

I would also like to announce to this House the appointment of the new Alberta Opportunity Company board members. In addition to Mr. Clarke they include: Robert Chapman of the City of Edmonton; Peter Grant of the City of Calgary; Jack Wilder of Ponoka; Gordon Buchanan of High Prairie; and Lorne Ordze of Camrose.

Mr. Speaker, we are indeed fortunate to obtain the services of Mr. Clarke who for the past seven years has been a senior branch director of the Ontario Development Corporation, first as director of the Consultative Services Branch, and more recently as head of the Industrial Parks Branch. As a director of the Consultative Services Branch, which investigates and evaluates applications for grants and loans, Mr. Clarke was instrumental in the establishment of the Northern Ontario Development Commission, an organization formed to provide particular attention to the province's less developed areas.

Mr. Clarke obtained his Bachelor of Commerce degree from the University of Toronto in 1953, followed by employment with Simpsons-Sears Limited from 1953 - 1961. He then joined the Industrial Development Bank from 1961 - 1965, and a small Ontario manufacturing company from 1965 - 1966. He is married and has three sons.

I am also pleased to announce that Mr. N. F. (Bill) Picard, former managing director of the Alberta Opportunity Company and now Assistant Deputy Minister for Finance and Administration, has been appointed the ex-officio member of the AOC board "to provide the necessary liaison and coordination between the Department of Industry and Commerce and the Alberta Opportunity Company."

I am sure this House joins with me in wishing Mr. Clarke and his board the very best.

## WRITTEN QUESTIONS

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

How many dead fish were detected by Government of Alberta officials in Sturgeon Lake following the detonation of seismic explosives on or under the lake bottom on or about March 20th, 1973?

Answer:

No dead or injured fish were observed at Sturgeon Lake following the detonation of seismic charges on March 20, 1973. Several holes were cut through the ice near the shot holes and a viewing device was used to look into the water at these sites. Visibility was estimated to be seven feet. Dredgings of the bottom also failed to collect any dead fish in the vicinity of the shot holes.

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

(1) Were any of the persons who were candidates for any political party in the last provincial election appointed to the Civil Service or employed in any capacity or appointed to government boards and agencies by the Alberta Government since September 9th, 1972?

(2) If so, what were the names, dates and the duration of each appointment?

(3) If so, what is the remuneration paid to each of the individuals listed above?

MR. SPEAKER:

The government is agreeing to Question 219?



DR. HORNER:

Yes, Mr. Speaker. . . . we can find some other interesting information with regard to the election in 1967. Both my colleague for Edmonton Whitemud and myself have ex-candidates in the civil service.

220. Mr. Clark asked the government the following question:

(1) How many women medical students were in attendance at the University of Calgary medical school during the 1972-73 term?

(2) Has there been a decision made or directive issued that would prevent women students from being enrolled in the medical school at the University of Calgary in the year 1973-74?

221. Mr. Clark asked the government the following question:

(1) How many district youth representatives were employed by the Department of Culture, Youth and Recreation as of January 1, 1971, and where were these individuals located and what are the names of the individuals involved?

(2) How many district youth representatives' positions were vacant as of January 1, 1971, and where were these vacancies located?

(3) How many district youth representatives were employed by the Department of Culture, Youth and Recreation, as of January 1st, 1972, where were these individuals located and what are the names of the individuals involved?

(4) How many district youth representatives' positions were vacant as of January 1st, 1972, and where were these vacancies located?

(5) How many new district youth representative positions were created during the period of January 1, 1971, to January 1, 1972, where were these positions located, when were the positions filled, and what are the names of the individuals involved?

(6) When was an advertisement placed to recruit new staff members for each of the district youth representative positions vacant from January 1, 1971, to January 1, 1972?

(7) What are the guidelines that the Department of Culture, Youth and Recreation uses to determine where a district youth representative position is created, are these guidelines in written form and circulated to the communities throughout Alberta?

MR. SCHMID:

Mr. Speaker, I accept the question.

222. Mr. Clark asked the government the following question:

(1) How many employees in each of the age categories from 45 years to 65 years inclusive, were hired by the Alberta Government and its agencies, including Alberta Crown corporations, since September 10, 1971?

(2) How many employees in the age categories from 45 years to 65 years inclusive, were released or retired from employment by the Alberta Government and its agencies, including Alberta Crown corporations, since September 10, 1971?

DR. HOHOL:

I accept the question, Mr. Speaker.

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

(1) With reference to the civil service caretakers working in the Highways Building

(a) How many hours per day does each caretaker work?

(b) What hourly rate of pay and monthly salary does each receive?

- (2) With reference to the caretakers who are working for the contractor who has received the contract for caretaking in the Highways Building
- (a) How many hours per day does each caretaker work?
  - (b) What hourly rate of pay and monthly salary does each receive?
- (3) (a) What is the total amount of the contract for caretaking in the Highways Building?
- (b) What floor area will be cared for under the contract?
  - (c) How many employees will be working for the contractor in the Highways Building?
  - (d) What is the name of the contractor?

Answer:

1. (a) Each caretaker on the day shift works eight hours per day. Caretakers on evening or night shift work seven hours per day.
- (b) The rate of pay for caretakers is in the pay range of \$5,724 to \$5,976 per annum.
2. The information to this question is not available as this information was not part of the contract, however the specifications do specify that the rate of pay must be in accordance with The Alberta Labour Act, Chapter 167, Labour (Part 2), and all other Acts whether provincial or federal. The contract caretakers will commence after 5:00 p.m.
3. (a) The total amount of the contract for contracting in that portion of the Highways Building that is to be done by contract is \$26,484.
- (b) Approximately 65,000 square feet of the Highways Building, Edmonton, will be cared for under contract.
- (c) The number of employees working for the contractor shall be determined by the contractor in fulfilling his obligations in accordance with the specifications of the contract.
- (d) The name of the contractor is Modern Building Cleaning.

MOTIONS FOR A RETURN

178. Mr. Henderson proposed the following motion to the Assembly, seconded by Mr. Clark:

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

Copies of the legal review conducted by the Provincial Auditor's Office with regards to the Government of Alberta's use of trust funds.

MR. MINIELY:

Mr. Speaker, that motion is acceptable.

[The motion was carried.]

217. Mr. R. Speaker proposed the following motion to the Assembly, seconded by Mr. Mandeville:

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

Copies of any studies in the possession of the government and conducted since 1969, showing:

- (a) the hen pheasant population of Alberta;
- (b) findings indicating a hen pheasant could be part of the bag limit; and
- (c) follow-up studies.

MR. R. SPEAKER:

Mr. Speaker, I move Motion 217 standing in my name. In so doing I would like to say that the information I request here is because of a great concern I have for my constituents with regard to this matter of the hunting of hen pheasants. I have to say that the many hunters, and various people I have talked to in my constituency certainly have no support for the present policy. They really don't even support the concept of the reduced season because they still feel this doesn't meet the need at the present time.

In examining this information, one of the questions we have to answer is really who is running the province and who is making the policy for the Province of Alberta or for the people of Alberta? Is it the biologist or the bureaucrat? Or is it really the people who are at the grass roots where they know and can understand what really does happen in an area?

I feel that, as representatives in a Legislative Assembly and as representatives making policy, the voice of these people is the one we should listen to because their local experience, and their experience from living each and every day where they observe and see the life styles of pheasants, the increase in population and decrease in population -- they can give us a lot of advice and information that can't be done by some surveys here and there or samplings that are done throughout the province.

I think we also have to recognize, Mr. Speaker, and I recognize this as a member of the Assembly for a number of years, that this policy was introduced by the Social Credit government when it was in power. I would like to say at that time I was certainly not in favour of the policy being put into effect. But the policy was put into effect. We certainly have to examine it each year. I must say that the extension of the policy to this point in time certainly doesn't stand in very good stead with my constituents.

We want to give it a fair examination. What we require is some of the information I have listed or asked for in this particular Return.

I have also, Mr. Speaker, placed on the Order Paper a resolution which I hope will come to the floor of this Assembly very quickly so that we can discuss the matter. This information I have asked for is very necessary for a good discussion.

MR. MANDEVILLE:

Mr. Speaker, in seconding the motion, and also coming from an area where there is a lot of concern with the harvest of our hen pheasant, I think this is the type of information we have to get and we have to get it back to our people and the areas that are concerned -- especially to the people, I feel, have very little input into the regulations so far as the game harvest is concerned. That is our farmer.

I know the minister has had much representation from my area and the Brooks area which has always been a good area for pheasant hunting, from the chambers of commerce, the councils and individuals. And I also get much concern in this area. If we can get this information, possibly, and get it back to the people, I think it will be very helpful to us as members of the Legislative Assembly.

However, I don't think it will deter the fact that our people realize that the harvest of our hen pheasants is certainly not a very good practice. I have talked to many farmers in my constituency. They are very upset and if something is not able to be done in this area they are prepared to stop pheasant hunting on their farms. There are many of them who are prepared to go to this length to stop the hen pheasant hunting.

Another area where I think the information will be good, and I don't think it has ever been out to the public, is in the pilot project that we had in Rainier, Scandia and Bow City on the harvest of hen pheasants. That is where the project first started on a pilot project basis. I don't think that information, myself, is going to determine too much as far as the harvest of pheasants is concerned because in these areas they harvested the pheasants and then they turned around and replaced the hen pheasants from the pheasant hatcheries. So whether this information will prove anything significant or not, I am not prepared to say.

In 1969 -- I think it was 1969 when we had the high mercury level in pheasants so that they disallowed them in hunting season. The next spring the pheasant population in my area was very good. But we have the information on this so we can go back to our people and tell them, was it a good spring that

made the pheasant population so much better or was it a result of not hunting our birds? This type of information is what our people are looking for.

I would also really plead with the minister, if there were some method that our farmers, the people who are growing these pheasants, could have an input into the regulations as far as the harvest of all our game is concerned, I think it would be a big step in the right direction.

The farmers will come to me and they'll say, "Well, you're hunting the hen pheasants. How are you harvesting them? Are you harvesting the weak birds or the older birds?" Well I tell them I don't know. If a hunter goes out and hunts, I think he shoots the first bird that jumps up before his gun.

I'm not a hunter myself. I never have done any hunting so I'm not that knowledgeable in the hunting area. But I do hope that the minister will be able to get all this information back to us so we can take it back to our people.

MR. SORENSON:

Mr. Speaker, I'm very much in favour of this motion, and my feelings are quite clear on the subject. I feel that nature and predators will provide a reasonable balance as far as the hen pheasants are concerned in Alberta.

I have noticed a falcon around my home vicinity over the past two years. I'd just like to share how he operates.

The other day I scared up a hen pheasant and I watched it as it rose up to 10 or 15 feet. Out of the sky came the falcon and hit her and they tumbled to the ground. I only had a few feet to go and I went over and picked up the pheasant, she was dying.

Well, I felt many times like destroying that falcon, but I don't want to destroy him and I don't want anyone else to destroy him either. He enjoys hen pheasants and I think he should be supplied with them. I don't think that people have to shoot hen pheasants. We'll allow the falcon to have a hen pheasant once in a while -- but hunters? No.

DR. BUCK:

Mr. Speaker, I'd just like to say one or two words on this. I, the same as the hon. Member for Little Bow, am concerned about this. I don't decimate the population too much in the fall, but to me it is just an example of the so-called experts dictating to the elected representatives what's going to happen in wildlife management.

I think back to a situation when we had a caucus committee looking at fish limits. We made a recommendation which was an awful lot lower than what the so-called experts had said. After the minister took it back to the experts, it came back with the original number they had stipulated. So it just makes me wonder who is really running the show.

So I would like to say that to me it's just a matter of simple mathematics. If you shot 500 hen pheasants, then there are just that fewer number to die the next winter. I mean if they are shot -- let's face it -- there is just no chance they are going to survive. But it's just a matter of simple mathematics as far as I as a layman can see, and there is just no way that I can justify in my own mind, and from what expert hunters have said, they are not in favour of shooting hen pheasants.

MR. D. MILLER:

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to add my few words with respect to this motion. And I can say that I am in complete harmony with it.

When any report reaches my constituency, which is pheasant country where there used to be any amount, but now they are scarce -- I'm a hunter myself, I've hunted all the country from Chin Coulee to Brooks and beyond that, and every fall -- but there certainly is a decided scarcity of birds now, and when this is reported to my constituency I intend to say and

MR. D. MILLER:

I'll say it now, I am sure that they will say, along with the Fish and Game, "We told you so." Because all our areas were against opening up a season for hen pheasants as part of a tag.

I am satisfied that this doesn't help the situation any. There are some farmers down there who pride themselves in raising pheasants -- they are grain farmers and cattle farmers -- but they just like to have the birds around, and for their various friends who come in the fall. But one farmer in particular told me that he is just losing faith because they are diminishing so fast.

So I would say, encourage the minister to give serious consideration to discontinuing the slaughter of hen pheasants.

DR. WARRACK:

Mr. Speaker, this is a somewhat astonishing experience really. My review of files indicates there has indeed been a considerable controversy over the matter of hen pheasants. As a matter of fact, the last speaker who brought this matter to the attention of my wife and me, was at the recent parliamentary dinner.

I have of course had occasion to pay attention to this issue because, at the time that I assumed responsibility in the Department of Lands and Forests it was not long before considerable outcry came about from southern Alberta, including parts of the constituencies represented by the gentlemen who've just spoken, objecting to the hen pheasant season of 1971.

Now each year, Mr. Speaker, the game regulations are passed by Order-in-Council, that is to say, by Cabinet decision and each member at that table is part of that decision, of course. In my review of this, I found that in the summer of 1971, the Order-in-Council authorizing the hen pheasant season to be the total duration of the pheasant season for 1971 was passed by the, of course, then previous government.

When objections came about, I, of course, approached the biologists about it. Two or three of the previous speakers have maligned the biologists in this matter, and I discovered that, as a matter of fact, the government of the time had opened the hen pheasant season despite recommendations from the biologists to the contrary. So, let's put the blame where it really belongs. --

DR. BUCK:

We're taking the blame --

DR. WARRACK:

And, of course, all of the speakers, with the exception of one, were a part of that government at the time. And I say, what I have just said, in order to relieve of unfair blame biologists who might be involved and, in fact, not to blame them with the decision because they didn't make that decision. As a matter of fact, they didn't even make the recommendation that was ultimately decided by the previous government.

In 1971 then, the hen pheasant season was open for the entire duration of the pheasant season, that is to say, exactly the same time period as the cock pheasant season. And I described last day, during discussion of Lands and Forest Estimates, some of the difficulties with the behavioural characteristics of the female pheasant and why it is a problem for them to be hunted late in the season when the weather gets colder.

For those reasons, in 1972 a new direction was taken by this government to greatly reduce that hen pheasant season to much less than had been the case. So while the members are contending that indeed the previous government had ignored the wishes of local people as well as the biologists, we don't intend to do so. Certainly in terms of the information as we passed it in the Motion for Return, that is very much in order.

MR. ZANDER:

Mr. Speaker, in speaking to the resolution, I would agree, to a great extent, with what the hon. members opposite have said, because in meeting with the various departments that determine, either by the biologists or the people in their field, the policies, the regulations -- and I'm happy to say at this time, the Minister of Lands and Forests meeting a few weeks ago with the members of the Civil Service regarding the hunting regulations -- I think this is good -- because we, as MLAs, either on this side of the House or on the other side, will certainly go back and get the feedback from the people within our constituency.

Too many times decisions are made by other than elected members of this Legislature. This is contrary to the wishes of the people of the Province of Alberta, who elect us to carry out their wishes. I would say that most of the time the biologists -- I wouldn't say all of the time, but most of the time, and I don't want to take anything away from them -- do not agree with the elected members, because they have the spot field checks that are made and this is what they go by.

But we are the people who live in our constituencies at least 365 days of the year, and certainly we should know what the feelings of the people are in our constituencies. If this is the wish of the people in the constituency, this is where the regulations in the Legislature should be brought in whereby the wishes of the people of the province can be recognized. We should not find ourselves entangled in a bunch of bureaucracy that is established somewhere else other than in this Legislature.

I think the minister made a wise move in this last meeting a few weeks ago -- that we have some input. At least elected members can argue their cause before the people who are attempting to bring about regulations, whether they are detrimental or beneficial. I would say that in the future, Mr. Minister, whenever possible -- if it is hunting regulations or fishing regulations -- I will find it very, very hard to go back to the people in my constituency, even with the fishing regulations.

We have to argue with the biologists. The people tell us the fish are not in there. It's the same thing as the people saying the pheasants are not there. And yet they make up regulations which are contrary to the wishes of our own constituency. I hope that the minister in the future, before any regulations are brought about, or at least the elected members of this Legislature, would have an opportunity to meet with the staff and discuss the various regulations before they are brought about. Thank you very much.

MR. R. SPEAKER:

Mr. Speaker, in closing the debate, I'd like to respond to some of the things the minister has said. Most likely he thinks that this has been an astonishing experience, and most likely it will be an astonishing experience before he is finished. I think one of the statements he made with regard to the fact that the biologists of his department did not make a recommendation to the minister is absolutely incorrect. Because we are aware, I'm certainly personally aware, as are other members of this House who were in the House at that time, that the biologists had input and made recommendations for that decision. I think that to try to pass it on to the policy-maker at that point in time and weasel out of responsibility is inaccurate, and certainly isn't something that is acceptable to myself or any other member of this Assembly. I think the minister had better respect the role he plays and the responsibility he has and recognize how policies are made through government in the role for which he has a responsibility.

I think his statement with regard to maligning the biologists is not accurate either. What he is saying and has said to us for two years is that the people down at the grass roots do not really know what they are talking about. We talk about maligning biologists, I would have to say, Mr. Speaker, that certainly maligning the grass roots of this province, the people who have built this country, that have preserved nature and preserved pheasants, those are the ones he is maligning and discrediting their point of view. I think the hon. minister should recognize that.

I had admitted in my earlier remarks that that policy came in when we were the government. That is a fact and we take that responsibility. But there is no question in my mind, Mr. Speaker, that the year after, that policy would not have existed because the people of Alberta were speaking to us and we would have listened.

The minister at this time has made up his mind, listening over in his ivory tower office, that is all he can hear. Some day he should go back to his constituency and talk to the people in his area and see what they are saying, because I know there is a lot of representation for change in this policy here. He isn't even listening to them, and I should have to say to my constituents, how will he ever listen to my constituents or the constituents of other people where pheasants are hunted? How will he ever listen to them? I don't think he is even turning an ear to them at all. He is making up his own mind and feeling he is living in a bit of an ideal society rather than realizing some of the practical things that have to be done. Some day as a policy maker he may recognize that.

I think the government certainly has to be open-minded and understanding on this matter. At this point in the development of this policy is the time at which we can make the change so when the season opens that policy is in effect. If we wait until the fall session to discuss this again then the time is too late, we can't do anything about it. I believe the thing has to be taken under consideration now. We have to review this material that is before us, make the decision and get the thing over with and do it, because eventually that will be the decision of the minister. Eventually he will find out that maybe it is politically expedient to do it. Then he will do it, but by that time we will have lost a lot of the hen pheasant population in this province and a lot of the production for a good many years to come.

The minister talks about the characteristics of the female pheasant. What I would do is refer those remarks to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and he can consider those, but beyond that I don't think those remarks really are relevant to this particular discussion.

I move, Mr. Speaker, that we receive this information and that it have an effect on policy change.

MR. FARRAN:

Mr. Speaker, would the hon. member permit a question?

MR. R. SPEAKER:

I'm always open for questions from the hon. minister.

MR. FARRAN:

As an expert in birds and obviously a good shot, would you also recommend that we only shoot hen partridge?

[Interjections]

MR. SPEAKER:

Are you ready for the question?

[The motion was carried.]

218. Mr. Clark proposed the following motion to the Assembly, seconded by Mr. Henderson:

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

1. Two copies of all commissioned studies done by or commissioned and completed for the Department of Municipal Affairs dealing with municipal taxation, since September 10, 1971.
2. The names of all studies presently in progress (either commissioned or done directly by the Department of Municipal Affairs' staff), the individuals doing the studies, the date the studies to be concluded.

MR. RUSSELL:

Mr. Speaker, I would just like to ask the hon. member a question for clarification. In part 2 of the motion, does he mean studies relating to municipal taxation, as mentioned in part 1, or all studies?

MR. CLARK:

Mr. Speaker, may I close the debate?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

No.

MR. CLARK:

Well then in answering the minister's question, I assume the names, and it applies directly to the matter related in No. 1. I assume that you couldn't ask questions on two different matters on the same Motion for a Return.

MR. RUSSELL:

Mr. Speaker, the answer to No. 218 to both parts 1 and 2 is none that I know of, so that should answer the Motion for a Return. You could withdraw it, because I don't think there is anything to table.

MR. CLARK:

Mr. Speaker, we will accept that answer. I am prepared to withdraw the motion.

[Mr. Deputy Speaker took the Chair.]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Does the hon. member have the unanimous consent to withdraw that?

HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

#### MOTIONS OTHER THAN GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

1. Mr. Purdy proposed the following motion to the Assembly, seconded by Mr. Moore:

Be it resolved that the Government of Alberta attempt to develop a plan in coordination with the Canada Grains Council, the Board of Grain Commissioners and the Canada Wheat Board to prevent the further closing of grain elevators in rural Alberta and to provide for a continuation of necessary services that are presently provided at local delivery points.

MR. PURDY:

Mr. Speaker, the motion I have on the order paper is a question that has been through our farm area and in rural Alberta for quite some time.

The Minister of Agriculture, Dr. Horner, has put emphasis on agriculture in this province and at the present time we are marketing a substantial amount of our produce. The closing of elevators in our rural areas, I feel, is a hindrance to the flow of grain. It is a detriment to the local farmer who has to have additional storage space or additional help to haul his grain to elevators some distance away.

In the area west of the City of Edmonton, mainly in the Stony Plain constituency, we have in the past two years two elevators closed at Carvel, one at Cherhill, one at Duffield, one at Gunn and two at Stony Plain, for a total of seven elevators for a total delivery capacity of approximately 300,000 bushels of grain. This, Mr. Speaker, is an additional 300,000 bushels of space that is required by the farmers in this particular area.

It is interesting to note that out of the seven elevators five were owned by the federal grain -- and then recently bought out by the Alberta Wheat Pool. The Wheat Pool, immediately after buying these federal elevators, closed these particular elevators.

During the past two years in the Province of Alberta, 142 elevators have been closed for a total loss of deliveries of 7,500,000 bushels of grain. In the year 1971-72, 15 communities were left with no elevators at all. In 1970-71, 17 communities were left with no elevators.

In 1971, the Alberta Wheat Pool did a survey in British Columbia and Alberta. Questionnaires were distributed to a random sample of about 8,200 farmers to whom delivery permits had been issued. About 2,000 of these questionnaires were returned.

I would like to go into some of the concerns of the questionnaire. One question was, "I patronize my delivery point because," and they had three or four various reasons. The most frequently cited was handiness and closeness to the farm. The second reason showed the importance of the grain elevator manager viewed as a friend or a person who provided local special services. A direct positive connection exists between the volume of grain handled at a station and handiness as a reason for choosing the delivery point. As volume increases, handiness becomes less important while elevator manager and services offered increases in importance.



Just to expand on this point for a minute, Mr. Speaker, I can imagine that many grain elevator managers are very useful to a lot of these people. I know of instances where they fill in income tax, or give people advice on various farm matters, and in fact act as DAs for a lot of these farmers. They had information pertinent to grain quotas, permits, the delivery price of grain, payments of grain and so on.

The questionnaire also analyzed the age group on this particular question and all the age groups indicated handiness was the major reason for using the specified delivery point. Other services available at the location were considerably more important to the younger farmer than the older farmer. And by services, Mr. Speaker, I mean fertilizer, chemical -- some elevator companies even handle baler twine and many other farm commodities that are important to the farmer in these rural local areas. Handiness was more important to the 70 and over age group than to the younger farmer, and the least important to the 40 to 49 year age bracket.

The questionnaire was also broken down into farm size -- quarter section and the other producer classed as the large farmer, with over 1,600 acres. Handiness is the first choice in all six sizes and the agent is the next most important. The largest producer, and that's the one having over 1,600 acres, sees the availability of other services at the location as less important than the small operator. These producers also indicate more other reasons than operators of small units.

The questionnaire made reference to the cost of operating country grain elevators and it stated that handling costs are increasing rapidly. A number of proposals have been made in regard to changing the system. "Of the alternatives I will cite, which would you like to see occur?" was also pointed out in this questionnaire.

(1) Leave the system as it is and ask the farmer to pay more for handling and storage of grain;

(2) Encourage industry, wide consolidation and reduce the total number of elevators by 25 per cent or 30 per cent;

(3) Encourage substantial reduction in elevators leaving about 50 per cent of the current number in existence in western Canada; or

(4) Encourage drastic reductions in the number of grain elevators and replace with a new system of inland terminals located at approximately 10 per cent of the delivery points.

About equal portions of these answering as first choice -- retain the system as it is now and encourage industry, wide consolidation, reducing the number of elevators by 25 to 30 per cent. The present system was favoured 51 per cent as the first or second choice, and 73 per cent indicated consolidation by reduction of 25 to 30 per cent of the elevators as the first and second choice.

The larger the farm acreage, the more apt the producer is to favour some form of elevator rationalization. The results are broken down into volume of delivery. The producers delivering at points handling less than 75,000 bushels tend not to favour any reduction in grain or in grain elevator numbers, while most other producers favour some reduction, particularly at the 25 to 30 per cent reduction. Producers delivering to points handling over a million bushels are the groups most in favour of inland terminals as a form of elevator rationalization.

Many farmers express concern about added costs if consolidation of elevators was to proceed. Others favoured consolidation provided that the increased costs were compensated for through increased benefits. Cost to the farmer might include loss of community services, the community itself, the friendliness of the neighbourhood elevator manager, the cost of obtaining a bigger truck, the long haul, more time spent on the road, improvements of trucks and so on.

As I pointed out earlier, some of the services which should be continued are: (1) supplying fertilizers; (2) maintaining a fertilizer manufacturing plant; (3) manufacturing and selling cereal or forage seeds; (4) supplying fertilizer spreaders for rent; (5) supplying fertilizer spreaders for sale; (6) supplying weed and insecticide control chemicals; (7) supplying prepared feed for livestock; (8) supplying feed additives for the livestock industry; (9) an expanded export and/or domestic sales operation, (10) supplying farm management services -- example, record keeping; (11) an expanded farm information service

providing outlook -- technical and business information, (12) supplying credit to farmers, (13) supplying farm products -- example, rapeseed crushing plants; (14) contract growing with producers.

In the survey there was a vigorous support for the Alberta Wheat Pool continuing to supply fertilizer, seed and chemicals. There was also a strong support for the expanded export and/or domestic sales operation.

Mr. Speaker, what is the greatest importance of an elevator to a community, and I went into a study that was done by a university graduate back in 1968. I'm going to cite the area east of Edmonton and dwell on a few towns and show the detrimental effects of the closing of elevators.

At one time there was a hotel at Bittern Lake. Donnelly once boasted a hotel, and until the 1930s there was a resident doctor in Donnelly and in New Norway there was a bank and creamery. Both these show on post-1945 changes, even though the trend may have originated in the pre-war era. Two other towns, Viewpoint and Lampton, ceased to become trading centres in 1962 and 1964 respectively when they lost their last function, grain marketing. At the same time the elevator at Ervick was closed. The Viewpoint post office was closed in 1943 and the post office in Lampton closed in 1950.

In 1960 and 1964 Dumsell and Donnelly suffered serious loss in function when their general store and post office burned down and were not rebuilt. The Dumsell grain elevators would have been shut down but for the objection of the local farmers. Bittern Lake store closed in 1962 because of increased competition from larger centres at Camrose and partial loss to the over-extension of credit. Machinery repair shops lost their machine agency and two mechanics and trade areas because of competition from Camrose and Wetaskiwin. The population of Bittern Lake increased three-fold between 1951 and 1961 but only three persons work in this centre and the rest commute to jobs in Camrose. This coincides with a population increase and commercial decline which illustrates the unreliability of population as an indicator of the economic importance of the small centre.

In 1945 a major general store lost its trade to Camrose and also Hay Lakes store, but its turnover of bulk fuel did increase. Its trade area remained relatively unchanged.

The trade area of both food stores in Gwynne has contracted. Former customers living furthest from Gwynne now get all their groceries from either Camrose or Wetaskiwin and a decreased portion of the remaining customers get their weekly groceries at Gwynne.

However, one of the food stores was established as recently as 1956 so a number of businesses have actually increased and a new school was built. No changes were reported in some of the other services for this particular centre.

Camrose has a slightly increased share of the trade in construction material, insurance and administration services. Transfer of trade in grain shows considerable centralization at the small central level with Bashaw the main beneficiary. The elevator in Viewpoint and Lampton closed recently. New Norway, and to a lesser extent, Edberg benefited from the closure of the Viewpoint elevator, while Bashaw and also Mirror gained from Lampton's marketing.

Farmers in the area of Meeting Creek continue to market grain in Meeting Creek but in decreased quantities. Bashaw, and perhaps Edberg and Ferintosh to a small extent have benefited. People also market grain less in Dorenlee and Kelsey. Transfer of grain marketing from Dorenlee and Meeting Creek to Bashaw or Ferintosh may be partly explained by the fact that in the latter centres there are more of the services demanded by the farmer. It may be for the same reason that Mirror itself did not sell as much as Bashaw from the closure of the Lampton elevators, although Lampton is closer to Mirror.

Mr. Speaker, all communities, except the ones too small to classify in this area, serve as grain delivery points for grain producers. If we are to assume that delivery points and grain producers are uniformly scattered through a given geographical region and if one considered only the grain collection service, he would theoretically expect the market area of each delivery point to be equal inasmuch as producers would seek to minimize handling costs for delivery of their grain to the nearest delivery point.

To extend this the producers also consider the availability of other services at a delivery point when deciding where to deliver grain. The effect is to enlarge the market area of large communities and to shrink those of the

smaller communities. Of course, producers could take into account many other factors such as the best roads available, grain storage capacity and sometimes preference for grain elevator companies.

And what I'm trying to cite, Mr. Speaker, is that we have in this area lost various trading commodities. A farmer trading grain will not go into a town to deliver his grain if he can't stop to purchase groceries, pick up his mail, or do other business pertinent to his farming operation.

To sum up, Mr. Speaker, on this particular section, it seems to suggest that the life of the very small centre is heavily dependent on grain deliveries, whereas the life of the larger centre is not. Of course, the larger centres derive their livelihood from many other services and activities besides grain delivery.

Changes in the grain handling and transportation system have been slower in coming than other social and economic changes in our prairie communities. Many communities have lost commercial and public services while the grain elevators and rail line remain. An alternative expressed fear is that if the rail line and associated elevators, in a particular company, are removed it will mean the death of the community.

I believe, Mr. Speaker, that this statement is fairly well true and you can go back into the area I have cited east of Edmonton and take a real serious look at these farming communities. Small villages and hamlets that have been degraded rapidly are the ones where elevators were closed sometime ago. And I can also cite this, Mr. Speaker, for the area west of Edmonton. This is slowly happening out there.

As I emphasized before, people will haul grain commodity to a business village in towns where they can do their other business. Looking at the economic and detrimental effect in closing elevators in rural Alberta, and our Minister of Agriculture has emphasized this previously on many occasions, I think the basic fundamental fact of what we are trying to do is to keep the farmer on the farm and this can go right from the young person up to the person who is thinking of retiring. With the moving out of many of our elevators we have an undetermined number of people who were put into the unemployment field -- the grain manager, in some cases, helpers at the elevators, truck handlers and so on. There have been many jobs for young rural Alberta residents that were not looked at very seriously because of the closing out of these grain handling facilities.

Mr. Speaker, in looking at this matter a bit further, the majority of the elevators closed in rural Alberta have been elevators owned by Federal Grain and then recently purchased by the Alberta Wheat Pool, and I think it is a known fact, Mr. Speaker, that the Alberta Wheat Pool leaves very little grain in the Province of Alberta. Most of it is marketed out. The content that I am getting at is that whenever Alberta Wheat Pool can market, they will market, but they have given no emphasis or consideration, I believe -- and I stand to be corrected on this statement -- but what about the Alberta Wheat Pool expanding their facilities coming out with a more concrete and a more positive approach to this problem?

Think of the various structures that could be put up in some of our small towns by a company such as the pool. They could have, in conjunction with their elevators, rapeseed crushing plants, flour mills, oilseed plants, feed mills and so on. There are quite a few of these in the province right now, but we can use more.

We have only one distillery, and I believe that is in the City of Calgary, and about six breweries scattered throughout the province. Think of the viable operation for rural Alberta if some of these large grain elevator companies would have the initiative to get off the ground and move on some of these facilities that I have just spoken about. The employment area in this province would certainly be increased and we wouldn't have to be looking for private enterprise to build more rapeseed crushing plants and so on in the province.

I would like to read a letter here that was in the last Farm Trends magazine, put out by Unifarm, and I concur with most of what this gentleman from Peace River is getting at. This is to the editor:

As we are all aware, much study has been done and is being done by committees on the very important question of grain handling and transportation as a means to facilitate and coordinate the policy-making process for the hon. Otto Lang, our Minister Responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board.

One aspect of these studies that no one seems to be concerned about is the fact that it has been suggested that over 5,000 miles of branch lines are earmarked for abandonment by the railway companies in western Canada and the closing down of over 1,300 elevators, not counting those that are to be abandoned by the grain elevator companies.

It is only common business sense that when a business becomes uneconomical it cannot carry on for long without being subsidized from another source, whether it be branch lines, grain elevators, or any other business, including farming.

But should we the Canadian consumer allow all this valuable storage space to go to waste? It is my suggestion that the abandoned and uneconomical elevators be taken over by the government through the Canadian Wheat Board by compensating the elevator companies concerned.

These elevators with an estimated average of 50,000 bushels of storage each, could be maintained at public expense as a first step in working toward a complete system to cope with unwieldy surpluses, to offset storages which always follow.

I further suggest, that not only as many as possible be saved, but that none may be eliminated without the Board's permission. In other words, they would become the property of the Canadian consumers.

And he goes on to suggest some names:

..."Consumer Resource Storage." In good crop years, in our country and others, when demands are down, and we are faced with strong competition such as we have experienced in recent years, it has created problems and hardships. We should be equipped to handle these surpluses as an asset, rather than a liability. This can be done through proper management which has been lacking in the past.

Our government could buy our surplus grain, whether it be feed or domestic and put it in free storage.

Putting our grain in regular storage and paying storage rates as we do now along with the low price we have experienced, the total value of grain in some instances was completely eroded through storage.

In order to maintain our cost valuable asset, "grain", we must have storage facilities. So let us save the facilities we already have wherever possible for this practical purpose.

It can only have a stabilizing effect, not only for grain producers and cattlemen, but for the Canadian economy as a whole, including exports.

It would also create jobs by offsetting greatly the number that will be eliminated by whatever system or systems are adopted by the Wheat Board.

Since past experience plus today's action is what gives a better tomorrow, now is the time to let our opinions be heard about this very important matter, before policies are formed in Ottawa.

Again I wish to emphasize to all Canadians, as consumers, whether urban or rural, to think about this while we still have a chance to make a contribution from the grass roots.

Now, this gentleman, Mr. Plaizier from Peace River, points out that the government could, in cooperation with the Wheat Board, buy some of these elevators. The going price for them right now is anywhere from \$800 to \$1,000. This might be a step in the right direction to start buying some of these out, rather than their neglect becoming a detriment to a community.

But this is something we have to sit down with our provincial marketing board here in the province, the Grain Commission I should say, the ministers of agriculture in the various provinces, the Canadian Wheat Board and the federal Minister of Agriculture to work out some type of policy. And I am saying this if it is going to be a detriment to a community, if it is going to cost a farmer in a special locality a lot more expense to get produce into a grain handling facility.

Mr. Speaker, I could relate to the House many more pertinent facts in this matter, particularly in grain handling facilities. But I believe the second

of the motion, Mr. Moore, who has been directly involved in this for some time, would have many more beneficial points to bring out that I have not elaborated upon. Thank you.

MR. SCHMID:

Mr. Speaker, before you do that, might I revert to Orders of the Day, to Introduction of Visitors?

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER:

May the hon. minister have the leave of the House to introduce visitors?

HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

#### INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS (CONT.)

MR. SCHMID:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce to you and through you to the members of this Assembly a group of 40 ladies from the Continuing Arts Committee in Calgary. They are interested citizens of Calgary, who have charged themselves with the responsibility of promoting the fine arts in Alberta.

The group today toured the Provincial Museum and Archives and the Edmonton Art Gallery to learn more about the services offered by the Department of Culture, Youth and Recreation.

The leaders are Mrs. Marian Gunther, president, Mrs. Patsy Minness, secretary. They were hosted by my deputy, Mr. Les Usher and were involved in discussions with Mr. Walter Kassa, director of the Cultural Development Branch. Mr. Bill McMullen, the president and chairman of the Alberta Art Foundation -- I have also had discussions with them. I would like them now to rise and be recognized by this Assembly.

#### MOTIONS OTHER THAN GOVERNMENT MOTIONS (CONT.)

MR. RUSTE:

Mr. Speaker, just a question to the mover. I believe you related several points and I missed No. 12 near the opening of your remarks.

MR. PURDY:

[Inaudible]...or commodities that we could service by using different elevator points. Supplying credit to farmers.

MR. WYSE:

I wonder if the member would accept another question. Are you advocating that the government take over the Alberta Wheat Pool?

MR. PURDY:

Not at this particular time, but it could be given thought.

MR. MOORE:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to divide my remarks today on the motion presented by the hon. Member for Stony Plain into several specific parts, and in that regard, Mr. Speaker, to discuss a number of questions.

First of all, I'd like to apologize for having seconded the motion and using the wrong term for the Canadian Grain Commission. We refer in the motion to the Board of Grain Commissioners. It is of course now the Canadian Grain Commission. However, that does not change the intent of the motion.

I would like, Mr. Speaker, to talk first of all about what is happening today in the field of grain elevator rationalization and rail line abandonment. Secondly, Mr. Speaker, what effect the results of these activities are having on rural communities today, and what effect they might have in the future, and

finally, Mr. Speaker, to discuss what, in my view, should be happening with regard to grain elevator rationalization and perhaps rail line abandonment.

First of all, Mr. Speaker, the grain handling and transportation system in western Canada. This system has grown up over the years, largely based on two factors, one being the amount of money that farmers in western Canada have paid into the country elevator system by way of storage charges, allowing that temporary elevator system to continue in operation perhaps much longer than they might have done otherwise.

The second factor is the Crowsnest Pass rates, which apply to delivery of all grain to Thunder Bay and the West Coast, and the effects they might have had over the years on the ability or the desirability of the railroads to improve their system of moving grain to the export terminals.

In discussing, Mr. Speaker, what is happening today in grain handling and transportation, we should go back to the year 1969 when, in an attempt to find some middle ground between what we might call autocratic planning or unilateral action by individuals and companies, the Canada Grains Council was established as a forum for discussion and to act as a liaison between the agricultural community and government. Membership on the Canada Grains Council is open to all non-governmental organizations or associations engaged in the production, handling, transportation or marketing of grain and grain products. It established in 1969 a permanent staff and undertook study in several fields related to the overall problem of agricultural prosperity.

Mr. Speaker, many leaders in the field of agriculture have suggested that the formation of the Canada Grains Council represented one of the most important steps the agricultural industry has taken to assure some mutual understanding between all parties involved in the grain handling and transportation system.

Unfortunately, very recently the three prairie wheat pools which, in the beginning, had supported the concept of the Canada Grains Council, decided to back out, a move they announced in December of last year. They perhaps felt that too much participation in the process of coordinating Canada's efforts to improve its share of the world markets for all grain products was in conflict with some of their own programs. Perhaps they felt they would be better off if they did their own thing.

At any rate, the Canada Grains Council, Mr. Speaker, was asked last spring to undertake further studies and ultimately to make recommendations for action on the whole business of change in the grain handling and transportation sector. This was the federal government's response and the need for moving the basic decision making out of Ottawa and into the hands of the people of western Canada who were most affected by the decisions, namely the farmers and those who provide capital services, farmers' marketing needs as well as those rural communities which service the farmer in a great many areas of this province.

The fact is, Mr. Speaker, that our present grain handling system is somewhat less efficient than it could be. And the cost of that inefficiency is largely borne by the producer, who certainly is in no position to afford any escalation in the cost of handling, storage and transportation on every bushel of grain he sells outside of the market within the province of Alberta.

The decision on the most appropriate structure in the future must be reached in consultation between the producer, the elevator companies, the railroads, federal, provincial and local governments, who choose the most appropriate environment for local residents and are responsible for raising taxes which may be required to provide highways and other needs in the event of elevator closure or rail line abandonment.

[Mr. Speaker resumed the Chair.]

The Canada Grains Council, Mr. Speaker, does provide a forum for these studies and these discussions and indeed from various areas in Alberta we have been making representations to them.

In 1970-71 the grains group in Ottawa undertook to study some of the possible alternatives to the present system. These studies are now forming the basis of work being undertaken by the Canada Grains Council. The alternatives in these studies, Mr. Speaker, are divided into three different areas.

They first of all suggested a system composed of 100 large inland terminals. Now the shortcomings, Mr. Speaker, of a system such as this are obvious. Each elevator would be required to service some 3,000 producers and one can only imagine the problems that might be involved here in providing

adequate highway transportation and the increased cost of trucking to inland terminals and, of course, the demise of some of the rural towns in this province. I doubt that farmers or people in general in rural Alberta are ready for quite this kind of a change, in that the high trucking costs and the demise of the rural communities and the need for much more farm storage could well cancel out any benefits that might be involved.

The second system suggested, Mr. Speaker, was some 356 satellite elevators delivering to 22 large terminals by commercial truck. There again, of course, one has to consider that the proposal will double the handling of grain and the high cost of developing a municipal road system and highways capable of accommodating heavy loads. These costs, in fact, cannot be borne by municipal or provincial authorities but must properly be charged as part of the handling costs of grain, and probably that cost will ultimately have to be borne by the federal government.

The third proposal presented by the grains group, Mr. Speaker, was for some 389 high-speed concrete elevators for primary delivery. There is, of course, under this system a very high cost in creating the system itself and elevator companies, in fact, have suggested that returns from the development of this system would be somewhere between one and four per cent after taxes. It is doubtful, in my mind, that the industry would be that interested in the development of such a system.

Now let us turn, Mr. Speaker, to the effect these three particular systems as suggested by the Canada Grains Council might have on rural communities in Alberta.

There have, Mr. Speaker, been within the past five years some 175 elevator points closed in western Canada. To my knowledge there has been no formal study to discover what the impact of those 175 closures have been on the rural communities. Many of these rural communities no doubt are suffering from other problems. Many of these points that were closed were called elevator delivery points but were in fact places that in this day and age just did not have a stature as a community. Many others of course, might qualify as a community but were declining for various other reasons, probably because they simply could not compete with more viable centres nearby.

However, there certainly is, Mr. Speaker, a great deal of evidence to indicate that when the elevator function is removed from hamlets and small villages, it is likely that these communities will soon cease to exist. Any tax base that depends to a large extent, in some cases up to 85 per cent or more, on railway right-of-way associated property, is indeed vulnerable and will drop dead when the rail line is abandoned and when the elevator point is closed.

Some of the larger villages might survive such a disruption. Most if not all of the towns would probably survive such a disruption and of course, most larger towns and cities could survive the absence of a railroad. But then again, except in unusual cases, the larger towns and cities are unlikely to ever experience the loss of their railway or elevator system.

So the smaller communities, Mr. Speaker, which we are talking about in general, are getting smaller and their demise will only be increased by elevator or rail line abandonment.

The villages are in an even more difficult position. Many which once had banks, post offices, schools are now more in the nature of stop-off centres. Speculation on their fate would lead one to conclude that the removal of the elevator function and the rail line spell doom for many of these communities.

I want to suggest however, Mr. Speaker, that there is a bright spot in the whole field. I might turn for a few moments to what we are currently engaged in in Alberta, that is grain policy within Alberta. The current aim of the Alberta government is to encourage secondary industry, that is, processing of primary agricultural products, and the processing of those products in rural communities all over the province. And to process in Alberta, all of the grain, oil seeds, and all other field crops grown in Alberta, to ensure maximum value being added to the primary product before it leaves this province.

I find this, Mr. Speaker, to be a very thrilling challenge and one which has already seen some significant results. I refer of course, to the development of cheese factories, to the development of a second rapeseed crushing plant in Alberta, to the development of a good number of alfalfa pelletizing plants.

Mr. Speaker, in the context of our thinking in Alberta, the export of a billion bushels of unprocessed raw grain from this province, would be a non-achievement. When you discuss the cost of exporting that amount of grain through our existing system, you must also include in that cost, items to cover the number of jobs we are exporting with our billion bushels of grain, the number of rural communities we are keeping at a depressed level because of a lack of industry as well as the number of people we are driving out of what could be a healthy, live, rural community and perhaps on to the welfare roles in the big cities.

These, Mr. Speaker, are some of the real costs involved in shipping a billion bushels of unprocessed grain out of western Canada.

MR. WYSE:

On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. Is the hon. member giving a speech or saying a speech that John Channon, Chairman of the Alberta Grain Commission gave in Winnipeg last week?

AN HON. MEMBER:

Aw, sit down.

MR. MOORE:

No, Mr. Speaker, the points I am making here are a combination of points that were developed for various federal-provincial meetings, meetings with grain companies across western Canada by Mr. Channon, myself, members of the marketing division of the Department of Agriculture and others. I might add that a considerable amount of the work that went into points that have been presented to conferences on behalf of the Province of Alberta and Alberta Grain Commission were, in fact, the work of the Member for Smoky River.

The best solution, Mr. Speaker, will not necessarily be the least cost approach. We must, however, whatever we do, recognize that the desires of the people in the future of our communities are involved. We do not solve problems of society by packing people into large towns and cities. Many people with whom I have talked in recent months and years are reassessing the value of rural small towns and the small city way of life. Many of them, Mr. Speaker, are concluding that this is the way of life for them.

The policy for change, Mr. Speaker, in my view will have to consider compensation to certain producers who are faced with longer truck hauls. It will have to consider the huge amount of money which will be required to upgrade the rural highway system into a position of being able to accept the heavier loads involved in grain transportation. In addition, we must realize that the distance from market in the past and the future will continue to affect the capital value of land and probably the longer truck haul will have an unfavourable effect on farm land values in certain areas.

So, Mr. Speaker, I want to conclude by saying that in my view the change in the grain handling and delivery system in Alberta must be a gradual change. It must take into account the effect on rural communities and must take into account the farmers' costs in additional hauling.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I would like to say there is very definitely one bright spot existing today which did not exist as little as two years ago. I mentioned earlier our desire in Alberta to develop secondary processing industries. I don't think I need to spell out that when we are successful, as we will be, in achieving this goal, Mr. Speaker, it may seem somewhat foolish to think about or contemplate the abandonment of elevators and branch lines. In the new context those communities which have aggressive imaginative resources together with a supply of low-priced natural gas, plentiful water, good disposal and transportation facilities will survive and prosper.

The greatest resource, Mr. Speaker, has to be resources of those individuals in rural Alberta who are concerned about developing, with this government, a system whereby we will be adding value to all of those products which presently go through the grain elevator system, thereby making Alberta, and in particular Mr. Speaker, rural Alberta a much more challenging and exciting place to live. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview was on his feet first.



MR. NOTLEY:

Mr. Speaker, after listening to the seconder of the motion outline some points I can't help but agree with, obviously we are all in favour of more processing of agricultural commodities in this province. But looking at the resolution, I find that the resolution really doesn't cover two or three major features that could easily have been incorporated within it. One is the whole question of a new freight rate structure, and the other is specific mention of rail line abandonment.

Dealing first of all with the question of a new freight rate structure, we can talk all we like about developing more agricultural processing in this province, but one of the ongoing problems we are going to face is the present freight rate structure in this country, a structure which will make it extremely difficult to develop viable processing enterprises in Alberta. I would hope that we would continue to make efforts to change that structure.

One of the things that the resolution does not say -- it talks about working with the Canadian Grain Commission, the Canadian Wheat Board, et cetera -- but it doesn't talk about the need to work with the other two prairie provinces. Surely this is a matter which should be formally discussed at the Prairie Economic Council. It is a matter where the three provinces can clearly work together on an ongoing basis and we all have a vested interest in putting our case, as strongly as possible, to Ottawa.

I submit, Mr. Speaker, in view of the present question of natural gas within Canada, that perhaps we in western Canada have a stronger bargaining point. Perhaps one of the things we might consider is offering a quid pro quo to Ontario and central Canada, that if we are going to supply natural gas at reasonable rates to central Canada perhaps it is time that central Canada returned the favour by taking a serious look at a new transportation policy which would provide redress to some of the historic grievances of western Canadians, most particularly in the field of freight rates.

The second observation I would like to make is that obviously when you talk about delivery points this raises the matter of rail line abandonment. I think it should be noted, Mr. Speaker, that the agreement to halt rail line abandonment is going to expire in 1975. The program that has been proposed would lead to rather drastic rail line abandonment. I believe the hon. Member for Stony Plain cited some figures, but just to go a little bit further I want to point out that on the basis of the present plan some 5,525 miles of rail line would be abandoned in the prairie provinces and 1,368 elevators would close down. Now the impact of that kind of massive abandonment of rail lines and closure of elevators would be pretty traumatic for rural Albertans and indeed for rural residents of all three prairie provinces.

Of course, it can be argued that we need to rationalize the elevator systems so that we can operate more efficiently and the per bushel cost of handling the grain will be reduced. But in order to get some sort of balance, Mr. Speaker, it seems to me that we have to assess other factors as well, the chief of which in the initial stage is the extra cost of trucking. If we are going to close down literally hundreds of elevators throughout western Canada, the extra trucking costs are going to be pretty substantial. These costs will bear most heavily on the smaller producers, producers who, as the hon. Member for Stony Plain mentioned when they completed their questionnaire, were not very pleased about the closure of local delivery points. I can certainly appreciate that because if they find they have to truck their grain 25 miles or 30 or 40 miles, that is going to be a substantial additional cost.

As one of the other members pointed out, if we are going to move to large scale trucking of grain that is going to have an impact on our expenditures in terms of maintaining roads. You can't have a substantial increase in trucking and not have an added maintenance cost on your rural roads. That is something that is going to come right back to the taxpayer.

The impact of closing the elevators in the small communities is one which generally concerns me. I hardly need point out that if you close down the elevators in many of our hamlets and villages this would spell doom to these communities and no amount of effort to stimulate processing -- especially when we don't have a freight rate structure which is going to provide incentive to agricultural processing -- in this line is going to take up the slack fast enough to save the communities which would be crippled if the federal government proceeds as of 1975 with rail abandonment plans.

So I would like to see the resolution go somewhat further to first of all include continuing consultation and representation by the three prairie

provinces as well as the other groups that are mentioned in the resolution; that we would deal specifically with the question of rail line abandonment, and also the matter of freight rates.

I want to make reference, Mr. Speaker, to something that disturbs me, and that is the Great Plains project. A project undertaken by the federal government and a study which is presumably going to look into the future of the prairie provinces. But when one examines the personnel behind the Great Plains project, you see by and large that it is dominated by eastern, corporate, business leaders. There is to my knowledge negligible representation from the farm communities.

Some of the newspaper men who have talked to the people behind the Great Plains project have found it rather interesting when they talk about the family farm because these are people who really have very little commitment to preserving rural life as we know it. Their concept of rural life is large farms and a very clearly rationalized delivery structure and so on.

Well frankly, what the Great Plains project seems to indicate is that the federal government is still following along with many of the presumptions and suppositions behind the federal task force report on the future of agriculture, the task force report quite clearly said that two out of three farmers are redundant, the sooner they were moved off the land the better it is.

Well that was the thinking of people in this country at the federal level two, three, or four years ago. What concerns me is that it may still be the thinking of many people today, but because it is not popular to say it, they are sort of hiding behind studies such as the Great Plains project.

The reason that I raise the federal task force report, Mr. Speaker, and the Great Plains project, is that if you reject the whole philosophy behind the task force report, if you say it is important that we maintain the family farm, that we maintain a reasonable number of farm units, that we provide opportunities for younger people to get into agriculture, that our objective is not to reduce the number of farmers in this province from 65,000 down to 20,000, but that we see a continuing need for the same number of farmers, then all of that has a great impact on the kind of elevator system, the kind of delivery system, and indeed the whole question of preserving rural life in its larger sense.

There is very little point in talking about preserving the smaller villages and towns if, in fact, we're going to see two out of three farmers eliminated. And perhaps after two out of three farmers are eliminated in the next 20 years, we'll then have a go at the remaining numbers, and we'll have still fewer and fewer. The net result, of course, is that the small community just won't be viable at all.

What is necessary then, in my view, is a pretty clear cut commitment on the part of both the federal and provincial levels of government that we are going to cast aside much of the theory of the 1960's which related to agriculture when we went along with the ridiculous notion, that somehow through bigness we achieve efficiency, somehow through bigness, we develop a quality of life.

Well frankly I don't think the evidence indicates that is true. As one of the other members said in the debate, what happens when we force people off the land? What is the social cost of forcing small farmers off the land?

They have to migrate to the larger centres. They enter a totally different milieu, they often find the job market is such that they simply can't fit in, especially if they are older farmers. What is the social cost of this kind of thing?

Well, Mr. Speaker, one of the things that does encourage me, frankly, is that in the last four or five years I see considerable evidence that the people in rural Alberta, rural Saskatchewan and Manitoba -- and right across the country for that matter -- are beginning to fight back. They're telling some of the so-called experts that the yardstick to measure agricultural efficiency is not just simply the efficient utilization of capital, but that there are other considerations, chief of which is the quality of life.

So, flowing from that there is going to be an increasing demand that government do something pretty concrete. In view of the fact that the present agreement on rail line abandonment is going to expire in 1975, we in Alberta and the other western provinces are going to be faced quite soon with what we're going to do on this matter. I would hope that we not allow ourselves to be sucked into thinking that a rationalization of the elevator system is somehow going to save money for the farmers. It might be all right for a few of the

larger farmers, but I think, in the long run, it simply would not be desirable for the smaller farmers and certainly not desirable for the small communities.

One final point before closing, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to see that the hon. members opposite have recognized the importance of this question. But it should be noted that much of the mess we're in at the present time as far as rail line abandonment is concerned is a result of the McPherson Report, a report which was appointed by the former Conservative government of John Diefenbaker. It is as a result of this report that we have set in motion many of the recommendations today for massive rail line abandonment, the closing down of elevators and all the implications that that sort of ill-founded policy would bring to rural western Canada.

So I'm pleased in a sense to see that we have some eleventh hour changes of heart on the part of the Tory party, and for that reason I am prepared to support the resolution. But I would hope that it would have gone a little further so we would have had wider consultation and we would have specifically dealt with the implications of rail line abandonment and freight rates.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Drumheller, who attempted to get the floor a moment ago, followed by the hon. Member for Drayton Valley.

MR. TAYLOR:

Mr. Speaker, I want to say a few words in connection with the resolution because I feel it is a very important one. It is also a resolution that crosses the bounds of political parties and all other surface considerations. I would hope that as the battle develops for the saving of our towns and our elevators there not be a political injection that is going to turn off a lot of people. I think this is something so positive in nature that the people of Alberta, and indeed the people of the three prairie provinces, can unite in an effort to make sure that the right thing is done.

There is a shadow over many towns in Alberta today, largely because last year a map was published in the Free Press Weekly indicating that the delivery points would be reduced from 1,900 in Alberta to some 280. On the map it indicated a number of presently virile towns and villages that were simply wiped out. They were not there. When we look at that tremendous reduction in elevators from 1900 to 280 by 1990, which is not too far away -- no wonder there is a shadow over the towns not included on that map.

Another fact -- even the towns that are included are somewhat worried. The map appears to have some authenticity and yet the people whom I have contacted in some of the towns -- the councillors, the mayors, and the reeves -- had no contact at all as to what they could offer or what their program might be. Somebody, somewhere, probably in Ottawa, decided to set out which towns they were going to keep and which towns and villages they were going to eliminate. This is a pretty cold-hearted, odd way of dealing with a social problem in this twentieth century. So the points that were left out when the 1900 elevators were reduced down to 280 are a great matter of concern.

We could go over the map and notice a number of virile towns and villages in this province that have been eliminated. They are simply not there.

When I look at towns like Rockyford and Carbon in my own riding, two really good towns -- good delivery points -- with good business sections, surrounded by good hinterland and find they are not included on the map, I have to ask myself, who is doing this? What subtle influence behind the scenes somewhere is working out a plan that is supposed to be good for the people? I disagree with this method of doing this type of thing entirely.

I want to deal with the matter of the reduction of elevators first, and then I want to deal with the matter of rail abandonment, because the two go closely together. As a matter of fact, they are definitely allied. You can hardly discuss one without the other.

In regard to the reduction of elevators, I don't belong to the school that thinks we have to have a reduction in elevators. Surely, in this day and age, when our population in the world requires food, why we should be thinking about reducing the number of elevators and the number of terminal points -- perhaps not the amount of elevator space, but the number of terminal points -- is a little difficult to understand.

These elevators grew up on demand. Nobody suddenly decided they would build an elevator in this town, that town, or the other town. The market was there, and they've been carrying out a very successful business that has added to the buoyancy of the town or village for many years. Now why somebody in lofty places wants to eliminate them is again, I say, very difficult to understand.

Is it necessary to modernize everything? Is it necessary to have larger trucks and larger elevators and longer distances? Who is asking for this? Is it the farmer who is hauling his grain to the elevators today? Is it the elevator companies? Is it the communities? I haven't had any demand for this type of thing.

The demand seems to be coming from the top down. Again, an indication of somebody who thinks he knows what is good for the people, better than the people know themselves.

I heartily disagree with that concept. I think today we don't have an illiterate people. Our people are well able to speak for themselves. They know what they want, they know what the economics are, and if you can't carry their judgment on this type of thing, there is something wrong with the project. Because I don't know of anybody in our smaller towns and villages who isn't just as enthusiastic about having a buoyant economy in Alberta and Canada as those who are in higher places.

So, if the proposition is sound, then we should be able to carry the judgment of the people who will be affected without a lot of mysterious goings on, where the people don't know what the alternative will be -- what is going to happen in 1990 when they look at the map and see 280 terminal points instead of 1900. The reduction is terrific, and as the hon. Member for Smoky River said, if there is reason to change these, surely the reason is going to be spread over a number of years, it's not going to be suddenly pressing a button, like letting off a dynamite charge and expecting to have order come out of that.

The people of these towns are concerned. When we look at rail abandonment, applications have been held on file until 1975. They haven't been abandoned, they are simply held on file. They are sitting there, and there is a number of forces that are wanting every application that has been put in on rail abandonment to become a realization after 1975, and as quickly after 1975 as possible.

No wonder we get letters like the one I got just the other day from a town in the south, from the Magrath District Chamber of Commerce who have become so concerned about this that they are writing to all the chambers of commerce in Alberta wanting to gather and garner support, so that something isn't suddenly thrust upon the people for which they are not ready, with which they do not agree.

I'm going to take the liberty of reading this letter, reading it into the record, because I think it expresses in a very excellent way the feelings of scores of towns and villages that have been left off this mysterious map that reduces the number of terminal points from 1,900 to 280. This letter is dated March 12, 1973, addressed to myself and it says:

#### Reported Possible Grain Elevator Rail Line Abandonment

Newspaper and magazine articles have reported that the grain groups are proposing abandonment of many grain elevators, and the two Canadian railways have in the past applied for an abandonment of 5,528 miles of rail line, mostly in the Prairie Provinces.

Because of this we believe that the small communities and many farmers will be affected if these plans are re-submitted at the end of the deferment period to the end of 1974 should be banding together now to make a strong case against any such proposals. Any such abandonment plans, I am sure you will agree, will spell the death knell of many small communities throughout the prairies and add untold dollars to the farmers' expenses.

We also believe in opposing any such abandonment that you should enlist the support of any or all groups in your area or across the prairies whose support would lend some weight to the cause. The purpose of this letter, then, is to solicit your support and action on these concerns that could have a far-reaching effect on your community and the members of your organization.

Signed, President of the Magrath District Chamber of Commerce with copies to all chambers of commerce in Alberta.

I am going to table that letter, since I have read it, and I think it is a letter that expresses the concern of a great number of our towns and villages in this province.

I would like to deal for a moment or so with this matter of rail abandonment. I had the pleasure of preparing some submissions for the Canadian government on rail abandonment and I think was somewhat instrumental in having that deadline set, or that freeze put on rail abandonments, along with people of other provinces of course. But we did not want the thing simply deferred, we wanted it eliminated. At least it was deferred and gave the people a breathing spell. And now 1975 is coming along rapidly and it is going to be here before we know it.

It is not too early to start preparing cases of why rail lines should be abandoned. I am not one of those who think we should keep a rail line simply for the sake of keeping it whether it is economic or not, but I believe that before any rail line in this province is abandoned a number of alternatives have to be considered.

First of all, we already have the capital investment in that rail line. It was put there at the expense of the people, whether the CNR or the CPR. It is paid for by the people of this province and of western Canada. So the capital investment of that rail line is there building the roadbed, that capital investment has been made. And the maintenance of it is a relatively small item compared to that original capital investment. Now if we are suddenly going to abandon and tear up the tracks, that investment is lost, at least for some time if not forever.

On the other hand, immediately something else has to happen. We have to think about the people who are losing their jobs, those who have made their investment in the town. This is a loss to the country. If stores fold up, if elevators fold up, farmers have to double the distance through which they haul their grain. This is an economic loss to the country. The social environment of what goes on, the recreational facilities that have been built, the school houses that have been built, all of these are social factors that were put in that particular town and village largely because there was a rail line and largely because there was an elevator to which people brought their grains.

Well, what is the real cost going to be to the community and to the province and to the country? To build highway lines means an additional cost. The roadbed of the railway might be okay for a two lane road, but to build a modern road it is not wide enough. It takes a great deal of additional capital cost. And so there is immediately an input by the provincial government, by the people of the province -- if you want to put it that way -- to replace an investment the people have already made in the rail line.

Why some of our hierarchy argue that the abandonment of that line is good for the country is most difficult for me to follow. I have seen places in this province where rail lines have been built and torn up two and three times in my lifetime in order to serve industry. No one can say that this isn't paid for by the people of the province. It is a loss and it is a cost, and to have left the rail line there for the five or seven or ten or fifteen years in which it wasn't being used would have been far cheaper to revitalize it and bring it back to life than building a brand new line and building a brand new grade. We have too much of that type of thing going on where the investment is thrown out of the window.

Well, there are a number of briefs before the federal government and before the Board of Transport Commissioners in connection with rail line abandonment. I would strongly urge the hon. members of this Legislature to make sure that their own communities know which lines are down for abandonment after 1975. It is a known factor. Maps have been prepared to show which lines they plan to abandon and which lines they plan to keep. Now is the time to start working on that, not waiting until we get right to the threshold of an order from the Board of Transport Commissioners saying the line is going to be ripped up.

Now the other point that I would like to deal with is the matter of a positive program in regard to rail line abandonment and keeping our elevators in our towns and villages to the greatest possible degree. I think these have to be considered on their merits and I don't think any consideration should be given without bringing into consideration the people whose lives are going to be affected the most -- those in the villages, those in the surrounding areas of the villages, those in the towns and those in surrounding areas of the towns.

While it will affect the economy of the whole province and the whole country, it will affect the day to day economy or the pocketbooks of those people living there in the most direct way and in the fastest way. So they should be taken into consideration and these plans should not be made without having very careful contact with the MLAs, the MPs, Chambers of Commerce, the elected representatives, the councillors, the reeves, the councils of the towns and villages, organizations and the people at large.

You would be surprised how many people show up in these smallest villages and towns if you advertise a meeting that is going to be designed to remove their rail line or elevator. You would have people flocking there. It's amazing where all the people come from when you have that type of meeting. They are concerned and consequently I am glad to see this resolution on the Order Paper. I think it could have included some other things too, such as rail abandonment and freight rates, but it really touches the root of all these things because if the elevators are going to be removed then the rails are going to be pulled up. There's no reason to keep the rails there.

I would suggest that we endeavour to get a positive program in connection with rail -- not rail abandonment but rail salvation if you want to put it that way; the keeping of the rails, not abandoning them, and making them pay. In that regard I agree with what the hon. Member for Smoky River said in endeavouring to get more industry and more traffic. This is one positive way. But on the other hand we have to look at the alternative costs, the other costs if these lines are removed. Maybe it's the indirect way of doing it, but we would find there are going to be some very great costs on the people if we simply abandon the lines without any positive program.

Again, perhaps the right thing to do is try to secure another deferment of all these rail lines, unless some are very, very conspicuous and obvious, but most of them if not all of them have merit. I would like to see another 10-year deferment in order that this thing can be carried out. Again, I say that because there are some places in this province where they require the rail line at harvest time and seeding time, and perhaps one or two other times a year. It's not necessary to run trains over them every day of the year in order to make them a paying proposition. Let's use them to the greatest possible degree, the economic degree that will pay off and be good for the village, good for the town, good for the country and good for industry too. Because they have already invested a lot of money in these rail lines.

The same with the elevators. If there is a market situation that shows we require larger elevators at terminal points, I can't see any reason against developing those larger elevators at those terminal points. But must it be done at the expense of eliminating elevators already there, which have been paid for and which are in reasonably good repair and doing the job? I can't see replacing them or abandoning them in order to get terminal elevators. Let's build terminal elevators gradually and progressively so that they handle the market as the market becomes real, and not simply make up our minds and by drawing some map show what it is going to be like in 1990 with elevators and delivery points reduced from 1,900 to 280, and with some 4,000 to 5,000 miles of rail line that cost the people of this country a lot of money suddenly ripped up and destroyed.

I think the resolution in asking that the various people vitally concerned get together and work out a plan is good. I would add, however, that it should be done in conjunction with the people of the areas concerned -- very definitely with the people of the areas concerned. We are getting too much being done from the top in this country and we are not getting enough thinking at the grass roots. No one has any monopoly of wisdom and there is no reason why the farmer in the smallest village might not have something worthwhile to contribute. And whether he has or not he should have the opportunity of letting his thoughts be known, of having his input into the solving of the problem.

One other point too, besides the people in the areas who are vitally affected, I think the Canadian government has to be brought into this in no uncertain way, for the reason mentioned by the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview in regard to freight rates. This is an important item.

They should be brought into the picture to show what is being done and what is happening because they permit freight rates that cost you double or three times to ship out the raw material -- the finished product from Calgary to Toronto compared to the finished product from Calgary to Toronto. This just doesn't make sense to me. It should be based on the weight or the bulkiness of it, not on whether it is a finished product or whether it is a raw material. This might have been good 100 years ago or 75 years ago, but it is not satisfactory to western Canada anymore.

To be forced, even though the economics are opposed to it, to ship out our raw materials simply because the railways say, "We will charge you too much, we will make your finished product uneconomical, we will force you to ship your raw material elsewhere" -- this just isn't sound. For this reason alone the Canadian government should be brought into the picture.

Then there are other aspects of this too -- the agricultural and social aspects which involve other departments both of the provincial and federal government. So, Mr. Speaker, I support this resolution. I think it is a step in the right direction. Along with this resolution I would like to see the Chambers of Commerce, our elected representatives in our towns, villages and rural municipalities, our service clubs, our women's institutes, et cetera, et cetera, mobilize and show a united front in connection with this very important matter.

MR. BATIUK:

Would the hon. member permit me one question? I am glad the hon. Member for Drumheller agrees the abandonment of railways and the removal of elevators is a detriment to the small communities. Does the hon. member agree also that the construction of highways bypassing these towns and villages which materialized during the years that he was Minister of Highways, was the first step to destroy these villages?

MR. SPEAKER:

Order please.

MR. TAYLOR:

I don't mind answering it. Mr. Speaker, the freeway or major highway is built to move traffic throughout the province. In order to move traffic on a major highway there are many advantages in not going through the main streets of towns and villages.

There are economic advantages in having them as close to the towns and villages as possible in order that those towns and villages can have access without the disadvantages of having traffic simply pouring through their streets causing danger to life and limb, doing their streets no good and doing their economy no good.

So it is a very simple matter and has been worked out by many jurisdictions that the bypassing of towns and villages in many cases is to the advantage of those towns and villages, and certainly to the advantage of those who use the highway.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Agreed. Any more questions?

MR. ZANDER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am certainly happy to see that this House at this time is united on one resolution rather than the storm we went through last night.

MR. CLARK:

Don't spoil it now, Rusty.

MR. ZANDER:

I think we have your agreement over there, Bob. Mr. Speaker, I think perhaps one who has gone through a meeting last year on the closure of an elevator -- really it makes you almost weep to see the sudden means by which these companies go about it.

I am talking this time about the United Grain Growers and I am talking about the elevator closure at Gainford. This lies in the constituency of Stony Plain, but nevertheless it affects my community. It is a hamlet that has lost, as the hon. Member for Drumheller mentioned, a number of people who were employed there and consequently they will also lose some people and pupils in the schools and in the recreational areas and certainly it is a detriment to the community.

Mr. Speaker, I was invited to that meeting -- I believe by one of the directors of the local board -- and when I got there, there were almost more company personnel than there were directors. They gave us various reasons, of course, the main reason was that the elevator was built in 1921 and consequently was not modern, and although it was large enough to serve the area, certain alterations to the elevator to make it a viable unit would cost in the neighbourhood of around \$100,000, and consequently since they had an elevator about eight miles away, although smaller, it would serve the purpose.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I as a farmer, last year experienced the modernization of the United Grain Growers. I was authorized by the Wheat Board to deliver some 4,200 bushels of grain. I arrived at the elevator with a load of grain and there were 21 units waiting in line to be unloaded and we were finally told there was no room. For three weeks I phoned to find out if there was ample room in that elevator to take on some grain at least. After three weeks I was finally able to haul approximately 1,000 bushels into this elevator.

Now, what has happened is this, it's not because it is rail abandonment in this particular area, it's the main line of the CNR to the coast. We were told at that meeting quite frankly, that it was in the best interest of the United Grain Growers -- and mind you, Mr. Speaker, the United Grain Growers is farmer owned, I have shares in that also -- but we find that we have nothing, or we have less and less to say and finally nothing to say of the things we are supposed to own.

I can only come to the conclusion, Mr. Speaker, that it is not economics, especially on the main line to have one central delivery point, as was suggested at that meeting. If we look down west of the city of Edmonton to where we run out of the grain growing area, we find we have elevators at Acheson, Spruce Grove, Stony Plain, the one at Carvel is now closed, and they are contemplating closing Duffield -- it's already closed, I'm told. They've closed down Gainford, they've left one at Evansburg, and I think there is only one further west. Well if we look at the economics as far as the farmer is concerned, we'll find that the cost to the farmer in that area going to be in excess of 11 cents a bushel if he has to haul the grain from 50 to 70 miles to a central delivery point.

Mr. Speaker, also at that meeting it was mentioned that they needed a quarter of a million bushels of grain to operate that elevator and since only, I think, about 200,000 had come in that year, they were about 50,000 bushels short of making it a viable unit.

Mr. Speaker, at that meeting I brought to the attention of the heads of the company that this was the policy instigated by the federal government because of their forage policy -- the \$10 per acre -- that they were paying farmers to raise forage rather than put it into grain. But, Mr. Speaker, I ask you, what will happen this year when we are going to take approximately 35,000 to 40,000 acres out of grass and put it into grain? The lines of the farmers who are willing to ship their grain out of that area are not only going to be from Evansburg, but will extend west of Wildwood, and back to the elevator at Gainford.

Mr. Speaker, when we are talking about rail abandonment, now I'll talk about the CPR, this is also a part in my constituency, and, Mr. Speaker, it may be interesting -- it may be forgotten by this Assembly -- but I read this when I was dealing with the surface and mineral leases, or the mineral holders of the Province of Alberta. It might be convenient to refresh our memories again that in Alberta by federal government grant under the agreement for building these railroads, the railroads in Alberta received 13,031,731 acres of land in the Province of Alberta. They not only received the surface rights but they also received the mineral rights with it.

In this area -- and this is one of the largest oil fields in Alberta -- the Pembina field. May I give you an indication of what this means -- I'm talking about Township 51 and Range 6 -- the area formerly held by the CPR. They held sections 3, 5, 7, and 9 all in one township. They disposed of the surface rights many years ago but they also disposed of the rail line many years ago.

Perhaps, Mr. Speaker, we should investigate the agreement or have a look at the agreement that the railroads had between the federal government in the disposition in the surface rights they required and the mineral rights of the Province of Alberta.

Maybe it is now time I would suggest, Mr. Speaker, that if they're going to pull the rails out of these communities and not give the services which they got the land for and the minerals, perhaps they should surrender the land if they



have the surface rights yet. But they certainly should surrender the mineral rights where these abandonments have occurred or will be occurring.

Mr. Speaker, in my area the CPR has in the past years -- and I think it extends into the area of the hon. Dr. McCrimmon -- they had never picked up the rails and the ties in that area yet, but there has never been a railroad to my knowledge in the past 15 or 20 years that has run on this track -- perhaps maybe once or twice, I wouldn't know. But the rails are still there. On this I can agree with the hon. Member for Crumheller and the hon. Member for Snoky Lake, that since the rails are in place in this area where there is a vast oil development, perhaps we should try to encourage by this Legislature the federal government to have these lines remain if not used, but at least remain to a point in time when they can be used by industry that will settle in that area some time in the future.

I can only say one more thing, Mr. Speaker. I have two items here yet. Would I be permitted to adjourn the debate?

MR. SPEAKER:

May the hon. member adjourn the debate?

HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

MR. HYNDMAN:

Mr. Speaker, concerning the House business for the next few days I would like to outline the tentative procedures which we would follow.

First, tomorrow being Wednesday we will be in Committee of Supply to consider those departments which have already been dealt with by subcommittees, probably beginning with the Department of the Environment which was not completed on a previous occasion.

Other departments to be studied as time allows will be the Department of Public Works, Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs, and the Treasury. The House will probably not be sitting this Thursday evening. This Friday we will contemplate moving back to Government Motion No. 1, I believe -- the Budget Debate. The House should be ready, I would think, Friday or certainly later than Friday to consider and debate second reading of all the 18 bills presently on the Order Paper.

Tonight the House will not be sitting. Subcommittees will be sitting: Subcommittee A will deal with health commissions, Subcommittee E Mines and Minerals Department; Subcommittee C, Telephones and Utilities; Subcommittee D, Manpower and Labour.

DR. BUCK:

Subcommittee "D"?

MR. HYNDMAN:

Subcommittee "D". Subcommittee D is moving to new, opulent and luxurious quarters in Room 108 -- that's Subcommittee D. So Subcommittee D is moving to room 108 which is on the first floor in the east wing, immediately under room 208.

Tomorrow being the day on which the Edmonton Exhibition Association hosts the members of the Assembly, it has been traditional to have the House start half an hour later. So if it is agreeable to all members, the House will start at 3:00 rather than 2:30.

Members will appreciate, there is no formal motion, so if members on the opposition side wish to come at 2:30, they can get into a lot of mischief for a half an hour if they have a quorum, but I hope everyone agrees. We will start at 3:00 tomorrow after the luncheon.

Concerning the Easter adjournment of the House, there has been some discussion between both sides, Mr. Speaker, and I think it is generally agreed that the House will rise on Wednesday, April 18, at 5:30 p.m., and return on Wednesday, April 25, at 2:30. So this would mean that the House would not sit on the Thursday before Good Friday, and the Tuesday after Easter Monday.

Concerning the actual time of adjournment on Wednesday, there is some difference of opinion on that, and we will consider that with our caucus.

I move the House adjourn.

MR. SPEAKER:

Having heard the motion by the hon. Government House Leader that the House stand adjourned until tomorrow afternoon at 3:00 o'clock, do you all agree?

HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER:

The House stands adjourned until tomorrow afternoon at 3:00 o'clock.

[The House rose at 5:34 o'clock.]