

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ALBERTA

Friday, October 19, 1973

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

PRAYERS

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

DR. WARRACK:

Mr. Speaker, it's my very great pleasure today to introduce to you and to members of the Assembly constituents from Three Hills. We have as our guests today, Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Freeman, Mrs. A. Bethune, Mrs. A. Cuaine, Mrs. J. Caine, Mr. W. Honnecker and Mr. A. Rashleigh from the Prairie Bible Institute in Three Hills. Along with these 7 adults there are 51 students. They are in Grades 7 and 8 at the Prairie Bible Institute and I ask you to welcome them. They are in the members gallery. If they would rise, please.

FILING RETURNS AND TABLING REPORTS

DR. HOHOL:

Mr. Speaker, I should like to file a report entitled Electrical Protection Act Regulations Adopted During 1973, as required by the statutes.

DR. WARRACK:

Mr. Speaker, I have the pleasure to submit the first series of reports of the Foothills Resource Allocation Study. These reports encompass 17 drainage districts: Blackstone, Bow, Castle, Clearwater, Cline-Siffleur, Crowsnest, Elbow-Jumpingpound, Ghost, Highwood, Kananaskis-Spray, Livingstone, Lower Brazeau, Nordegg-Baptiste, North Saskatchewan, Porcupine Hills, Ram, and Red Deer. They are all part of the Foothills Resource Allocation Study.

MR. GETTY:

Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to table a reply to Motion for a Return No. 256.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Plumbers' Strike

MR. CLARK:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct a question to the Minister of Labour, to ask the hon. minister what progress has been made in settling the plumbers' strike across this province?

DR. HOHOL:

Mr. Speaker, to answer the question one would have to go to a chronology of events preceding the expiration of the contract. I believe the question is intended to be literal in terms of progress. A great deal of time has been spent between the principals in attempting to conclude and effect an agreement.

Progress, as defined by a conclusion of that kind of situation, is something that I cannot report in that way. The mediator continues to stand by, work with each side and with them together as they see the need. Our most recent discussion on the matter was this morning. Again, in the literal sense of progress, that of predicting a conclusion to the strike, I can't be affirmative in that sense.

MR. CLARK:

A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Are the two sides meeting today?

DR. HOHOL:

It's very difficult to know, Mr. Speaker, that they are or that they aren't. They are both wishful of meeting whenever the other side is prepared to meet, whenever the mediators are able to get them to meet, or when both parties ask the mediator to meet with them, or with each separately. Whether they will specifically meet today or not, is a question I couldn't answer.

MR. CLARK:

A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker, to the minister. Has the minister himself been involved in face to face mediation or consultation with the two groups together?

DR. HOHOL:

Mr. Speaker, I want to be very careful in phrasing the answer to that question. I have not been involved in mediation as it is defined under The Alberta Labour Act. I have been involved in the area of consultation at the initiative of both parties.

MR. CLARK:

One last supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Then the minister doesn't know if they are meeting today? He doesn't know if they are or they aren't?

DR. HOHOL:

No.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Cypress followed by the hon. Member for Calgary Mountain View.

#### Federal-Provincial Constitutional Conferences

MR. STROM:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct my question to the hon. Premier. Is it the intention of the hon. Premier to seek any further federal-provincial conferences on the constitution? Have you had any chats with the Prime Minister in this regard?

MR. LOUGHEED:

Mr. Speaker, in answer to the honourable gentleman's question, I did discuss that matter with the Prime Minister at the first meeting I held with him after taking office.

He took the position at that time, which I think he expressed publicly, that in essence the next step would have to emanate from the Government of the Province of Quebec, and that if the Government of the Province of Quebec indicated an interest in renewing discussions with regard to the Constitution, the federal government then would reassess the desirability of doing so.

For our part, as the Government of Alberta, if those events occurred, we would be quite prepared to participate in further discussions with regard to the Constitution and any possible revisions thereof.

MR. STROM:

Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question. I note that the Province of Quebec reported in the press that they are requesting it. I'm wondering if it's the

intention of the hon. Premier to support them in this, in keeping with the statement the hon. Premier made some time ago?

MR. LOUGHEED:

Mr. Speaker, putting aside the question that those matters arose during the course of an election campaign in Quebec, if, after the election, the government confirms that position and, in any way, seeks acquiescence and support from the Government of Alberta on the question of renewing those discussions, we would certainly accede to that request and endorse it.

MR. NOTLEY:

Mr. Speaker, may I pose a supplementary question to the hon. Premier. Could the Premier advise the Assembly whether the question of constitutional reform was specifically discussed at the Premiers' conference during the summer?

MR. LOUGHEED:

Mr. Speaker, in the sense of constitutional reform, I believe the answer would be: no, it was not.

There was a very interesting discussion on the matter of energy that arose out of the question of the constitutional position of the provinces. The communication that went to the Prime Minister from the Chairman of the Premiers' Conference, regarding constitutional matters specifically referred in the area of energy, [was] that the jurisdiction was clearly, in terms of natural resources, with the provinces - which, of course, is very important from our point of view here in Alberta.

MR. NOTLEY:

Mr. Speaker, a final supplementary question to the Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs. In light of the hon. Premier's statement about Quebec initiating any further constitutional talks, has your department had any consultation, either directly or informally, with the Government of Quebec with respect to getting the constitutional question again before the Government of Canada?

MR. GETTY:

No, Mr. Speaker. I gather that is essentially the same question that was asked by the hon. Member for Cypress. The Premier gave the position of the Government of Alberta on it.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

#### Discussion Guidelines

MR. LUDWIG:

Mr. Speaker, my question is to the hon. Premier. Are there any guidelines from him or the government, or government policy with reference to ministers making contact or discussing matters with chairmen of commissions investigating matters in any particular department?

MR. LOUGHEED:

Mr. Speaker, we leave that to the good judgment of each minister, and I'm very confident about their good judgment.

MR. LUDWIG:

Mr. Speaker, supplementary. Does the Premier, in fact, approve ministers discussing matters with heads of commissions investigating maladministration in departments?

MR. LOUGHEED:

Mr. Speaker, in each case I think the circumstances may vary. As I mentioned in answer to the first question, we would leave it to the good judgment of the ministers in that particular case.

MR. LUDWIG:

Supplementary, generally then, the Premier does not disapprove of this action.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order please. The hon. Member for Clover Bar followed by the hon. Member for Edmonton Highlands.

Liquor Advertising

DR. BUCK:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask a question of the hon. Premier. Mr. Premier, in light of the announcement that there is going to be advertising of liquor, beer and wine on radio and television, will there be an opportunity to debate this issue in the House?

MR. LOUGHEED:

Mr. Speaker, I think it is a matter of Executive Council decision so I wouldn't anticipate debate. Certainly it's a matter that any member can bring up in terms of a Private Member's Motion if he so desires.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Crude Oil - Security of Supply

MR. KING:

Mr. Speaker, a question to the hon. Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs. Having reviewed the exchange of correspondence recently tabled in the Legislature, I wonder if it is correct to conclude that the question of the security of the Canadian supply of crude oil, including all of Canada's supply, was initiated by the provincial government rather than the federal government?

MR. GETTY:

Mr. Speaker, a study of the correspondence tabled as a result of a Motion for Return would, I'm certain, indicate two matters in that context.

One, it was the Government of Alberta which expressed and confirmed Alberta's interest that Canada's interests get number one priority.

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, it was raised by the Government of Alberta in that context that a reassessment should be made of the fact that eastern Canada, east of the Ottawa Valley line, was now dependent on offshore oil and that, in fact, Alberta felt that there should be a reassessment of that position so that in the matter of security of supply there should be an assessment as to whether that should be allowed to continue and perhaps there might be a Montreal pipeline.

So I think the significance is that in January, 1973 the Government of Alberta was initiating these comments, a fact, which, I think, some people may have lost sight of, Mr. Speaker, in the total energy picture and Alberta's position in relation to the rest of Canada.

MR. KING:

A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Is it correct to say that at the time this proposal was made by the provincial government to the federal government the response of the federal government was to discount the need for a pipeline into Montreal?

MR. GETTY:

Mr. Speaker, filed at the same time was a reply from the federal Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. That reply is contained, I think, in the last paragraph regarding Alberta's request to reassess the Montreal pipeline and security for eastern Canada. We find that the federal government, in fact, was very cool, it appeared, to that. It's interesting then to read that paragraph in relation to a reversal by the federal government in recent months.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for ...

MR. YOUNG:

Mr. Speaker, pardon me, a supplementary. In view of the reversal which has just been announced, could the hon. Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs indicate the degree to which Canada is dependent upon offshore oils? Approximately how much per month is imported, relative to total consumption?

MR. GETTY:

I don't have those figures exactly, Mr. Speaker. I believe, though, that it's all of the requirements east of the Ottawa Valley. I'd say perhaps 50 per cent of those requirements come from the Middle East and 50 per cent from Venezuela.

MR. NOTLEY:

A supplementary question to the hon. Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs. Can the minister advise the Assembly what steps his department has taken for government-to-government consultation between Alberta and Quebec with respect to the security of supply argument? Has there been any formal discussion with Quebec authorities on this particular subject?

MR. GETTY:

Yes there has been, Mr. Speaker, on a preliminary basis. We have provided Quebec with several documents relating to the energy issues in Canada and we have had a meeting with the federal government at which the Government of Quebec was in attendance.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Dominion Aircraft Industries Ltd.

MR. WILSON:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct a question to the hon. Minister of Industry and Commerce. Can the minister advise what the current status is of the Alberta Opportunity Company commitment to Dominion Aircraft Industries Ltd.?

MR. PEACOCK:

Mr. Speaker, the full extent of the commitment of the Alberta Opportunity Fund to Dominion Aircraft is this, that if Dominion Aircraft could obtain a loan of \$2 million from the Royal Bank and if, at the same time, the prototype was flyable and acceptable to our engineers and our examination, then we would be willing to come in and support the bridge money necessary in order to develop the STOL aircraft in Alberta.

MR. WILSON:

Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Can the minister advise if the Alberta Opportunity Company commitment could be withdrawn at any time if evidence warranted it?

MR. PEACOCK:

Yes, Mr. Speaker.

MR. WILSON:

Supplementary, Mr. Speaker, to the Premier. Can the Premier advise if any guarantee or loan or grant has been made to the benefit of Dominion Aircraft Industries or principals from any source within the provincial government other than the one through the Alberta Opportunity Company?

MR. SPEAKER:

This is scarcely the type of question that would be expected during the question period. It is one that would require research and detail and could properly be put on the Order Paper.

DR. BUCK:

He might know.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Telephones - Toll-Free Service

MR. TAYLOR:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a question for the hon. Minister of Telephones and Utilities. What is the maximum distance now being used for free toll service in Alberta?

MR. FARRAN:

Thirty miles, Mr. Speaker.

MR. TAYLOR:

Mr. Speaker, a supplementary. Is there any thought of extending this 30 miles?

MR. FARRAN:

No, Mr. Speaker. We have already extended the old limit from 15 miles to 30 miles and doubled the size of the program, which is about as much as any province can chew for the moment.

MR. TAYLOR:

One further supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Has there been an estimate of the loss or gain in revenue resulting from this extension of toll-free service?

MR. FARRAN:

Yes, Mr. Speaker.

MR. TAYLOR:

Do you have the figure?

MR. FARRAN:

If you would make that a motion for a return I will give it to you in detail, mentioning the specific areas you are interested in.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Clover Bar with a supplementary.

DR. BUCK:

Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. In light of the minister's statement that the area has been extended to 30 miles, will he be including areas within the 30-mile radius such as Fort Saskatchewan, Leduc, and these areas that are within that radius?

MR. FARRAN:

Mr. Speaker, the program is a five-year one and has to be done in an orderly fashion. What it envisages is that a nominal flat monthly rate will replace the charges by the long-distance call. This has to receive the consent, of course, of the subscribers and the blessing of the Public Utilities Board. So in each case an application for an amendment to the rates has to be made to the PUB. Sometimes people don't want to go in one direction; they want to go in another. How do I know the people in Fort Saskatchewan really want to go to Clover Bar? I don't know.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

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Interprovincial College Use

MR. NOTLEY:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct this question to the hon. Minister of Advanced Education. Can the minister advise the Assembly what progress, if any, has been made in developing a joint use program for post-secondary institutions on those points that are close to either Saskatchewan in the east or British Columbia in the west?

MR. FOSTER:

Yes, Mr. Speaker. Very briefly, we have undertaken a study with the Saskatchewan government. The study is being conducted by people from the University of Alberta and the University of Saskatchewan, in Saskatoon, with respect to possibilities of some inter-provincial cooperation in the college area on the border surrounding Lloydminster in the area generally including Vermilion on one side and north, and an area around Vermilion to Maidstone in Saskatchewan.

To the west of us we have had some discussions with the British Columbia Minister of Education, Mrs. Dailly, concerning possibilities of some cooperation in the Peace River country. I think I will be meeting with her in the course of the next three weeks to carry this discussion further. I could report further at that time.

MR. NOTLEY:

Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question. In the discussions and considerations, do these discussions specifically include the Vermilion School of Agriculture and the Fairview Agricultural College?

MR. FOSTER:

Yes, in both cases.

MR. NOTLEY:

A final supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Can the minister advise the House whether in the consideration to date any thought has been given as to what mechanism might be developed to carry out ongoing consultation between the two provinces?

MR. FOSTER:

The mechanism at the moment, Mr. Speaker, which I think is rather an excellent mechanism, is the minister in Alberta talking to the minister in Saskatchewan and the minister in B.C.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Federal Government Land Purchasing

MR. DIXON:

Mr. Speaker, I will direct my question today to the Minister of Municipal Affairs, but I would like it to actually cover two departments, including that of the Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs. It deals with the announcement today made by the federal government that it is going to enter in a massive way into making land purchases, which it says will cut down on inflationary land prices and put speculators out of business.

Has there been any consultation with the Alberta Government on this issue, and if so, does the provincial government favour the federal government entering into massive land purchases in our province?

MR. RUSSELL:

Mr. Speaker, I believe the announcement the hon. member is referring to was contained in a speech by the newly-appointed President of the Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation, who actually used it as the subject matter of an announcement which had been made some months ago.

There has been ample consultation over the past several months, extending back more than a year, with respect to proposed revisions to The National Housing Act. At the meeting of the federal-provincial ministers responsible for housing, early in 1973, this specific program was discussed in some detail.

Insofar as Alberta is concerned they have been extremely active, particularly during recent years in land assembly programs. As a matter of fact I think you know some very dramatic examples throughout the province of the use we are making of that program. So, with respect to that, the very substantial funds which will be available under The National Housing Act for the provinces to use for land assembly - I would have to say consultation there has been good.

I wish there had been as good consultation with respect to lending rates for the prices of homes which we are trying to reduce.

MR. DIXON:

One final supplementary to the minister. I was wondering, Mr. Speaker, what participation the federal government would have regarding control. In other words, will we have control as to where the money is spent or will the federal government, in the final analysis, make the decision?

MR. RUSSELL:

The matter of where the programs happen, up until now, has always been a matter that originated at the local level. It comes to the province in this case through the Alberta Housing Corporation. When the project is approved the funds are then requested through CMHC.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Edmonton Kingsway followed by the hon. Member for Medicine Hat-Redcliff.

School Bus Safety Regulations

DR. PAPROSKI:

Mr. Speaker, a question to the hon. Minister of Highways and Transport. What assurance can the minister give the House that the concerns expressed by the Alberta Federation of Home and School Associations that safety-related provincial school bus regulations are being ignored, will in fact not be ignored?

MR. COPITHORNE:

Mr. Speaker, I think the school bus operators in the Province of Alberta have a very reputable record, of 90,000 miles driven each day by some 4,000 school bus operators. I happen to have some statistics that were compiled. In urban areas in the last year there were 52 accidents. In the rural areas, there were 56 accidents. At intersections ...

MR. GRUENWALD:

Whereabouts?

MR. COPITHORNE:

In Alberta, of course. Where else would you expect me to give figures for? Is there somewhere else?

[Laughter]

School bus drivers at fault numbered 45 and 53 other people who were at fault were involved in accidents with school buses. So you see ...

DR. BUCK:

Mr. Speaker, could this not be made a return? It could be asked that way.

MR. COPITHORNE:

So you see, Mr. Speaker, there are many things taking place that are ensuring the school children's safe passage. I might also add, Mr. Speaker, that at the recent ...



MR. SPEAKER:

With regard to the hon. member's question, certainly an answer requiring this amount of detail should perhaps be one that is asked for by a question on the Order Paper.

The Chair is wondering whether the accidents mentioned by the hon. minister include the one which resulted in the figures being on his desk.

[Laughter]

MR. BATIUK:

A supplementary to the hon. Minister of Highways, Mr. Speaker. Could the minister advise what category of drivers has proven to have the safest record?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Lady drivers.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Put it on the Order Paper.

MR. COPITHORNE:

Mr. Speaker, this isn't by accident either. I have to put a plug in for the ladies this time, Mr. Speaker.

DR. PAPROSKI:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker, if I may. Would the minister then definitively assure us that he will follow through to see that these regulations are, in fact, being carried out?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. member is repeating his first question.

The hon. Member for Medicine Hat-Redcliff followed by the hon. Member for Lethbridge West.

Canadian Wheat Board - Fines

MR. WYSE:

My question, Mr. Speaker, is to the hon. Provincial Treasurer. Do fines collected in Alberta under The Canadian Wheat Board Act come back to the provincial purse?

MR. MINIELY:

Mr. Speaker, I think he asked that question yesterday except in a different way and I would have to check that to find out. But perhaps my colleague, the Minister of Agriculture, could answer it.

DR. HORNER:

Mr. Speaker, we endeavour to use our office to prevent the Wheat Board from fining the farmers in Alberta, not to try to accumulate fines.

MR. WYSE:

A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Is this provided for in Section 651 of the Criminal Code and Section 16 of the federal-provincial agreement on policing the province?

MR. SPEAKER:

There is no doubt that the hon. Minister of Agriculture will resent being consulted as a solicitor.

MR. WYSE:

A supplementary question to the Minister of Agriculture then. Because of the minister's stand regarding the many convicted farmers at Lethbridge

regarding the rapeseed case, did the province reimburse the farmers for these fines?

DR. HORNER:

As I said earlier, Mr. Speaker, what the province has attempted to do was to prevent the farmers from being fined.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

The answer is no.

AN HON. MEMBER:

It's nothing less than political hypocrisy.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Alberta Educational Communications Corporation

MR. GRUENWALD:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct my question to the Minister of Education. I am wondering if the minister could give us an explanation as to why, in selecting the directors for the Alberta Educational Communications Corporation, no member was chosen from Lethbridge?

MR. HYNDMAN:

There were some 250 submitted applications for the 11 directorships that were open, Mr. Speaker, and certainly there was no purely geographic basis on which the appointments were made. The people who were appointed, I think, will offer objective advice in the Alberta concept for the corporation. However I think there should be no concern whatever about the corporation's or the government's interest in the Lethbridge area insofar as, when it was decided by the government some weeks ago to extend CKUA broadcasting in southern Alberta south of Calgary, the transmitter will be in the Lethbridge area.

MR. GRUENWALD:

Thank you. A supplementary. I cast no reflections on the selection of the board of governors and I want the minister to know that, except it is an excellent board but it would have been better had he sought the wisdom, knowledge and experience of a Lethbridge ...

MR. SPEAKER:

Order please. The hon. Member for Vermilion-Viking followed by the hon. Member for Calgary Mountain View.

Metric System

MR. COOPER:

Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Industry and Commerce. Is there a definite plan to convert to the metric system in Canada, and if so, when is it scheduled to take place?

MR. PEACOCK:

Mr. Speaker, I don't think there is any real timetable for it. The federal government, as well as the provincial governments - and when I say the provincial government, the research council - have all undertaken programs on what is involved in the conversion. As far as a timetable is concerned, it hasn't been announced.

MR. COOPER:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. The news item is headed, "Not Much Of A Problem". Does the minister consider the conversion will constitute much of a problem for the general public?

MR. PEACOCK:

Mr. Speaker, I think we could talk on that for the next two or three hours, but I would suggest it is a tremendous problem.

MR. HYNDMAN:

I might add that we are now waiting, and have been for some months, for the federal government to decide on a timeline toward which the Canadian and Alberta economies and school systems might work on the metric system, and also, on the formula on which the metric system would be implemented.

DR. PAPROSKI:

One supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Is the hon. member aware that the medical profession is pacesetting this conversion ...

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Bears

MR. LUDWIG:

Mr. Speaker, my question is to the hon. Minister of Lands and Forests. With reference to the recent announcement that there was a slaughter of about 408 bears in this province, I want to ask a specific question of the minister. Was any action taken following this slaughter to determine whether any cubs were left to roam on their own and die of starvation, or was anything done in this regard?

DR. WARRACK:

That's part of the overall program, Mr. Speaker.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Yes, starvation.

MR. LUDWIG:

I didn't get the significance of the minister's remarks. Is the overall program to kill the bears or starve them to death?

MR. SPEAKER:

Order please. The hon. Member for Calgary Mountain View ...

MR. LUDWIG:

A question to the hon. minister again. Was there anything done at all to determine whether cubs were left stranded after the slaughter of these bears?

DR. WARRACK:

I reconfirm my previous answer that it is, yes.

MR. LUDWIG:

What was done, Mr. Speaker?

DR. WARRACK:

They were taken into account in our total management program, Mr. Speaker.

MR. LUDWIG:

Was there any determination how many may have been stranded?

MR. SPEAKER:

Clearly that's a matter of detail and that kind of census could be answered on the Order Paper.

The hon. Member for Clover Bar followed by the hon. Member for Calgary Bow.

Highway No. 16 Consultation

DR. BUCK:

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to address my question to the star of Front Page Challenge, the hon. Mr. Getty.

MR. BARTON:

The PR Man.

DR. BUCK:

I would like to know if the hon. minister can inform the House as to what consultation took place between his department, the federal department and conservation groups regarding the proposed new highway from Highway 16 into Elk Island Park?

MR. GETTY:

Mr. Speaker, I would have to review with the members of the department whether they have had any consultation on that issue. I will do so and report back to the member.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Calgary Ring Road System

MR. WILSON:

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct a question to the hon. Minister of Highways. Can the minister advise if the government has commissioned a consultant to issue a report dealing with the ring road system around Calgary?

MR. COPITHORNE:

Mr. Speaker, we have had a consultant working on that particular project.

MR. WILSON:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. What is the name of the consultant and when is the report expected to be completed?

MR. COPITHORNE:

The report is completed. Just offhand, Mr. Speaker, I am unable to recall the name of the consultant.

MR. WILSON:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Can the minister advise if he is prepared to table a copy of this report in the Legislature?

MR. COPITHORNE:

No, Mr. Speaker, it's an in-House document.

MR. WILSON:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker, what is the purpose of the report then?

MR. COPITHORNE:

Well, Mr. Speaker, I don't, and my department does not have, a corner on all the knowledge in the development of road systems, and we sometimes seek outside knowledge.

MR. WILSON:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Will copies of this report be available to the municipalities involved?

MR. COPITHORNE:

Mr. Speaker, as I indicated before, the study at the present time, at least, is an in-House document.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

MacKinnon Ravine Highway

MR. TAYLOR:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a question to the hon. Minister of Highways and Transportation. Has the government taken a position on constructing a highway through the MacKinnon ravine or is this being left entirely to the decision of the city council of Edmonton?

MR. COPITHORNE:

Mr. Speaker, it is the philosophy of this government that local autonomy is most important and we respect their decisions.

MR. TAYLOR:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Has the hon. minister had any recent discussions with the mayor, council or commissioners on this matter?

MR. COPITHORNE:

Mr. Speaker, I have had no communications with the mayor recently on it.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Medicine Hat-Redcliff followed by the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview.

Alberta Grain Commission - Appointments

MR. WYSE:

My question, Mr. Speaker, is to the hon. Minister of Agriculture. Since the minister first appointed the members to the Alberta Grain Commission, has any member resigned because of dissatisfaction with the commission?

DR. HORNER:

No, Mr. Speaker.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Not at that salary!

MR. WYSE:

A supplementary question to the minister. Has the Alberta Government or the Alberta Grain Commission considered purchasing the government elevator at Lethbridge?

DR. HORNER:

No, Mr. Speaker. We are involved in negotiations with the federal government with regard to making sure that we get optimum use of the elevator in Lethbridge. If the hon. gentleman would like to know, it is now being used for grain corn storage in a major attempt to expand that particular product in Alberta.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Tartan Breweries

MR. NOTLEY:

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct this question to the hon. Provincial Treasurer. Yesterday the Provincial Treasurer advised us that he would check to see whether or not the half million dollars had been paid to Tartan's Brewery. My question is, has he had an opportunity to check? In fact, has it been paid?

MR. MINIELY:

Mr. Speaker, in reply to the hon. member, I think yesterday I didn't know that I had specifically been requested to check. I think when I replied to the question I said that I could check. But if the hon. member is saying he would like me to, I certainly will.

MR. NOTLEY:

Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question. So there is no misunderstanding, I would certainly request that he check.

MR. PEACOCK:

Mr. Speaker, in order to avoid coming back to the House and making a report, I have checked - and there hasn't been anything paid.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Calgary Millican.

Daylight Saving Time

MR. DIXON:

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct my question today to the hon. Premier. It is regarding daylight saving time, which reverts back to standard time on October 28. I was wondering if his government was giving any consideration or had any discussion relating to maybe carrying out daylight saving time all year round?

MR. LOUGHEED:

Mr. Speaker, I would tend to respond to that question on the basis that the decision to bring in daylight saving time in this province was one based upon a referendum. I believe it would be fair to say that most citizens cast their vote on that ballot on the presumption that it was a daylight saving time, as we know it, through the course of summer months. For that reason, I think it would be inappropriate for the government on its own initiative to make an adjustment.

I understand there have been some thoughts expressed in other jurisdictions that the hon. member brought to my attention, that they are considering an expansion. But, frankly, we haven't had it as a matter under active consideration by our administration.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

MINISTERIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

MR. YURKO:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to bring before the House the government's policy in regard to assistance for waterworks for the municipalities of Alberta.

I would like to suggest that the government's policy in this area is related to equal and equitable treatment of all communities. I would also suggest, Mr. Speaker, that it's going to take me a few minutes to go through this policy. But as it is something that is pretty vital to the communities of Alberta, I am sure the members will tolerate the time I take.

A supply of water is one of the essential utilities that must be provided to every community. Water of potable quality and adequate quantity is necessary to

service domestic, industrial, commercial and fire requirements to maintain a desirable standard of living and to keep municipalities viable.

Because of circumstances of location or physical characteristics of terrain, the providing of a proper waterworks utility can sometimes impose a very heavy financial burden on some municipalities in comparison with others, thus creating inequities in the tax structure and utility charges. Such can materially affect the viability of a given municipality with respect to other municipalities.

Any waterworks system has five basic components:

1. a source of water;
2. water treatment;
3. water transmission lines;
4. water storage reservoirs, and
5. a water distribution system.

Normally the distribution system, consisting of the actual distribution mains, laterals, internal valves, fire hydrants and other pertinencies used for distributing the water to the users has a fairly common or equal per unit cost. Consequently, this cost on a per capita basis is normally relatively consistent, within reasonable limitations as between one community and another, and is therefore not a major consideration in the creation of inequities.

Inequities do exist, however, in the other four areas of a waterworks system. The government of the Province of Alberta is committed to a program of balanced growth throughout the province. Inequities arising from a heavy tax burden incurred by some municipalities through the provision of a waterworks system can be a deterrent to the effective implementation of the balanced growth concept.

Every municipality should be expected to bear a reasonable municipal capital cost without assistance for the provision of a waterworks system. At the same time, there is a maximum waterworks capital cost which, if exceeded, might impose adverse effects on the economic viability of the community because of such factors as location, trends in population growth, and the degree of potential for economic development - therefore, the Alberta Waterworks Assistance Program.

The Alberta Municipal Waterworks Assistance Program will provide financial assistance for the extension or construction of waterworks systems such as to foster a degree of tax burden equity among communities, while at the same time encouraging communities not to incur tax burdens for water utilities in excess of their reasonable economic ability.

The Alberta Municipal Waterworks Assistance Program will consist of three segments. The first is the Alberta Government Waterworks Assistance Program. The second is the Government of Canada Agricultural Service Centres Assistance Program, which shall be incorporated to complement the Alberta program. The third is the Alberta Government Water Supply Source Development Program to be applied to small communities, the economic viability of which does not permit expending the degree of capital costs necessary for the construction of a conventional waterworks system.

#### Part 1, The Alberta Government Waterworks Program.

The Alberta Government Waterworks Program will provide financial assistance for the construction of:

1. The supply of water, such as wells, small dams, low lift pumping facilities et cetera;
2. Well water reservoirs;
3. Water treatment plants and water pump stations;
4. Water transmission lines up to, but not including, any portion of the distribution system;
5. Clear water storage reservoirs and water towers.

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To be eligible for assistance toward the capital cost of constructing items covered under this program, the existing capital debenture debt for such items must equal or exceed \$75 per capita. Any community with an existing per capita capital debt of less than this amount will be required to be financially responsible for that portion of the new work capital costs up to the equivalent of \$75 per capita.

To those municipalities that have met this requirement, financial assistance will be provided by the Government of Alberta to a maximum amount equivalent to the expenditure of \$150 per capita. This assistance will be extended on the basis of a 50 per cent grant and a 50 per cent loan. The loan will be repaid over a 20-year period at an interest rate of 7.75 per cent or such other rate of interest as is established by the federal government under the Agriculture Service Centres Program. Any amount of the capital cost that exceeds this provincial assistance will be the sole responsibility of the municipality.

The program will have a five year duration from the year of its initiation, and will require a commitment of \$6 million on the part of the province, \$3 million of which shall be in a form of grants, and \$3 million in the form of loans. It will be administered on a first come first served basis amongst the municipalities.

#### Part 2, The Agriculture Service Centres Program.

This is being announced in Ottawa today by the Hon. Minister Mr. Jamieson. The Government of Canada has entered into a cooperative agreement with the Province of Alberta for the undertaking of a five-year financial assistance program in the construction of water supply for specific centres in the province that are assuming a growing role as Agricultural Service Centres. The program is specifically orientated to facilitate the growth and development of such centres.

Under the terms of the agreement, Canada will be responsible for the construction of projects and the initial financing of the costs. Such financing shall be in the form of a 50 per cent grant to Alberta and a 50 per cent loan to be repaid by Alberta to Canada over a period not to exceed 20 years, at an interest rate to be determined from time to time by the Minister of Finance of Canada.

In order to assure consistency and equity over the entire program, and to prevent preferential treatment to those communities which may or may not be identified as an Agricultural Service Centre, the terms and conditions applicable to the Alberta Government Waterworks Assistance Program will be equally applicable to the Agricultural Service Centres Program. Stated more positively, the Government of Alberta will only sanction agreements under the federal government Agricultural Service Centres Program which carry terms and conditions of assistance equal and comparable to the Alberta Government Waterworks Municipal Assistance Program.

The amount of \$6 million has been budgeted by the Government of Canada to be applied to the Agricultural Service Centres Program, \$3 million of which will be in the form of grants and \$3 million of which will be in the form of loans guaranteed by the Province of Alberta.

In this way the Agricultural Service Centres Program will complement the Alberta Government Waterworks Program so that all communities in Alberta will be afforded the opportunity to participate on an equitable basis.

A total of 71 communities in Alberta are expected to participate during the next 5 years in either the Alberta Government Waterworks Program or the federal-provincial Agricultural Service Centres program.

Thus far 13 centres have been identified in terms of the Agricultural Service Centres Program. They are; Barrhead, Cardston, Coaldale, Fairview, Hanna, Leduc, Lloydminster, Olds, Redcliff, St. Albert, St. Paul, Taber and Westlock.

#### Part 3, The Water Supply Source Development Program.

In the case of small communities where it is deemed to be beyond financial feasibility to provide a complete conventional waterworks system, the Government of Alberta is prepared to offer a grant, not to exceed \$2,500, toward the cost of constructing a centralized community water supply source, consisting of a well, pump, water tank, dugout or such facilities that best suit the circumstances. Further, the Government of Alberta shall accept the responsibility for the implementation and supervision of design and construction



of such works, except where the works consist of a dugout constructed under the Government of Canada PFRA Assistance Program for the development and improvement of water supplies required for municipal purposes.

Those communities which take advantage of the Government of Canada PFRA dugout assistance program, will be eligible for a PFRA grant of up to \$550. In such cases the Alberta Municipal Waterworks Assistance Program grants shall apply only to those costs in excess of the PFRA grant money.

In the case of hamlets, where a local municipal or county authority is responsible for the provision of a water supply to hamlets within its boundaries, grants shall be made to the local municipal or county authority on behalf of the hamlet. Where hamlets are located in improvement districts, the local authority shall be the Department of Municipal Affairs.

Now, Mr. Speaker, there is a joint release from Ottawa on the Agricultural Service Centres program, but as this is being released here today I will not take the opportunity to read it because all it contains are additional details or generalities in terms of the position paper, or government positions, which I have just read. Thank you.

MR. CLARK:

Mr. Speaker, in commenting on the ministerial announcement by the Minister of the Environment, let me say that we on this side welcome the announcement of the federal-provincial program, the federal program, the Agricultural Service Centre Program.

We are pleased that the Government of Alberta has entered into an agreement with the Government of Canada in this area and we note the Government of Canada will be putting \$6 million into this particular program.

We are also pleased that the government has moved on the Alberta Waterworks Assistance Program to municipalities in this province, and certainly we support the concept of attempting to make rural life in this province just that much better.

Sessional Paper No. 599: Report of Select Committee on House Rules

MR. HENDERSON:

I rise on a point of privilege to beg the unanimous consent of the House to present a motion for its consideration at this time.

MR. SPEAKER:

Possibly the hon. member would like to indicate the nature of the motion to the House so that we might ask for consent.

MR. HENDERSON:

Mr. Speaker, the motion relates to certain misunderstandings which I believe developed in the House concerning the contents of the Report of the Select Committee of the Legislature on the rules of the House which was tabled earlier this week.

I feel some of the misunderstandings relate to my particular actions or inaction. I would like accordingly, to beg the indulgence of the House for an opportunity to rectify the situation.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

MR. HENDERSON:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to move, seconded by the hon. Mr. Notley:

That the Select Committee consisting of Messrs. Hyndman, Appleby (Chairman), Amerongen, Dixon, Henderson, King and Young be reappointed.

And be it further resolved that Sessional Paper No. 599, being the Report on House Rules 1973, Volumes 1 and 2, as tabled by Mr. King on Wednesday last, be withdrawn from the Assembly for further consideration by the committee, and that the committee report thereon to this Assembly on Tuesday next.

MR. SPEAKER:

Having heard the motion, is there any debate.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

MR. HENDERSON:

Mr. Speaker, I would beg your indulgence to state very briefly the reason why I asked the members to extend this consideration to me. In so doing I would preface my remarks by saying I realize the pitfalls of standing before this Assembly and overestimating one's importance on any committee in this Assembly, but I have to state in all honesty, Mr. Speaker, that after discussing certain misunderstandings regarding the House Rules Report with the Government House Leader and with the now Leader of the Opposition, I am forced to conclude that my action and certain inactions as a member of that committee have significantly contributed to a misunderstanding which, I think, is prejudicial to the consideration of the report by the House.

I would simply say, without going into great detail, that I was a member of the committee and played a fairly active role in making recommendations and participating in the discussions and the contents of the committee report. Also, as the Leader of the Opposition at that time, I had certain responsibilities in carrying on certain discussions and negotiations with the Government House Leader regarding some aspects of the report.

At the critical stage of the drafting of the final report I, as all members are aware, severed my connection with the Social Credit party and, in so doing, arrived at certain assumptions relative to the internal communications within the committee. I think these assumptions proved to be false. I didn't effectively communicate certain views to the now Leader of the Opposition, the hon. member, Mr. Clark, nor did I attend the final meeting of the committee which preceded the final drafting of the report.

In examining the entire matter, Mr. Speaker, I can truthfully say that my actions or lack thereof, I personally believe, contributed significantly to some of the misunderstanding and I accordingly ask the indulgence of the members to consent to this motion with a view to rectifying the situation.

[The motion was carried.]

#### INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS (CONT.)

MR. CLARK:

Mr. Speaker, on a point of procedure might we revert to introduction of guests for one moment?

HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

MR. CLARK:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce a group of grade 9 students from the Crossfield School who are here today with their teacher, Mr. Gary Kiernan. They are in the members gallery, I trust - I trust not.

[Laughter]

But I say, Mr. Speaker, it's very regrettable this didn't happen because I was going to have the opportunity of introducing members in a great show of non-partisan relationship between the hon. member Dr. Warrack, the member Mr. Copithorne and myself. However, I will have to withdraw from that very splendid experience.

GOVERNMENT BILLS AND ORDERS  
(Second Reading)

Bill No. 80  
The Alberta Income Tax Amendment Act, 1973

MR. MINIELY:

Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the hon. Minister of Municipal Affairs, that Bill No. 80 The Alberta Income Tax Amendment Act, 1973 be now read a second time.

Mr. Speaker, I have to commence by saying that I consider it an honour to present this bill for the consideration of the members of the Legislative Assembly of Alberta and the people of Alberta. This is so, Mr. Speaker, for several reasons.

It is the culmination of many hours of planning and negotiation. It of course started, Mr. Speaker, with a commitment, a commitment from this government prior to the last election, that in any property tax reduction plan for citizens in Alberta we would recognize that renters indirectly pay property taxes through the rents they pay to their landlords.

After the last election a task force was appointed by the hon. Premier, chaired by the hon. Mr. Farran, now Minister of Telephones and Utilities. This task force in its recommendation for the Alberta property tax reduction plan made significant recommendations regarding the way renters should be handled in this plan.

Mr. Speaker, it is a first in Alberta. It is the first time that in a tax reduction plan related to property renters are being treated equally with homeowners. I think it is fair to say it is also unique in Canada - not that two other provinces in Canada don't have a similar plan - because Ontario and Manitoba do. But Alberta's differs from either Ontario's or Manitoba's. It maximizes better than Ontario's and Manitoba's plan does the impact of the tax reduction to lower income citizens.

Mr. Speaker, it is an example in my view of cooperation between the federal government and the Alberta Government in achieving what is a worthwhile objective for both our citizens.

Certainly, Mr. Speaker, there were problems. One was to ensure in the case of renters it was more difficult to ensure that the benefit went directly to renters. If we tried to do it in the same manner as we did in the case of a property tax reduction of course the problem in the case of renters was that the benefit would go to landlords. There was no way that we could ensure it would be passed directly to the renter.

That problem, Mr. Speaker, was solved by allowing an income tax credit to be applied for by the renter when filing his income tax return.

Another major problem was that while, for the first time in Alberta, it was going to be recognized that renters would be treated equally with home-owners, one didn't want to carry it beyond the point where it achieved fairness in equity as between home-owners and renters. Mr. Speaker, I believe this solution was found by placing in the legislation in the bill first, a maximum on the individual tax credit that would go to an individual renter, and secondly, a maximum based on the percentage of the actual rent expense that that individual renter incurred.

You see, Mr. Speaker, in the case of the home-owner, if one took the example of an individual home which was owned by a husband and wife and considered the amount of property tax reduction through the Alberta Property Tax Reduction Plan that would be provided on that dwelling unit, and compared that to the same home which might be occupied by five or six individuals renting that same dwelling unit, we had to be concerned about providing a similar reduction in tax for the renter as was provided for the home-owner. While one could not achieve this exactly in principle, we did not wish to treat one unfairly in relation to the other.

Of course we were concerned, Mr. Speaker, that in anything we did to provide a renter income tax credit we would not create a lot of paperwork for our senior citizens which is very difficult for them at that age. Mr. Speaker, as my honourable colleague the Minister of Municipal Affairs indicated, we found the solution to that by simply saying that for those Alberta citizens over 65 who

were renting accommodation we would provide a straight \$100 renter allowance to those citizens. Thereby they need not worry about the complexity of filing and calculating a tax credit with their income tax return next year.

Another problem, of course, was to ensure that in spending \$10 to \$12 million, which is our estimate of the total tax relief that will be provided to renters in Alberta, this \$10 to \$12 million maximum impact was on the lower income citizens in the province. Mr. Speaker, I believe we found a solution to that by relating the Alberta renter tax credit to the taxable income of the individual renter and by applying a ceiling first of \$100 maximum, and secondly a further maximum of 5 per cent of the actual rent expense or the share of rent expense of the particular individual.

Lastly, Mr. Speaker, we felt a responsibility to ensure that the plan was administered in a way that was most simple for Alberta citizens and also to ensure that the cost of administration to the province was not exorbitant, that we chose the most efficient method of doing so. So at this point, Mr. Speaker, negotiations were undertaken between the Treasury Department, the Department of Municipal Affairs and the federal government on the possibility of administration of the Alberta plan by the federal government.

Because my colleague and I realized it would be easier for those citizens in Alberta who were under 65 to actually have a form in their income tax return which they receive automatically from the federal government, a form that would identify an Alberta income tax credit for renters and one which they could submit at the same time and in the same manner within a system they were used to rather than having to set up a separate system and another route that our citizens would have to go through to claim the credit.

Initially, the federal government, of course, was concerned that Alberta was asking for something unique. We did not want something that was the same as Ontario and Manitoba. We had a plan which would have a greater impact for lower-income citizens, and which had a ceiling that was lower than that of Ontario and Manitoba.

But we were able to convince them, Mr. Speaker, that it was not only in Alberta's best interests, but in the best interests of the federal government, being responsible for the overall harmony of the income tax system, to provide this administration for our citizens in Alberta. Of course, it thereby solved, in our view, the concern we had relative to simplicity for our citizens, and also, Mr. Speaker, resulted in a minimum cost of administration for the Province of Alberta and its citizens.

Mr. Speaker, at a time of concern which we are all in now regarding cost of living and cost of living increases to our citizens, the hon. Premier and others of my colleagues on this side of the House have expressed many things that have been done and many actions that have been taken to provide our citizens with some assistance in this time of rising costs.

Mr. Speaker, of course in addition to accomplishing a basic principle and a basic commitment, it is fair to say that this is an additional \$10 million to \$12 million which will be provided to our renters in Alberta, and assist them in this particular period of high costs.

So there were major problems, Mr. Speaker. The major problems were overcome. While I believe hon. members on both sides of the House will have questions regarding details, I am sure that all hon. members will agree that the objectives which were planned have been met and will endorse this bill which is a first, and a dramatic first, for the Province of Alberta.

#### INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS (CONT.)

MR. SPEAKER:

Order please. I wonder if the hon. Leader of the Opposition might now revert to Introduction of Visitors.

MR. CLARK:

Mr. Speaker, we'll try again.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce to you and through you to the members of the Assembly a group of Grade 9 students from the Crossfield School who are now sitting - I emphasize, now sitting - in the gallery. They are accompanied

by their teacher, Mr. Gary Kiernan. Before the members of the Assembly greet these students in their normal manner, might I say that this is an example of how, regardless of where we sit in the Legislature, we're pleased the students are here. There are students from the constituency of the Minister of Highways, the hon. Mr. Copithorne, from Dr. Warrack's constituency, and, of course, from the constituency of Olds-Didsbury.

I would ask the group of students now to rise and we'll give you a real rousing welcome.

FILING RETURNS AND TABLING REPORTS (CONT.)

MR. YURKO:

Mr. Speaker, while we've reverted to a former matter of business, I wonder if I could just indicate to the Assembly something I forgot before.

We have a brochure on the policy, and it's being distributed to all members so they can have it for their use. I am tabling five copies.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

GOVERNMENT BILLS AND ORDERS (CONT.)  
(Second Reading)

Bill No. 80  
The Alberta Income Tax Amendment Act, 1973

MR. NOTLEY:

Mr. Speaker, I certainly am very pleased to support the principle contained in Bill No. 80. My quarrel with the original concept of the Property Tax Reduction Plan is that as far as the money for home-owners is concerned, it wasn't as clearly related to the ability-to-pay concept as is the tax credit proposition for renters.

I feel that we are taking the right course, for two reasons. First of all, I think it is a fair statement that renters do indirectly pay a portion of property taxes. By making a tax credit available to them this is remedying, in my judgment, a discrimination against renters which has existed for some time.

The only caveat I would register at this point, however, is the amount of the ceiling, \$212 for the property holder, the home-owner, compared to \$100 for the renter.

I really question whether or not we should draw the distinction between the ceiling for one and the ceiling for the other. Nevertheless, while one can argue over the ceiling, it seems to me that it is a valid proposition that renters should receive a rebate.

The second point, as the hon. Provincial Treasurer has pointed out, is that this scheme is related to the ability-to-pay concept. I note, under the definition of a credit, the three steps, five per cent of the rent, an aggregate of \$100 plus deduction of one per cent of taxable income or \$100, whichever is less. I think the "whichever is less" is very important because under this provision high income renters will receive less than low income renters. If that "whichever is less" hadn't been in it, of course, we would have a cushioning of the progressive impact. But in view of the way the section is drawn, it seems to me that it guarantees that those people who need it most within the terms of the ceiling will get the maximum.

My quarrel, in closing, is that I really question whether or not we should place a maximum of \$100 on renters when we provide for a maximum of \$212 for home-owners. Notwithstanding that caveat, I believe that the principle contained in this bill is a good one. My hope, Mr. Speaker, is that as soon as possible we can move to the same sort of proposition as to the rebate for property owners, too.

MR. GHITTER:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to address a few remarks with respect to this bill. I do so first because the constituency I represent is probably half populated by renters as is the constituency of the hon. Provincial Treasurer. We share the same concerns with respect to the view of the government as it relates to renters and their position in our society.

I think one must come to the rapid conclusion, as one looks at the rim of the North Saskatchewan River in the city of Edmonton, or would come and visit the downtown urban core of the city of Calgary, that life styles in urban centres of our cities are indeed changing.

What used to be regarded as a lesser form of habitation for citizens, namely apartment residences, are now becoming a very acceptable and, in fact, a very common and very popular way of life to some.

However, as we see our urban cores growing, as we see our skylines increasing and as we see the problems that exist in our urban cores, I think we must also keep in mind the fact that as governments in this province have developed policies to rebate [taxes] to citizens, one element has always been ignored from the point of view of property tax rebates and incentives that we have seen through the years. That has been the apartment dweller.

I have always had the viewpoint, Mr. Speaker, in the past, that while governments were concerned with giving money back to the property owner, and rightly so, assisting him where taxes were rising so considerably, our government in the past has forgotten the renter, who indeed is paying just an appreciable portion of his income in increasing rent to his landlord. As the taxes go up, the renter pays more.

So I am just delighted, Mr. Speaker, to be a part of a government which is recognizing in a contemporary way the changing life styles in our cities and recognizing the contribution of the renter, and is assisting the renter in this way, by recognizing that renters too are paying their share in our society and that they too must be recognized and be dealt with in the same way as a property owner.

May I suggest to the Provincial Treasurer that inasmuch as this is a new program and a program which must be understood by those who are renters in our areas in this province, that this program be publicized considerably. Renters should be made aware of the procedures they must follow so that, come income tax time next spring, when they are filling in their returns, they will be aware of the situation, so they will know how to take advantage of this contemporary program of which I am sure we are all proud to be a part.

MR. LUDWIG:

Mr. Speaker, I ...

MR. FARRAN:

Mr. Speaker ...

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Calgary Mountain View, I think, requested the floor earlier.

MR. LUDWIG:

Mr. Speaker, I certainly support some of the clauses in this bill. I was very impressed with the Provincial Treasurer's introduction of the bill. He says this was a dramatic first. I'm under the impression that the estate tax legislation in this province was somewhat of a good lead and a dramatic first and just to let the hon. minister know that it is sometimes better to be right than to be first.

I don't disagree at all with the renter's aid in this province. I think it's in keeping with our ability to pay at the present time. I think that we ought not to get carried away by the \$100 amount now. One hundred dollars is not that large a figure any more. I agree with the hon. member, Grant Notley, that perhaps we should extend this principle and make it a little more meaningful.

One hundred dollars was a nice round figure 8 or 10 years ago. It would buy an awful lot. But now \$100, in an apartment where the landlords have been waiting for tax reductions, didn't get them and moved in and increased the rents by at least \$10 a month, merely takes up the slack. My comment is that it is good, but perhaps it has to be better.

I know that it's probably customary for the opposition to tell the government, you're doing all right, but why stop there? It's done all over, but I believe the case in Alberta is different. We can all stand up and very proudly say, well, inflation wasn't caused by us. It's outside the province. We have nothing to do with inflation. I believe we have a certain amount to do with inflation, but no one can deny the fact that we received a tremendous extra amount of money because of inflation and changing conditions within the next two years.

The change from a buyer's market to a seller's market in the petroleum industry has had a dramatic effect on this province - perhaps much more than all the combined action, decisions and talk of the Conservatives over and over and over again. So we mustn't be too anxious to take credit for coming off with a dramatic first. We're merely making an adjustment, perhaps slightly overdue, but at least an adjustment we can afford now.

I'll have to get back to the fact that we're still helping people across the board. There is nothing wrong with that I suppose. We don't want to get involved in red tape and in paper work and in perhaps finding out whether we're helping those who need it or whether we're helping many who don't need it. I'm not going to quarrel with that issue because we probably started it. The principle of the Social Credit dividend was fought hard by the opposition until they got into office and now the principle smells very sweetly. So we'll give it, whatever we'll be able to give by way of an aid or dividend will be given across the board.

I wonder whether we're not moving, perhaps subconsciously or unintentionally, into an across the board guaranteed income. I believe that with a guaranteed income many of those who are over a certain amount would get nothing. Maybe that principle isn't good because when you give something that belongs to all the people maybe they should all get their fair portion, but many people who are better off can manage in their own way and through their own efforts. Sometimes through fortune and sometimes through better knowledge, better education they have managed to get their fair share of the good things in this province where many have not.

We keep coming up here with programs and it's a dramatic first because we're helping everybody, the rich and the poor alike. It's good if we can afford it, but I'm saying, Mr. Speaker, that if we can afford to help the rich and the poor in several categories alike then we can definitely afford to help the poor in a certain category entirely. Perhaps this principle isn't sound. I think it is. I believe that many hon. members here, whether they're the landed barons of the Conservative Party or whether they represent workingmen's districts, can realize that there are poor people, there are pockets of poverty in this province like there are pockets of poverty throughout Canada even in the richest provinces. There is where we should concentrate our intention to help.

I can't get too excited about the fact that we are helping many people who are doing rather well. The economic condition in Alberta is good, it's a buoyant economy and so many people are doing well.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Order, order.

MR. LUDWIG:

But on the other hand many people, comparatively speaking, have lost their position as far as standards of living are concerned. Perhaps someone can start speaking up and seeing that some of the good things, some of the bonuses we have because of inflation, will go to these people who did not cash in.

I'm sure that you might not like what I'm saying but it will be interesting if you challenge the facts of what I'm saying and to that extent, Mr. Speaker, I believe that we have an obligation and should keep looking at this. There might be a little bit of extra work to help the thousands and thousands of family people who have to pay everything all around the clock and they can't make ends meet. Children have to wear old, torn clothes, buy the cheapest food they can, live in the cheapest accommodation possible, and we have to stand by and watch this.

But let's go on merrily with the principle of helping some categories straight across the board because it is the easy thing to do and, I would say, the popular thing to do. There are many people who are well-to-do, who have a compassion for those who are not so well off, and they wouldn't mind, for instance, if some of the wealthier people didn't get the \$100 or the \$212 providing they were satisfied that the families in this province were content and perhaps did not have to worry that tomorrow or the day after or the month after this they would not be able to buy nearly as much food as they did this month. This is a fact glaring at us, that everybody has to accept, that everybody speaks about. Everybody talks about the urgency of inflation but somehow they can't do much about it.

I can say that politicians straight across the country from the east to Vancouver Island - one thing they have done is to show the people that they know how to deal with inflation - municipal, federal and provincial. They have dealt with inflation as it affects them. It was right and proper for them to give themselves a proper increase and solve their own inflation problem. Unfortunately the taxpayer hasn't got everybody standing up for him and there are some people who are helpless. In every constituency you will find some who are helpless and who need help. And that help is not forthcoming from this government because maybe they are too busy taking care of things that are easier to do.

I would like to hear some of the hon. members stand up and say that there is no poverty, no people living below standards in their constituency. I would like to hear that I don't think that is so, but perhaps it isn't as easy for people who are in professions, or people who might be classified as landed barons, people who are doing well and who have good salaries, to be concerned about how the other side is living. I don't feel that - in fact, it is my intention at every opportunity to urge the hon. members to take a good look at this matter and see what they can do about it.

Now when we look at the dramatic first in taxation, it is well known that for many years Alberta was known as the tax haven of Canada. Everybody - people came from elsewhere to invest here even though we were geographically handicapped; our freight rates were higher; we had to buy higher and sell cheaper. But people kept coming because there were tax advantages here, Mr. Speaker. The hon. Provincial Treasurer will probably agree. I don't think it matters whether he does or not, but that was the reputation of this province. That is why we grew so quickly even though we are isolated geographically.

And so as we progress, as we can afford to make these adjustments to the public that we are making now, we should take a look at an adjustment that will help everybody. Let's look whether it isn't time to adjust the income tax right across the board. We had at one time moved into the higher average of income tax throughout the whole country. Perhaps revenues declined and we had to make that adjustment, perhaps it was the right thing to do, but right now is the time. If we can afford to make several adjustments, across the board - adjustments to the rich and the poor alike in some categories only - then perhaps we should look at whether we can make adjustments for those who perhaps are not doing so well.

No one will deny the fact that some people are unable to cope, compete and get hold of the better things in life that are available in this province, as are others who are more fortunate, perhaps through no fault of their own but they have done better.

Mr. Speaker, with those few remarks I believe that we should take a look at income tax right across the board. We should take a look at the gasoline prices right now. I believe the government is thinking about it but thinking is not quite enough. They have to do something about it.

So, Mr. Speaker, I would like to urge the hon. Provincial Treasurer to give us some facts and figures of whether we do have poverty here, whether there are children who are on the verge of starvation, whether there are people who are not sleeping so well because of worry that their earnings were taxed out of their - were confiscated virtually by inflation. This is something that people throughout Canada recognize and we can't afford to ignore this very problem because we are a wealthier province, and we can afford to help some of these people who are not doing so well at the present time.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Minister of Telephones and Utilities followed by the hon. Member for Slave Lake.



MR. FARRAN:

Mr. Speaker, just a few words to correct some obvious misunderstanding. It's quite obvious that the hon. Member for Calgary Mountain View doesn't understand the bill or, perhaps, doesn't want to understand it.

The whole concept of the bill is not \$100 across the board. It's a tax credit which is hitched to ability to pay and the wealthy people won't get any credit, because their incomes will be too high. He's obviously missed this. I must say it must be very hard for political heels not to distort facts. Mr. Speaker, ...

MR. SPEAKER:

Did I understand the hon. member to use the expression "political heels"?

MR. FARRAN:

Well ...

MR. SPEAKER:

If I understood the expression correctly, I wonder if the hon. minister would deal with the expression further.

MR. FARRAN:

Mr. Speaker, I'd find it very difficult to define a political 'heeler' or a political 'heel', but I wasn't referring to anyone in particular because I'm quite certain the hon. member is full of decency, integrity, fair mindedness and all the rest of it.

MR. TAYLOR:

A point of order, Mr. Speaker, what is the difference between a political heel and a political sole?

AN HON. MEMBER:

This much, Gordon.

MR. FARRAN:

Well, Mr. Speaker, let me go on and I'll try to explain why the \$100 figure was chosen. It wasn't just picked at random. It was the result of a study which showed that this was the average educational property tax paid on an average 2-bedroom suite in a high-rise building in downtown Calgary or Edmonton.

It may not be fair. No rule of thumb is totally fair because there are people who are renting houses and are perhaps paying a bigger portion of educational property tax than people in apartments because in apartments you have the benefit of economy of scale. The land is better utilized. The building is more densely planned so you have common utilities and so on, so the total tax per unit is less than it would be in a single family residence. You go on to townhouses and maybe the analogy is not so good, but the \$100 figure was based on a 2-bedroom suite in a high-rise apartment building.

Really, this is a tremendous first for Alberta, recognizing that renters pay property tax indirectly through their rent. It's the first for a tax credit scheme, and I hope that we continue along this line and develop this form of tax reduction to a greater extent in the future. One hundred dollars may not seem very much to people who are wealthy like some of the hon. members, but I can assure them it's a considerable relief to people who are on low incomes and are hard-pressed. It's certainly better than even the old \$50 - which we mentioned became \$75 - homeowner grant, which was a flat across-the-board grant to owner-occupied properties. It had no relationship whatsoever with ability to pay, so this is a big movement in the right direction. It's a big, big improvement over the fat zero dollars paid to renters by the previous administration.

MR. BARTON:

Mr. Speaker, in speaking to this bill, it's rather a point of clarification. I'm glad the three ministers involved in it are here.

My point is that under the new Metis program introduced by the government, the owner of the house doesn't become an owner, he becomes a lessee for five years. Correct me if I'm wrong in this. In that case, it affects the bill indirectly quite significantly - who gets the credit for the Homeowner's Tax Reduction Plan? Maybe he would be entitled to the maximum of \$216, or does he claim for \$100 as a renter? Basically, they have the option in five years to take out ownership, and if that option is through, then they would be entitled to roughly \$500. I was wondering if the government would consider putting it toward the down payment when they exercise the option to own?

MR. KOZIAK:

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to take part in this debate and to indicate my support for Bill No. 80, The Alberta Income Tax Amendment Act, and also the support of the residents of the constituency of Edmonton Strathcona for the plan which is found in Section 5 of the Act and Section 8 (iii) of the amendment.

The bill, Mr. Speaker, puts to rest the fallacy that a renter pays no property tax. It recognizes the fact that in his rent a tenant does pay for his fair share of the taxes, both municipal and educational. We all recognize that in this province not all Albertans live on their own property. A good number live in high-rise apartments, townhouse apartments and other rented accommodation. By paying rent for this accommodation they are in fact paying property taxes.

In the city of Edmonton I would guess that fairly close to one-half of the people now occupies rented accommodation. In my own constituency this is even more predominant. One just has to walk outside, through the members' lobby, and look out over the balcony over the right bank of the North Saskatchewan River and view all the high-rise apartments dotting that bank of the river.

For these people, Mr. Speaker, this plan provides on a province-wide basis approximately \$12 million a year. It's unnecessary for me to deal with the figures dealt with specifically in the Act. The Provincial Treasurer admirably dealt with them. However, I felt that I must again underline the \$12 million figure, a very substantial addition to the ability of renters to cope with inflation in these trying years.

There was some suggestion, Mr. Speaker, that this money should not have gone to the tenants and renters, such as in the case of the property owners, but should have gone to the municipalities, to the town councils and city councils so they might be able to deal with the moneys in the manner they deem fit and perhaps reduce taxes on a general basis.

Mr. Speaker, in the spring session this year I spent some time in debate on the matter of assessment of properties. I brought to the attention of this House the substantial reduction in taxes being enjoyed this year in the city of Edmonton by high-rise apartment buildings, reductions, Mr. Speaker, that would have amounted to a rent reduction had that saving been passed on, a rent reduction of \$10 per month to each tenant. However I am not aware of one instance, Mr. Speaker, where that reduction was passed on to a tenant. So I think the provincial government was extremely wise in approaching this assistance in the fashion in which they did, by providing that assistance directly to the tenant and not through either the vehicle of the municipal government or the vehicle of the property owner himself.

I have always been concerned, Mr. Speaker, whenever a new tax was created. In the initial stages of a new tax of course the amount of the tax is usually low and accompanied by promises that it will be kept low. We find these promises accompanying the new Capital Gains Tax which was included in the recent amendments to the federal income tax acts. We found those promises accompanying federal sales taxes. All of the provinces in Canada now levy a provincial sales tax. I don't recall an instance where that tax has at any time been reduced. However, we see occasions of that tax going up.

In this particular case I am pleased that we have a reversal of that trend because what we do in Bill No. 80 is create a new vehicle which provides for a reduction in tax. I can see in future years where this very same vehicle which appears in Bill No. 80 - this very same vehicle can be used to increase that reduction from time to time for renters and others.

Mr. Speaker, the hon. Member for Mountain View suggested that the benefits provided for in Bill No. 80 are nothing more than the Social Credit dividend. Well, if that be the case, Mr. Speaker, then the people of Alberta were required to elect a Progressive Conservative government in order to implement 36 years of unfulfilled Social Credit promises.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Drumheller followed by the hon. Member for Hanna-Oyen.

MR. TAYLOR:

Mr. Speaker, I am delighted that we are seeing some really modernistic trends on the part of the Tory government if they are adopting Social Credit principles. I commend them for it. Certainly the more Social Credit philosophy we adopt in this province, the greater the province will become and the greater Canada will be. So I commend you for that.

Mr. Speaker, I like this bill. I commend the government for recognizing renters. Renters are human beings and I think this is a real step forward when renters and their needs are recognized. Another thing I like about the bill - and I want to deal with the things I like about it first - is the fact that it does take into cognizance the wealth of the individual. I would not support the bill if it were going to take from the 'have-nots' to give to the 'haves'. This is a principle coming into vogue in many parts of Canada and, indeed, in some of our legislation - where we are taking from the 'have-nots' to give to the 'haves'. That isn't a sound principle.

I think I told the House once before that a chap stood up at a public meeting I was conducting and waved a cheque he had got back, a premium return on his health insurance, and said, "I need this like a hole in the head. I'm rich. Why are they sending this back to me?"

People generally will go along with any program designed to help those who need it, but people look askance at programs that are taking from the 'have-nots' to give to the 'haves'. I like this program in that regard. If I am wealthy and I fill in my income tax, I am not entitled to anything as the hon. Minister of Telephones and Utilities said. I think that is sound. I shouldn't be helped to avoid paying my proper contribution toward running this country when I can well afford to do it. So the \$100 will vary from nothing to \$100 for renters who pay income tax.

There is another point, however, that worries me a little, and I would hope the hon. Provincial Treasurer might be able to clarify it when he is closing the debate. That is, what about those who are not senior citizens and who do not fill in income tax? Will it be possible for them to apply as senior citizens may now apply, according to the hon. Minister of Municipal Affairs, and get a flat \$100? Because as I understand the Income Tax Act now, you are not required to fill in an income tax if you are not taxable. So there may well be - not only may well be; there are - many many people who are not taxable in this country and in this province and they are not all over 65 years of age either. Consequently there should be some way in which that group may apply for their flat \$100. They are entitled to it. They are the ones who need it. They are the ones who really - most of us are more interested in them getting it than anyone else.

So I would urge, if there is a section in the Act dealing with this - I haven't been able to find it - but whether there is or not, provisions should be made for those who are not required to fill in income tax and consequently would be entitled to the \$100. But there has to be some machinery set up whereby this can be done. I notice in the Act the provincial cabinet, the Lieutenant Governor in Council, has authority to pass regulations. It may well be that it can be dealt with in that way.

There is just one other principle in the act that I want to deal with, that I look a little askance at. That is the principle that deals with two people who are married, living together and not separated with proper separation papers or a separation agreement. Only the one getting the higher amount of income is able to declare this and get some rebate if it is within the proper amounts. I'm not quarrelling with that, because husband and wife are supposed to be one and their income is supposed to be one and so on. The hon. members know more about that than I do, but I understand that is the way it works.

I hope there is no loophole in this act that would enable people to separate simply for the purpose of securing money unfairly that shouldn't be coming to them. I have heard of cases - I can't say I know of any personally - but I have heard of cases where people do this in order to qualify for welfare. I'm sure that whenever such are caught, they should be treated very severely because it's taking something out of the public purse, it's really stealing from the public purse. It is just as much theft, in my view, as going into a store and stealing from the cash register. So there shouldn't be a loophole where people

can secure extra money from the public purse simply by living in separate houses while really living, for all other intents and purposes, as man and wife.

I think that has to be looked after because more and more we have to be checking into the very few people who want to enrich themselves, even though it's a dishonest way of doing it. If we close the loopholes, then we stop people, who may be inclined, from committing the offence.

Generally speaking, I want to commend the hon. Provincial Treasurer for this bill. I hope this same principle will be applied to other distributions of public money, namely that the amount will be going to those who need it and not to those who have already.

MR. FRENCH:

Mr. Speaker, in rising to make a few comments on Bill No. 80, I would like to join with those who have complemented the hon. Provincial Treasurer in bringing in this bill. I think it's a step in the right direction.

However, I have one or two questions I would like to pose to him. The first is, what provision is being made to look after people who are renting farms? We realize that in many cases farm income, maybe on a crop-share basis or some other basis where they have a renter, these do not pay a definite amount each month in rent. At the same time they are taxpayers, in the same way as the other people in the province are taxpayers, and it seems to me that maybe some provision could be made - maybe an amendment in committee - to take care of this problem.

I would also like to support very heartily the submission made by the hon. Member for Drumheller with respect to people in the age bracket of 65 and under, who do not pay income tax. We have a large number of people in rural areas who have a great deal of difficulty in filling out any form.

Listening to a report from Ottawa the other day, it would appear that the federal government is removing a number of people from the tax rolls with some of the amendments they are bringing in. So we are going to have a larger group of people in the province, I expect, who will not be subject to paying income tax. Now we are going to be in a position where we force these people to fill out this long complicated form. The people I represent have difficulty in filling out even a simple form. When we look at the income tax form, we must admit it is not as easy to examine and complete as it maybe could be.

So for those people who are under 65, it seems that we could have some provision where they could just make application, maybe on a simple form or some other way. I certainly want to endorse the representation which was made so effectively by the hon. Member for Drumheller and trust the minister, in bringing this to his attention, will be able to bring in some amendment in the committee, which will take care of the problem I am bringing to the attention of the Assembly.

MR. CHAMBERS:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to make a few brief comments on this bill because I feel it contains provisions which are so important to our Alberta society today.

I think we have all recognized for a long time that there has been a degree of injustice insofar as renters are concerned. Indirectly, as several of the members here pointed out, renters do pay property tax. The tax is obviously incorporated as part of normal rent. Also, for a long time of course, home-owners have been assisted in one manner or another. I think this is fine and as it should be. We all want to assist home ownership. With costs the way they are today, home-owners obviously need all the help they can get.

However, there is a large and growing portion of our society today who are renters. As the Member for Calgary Buffalo pointed out, many people today are renters by choice. It is the way they want it. But also, there are many more people who are renters for economic reasons. I think most of our young couples today are obliged to pay rent for many years before they can accumulate enough cash to make the down payment on a home, particularly at home prices the way they are at this point in time.

Who needs help more than the young couple? I think these new renter assistance credits will help our young people put together that down payment for a home just that more quickly.

Also I would like to make one other point and that is that the property tax rebates to home-owners and renters are really possible because of the ownership by the people of Alberta of the oil and gas resources. Therefore these rebates and credits, in my view, really reflect a dividend to the people of Alberta on the ownership of these most valuable assets. It seems obvious that renters should share these benefits as well as home-owners.

This most progressive legislation provides for just that.

In summary then, Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate the minister for his achievement in convincing the federal government that this fine progressive plan, unique to Alberta, should be adopted.

I would urge all members of the Assembly to support the bill.

MR. ZANDER:

Mr. Speaker, as a member of the committee at that time, some two years ago, we studied the possibilities of giving relief to the renters the hon. member just mentioned; the young couple, those on fixed incomes. It was a problem at that time, Mr. Speaker, really to come to a figure that would be suitable or somewhere near the necessities for shelter at that time to renters. I remember full well, wrestling with the amount of dollars. At that time, Mr. Speaker, I think as the chairman can attest, we were working on a figure. We worked it down from \$150, \$125 and somewhere down to \$100.

I cannot agree with the hon. Member for Mountain View - he is not - oh, yes, he is here - when he said it is the duty of the government to help everybody. In my opinion, I cannot see how everybody cannot be included when it is implied in the bill. Any renter who avails himself of the funds, if he is in a low income tax bracket, certainly takes full advantage of the advantages in the bill. Also, if he is in a high income tax bracket, he practically receives no advantage at all.

He said we know there were many low-income families and individuals in our province. We fully realized this in dealing with the problem at that time. But surely he cannot relate the disadvantages that also will be to those people who are in a high income tax bracket and cannot avail themselves of the funds.

It's sort of amusing that the hon. Member for Drumheller should say that we are implementing some of the Social Credit principles by dividend.

[Interjections]

If we only look back, and I don't think his memory is that short, I can remember the previous government at one time giving \$20 to every Albertan out of the Natural Resources Fund and that was somewhere around that figure of \$11 million or \$12 million. I also attest to the fact that I stood in the rural areas, in our little towns, and watched the line-up of white and Native people, lots at length, collecting the \$20, but the length was the same at the government liquor store. So, who got the advantage?

[Interjections]

You got it back, it's true. But this is an advantage that's designed to help the lower income tax bracket people and the new families that are starting out. The individual female or male that leaves the family home and has to reside in a different city, also has to pay the income tax, but also gets advantage out of the tax rebate. So you cannot relate this to the \$20 that was given to every Albertan many years ago out of the same fund because the advantage was one that the government immediately got back at that time.

So, Mr. Speaker, as a member of the committee that went into the study, I'm certainly happy that the Assembly will approve this bill so that our low income tax people and younger people, individuals or young married couples, will be able to avail themselves of the funds under the renter tax rebate.

MR. TAYLOR:

Mr. Speaker, may I ask the hon. member a question. Is the hon. member suggesting that the government is going to tell those who get the \$100 how they have to spend it, or how they may spend it, or how they may not spend it?

MR. ZANDER:

Well I'm sure the hon. member well knows that persons in the lower income tax bracket are not going to line up at the liquor store immediately.

MR. TAYLOR:

Another question, Mr. Speaker. Is it only the rich who can drink?

MR. ZANDER:

No ...

MR. SPEAKER:

Possibly the reversion to the question period should end now.

MR. YOUNG:

Mr. Speaker, if indeed the question period has concluded, I have a few points I should like to make very briefly.

Number one, I believe very strongly that this approach is very necessary in the name of equity, equity as between house-owners and renters. As an economist, I have long believed that renters pay property tax even though they do so indirectly. I think this is a proper recognition of that fact and helps to remove what would otherwise have been an inequity as between property owners or home-owners and renters. I may say that it is removal of an inequity that has existed for a number of years, so in that sense we are correcting a wrong which has grown over a period of time.

Number two, Mr. Speaker, I should like to indicate that not all renters live in downtown Edmonton or downtown Calgary or downtown Lethbridge for that matter. My constituency which extends to the northwest border of Edmonton contains renters in every portion of it and many of these people are not able to afford the kind of accommodation which can be found in some of the downtown areas.

Thirdly, Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to emphasize again the progressive nature of this particular legislation.

For those who may not have done the calculations, I have attempted to do some. If my arithmetic is correct the progressive nature can be calculated somewhat as follows: Persons with taxable incomes of \$15,000 will not be eligible for any benefit; persons with taxable incomes of \$10,000 will be eligible for approximately \$48; persons with taxable incomes of \$7,000 will be eligible for approximately \$78, and persons with taxable incomes of \$5,000 for approximately \$98. So we may conclude from that, if my arithmetic is correct, that the minimum cut-off point for maximum benefits would be a minimum taxable income of \$5,000, and for the maximum cut-off point a taxable income of approximately \$15,000.

Mr. Speaker, I think the fourth point of concern I have is the rapid rate of inflation and the fact that in my constituency, at least, those people affected most grievously by inflation, apart from the senior citizen group, are those who live in some of the less well-appointed rental accommodations. And I believe that these people, because they are forced to live in these situations, are probably those whose incomes rise more slowly during inflation than some of the salaried positions, some of the tradesmen classifications that tend to keep up with the increase in inflation if not exceeding it.

My fifth point, Mr. Speaker, is to observe or to comment upon a comment from the hon. Member for Calgary Mountain View. This afternoon he treated us to the expression that it is better to be right than to be first. That announcement of self-evaluation, Mr. Speaker, which presumably has been executed with the hon. member's usual incomparable objectivity, is the first indication to come to my attention that the gentleman is either right or first.

MR. SPEAKER:

May the hon. minister conclude the debate?

HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

MR. MINIELY:

Mr. Speaker, may I thank all hon. members for their contributions and comments on Bill No. 80. There are just a few that I would like to respond to. My colleagues on this side have effectively responded to some of the concerns on the other side.

First, I would like to say that there was a considerable degree of concern expressed about the \$100 maximum to renters where there is a \$216 maximum to home-owners. And perhaps in my remarks on moving second reading I did not make it clear that we were trying to accomplish two objectives.

One was, of course, to treat the renter equally with the home-owner, but the other was the property tax reduction to the home-owner per dwelling unit. A good example would be in the case of a husband and wife living in one home; the maximum property tax reduction on that dwelling unit is \$216. You could have two single renters, not married, in the same dwelling unit and they could both qualify for \$100, making the total credit on that dwelling unit \$200. You see, we are trying to balance both equalizing the renter on a tax credit basis and also on a dwelling unit basis, to try to bring it into some proportion of equity between the home-owner and the home-renter. And that was the reason - as well as the comment by the hon. Minister of Telephones and Utilities, - that the \$100 represented the average rental situation in Alberta and was chosen so that the impact was, if you like, to the average renter and below, as opposed to the people in more expensive rental accommodation and in higher incomes.

My colleague, the hon. Member for Calgary Buffalo, I think made a comment regarding publicizing the renter income tax credit, and I think, frankly, that there will be some need for communication to our citizens who are renting. We will have to take a look at what is a proper and effective way of ensuring that our citizens have full information regarding the program of tax credit.

The hon. Member for Lesser Slave Lake raised a question regarding the Metis housing program. I am not familiar with whether or not it is a leasing situation for five years. I suspect that it is probably a lease purchase arrangement. If it is a lease purchase arrangement I believe, although I can clarify further, that they would qualify for the property tax reduction, in other words the Alberta property tax reduction and not the renter tax credit. You can't receive both of course. You can receive one or the other, but in answer to your question I believe in this situation it would be the property tax reduction.

There was also a fair degree of concern expressed regarding those of our citizens who are not senior citizens but who are in low incomes and normally, perhaps, not required to file an income tax return. There are just two comments I would like to make about that. First, with the advent of the Canada Pension Plan the number of people who are not required to file income tax returns has been substantially reduced. On the return you also have to calculate your Canada Pension Plan contributions. But the other thing is that you really can't design a plan that is related to an ability to pay, which is the whole concept of this plan, without relating it to income in some manner. We have no way provincially of judging the income of our citizens except by virtue of their filing of an income tax return. I realize it is a problem. If you sacrifice the one side you are on the other side not able to have a plan geared to the ability to pay concept which is what we have tried to do in this.

People under the age of 65 - we were aware of this concern - who have low incomes and otherwise would not file an income tax return will have to file an income tax return if they wish to obtain their renter income tax credit. But in any event they would have to file and claim a form of credit which ever way it would be administered.

I think the hon. Member for Cypress, by note, asked me what the average person would receive in way of a credit. I think, rather than say the "average person", the "average renter" in Alberta with the average income would receive the \$100. Other than that, Mr. Speaker, I would just like to repeat that I am pleased with the comments of the hon. members and I'm sure it will receive the support of all members in this House for the principle that it recognizes.

MR. STROM:

Mr. Speaker, I wonder if I might ask the hon. minister a question. If I understood you correctly you suggested that a couple in the home-owner category would be receiving the \$216 and then you compared that to the renter as being an individual. Through you, Mr. Speaker, I am wondering if the greatest number of renters are single people and is that why you made your comparison that way?

MR. MINIELY:

I think it's fair to say that a greater number of renters, as the hon. members says, Mr. Speaker, are unmarried. You can't say that more than 50 per cent of renters are unmarried, but if you compare the home-owners to the renters there is a higher percentage of renters who are single compared to the percentage of home-owners who are single and unmarried.

The problem we were confronting was the fact that we also had a large number of rental accommodation that we had five single people in, and if you didn't have some way of administering that you could in effect end up with a \$500 tax credit because it applies to the individual in the case of the tax credit. We have to remember that the tax credit applies to the individual whereas the property tax reduction applies to the dwelling unit. That's what we were trying to balance.

MR. BUCKWELL:

Mr. Speaker, I wonder if I could ask the minister a question. We asked about farm rent.

MR. MINIELY:

Pardon me, Mr. Speaker, I meant to answer that. You will notice on page 5, subsection 5 that it says "rent paid directly or indirectly", and indirectly is meant to mean payment in kind. So it would take care of any farm rental situation as long as it applied to the dwelling. The whole principle of this is related to the dwelling. It's not intended to take into account rental payments that are related to the business side of the farm operation. It is rental payments that are related to the dwelling the farmer or individual lives in. If he were paying his rent in kind through wheat or through grain or through produce or in any other way, page 5, subsection 5 looks after that and he would qualify for the same form of credit.

[The motion was carried. Bill No. 80 was read a second time.]

MR. HYNDMAN:

Mr. Speaker, I move that you do now leave the Chair and the Assembly resolve itself into Committee of the Whole to consider certain bills on the Order Paper.

MR. SPEAKER:

Before putting the motion I wonder if I might just mention briefly to the House on a point of order, that the hon. Member for Drumheller wishes to withdraw the notice given of Question No. 267. There is some lack of precedent on the point. As I understand it, as long as a substitute question not exceeding the scope of this one is filed, the notice may be withdrawn. In the absence of specific authority I would ask the leave of the House that notice of this question may be withdrawn.

HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

[Mr. Speaker left the Chair.]

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COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

[Mr. Diachuk in the Chair]

MR. CHAIRMAN:

The Committee of the Whole Assembly will now come to order.

Bill No. 57  
The Disaster Services Act

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Bill 57, The Disaster Services Act. There is an amendment. Has the amendment been distributed to every member?

MR. WILSON:

Before we get into dealing with the bill, I think there are some explanations due regarding the hearings, meetings, or whatever they were, around the province and the results of those meetings, as well as the distribution and availability of the results.

First of all, Mr. Chairman, approximately 15 attended by something like 2,000 participants were held throughout the province. In some cases they were advertised as public meetings. In some cases they were advertised as public hearings. Now, Mr. Chairman, it seems to me that those 2,000 participants were led to believe that their viewpoints would be heard and considered on this bill. After all, that was the purpose of introducing it in the spring, we were told, and holding it over until the fall.

Now, Mr. Chairman, we were told earlier that the information would be made available to the government caucus only. Then we were advised after we requested it, that the information would be made available to the opposition members of this Legislature. What the opposition members got were five sheets of paper which carry comments, but only one side of the comments on the various points considered. Furthermore, Mr. Chairman, the comments we got are dated August 27, and that is before the completion of the public hearings, or meetings or whatever they were. I would appreciate the minister in charge of this bill advising, before the day is out, what they really were.

So here we're told that this is all the documentation that flowed out of those 15 or 17 meetings from some 2,000 people. We have five sheets of paper here with some very brief comments that only list one side of the story.

For example, the Calgary meetings were held on September 11, and this document was completed on August 27. Now I don't think that is playing fair with the opposition members when they are told they can get all the information that the government members could get and this is all that was compiled as a result of those meetings.

Now, Mr. Chairman, one thing further. That isn't all that was compiled at those meetings because at the Calgary meeting, for example, the public attending was split up into three groups to study various sections of the bill. They were given work sheets similar to this, work sheets that listed the various contentious points that the groups could discuss, whether they agreed or disagreed with that section of the bill, and why, and what their comments were.

Now then, as a result of those group meetings there were a great deal of these sheets returned back to whoever was in charge of conducting the meetings. We're told that all we got were five sheets that list one side of the argument when there must be hundreds of these other forms that listed both sides of the argument. I don't think that is playing fair with the Albertans who attended these meetings, who were told that their viewpoints would have some effect on the result of this bill. Here is one of the ads that said, "Your Opinion of the New Act is Important". What kind of travesty of justice is this when we're called here to debate on this bill, Mr. Chairman?

[Interjections]

We're called here to debate on this bill, to consider the viewpoints of 2,000 Albertans more or less, because we don't know exactly what the attendance was yet. Hopefully we'll find out before we get on with this bill, but we're supposed to know what the opinions of those participants were so that we would have an intelligent opportunity to assess the viewpoints of the public who

attended. To think the public would be invited, asked and requested to participate, to attend meetings, to study the bill in advance, then to have their viewpoints submerged so that the opposition members don't know what the public wanted done at those meetings, is not carrying out the spirit and intent of the meetings.

So I would like the minister in charge of this, Mr. Chairman, to advise whether these were public meetings or public hearings and why were they advertised both ways.

Further, it seems to me that an apology is due to the Albertans, Mr. Chairman, who participated in those public meetings because their word has not been heard and distributed.

Public money was spent on those public meetings and the results should be given in public. We asked for them very nicely and quietly, and we were given these phoney five sheets of paper with somebody's viewpoints of the summary of what went on. That certainly isn't sufficient to represent the viewpoints of 2,000 Albertans who went to 15 or more hearings.

So, Mr. Chairman, I'd invite the minister in charge to make an apology to those Albertans who participated at those meetings and who showed up, studied and made worthwhile comments so that all might know what the situation was. It seems to me there has been sloppy handling at the very least, of this whole situation, mismanagement of the entire operation and withholding of important information that was paid for by public funds, that was meant to be public information, that still has not been released to the opposition. But we have been told it has been released to the government caucus, and I can't attest to that one way or the other, but perhaps the minister would like to answer some of those queries for a starter.

DR. HORNER:

Mr. Chairman, I'm always amazed by my hon. friend for Calgary Bow who spouts off loudly. His knowledge is only related to the manner in which he spouts off.

First of all, there was a total of 357 people who attended the 15 meetings throughout Alberta so I don't know where he got the figure of 2,000, but I rather expect he is trying to exaggerate everything as usual.

There were 357 people who participated in 15 meetings throughout the Province of Alberta. There were review forms passed out at these meetings. In addition to that, Mr. Chairman, we asked the 330 municipalities in this province to complete a review form. Out of all of that, I asked the people to give me a condensation of the response and I placed that condensation of the response in front of the opposition caucus.

My hon. friend made some other comments earlier with regard to the Calgary meeting. The Calgary meeting, as a matter of fact, was advertised in The Calgary Herald on Friday, September 7, four days before the meeting on Tuesday, September 11. The Calgary Albertan carried a story about the meeting in its September 8 edition.

The chairman told the meeting that it was not planned to publish a report about the meeting, but to get public opinion and reports would be made available to the government - not necessarily to the caucus at all. But the caucuses received the same kind of information as my hon. friend has.

I suggest, Mr. Chairman, the only mismanagement and bungling, quite frankly, is that if the hon. member was interested in this act, he should have become knowledgeable and attended the meetings. If he had done that, I am sure the situation in Calgary could have been improved substantially. Because my reading of the situation now is that, in fact, the Calgary people didn't appreciate the kind of Act they were now operating under, and that there are substantial improvements in this Act in relation to civil liberties. And for my hon. friend for political reasons to start hollering about mismanagement and bungling, I suggest to him that if he wants the government to do his job as an MLA, perhaps he should consider resigning so we can elect somebody there who will do the job as an MLA.

MR. WILSON:

The Deputy Premier can huff and puff all he wants. But that does not belie the fact that at least on one occasion that I have evidence of, the Calgary meeting was advertised as a public hearing. The advertisements that were in the newspaper calling a public meeting did not say that the information would go

only to the government. The people were misled, and that information should still be made available that the government has as a result of those public meetings. It was public money that was spent. There were public meetings. The public who participated expected that their information would be given to all members of the Legislature and not just selected members of the Legislature.

And as to the statistics on the meetings, I'd like to ask the Deputy Premier how many people he thinks attended the Calgary meeting? And why did he hand us information of five sheets, saying that those were all the documents they had, when the thing is dated August 27 and the Calgary meeting was on September 11? This was compiled before the Calgary meeting. What kind of document or evidence is that of opinions that were gathered from the public, when this was given to us as representing the opinions of the public and it was prepared before the Calgary meetings.

I still, Mr. Chairman, would like the Deputy Premier to give us some reasonable explanation of those comments.

DR. HORNER:

Mr. Chairman, 110 people attended the Calgary meeting. Inasmuch as the concerns expressed at the Calgary meeting were covered in the condensation of the previous compilation that I had them do for me - whatever the date is - in August some time, I didn't feel that additional paper would really, in fact, help the hon. gentleman.

The primary concerns are listed in the condensation. The question of civil liberties was the important consideration raised at the Calgary meeting. Again I suggest that that was a misunderstanding by the people who were involved because they didn't appreciate what The Civil Defence and Disaster Act now says. There are substantial improvements.

Again I say, in relation to The Disaster Services Act, in regard to civil liberties over and above what was there before, that the total participation, including the Calgary meeting, was 357 people. In addition to that, as I mentioned before, out of the 330 municipalities asked to complete a review form, 49 replied. On the other hand, those 49 represented a substantial majority of the population of the province. We also sent it out to 42 provincial organizations and associations which we thought might have some interest.

My hon. friend, you know, for the first time in the history of legislation in the Province of Alberta, we brought it in in the spring session, we made it available to all of the people to consider during the summer, to come back in the fall. Again I say to my hon. friend if he wants us to do his job as an MIA in Calgary Bow, he'd better resign so we can get somebody elected that'll do it.

MR. WILSON:

Mr. Chairman, just a minute ...

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Mr. Wilson, I think Mr. Ludwig has tried to get up twice. We'll give him ... Very well, Mr. Wilson.

MR. WILSON:

Mr. Chairman, the Deputy Premier says 110 people were at the Calgary meeting. I'd like to know what he thinks the other 100, and 200 plus that, were doing there then. What kind of feedback is he getting?

He's the man who's responsible, if this bill goes through, for some very, very serious things that could happen in this province, and it seems to me that the evidence of the performance, the result of meetings which were held on this particular bill, does not build confidence in the minds of the public.

It seems also, Mr. Chairman, that the very least that we could settle for at this stage of the game is a complete list of all of the summaries that were produced from the task forces at the various public meetings, because those summaries include both viewpoints on every question, not just somebody's opinion about one side of the viewpoints. If the debate on this bill, Mr. Chairman, is to be meaningful and worthwhile, and if those 2,000 - and I still say it's closer to 2,000 than it is to 300 throughout the province, Mr. Chairman - if the contribution of those people is to be meaningful and worthwhile, their comments have to be considered, as the advertisements suggested that they would be, by everybody and their opinions will be weighed.

It doesn't seem right to me that we should go on with the debating of this bill when the information the government gleaned from the public at those hearings is not to be considered by the opposition members of this Legislature. It seems to me that that's a sham. The Deputy Premier can huff and puff all he wants but he knows he's on weak ground on this one. He hasn't commented yet either about the fact that it was advertised once as a public hearing, in Calgary.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Mr. Ludwig.

MR. LUDWIG:

Yes, Mr. Chairman, I wish to support my hon. colleague, Mr. Wilson, and the stand he takes.

It's nice to hear the Conservatives laugh when somebody stands up and raises a point that is legitimate and is his responsibility. The Conservatives can laugh, they're laughing about a lot of things that the people are perhaps concerned and maybe crying about. I believe this is an indication that principles, political standards and principles, don't mean that much somehow. Alberta used to have the reputation throughout Canada that a politician's word meant something. No wonder a fellow called Herzog in the U.S. is writing a book called "The BS Theory", and that is America's biggest problem.

We want to believe the leaders in our government and when they try to ridicule a man because he is expressing a legitimate complaint and then tell him that maybe he should have somebody else represent that area - the people have spoken in that area. More people in Calgary know about Roy Wilson, and what Roy Wilson does, than what some of the Conservatives do, including ministers. At least he can stand up and be counted. He is discharging his responsibilities. He does not need to be browbeaten by the Deputy Premier who's done such an excellent job in bringing his own supporters into a docile kind of agreement. There is no need for the Deputy Premier to browbeat anybody. He got caught short. He could stand up, he's a pretty good man, and say, we could have done better. Not only does he fumble the ball, he misrepresents the whole situation and then tries to put the blame on Roy Wilson.

What has Roy Wilson done? He stood up because he's indignant and a lot of us on this side are, and some on that other side ought to be. Because the government is more concerned about the publicity it got about wanting the people's input - and then say, well we can stuff it into a wastepaper basket for all its worth.

We're not saying that perhaps the information from the Calgary people would have been much more than there is on this sheet. But it isn't up to the Deputy Premier to decide whether that information would help the hon. member, Mr. Wilson, or all of us. It's not for him to scream what's good or what's bad for anybody. If that's his response then maybe there is a good example of misplaced confidence in him, because that is not the way it ought to be done. Perhaps the other hon. members might be allowed a bit of levity in not doing things exactly accurately. But this man in a responsible position has brought in a bill I think is necessary but some of it is no good. The people are howling. They are howling about it, they are complaining. Groups are organizing. They have the right to do this and the government encourages it. If you encourage these people to make an input, don't destroy the input, let everybody see it.

I am sure that the hon. Deputy Premier can withstand criticism. I think he is a very good man. At the same time, he shouldn't try to raise the might of the government and say, well, we decided that it wouldn't have helped Roy Wilson. It is not his business what would have helped Roy Wilson or anybody else. It is not up to him to screen public input, especially when they are virtually buying public input.

There are more examples in Calgary where they preach they want to hear from the public but they suppress it. I can give you some very flagrant violations of this principle, where they want public input but go behind the backs of constituents, do something, and then tell them when it is finished. This belies the fact that they want to be first, that they want the public input. The best public input is through the MLAs and I commend the hon. member, Mr. Wilson, for standing up and speaking up on behalf of the people of Calgary.

MR. GHITTER:

Mr. Chairman, I would like to make a few comments because I think if the illusory Mr. Herzog wanted to do a little research on his BS theory, he should have come and interviewed the hon. Members for Calgary Mountain View and Calgary Bow.

I don't know where these hon. gentlemen spend their time, but it is obviously not in the city of Calgary as they endeavour to come to conclusions as to what really went on when that hearing took place. But let me suggest to them that not only was it advertised in a very public sense, but they also received a personal invitation to attend, had they the interest to find out what the public really felt about this bill. If, because of their busy schedules, they did not have the time to find out what the public really felt, all they had to do was to listen to the radio, look at the TV or pick up a newspaper and they would have found out quite clearly what the public had to say with respect to this bill.

But aside from their flagrant abuse of what I regard to be a tempest in a teapot here this afternoon, may I suggest to the excited members on the other side when they look at this issue, that out of courtesy the Deputy Premier came forward and gave them the information that was readily at his disposal at the time.

[Interjections]

There was no motion on the Order Paper, Mr. Chairman, suggesting that they wanted anything detailed. They are too lazy to do that. So they get on their feet and they yell and they scream and the Deputy Premier, out of courtesy, gives them the information they have. Then they have the audacity this afternoon to come forward yelling and screaming about lack of information.

What is it, Mr. Chairman, that is so confusing about what is in this bill? Had they listened to what is going on in main street in Calgary, if they are ever there, they could very easily talk to anybody who is interested and find out the areas of dispute.

Surely the Deputy Premier has shown his understanding by the very amendments that are before this Legislature today. And so for the honourable so-called members from Calgary to come forward with this great heart-bleeding ceremony we are receiving this afternoon, I regard that as being just nonsense, Mr. Chairman.

MR. WILSON:

How many public hearings did the hon. Member for Calgary Buffalo attend?

MR. CHAIRMAN:

I don't think Hansard recorded that.

MR. WILSON:

How many public hearings did the hon. Member for Calgary Buffalo attend?

MR. LUDWIG:

Mr. Chairman, I am rather impressed with the beautiful speech of the hon. Member for Calgary Mountain View, I mean Calgary Buffalo.

[Laughter]

I have been receiving an input from people over the phone, by correspondence and by questions and meetings in the office. I believe that one ought not to criticize a member for not being out on the street in Calgary. I believe that the Social Credit MLAs have shown who is the responsible voice of Calgary and who is the dead voice of Calgary.

[Interjections]

We have nine Conservative MLAs and they can't get together with the government to determine when the law faculty is going to be there. There are many issues down there that they can't stand up and be counted on, because somebody will browbeat them and they will wait for the signal. It is rather hollow comfort to someone to stand up and eloquently accuse somebody for not doing his job. I believe that the public in Calgary know that I am in Calgary, hon. member, which is more than you can say for some of the Conservatives.

In fact when the Deputy Premier starts telling an hon. member from here to resign, if that is the best he can do, I would tell Roy Wilson that if his record of performance was as bad as some of the ministers I would ask him to resign myself. So, lets not start being arrogant and say well, we are great, and you people in the opposition, you don't count. Because the people are coming to us. They come to us a lot and they complain a lot, and the complaints are getting greater and greater. And one of the things they are complaining about is the spending of money, pleading for an input and then scrapping the input.

I believe this is a flagrant violation of integrity on the part of those people who are trying to sell this kind of program and then say, well, sorry fellows we got the publicity, stuff the information in the wastepaper basket. So that is a legitimate ground for complaint.

I don't expect a Calgary member or anybody from Calgary to stand up and criticize the Deputy Premier. It isn't done, not in this government. There are 48 minds with a single thought. You may as well give the Calgary members - including the hon. Member for Calgary McKnight, who I understand has now left Calgary. He wouldn't be any less well off if he gave his proxy to the Deputy Premier and never showed up here again. Then they have the nerve to criticize that we are not doing our job. We are doing our job and we are going to do a better job.

Our biggest problem is to keep this government honest. We'll try our best and I think we'll succeed to a certain extent and the people will judge the rest of it.

MR. BENOIT:

I'm not much of a man to shout and holler and I don't aim to do so unless I have to. But sometimes that is the only way some people can be heard because they don't seem to hear when the voices are low and pleading.

But when it comes to this I don't know how anybody could have been to all seventeen hearings and still do his job at home. This is what has been asked for, the information that was at all the hearings. We wanted both sides of the information. Those are both available if they would be handed out.

There are a number of other factors in connection with this bill that we ought to deal with in Committee of the Whole. But some kind of a disposition should be made that would be satisfactory so as to provide us with the information we need in order to see what the people in places, other than where we ordinarily live, have to say about this bill.

MR. YOUNG:

Mr. Chairman, if I might very briefly; this whole discussion this afternoon or at least this whole shouting episode from the other side, is much ado about nothing.

First of all, the allegation is levelled that we on this side are suppressing information. Now, may I ask Mr. Chairman, is it possible to suppress information, information coming out of a public meeting and information generated at a public meeting, how is it possible to suppress that kind of information?

Secondly, Mr. Chairman, the hon. member has asked for information or at least for sheets of paper, for repetition of the same statements from different meetings. He wants one from each meeting apparently, or one for each participant at each meeting. What is the value of a whole lot more paper than is necessary when it could all be collected on one or five sheets or whatever he has?

Thirdly, Mr. Chairman, he has indicated that the information he has is biased, is incomplete and presents one side of the argument, et cetera. The Deputy Premier has already indicated that it is a summary of the material that came out of the first meetings and that material from the other meetings was not significantly different or did not in any way significantly supplement what was there. If he will not accept the information, as being factual, that came from the first meetings what good is more of the same information?

If he chooses not to believe, if he chooses not to do his own homework, if he wishes not to check with people who were at the meetings, because he didn't have time to be there, Mr. Chairman, we are wasting a lot of time here needlessly.

There is a question being raised about the cost of these meetings to the taxpayer. I ask the hon. gentleman on the other side, Mr. Chairman, if he has considered the cost to the taxpayer of our time in this Assembly, time which has been wasted this afternoon in a shouting exercise by the hon. members for Calgary Bow and Calgary Mountain View.

DR. BUCK:

Mr. Speaker, this is just another example of, what is good enough for General Bull Moose is good enough for all Albertans. Whenever the government on the opposite side of the House gets into trouble, the hon. Deputy Premier gets up in his fine smooth manner and tries to browbeat someone into saying, hey Mac, shut up I know everything. I don't think this is what we are here for.

[Interjections]

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Order, order. Continue Dr. Buck.

DR. BUCK:

All we wanted was just the information that came from the meetings. It would have been very easy for the Deputy Premier to supply this. This is all we wanted. Whatever that remark was about, Why weren't you there?, well, I don't think it is our responsibility to go to every public meeting across the province. This is why we have civil servants, and they are doing a good job. At the meeting I was at they were there and they did a good job, and they were honestly trying to get information from the public. We were all trying to get information from the public. That is all we really want. Then let us decide if the summary which is given to us was slanted or not. That is all we asked. It is just that simple.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

No further questions? Can we continue then with the clause ... yes, Mr. Clark?

MR. CLARK:

Mr. Chairman, just perhaps three comments so that no one misunderstands the issue. The issue very clearly and very simply here is the availability of the information that came from these public meetings which were held across the province.

The Member for Calgary Buffalo, who isn't in his seat now, said we could have gone about this by putting a request on the Order Paper and he is absolutely right. But it should also be pointed out that we asked, one day, I believe this week, of the government if they would make the information available and the Deputy Premier indicated he would go back and see if there were, in fact, transcripts and then make this information available. This is the process we went through here in the Assembly. The Deputy Premier is now telling us that this is the information which the government has. We asked specifically for transcripts of the information and we will go back and check Hansard.

AN HON. MEMBER:

There are none.

MR. CLARK:

The Deputy Premier is telling us that this is virtually all the information the government has on this particular matter. I think the point has to be made that this simply isn't good enough. If we are going to public hearings or information meetings of this type and hold 17 meetings across the province and then this is to be the result of those hearings, that simply isn't good enough.

If we learn nothing else out of these hearings on The Disaster Services Act, I would suggest to the government that from here on a more thorough and more practical approach be used in acquiring the information and then making it available. If it costs a bit of money, given the fact that in this area the real concern is in the area of individual rights, it may well be money well spent, in light of the time this House has spent previously in debating The Bill of Rights and The Individual Rights Protection Act, and in light of the fact

that the government hasn't yet got around to appointing an Alberta Human Rights Commission. So it is a matter of, where do you sit?

It is all well and good for members on that side of the House to say it's a waste of money and the economist member from Jasper Place give us some kind of an off the cuff cost benefit analysis. We might want to go back and analyze what has come out of his resolution about the ARR that we have on the Order Paper which has been adjourned about four times. So it's a matter of where you sit and what are your priorities.

I would say to the government very sincerely, Mr. Chairman, that in the future if we are going to go through this idea of public hearings, then we are not satisfied with this kind of result from those public hearings. We don't think this is good enough. For the Member for Calgary Buffalo to say you could read it in the paper or you could watch television - in fact he wasn't at the meetings in Calgary himself.

It is rather interesting, Mr. Chairman, that the government is saying that the approximately 300 people who attended the hearing in Calgary didn't have one solitary additional thing to add, that there wasn't one new idea, one new concern worth mentioning after the hearings in Calgary. This information we have been given is dated August 27. So the fact is, and the people of Calgary should know, that at the meeting in Calgary there wasn't one solitary good idea that came out of that discussion despite the fact that the discussions went on longer and that the civil servants involved, because of the time frame involved, had to end the meeting before all the groups had finished their discussion. Despite that, despite the interest of those people involved, there apparently wasn't one solitary good idea that came out of Calgary.

DR. HORNER:

... [Inaudible] ... distorting the truth.

MR. CLARK:

Distorting the truth. Balderdash! That's the way it is. And it's with great respect that the Deputy Premier talks about distorting the truth. If this isn't the case, if there is an addendum to this dated after August 27, and that was somehow done before August 27, even though the meeting in Calgary was on September 11, if that's distorting the truth, then I'm sure the Deputy Premier in his usual bashful way won't be above getting up and explaining this particular kind of situation.

The point I make again, Mr. Chairman, is this. Apparently not one worthwhile idea came out of the meeting in Calgary on September 11. If that's the way the government feels about it, then certainly we'll be very pleased to be sure the people in Calgary find this out, that they had not one worthwhile idea as a result of the meeting down in the City of Calgary.

MR. KOZIAK:

As I read the comments that are being made this afternoon, Mr. Chairman, the complaint is that a transcript of the public meetings was not, in fact, kept and reproduced word for word and supplied to the hon. members.

Now there is no doubt that to some degree a word-for-word reproduction of a public hearing, a public meeting, can be very useful when you consider an act or you consider any particular matter of importance that might come before this Legislature. But on the other hand, you have to weigh the feeling of the individual who appears at these meetings. Some of them might be a little reticent in discussing certain feelings, letting others know of their particular points of view, if they know that those points of view and those feelings are being recorded word for word and then subsequently will be reproduced in writing.

So we have to weigh the two situations. Perhaps we can get better information, more freely given, from the public when they know it is not reproduced word for word, when they know it's not going to be set down in writing. On the other hand there is benefit in obtaining such a transcript and that's a system that is now used in courts, of course. Every word of evidence that is given in a court is reduced to writing.

A public hearing is not of the same nature and I think we have to take a look at the situation and say to the hon. gentlemen on the other side, if you are not satisfied with our reporting of what took place at those meetings, you should have had someone there yourself to make your own reports.



MR. LUDWIG:

Mr. Chairman, when the government undertakes to provide information and then doesn't, or tells us that there is a lot of information we got that isn't of any use, then that is the objection.

We're not asking the government to do our job, they don't have to, and I don't think we are expected to do their job. But we are responsible to see that they do what they say they will do. It's just that simple.

So if the Deputy Premier says there was no more information than what you got, take it or leave it, I have spoken, and that's the end of it, then let him, because that's what he tried to do. But when he stands up here and says, well there is lots of stuff that would not have helped Roy Wilson, then that's an interesting admission. We'll have to assess him for what he is. He can deny it, but he did state in this House, Mr. Chairman, that there was some material that would not have helped the hon. Member for Calgary Bow. If he wants to challenge me, let's get the tape. I say he did. He says he didn't. So it stops at that.

There were a lot of complaints, a lot of input by telephone and correspondence and public meetings about civil liberties, about encroachment, about taking away some things from people without due process of law, their property or their rights. This was all, but there is nothing about this in this thing. We don't fault ...

I don't think the minister was even obliged to hold hearings, but he created the impression, we're going to do this, we want a public input. That has to be a lot of nonsense. There was a lot of flair, a lot of drama attached to the whole thing and then it sort of petered out and you got nothing.

So what we want to do, we want to tell you that it isn't the way you say it is. I suppose we shouldn't say that. I think part of the responsibility of the opposition is to let the people know, and when these people tell you something, get it in writing because it may not happen.

The hon. Deputy Premier was in the opposition, and he was a good opposition member. He can recall everything that he considered his responsibility. Now when we do it he tries to pull the heavy hand on us and say, well, I know what's good for you.

But he doesn't. And, in fact, a lot of people are angry in Calgary today. There are meetings being held, there is correspondence, there are even petitions being signed. In fact, a group in Calgary is contemplating engaging a solicitor, or has, to challenge this type of legislation. So we should listen a little bit more because we want a good act. We are just as interested about this issue and just as concerned that it be done properly. We also have to fight for encroachments on liberties of people.

This government has a tendency, in a lot of its legislation, to pass something here in the interest of the public good. One by one principles of liberty are falling.

Somehow the Deputy Premier stands up and says I'm against government interference. The less government the better. We all agree to it. Nobody disagrees with it, but every day we get more and more legislation that interferes with the rights and the freedom of choice of an individual. If somebody says that isn't so, we could find at least three instances - at least three - in legislation presented now where the principle of a freedom of choice and individual liberty is being made subordinate to what the government believes is good for one person and therefore good for everybody.

I believe that expression of the hon. member Dr. Buck "what is good enough for Bull Moose is good enough for the country" is a classic one and we have to assess this whole operation, this present bill, in that light and future action. Because forewarned is forearmed, therefore we'd better be on the alert. It's the opposition in this House that is going to stand up for the liberties of the people and see that the government doesn't start violating their liberty, violating their freedom of choice. I am surprised nobody has asked me to show them another bill where freedom of choice is being subordinated, or something that somebody knows better.

MR. COOKSON:

Would the hon. Member for Calgary Mountain View entertain a question? I am just wondering if the Member for Calgary Mountain View understands that if he is going to talk out the clock he has got another eight minutes to go?

DR. PAPROSKI:

Mr. Chairman, to clear the air ...

MR. LUDWIG:

I wasn't finished.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

I'm sorry doctor. Continue Mr. Ludwig.

MR. LUDWIG:

I didn't understand what the hon. member, Mr. Cookson, said but I suppose he'll have his chance to speak.

AN HON. MEMBER:

The silent majority.

MR. LUDWIG:

So Mr. Speaker, I think the Deputy Premier who has now turned his back on the Assembly ...

[Interjections]

Yes, getting the word to somebody else. Perhaps they are going to pull off closure proceedings on this bill, because he is not one man to tolerate discussion. He wants it done now and he wants it fast. So maybe we better ...

MR. HYNDMAN:

... [inaudible] ...

MR. LUDWIG:

Well, that's a sudden change of heart. They are rushing to adjourn us next week and he says you got all the time in the world.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Who said that?

MR. LUDWIG:

Well, why don't you get the word from the hon. member Mr. Young who said we should cut it off and get on with passing the bill.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Order. Mr. Ludwig, please provide your discussion or debate with regard to the title of the bill. Some of it was, but some of it isn't too relevant to the bill.

MR. LUDWIG:

Mr. Chairman, you know that you and I have a good understanding about these things. I will continue the way you say.

Mr. Chairman, when the hon. members opposite say that we are not doing our job, and somebody said that the hon. Dr. Buck was not here, let me give you a couple of pointers about presence in this House. Although the Premier can be absent, because they can dub him in, we haven't got quite the same privilege so it behooves the hon. members on this side to be here, because you can't be dubbed in. That's only for VIPs. If you are not here, it's important that if the Premier isn't here, he can be dubbed in. So if he isn't here we shouldn't criticize that. He can be dubbed in. So our dubbed-in Premier doesn't have to

be here. Progress continues. The Deputy Premier continues, will take over, and our bills will be passed a lot faster than even when the Premier is here.

Mr. Chairman, I'd like the Deputy Premier to stand up and tell us whether he has had any criticism other than what was prepared by some of the civil servants what they want us to know, whether he has had any other input and criticism. Because he must have, otherwise he would not have brought in amendments. Tell us what some people told him about civil liberties, about human rights and about confiscation and about commandeering people. So even he tells this is the EMO bill with a few amendments. In fact, the staff is going to be the same. So let's not stand up and preach that we've got some kind of a dramatic 'first' here when changes are minute. But I am surprised that - I'm not at all supporting the kind of legislation we had, but we have the benefit of hindsight. If anything was wrong - I don't apologize for the bill the way it was, perhaps in those days that's the way they did it - but we now know better.

We now have had a Bill of Rights and the Human Rights legislation so let's do a little more than pay lip-service to it. Let's live by that. Let's not feel that someone who is knowledgeable in experience and very publicly concerned knows what's good for the people and if there is a disaster he can confiscate, he can commandeer without due process of law. We're not afraid of what the Deputy Premier would do. I think he's a reasonable man and a fair man. We're concerned in this Legislature what he can do. That's the thing we're concerned about, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Dr. Paproski.

DR. PAPROSKI:

Mr. Chairman, I'll make some attempt to try to clear that muggy cloud from the Opposition in trying to throw a veil of distortion over this bill and the issue.

Mr. Chairman, I suggest the hon. members opposite should review in their minds whether it is not, in fact, true that over the past two years we have had more open hearings than the previous administration has had over the past ten years.

MR. CLARK:

Do you want to take that one back and check on it?

DR. PAPROSKI:

Not only that these opening hearings are held, Mr. Chairman, ...

DR. BUCK:

... [Inaudible] ...

DR. PAPROSKI:

Just be patient there, Dr. Buck. Not only that these hearings have been held, the input is taken and it's acted on. I submit to you that the people of Alberta know this very well, and the various bills have been brought in.

There is one more item - and this is for the record, to reinforce us again - that we've had spring and fall sessions hon. members, and there has been ample time for every member on the opposition side or this side to put in all the input they want to. I ask the hon. members opposite, where were they during this period of time? Where were their letters regarding opposition to any item regarding this bill?

In summary, Mr. Chairman, I think the concerns that have been expressed regarding this bill were heard very well at the public hearings. The hon. Deputy Premier knows these concerns. He has indicated them in the House. They are documented on that sheet and there is nothing different from the hearings that came after that.

DR. BUCK:

How do we know?

DR. PAPROSKI:

I suggest to you, hon. members, the appropriate amendments are here, as has been mentioned, and we are going to act on them. Thank you.

MR. HYNDMAN:

I move the Committee rise and report - ... progress ... - and beg leave to sit again.

[The motion was carried.]

[Mr. Chairman left the Chair.]

\* \* \* \* \*

[Mr. Speaker resumed the Chair.]

MR. DIACHUK:

Mr. Speaker, the Committee of the Whole Assembly has had under consideration the following bill, Bill No. 57, begs to report progress, and disaster, on same and asks leave to sit again.

MR. SPEAKER:

The Chair is unable to sever the two parts of that motion.

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

HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER:

The House stands adjourned until 2:30 Monday afternoon.

[The House rose at 4:00 o'clock.]