

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ALBERTA

Friday, April 27, 1973

[The House met at 1:00 o'clock.]

PRAYERS

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 34 The Crown Agencies Employee Relations Amendment Act, 1973

DR. HOHOL:

Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce a bill, being The Crown Agencies Employee Relations Amendment Act, 1973.

[Leave being granted, Bill No. 34 was introduced and read a first time.]

Bill No. 41 The Public Service Pension Amendment Act, 1973

Secondly, sir, I should like to introduce a bill, being The Public Service Pension Amendment Act, 1973.

[Leave being granted, Bill No. 41 was introduced and read a first time.]

Bill No. 19 The Hail and Crop Insurance Amendment Act, 1973

MR. STROMBERG:

Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce a bill, being The Hail and Crop Insurance Amendment Act, 1973. Mr. Speaker, this bill contains major amendments in response to the final report tabled in this House a month ago of the Crop Insurance and Weather Modification Committee.

[Leave being granted, Bill No. 19 was introduced and read a first time.]

DR. HORNER:

Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the hon. Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs, that the Hail and Crop Insurance Amendment bill be placed on the Order Paper under Government Bills and Orders.

[The motion was carried.]

Bill No. 52 The Public Utilities Board Amendment Act, 1973

MR. FARRAN:

Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce a bill, being The Public Utilities Board Amendment Act, 1973.

[Leave being granted, Bill No. 52 was introduced and read a first time.]

Bill No. 28 The Amusements Amendment Act, 1973

MR. SCHMID:

Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce a bill being The Amusements Amendment Act, 1973. The bill will strike out Clause 71 which provided for taxation of lotteries and thereby help numerous charitable and community organizations in the province.

[Leave being granted, Bill No. 28 was introduced and read a first time.]

Bill No. 49 The Health Unit Amendment Act, 1973

MR. PURDY:

Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce a bill being The Health Unit Amendment Act, 1973. There are some major changes in this bill. It will allow municipalities wishing to include a health unit in an existing area, and also allow health units to hire their own staff on their own terms according to its budgetary provisions. Furthermore, it will enable staff members to contribute toward the public pension plan on the basis of actual earnings.

[Leave being granted, Bill No. 49 was introduced and read a first time.]

MISS HUNLEY:

Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the hon. Minister of Lands and Forests, that Bill No. 49 being The Health Unit Amendment Act, 1973 be placed under Government Bills and Orders.

[The motion was carried.]

Bill No. 54 The Alberta Heritage Act, 1973

MR. HARLE:

Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce a bill, being Bill No. 54, The Alberta Heritage Act, 1973. This bill, Mr. Speaker, is to provide a method whereby Alberta's heritage resources may be protected for future generations.

[Leave being granted, Bill No. 54 was introduced and read a first time.]

MR. SCHMID:

Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister Without Portfolio Responsible for Northern Development, that Bill No. 54, being The Alberta Heritage Act, 1973, be placed under Government Bills and Orders.

[The motion was carried.]

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

MR. TRYNCHY:

Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure today to introduce to you and to the members of the House, 16 Grade 12 social studies students from the Grand Trunk High School in Evansburg, Alberta, which is in my constituency. They are accompanied by their teacher, David Allison. They are seated in the public gallery. I would ask that they rise now and be recognized by the House.

MR. ZANDER:

Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to introduce to you His Worship the Mayor of Drayton Valley, Mr. Lloyd McLean and Mrs. McLean, seated in your gallery. It's quite interesting that he does not come often to this House to observe how the wells in the area are producing and the funds that are available to the government. The constituency boasts a total of almost 6,000 oil and gas wells.

I certainly, welcome them to the House and I would ask them to rise and be recognized by the Assembly.

MR. WYSE:

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce to you and through you to the members of this Assembly, Mr. George Davison from Medicine Hat. At the present time he is Chairman of the Board of Governors of the Medicine Hat College and a member of the city council. Mr. Davison is well known throughout Alberta. I believe he is seated in the members gallery and I'd ask him to stand at this time and be recognized by the Assembly.

FILING RETURNS AND TABLING REPORTS

DR. HOHOL:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to table reply to Notice of Motion for a Return No. 140.

MR. DICKIE:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to table answers to three questions: one by the hon. Member for Olds-Didsbury re Bow River Pipelines Ltd.; another by the hon. Leader of the Opposition on Alberta crude in the Ontario market, and the third by the hon. Leader of the Opposition re TransCanada Pipe Lines common carrier.

MR. MINIELY:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to table the annual report of the auditor on the Alberta Resources Railway Corporation for the year ended December 31, 1972.

Briefly, members will be interested in note 7 on page 2 of the notes to the financial statements which makes a major change in the operating deficit of the railway.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Royal Alex Hospital Nurses' Strike

MR. HENDERSON:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to address a question to the Minister of Manpower and Labour. I wonder if the minister could advise as to the activity within his department relative to the impending strike situation at the Royal Alex hospital?

DR. HOHOL:

Mr. Speaker, the activities of the department are the usual ones under circumstances such as those at the Royal Alex Hospital. We are standing by and have offered mediation services at extremely short notice to both sides. The nurses are meeting today further to their vote yesterday and we anticipate certain kinds of results from the meeting.

MR. HENDERSON:

Supplemental, Mr. Speaker, but to the acting Minister of Health and Social Development, whoever that is. I wonder if he could advise as to the state of government planning [designed] to see that the well-being of patients in the Royal Alex hospital is adequately protected?

MISS HUNLEY:

The acting Minister of Health is a she, Mr. Speaker, and we will be keeping in close consultation with colleagues and also with the administration to ensure that the citizens of Alberta are looked after.

MR. HENDERSON:

A supplemental, Mr. Speaker. Has the minister or the department done any active preliminary planning to deal with the situation should it develop?

MISS HUNLEY:

I hadn't personally discussed it with the minister prior to his leaving, but I am sure he has.

MR. NOTLEY:

A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Could the hon. acting Minister of Health and Social Development advise the House what allowance there is in the formula for global budgeting to provide for a wage increase?

MISS HUNLEY:

Mr. Speaker, I will take that under notice because I don't have the information.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Alberta Sugar

MR. D. MILLER:

Mr. Speaker, my question is through you to the hon. Minister of Agriculture. What is the present availability of Alberta sugar packaged for individual customers in the province?

DR. HORNER:

The question of individual portion packaging, Mr. Speaker, is one that continues to concern the Department of Agriculture and indeed the Department of Industry and Commerce as well. What, in fact, we require in Alberta is an industry devoted to the portion packaging part of the food service. At the present time we don't have that kind of industry but we are actively working toward the creation of such an industry.

MR. D. MILLER:

Supplementary question, Mr. Speaker, to the minister through you. What action has the minister proposed to promote the use of Alberta sugar in commercial outlets, restaurants and hotels over the entire province?

DR. HORNER:

Mr. Speaker, that ties in with the whole question of portion packaging as I tried to indicate in the answer to the first question, because sugar and the other foods used in portion servings require an industry in the packaging end of the food service industry. At the moment we don't have that in Alberta and all of it is important. Therefore it becomes paramount and a priority within our department to develop such an industry within Alberta.

MR. D. MILLER:

Mr. Speaker, this should be perhaps the sweetest day of the year. I would like to give to the pages a sample of Alberta sugar to distribute to the members and assure everyone that Alberta produced sugar is a product of quality -- and has ample supply for all commercial and personal needs.

MR. SPEAKER:

Possibly it would suffice for the moment if it were put on the Clerk's table instead of on the individual members' tables.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER:

Distributed?

AN HON. MEMBER:

Agreed.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Let it sweeten up the front desk.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Objectionable Publications Board

MR. HO LEM:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question today is to the Minister of Culture, Youth and Recreation. Is it true Mr. Minister, that the government's Advisory

Board on Objectionable Publications has classified the Penthouse magazine as being objectionable?

MR. SCHMID:

Mr. Speaker, the Advisory Board on Objectionable Publications has recommended that the Penthouse magazine be placed on a list of withdrawn publications. However, the recommendation is not in order.

MR. HO LEM:

Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Has the minister taken any definite steps to enforce a ruling by the board on having it removed from the newsstands?

MR. SCHMID:

Mr. Speaker, I am quite sure a mother or father can recommend to their daughter who to marry and who not to marry. I do not think they should tell her. In this case I think the difference is 'recommend' withdrawal but do not 'order' withdrawal.

MR. HO LEM:

One supplementary, Mr. Speaker. In view of the minister's reply, can the minister advise this House if it can be expected that this board be abolished in the near future?

MR. SCHMID:

Mr. Speaker, I don't know why the hon. member asked the question since the board only looks at magazines from their viewpoint in order to recommend to wholesale publishers whether or not this material might be objectionable in Alberta. So far it has done a good job. Since, I think only two prosecutions have been handled since the board has been in existence I see no reason actually why it should be out of existence in the near future.

MR. HO LEM:

One final supplementary, Mr. Speaker, if I might. Does the hon. minister plan to introduce legislation to give to this board teeth to enforce its rulings?

MR. SCHMID:

Mr. Speaker, so far the wholesalers of publications in Alberta have cooperated very excellently with the Advisory Board on Objectionable Publications and I see, therefore, no reason why the government should institute another law to put teeth into something where the people are willing to cooperate.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Electronic Listening Devices

MR. WILSON:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct a question to the hon. Attorney General. Has the office of the Attorney General received any reports of alleged electronic bugging of Mayor Sykes' office in Calgary, as broadcast by CFCN this morning?

MR. LEITCH:

No, Mr. Speaker, we haven't. At least we haven't to my knowledge.

MR. WILSON:

Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Can the minister advise who was responsible for bugging Mayor Sykes' office last August?

AN HON. MEMBER:

Watergate.

[Interjections]

MR. SPEAKER:

Order please. The hon. member certainly isn't serious about this question.

MR. WILSON:

Mr. Speaker, I most certainly am.

MR. SPEAKER:

In that event I must seriously say it is out of order.

[Laughter]

Order please.

MR. WILSON:

Supplementary, Mr. Speaker, to the Minister of Telephones and Utilities. Can the minister advise what involvement Alberta Government Telephones has had regarding the electronic bugging of Mayor Sykes' office?

MR. FARRAN:

Well, Mr. Speaker, I don't know how I can answer a supplementary to a question which is out of order, but I will say that, as far as I know, absolutely none.

MR. LUDWIG:

You're not sure.

MR. WILSON:

Supplementary, Mr. Speaker, to the hon. Attorney General. Is it common practice in Alberta for police to use electronic listening devices?

MR. LEITCH:

Mr. Speaker, there are some occasions when electronic devices are used. I would have to do some checking to be able to answer specifically. I should, though, call to the hon. member's attention that the federal government has just recently introduced a piece of legislation which will deal with that kind of electronic surveillance.

MR. WILSON:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker, to the hon. Attorney General. Can the hon. minister advise how many legal applications have been made during the past year in Alberta to plant electronic listening devices?

MR. SPEAKER:

This is clearly a question which should be placed on the Order Paper. The hon. Member for Calgary Mountain View, followed by the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview.

Bighorn Dam

MR. LUDWIG:

Mr. Speaker, my question is to the minister of consumerism -- Consumer Affairs. Can he advise if there have been any applications for the provision of tourist accommodation in the Bighorn Dam area?

MR. DOWLING:

Mr. Speaker, I can't be specific about that, but I do know a number of organizations have shown an interest in developing tourist facilities in the forested area and the mountain area of our province outside the national parks. Whether they have been specific in suggesting that it be in the Bighorn Dam area or this type of thing, I am not sure. I hope the hon. member isn't referring to a specific he knows about, because there are some that perhaps could be lumped in that kind of category.

MR. LUDWIG:

Mr. Speaker, in view of the answer, can the hon. minister ascertain whether there have been any applications or plans made for the provision of such facilities? If not, can he advise whether the government anticipates a tourist influx into that area, and how the accommodations for the tourist will be handled?

MR. DOWLING:

Well naturally, Mr. Speaker, with a province such as we have I don't doubt that there will be a tourist influx into every area of Alberta, that being one of them. Our plan for the next number of years, through the public hearings on the eastern slopes of the Rockies and a positive plan for park development and tourist facility development, leaves no doubt that we will be able to look after the tourist influx.

MR. LUDWIG:

Is it the minister's intention to permit extensive development of tourist facilities in that area?

MR. DOWLING:

Mr. Speaker, that is not in my purview. It belongs to the Minister of Lands and Forests, but I am sure that in his usual fashion he will handle it with the discretion and expertise usually shown by his department.

MR. LUDWIG:

Mr. Speaker --

MR. SPEAKER:

The question is similar to one that was asked just recently -- not today -- and I believe the answer was that these matters are coming to the hearings of the Environment Conservation Authority. Possibly it would not be correct under these circumstances for the the minister to prejudge the matter.

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

Export Price of Natural Gas

MR. NOTLEY:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct this question to the hon. Minister of Mines and Minerals. By way of introduction, during the Budget Speech you mentioned Section 11(a) of The National Energy Board Act. My question, Mr. Speaker, to the hon. minister is, has the government made any official representation to the federal government with respect to The National Energy Board Act exercising its authority under Section 11(a) to increase the export price of natural gas?

MR. DICKIE:

Mr. Speaker, Section 11(a) is a regulation under The National Energy Board Act. We have made no official statements to the federal government in respect to Section 11(a). We have had discussions with them on the question of how to implement and the best ways of implementing Section 11(a).

MR. NOTLEY:

A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. In view of the concern now shown by the British Columbia government over Section 11(a), has your department given any consideration to consultation with British Columbia so that perhaps joint representation can be made?

MR. DICKIE:

Mr. Speaker, we haven't received any representation from British Columbia in respect to Section 11(a). At the Mines Ministers' Conference the question of Section 11(a) was discussed and I can't recall at that time if British Columbia put forth any submission or any comment on Section 11(a). But we would be glad to listen to them at any time if they would care to contact us.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Lloydminster Bridge

MR. J. MILLER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I direct my question to the hon. Minister of Highways. Have you any information to report on your budget offer toward the building of a bridge on the meridian road north of Lloydminster with Saskatchewan and the federal government?

MR. COPITHORNE:

Mr. Speaker, I wrote a letter to Mr. Marchand in regard to our offer in Alberta to build a travel facility north of Lloydminster to service those people in that area.

I also sent a letter to the hon. Minister of Highways, Mr. Kramer, in Saskatchewan. I did this on the 9th of April. I was pleased to see in an article in The Edmonton Journal yesterday, that Mr. Kramer is endorsing the stand that we in Alberta have taken, and I am pleased to see that my hon. friend to the east of us is taking the initiative to follow the lead of Alberta in providing a useful facility for the people of Alberta.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order please. The hon. minister is beginning to debate.

The hon. Member for Lloydminster --

MR. J. MILLER:

Mr. Speaker --

MR. HO LEM:

A supplementary to the hon. minister regarding the building of this bridge. After its completion what does the minister propose to name this bridge? Will it be the Loughheed Bridge, the Blakely Bridge, or the Trudeau Bridge?

AN HON. MEMBER:

The Ho Lem bridge.

[Interjections]

MR. COPITHORNE:

Well, Mr. Speaker, it is on very few occasions that we actually name bridges unless names are required and requested in the area.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Clean-Up Week Broom

MR. KOZIAK:

My question, Mr. Speaker, is to the acting Minister of the Environment. I wonder if the acting minister could advise whether or not this broom which was used in opening up Clean-Up Week, April 30 to May 6, in the City of Edmonton has been approved by his department? It may assist him in answering the question to know that it was used in a race with the Mayor of the City of Edmonton, and that the race resulted in a tie.

DR. WARRACK:

I was hoping, Mr. Speaker, that we would make a clean sweep of that. But thank you very much to the hon. member for providing additional evidence of this important clean-up program being carried forward through the cooperation of a lot of people, including the Department of the Environment.

MR. KOZIAK:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Would the hon. Acting Minister consider turning the broom over to the Speaker to assist the Speaker in cleaning up some of the items tabled by the hon. Member for Camrose?

[Laughter]

MR. LUDWIG:

A supplementary. Has the Minister of Agriculture made the recommendation to the government that the coat of arms of the Conservative Party be a shovel?

[Laughter]

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Progress of Bills

MR. TAYLOR:

Mr. Speaker, I have a question to the hon. Premier. Does the government plan to hold over to the fall session a number of the bills now on the Order Paper?

MR. LOUGHEED:

Mr. Speaker, I believe it is difficult to generalize in terms of number. There will be some. I believe an introduction of a few of them has been specifically mentioned, but certainly for the vast majority of them it is the intention to deal with them during the course of this spring session.

MR. TAYLOR:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Has the government decided on a date for the adjournment of the spring session?

MR. LOUGHEED:

Mr. Speaker, no we definitely haven't. It would appear that we are here for some weeks and there is a very substantial amount of legislation that will be involved. We thought we would assess it as we move from week to week, having regard to the legislation we feel should be enacted at the spring session relative to the balance that may be referred over to the fall.

MR. NOTLEY:

A supplementary to the hon. Minister of Manpower and Labour. Will The Workmen's Compensation Act be introduced at the spring session or held over until the fall?

DR. HOHOL:

Mr. Speaker, the Act will be held over until the fall.

DR. BUCK:

Supplementary, Mr. Speaker, can the hon. Premier give us any indication when the fall sitting will be opening?

MR. LOUGHEED:

Mr. Speaker, we would hope to give very extensive notice to the members with regard to that date which will be during the month of October. But we felt that we wanted to get a little better idea, Mr. Speaker, as to when we might conclude the spring session before establishing a specific date. We will undertake to give considerable notice to the hon. members just as soon as we are able.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Rural Gas Position Paper

MR. RUSTE:

Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Telephones and Utilities. Is the position paper on rural gas available at this time? I'm referring to your quote in Hansard on April 9 in which you said there would be a position paper in a very short time.

MR. FARRAN:

No, Mr. Speaker, it is not yet ready but it will be available in a very short time.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Municipal Assistance Grants

MR. WYSE:

Yes, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct my question to the hon. Minister of Municipal Affairs. Will the hon. minister be tabling at this spring session, as indicated earlier, the working formula for calculating municipal assistance grants?

MR. RUSSELL:

Mr. Speaker, while I'm on my feet, first I'd like to thank the hon. Member for Taber-Warner for the sugar. I think when added to the sour grapes contributed by his colleagues, we can make quite a potable brew.

Mr. Speaker, with respect to the formula used to determine this year's municipal assistance grants, I've given the assurance that all members will receive it during this session. Whether it is during the spring portion of the session is undetermined at this time because we don't know when that will end. But I suspect it will be some time early after June 30.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Welfare Ministers' Conference

MR. DIXON:

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct a question today to the hon. Premier or the hon. Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs. It's regarding the follow-up to the present conference which is going on in Ottawa with the welfare ministers.

I was wondering, Mr. Premier, with the province's desire to have more autonomy in the social development field, how does the arrangement stand at the present time with the federal government and the other provinces regarding our constitution in Canada? We haven't heard too much on it lately and I wonder if the hon. Premier could tell me if there are discussions going on about the constitution.

MR. LOUGHEED:

Mr. Speaker, I would think the fair way to answer that question is that at the moment there are no on-going discussions in regard to the constitutional matter. It was raised at the last First Ministers' meeting which was in November of 1971. It is not specifically on the agenda for the First Ministers' meeting in late May of this year, although by the nature of the meeting it is certainly a subject that could be raised.

So I would have to say, Mr. Speaker, that for the moment that particular matter is not one of on-going discussions between the provinces and the federal government.

MR. DIXON:

A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker, to the hon. Premier. Do you notice, hon. Premier, any change of attitude with the federal government as to whether they are going to allow the requests of provinces such as Quebec and Alberta that they provide the funds and we do the actual distribution as far as the programs are concerned within our own provinces?

MR. LOUGHEED:

Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned in my remarks in the Budget Address, certainly that Gallup Poll referred to in Hansard of April 18 reflects the public mood.

Insofar as the federal government is concerned, I think we could say that there have been some significant modifications over the course of the past year with regard to that matter of cost sharing and tax responsibility being shifted to provincial authorities. However there are so many on-going meetings of a federal-provincial nature at the moment that it would be perhaps better to respond to a question of that nature after the First Ministers' meeting in late May.

There are a number that have culminated. There are, of course, the meetings that are occurring this week on education and on social development. There is an imminent meeting with regard to the finance ministers and on the agenda of the First Ministers' meetings there are a number of items that are raised in the hon. member's question. So I don't think I can say more than that there will be a culmination of this aspect of federal-provincial relationships at the First Ministers' meeting in late May.

MR. DIXON:

My final supplementary question to the hon. Premier, Mr. Speaker, is, do I take it then that the constitutional question as far as the federal government and the provinces are concerned is not a priority at this time?

MR. LOUGHEED:

Mr. Speaker, I would have to answer that in the affirmative insofar as the provinces generally and the federal government are concerned. It would be my interpretation of the present situation.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Electronic Listening Devices (Cont.)

MR. WILSON:

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct a question to the hon. Minister of Telephones and Utilities. Has the hon. minister had any reports from Alberta Government Telephones regarding the discovery of electronic listening devices?

MR. FARRAN:

No, Mr. Speaker.

MR. WILSON:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker, to the hon. Attorney General. Has the hon. minister had any report from Alberta Government Telephones regarding the discovery of electronic listening devices?

MR. LEITCH:

No, Mr. Speaker.

MR. WILSON:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker, to the hon. Attorney General. Can the minister advise as to the approximate number of court orders granted to plant electronic listening devices last year?

MR. SPEAKER:

This would appear to be a question for the Order Paper.

MR. WILSON:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Can the minister advise the number of illegally planted listening devices that were discovered in Alberta during the past year?

MR. SPEAKER:

Surely, if the hon. member is putting the first part of the question in the Order Paper, the other part might accompany it.

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

McIntyre Porcupine Strip Mine

MR. CLARK:

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct a question to the acting Minister of the Environment, the Minister of Lands and Forests, and ask him if McIntyre Porcupine have received approval to go ahead on the strip mining of mine site No. 9 at Grande Cache?

DR. WARRACK:

Mr. Speaker, a permit has been issued to the company with respect to that mine by the Energy Resources Conservation Board and, in addition, the Department of the Environment and also the Department of Lands and Forests have looked at and approved the road development that would be necessary for them to do some detailed development work. That is the status at this time.

MR. CLARK:

A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Why was it that there were only ten days notice given to those groups that would want to make a presentation to the hearings in Grande Prairie?

DR. WARRACK:

I'm not aware of the details on that at all, Mr. Speaker, but I'm quite sure, however, this is under the purview of the Energy Resources Conservation Board.

MR. CLARK:

One more supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Would the minister find out why the people who wanted to make representation on this particular project had to have their representation tabled in Calgary -- at the offices in Calgary?

DR. WARRACK:

I would have to look into it.

MR. CLARK:

Mr. Speaker, would the minister look into it and report back to the Assembly?

DR. WARRACK:

Sure.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Calgary Area Parks

MR. LEE:

Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the hon. the Premier. I wonder if the hon. the Premier could inform the Assembly as to what matters were discussed in his recent meeting with Mayor Rod Sykes in Calgary? And in particular, was the matter of Calgary's designation and development of portions of Nose Hill as an urban park discussed at that meeting?

MR. LOUGHEED:

Yes, Mr. Speaker. On Wednesday evening last, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and myself held a lengthy meeting with the Mayor of Calgary for some two or three hours to discuss a number of subjects, one of which had to do with the Nose Hill Park or proposed park in the City of Calgary.

We discussed a review of the Fish Creek Park: a confirmation of the undertaking by the City of Calgary to provide effective transportation to all of the citizens, wherever they live within the environs of Calgary, through their transportation system to the Fish Creek Park -- Provincial Metropolitan Park.

We confirmed to the Mayor of Calgary that insofar as the proposed Nose Hill Park was concerned, we ourselves were not prepared as a provincial government to contribute to the cost there. We felt there was a substantial contribution of cost being made in this particular area, insofar as the citizens of Calgary were concerned, by the general revenues of the province.

MR. DIXON:

Mr. Speaker, I wonder if I can ask a supplementary question, Mr. Speaker, of the hon. Minister of Lands and Forests. Are there any approaches being made to the government to purchase the Happy Valley Park in the Calgary area?

DR. WARRACK:

None that I am aware of, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Clover Bar followed by the hon. Member for Medicine Hat-Redcliff.

Vandalism of Power Lines

DR. BUCK:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to address a question to the hon. Minister for Telephones and Utilities as a result of the power outage due to the favourite spring pastime, shooting off power insulators and power lines. I would like to know if the hon. minister is contemplating raising the fines for vandalism of power lines?

MR. FARRAN:

Mr. Speaker, I haven't given any consideration to that subject but I'm grateful to the hon. member for bringing it to my attention and we'll have a look at it.

DR. BUCK:

Supplementary. Is your department considering a program, in conjunction with the power companies, of instigating a publicity campaign to advise young people of the dangers involved in such a practice?

MR. FARRAN:

Mr. Speaker, again, it sounds like a constructive suggestion and I'll have a look at it.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Export of Gas to Montana

MR. WYSE:

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct my question to the hon. Minister of Mines and Minerals. It relates back to a question I asked earlier in the session. Has the provincial government given approval to Canadian Montana Pipe Line Company's application for exporting more gas to Montana?

MR. DICKIE:

Mr. Speaker, I believe at that time I answered no, and the answer is still no. It's presently before the cabinet.

MR. WYSE:

Supplementary question. What pool will this be extracted from if it is okayed by the cabinet?

MR. SPEAKER:

The question is hypothetical in form, but it seems to be direct in substance.

MR. DICKIE:

Mr. Speaker, I hesitate to answer that without checking the information. It's a good question, and I'd be glad to get the information for the hon. member.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Calgary General Hospital Purchase

MR. TAYLOR:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a question for the hon. acting Minister of Health and Social Development. Has the government indeed offered to purchase the General Hospital in Calgary for \$1?

MISS HUNLEY:

Mr. Speaker, I don't have that information. I'll be glad to inquire and let you know.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Edmonton Cable Television

MR. DIXON:

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct my question to the hon. Minister of Telephones and Utilities. Has the government refused the City of Edmonton permission to operate its own cablevision, and if so, why?

MR. FARRAN:

Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is obviously a little confused, or perhaps his recollection of the news story he read is not good. The City of Edmonton entered into an agreement with private operators of cablevision whereby the coaxial cables will be turned over after 20 years. This agreement also gave the City of Edmonton free access for telephone purposes to these coaxial cables. The City of Edmonton has submitted that it would like special legislation to be passed for them to acquire ownership immediately of these coaxial cables.

The jurisdiction of a government ownership of any of the hardware connected with television rests with the federal authorities. The government has said that it is prepared to sit down with the Mayor of Edmonton and his representatives to discuss any problems he might have in the field of communications and utilities when the session is over.

MR. DIXON:

Mr. Speaker, supplementary. Starting off with the fact and agreeing with the minister that I'm a bit confused and I'm still confused, why is the City of Edmonton and the mayor in particular very unhappy and saying that they have been refused?

MR. FARRAN:

Well the position at the moment is that the government is not prepared to pass special legislation for the City of Edmonton to, so to speak, nationalize the cables owned by the private operators. But it is prepared to sit down and hear the City of Edmonton's case at some meetings. At the moment I have no idea why they want to acquire the coaxial cable.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Calgary Bow.

Ottawa Office Head

MR. WILSON:

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct a question to the hon. Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs. Can the minister briefly advise the terms of reference for the new head of the Ottawa office of the Department of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs?

MR. GETTY:

Mr. Speaker, I think we touched on this matter several times in the House during the course of estimates --

MR. CLARK:

Your estimates? This year?

MR. GETTY:

--in the previous year in this House. Actually, the director of the Ottawa office will be the representative of the Alberta government in all matters in which he is requested to represent the government. He will also be responsible for obtaining information that will be of interest to Albertans or the Alberta government, to pass back to the government.

I'm sure the hon. members will appreciate that there is a variety of matters that a government representative can handle, and it's very difficult to outline every one of them now. But I would say, on a very general basis, that it would be to represent the government in those areas designated by the government.

MR. WILSON:

Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Will the services offered by the new head of the Ottawa office of the Department of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs be available to opposition members making inquiries on federal departments and things of that nature?

MR. GETTY:

Mr. Speaker, right now the department represents the government with other governments. It is an interesting possibility that if the department, or any member of the department, could help an individual Albertan through their MLA we may be able to facilitate matters in that regard. Certainly there have been times when we have tried to do everything possible to assist Albertans with the federal government. But it should be recalled that the department and the officials of the department are essentially to represent the government with other governments.

MR. WILSON:

Mr. Speaker, a supplementary to the hon. Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs. Will there be a Zenith phone number for your office in Ottawa, or will it be authorized to accept collect calls from MLAs in Alberta?

MR. GETTY:

No, Mr. Speaker, there is a Department of Intergovernmental Affairs in the province and surely any MLA can contact that department and they would be pleased to assist them if there is some role the department can use. We have not contemplated a Zenith number in Ottawa.

MR. LOUGHEED:

Mr. Speaker, on the matter of Zenith numbers, I believe the hon. Member for Wainwright asked me a question on a previous occasion with regard to The Farmers Advocate and the Ombudsman. I haven't completed the information yet in regard to The Farmers Advocate because I understand there is some merit in further consideration of that matter. However we are advised, insofar as a Zenith number for the Ombudsman, that that would probably not be a step we would be taking insofar as The Ombudsman Act provides that essentially these complaints that are made to the Ombudsman need to be made in writing.

We do feel the situation will be somewhat improved in terms of communication relative to the southern Alberta office in Calgary for the Ombudsman, and steps are being taken, as I understand it, to have that office under way by the first of September. There is some hope that date could be accelerated.

MR. CLARK:

A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker, to the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs. Mr. Minister, as a result of the appointment announced this morning, can we assume that the office in Ottawa will now hum?

MR. GETTY:

Mr. Speaker, the office has been humming, as far as I know, ever since we had a Department of Intergovernmental Affairs in this province.

MR. TAYLOR:

Supplementary to the hon. Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs. With the change in the Ottawa office, will the girls there continue to be cooperative with opposition members?

MR. GETTY:

I hope so, Mr. Speaker.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

MINISTERIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

MR. COPITHORNE:

Mr. Speaker, I wish to bring to the attention of this Assembly and the citizens of Alberta a new government policy to further enhance the quality of life in rural Alberta. During debate on the budget I advised this Assembly of a program designed to assist rural towns and villages in the improvement of their internal roadways. At this time I wish to table the details of what is quite obviously the most progressive program of its kind in all of Canada.

As Minister of Highways and Transport, I wish to announce on behalf of the Government of Alberta the launching of a \$10 million program of grants to Alberta's towns and villages for the improvement of street facilities in these centres. The program, which will extend over a five year period and involve a \$1 million expenditure in its inaugural year, is designed to provide sufficient funds to each centre once within the five year period for purposes of carrying out worthwhile projects.

The grants will be allocated on a formula basis providing \$20,000 basic, plus \$20 per capita to each town and village. The same formula will apply to summer villages with permanent populations of 100 or more. Summer villages having under 100 permanent population will be eligible for \$5,000 basic, plus \$20 per permanent resident.

Projects eligible for grant funding will cover a wide variety of capital construction works, ranging from grading and drainage to street illumination and traffic signals. Maintenance and operational items are not within scope.

Participation will be on a first-come first-served application basis until individual covering agreements reach the total funds appropriated in each fiscal year. Agreement terms will include reasonable standards and engineering requirements where the nature of the projects warrant this. No local matching of grant funds is necessary. But participating urban centres may elect to combine the grant with their own funds to undertake expanded projects, thus obtaining the best possible advantage of project size and timing within the five year period.

Over 260 Alberta urban municipalities are expected to benefit from this program, a program which further emphasizes the importance this government has placed on the development of rural Alberta.

GOVERNMENT BILLS AND ORDERS
(Second Reading)

Bill No. 48
The Alberta Property Tax Reduction Act

[Adjourned debate: Mr. Ludwig]

MR. LUDWIG:

Mr. Speaker, when I adjourned debate on the amendment proposed by the hon. Member for Drumheller, I had made the point that we do require a committee hearing of Bill No. 48. I based my decision on the fact that some of the cities are not having any representation in this House as far as their point of view is concerned and particularly Edmonton, where for some reason best known to the hon. members, the hon. members chose to remain silent. But I believe that it became obvious recently, in fact today, that the City of Edmonton is not happy with the developments are far as Bill No. 48 are concerned and they want to be heard.

It is rather interesting that instead of being heard by their representatives in the democratic process in the House, they have to lobby the government directly in order that their voice be heard as far as this issue is concerned.

Secondly, I made the point that we really need to look into this when the ministers stand up and say that they can't possibly be wrong because the people are happy, and as long as the political situation is all right nothing else seems to matter. At least that is the impression I drew from the minister's remarks.

Thirdly, the impression that Bill No. 48 has been discussed with the people is in my opinion entirely wrong. The bill as it is in its present form has not been presented to the people. The people know nothing about it and the municipalities have not had an opportunity to respond to it except through their MLAs. I am suggesting, Mr. Speaker, that the MLAs, at least those who represent one half of the vote in this province, have responded in a positive manner demanding that the public, council members, hospital boards, et cetera, if they so wish, be given an opportunity to present their case to the members in Committee of the Whole Assembly, the Public Affairs Committee.

So with those few observations, Mr. Speaker, I urge the hon. members on both sides of the House to support the amendment. It is an established

procedure. It is in the interests of the public. Nothing much can be lost by giving these people a chance to voice their concerns directly, particularly in view of the fact that many constituencies have not had a voice on this issue in this Legislature, Mr. Speaker.

MR. CLARK:

Mr. Speaker, just three quick comments that I would like to make before we vote on this particular matter. I think all of us should keep in mind very clearly that the real issue at stake here is not how much money is being made available or how much money is not being made available. The real issue we are voting on in this amendment is the question of providing an opportunity for the municipalities of the province to come before the Legislature and tell the members of the Legislature what their feelings are with regard to this particular bill.

The real issue is nothing more or nothing less, Mr. Speaker, than the question of local autonomy. That is the first point I want to make. I think we should make it clear that we are not arguing about the amounts of money here but we are arguing about the basic issue of local autonomy, nothing more and nothing less.

The second point I would like to touch on for just a moment, Mr. Speaker, deals with the comments the minister made last evening when he was commenting on the amendment. He emphasized at some length the discussions he had had with the representatives of the two provincial municipal organizations, and the discussions he had with city councils and town councils, municipal councils and so on. But there was absolutely no reference made and, to the best of my knowledge, there had been no discussions held with representatives of hospital districts, hospital associations themselves. Their future is very, very much at stake in this particular piece of legislation that we are dealing with.

The same thing, Mr. Speaker, can be said for health units. There has been no indication whatsoever from the government that there had been any indication that discussions were held before this legislation was considered, after the announcement in the middle part of January or since the legislation has come into the House. There is no indication the government has sat down with the health units of this province nor with the hospital boards of this province and given them an opportunity to respond.

We should not forget that we are not just dealing with the local town councils, city councils, county councils and so on. We are also dealing actually with the ability that hospital boards and health units have in having a say in the level of service they can provide for their particular constituents. It's the same people who elect them who elect the members of this Assembly.

So when we vote on this amendment Mr. Speaker, let's keep it very much in mind that the matter is not the dollars and cents involved. The matter is the question of local autonomy and the future of local government, hospital boards, health units and locally elected municipal governments.

[Mr. Speaker declared the amendment defeated. Several members rose, calling for a division. The division bell was rung.]

[Three minutes having elapsed, the House divided as follows:

For the amendment:

Anderson	Dixon	Ludwig	Sorenson
Barton	Drain	Mandeville	Speaker, R.
Benoit	French	Miller, D.	Taylor
Buck	Gruenwald	Notley	Wilson
Clark	Henderson	Ruste	Wyse
Cooper	Ho Lem		

Against the amendment:

Adair	Doan	Jamison	Purdy
Appleby	Dowling	King	Russell
Ashton	Farran	Koziak	Schmid
Backus	Fluker	Lee	Stromberg
Batiuk	Getty	Leitch	Topolnisky
Chambers	Hansen	Lougheed	Trynchy
Chichak	Harle	McCrimmon	Warrack
Cookson	Hohol	Miller, J.	Young
Copithorne	Horner	Miniely	Zander

Diachuk	Hunley	Moore
Totals:	Ayes - 22	Noes - 39]

[The amendment was lost.]

MR. SPEAKER:

Is there any further debate on the motion?

[The motion was carried, Bill No. 48 was read a second time.]

[Mr. Speaker left the Chair.]

* * * * *

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

[Mr. Diachuk in the Chair.]

MR. CHAIRMAN:

The Committee of Supply will come to order.

Department of Municipal Affairs

Administration

Appropriation No. 2101 Minister's Office

MR. HO LEM:

Mr. Chairman, I would like to make a few remarks in relation to this estimate we are discussing this afternoon and at the same time make a few particular remarks with reference to the aspect of urban development which is a responsibility of this department.

The area of urban development must be one of imperative and insistent concern to the provincial government because the root of this problem, as I have stated before, has been found in the population shift from the rural areas to the urban centres. We now find that we have half of our provincial population gathered in the larger centres of Calgary and Edmonton. I believe the time is now overdue to take some positive steps to assist the urban centres in the field of urban growth and orderly development, and the present record of the provincial government in working in cooperation with the cities in the larger centres is not that good, although the areas of responsibility as I see it are very clear, quite clear to me.

As stated before, I feel that the quality of life can be measured by the availability to the average working man of things like adequate housing at the prices he can afford, educational facilities for his children and transportation to take him to and from his place of employment, parks and recreation areas, health care, police and fire protection and so on. But more importantly, Mr. Minister, an overall environment must be developed, an overall environment of security for his family and an opportunity to enjoy the things in which the citizens are working for.

I think, Mr. Chairman, at the present time the housing problem in all centres in Alberta is a major problem and this concern has been echoed in this House on many occasions. The cost of housing today is far above the resources of most of our citizens. They cannot afford to pay the price and still have any hope of being able to enjoy some of the other amenities of life.

In recent years one of our major increases in the cost of homes has been attributed to the rising and soaring cost of land. This is a factor dependent, of course, on a supply-and-demand situation because if you make less land available for development the cost of the presently available land soars. Now in the study conducted by CMHC covering the years from 1951 to 1967, it was shown that the rise in the cost of land for that period rose over 206 per cent, Mr. Chairman. Of course, since that time it has continued to rise.

The land developers and project builders advise that one of the major factors today and one of the major problems is trying to get sufficient land assembled ready for development because of a complete lack of coordination

between various city departments and the provincial government. They can draw up plans for developing a tract of land, then find out that a provincial department for instance, such as the Highways Department, has not yet decided what their requirements are in that particular area. And this, of course, might hold it up for many, many months or even years, removing that available land from market for some time and this creates a problem.

In short, Mr. Chairman, there does not seem to be any definite long-range plan as to land use and land requirements between the various civic and provincial departments. We must address ourselves to this problem because something must be done in this area and done soon if we expect our urban areas to grow in an orderly manner.

An example of this is, of course, the freeze on development of land adjoining the newly announced park in Fish Creek. I want to make it quite clear, Mr. Chairman, that I do not oppose this park -- it's a wonderful thing -- it's an outstanding contribution for Calgary, and one that will benefit many, many people for years to come. However, I believe that the kind of problem it raises is in the area of long-range planning, because land that was slated for development in that area is now held in limbo. It's in a freeze, thus removing that land from market and consequently putting more pressures on the price of land and prices in another area of the city. I would urge the government to do everything possible to correct this direct influence on our housing.

Mr. Chairman, I feel that we are getting to a point in our relationship with the municipalities in Alberta where, after a great effort of planning and advice we have reached a state where we are not going backwards -- if we are reaching a stage, if we are not going backwards too fast, or losing ground too rapidly, we consider it a triumph. We are no longer measuring our success by how well we are moving forward in our municipalities, but by our success in holding the status quo, or by how slowly we can keep from going backwards.

We have an urgent decision to make. We must decide now if our cities and larger centres are to be, and remain, places for the people to live and enjoy life. We must decide if our cities are there for the purpose of serving the people and providing them with a good place to live, or if the people are to become the servants of the city. We are getting to a point where people can live in a city all their lives and in the end have nothing to show for it and enjoy, except steel, concrete, freeways, and parking lots. We must keep in mind that it is people, not freeways, nor buildings, nor the number of vehicles that make up the city. Because of the unplanned growth, the pollution, and the divine right of freeways over people, we have reached a point where the only thing that can be raised on city land is taxes. I think we should decide now if the cities are there to support the people, or if it's the sole purpose of the people to support the cities.

Surely, I believe that in this day and age, and in this prosperity in Alberta, man should be able to live for his own sake and to enjoy life -- not merely to be counted as just another taxpayer.

We have, it is true, made some strides in the right direction. Building provincial parks in cities is one such area. At the same time, however, we find it necessary to destroy several hundred acres of park land and golf courses to accommodate a freeway in Calgary. In this particular exchange of give and take, I'm not sure if we are ahead or behind in the game. One day the government accepts the bows and takes the praises for giving a little more money into the city purses, but the next day it tightens the purse strings.

What I'm saying is that the present government is making a great show of giving and taking: more emphasis on giving than taking, more emphasis on building and destroying, more emphasis of handing out authority and less emphasis on taking away authority.

My question is, are we accomplishing anything by doing this? I think the record speaks for itself. Because after every burst of activities, and after the dust has settled, we find that the citizens are pushed back a little further and a little deeper.

We do not seem to have any coordinated attention to our city problems. Each government department goes about doing things in its own way as it sees fit. We see many examples of this. In Calgary we have the Department of Highways deciding to build the Blackfoot Freeway through a campground, a golf course, a tourist motel, an oil refinery and who knows what else. But at the same time we have the Department of Industry and Commerce pumping in money to restore jobs taken away by the Department of Highways. Then the Department of Lands and Forests is adding new parkland to restore land taken away and the

Opportunity Fund is handing cut money to build new additional campgrounds and tourist facilities.

Another example of this give and take. We have one department telling the city to rechannel the river and at the same time the same department is putting a halt to this work. It's just another example of giving and taking. On the one hand the government is subsidizing low-cost housing, and on the other hand it is tearing down homes and making room for roads and bridges.

Further along the same lines in the area of transportation, Mr. Minister, we do not seem to have any long-range plans for transportation requirements in given areas. Does the provincial government, for instance, have plans ready for the forthcoming development of Saddle Ridge? I've asked that question before. In the next few years in this area in my constituency we are planning for a population of 100,000 people, three times the size of Red Deer. How will these people who are going to live there get to their jobs? What plans for major freeways and other roads do we have for this development? Or are we going to experience a recurrence of having the Department of Highways decide after the homes are in?

What I am trying to say is that we must have closer cooperation between the various levels of departments of government, as well as various departments with the city. We do not need any more of the kind of thing that happened in Calgary over the Bow River development and clean-up campaign in cleaning up the shore line. Because this type of thing, this lack of coordination, is costing the people of that area a lot of money. I feel that something should be done and done immediately.

I think also we should examine our policies in the field of urban renewal. In the past number of years we haven't heard anything about urban renewal. Just because the federal government has thrown up its hands and withdrawn from this problem, seemingly because of a lack of funds, there is no reason why the provincial government should also wash its hands of this problem. Areas of our larger centres are subject to urban renewal projects. These areas are all well known to us, and should have the right to expect some long-range planning to provide them with a measure of security and assistance.

Just because our government doesn't seem to worry about what the future holds for these areas, it doesn't mean that the residents are all that short-sighted. They would like to know what is going to happen to them, and rightfully so. We must keep them in mind. We must keep in mind that in urban development and urban redevelopment we are dealing with people, with citizens of Alberta, and they have certain rights which we cannot ignore. We must stop this situation where each department sits on its high throne and decides unilaterally what is good for the city from a particular point of view. Because it strongly reminds me of The Blind Men and the Elephant and it goes like this.

It was six men of Indostan, to learning much inclined
Who went to see the elephant, though all of them were blind

That each by observation, might satisfy his mind.
The first approached the elephant, and happening to fall

Against his broad and sturdy side, at once began to bawl:

"God bless me! But the elephant is nothing but a wall!"

The second, feeling of the tusk, cried "Ho! what have we here

So very round and smooth and sharp? To me 'tis mighty clear

This wonder of an elephant is very like a spear!"

The third approached the animal and happening to take

The squirming trunk within his hands thus boldly up and spake

"I see," quoth he, "the elephant is very like a snake."

The fourth reached out his eager hand and felt about the knee

"What most this wondrous beast is like is mighty plain" quoth he.

"'Tis clear enough the elephant is very like a tree."

The fifth, who chanced to touch the ear, said "Even the blindest man

Can tell what this resembles most, deny the fact who can, This marvel of an elephant is very like a fan!"

The sixth no sooner had begun about the beast to grope, Than, seizing on the swinging tail that fell within his scope

"I see," quoth he, "the elephant is very like a rope."

And so these men of Indostan disputed loud and long

Each in his own opinion exceeding stiff and strong

Though each was partly in the right, and all were in the wrong!

Mr. Chairman, this poem would indicate to me the approach taken by the various departments of our government in approaching urban development problems. I would like, at this time, to scorn and criticize the government for their obvious lack of coordination between departments, a lack of coordination in dealing with the great problem of urban growth. I criticize the government on their give-and-take policy, by giving with one hand and taking away with the other and I also criticize them for not giving any encouragement for the development of local autonomy.

I would, therefore, support that a committee be set up comprising municipal officials, along with government people, to take a look at this lack of policy and leadership by the government in not providing the authority to the urban municipalities so they may better cope with their own specific problems.

Some of the other topics which may be discussed would come under the heading of ceiling and mortgage rates particularly on smaller homes.

Another topic that could be discussed is providing more mortgages for low-income earners, lower cost of lots. And let's also put on the agenda the principle of cost-sharing projects in road building, urban renewal et cetera.

And of course we mustn't forget the apartment dwellers. Let's make sure that they are protected and are given a fair and just rental rate. These, Mr. Speaker, are only a few of the basic concerns of the people of Alberta and we are waiting, and waiting not too patiently, for the government to act on some of these concerns.

MR. RUSSELL:

Mr. Chairman, I think the points the hon. member spoke about deserve some reply because they are certainly very important, particularly in the aspects of urbanization which has become a prime national challenge, not just a concern of provincial or municipal jurisdiction any more.

It is, of course, a two-way process which affects a dwindling rural development at the same time as rapidly increasing urban development is taking place. So I suppose if any provincial government in Canada is going to deal effectively with the problem of urbanization they have to deal with it on a two-way basis. I submit to the hon. member that it wouldn't be practical for us to hold out hope that the province at a provincial level could solve all the problems which he mentioned, from rent control to aesthetics, to the cost of living, to goodness knows what. But they can deal with many of the things specifically as they refer to physical development.

I think the record of this present government is pretty good insofar as trying to cope with what is happening as a result of the process of urbanization within Alberta. When you look at the balance of programs initiated in the urban and the rural areas, I think it's a pretty good and significant start for a government that has had less than two years to do this.

I must emphasize again the metropolitan provincial parks which have got to be, I think, a significant move, not only because of their social value but because of the amount of money that is involved with them. And I certainly agree 100 per cent with the hon. member who despaired about the fact that a throughway is proposed to go through one very beautiful golf course in Calgary while at the same time, a few miles away, we are attempting to build a very nice provincial park.

Unfortunately you get involved in this question of local autonomy, and here is where the local council supposedly is better able to decide where these throughways go.

I have watched with a great deal of concern the various projected paths of the Blackfoot Trail through east Calgary. I have discussed this with the hon. Minister of Highways and we are concerned, not only about the fact that valuable and beautiful open space is apparently in danger, but also the effects it will have on a residential community. But again, it is one of those unfortunate situations I suppose, where the local council is the final decider when it comes to where the route is going.

Insofar as other forms of transportation are concerned, this year's budget, of course, saw the first time in which there are funds, in addition to cost-sharing programs for street construction within the cities, for the two metropolitan centres to start on an experimental basis with other forms of public transportation. There is approximately \$2 million available for each of the cities of Calgary and Edmonton. Those funds have been indicated to them. We have asked them for their proposals insofar as the way they hope to spend this money, and there is a pretty wide latitude of programs or areas in which they might spend those funds.

Along with that I think it is important that the rural paving program that the Minister of Highways announced today takes effect the same year as this metropolitan rapid transit financial support was given, because we do, in fact, have to deal with both of these problems.

I could go very quickly through a number of other specific examples of major items being undertaken, particularly in the larger cities, but I think it is self-evident. The support for the Commonwealth Games and the facilities which that will bring to Edmonton; the Glenbow Museum and the facilities that will make available to the people in the Calgary metropolitan region -- are two pretty outstanding examples.

Insofar as the program of land assembly is concerned. I think the record of the Alberta Housing Corporation will show that there has been, in fact, an on-going program of land assembly in most municipal regions throughout Alberta. And every time one is announced, I believe the news service does send a notice of that to all hon. members.

Decentralization of course, is another important aspect of trying to cope effectively with the problems of urbanization. I admit that what has been undertaken within the last year in the overall picture is probably rather a small start, but nonetheless a significant one. I speak of the very welcome developments by way of the Agricultural Development Corporation and the housing it will bring to Camrose, the Alberta Opportunity Company and the housing and employees it will bring to the town of Ponoka, the development of our industrial park and the provincial facilities that are going in as a catalyst to the town of Airdrie and the very, very substantial direct involvement we have in the resource town of Fort McMurray. All of those are specific examples which, as far as I understand it, have been very warmly welcomed by the local councils of those areas because in many cases they mean that facilities that otherwise would have traditionally gone to the two metropolitan regions are now by conscious effort being directed to other parts of the province.

I appreciate also the remarks that have been made about urban renewal because certainly rehabilitation and restoration are going to be the major challenges facing us. The hon. Member for Lethbridge will I think recognize the significant development that is under way there, not only by way of land assembly but also with respect to the redevelopment of a major sector of the downtown core. There is direct provincial involvement there and after that involvement there will be physical evidence by way of a provincial building in the region. So that kind of thing is taking place.

I mentioned earlier that we can't do it alone. I don't think any province or any municipality in our country could do these kinds of things alone. That's why the matter of tri-level government participation and thinking on this is very important.

I think I can fairly say that Alberta has a very enthusiastic supporter and leader in the field of tri-level consultation. We made a very vigorous participation in the first tri-level conference that was held a year ago. We hope very much at this time that Alberta's invitation to hold the second tri-level conference in Alberta will be accepted. In addition to our hopes for hosting the national one here we presently have plans under way to hold an Alberta regional tri-level conference.

Other thoughts that come to my mind are the extended area services for telephones to try to upgrade the quality of life in the rural area. Very soon

our members will hear of the rural gas policy which again will bring substantial improvements to our rural way of life.

So it is a two way street, Mr. Chairman. I mention those very quick examples that came to mind while the hon. member was talking. But I have to say I agree with him. One of the biggest challenges, in my way of thinking, that faces any government will be to try to preserve a way of living which has quality involved in it, especially insofar as our urban centres are concerned, and not just quantity, which until very recently has been the traditional North American concept.

MR. NOTLEY:

Mr. Chairman, I would like to pose several questions to the minister with respect to development in the new town of Fort McMurray. There is no real doubt about the fact that McMurray is mushrooming as a growth centre. I was really quite impressed just before the Legislature opened with the problems. I spent several days in Fort McMurray and met with a number of the local people, and the conditions there, the rents, the mortgage cost, the residential lot costs, seemed to me by standards of the City of Edmonton to be rather unusually high.

I'm wondering perhaps, Mr. Chairman, if I might just lead off by asking the minister if he could advise the committee just what is the status today of government plans to provide for expansion of the town of Fort McMurray?

MR. RUSSELL:

Mr. Speaker, the hon. member has referred to a fantastically unique situation, at least in Canada if not in North America. That is this glamour town which serves as a service centre in the middle of an area rich in potential as far as resource development is concerned. The problem there, of course, was one of a past history of very erratic but dramatic growth, which had been based upon hopes and despair insofar as future regional development was concerned. But in any event, with that background, the potential there and the fact that it is essentially a company town, the fact that they had reverted to new town status, that there was a board of administration there that was really having to cope with difficulties that were regional in nature and not just municipal in the more traditional sense, the past history of land speculation within the Town of Fort McMurray is a most unhappy one. The record of the prices of lots and the dollars that have been involved in land exchanges is not a good one for Fort McMurray.

Notwithstanding that, with the potential Syncrude announcement in the offing and perhaps others beyond that, it became obvious that Fort McMurray would be the major service centre for the region for the next few immediate years anyway, and at least until town No. 2 is started somewhere in the region.

With that understanding the province, because it was getting feedback on a lot of problems with respect to town planning, housing, a high school site, location of industry and complaints of mobile home industries, decided to take a much higher than average direct involvement in the development of the town. We wanted to do this with the agreement of the town. Several months of discussion took place with the town board until finally early this year an agreement was reached whereby undertakings by the provincial government were made in the form of a commitment to the town and the work is well under way.

Briefly, what it involves is an expansion of the existing town into three areas lying generally to the south of the existing townsite. Two of these areas will be used for residential and the third area will be used for a mixture of a mobile home park and a variety of light industrial mixes. Along with that, that is the new outward expansion of the town, there is going to be a concerted effort to go back into the existing town, replan it, redevelop the parts that do need redeveloping and try to make what we think will be a first class resource industry new town insofar as North America is concerned.

The consortium of consultants has been hired. Alberta Housing Corporation has been appointed as the agent of the government to carry this out, and the planners we are using have also been appointed planners for the Town of Fort McMurray. So while they are planning the development of the new areas they will also tie that physical planning in for the redevelopment of the existing town.

Current things which are under way include such items as the removal from the main street of the existing Lands and Forests compound and helicopter landing site into a new area, area 6, the industrial area I referred to a moment ago; the provision of a high school site which is badly needed in the main portion of the town. We are endeavouring to establish as quickly as possible a

substantial land bank of residential lots along with a mobile home park that I earlier referred to. So those are the immediate priorities.

In the longer term the plan includes a program of land reclamation and flood control and a relocation of some of the objectionable industries from the existing townsite. Generally that is the broad outline of an approach to a town development that will probably level off at about the 15,000 population mark, which is about double of what it is now.

MR. NOTLEY:

Mr. Chairman, I have several specific questions, but before I pose those, I was interested in the minister's remark that he anticipates the town will level off at about 15,000 people. I gather that the present plan of the government is that Fort McMurray will not be allowed to become a major centre, that sub-towns will be developed.

I'm wondering just on what basis the government has arrived at this thesis, because it would seem to me that under normal circumstances one would expect that Fort McMurray would become the major centre. That means that if the area eventually supports 50,000 or 60,000 people, that population would live in Fort McMurray.

So I'm rather interested in hearing some more reasons as to why the government feels that several towns are preferable. Is it because of the shortage of land in the immediate vicinity of Fort McMurray that a ceiling of 15,000 people is being placed on the town? Or is it because of a new departure in terms of your municipal planning?

MR. RUSSELL:

Mr. Chairman, the answer to that is in two parts. First of all, there is a physical limitation with respect to the new areas I mentioned and a mixed density of housing around the 15,000 mark is the reasonable level that those areas would support. At that stage, if more people wanted to move into Fort McMurray, a jump across the river to the west would occur and further expansion would take place there.

I didn't mean to infer that Fort McMurray would stop at 15,000. I meant that in the plans for the town within the valley, the new areas under development now would accommodate about 15,000.

That takes us probably to a period four or five years hence, and at that time I think we will have a better idea from industry interested in locating in the area where they would be interested in housing their workers. Fifteen thousand also happens to accommodate the number of people who would be involved in the two plants, GCOS and Syncrude.

Indications we've had beyond that from industry that might go beyond the two plants is that they are not at this time necessarily interested in locating in Fort McMurray because of the distances involved. They would, in fact, rather examine the possibility of a second townsite in the area. That is projecting a few years ahead and there are some important hypotheses included in that. But we are planning, at least on a reasonable basis, for the 15,000 in the valley with the possibility then of a strong central town which could expand across the river to the west -- unlimited, if it wanted to, with a strong central core -- or at that time would have the option of establishing a second townsite some distance away.

MR. NOTLEY:

Well, Mr. Chairman, with respect to the option of establishing a second townsite, is the government giving any consideration at this time to planning so that land development is completely under public control through a land assembly program well ahead of time? Because you mentioned, Mr. Minister, the problems of land speculation, and it almost makes you cry when you see the prices that some people have to pay for lots in that community. I'm wondering whether or not it would be part of your advanced planning that the mistakes made in Fort McMurray the first time won't be permitted to happen a second time and that there will, in fact, be a land bank established well ahead of time while the land is still Crown land and before any speculators have an opportunity to move in, buy up land and then resell it to home-owners at exorbitant rates.

MR. RUSSELL:

Yes, Mr. Chairman, most of the land outside of the existing town boundaries for many, many miles in all directions is Crown land and we've put a freeze on that and there is no land exchange.

Athabasca Realty recently was involved in trying to acquire from the Crown additional land adjacent to land which they now own across the river, and we took a fair amount of criticism from them when we refused to go ahead with the exchange.

But for the very reasons the hon. member has outlined, it is certainly the government's intention to keep a very close control over land ownership in the region.

MR. NOTLEY:

Mr. Chairman, coming back to the specific problems of the town again. It is my understanding that the three areas, Mr. Minister, to be expanded are areas 1, 2 and 6. The area that the local town board had considered for some time was area 5. It was also my understanding that the reason that area 5 was rejected was the thought that you would in effect establish a competing town centre across the river from the central core.

However, I gather that Athabasca Realty are still going to proceed and construct 400 and some houses this year in area 5 anyway. So that being the case, I wonder what the rationale is for, in effect, choosing areas 1, 2 and 6. I'm told that the construction problems in areas 1 and 2, which I gather are slated for residential purposes, would be substantially greater than in area 5. Now I'm no architect, but this is what I've been advised by some of the local people. So I'm wondering just what the rationale is for the decision to move into areas 1 and 2 in preference to area 5 when, in fact, there seems to be some development taking place there anyway?

MR. RUSSELL:

Mr. Chairman, the member is correct in that the government did have serious concern about the fact that an expansion westward across the river at this time on the basis that had been contemplated, would in fact, start Town No. 2 and we thought severely hamper the present status of the existing town. And they have some serious problems.

We got an independent consultant to take a look at it and the consultant's recommendations were along the basis I outlined. It's for that very reason, and this is the significance of the solid town in the valley on the one side of the river with about 15,000 people upgraded in the central core, et cetera, that we hoped would provide the centre for a strong one-town concept should the expansion take place across the river. Hinton, I suppose, is a good example where a two-town concept was allowed to proceed and I think perhaps it's unfortunate that did occur. However, we learn by experience.

It's controversial. There is no question that there was strong local opinion as to whether the development should take place on one side of the river or in the valley. The arguments, pro and con, the construction problems that were advanced for either area and the costs were considered as carefully as they could have been. The various consultants, the engineering estimates for on-site and off-site servicing, the costs of acquiring the raw land, the soil conditions, all of these were taken into consideration. And all things being considered equal, finally the decision with the town board -- and it's important that the decision was reached with the town board, after months of controversy, there's no question about that: the town board is not unanimous -- we pointed out to them that when a decision was made, both parties would then have to go forward and get on with the job and enthusiastically support it whether it went across the river or in the valley. The consensus was that it should go in the valley and that is the basis we are proceeding on.

MR. NOTLEY:

Is the minister able to give the committee any idea of what the relative costs would have been for the purchase of residential lots in the two major areas, area 5 versus areas 1 and 2? Because I've received information from some of the local people which suggests, \$14,600 in areas 1 and 2, and I understand you've mentioned \$7,500 as a figure.

The controversy seems to centre around how much of the land and areas 1 and 2 that you are purchasing will, in fact, be usable for residential lot purposes.

So, do you have any additional information as to what it is actually going to cost the homeowner, the new people who are going to be moving into Fort McMurray as a result of this decision to strengthen the inner core?

I can appreciate the reasons you advanced for suggesting that we should be strengthening the inner-city core and that perhaps a new town at this stage might not be desirable. But if it's going to mean a substantial difference in the price of a lot to homeowners who come in, then it seems to me that we have to reassess how important it is to develop the city or the town as it is now located.

MR. RUSSELL:

As far as we are able to tell, Mr. Chairman, the costs are comparable in either location. Both consultants who have examined the costs and have provided estimates to government have hedged their estimates by saying they are only accurate within 5 or 10 per cent and are contingent upon this or that happening. But in any case, a very careful analysis was made of the development and raw land acquisition costs in both areas. Certainly, it's understood that areas 1, 2 and 6 had to be competitive, otherwise why proceed?

The best information we have at this time is that there is very little difference in the costs of lots. We can't say at this time in which area they might be less. Both consultants are using costs in the range of \$7,400 to \$7,600, somewhere around there. But again, both sets of proponents are using qualifications. In other words, you mentioned the fact that Athabasca Realty has decided to go ahead in their development anyway. I believe you are wrong in your numbers. It's about half that with which they have permission to proceed, and they probably won't receive permission to go any further for several years. But, of course, their unit costs were based on the fact that they could develop many, many hundreds of lots at one time and amortize the costs over many, so it depends on the method of financing.

The land density and the use to which we are able to put the entire site in the existing town is important, because it is quite possible that local commercial sites or apartment sites would, in fact, help subsidize or bring down the cost of the single family residential lot. So within those qualifications there are a number of unknown factors that have to be estimated to the best of everyone's ability. I can say that the costs to the homeowner in either case appear to be equal and are around the \$7,400 to \$7,600 mark at this time.

MR. NOTLEY:

I have one final question, and it's one of a more general nature that really relates totally to company towns, not just Fort McMurray. This is true, I believe, of Grande Cache as well, where the company sets up a realty company, a sub-company, and when workers come in they buy their homes from this realty company. But there is a clause in the contract that for the first ten years the company can buy the house back at the price that the individual paid for it. In other words, the individual doesn't enjoy any capital gain at all.

It seems to me that in a place like Fort McMurray this really takes away the whole meaning of home ownership, because capital gains, where you have rising land values, are supposedly one of the things that we can expect in a free enterprise society. But yet in Fort McMurray, if a worker is laid off by GCOS or fired, or for one reason or another has to leave the town, when he moves the company has the right to repurchase the home at the price he paid for it, and it may be, in terms of current market value, \$10,000 or \$12,000 less than it's worth today.

I'm wondering whether or not the government has given any consideration to how we can deal with this sort of problem. Because it seems to me that it's extremely unfair that we should allow realty companies, which are really sub-operations of the major company developing in the area, or any realty company for that matter, to put people who, by desperation -- because there is no other choice of housing; they have to buy from this firm -- to put them in a position where they lose their capital gain.

MR. RUSSELL:

Well, I agree that it's probably not a desirable situation to have the subsidiary real estate or development company of the company that formed the company town handling housing in the way you mentioned.

However, in this case I think we must be fair. If Athabasca Realty had not been there several years ago when the plant was developing, it's probably

unlikely that the workers there would have the housing they do have. The housing -- again give credit to the company -- is fairly attractive. The subdivisions are well laid out and there has been a sensitivity in trying to retain natural tree growth and provide pleasant neighbourhoods. So the company has done that. I don't think they have approached their responsibilities in a gouging kind of manner. They have also given a substantial break, as I understand it, to the worker at the time of purchasing the house, and on the other hand this is balanced by the clause which the member referred to.

I don't know -- until we get other developers in there and other forms of housing which provide competition and a better mix, I suppose we are stuck with that situation as it now exists. It is good housing and certainly the people who are in it are comfortably and well housed and the company deserves credit in that regard because I suppose they didn't really have to do it.

Insofar as trying to provide a mix is concerned, we are trying to encourage other developers to go in and build not only other housing but other forms of housing. At the same time, one of the things that has been mentioned to Athabasca Realty is that instead of you guys going across the river and developing 250 lots, why don't you come in with us and we will give you 250 lots on a mix basis at a fair purchase price in the area we're developing so you don't get another neighbourhood or enclave with 250 company employees all by themselves across the river.

I guess what I am trying to say is, there are social, aesthetic and financial aspects to this. At the present time the province can deal to a limited degree with all aspects but not entirely.

MR. NOTLEY:

Just one final observation. Certainly as far as the accommodation is concerned, it seems reasonable enough. I'm not quarrelling with the quality of the building, but I was especially impressed with one lady who came to me at a public meeting. They had been in the community for several years and they had to move and all they were getting back from their house was about \$100, but because of the population pressures their house was probably worth \$5,000 or \$6,000 more on the market. It seems to me that is a particularly unfair situation.

To what extent do you feel that in a town like Fort McMurray the government has a responsibility to do more than would be the situation in a normal community where you have rapid growth because of expanding industrial production, where you have the kind of situation where normal growth projections, even the growth projections you can predict for Calgary or Edmonton, just don't apply? To what extent do you feel the government has a responsibility to go beyond current steps and provide, for example, substantial public housing as an alternative?

MR. RUSSELL:

Mr. Chairman, I don't agree that public housing is the answer, because public housing is supposed to be designed for persons of low or limited income who have difficulty in acquiring housing, and that is not the case of the typical worker in the Fort McMurray area.

I think government has a responsibility to try and ensure that the various kinds of housing that are needed in an area like this are provided. As I see it, there are three kinds; there is the single family detached home, and I have already explained how not only the company but hopefully other developers on a free, competitive market would provide that housing.

Two, I think there has to be rental or high-density housing for the families who go there and don't necessarily want to have the responsibility of the ranch-style bungalow and the big driveway and yard to look after in the Fort McMurray region. Today I have to say I am encouraged by the most recent reports that indicate there is liable to be a substantial program of development by the private sector in the provision of that kind of housing.

The third thing, because of the unique nature of the town, is that there obviously have to be good facilities for the provision of mobile homes by way of mobile home subdivisions. The figures industry has given us in this curve that peaks and then goes back down again, are that if Syncrude goes ahead and the growth of the town takes place, there will be, a couple of years from now, a peak in population which will comprise mainly construction workers who are temporary. Strangely enough, when the construction workers withdraw, the permanent staff for the new plant are fewer in number than the construction

workers. So when you finally reach about the 15,000 level where the permanent workers and their families are there, that is about 1,800 less than when the thing is under construction. Yet some sort of decent temporary housing has to be supplied for the construction workers. There are a couple of construction camps that are not satisfactory in a family way. It's in specific areas like that, in the provision of a mobile home park which the Alberta Housing Corporation is going to build, that I think we can make a significant contribution.

MR. HO LEM:

Mr. Chairman, to the minister still on the subject of Fort McMurray. As you know, any town that is going to develop in an orderly fashion must be financially sound. In Fort McMurray they have a great financial pressure on the town itself. You will recall that the per capita debt in Fort McMurray is perhaps seven or eight or even ten times above the norm.

I understand that the revenues raised through taxes hardly meet payments on the interest, let alone try to retire some of the capital. This is a problem facing the Town of Fort McMurray, and I was wondering whether the government -- I know that you are interested -- had considered advancing interest free loans to this town so it can get over this initial difficulty which is no fault of theirs but because of the influx of people coming all at once. I can see that the pressures are going to be on for the next few years. Certainly the people of Fort McMurray are interested not only in the aesthetics of planning but are surely, very, very much interested in the financial aspects of it.

MR. RUSSELL:

Yes, Mr. Chairman. That is exactly why Fort McMurray several years ago reverted to new town status so that although it is not a new town -- it is a very, very old establishment that is undergoing rapid growth -- it can take advantage of the new town legislation and the financial advances that come to it from the province.

As you are probably aware, through the new town legislation and regulation by the Local Authorities Board, the borrowing and the debt repayment is kept pretty well under reasonable control. By that I mean the balance of payment is held in check until such time as the town has developed to the stage where it can reasonably support it. At that time the town would make application to revert to regular town status and away they go and rely on their taxpayers to support this debt. But there is no question whatsoever -- and Grande Cache is a fantastic example -- if you think the borrowing in Fort McMurray is bad you should see the debt owing against Grande Cache where there is a real problem because the population is decreasing there and they need an increasing population to try to reach the point where the taxpayers can support it.

But in both cases there is some hope because, of course, both towns are in a resource development area, in an industrial ID, and as such are the recipients of substantial tax transfers from the owners of industrial development outside of the town boundaries. So there is very, very heavy financial contribution by way of property taxation of the GCOS plant 22 miles away which reverts back to the new town.

MR. DIXON:

Mr. Chairman, there are two things I would like to touch on briefly regarding the parks policy and the change that has happened in the last twelve months where we are going into the larger cities as a province and buying up land. The hon. Member for Calgary McCall has mentioned some of the problems that have arisen, the freezing of land and the anxiety of some of the developers in the area at how long their land will be tied up with this freeze and how the thing is going to be connected, where you take an area that cuts off and a barrier is created between where the development terminated and where it starts again. I was wondering if you had consultations with the city and what your ideas are on overcoming some of those problems.

The other problem, Mr. Chairman to the minister, is that as I go over the minutes of the regional planning commissions in the Calgary district, and I imagine it's the same for the Edmonton district, I get the distinct impression that there hasn't been too much liaison between the district planning commission and the province as far as a park plan for major cities is concerned. You may say, well why are you concerned about that because the park is going to be built in the city limits? This is correct up to a point, but they are also working on parks development within the outside area of the city and we do know too that there is city representation on the regional planning commission.

I gathered from reading some of the minutes that there was some -- I shouldn't say anxiety -- but some question as to where they could get better liaison between the provincial government and its parks plan for major cities and the overall Regional Planning Commission. I was wondering if the minister had any thoughts on a closer liaison with them. What are we planning to do to make them aware of this before it happens so they can sort of say to the province, well look, you are going to go ahead there, but what about this, couldn't we have a combination of both -- or whatever the problem may be?

MR. RUSSELL:

Mr. Chairman, dealing with the matter of regional planning commissions and specifically the way it ties into the urban parts, as well each commission has at least one and in most cases more provincial department representatives, usually from Highways, Lands and Forests and in some cases -- I don't know what the other departments are. But at least there is civil service representation on the planning commission in addition to the financial contribution the province makes.

The policy, of course, was well debated a year previously in this Legislature about the desirability of providing provincial parks within the urban or metropolitan regions. As a government we decided, after hearing the debate and the representations, that it made a good deal of sense to provide these park facilities where there are such heavy concentrations of people. On that basis it was decided initially to proceed with the two major parks, one for Calgary and one in Edmonton. There was some case of urgency in the City of Calgary, in that there was heavy local representation to establish a park in the Fish Creek area. There is no question that interested citizens were concerned that in Fish Creek, which is rather unique and on the brink of development, the development was held back by delaying tactics of the city officials. If, in fact, a park was to go ahead there then action would have to be taken very, very quickly. It became obvious from discussions Calgary city council was having that they couldn't afford to finance such a major undertaking.

The government acted very quickly and, by way of freezing the land on one side of the highway and actually acquiring it on the east side of the highway, established the park and announced it. This was necessary for two reasons: there was danger of imminent development within the park, and secondly, it's a unique area. There just are not many wooded creek valleys in the City of Calgary as attractive as Fish Creek.

So I'm certain that in the case of the City of Edmonton, because the policy has been announced -- they know they are getting it -- and because the various planning bodies will have a chance to assess alternative sites, there won't be the pressure there was in the case of Fish Creek.

But insofar as ongoing planning is concerned, we have been assured by the city through its mayor that there will be protective zoning adjacent to the park as well as a rigid control we have established in the park area itself. Everybody is concerned about the fact that they don't want service stations or highrise apartments hanging over the boundaries of the park. I noticed a recent clipping in the Calgary Herald showed that the city had, in fact in the South Canyon Meadows area, taken a fairly firm stand on the development of a service station because they felt that was too close to the park boundary.

So these things are starting to happen. There was a case of urgency in the City of Calgary which is being well handled through cooperative planning by the two governments. I expect we will have a chance to assess the situation a little better, in the case of Edmonton, where the urgency isn't so high.

MR. DIXON:

Well, Mr. Chairman, a further question. It may be an unfair question to the minister but I was just wondering, with the fact that my motion for an Order for a Return requesting information on the park in Calgary was turned down, how long does the government plan -- within months or weeks -- on having this secrecy about the purchase of the park?

MR. RUSSELL:

Are you referring to Calgary or Edmonton?

MR. DIXON:

The Calgary one, because the announcement has already been made. A number of purchases have been made so there is no secrecy as far as the fact that the province is going to purchase the land. The land freeze is on.

I have requests from people to find out about the cost of it and the land acquired but I wasn't able to get it through an Order for a Return. I got it from the refusal that they didn't want to do it at this time, but I just wondered how long we are going to hold this away from the public because it is a big amount of money and they are anxious to find out just where the money has gone.

MR. RUSSELL:

Well certainly there is no question that the latest information you would want would come forth out of public accounts for this current year. The payments would have to show in there. I am not certain if the last parcel on the east side of the river has been acquired yet. I know you yourself, because of your profession, understand the dangers involved in releasing land prices when you are still negotiating on the park next door. Now I am guessing, because I don't recall the exact wording of the member's Motion for a Return, but there was a time when some of the Burns property, although it was under option, had still not been acquired and perhaps that is the reason. But certainly I can see it at public accounts time where there would have to be full disclosure if it is wanted.

MR. DIXON:

[Inaudible]...There are still one or two people living in the area. Naturally their concern is what the future holds for them. Has the government made an announcement that these people can continue to live there as long as they want, or as long as their property is sold to the government when they eventually do decide to sell it, or are we going to expropriate?

MR. RUSSELL:

Are you talking about the east or west side?

MR. DIXON:

West side.

MR. RUSSELL:

Oh, the west side. I don't think there is an urgency there. Now that the park has been announced development control has been put on. As far as I know, maybe the Minister of Lands and Forests wants to elaborate on this, there is no desire to force people out in a hurry.

But on the other hand, it is something like the government area across the avenue here. They can stay there as long as they want but when they do decide to do something it has to go to the province. I am not ruling out the possibility of expropriation because I don't know how many years down the road you are looking, but there has already been a substantial investment by the province in land acquisition and I would think -- I am guessing now -- that it would hold at that level for some time, as long as the protective freezing is on the other side.

I am getting a little outside of the responsibilities of municipal affairs now and when we get into those detailed questions you should perhaps ask our Minister of Lands and Forests.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Any further questions or comments?

Appropriation 2101 agreed to: \$54,390

Agreed to without debate:

<u>Appropriation 2102</u>	General Administration	\$603,020
<u>Appropriation 2103</u>	Tax Recovery Branch	\$135,150
<u>Appropriation 2104</u>	Liaison Office	\$110,730

Appropriation 2106 Assessment

MR. KOZIAK:

Mr. Chairman, I'd like to say a few words on the whole area of assessment which now comes up under Appropriations 2106, 2107 and 2108.

Mr. Chairman, during yesterday's debate the hon. Member for Ponoka stated that the Province of Alberta has one of the worst taxation systems in Canada, or words to that effect. Now the hon. Member for Calgary Millican wrongly interpreted that remark --

MR. LUDWIG:

Mr. Chairman, on a point of order the hon. member --

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Mr. Ludwig, would you please take your place in the Assembly.

MR. LUDWIG:

Mr. Chairman, there is no rule saying that I have to but I will.

MR. KOZIAK:

Mr. Chairman, yes, the hon. Member for Calgary Millican --

MR. CHAIRMAN:

What is the point of order, Mr. Ludwig?

MR. LUDWIG:

The point of order is that the hon. member who is now speaking missed the significant point that the hon. Member for Ponoka made. The hon. Member for Ponoka apologized for misleading the House with his statements so he shouldn't quote that as an authority any more. He is really compounding a statement that wasn't true and it's not in the interest of his members to have a thing like that develop in this House.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Continue, Mr. Koziak.

MR. KOZIAK:

Thank you. Mr. Chairman, as I was saying the hon. Member for Calgary Millican wrongly interpreted these remarks to refer to all of the taxation we have in the province including sales tax, income tax and such other taxation --

MR. HENDERSON:

Have you got a sales tax coming?

[Interjections]

MR. KOZIAK:

Yes, Mr. Chairman, now I'm ready, I'm all dressed.

Mr. Chairman, the comments that the hon. Member for Ponoka made yesterday were with respect to the property tax and not with respect to the other levels of taxation and this is the particular matter that I would like to comment on this afternoon.

Mr. Chairman, as we are well aware, the City of Edmonton and perhaps other municipalities are now going through a reassessment process as required under The Municipal Taxation Act. The comments which I have to make, Mr. Chairman, are with respect to the provisions of The Municipal Taxation Act and how I feel that perhaps we should consider changes in that Act in order to correct what I think could be problems in the area of taxation.

I have a few examples, Mr. Chairman, which would probably be of interest to the members of the committee and I would like to give them to the members.

In the first place, Mr. Chairman, there is an office building in downtown Edmonton approximately 18 or 20 storeys in height. Mr. Chairman, on the basis of that assessment, taxes for 1972 were \$147,356.49. Now the City of Edmonton when it sent out its reassessment notices accompanied these assessment notices with an explanation which would enable the recipient to be able to calculate whether the assessment was correct in view of land values, market values, et cetera.

In this particular case the City of Edmonton's mill rate in 1972 was 78.83 mills. In the explanation sheet which they sent out with their assessment they suggested that the mill rate in 1972 on the basis of the new assessment would have been 51.66 mills. Mr. Chairman, using that mill rate and calculating the new assessment of this office building which this year is \$1,651,730 for building and \$529,250 for land, the taxes last year on this building would have been \$112,669.42. Now, Mr. Chairman, that is \$34,687.07 less than what in fact the taxes were last year, in other words a decrease of almost 20 per cent.

On contacting the City of Edmonton recently I find that they are using a suggested or proposed mill rate for 1973, on the basis of the new assessment, of approximately 55 mills. Now, using that mill rate on the new assessment, I calculate that the taxes in 1973 will be \$119,953 which, Mr. Chairman, is still \$27,000 less than the taxes for that same building for last year.

A further example, Mr. Chairman, with respect to a highrise apartment, approximately 10 storeys in height, containing in the neighbourhood of 90 suites: the taxes on the basis of the old mill rate of 78.83 and the old assessment, Mr. Speaker, of \$533,660 were \$42,000 and some dollars for 1972. On the basis of the new assessment and the suggested mill rate of 51.66 for 1972, the taxes for that building, Mr. Chairman, in 1972 would have been \$33,772.20; \$9,000 less than they, in fact, were.

Contrast that, Mr. Chairman, with a house in my constituency, which is situated on a 33 ft. by 132 ft. lot, a house that is approximately 30 years old, a two bedroom home, what I would class as slightly below average. The assessment for that particular house -- now I might point out that this is not a homeowner occupied home; it's a house that is rented out by its owner -- the assessment on that house, Mr. Chairman, is \$10,930. Now, the assessment last year, Mr. Chairman, was \$5,020.

On the 78.83 mill rate the taxes on that house last year were \$395.73. Projecting the 51.66 mills that the city suggested would be applicable to 1972 taxes, had the present assessment been used in that year, would have meant that the taxes in 1972 would have been \$564.64, or an increase of \$168.91, almost a 50 per cent increase.

So what we have Mr. Chairman, is a situation where the office building and the highrise apartment have gone down substantially and the house has gone up substantially.

A further example, Mr. Chairman, in respect to land in the City of Edmonton. A couple of examples: a quarter section of land that was annexed about a year or two ago from the County of Parkland. The 1972 assessment of this land was \$4,160; the taxes were \$327 -- that was after annexation from the County of Parkland to the City of Edmonton. This year's assessment for the same land is \$415,580, more than 100 times the assessment of last year.

Another parcel of land, Mr. Chairman, which is half a mile directly north of that parcel, along the same north-south plane which was annexed at the same time as this parcel that I've mentioned was assessed in 1972 at \$4,840 and assessed in 1973 at \$5,080.

Now the difference between the two parcels, Mr. Chairman, is simply this. In the case of the one parcel, that parcel of land is vacant, and it is owned by a corporation, leased out for farming purposes. True, it is held for the purpose of ultimate development into city residential lots. The parcel which is north of it and which has retained its assessment is occupied by a farmer. His house is situated on the land and he, in fact, farms it. Again, the difference in assessment in the case of the same land, or land which is just a mile north on the same north-south plane, is \$5,080 for 1973. In the case of the other one which is vacant, \$415,580. Now, Mr. Chairman, immediately adjacent to this farmer occupied quarter-section of land are 80 acres of land -- immediately adjacent, directly to the north. Both these parcels will come for development at exactly the same time in terms of residential lots and what have you. That 80 acre parcel of land is assessed at \$306,730. And that is immediately next to a parcel of land, twice its size, just as ripe for development, which is assessed at \$5,080.

These are examples of what happens in the City of Edmonton. Just outside the City of Edmonton in the County of Strathcona is a parcel of land which a year or two ago was purchased for \$160,000. The assessment for both 1972 and 1973 is \$5,970. Now if that parcel of land is worth \$160,000, and the presumption, of course, must be that it is, in view of the fact that that much was paid for it, then why isn't it assessed at market? The difference is that it is outside the City of Edmonton.

Another example of a recent sale of approximately 400 acres in the county listed at \$1,200,000 and sold -- I don't know for what price. The assessment, \$16,190.

We find, Mr. Chairman, that buildings which have an abundance of land and which provide such services as parking, in the nature of shopping centres, hotel complexes which provide parking for their tenants, have seen a substantial increase in the proposed 1973 taxes. Similar types of businesses which do not provide the amenities of parking find that their proposed taxes for 1973 would, in fact, be reduced.

I'm concerned about this, Mr. Chairman. I see an office building where the taxes will, in all likelihood, be reduced by approximately \$27,000. It's a situation where the effect of that really isn't felt by the people who pay it -- not in the same sense as the house where the taxes are increased. The same situation applies with the highrise apartment where the taxes are reduced \$12,000. Will that reduction be passed on to the tenants? I doubt it.

The problem, Mr. Chairman, is found in this particular Act, The Municipal Taxation Act. It's an Act that's been with us for some time, Mr. Chairman, and changes will have to be made to that Act. Presently, we find that the Act requires land to be assessed at its fair actual value. Now fair actual value, Mr. Chairman, is \$5,080 in the case of one quarter-section, and \$306,000 in the case of one-half of a quarter section, both next to each other, both worth as much per acre, but because one is farmer-occupied and the other is not, that is the determination of fair actual value.

Now I can't see that that's equitable, Mr. Chairman, at all. If an assessment is going to be used throughout this province which is equitable, then fair actual value should be applied equally to all properties. There should be no exceptions to that rule. It doesn't matter what that land is used for. If a willing purchaser is willing to pay 'X' number of dollars and that is an established fact, that is the criteria to be used for the establishment of fair actual value. That should apply equally throughout the province and it shouldn't be artificially affected by a \$40 per acre ceiling.

If we are going to use the \$40 per acre ceiling on farm lands, then we have to take another approach to these other lands because a farmer can equally be a speculator as anybody else. There is no rule, Mr. Chairman, that provides that everybody else is a speculator but a farmer is something else. He can just as equally be a speculator in the case of rising values as anybody else, and that individual should play the game in the same fashion as everybody else.

The Act also provides that buildings and improvements be assessed in a manner provided for by regulation and by the assessment manual. Now the assessment manual is a very technical, well-thought out document and provides for assessment on the basis of cost of materials that are included in the construction of the improvement which is found on the land. And pretty well the same standards are used throughout the province. It doesn't matter whether it is Coumts, whether it is Fort McMurray, whether it's Edmonton, whether it's Red Deer or Calgary. If there are 1,000 square feet of tile of a given quality, that 1,000 square feet of tile is assessed at the same value in every location.

However, it is not assessed at its full actual value. The explanation sheet which the City of Edmonton sent out with its assessment for the coming year sets out that improvements, except in the case of single family lots, are being assessed at approximately 32 per cent of market value, and single family homes are assessed at approximately 26 per cent of market value.

In fact land, they say in the same document, is assessed at 65 per cent of market value. Now in the case of the comparison of land to improvements, eliminating the difference between single family and other improvements would mean that land is assessed at twice what improvements are assessed on a relative basis. In other words, \$2 of land and \$2 of improvements are not the same thing. What you have is really approximately \$2 of improvements equal to \$1 of land in the assessment process.

That is what creates some of the problems that I see developing today. We are involved in a high land escalation where the values of land are accelerating beyond belief. That brings home the problem that the Act in its present form creates.

Where a parcel of land is fully developed with no provision for parking, with no other amenities, that combined unit of building and land really receives a benefit under this system and that is the benefit that I suggested existed when I described the particular office building in the City of Edmonton where the taxes would be dropping by approximately \$27,000 or more than 20 per cent. That same building, had it been situated on a large parcel of land that provided parking, in the same fashion that a lot of the shopping centres in town do, in the same fashion as some of the hotel complexes do, the taxes would have increased substantially rather than decreased.

Now it may be that as a product that can create revenue the parcel of land may have no ability. It may have some future ability on the resale but its ability to create an economic return on a continuous basis would be limited. Whereas a building such as a highrise apartment, such as a highrise office building, has an immediate income producing ability and an ability to pay taxes. So what we then have as a result of this procedure is a situation where the particular property with the most ability to pay sees a reduction in taxes; the highrise apartment, the highrise office building, and the property with the least ability to pay, vacant land sees a substantial increase, in some of these cases increases of 100 times not 100 per cent, but 100 times the assessment of the previous year.

Part of the problem that has been created in the City of Edmonton, particularly in the area of the residential property -- and by residential I include rented, homeowner occupied, et cetera -- is the alarming increase in the cost of serviced lots in the last three or four, five or six years.

Mr. Chairman, the blame for this has been placed on speculators, on developers, and I sometimes question that. I have personal experience of one situation where in 1968, one of Edmonton's larger developers, builders, land speculators if you might want to call it that, sold to a client of mine 10 lots for \$2,300 per lot plus the cost of local improvements. Within nine months my client resold that very same land to the very developer, speculator, builder, that he purchased it from, for \$3,900 plus improvements, an increase of \$1,600.

Mr. Chairman, even that particular person, knowledgeable in the development business, in the construction business, didn't know what was happening in the City of Edmonton. All of a sudden the lots ran out. The lots ran out, as if a steel belt were placed around the City of Edmonton. The demand didn't change, Mr. Chairman, the demand kept growing; people still wanted to live in Edmonton; jobs were available; they wanted to move here. But the supply was limited, the supply was limited. What happens when you interfere with the supply, with an increasing demand? The price of lots go up.

So we have a situation where in the last five or six years, the price of lots has gone up four or five times what they were five or six years ago. Now the people who live on those lots, their ability to pay hasn't increased by four or five times. Perhaps it has gone up -- if you take an average of 6 or 7 per cent -- maybe 24, maybe 35 per cent, but not 400 or 500 per cent. They are caught in the middle of this. Where does the blame for this lie? I can't speak definitely, but I wonder where the fathers of the City of Edmonton were at the time when the supply of lots ran out.

Mr. Chairman, we don't live on an island; we are not surrounded by the ocean; we are not like the Dutch where we have to build out into the sea. We have prairie all around us as far as the eye can see. If somebody said there is no land in Edmonton to build on, he would be laughed at. But the problem I raise is, where were the fathers of the City of Edmonton when the supply of lots ran out? What have they done about it since?

That has, of course, affected the cost of land in the City of Edmonton and is reflected in the assessment that we now see. Now of course, that alone did not account for that increase because in Calgary, in other centres, we also find an increase in the cost of land, but I don't think as substantial as in Edmonton, and the difference between the two, I think, has something to do with the

So what we have, Mr. Chairman, is a situation where, I find, my particular piece of property has increased in value. At first blush, you would think by reason of that I should pay an increased property tax, but all that has been

done, is an inflationary factor has been dovetailed in with my piece of property, but my income, my ability to pay, hasn't increased correspondingly.

So I say, Mr. Chairman, that what this new assessment in the city of Edmonton, and perhaps in Stettler and other municipalities, bears out is that we must look at this Municipal Taxation Act very, very seriously and very carefully. Because we have something, we have inherited something as the hon. Member for Ponoka mentioned in his debate on the Alberta Tax Reduction Plan yesterday evening, and that is, one of the worst property tax situations in Canada. I have to agree with him wholeheartedly and the figures I have quoted surely bear that out. Surely when properties lie side by side, one assessed at \$360,000 for 80 acres and the other at \$5,000 for 160 acres; if that's an equitable system you have handed us, and you say that is not the worst property tax system in Canada, then again there is a large, large credibility gap on that side of the House.

MR. ZANDER:

Mr. Chairman, I believe the hon. member was quite correct when he said that. This document here is a study made by Hedley, Menzies, Hu Harries and Associates of the city in 1969 and was submitted to the former government.

There is a difference in the equalization of assessment of properties in the province that I don't agree with. If we take it on a per pupil basis, and I think this can only be recognized, it quotes 33 municipalities and also quotes the cities of Edmonton, Calgary and Red Deer on a per pupil basis on an equalized assessment in both the rural and urban areas. And may I quote just some of them.

In the town of Pincher Creek the assessment per pupil is about \$5,450. In the rural areas it's \$12,800. It's 100 per cent higher. In the village of Rockyview the assessment was \$3,840 per pupil, but in the rural areas it's \$11,000. Let's take Starland -- \$5,400 per pupil, and in the rural areas \$15,060.

Now we are basing our grant on the 30 mills on the equalized assessment and we have allocated the funds on a per pupil basis. Let's look at the City of Edmonton. In 1969 the per pupil assessment for equalization was \$6,784. In the City of Calgary it was \$7,196, and in the City of Red Deer, \$5,585.

I have long said, Mr. Chairman, that the assessment manuals which are prepared -- perhaps by the department, but I don't know who prepares them -- should have been chucked out of the window many years ago. When I look at the Town of Leduc where the assessment per pupil is \$5,080, and in the rural areas \$12,300, I think there is a need for the government to come to grips with the Assessment Act in total.

I just wanted to mention this, Mr. Chairman, at this time. I wanted to substantiate the facts the hon. Member for Edmonton Strathcona has just mentioned.

MR. HENDERSON:

I would like to ask the minister one question. It relates to No. 2107 technically but I hope we can deal with it now under the general question of assessment. I hope the minister has access to a few Solomons to solve the problems of fair actual value, but I suspect this debate will be going on years and years from now.

I am wondering, Mr. Chairman, if the minister could comment on what specifically is the responsibility of the Equalization Board in dealing with the problems of equalization with communities such as Calgary or Edmonton where the city follows its own assessment rules as opposed to adhering to the provincial assessment manual. I am thinking of the circumstances which have developed. Words have been stated inside the minister's remarks and those of the Mayor of Edmonton about the error in this factor which accounts for the situation that has existed in Edmonton.

What is the responsibility of the Assessment Equalization Board to examine the figures that are submitted by the municipality with a view to ascertaining that the proper factors are applied to see that the equalization is carried out effectively? I am not being critical but I just want to know what the board is. On the surface it really seems to me that the problem of assessment with the situation relevant to Edmonton, was that while Edmonton prepared the assessment figures, the board did the equalization calculations and should have picked up the particular factor which has caused the situation that developed last year.

Does the board not ordinarily go through -- particularly in the municipalities where the provincial manual is not adhered to as the basis for assessment? Do they not check those factors out when they go through the calculation of the equalization basis? It seems to me they should be. I don't quite understand how that error slipped through without the board catching it.

MR. RUSSELL:

I think there are probably several parts to that answer, Mr. Chairman. First of all on a general basis, assessment is carried out in all parts of the province by provincial assessors other than in the cities of Calgary and Edmonton. There it is Calgary and Edmonton doing the routine year by year work.

In the case of re-assessment in the City of Edmonton, it is my understanding that because of the heavy workload they brought in extra assessors. Some were borrowed from the province. I don't know if any were obtained from some of the private firms in the province that do this work on a contract basis or not. Hu Harries & Associates, for example, is one that does that kind of work. But in any case they all use the same manual, so the manual is constant.

Where the difference has come is that the manuals are upgraded on increments of about, what is it, four or five years. I can check that figure more accurately. Anyway depending on when a city's or a municipality's re-assessment cycle occurs, they may have just caught the last assessment manual, the last year of the last assessment manual, or maybe they are the first municipality to go on to the first year of the use of the new assessment manual. That is a further complicating factor.

As far as I know, the Assessment Equalization Board does not, unless it is specifically asked, review the submission that has been made to it by the municipality. In other words, the report of the live assessment for that year is put in along with the factor of what the assessment official believes is the proper ratio of assessed value to current market value. This year is a very good example of where, despite the fact that an error has been proved, I'm sure everybody in the past four or five years was working to the best of their ability. But they failed to recognize the fantastic increase in land values. Now if that is an excuse or not I don't know. But it is a fact that where these errors have occurred is primarily in the assessment of land.

The Equalization Board then takes a live or actual assessment as has been turned in by the responsible official along with the factor that the official submits. They take into consideration the list of properties that are supported by grants in lieu of taxes by the federal and provincial governments, as opposed to a straight property taxation, and go through some other refinements and come up with what they call the equalized assessment.

They then apply, getting from the Department of Education and the Minister of Education whatever the mill rate levy is to be for the Education Foundation Fund, the amount to be applied to the municipality. So in that case 30 mills times the equalized assessment equals "X" million dollars. That is submitted back to the municipality. They take their live assessment and apply the equivalent mill rate, not necessarily 30, to raise the equal amount. And that's how it works.

DR. HORNER:

Mr. Chairman, I move the committee rise, report progress and ask leave to sit again.

MR. HENDERSON:

Mr. Chairman, I wonder if I might ask the minister one more question just to pursue this point?

DR. HORNER:

The vote is open.

MR. HENDERSON:

OK.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

We'll revert to that.

Moved by the hon. Deputy Premier that we rise and report again. Is that agreed?

HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

[Mr. Chairman left the Chair.]

* * * * *

[Mr. Speaker resumed the Chair.]

MR. DIACHUK:

Mr. Speaker, the Committee of Supply has had under consideration certain estimates, reports progress, and begs leave to sit again.

MR. SPEAKER:

Having heard the report and the request for leave to sit again, do you all agree?

HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

ORDERS OF THE DAY (CONT.)

MR. LOUGHEED:

Mr. Speaker, I wonder if I could have leave to revert to Orders of the Day?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

MR. LUDWIG:

Mr. Speaker, does this require unanimous consent to return to Orders of the Day?

DR. HORNER:

No.

MR. LUDWIG:

I believe it does.

MR. SPEAKER:

I heard no dissenting voice.

MR. LUDWIG:

There is my dissenting voice, Mr. Speaker. My answer is no.

DR. HORNER:

Mr. Speaker, I then move that we revert to the Orders of the Day so the Premier can make an announcement.

MR. LUDWIG:

Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. I believe that a motion of this nature requires unanimous consent and I did not give my consent. I don't believe there is any way to get around that.

DR. HORNER:

Well, Mr. Speaker, on the point of order raised by the hon. member a motion of this nature does not require unanimous consent if the motion is made. It requires unanimous consent only to get the approval of the House to do so. If

the approval of the House is not forthcoming, then a motion is in order and I so move.

MR. SPEAKER:

I know of no authority which requires unanimous consent on an occasion of this kind. I'll consider the matter further. In the meantime I propose to put the motion by the hon. Deputy Premier, seconded by the hon. Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs.

[The motion was carried.]

MINISTERIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

MR. LOUGHEED:

Mr. Speaker, I have today received from Chief Justice J. V. H. Milvain, the Chief Justice of the Trial Division of the Supreme Court of Alberta, the report under The Public Inquiries Act which was appointed by the Royal Commission dated the 20th of February, 1973.

This commission directed the Chief Justice to inquire into the allegations made by the hon. Member for Drumheller of the Legislative Assembly of Alberta with respect to the committal of one Frank Joseph Edward Davy to the Alberta Hospital, Edmonton, and to report thereon, and in particular, to inquire into and report on:

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

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

(3) whether there was any misconduct or any improper act on the part of any member of the Executive Council, any employee, or agent or person acting on behalf of the government or the Workmen's Compensation Board.

The Report, Mr. Speaker, has just been received and has not yet been considered by the Executive Council. But due to its nature, I felt that it was only appropriate to deliver a copy to the Member for Drumheller and to give an opportunity for the public and the members to be aware of the contents. I'll table, Mr. Speaker, three copies of the Report.

In summary, the Report reaches the following conclusions:

1. Frank Joseph Edward Davy was admitted to the Alberta Hospital, Edmonton, on Tuesday, the 19th day of December, 1972.
2. He left the hospital on Tuesday, the 23rd day of January, 1973.
3. His admission and detention in the Alberta Hospital, Edmonton, was in accordance with the laws of Canada and Alberta.
4. His admission to the said hospital was pursuant to a certificate properly issued under the provisions of Section 7 of the Mental Health Act of Alberta. (1970, R.S.A. Chapter 231.)
5. His continued detention in the said hospital was pursuant to a renewal certificate, properly issued under the provisions of the said Act.
6. There was no misconduct or improper act on the part of:
 - (a) any member of the Executive Council in the Province of Alberta; or
 - (b) any employee, agent, or other person acting on behalf of the Government of Alberta; or
 - (c) The Workmen's Compensation Board of the Province of Alberta or any of its officers or employees or any other persons acting on its behalf, in connection with such admission and detention.

7. All persons concerned acted bona fide and with reason in their handling of a very difficult situation which resulted in the admission of Mr. Davy to and his detention in the Alberta Hospital, Edmonton.
8. There is no foundation whatsoever for thinking Mr. Davy was a political prisoner in any sense.
9. There is no foundation for any suggestions that any improper pressures political or otherwise, were brought to bear upon the admission or detention of Mr. Davy in the Alberta Hospital, Edmonton.
10. There is no foundation whatsoever to any allegation or thought that Mr. Davy has been refused advances to procure medical attention. In fact, a grant is offered for such purposes.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

[The House rose at 3:56 c'clock]