

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ALBERTA

Thursday, October 25, 1973

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

PRAYERS

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 91 The Highway Traffic Amendment Act, 1973

MR. COPITHORNE:

Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce a bill, being The Highway Traffic Amendment Act, Bill No. 91, seconded by my colleague, the Minister of Consumer Affairs.

[Leave being granted, Bill No. 91 was introduced and read a first time.]

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

DR. HOHOL:

Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure again to introduce some students from the constituency of Edmonton Belmont and from the O'Leary High School. They are with us this afternoon in the members gallery, 32 students from Grades 11 and 12, accompanied by their faculty member, Mr. Gove.

I am sure you will permit me, sir, to give the additional information that from Monday till today this school has been in the Legislature in the forenoon and afternoon with combinations of classes from Grades 11 and 12. I would ask them now to rise and be recognized by this Assembly.

MR. DIACHUK:

Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce to members of this Assembly and wish to extend welcome to four distinguished guests from the Ukraine seated in your gallery.

I will first introduce them in English, then I will introduce them in Ukrainian and I will then ask them to rise and be recognized.

This is a group of four of twenty guests visiting Canada from the Ukraine who have chosen to visit Edmonton and Alberta. Heading the group is Mrs. Valentina Shevchenko, Chairman of the Ukrainian Society for Friendship and Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries; Mr. Timofei Telischewski, Chairman of the Lvov Oblast Council, which is the equivalent of the Premier, of the Province of Lvov; Mr. Nikolai Kondratjuk, Director of the Operatic Department of the Tchiakovsky Conservatory of Kiev; and Mr. Igor Pobirchenko, Professor of Civil and State Law of the Shevchevko University of Kiev.

[Translation of the portion of introduction spoken in Ukrainian]

Dear Visitors from the country of Ukraine, we welcome you to this Provincial Legislature and we wish you the most successful visit and good fortune. Please stand and be recognized by the members of this Assembly.

MR. WILSON:

Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to introduce to you, and through you to the members of the Alberta Legislature 29 early-bird Grade 8 students from the Thomas B. Riley Junior High School in Calgary Bow. They are accompanied by Mrs. Hyssop, a retired teacher; Mr. McConnell, the teacher and driver of the bus; Mr. Leonard Quan, the social studies coordinator. They are seated in the public gallery and I would ask that they rise and be recognized, Mr. Speaker.

MR. COOPER:

Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure today to introduce to you and to the members of the Assembly 60 Grade 9 students from the town of Viking in the constituency of Vermilion-Viking. They are accompanied by their teachers, Mrs. Hanson and Mr. Erickson.

Mr. Speaker, in order to be fair to all concerned 30 of the students, along with their teacher, Mr. Erickson, are seated in the public gallery looking down on the opposition members, and 30 under Mrs. Hanson, are in the members gallery observing the government members in action. The students, I might say, Mr. Speaker, plan to exchange their views on the way home. I would ask the students to rise and be welcomed.

#### FILING RETURNS AND TABLING REPORTS

MR. COPITHORNE:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to table the answer to Question No. 275.

MR. CRAWFORD:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to table the answer to Question No. 258, in respect to certain recommendations made by the Royal Commission on the Status of Women.

MR. CLARK:

Mr. Speaker, on a point of information, I'd like to ask the government when we can expect [replies to] the remainder of the questions and motions for a return? Our calculations show there are still 24 out. I appreciate that some of them have been approved just recently, but as we begin to wind down this session, if all possible could be tabled right away we'd appreciate that.

MR. HYNDMAN:

Mr. Speaker, I think it depends on the length of the question. I think some of the answers require gathering of quite a bit of information. But we'll certainly assess them, and all those it is possible to table will be tabled in the near future.

#### ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

##### Separate School Boards - Assessment

MR. CLARK:

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct a question to the Minister of Education. Has he had discussions with representatives of the separate school trustees in the province concerning loss of assessment, which is the basis for supplementary requisitions for school boards?

MR. HYNDMAN:

I've had some brief discussions, Mr. Speaker, and a number of letters, particularly from two of the Catholic boards of the province. At the moment the matter which is at issue, I gather, is before the board of revision in the city of Edmonton, and it would be my view that it would be appropriate to assess the conclusion drawn by that board and to assess, thereafter, whether or not there is an appeal to the Assessment Equalization Board and possibly to the civil courts. I think the matter should be handled by some or all of those bodies, prior to any action being contemplated in a definitive way by the government.

MR. CLARK:

Supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Has the minister received representation from separate school boards in the province, outside the city of Edmonton, regarding their decline in assessment while the number of students in their system has been remaining constant or in fact increasing?

MR. HYNDMAN:

Yes, Mr. Speaker. A letter roughly dealing with the matter was received from the Fort McMurray Separate School Board.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Bow Valley followed by the hon. Member for Camrose.

Tariffs - Beef

MR. MANDEVILLE:

Mr. Speaker, my question is to the hon. Deputy Premier, the Minister of Agriculture. In light of the recent brief sent to the federal Minister of Agriculture by the Canadian stockgrowers' association requesting an increase in tariffs on beef coming into Canada from the United States, from 1.5 cents per pound to 3 cents on live beef, and on dressed beef from 3 cents to 6 cents, would the minister consider supporting this brief by a telegram or a brief from his department?

DR. HORNER:

Mr. Speaker, on that particular point, I've had some discussions with the Alberta Cattle Commission on their views in regard to the brief put out by the Canadian Cattlemen's Association. There is a substantial reluctance on the part of the Alberta Cattle Commission to substantially support that particular kind of thing. As I mentioned in the Legislature before, Mr. Speaker, we are in a North American beef market, and the more that governments fiddle around with that market, the more danger we have to our future ability to market within that sphere. I can say to the hon. member, however, that I've set up meetings with the full Alberta Cattle Commission in the immediate future to discuss this and other matters.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Camrose followed by the hon. Member for Vermilion-Viking.

Margarine in Government Institutions

MR. STROMBERG:

Mr. Speaker, I was wondering if the Minister of Health and Social Development would inform the House if government hospitals and institutions are switching from butter to margarine, and would he also advise - if this is so - whether the vegetable oil used in that margarine is a Canadian product?

MR. CRAWFORD:

Mr. Speaker, some provincial institutions have switched from butter to margarine within the last year. In each case it has been a matter to be determined by the administration of the institution. There are two, so far, using margarine from Alberta, those two being the Provincial Single Men's Hostels.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Vermilion-Viking followed by the hon. Member for Calgary McCall.

Alberta Crude Oil Export

MR. COOPER:

Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Mines and Minerals. Could the hon. minister inform the Legislature if any formal agreement was required in order to clear the way for the shipment of Alberta crude oil east of the Ottawa Valley, which shipments are due to commence at an early date?

MR. DICKIE:

Mr. Speaker, I take it the question is whether there would be a requirement for a formal agreement? There has been no agreement that I'm aware of. There was a national oil policy and that is presently being discussed with the federal government.

MR. COOPER:

Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Could the minister inform the Legislature if Canada is at present self-sufficient in crude oil production?

MR. DICKIE:

Mr. Speaker, we have always looked at the question of reserves west of the Ottawa Valley. At the present time the NEB is proposing to conduct a hearing in which it will hear submissions and briefs on the questions of reserves for the future for all of Canada.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

#### Hunters' Training Course

MR. HO LEM:

Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Lands and Forests. Mr. Speaker, this question is related to the question brought up yesterday regarding the hunters' training program. Would the minister give consideration to providing, either by a lease or grant, land in the vicinity of Calgary so that various interested groups could establish hunters' training programs and facilities?

DR. WARRACK:

Mr. Speaker, that is a very good question. It is one we were having some difficulty with earlier this year with respect to a hunter-training site accessible to Calgary. We have now solved that and it is within the government's hunter-training program.

I think the hon. member's question has to do with additional land possibilities that private groups might be able to obtain on a lease basis from the public lands of this province. Now that the Environment Conservation Authority hearings in those areas are complete I think we would be in a position to look upon proposals and regard that as something we could take a very serious look at, Mr. Speaker.

MR. HO LEM:

Supplementary, Mr. Speaker, will the hon. minister give consideration to setting up a meeting with interested groups within the near future?

DR. WARRACK:

Mr. Speaker, if they would be kind enough to contact me I'm sure we could arrange it.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

#### Welfare Payments

MR. TAYLOR:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a question for the hon. Minister of Health and Social Development. In view of the increased cost of living and also in view of the recent recommendations of the social workers' council [The Alberta Association of Social Workers] is the government considering another increase for persons on welfare?

MR. CRAWFORD:

Mr. Speaker, not at the present time in view of the circumstances, which are that two increases have already been made since the government assumed office, the last of which was in May of this year. It was approximately nine per cent across the board.

My feeling is that another review of the rates would normally take place not sooner than one year after the last review. However, the government has, of course, borne in mind that there have been unusual developments in the area of cost of living over the last several months. Because of that, we of course, will keep open in our own minds the option of giving further consideration to it prior to next May.

I think it should be mentioned that the new program which in part, took effect this month through the cooperation of the Government of Alberta and the federal government in regard to the distribution of family allowances and is fully operational on January 1, will cover the situation for at least some people who are on welfare.

MR. TAYLOR:

Supplementary, Mr. Speaker, the family allowances don't help the old bachelors and the old maids. But my supplementary question is: is the hon. minister, in his studies and considerations, making the cost-of-living index a major factor, particularly on foods?

MR. CRAWFORD:

Mr. Speaker, the hon. member makes reference to old bachelors and old maids. I didn't want him to get too personal in respect to his role in the House. But if it is a submission, Mr. Speaker, that is not after all on behalf of the hon. member personally, and is really on behalf of his constituents, I would be pleased to say that I think the idea of indexing, tied to some appropriate base, whether it be consumer-price index or whether it be an industrial or wage type of index, certainly should be considered. It would be part of an overall policy in the event that this type of inflation continues unchecked as it has so much in the last few months.

I think, Mr. Speaker, I should also mention that when I made reference to family allowances, there are, of course, other programs recently reviewed in relation to the Canada Pension Plan, the Guaranteed Income Supplement, the Old Age Security item, the province's own thrust in regard to extended health benefits and the bill now before the House in regard to payments to supplement those amounts to senior citizens, so that a very large number of people are indeed covered.

I recognize in closing, Mr. Speaker, the difficulties of those just under 65 who don't fall into the other class.

MR. NOTLEY:

Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question. Could the hon. minister advise the House whether or not the increases announced by this government in social allowance payments over the last two years have, in fact, kept pace with the cost-of-living index?

MR. SPEAKER:

Surely this is a matter which is not peculiarly within the knowledge of the minister or his department.

The hon. member for Calgary ...

MR. NOTLEY:

Mr. Speaker, if I may put another ...

MR. SPEAKER:

Possibly we could come back to this topic. Yesterday because of the supplementals we had, a large number of members didn't get a chance to ask their questions.

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

Calgary MLA and Council Meeting

MR. LUDWIG:

Mr. Speaker, my question is to the hon. Minister of Municipal Affairs. Could he advise the House why the practice of the Calgary MLAs meeting with the City of Calgary Council, has been discontinued, and particularly whether it was his decision or whether the Council has not invited the Calgary MLAs to meet with Council?

DR. HORNER:

They can meet with them any time they like.

MR. SPEAKER:

A question ordinarily beginning with the word "why" asks for reasons. Giving reasons is a method of debate and, as hon. members know, the rules which the Chair is obliged to follow in the question period exclude debate of any kind. It is the one period when there is no debate in the House, or shouldn't be.

MR. LUDWIG:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to give the minister a differently-worded question. What was the reason for discontinuing the meeting with Calgary Council and Calgary MLAs which was left in the hands of the hon. minister and one of the aldermen?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. member's question is the same as the previous one with the substitution of a couple of words.

MR. LUDWIG:

Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the fact that the minister may be embarrassed by the answer ...

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Oh, Oh.

Alcohol in Automobiles

MR. SPEAKER:

Order please. The hon. Member for Taber-Warner followed by the hon. Member for Stony Plain.

MR. D. MILLER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the hon. Solicitor General. Is it the government's intention to allow unsealed beverages, such as alcohol, within motor vehicles?

MISS HUNLEY:

I realize, Mr. Speaker, that is one of the recommendations in a report. We have not made a decision on that matter.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Stony Plain followed by the hon. Member for Lethbridge West.

Crude Oil Import Tax

MR. PURDY:

Mr. Speaker, a question to the Minister of Consumer Affairs. What are the implications of the removal of the import tax on crude oil for the consumers of Alberta?

MR. SPEAKER:

With great respect this is the type of question that's a straight matter of opinion. It was very doubtful whether the answer is something that is peculiarly within the knowledge of the department rather than available to anyone who wants to research it.

MR. PURDY:

I will rephrase the question, Mr. Speaker, and ask what will be the effects of the removal of the import tax?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. member is again asking for a question of opinion and possibly a very large statement of policy.

The hon. Member for Lethbridge West followed by the hon. Member for Calgary Bow.

Lethbridge College Gym

MR. GRUENWALD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to direct a question to the Minister of Advanced Education. It appears that the sportsplex presently being built in Lethbridge will not incorporate the gym for the Lethbridge Community College for which, I believe, the minister has authorized the expenditure of \$750,000 ...

MR. SPEAKER:

Would the hon. member please come directly to the question.

MR. GRUENWALD:

Will the Lethbridge Community College still have access to the \$750,000 for the construction of their own gym if they decide to go that route?

MR. FOSTER:

Mr. Speaker, first of all I don't recall - and I'm sure I did not authorize - the expenditure of some \$750,000 to the Lethbridge Community College for recreational facilities. I think that may have been part of a submission by the Lethbridge College with the sportsplex proposal. I agree with the Chairman of the College Board in Lethbridge that it is, at this time, a shame that the sportsplex will not serve the interests of the college.

It can be said however, Mr. Speaker, that we are now, and certainly were before, prepared to examine the legitimate requirements of the college for recreational purposes and to approve and fund those requirements. We have met with representatives from the board and have indicated that to them. We are currently pursuing joint studies to determine that need and the amount of dollars involved.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Calgary Bow followed by the hon. Member for Lethbridge East.

CUPF Negotiations - Calgary

MR. WILSON:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct a question to the hon. Minister of Manpower and Labour. Can the minister advise if the provincial government has been, or is currently, involved in negotiations between the City of Calgary and Canadian Union of Public Employees Local No. 37?

DR. HOHOL:

Yes sir, Mr. Speaker. Up to the present time we are not involved in negotiations with those two groups.

Trade Union Affiliation

While I'm on my feet, sir, I wonder if I could briefly respond to three questions, put to me yesterday, on which I indicated I would bring information this afternoon.

One had to do with what major unions in Alberta are affiliated. The answer is that the greater majority of the national and international unions are affiliated with the Canadian Labour Congress or its equivalent in the United States, the AFL-CIO.

The second question was: what is the nature of the affiliation? It is simply this. On application by an Alberta or Canadian union, the affiliate has to undertake to perform its activities under the constitution and by-laws of the affiliating union, national or international. And in turn it pays its dues on a formula-based membership. In return it gets a seat on the policy-making and decision-making body of the national or international union.

The third question was: what is the Alberta stand with respect to the Burke-Hartke bill? It's a very clear one. We are completely and unalterably opposed to this particular bill because of its restrictive nature with respect to imports and labour.

CUPE Negotiations - Calgary (Cont.)

MR. WILSON:

A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker, to the original question to the hon. Minister of Manpower and Labour. Is the provincial government monitoring the negotiations and developments between the City of Calgary and CUPE Local 37?

DR. HOHOL:

Yes sir, we are, very closely, Mr. Speaker. We are in touch daily, and more than once. The offer of mediation, as the House may know, has been made and has not yet been accepted. So we are standing by to assist at the first possible moment.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Cooperative Education Program - Lethbridge

MR. ANDERSON:

Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Advanced Education. What has been the reaction of the employers in Lethbridge to the cooperative education program instituted by the University of Lethbridge?

MR. FOSTER:

I don't have any specific reports on that, Mr. Speaker. Perhaps the representatives from the City of Lethbridge in the House would be in a better position than I to judge that, since you are talking to employers in the community. I would be interested in your reactions, if you have had any.

My informal response, from communications I have had from Lethbridge, is that the program is proceeding well. It is a unique program in Alberta and the university seems quite excited about it. I understand the business community has endorsed it and is working in a very cooperative way with the institution.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Petrochemical Industry

MR. NOTLEY:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct this question either to the hon. Premier or to the hon. Minister of Industry and Commerce. Can the Premier advise the



House when the government intends to table its report or study on the potential of the petrochemical industry in Alberta?

MR. LOUGHEED:

Mr. Speaker, I believe there are a number of developments which are ongoing with regard to that matter that bear very much upon a study by the government on the petrochemical industry.

If members observed the proceedings of the Western Economic Opportunities Conference, the Government of Alberta put a very heavy emphasis on the importance of the development of the petrochemical industry in Alberta - the need for processing of our petroleum products here in this province. And as an essential first step we need to have some improved tariff relationships between Canada and the United States to assure that we can develop the petrochemical industry here because, quite clearly, we need the North American market.

Mr. Speaker, what is of great concern to the government today is that the action taken by the federal government with regard to the crude oil export tax - it seems to find some favour with the odd honourable member - strikes me as being completely counter to the opportunity to develop the petrochemical industry in the province.

MR. NOTLEY:

Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question. Has the government considered the impact of rising energy prices on the cost of feed stock for the petrochemical industry?

MR. LOUGHEED:

Mr. Speaker, it would be apparent, I think, to hon. members making a study of the situation that it is exactly that fact that now gives Alberta the opportunity, if there is any reasonable tariff structure in the course of the next three to five years, to move in a very strong way in terms of the development of the petrochemical industry. Because it is the very nature of the expensive feed stocks involved [that] draws back the site location for petrochemicals from the market to the source of the feed stocks themselves.

MR. NOTLEY:

Mr. Speaker, a further supplementary question. Has the government considered the impact of the removal of the import tariff on feed stock from the United States - the impact of that removal on existing and projected plants in Alberta?

MR. LOUGHEED:

Yes, Mr. Speaker. That is the matter I believe the Minister of Mines and Minerals is in the process of reviewing. But certainly, because of the very delicate relationships that Canada now finds itself in, with regard to trade with the United States arising out of the unilateral imposition of the crude oil export tax, and then the counter-move by the federal government, as announced, with regard to the import of these petrochemical products - the inconsistency of these policies certainly is not beneficial to the development of the petrochemical industry in Alberta.

MR. NOTLEY:

Mr. Speaker, ...

MR. SPEAKER:

Perhaps we could come back to this topic when we have heard the other first questions.

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

#### Powdered Milk Supply

MR. MCCRAE:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question today is to the Minister of Consumer Affairs. Can the minister advise the House as to whether he has had any

response from Ottawa with respect to his inquiry as to what categories of powdered milk qualify for milk subsidy under the federal-provincial agreement?

MR. DOWLING:

Mr. Speaker, we have had an acknowledgment from the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs regarding the problem of stocks of powdered milk presently on hand by the suppliers to the retail outlets in Alberta.

However, the Department of Agriculture did make some strong representations to the federal authorities regarding the two types of powdered milk that there are in existence. One type is instant-dissolving; the other is industrial. The only one manufactured in Alberta is the industrial one manufactured by N.A.D.P. At the moment the instant-dissolving product is subject to the subsidy. The industrial one is not.

The purpose of the representations by the Department of Agriculture supported by the Department of Consumer Affairs, was to make sure that this subsidy was paid across the board.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Sedgewick-Coronation followed by the hon. Member for Clover Bar.

Housing for Handicapped

MR. SORENSON:

Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Health and Social Development. Has your department changed its policy to remove the problems encountered by handicapped people who wish to move out of an institution and set up an independent residence or lifestyle? I refer specifically to a recent newspaper article regarding problems encountered by a newly married handicapped couple.

MR. CRAWFORD:

Mr. Speaker, I'm not familiar with the precise example, the newspaper article the hon. member referred to. However, in general response to his question I could say that in the area of handicapped housing the Government of Alberta has recently taken several strong initiatives which are well known throughout Canada. Included in them is the holding, for the first time that anyone can determine, of a charette for the purpose of having the handicapped people themselves discuss what lifestyle they would find most useful to their needs outside of institutions.

By way of a grant for study, by way of funding the getting together of handicapped people, by way of representations to the federal government and discussions with federal funding authorities, we've been exploring and promoting, in cooperation with the handicapped association, every possibility. I don't think, Mr. Speaker, that any other province has gone as far as we have in this respect so far.

MR. SORENSON:

A supplementary to the minister. Do handicapped people wishing to leave their homes or an institution to set up an independent residence or lifestyle upon reaching adulthood have to prove that a saving to the government will result?

MR. CRAWFORD:

A very short answer would be, absolutely not, Mr. Speaker.

The only further comment that should be made is that the area of residence which is suitable for a wide variety of handicapped people is not an easy matter. And the question raised in the hon. member's supplementary - the availability of what range of facilities, for example, and where they can be made available in view of the fact that handicapped people live in all sizes of communities throughout the province and in all types of institutions - is precisely the sort of thing that is being actively studied at the present time.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Non-prescription Drugs

DR. BUCK:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to address my question to the hon. Minister of Health and Social Development. I would like to know if the hon. Minister is aware that many non-prescription asthma drugs on sale in drug stores in Alberta, if indiscriminately used, may be potential killers?

MR. CRAWFORD:

Mr. Speaker, like other hon. members, it has come to my attention, through reports, that these statements are being made by some people at the present time in regard to certain types of non-prescription drugs available in drug stores. Since the reports are particularly recent, all I would say is that there are a number of agencies in the country, primarily associated with the federal government, that are responsible for safety in this respect. It will be our intention to be in touch with them and obtain the maximum information immediately.

DR. BUCK:

A supplementary. In light of the fact that this is a fairly recent development, I would like to know from the hon. Minister of Consumer Affairs if his department is considering taking these non-prescription drugs off the market until they are fully studied?

MR. DOWLING:

No, Mr. Speaker. That is a matter for the federal Food and Drug Administration to take care of. I do know that the product under question is questioned as a result of findings in the United Kingdom where, in fact, the British product is ten times stronger than that sold over the counter in Canada.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Highway No. 2

MR. DIXON:

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct my question today to the hon. Minister of Highways and Transport. My question relates to the heavy traffic build-up which we are now experiencing on Highway No. 2 between Calgary and Edmonton and the serious accidents there in recent months ...

MR. SPEAKER:

Would the hon. member please come directly to the question.

MR. DIXON:

My question to the hon. minister, Mr. Speaker, is: when is the government going to start a program to widen, to at least six lanes, Highway No. 2 between Calgary and Edmonton?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Now, now.

MR. COPITHORNE:

Mr. Speaker, at this time it is generally felt that it is not necessary to start that program.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Little Bow followed by the hon. Member for Pincher Creek-Crowsnest.

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Pheasant Crop

MR. R. SPEAKER:

Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Lands and Forests. Has the minister been able to make a final decision as to the closing of the pheasant season in 1973?

DR. WARRACK:

Mr. Speaker, such a decision is, of course, a matter of regulation and would in fact be a government decision rather than only a ministerial one. It's not a decision that we have made, as of this point. But as I said before in the House, we are looking at that matter very closely.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Pincher Creek-Crowsnest followed by the hon. Member for Calgary McCall.

Legislature Building Environs

MR. DRAIN:

Mr. Speaker, my question is to the hon. Minister of Public Works. The question is did his department institute the destruction of houses in the area of the Legislature? If this is so, was not the possibility explored of disposing of them by giving them away or selling them - in the interest of more housing for Edmontonians?

DR. BACKUS:

Mr. Speaker, in most cases these houses were of very old construction and would not lend themselves very well to being moved. The question of the possibility of moving houses, as opposed to destroying them is always looked into. But in many cases, I would say the majority of cases, the cost of moving them and the value that would be achieved by so doing, is usually much less than the cost of taking them down.

MR. GRUENWALD:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Could the minister tell us what the immediate plans are for the use of that property?

DR. BACKUS:

We are, at present, acquiring all this property with a view to trying to solve the problem of the unfortunate appearance caused by the motor cars parked around that area. The decision as to just how this is to be done has not been finalized yet and will certainly be brought to the Legislature when it is.

DR. BUCK:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Were these buildings put out to tender, to find out if anyone did wish to buy and move them?

DR. BACKUS:

I don't think in this particular instance they were, no.

DR. BUCK:

Why?

MR. TAYLOR:

A supplementary ...

MR. DIXON:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. I was wondering, Mr. Minister, if you can enlighten the House on how far north the government plans to acquire the property north on 107 Street because we are now going into a new area?

AN HON. MEMBER:

The 60th parallel.

DR. BACKUS:

We are not planning to go farther north than the present government buildings extend on the north side there. We are not planning to go farther north than, I believe, the Administrative Building. We are looking at some arrangement with the federal government over the Federal Building. This would be the line: the front of the Federal Building, down to the Agriculture Building and 109 Street on the other side and up to the area of the Administrative Building as a northern boundary.

MR. DIXON:

Another supplementary to the minister. There has been no threat of expropriation, Mr. Minister, for people who do not wish to sell their property presently being purchased by the provincial government?

DR. BACKUS:

No, Mr. Speaker, only one property there was expropriated and that was with agreement of the owners. It was owned by one of the religious groups and they had something in their title that said it had to be expropriated. They completely agreed with the idea and, in fact, were very anxious for us to do so. All the others were purchased by agreement with the owners.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member ... Possibly we could revisit this area after we finished the other questions.

The hon. Member for Calgary McCall followed by the hon. Member for Vermilion-Viking.

Municipal Finance Council

MR. HO LEM:

Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the hon. the Premier. Would the hon. Premier advise the members of this Assembly for the purpose of verification the reason for restricting MLA representation on the municipal finance council to government MLAs only?

MR. SPEAKER:

With great respect, and without wanting to be unduly restrictive, it seems, perhaps, that we should refer again to the rules regarding the question period which are set out at 171 of Beauchesne and following. It seems, with great respect to hon. members, that they expect the Chair to follow these rules and if the Chair doesn't follow those rules I'm being remiss in my duty, unless the Assembly wishes to change them. Questions which invite debate are, of course, out of order, as well as answers which are debating. However, as hon. members have noticed, in some questions there are obviously barbs more or less hidden and on those occasions it is impossible for the Chair to intervene if there is a debating answer.

MR. HO LEM:

Mr. Speaker, may I reword the question to the hon. Premier? Will the hon. Premier give consideration to expanding the council to allow a more democratic representation ...

[Interjections]

MR. SPEAKER:

Order please.

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

Challenge Homes Construction

MR. COOPER:

Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Municipal Affairs. Could the minister report on the present status of Challenge Homes Construction, which firm has had 12 much-needed homes standing in various stages of partial construction in Vermilion for the past year and a half?

MR. RUSSELL:

I'm not able to do that during the Oral Question Period, Mr. Speaker, but I'd be pleased to get an up-to-date report and give it to the hon. member.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Museum in Calgary

MR. LUDWIG:

Mr. Speaker, my question is either to the Minister of Public Works or the Minister of Culture, Youth and Recreation with regard to the museum being built with government funds in Calgary. Has there been any request from the City of Calgary for an additional contribution to the cost of construction?

MR. SCHMID:

Yes, Mr. Speaker, there has been.

MR. LUDWIG:

Could the minister perhaps elaborate on the amount and when the request was made?

MR. SCHMID:

Mr. Speaker, the request was made last February. It took some time, of course, to consider the application. The Metropolitan Affairs Committee of cabinet did so and approved additional funding in the amount of \$750,000, I think, which was necessary for a floor of the museum.

MR. LUDWIG:

Mr. Speaker, in light of the increased cost of construction, does the minister anticipate any further demands for a contribution to this building?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. member is asking the minister to assume the role of a prophet.

The hon. Member for Calgary Bow followed by the hon. Member for Stony Plain.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Stony Plain? Was that Little Bow?

Import Tax on Oil

MR. PURDY:

Mr. Speaker, a question to the Minister of Consumer Affairs. Has the minister responded to the federal authorities as a result of Mr. Turner's recent announcement in regard to the lifting of the import tax on oil?

MR. DOWLING:

Yes, Mr. Speaker, as a result of that communication from the Minister of Finance and some information supplied to our department by the Minister of Mines and Minerals, that information indicated that Canada imports something like 141,000 barrels of oil or crude product into the country every month; 83,000 to Quebec, about 27,000 to the Maritime provinces, 17,000 to Ontario and 13,000 to B.C., which means that the prairie provinces are not, or appear not to be, influenced whatsoever by this import tax removal. In view of that, we sent a

communication to Messrs. Turner and Gray suggesting that rather than dealing with something of this nature on a regional basis, they should rather lift the federal tax on gasoline which, I believe, amounts to some 2.4 cents at the moment. I have yet to have a response - except an acknowledgement - from them.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Sedgewick-Coronation followed by the hon. Member for Little Bow.

Supermarket Expansion - Legislation

MR. SORENSON:

Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Consumer Affairs. Is the government, through your department, contemplating legislation limiting the expansion of supermarkets, to ensure the survival of the small corner store?

MR. DOWLING:

Not at this time, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Hutterite Education

MR. R. SPEAKER:

Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Education. Has the minister had the opportunity to consider the submission made to him on April 16, 1973 with regard to Hutterite education in the province?

MR. HYNDMAN:

Sorry, I missed the first part of the question, Mr. Speaker.

MR. R. SPEAKER:

Mr. Speaker, repeating the question, has the minister had the opportunity to consider a submission made to him on April 16, 1973, with regard to Hutterite education? The submission was made by a delegation from the Brant-Vulcan area.

MR. HYNDMAN:

I believe we replied to that, Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure. I'll check on that and report back to the hon. member.

MR. R. SPEAKER:

Mr. Speaker, supplementary question. Is the minister planning a full-scale study and research on Hutterite education as is recommended or discussed in an interim report to the Minister of Municipal Affairs from the Special Advisory Committee?

MR. HYNDMAN:

I think the words used by the hon. member are not those used in the report, Mr. Speaker, but I wouldn't be endorsing the words "full-scale study". However, we are doing and have already completed some stages of ongoing research in the area of Hutterite education, part of which will be done by the committee and part by the government. In that regard certainly the report is a most useful document.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Legislature Building Environs (Cont.)

MR. TAYLOR:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the hon. Minister of Public Works. Is the government considering construction of a five to ten storey

parkade in the vicinity of the parliament buildings and other government buildings in this area?

DR. BACKUS:

I think it would be fair to say we're certainly not considering a ten-storey parkade in this area. We hope to achieve something that will improve the scene rather than spoil it. I don't think a ten-storey parkade would really improve the landscape around here.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Cabinet Tour - Southern Alberta

MR. WYSE:

My question, Mr. Speaker, is to the hon. Premier. In the Premier's address on October 10, mention was made of a tour across southern Alberta. My question is, Mr. Speaker, does the Premier consider Medicine Hat and Redcliff as part of southern Alberta and if so, when is the cabinet scheduled to visit my particular constituency?

MR. LOUGHEED:

Mr. Speaker, a very reasonable question. The answer is, I didn't intend the term "southern tour" to be exclusive. Certainly Medicine Hat and the area not involved in the tour was kept aside because of the very specific interests of the hon. member and others that the total cabinet, when it makes its visit there - which will be within the course of 12 months - will be able to do an effective job of touring throughout the entire area. We welcome the opportunity to do so.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for ...

We have time for just one more question, unless the hon. member wishes to ask a supplementary on the question of geography.

MR. WYSE:

Supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Will the MLAs involved be notified early enough so they can make the necessary arrangements?

MR. LOUGHEED:

Mr. Speaker, I have some puzzlement as to what he means by necessary arrangements. I don't know if that means that he wants to attend or he wants to leave. But if the view is that he wants to attend, the answer would be yes.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Calgary Millican.

Powdered Milk Subsidy (Cont.)

MR. DIXON:

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct my question to the hon. Minister of Consumer Affairs. It has to do with the telegram sent to the Hon. Herb Gray, the federal minister, regarding the 17 cent subsidy on powdered milk and asking the federal government to make payment on that already held in storage.

My question is, if the federal government turns down this request, will the provincial government pay for the surplus powdered milk that's held in stock at this time and maybe give it to a needy country?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. member's question is clearly hypothetical. The time for the question period has ended.



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Museum in Calgary (Cont.)

MR. SCHMID:

Mr. Speaker, I wouldn't want to mislead the hon. Member for Calgary Mountain View. I give him the exact amount which was approved, \$753,225.07.

Legislature Building Environs (Cont.)

DR. BACKUS:

May I correct an answer I gave to the hon. Member for Clover Bar? We did of course call for tenders for the removal of these buildings and had any of the firms tendering come in with an offer to pay us we would have accepted it as the lowest tender.

ORDERS OF THE DAYPresentation

MR. DIACHUK:

Mr. Speaker, may I have leave of the House to make a presentation?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

MR. DIACHUK:

Mr. Speaker, the distinguished guests from the Ukraine that I introduced this afternoon have asked me to present to this Legislature, particularly to the Premier, a piece of art. If by chance the Premier's office has no place for it to be hung, the Deputy Speaker would welcome it. However, on behalf of that group I would like to have one of the pages present this to the Premier.

## MINISTERIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

Department of Highways and Transport

MR. COPITHORNE:

Mr. Speaker, in the coming winter months I anticipate several questions from members of this Assembly which relate to the sport of snowmobiling. On this topic I wish to table a report prepared by Statistics Canada on snowmobile accidents in Canada during the winter of 1972-1973.

It is interesting to note in the report that Alberta was the only fatality-free province during the 1972-73 winter. Of the 127 snowmobile-related deaths none occurred in Alberta. One interesting observation in the report is that 59 persons or 69.4 per cent of all fatalities occurred as a result of collisions with cars, trucks or buses. An additional 6 deaths were attributed to railway crossings or collisions involving trains.

The new Off-highway Vehicle Act in Alberta clearly separates snowmobiles from roadways being used by other vehicle traffic. Ten snowmobile operators under the age of 15 lost their lives ...

MR. SPEAKER:

Order please. Order please. The Chair has grave misgivings whether the tabling and announcement being now made by the hon. minister comes within the scope of the custom and rules relating to ministerial announcements which are really intended for government policy, or departmental policy, or government projects of some kind. In effect, what the hon. minister is doing, in the respectful opinion of the Chair, is tabling a document and amplifying on it considerably over what would be permitted during the tabling of documents.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Table it.

MR. COPITHORNE:

Mr. Speaker, with due respect, I would like to table this information. I think it would be most informative to the members.

Department of Agriculture

DR. HORNER:

Mr. Speaker, I have a brief announcement I would like to make under Orders of the Day having regard to part of the PEP program and the Labour Assistance for Livestock Facility Development program in Alberta this winter.

It might be of interest to members generally that the difference between the number of people employed in agriculture in the month of August and those employed in agriculture in the month of January pretty well coincides with the total number of unemployed in this province. I am not saying for a moment, sir, that the people who were in agriculture and then went out of it are the bulk of our unemployed. But there is a startling coincidence in the fact that those figures are pretty nearly identical. And so for that reason the necessity of providing some incentive to maintain year-round employment for an agricultural worker is there.

In addition to that, Mr. Speaker, it is of extreme importance to the province's overall economic activity and particularly its agricultural viability that we encourage our farmers to stay in the livestock industry. So the program I am announcing today - and hon. members will receive a pamphlet very shortly outlining the assistance that is available - is a two-pronged one in relation to those two needs: first, to provide employment in the agricultural sector on a year-round basis if at all possible, and second, to add incentive to our farmers to stay in the livestock industry and indeed to expand it.

The program essentially will provide for cash grants for the labour portion for the expansion of improvement of livestock facility development. It includes of course, such things as cattle sheds, hog facilities, poultry facilities, dairy barns and all of those things that in fact can be worked on during the winter months. It is a flexible program which will fit in, I think, with the other programs we announced before. Additional details, as I have said, Mr. Speaker, will be circulated to all members of the Legislature.

WRITTEN QUESTIONS

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

Which organizations, companies and/or individuals, received fees or commissions, and what were the amounts, under the 1972-3 Estimates of Expenditures, numbered

- (a) 1151 Agriculture (Market Intelligence)
- (b) 1155 Agriculture (Domestic Marketing)
- (c) 1402 Executive Council (General Administration)
- (d) 1612 Industry and Commerce (Economic Research)
- (e) 1621 Industry and Commerce (International Marketing)
- (f) 1624 Industry and Commerce (Transport Research and Development)
- (g) 2020 Mines and Minerals (Oil and Gas Studies)
- (h) 2420 Health Commissions (Alberta Alcoholism and Drug Abuse Commission)
- (i) 2708 Treasury (Surveys and Commissions)

MR. MINIELY:

Mr. Speaker, I would like that to be in the form of a motion for a return because it is a rather lengthy question. I move that it be a Motion for a Return.

MR. CLARK:

Mr. Speaker, would you like me to move Question 268, then, becoming a Motion for a Return? That is the understanding the Provincial Treasurer just gave.

MR. SPEAKER:

If that could be done with the leave of the House?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

271. Mr. Notley asked the government the following question:

Re: Fort McMurray Housing/Land

1. What steps, if any, were taken by the government prior to February 12, 1973, to secure the land for the school site in Fort McMurray?
2. Did any consultation take place between the government and the Fort McMurray School Board regarding site location prior to the government's announcement of the chosen site?
3. Has the government assessed the accuracy of the Reid Crowther Report with respect to projected housing needs in the Fort McMurray area?
4. What steps has the government taken to meet the projected deficits of mobile homes in Fort McMurray as projected by the Reid Crowther Report?
5. Do any of the present mobile home lots or the mobile homes thereon in Fort McMurray fail to meet provincial standards as set out in the province's health act or any other provincial legislation, particularly with regard to zoning and planning?
6. Does the government plan any measures to prevent any additional government land in the Fort McMurray area from falling into the hand of land speculators?
7. What steps, if any, has the government taken to assure a proper mix of multiple family dwellings, apartments and mobile homes in Fort McMurray so that social stratification, based on income and occupation, does not occur?
8. What specific measure is planned to deal with the special problems faced by the native families in the Fort McMurray area in meeting the problems associated with the transition to town living?

MR. RUSSELL:

I accept the question, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Just reverting for a moment to Question 268, night Votes and Proceedings show that the question of the hon. Leader of the Opposition is seconded by the hon. Member for Drumheller now that it is going into the form of a Motion for a Return.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

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

In the school year January 1, 1973 to June 30, 1973

- (a) How many school boards chose accreditation for their senior high schools?
- (b) How many boards required their students to write the Grade 12 examinations in June, 1973?

- (c) How many students wrote one or more Grade 12 departmental examination subjects in June, 1973?
- (d) What was the percentage of courses passed in June, 1973 by:
- (i) examination method?
  - (ii) accredited procedure?
- (e) Of the number failed how many appealed the school mark by writing the departmental examinations in August, 1973?

MR. HYNDMAN:

I accept the question, Mr. Speaker, and am pleased to table the answer.

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

- (a) What are the names, the classification title, the present salary, and the date of commencement to the present position of all individuals appointed on or after September 10, 1971, by the government, its ministers, departments, agencies or boards, to the following positions:
- (1) Deputy Minister
  - (2) Associate Deputy Minister
  - (3) Assistant Deputy Minister
  - (4) Executive Assistant to either a member of the Executive Council or (1), (2), or (3).
  - (5) Administrative Assistant to either a member of the Executive Council or (1), (2), or (3).
  - (6) Special Assistant to either a member of the Executive Council or (1), (2), or (3).
- (b) Which of the classified positions, mentioned in (a), existed prior to September 10, 1971?
- (c) Are there any positions which have the classification titles mentioned in (a) which do not have an incumbent (please list these vacant positions by classification title)?

DR. HOHOL:

Mr. Speaker, we accept the question but because of the extensive scope of the question we should like to ask that it to be a Motion for a Return and at the same time indicate that because of the few days left in this sitting the answer would be tabled in the spring sitting.

MR. SPEAKER:

If the House agrees to the suggestion by the hon. Minister of Manpower and Labour, possibly the hon. Leader of the Opposition might wish to make his Question No. 277 a Motion for a Return with a seconder.

MR. CLARK:

Mr. Speaker, I move Question No. 277 on the Order Paper appear as a Motion for a Return, seconded by the hon. Member for Calgary Mountain View.

278. Mr. Ho Lem asked the government the following question:

What are the specific steps or programs the Department of Consumer Affairs has initiated to lower directly, or limit the increase, in the cost of food to the Alberta consumer?

MR. DOWLING:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to make that a Motion for a Return.

MR. HO LEM:

Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by Mr. Strom that Question No. 278 be made a Motion for a Return.

MR. SPEAKER:

I take it that the House has no objection to the change which has just been made to Question 278?

HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

#### MOTIONS FOR A RETURN

279. Mr. Clark proposed the following motion to the Assembly, seconded by Mr. Ludwig.

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

Copies of all reports, commissioned for or done by the Minister of Consumer Affairs or his Department, with regards to the monitoring of food prices in Alberta in the past eight months.

MR. CLARK:

Mr. Speaker, I move Motion No. 279 standing in my name on the Order Paper be made a Motion for a Return.

In moving this, I do so as a result of the answers to questions in the Oral Question Period last week when the Minister of Consumer Affairs indicated that his department was actively involved in this area of monitoring food prices. So it's with regard to that answer from the Minister of Municipal Affairs that I would like this Motion for a Return.

[The motion was carried.]

280. Mr. Wilson proposed the following motion to the Assembly, seconded by Mr. Clark.

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

A copy of the itemized listing of projects approved by the Government of Alberta under the STEP and PEP programs since the initiation of these programs, as well as the date approval for each project was given, the names of the principals involved in each project, and the total funds allotted for each project.

DR. HOHOL:

Mr. Speaker, in discussing Motion for a Return No. 280 the government would ask the Provincial Treasurer to make some information to the House and particularly to the hon. Member for Calgary Bow and the hon. Leader of the Opposition who placed the motion before the House.

While we are prepared to give this information I should like to draw to the attention of the House that on April 27, 1972, Mr. Robert Dowling, the hon. Minister of Consumer Affairs, tabled a position paper on the STEP program. On November 7, 1972 I tabled a position paper on the PEP program and reference papers, 537 and 538. In the case of the reports of the Minister of Consumer Affairs the reference paper numbers are 503 and 572.

In addition sir, in answer to a question by the hon. Leader of the Opposition early in this session, I had indicated that the government would table in the spring session of the Legislature a comprehensive and complete report on the STEP and PEP programs.

In giving this information I'm wondering if the gentlemen members would be prepared to reconsider their motion and possibly withdraw it until such time as the government tables this very comprehensive report, which it is preparing at the moment for the spring session, if this were agreeable to them.

After examining the report it may be their judgment that they would wish to place additional questions for additional information. If that were not the case then we would have no objection at all because the question is well placed to attempt to put this information together.

I would like to point out, Mr. Speaker, that in terms of projects we are looking at about 1,800. And in terms of participants we are looking at about 15,000 plus. By saying this, I simply wish to indicate the scope of the question. The hon. gentleman might hold for the report in the spring.

The cost as we estimate, to answer Question No. 280, would be about \$25,000.

MR. LUDWIG:

Mr. Speaker, I believe that the Motion for a Return requests specific information. In order to permit the opposition to discharge its responsibilities properly, perhaps critically reviewing the program and dealing with complaints and criticisms, the hon. minister's answer is not entirely clear. He doesn't object to the question but he is postponing the date of his accountability.

In light of the specific reports which were tabled, this question does not require very much more but, if it does, that is not any reason why the motion ought not to be returned at the earliest possible date. Because if we can't get specific information on specific programs involving government spending, then our responsibilities are being frustrated in a manner we ought not to go along with. I believe it's a reasonable request, although the answer may involve a lot of work. That is not the test of refusing a question of this nature.

For that reason, Mr. Speaker, I would appreciate the minister agreeing to provide this information, as specifically requested, as soon as possible instead of postponing it to some indefinite date.

DR. HOHOL:

May I respond, sir, by saying ...

MR. SPEAKER:

May the hon. minister have leave to speak again in the debate?

HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

DR. HOHOL:

Thank you, sir. May I respond by saying that there is no intention on our part at all - I began by saying we would accept the question. But we are in the process, as I indicated to the hon. Leader of the Opposition through you, in answer to a question by him with respect to these two programs, that we are in the process of putting together a comprehensive report on the PEP and STEP programs for the spring session. I was estimating that about 80 per cent of the material asked for in the question would be in that report. So it's not a matter of postponing. We are in the process of preparing a report.

However, having said that and having indicated the scope, the nature of the cost in time and money I still say the submission of the question is proper. If the House requires an answer to the question we are prepared to make this a separate report and then table the report in the spring session. But there would be a great deal of duplication, cost and time. But the hon. gentleman having made his point in that way, we will accept the question.

MR. CLARK:

Mr. Speaker, if I could just comment on the comments made by the Minister of Manpower and Labour. I simply say this: we have in the opposition offices received a number of specific complaints with regard to various people employed by this program and with regard to various aspects of the program.

If the opposition is to legitimately carry forward its function of monitoring government activity there is simply no way we can do that, Mr. Speaker, with regard to these two programs, other than to get the specific information we desire. It's for that reason, Mr. Speaker, and for that reason only, that we want the information which the hon. Member for Calgary Bow has set out in this particular Motion for a Return.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

MR. WILSON:

Mr. Speaker, in closing the debate on this ...

MR. SPEAKER:

May the hon. member close the debate?

HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

MR. WILSON:

Mr. Speaker, I have a great feeling of consternation about how we arrive at \$35,000 to answer this question because I don't envision anything in a fancy or a comprehensive report. It seems to me there could be a possibility, Mr. Speaker, that the hon. minister envisions preparing something far more detailed than what is meant by the motion. It certainly isn't my desire to waste the taxpayers' money.

If I could just ask the minister that, in preparing this data, he tries to do it as economically as possible, and not have it too elaborate and expensive because it certainly isn't what we are after. It's just the bare facts of the matter, Mr. Speaker.

[The motion was carried.]

#### MOTIONS OTHER THAN GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

MR. HYNDMAN:

Mr. Speaker, at this time I would ask for leave of the Assembly to move to the top of the Order Paper for debate at this time of Motion No. 12 on page 8, being the motion which, if passed, would purport to put the report of the select legislative committee on rules into Committee of the Whole.

MR. SPEAKER:

Has the hon. Government House Leader the leave of the House to proceed to Item No. 12 on page 8 as requested?

HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

MR. KING:

I would like to move, seconded by the hon. Member for Calgary Millican, that the report of the select legislative committee on rules of the Assembly be now referred to the Committee of the Whole Assembly for its consideration.

In making the motion, Mr. Speaker, I would just like to make three brief comments.

The first is that the seconder and myself and others have agreed that this particular procedure is the one that would most easily allow specific consideration by all of the members of the Legislature of the individual proposals of the report before we deal with the whole concept or the whole report.

The second thing is that it is in Committee of the Whole that amendments to specific portions of the report can most easily be made. In fact, a number of amendments have been proposed informally by different members of the Assembly for the contents of the report.

The third comment I would like to make is that it is the feeling of myself and, I think, my seconder that having gone through the specific and the individual proposals of the report that the report, in a general way, could be discussed in terms of its introduction and Chapter 1.

Those are my only comments, Mr. Speaker, as I make the motion.

[The motion was carried.]

MR. HYNDMAN:

Mr. Speaker, I move you do now leave the Chair and the Assembly resolve itself into Committee of the Whole to consider the report of the select legislative committee on rules of the Assembly.

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

[Dr. McCrimmon in the Chair]

Report of the Select Committee on Rules,  
Orders and Forms of the Legislative Assembly

MR. YOUNG:

In dealing with the debate at this stage and review of the report as tabled, I would suggest, if I may, that we deal with Volume No. 2 which is a consolidation of all the recommendations. It is consolidated in a sequence which was deemed to be perhaps more logical than that found in Volume No. 1. It is confined strictly to the rules as proposed by the committee.

MR. HENDERSON:

Mr. Chairman, I might make a suggestion too, before we start on the examination of Volume No. 2 of the report. I would like to suggest to the members that if possible I think it would be desirable to examine progressively each rule as we go through the book, and hear the explanations from members of the committee possibly, as to the reasons for some of the changes. I am sure the members will realize there is an inter-relationship and an interlocking between many of the rules. Just examining the recommendation itself, a change in the rule may appear detrimental to some members of the House. But if one examines as a whole the re-organized report there may well be compensating recommendations elsewhere in the report.

So I would think, Mr. Chairman, that if members could go through the report clause by clause with a constructive attitude, examine all the details and save general comments on the whole report to the tail end it would probably expedite consideration of the report.

[Rule No. 1 was agreed to without debate.]

Rule No. 2

MR. STROM:

Mr. Chairman, are we now following the amendments that are listed here?

MR. YOUNG:

Mr. Chairman, if I may. This is the first of a change in the documents delivered somewhat earlier last week to us. This does contain an amendment. Specifically Section 2 reads:

The time for the meeting of the Assembly is at two-thirty o'clock ...



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That is the only change or correction on that page. If the substitute page as contained in the committee's report is used, that is the way it will read.

MR. STROM:

Mr. Chairman, just so there is no misunderstanding as we go along, I understand, Mr. Chairman, you will be calling the chapter and section, but I may not necessarily be able to flip through and check it out. Will you, Mr. Chairman, or the chairman of the committee bring it to our attention where we will be considering the amendments rather than ...

AN HON. MEMBER:

Good idea.

MR. YOUNG:

One of the committee members will undertake to do that.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Chapter 1, Section 2 is amended to "2:30".

HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

[Rule No.

[Rule No. 3 through Rule No. 5(2) were agreed to without debate.]

Rule No. 5(3)

MR. YOUNG:

Mr. Chairman, on No. 3 the members should now be referring to the substitute page.

MR. KING:

For identification, Mr. Chairman, the substitute page we are referring to is Volume 2, page (2), (substitute). That is how it reads at the bottom and that is the page we are now on.

MR. STROM:

Mr. Chairman, my second page says, "Volume 1, 14(a) (substitute)." Is that the sheet they refer to?

MR. KING:

Every hon. member received two documents of correction. The first is written in script type and has, across the bottom, "Volume 1 and page substitutions". That is not the document we are referring to this afternoon. You can set that aside completely. What we are referring to is one which is printed in ordinary type and has across the bottom "Volume 2" and then we are referring in all cases to the thin document which, in its original form, was referred to as "Volume 2".

MR. YOUNG:

If members will observe what I have in my hand. The report to which we are now referring consists of Volume 2, small document, yellow covered. The report as tabled would require you to take the last four pages from this memorandum and insert those at the appropriate location in this particular document.

MR. CLARK:

While we're having the confusion, perhaps I might add a bit more.

I wonder if I could ask one member of the committee - I'm not particularly fussy who - for the reason for moving Ministerial Statements in Section 5, to prior to question period rather than following question period. What rationale was involved?

DR. HORNER:

[Inaudible]

MR. CLARK:

I hope that was the reason, Dr. Horner.

MR. YOUNG:

It was felt that questions are sometimes raised on matters which will later be dealt with by ministerial statements, and secondly, that there might be some interest arising out of ministerial statements that would wish to be followed up in the question period.

MR. CLARK:

If I could just follow it up then. It will still remain, though, the custom in the Assembly that, following a ministerial statement, the Leader of the Opposition or his designate would have the opportunity of commenting on the ministerial statement?

MR. YOUNG:

There was no intention to change that custom.

MR. STROM:

I wonder if I might be permitted to raise maybe a simple question in a sense, but it refers to 5(1), "Mr. Speaker shall offer prayers every day". I'm wondering whether the committee gave any consideration as to the form it should take, or whether that is left to the discretion of the Speaker? Or was a consideration given to that in the committee?

MR. KING:

With respect, the only thing we considered briefly about prayers was the alternative of inviting church leaders from different denominations or groups to give these prayers rather than the Speaker himself. After consideration it was decided that we would continue with the rule as it presently exists. I think, by implication it was the feeling of the committee that we would continue leaving with the discretion of the Speaker the form that the prayers would take. We did not consider laying out any particular form for the prayers.

MR. STROM:

Mr. Chairman, just a further question if I may. If the Speaker were to use the Lord's Prayer, it is acceptable under this particular rule, it's a matter of choice by the Speaker?

MR. HENDERSON:

Mr. Chairman, I think we should just reiterate what the member for Edmonton has said, that the present rules state, "Mr. Speaker shall offer prayers every day at the meeting of the Assembly before any business is entered upon". Basically, we didn't really entertain making any change in it. So whatever the tradition has been, and whatever the basis has been for dealing with the question of prayers, the committee in no way, shape or form entertained any changes or considerations of it.

MR. LUDWIG:

Mr. Chairman, we're talking about the tradition of the House. It has been the tradition of this House, and perhaps every other House and Legislature in Canada and the House of Commons, that the Lord's Prayer forms part of the Speaker's prayer - if we're going to talk about tradition.

[Mr. Diachuk in the Chair]

[Rule No. 5(3) was agreed to.]

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Rule No. 6(1)

MR. KING:

Mr. Chairman, I just want everybody to be clear again that this is another place where a correction has been made, and so you are referring again to the memo in 6(1).

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Is everyone agreed, as correct? Page 3 of the substitute.

MR. HENDERSON:

Mr. Chairman, I was out for just a moment discussing the proposed amendment with the Speaker. My apologies for being out, but I just wondered if it had been pointed out by any of the members of the committee about the change on page 2 where ministerial statements would now precede the question period. Has that been pointed out?

AN HON. MEMBER:

Yes, it's been pointed out.

[Rule No. 6(1) and (2) were agreed to without debate.]

Rule No. 7

MR. BENOIT:

Mr. Chairman, I'd like to get the committee's opinion of what is meant by "leave of absence [has been given] by the Speaker". Does this mean that every member, if he is going to be absent, should request the permission of the Speaker or notify the Speaker beforehand?

MR. KING:

Mr. Chairman, again this is a rule that has been in effect in the Legislature, so we didn't change it although we did discuss it. The feeling was that in point of fact we are elected primarily for attendance in the Legislature, that when we put in an appearance here, perhaps for a part of the afternoon, there may be a legitimate reason that takes us out of the Assembly again for a part of the afternoon. But once you have been here you are considered to be in attendance.

There are a variety of rules, others will come up, for example, relating to sittings of committees while the House is in session. The general thrust of them all is that the members should be in the House. That's why we continued this rule.

MR. BENOIT:

It doesn't really mean, Mr. Chairman, that if you're going to be absent, and if you know in advance, that you necessarily seek the permission of the Speaker to be absent.

MR. HENDERSON:

Mr. Chairman, I wonder if I might just comment on this. I think the wording of this has to bear in mind the wording of the proclamation calling the House into session which, in the name of the Queen, orders and commands the members of the Assembly to attend this Assembly and await on the Queen's business, so the wording of the rule reflects a basic British parliamentary tradition.

Of course, while we don't rigidly adhere to it, I'd suggest to members of the committee that I think common courtesy to the House suggests that when a member is not going to be present he should accordingly advise the Speaker, because technically he's breaking the rules when he doesn't do it. The outcome of breaking the rule rests on the member's shoulders. The House, in the past years I've been around, hasn't made a fuss about it but it's conceivable it could happen. Nonetheless, I think the wording reflects the tradition and background of the evolution of our parliamentary system.

MR. TAYLOR:

Mr. Chairman, in addition to it being a command of the Queen, I think really it's only ordinary courtesy to let the Speaker know if you know you are not going to be present in the Legislature.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

[Rules Nos. 8 through 11 were agreed to without debate.]

Rule No. 12

MR. TAYLOR:

Mr. Chairman, I really take exception to Section 12. The very few minutes that it takes each day to introduce visitors from various constituencies is, I think, almost negligible in regard to the total time. Yet it is something that is valued by those who come, and I think also, it is interesting to the other members - at least I enjoy knowing who people are, introduced by the member from that riding, or some other member on his behalf. I really can't see where Section 12 is necessary at all.

The Speaker, now, has the right to introduce distinguished visitors and he does this from time to time. I think that is very interesting. I consider the lowliest man, woman, boy or girl in the province to be a human being just like the most distinguished visitor who comes. I think they enjoy being introduced just as much as the distinguished visitors do. I'd hate to see this difference made. I'd like to see the rules left as they are in this connection.

MR. WILSON:

Mr. Chairman, is the key word in here "responsible"? Does this mean, in effect, that the Speaker can exercise his prerogative as to whether or not he introduces diplomatic personnel or not, or that under certain circumstances other members of the Legislature could do it? Does this mean that members of the Legislature can still introduce groups of school children, for example? It seems there is some vagueness in it.

MR. HENDERSON:

Possibly as a member of the committee who expressed some strong views in the committee on this subject, I might just respond to the two comments made. I would have to inform the members of the House the recommendation in the report probably reflects my views to a larger extent than maybe any other member of the committee.

I think the members probably appreciate that in the committee we discussed the question at considerable length. I would have to say there was really no unanimity on the recommendation. I, as a member, and I think probably the committee as a whole, would have been surprised if the House had accepted the recommendation.

But we did think, in discussing the present rules, that it should be brought to the attention of the members of the House that there has to be some limitation on introduction of visitors because if one accepts - and I don't wish to debate the matter - the extreme position, the House could introduce every individual in the gallery. At times members are predisposed to make some rather flowery little speeches when they introduce visitors. There is a natural tendency on the part of a member to try to top what was said by the previous member. There are occasions when introduction of visitors has become a subject of one-upmanship or the possible practice of it on the floor of the House when members are in a more light-hearted frame of mind on a particular day.

As a member of the committee, I say, there was no unanimity in the committee. The recommendation, I think, was put in for bringing the subject to the attention of the House. The Speaker finds himself in difficulty. There is no way he can, from the Chair, deal with the question of an introduction when an individual member happens to get a little out - I won't say out of line - but carried away a little bit with flowery language on such occasions. So we felt it was desirable on the part of the committee to bring the matter to the attention of the House. This, I suggest, was probably a fairly dramatic way of doing it.

I don't intend, as a member of the committee, to defend it. I think the purpose of the recommendation has probably been served thus far. But as far as the wording itself is concerned, in the extreme it would be only the Speaker who would do the introductions. The introductions would be limited to the description of the parties outlined in the rule. Beyond that, Mr. Chairman, I don't intend to try to defend the rule. I would indeed probably be surprised if the House could arrive at a recommendation for change any better than the committee could.

MR. FRENCH:

Mr. Chairman, I'm pleased that the committee has brought this to our attention for discussion in committee. What I understand from the committee is that they wanted to have a general discussion in the House.

I would like to say that it was about a year ago, last year, this whole matter was dealt with by a select committee of the Legislature set up to look at various rules. The recommendation of the committee at that time was there be no change made in the rule that we have.

Reference was made today to the amount of time we have spent on some of these introductions. I want to make it quite clear that in the 14 years I have been in the House, I've only had the privilege of introducing probably three or four groups. So I certainly can't be accused of having a vested interest in this whole matter.

I watched with some interest when the matter came before this special committee, of which I was a member last year. For about two weeks, I wrote down the time it took to introduce the different groups. If I remember correctly, it didn't take over five minutes at any time. Even today, when we had an extensive introduction of visitors, honoured guests from other lands, I think it took just a little over the five minutes.

When we go back, as long as you like, I am sure it hasn't exceeded five minutes at any time. So I say if we want some limitation on our present rule, this is fine. I think we should have some limitation. I don't think members should be standing up and talking about the beautiful scenery they have in their constituencies and all these things. If we want to have some limitations, I would go along with that.

But Mr. Chairman, I don't know why you want to throw the baby out with the bathtub, why you want to change the whole rule. If there is something wrong with the present rule, let's have some rules that would restrict the members on how they make these introductions.

Now as far as I am concerned, we spend less than five minutes. When we have school children coming into the City of Edmonton it is a great honour for these students to be in the gallery. When we are talking about education, talking about all these important subjects in our legislation, I don't think we should ever forget that children are our most valuable asset in the province.

True, we have many important things to deal with in this Legislature, but let's not forget that children are the people who are going to be our adults down the road. I have talked to a number of children who have been in the gallery. They are impressed. When you go back to the social studies classes in the school - I don't know how many of the members follow the practice that I do, but I take advantage of the teachers when they ask me to come and show films. There is a great deal of interest in the province with respect to the Legislature. It's a very special occasion for these students to come to the group. Quite recently there was a group of Boy Scouts who came in the evening. They came down and they were introduced. I am sure they were quite impressed.

If we are honest with ourselves and think back for the number of years that we have been in this House - I have been here for some 14 years - I can recall very few occasions where the privilege has been abused. I for one feel that we should stay with the present rule.

Mr. Chairman, if we are in committee, in order that we can have a proper expression, if this is the wish of the committee, I would be very pleased to move - it reads Section 12 here, Chapter 2. I don't know if that is the right interpretation or not, but if it is not, maybe you could [indicate]. It is at the bottom part of page four of this report on Volume 2 ...

MR. CHAMBERS:

Make reference to it as Rule 12.

MR. FRENCH:

Okay. I would move, seconded by the hon. Member for Drumheller, that Rule 12 be struck out, or the recommendation on Rule 12, if that is the right interpretation.

MR. TAYLOR:

Mr. Chairman, I am very happy to second that motion if a substitution is included - by striking this out, we substitute the present rule.

With all respect to the hon. Member for Wetaskiwin-Leduc and the things he said, my only comment is, so what? What if members do make colourful speeches or flowery speeches? That adds to the colour of the Legislature. It is probably one of the few things we do in this Legislature that is not open to dispute. Everybody can enjoy the welcoming of visitors. I think the very fact today that the hon. Deputy Speaker, who is a Canadian of Ukrainian extraction, was able to introduce a group from the Ukraine, will be appreciated by Canadians of Ukrainian extraction all over this province. I think it was colourfully done. I like it. I would strongly urge the members to strike out this 12 and put back the rule as it is today.

MR. KING:

Mr. Chairman, on two grounds I would be opposed to the resolution. I think that in no case should we go further back than to replace the proposed rule with the present rule, which is "When introduction of visitors is called, brief introductions may be made" et cetera, et cetera. If somebody wants to go back to the rule that we presently have, that is one thing, but to recommend that we delete any rule relating to the introduction of visitors at all ... Pardon?

AN HON. MEMBER:

That's been amended.

AN HON. MEMBER:

That was substituted.

MR. KING:

That's not what the motion says. He says "delete the rule".

AN HON. MEMBER:

Leave as is.

MR. KING:

Okay. Then having settled that, Mr. Chairman, I am still opposed to it, and I am one of the people in the committee who argued in favour of what we have in front of us as Rule No. 12.

About five years ago I watched in this House, from up where Mr. Monsma is now sitting, as the introduction of visitors took 20 minutes one afternoon. It is correct to say that it often takes five minutes, or less than five minutes. It does, however, sometimes take more than that. There is real concern in my mind about 75 members of the Legislative Assembly sitting in this House and taking up time which has been paid for by the citizens of the province ...

AN HON. MEMBER:

Oh, ho ho!

MR. BARTON:

How about your task forces?

MR. KING:

... as we listen to the introduction of the manager of a liquor store, or a prominent businessman from some part of the province, or any one of a number of other introductions I have heard in this House.

Now it's true to say, Mr. Chairman, that the introduction of visitors is just one thing that takes up our time and that maybe we can achieve economies in

other ways, including my sitting down right now. But Mr. Chairman, this is something I am afraid I, personally, feel strongly about. We have formulated a rule which allows for introductions such as were made this afternoon, people of provincial, national and international distinction and members of the diplomatic corps. Some of the introductions made this afternoon would clearly have fitted into that category and could have been made by the Speaker on behalf of the House. But the introductions of many other ...

AN HON. MEMBER:

Ordinary people.

MR. KING:

... people, I think is unnecessary.

The point was well made that some members can enjoy that unique privilege only because every other member of the Legislature doesn't take advantage of it. If each and every one of us were to introduce every one of our constituents who walks into the gallery, then we would be in a ludicrous situation.

Mr. Chairman, when students from my constituency come to this Legislature I make it a point to meet with them either out on the steps or up in the gallery prior to the commencement of the afternoon's business. I think they can appreciate that, on behalf of any of the members, as much as they may appreciate the introduction in the House in the afternoon.

I, personally, would be willing to extend the rule one further notch to provide for the introduction of students when it is done by the Speaker of the House. But the way people take varying amounts of time to introduce these people, and the wide range of people who are introduced, is unnecessary and I'm opposed to the resolution deleting the rule.

MR. NOTLEY:

Mr. Chairman, first of all I really question that there is a problem here. Looking back over the last two years, I can't remember a day when the introductions have taken any more than five or six minutes.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Oh, really.

MR. NOTLEY:

I can remember a lot of days when introductions brought laughter to both sides of the House and in many ways lightened the atmosphere for a moment. I certainly agree with the points the Member for Drumheller raised about school children being introduced, especially those from areas of the province that are not close to the city. It's a real pleasure for them to be introduced to the members of the Assembly. It's something they remember and something they appreciate.

There is another point I would raise, Mr. Chairman, and I would ask the members of the committee whether they have really considered this. Have they consulted with the Speaker as to what his private opinion is? Because it seems to me that if you increase the responsibilities of the Speaker in this area and include other persons of provincial, national or international distinction, are you not putting your Speaker in a rather difficult position? Will we not have him in a position where members of the Legislature will lobby him and say, all right, so and so is in the gallery today and is a person of distinction, and so the Speaker has to make the introduction.

It seems to me that right now, the way things stand, the Speaker introduces people only of the diplomatic corps, very distinguished people beyond any question. But once you broaden that, as I think we end up doing if we accept this proposal, then I suggest that we are going to put our Speaker in a rather difficult position from time to time.

Far better that we just carry on our present approach where there is a natural governor, that individual members are perfectly entitled to rise in their place and introduce people they feel should be introduced to the Assembly. As I say, we have had the experience of the last number of years where people haven't abused it. Rather than detracting from the Assembly, I think the introductions have added to it in many ways.

MR. YOUNG:

To answer the member's question - he asked, I believe, whether the Speaker was aware of this change. The Speaker was a member of the committee, Mr. Chairman. He is aware of the change. It was quite thoroughly discussed in terms of the position he might find himself in. In fact, in fairness it could be reported that it would remove an embarrassment which is sometimes caused him, and I think which occurred both today and yesterday; today, in the sense that a group was introduced prior to some visitors in the Speaker's gallery, and yesterday when the Speaker ...

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Oh.

MR. YOUNG:

... rose to introduce and several other people rose to introduce at the same time. These things are happening because of lack of coordination.

DR. BUCK:

Mr. Chairman, first of all, we're really making a mountain out of a molehill. I would like to ask the hon. member who just spoke, who are the most important people who come to this Legislature but Albertans? I don't give a rip about the cotton pickin' protocol when you talk about the diplomatic staff. The people who sit in these galleries, our young people and our local municipal people are the most important people who come to this Legislature.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Hear, hear.

DR. BUCK:

When we talk about the length of time spent, I have listened to so much b.s. in this Legislature from members on both sides of the House that if we cannot take five minutes of time to introduce the people who elect us - and we have to remember that these are the people we serve, the people who sit up there and are introduced for no more than five minutes. I cannot remember anybody ever being introduced for 20 minutes in this Legislature, and I stand to be corrected hon. Member for Highlands. But we also have to remember that the people at the municipal level are just as important to the democratic process as we think we are. I, as a member of this Legislature, feel that I should have the privilege of introducing the people who are in my constituency, especially the young people.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. BUCKWELL:

I'd like to say a few words on this. You know, the vagaries of political life are rather short and, whether government or opposition members, some of us have been here 14 years like the hon. Member for Hanna, others have been here longer and some are going to be here a shorter period. It isn't very often that we have the opportunity - the ones in Edmonton have an opportunity every session, but the ones who are from farther away have less. What always bothered me, Mr. Chairman, was that maybe the most progress we made on some days was during the introduction of visitors. I've always been afraid that our visitors would stay beyond the question period and would become disillusioned.

I feel, in courtesy to the Speaker, that maybe we should allow, when Introduction of Visitors is called, a ten-second break if the Speaker wants to rise. Give him the first opportunity for the introduction of whatever visitor he has.

I know that we are very prone to say, well, all these people sitting in the gallery are the most important. They are to us because we hope they are going to vote for us some day. And they are important. But when we have, for example, the Ambassador of France or those we had today - and I remember we had an archbishop of the Ukrainian church here last spring - I think in fairness to them that we ... As a little delegation to the House of Commons we were introduced by the Speaker, but it was over so quickly. I was looking down to see who would introduce us. The Speaker introduced us and it was all over, but we were proud to be introduced. I feel, in some respects, that with the



time it takes and the time we are debating it, we've pretty nearly used up the spring session of introduction of visitors.

MR. MOORE:

Mr. Chairman, there are members of the Assembly who are not happy with the proposal that has been put forth by the committee with regard to the introduction of visitors. It's also evident that the committee wouldn't have had it under advisement if everyone were satisfied with the existing situation.

I think, Mr. Chairman, that perhaps a move to a different type of amendment to Section 12 would perhaps solve the concerns of both opposing points of view. I just wanted to suggest - not to make a motion but to suggest - that if the motion now before us, made by Mr. French, were defeated that would be possible. I would undertake to make an amendment to Section 12 to change the original Section 12 as we see it before us to Section A and add a Section B which would simply say that members of the Assembly may introduce groups of school children only.

I wonder, Mr. Speaker, if there are any comments in that regard.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Mr. Moore, you appreciate the amendment that Mr. French presented, that Rule 12 be struck out and existing Rule 13 (3) (a) be substituted therefor.

Mr. Schmid.

MR. SCHMID:

Mr. Chairman, my greatest concern is that the time any of the school classes come here is possibly the only time they are here in this Assembly. I think that a closer touch, the knowledge that the MLA has, irrespective of which party he belongs to, of the situation in his constituency I think demands this MLA introduce the children or students who are here from his constituency.

I also would suggest, of course, that to have dignitaries visiting from other countries I think the same type of applause, the same type of welcome, is accorded any members of the Assembly here should they travel to another province. It was accorded to me just last week out in British Columbia.

Again I would suggest to you that at one time it may be appropriate for the Speaker to do so. At another time it may be appropriate for the minister or an MLA to do so. However, I think it should be at the discretion of the Speaker and the MLA concerned when or who is going to be introduced by whom. I would also like to say, of course, that in order to instill in our students the type of system we have here maybe some of the members could make better introductions. On the other hand, my feeling is no matter how good they are it has been the introduction [by the MLA] of the school which is present in this Assembly and I think it should continue to be done by the Speaker.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Mr. Getty.

MR. GETTY:

Mr. Chairman, I've watched over some period of time the introduction of school children in the House and frankly, the members from Edmonton have far more opportunities than those from outside Edmonton. I think the reason the members of the committee must have considered this is because it is, in my mind, one of the most abused privileges that there is in the House. I take it not only on school children but right to individual members, because frankly, I've observed the hon. Member for Drumheller who has, with a degree of pride, introduced people from his constituency. He has gone as far as to introduce to us a valued friend who comes from Drumheller and happened to be here on any given day. I think that's fine except that what he's really doing is imposing on the rights of other members. Frankly, on any given day there are probably 10 or 15 people, those of us in the House from Edmonton who could easily stand - we are just as proud of them and they're just as close friends and just as important in our constituencies - and we could stand and introduce them. Frankly it wouldn't work.

So what happens? We allow him to do it, but we do not follow his example at all. It would be impossible for us, because by following his example we would, in fact, shoot down his ability to do it. I think that over the years the House

of Commons went through this and they decided to allow only certain very special people, people of outstanding qualifications - I imagine it is.

The hon. Member for Fort Saskatchewan says "the ordinary people". Well sure, that sounds great when you stand up and say, well let's introduce the ordinary guy. He doesn't give a heck for all the important people who are diplomatic types. That's fine too, but the fact of the matter is, if we all took that attitude, the whole system, this introduction of individual ordinary people would completely come apart.

[Interjections]

Well, that's just what I mean. We are passing up the opportunity for those of you who like to do it, but the fact of the matter is it changes the opportunities for each individual member. Frankly, in terms of school kids, I think we have had an abuse of that rule. We have had people try to use it as an opportunity. I think they've gone beyond the bounds of introducing them.

If the school children need to be recognized, I've always thought that what should happen is that the Speaker or the Clerk should say: "in the galleries today are the following five schools." And then mention them and they all stand up together and get a pound on the desk, if that is important to them.

Frankly, the way I've done it with school children is to meet them in a room or somewhere in the building, go through the procedure with them and acquaint them with what they are going to see. I have found that they are quite appreciative of that. Certainly it isn't a reason for them to recognize their member because I would think that he'd be seeing them more than just standing and giving a little talk in the Legislature.

So, I guess what I'm saying in general is that I think we should have a rule which is more restrictive, one that allows us to give the Speaker control of the Legislature and, I think, one that would prevent abuses and would give us all the same kind of opportunities in the House. As I've pointed out earlier, I think the Member for Drumheller would have to agree, we do not have the same opportunities. I could not do what he does. Most Edmonton MLAs could not do what he does. I think we should somehow have the rule allow us all to have equal opportunities. My own feeling - I wasn't on this committee - is that the Speaker should introduce those of outstanding qualifications and that the Clerk should introduce, at one time, all the schools that are in the gallery, to be recognized at one time. The members should take the opportunity to see their friends, important constituents and their school children outside the time of this Legislature.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Mr. Henderson.

MR. HENDERSON:

Mr. Chairman, I would just like to bring before the member's attention particularly the remarks made by the Member for Spirit River. One of the problems that the committee really laboured under is that the rules on introduction of visitors are not being observed now. The Speaker has a difficult task if he tries to enforce it, because what the rule says, for the benefits of the House, is:

When introduction of visitors is called, brief introductions may be made of groups of school students and with prior permission of the Speaker of other visitors in the galleries.

Now what the rule says right now is the only privilege of introduction a private member has is school students. But as to the other part of it about introducing people other than school students the member, according to the rules, is supposed to go to the Speaker in advance, the way I read it, and get his concurrence. Nobody is doing that.

So, we laboured over this question. You know, it puts the Speaker in a difficult position to try, from the Chair, to interfere when a member does not abide by the rules, because the Speaker doesn't want to embarrass a member on the floor of the House when he isn't following the rule.

As far as putting the Speaker in a difficult position regarding making a decision as to who to introduce or not to introduce, he is in that position now. The rule isn't being enforced and I don't think the Speaker chooses to enforce it because of the risk of embarrassing some member. So from the discussion that

has taken place, I think you can see the difficulty the committee laboured under in trying to draft a recommendation.

I think about the only thing the committee really agreed on was who the Speaker should introduce. Now maybe we should put another section in dealing with what members could introduce. Either that, or if we leave the present section in, make it incumbent upon all members of the House to abide by the present rule relating to private members; that his privilege relates to school children and, with prior permission of the Speaker, other visitors. Maybe that would take care of the situation we have been debating for the last few minutes.

MR. LUDWIG:

Mr. Chairman, on a point of order, it is 4:30 and I believe that this motion, much ado about nothing, is too weighty for this body to determine. They should probably study it but I move that this committee adjourn, as undertaken by the hon. House Leader.

MR. HYNDMAN:

Mr. Chairman, rather than the committee adjourning, could the committee rise and report progress and ask leave to sit again, because I gather we would be moving again to discuss this motion next Tuesday afternoon.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Is it agreed as moved by the Government House Leader?

HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

[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 House rules, reports progress and begs leave to sit again.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

PUBLIC BILLS AND ORDERS  
OTHER THAN GOVERNMENT ORDERS  
(Second Reading)

Bill No. 212  
An Act to amend the Ombudsman Act

MR. LUDWIG:

Mr. Speaker, in opening debate on second reading of Bill No. 212, I would like to comment briefly on the fact that the Ombudsman of Alberta, Mr. McClellan, the first Ombudsman in North America, is retiring. I believe it is interesting that he is retiring at a time when he has served six years with distinction and has done perhaps more than any other man in North America to encourage other areas to establish the office of ombudsman.

Since the date Ombudsman McClellan was appointed, the idea has spread throughout North America, throughout Canada definitely, but more recently throughout all levels of government in the United States and the acceptability of the office in other areas is a tribute to the fact that it was such a success in this province.

I believe that when the office of the Provincial Ombudsman was set up, much reliance was placed on the type of man who was going to be the first ombudsman to determine whether the office would be successful or not because a lesser figure, a less able man than George McClellan may well have not done justice to the office and the idea may have gone into a decline.

But the fact that now all levels of government, all areas of North America, have accepted the idea, is indeed a tribute to Mr. McClellan and I hope that he will continue to work in this field, notwithstanding that he wishes to retire as ombudsman. I believe that we are witnessing the stepping down of one I consider to be a great Canadian.

When this issue came up in 1963 and then in 1967, Mr. Speaker, I had made the statement that this is not a partisan issue. It isn't an issue that one party endorses and another party does not. All parties throughout Canada have now implemented the office of ombudsman so at best it has to be a non-partisan issue and I suppose one can't possibly entirely divorce it from the fact that either one side or the other side introduces it. But I appreciate the fact that as a member in the opposition, the opposition does not legislate in any legislature in the British Empire, nor do I expect the bill to be passed by my guidance alone.

I would like to recommend that whether this bill can become law or not is one question, but another matter is that I believe it ought to be debated to a vote in this Legislature. How that procedure would be followed I do not know, Mr. Speaker, but it would be wrong to merely debate this issue briefly and let it drop to the bottom of the Order Paper.

I would be obliged, since I feel very strongly about the principle that is being advanced in Bill No. 212 to continue to present this bill. I believe that since it is a non-partisan issue that the principle of ombudsman has been accepted, has been established and endorsed by all parties, this should be approached on that basis. And as I stated, it is not something that one party advances and another party opposes.

There is precedent for the establishment of the Ombudsman to deal with local authority, that is municipalities and school boards in Canada. I would like to read a letter that I received. I am sure it is not a confidential letter. It is a letter from the Ombudsman of Nova Scotia. I have two letters from him. In the second one he states:

4 December, 1972

In response to your letter of November 30, 1972 I shall offer my comments on municipal jurisdiction as it relates to the Office of Ombudsman in Nova Scotia.

We believe that it is preferable to have the one office look after provincial and municipal complaints and grievances. If, in the future, it is found that the workload generated by municipalities gives rise to the desirability of somebody looking after municipal affairs by themselves, then a person within the Office of Ombudsman could be designated for that purpose.

I am not reading this to argue what type of office should be set up, except to indicate that there is precedent of a successful establishment of this office. I would like to continue to read the letter.

It is our view that there are so many matters within the two jurisdictions that relate to one another, it is reasonable to look to the one Ombudsman's office for a solution to problems. Such things as planning, taxation, welfare and other things point up the fact that a great many questions come within the joint administration, that is to say provincial and municipal.

In this province, we feel that the legislation as presently enacted, is sufficient to deal with both provincial and municipal grievances ...

Dr. H.D. Smith  
Ombudsman for Nova Scotia

I believe, Mr. Speaker, that the present ombudsman of Alberta has indicated that he gets a number of complaints about local jurisdictions, such as municipalities and perhaps school boards and others, without being able to entertain them because he hasn't the jurisdiction.

I am of the opinion that in recent years some of the larger municipal governments are now almost as large as the provincial government was prior to 1967. The size of budget, the extent of authority extended to them through our legislation, and the decision they must make dealing with the rights, privileges and property of citizens of this province makes it worthwhile to examine whether the opportunities that the people have - individuals have in complaining against the provincial government - should be extended to include complaints against local jurisdictions.

That is why, Mr. Speaker, I believe it is timely, presently, to review this whole matter and determine whether an ombudsman ought to be given extended jurisdiction to include municipalities and school boards.

I mentioned the Nova Scotia situation because the bill that I introduced was based to a great extent on the Nova Scotia legislation. It has been tested and although it may need more adjustment, more amendment that is not a problem. I believe it is at least a recommendation that a workable system has been implemented, and as we did with the New Zealand ombudsman legislation we followed it almost verbatim so we have another proven means of dealing with complaints against municipalities and school boards.

Before I get into the supporting arguments for the purpose of the bill, I would like to deal with one matter of local autonomy. Some municipalities, before they know what the responsibilities and the method of operation of the ombudsman are, will immediately raise the question of local autonomy. There is one case in the United States where a private body, a group of associations or group of people who could afford it, banded themselves together and without any legislation set up an office of ombudsman to deal with complaints against local authority.

There is nothing to prevent that from happening here. It would not encroach upon the local autonomy because the ombudsman has no jurisdiction to overrule any decisions. So if anything, an ombudsman who has the right to entertain complaints against municipal governments would enhance the prestige and the efficiency of the civic employees and civic governments, as is the case with provincial governments.

It should be noted that when the municipal ombudsman was first advocated in New Zealand its biggest opposition came from the civil service. The top ranking civil servants fought the idea, they didn't want anyone independent looking over their shoulders interfering in their decisions. Since then it has been reported quite often by the past Ombudsman, Sir Guy Powells, that his strongest support for his office now comes from the civil service and that the prestige of the civil service has been enhanced tremendously and the civil service has received greater public acceptance because of the ombudsman being there to handle complaints against their administration.

I would like to just point out that the idea for extension of the principle from provincial, or senior government ombudsman, to the local ombudsman is strongly supported by a study conducted in Britain under the Justice Committee. It was published in 1969 [the Whyatt Report] but the facts which were relied upon to form the report have not altered meaningfully since that date. I would like to quote from a report. I understand, Mr. Speaker, that some hon. members may object to one reading, but I submit it is not against the rules of the House to quote articles or even decisions in support of one's arguments. So I would like to proceed in that manner, Mr. Speaker.

In referring to a report commissioned to study the issue of ombudsman for local authorities the following statement was made by the Justice Committee:

The study embodied in the report which is here published may well form the basis of what could become a real charter for the little man. In the ever growing complexity of the modern state, the interventions of central and local government into the lives and affairs of the ordinary citizen inevitably multiply. For the most part, no doubt, these interventions are for beneficent purposes and have beneficent results. But the nature of governmental and local governmental activity is now such that large areas of discretion are created in regard to all sorts of matters affecting the lives and rights of ordinary people in varying degrees.

The general standards of administration in this country are high, probably indeed higher than in any other. But with the existence of a great bureaucracy there are inevitably occasions, not insignificant in number, when through error or indifference, injustice is done - or appears to be done. The man of substance can deal with these situations. He is near to the establishment; he enjoys the status or possesses the influence which

will ensure him the ear of those in authority. He knows his way around. But too often the little man, the ordinary humble citizen, is incapable of asserting himself.

[Lord Shawcross in the preface to the Whyatt Report, 1961]

Mr. Speaker, I believe that is couched in straightforward language and certainly I could not improve on it. But it does state the principle clearly that there is a problem. It stresses the fact that local governments, municipalities, could well end up by having \$500 million budgets, and could encompass a million population in the foreseeable future, and that we should move in this manner.

One of the most frequent objections one gets to the suggestion that we ought to have an ombudsman, either federally or provincially or municipally and for school boards, is the fact that someone elected will say, I'm the ombudsman. They come to me and I solve all problems.

Once in a while you meet a very dedicated and well to do representative who has time, but he has neither the ability nor the authority nor the experience to be an effective ombudsman. The question of impartiality is very important in dealing with complaints of people who are disgruntled, aggrieved or dissatisfied with the treatment they receive from administrators, whether at the provincial or civil level.

I have often wondered why this person would stand up and say, I'm the MLA, I'll take care of all complaints. But it has been proven that is not sufficient. An MLA has responsibilities other than perhaps setting up a full time office dealing with complaints. As I stated before, not every MLA wants to, or has the temperament or the ability to deal with these. So that argument is not too effective. With members of Parliament, they are too far away and sometimes they are busy in other respects and they have no obligation to really deal effectively and pursue a complaint to its final disposition.

In support of that view I would like to quote from the same report. It states:

The elected representatives are, therefore, judges in their own cause and the only external checks are public criticisms and ballot-box in the next election. These sanctions are no doubt appropriate to an elected body in relation to the policy matters for which it is responsible, but it is open to question how far democratic processes of this kind are suitable for investigating accusations of maladministration.

[Appendix to the Whyatt Report, page 88]

I used the argument when I debated in favour of the provincial ombudsman. It isn't sufficient to complain to a minister about his favourite civil servant - they have a tendency to back each other. After all, if the civil servant is incapable, negligent, or arrogant, the minister can replace him. But they do stick together.

I find the same thing happens at the civic level, that somehow the principle of impartiality is not evident. It certainly is never accepted. I believe a person with a grievance who gets a favourable decision goes away and no more is heard about it. But one who gets an unfavourable response screams bias, impartiality, and the fact that they are big and I can't do anything about it and they didn't hear me out. This goes on and on.

I have always subscribed to the view, and I believe every MLA must have. If they are not interested in people's problems they probably wouldn't be here. But here is a quotation from a report by Bernard Frank who was the Chairman of the Ombudsman Committee of the American Bar Association. It's a fairly recent report - 1971 - and it states:

The right to complain, the right to be heard, the right to have corrective action taken if one has suffered harm from government - are human rights. We know that human rights are not protected merely by words and phrases in constitutions, charters, laws, ordinances, proclamations, and declarations. Human rights are primarily protected by effective machinery which implements the constitution, the charter, the law, the ordinance, the proclamation and the declaration.

It goes on to argue that the ombudsman was in fact a human rights type of institution to give that person who has a grievance. Because such a person

could not afford to hire help and perhaps hire legal help to fight, was the purpose and the necessity for establishing ombudsmen.

It should be noted that the United States government had at that time three presidential commissions to study, perhaps, the matter of whether they should improve their grievance handling machinery. This is only one, but it comes from a very learned person in this regard and a man who dedicated many years to advancing the cause of the individual who has complaints.

Another very interesting quotation from a consultation document, a proposal for the creation of a Commission for Local Administration in England, is from the Department of the Environment. I believe that department is very large in Britain and has extensive authority. I believe it has municipal affairs and other matters in it, and that is why it made this report. It is a very worthy report and I would like to quote one short paragraph. It states here,

Ministers consider that a citizen who believes himself to be the victim of maladministration by a local authority, should enjoy the same right to have his complaint independently scrutinised as he already enjoys through the ...

... in this case the parliamentary commissioner and in our case the ombudsman. He deals with alleged maladministration by central government.

They propose that this should be achieved by creating an independent statutory Commission for Local Administration, appointed by the Crown and financed by local government, to deal with complaints of maladministration by local authorities.

I am not recommending that we go that route but the principle is there. When you deal with local authorities in Britain you are dealing with a population of 55 to 65 million people and it is a tremendously involved and large problem, whereas in this province we still have a small population so I don't believe we have to go to that extent.

Support of the view that the principle of ombudsman, of permitting complaints to an independent body by agreed persons, proliferated in North America, is supplied by a statement in an American Bar Association Ombudsman Committee report of April 1971. I'll just quote a very short paragraph.

The record shows that bills proposing Ombudsman legislation on a state level are year after year being poured into the legislative hopper. Bills were proposed in thirty-six states in one or more of the sessions from the years 1967 to 1970 and bills are presently pending in twenty-two states. In addition, legislation had been proposed in the Micronesia Trust Territory and presently legislation is pending in Guam and Puerto Rico.

This issue is accepted, is serving a worthwhile purpose, Mr. Speaker, and is supported by facts and many authorities. An indication of the extent to which local governments are now being serviced by ombudsmen comes from another more recent edition of an American Bar Association Ombudsman Committee report, under Mr. Bernard Frank, which is dated June 30, 1973. I wish to point out that this man has become an outstanding authority on this issue in the U.S. He is doing research and certainly has compiled a tremendous amount of information which helps people who pursue this issue. I am quoting from this latest edition that I have from him, under the title United States--Local Government.

A study prepared by the Chairman and known to be incomplete shows some 76 local governmental units (not including school districts) with some form of complaint-handling mechanism. A great variety of names are in use including the term ombudsman. The majority are part of the Mayor's or City Manager's office. Professor Paul Dolan has properly called them "pseudo-ombudsmen". Only a handful have the attribute of independence from the executive which is generally associated with the classic ombudsman system.

But it shows that they have moved wherever they could to permit people who have complaints against municipalities and perhaps school boards - the school ones are not listed in this report - that it is an accepted form of procedure. I think I will discontinue the debate in support of the need for it because that principle had been recognized provincially. It has public approval. I believe all the people may not have availed themselves of the office, but it has public approval and not too many days pass before someone phones - I am sure most MLAs will go with this - someone phones with a complaint and perhaps wants to be guided to the ombudsman. In fact, sometimes it's a very wise thing to do because some of these people's complaints may be small. The facts may be complex and difficult.

As I stated, I will not pursue the supporting argument for the ombudsman and the human rights aspect of it. But there is a tremendous amount of literature on this issue, some against it but many are very strongly in favour.

I had a statement here on the matter of ombudsmen in schools, dealing with school boards et cetera. It isn't updated. It's the last report of June 30, 1972, also from Mr. Bernard Frank. It states here,

Information in this area is not complete. Information received shows three school districts (not including the Dayton School Board ...) have established the office.

So there is a movement in that direction. I can't quote the authority, but as I stated earlier one area in the United States set up a private ombudsman without legislation and without any legislative sanction. For that reason I believe this can be done. It does not affect the jurisdiction or the local autonomy at all. So far, in talking only with several municipal councillors and mayors, there has been no real opposition to the idea. They would like to be more informed. But most people who are in administration of any kind in this day and age do not mind if someone can review complaints against them. In fact, if they resisted too hard the public might make an issue out of this. In this case, as there was no agitation by the public for the ombudsman provincially, the public will not take the lead in this regard either. They expect their MLAs to take a stand on it and perhaps provide a service. Because it isn't everything in a province like this that is done by public agitation.

On the other hand, I can truthfully say that many people have no objection to it whatsoever. It is, in my opinion, a worthwhile and an established principle and one that does show concern for the individual. I believe that most hon. members in this House have expressed a concern in that regard, and I would hope that this bill can be given a thorough debate and perhaps be voted on.

I am often asked, and sometimes I am unable to answer, the question of what is the particular or specific reason for an ombudsman to deal with local matters. Reading the material available and reviewing the different kinds of problems which may arise - and this is no reflection on any particular council or school board - here are some of the things I gleaned out of the material available to me in dealing with this issue. One of them was the matter of maladministration. A citizen who pays taxes wants to know why a certain official may take a trip in a car with a couple of escorts. It may well be that the concern is not important. On the other hand, it may be a junket. But the individual who pays taxes doesn't know he has a right to be informed. Now who will tell him? He can't go to the office of the party concerned because he may not be entitled to an answer. He may be entitled to an answer but he won't get one, and there is not a thing he can do about it. But he can go to the ombudsman and the ombudsman will have the right to check the matter out and give him an answer which may satisfy him, or it may be the kind of an answer that may lead to an inquiry which will satisfy the individual that if there is something wrong it shall not happen again.

In dealing with the issue of maladministration, I'd like to read a couple of statements that I prepared from the material.

Maladministration has been variously described as including a number of greater or lesser sins of administration. It may be taken to cover administrative action or inaction based on or influenced by improper considerations or conduct. Arbitrariness, malice or bias including discrimination are examples of improper considerations. Neglect, unjustifiable delay, failure to observe relevant rules or procedures, failure to take relevant consideration into account, failure to establish or review procedures where there is a duty or an obligation on a body to do so are examples of improper conduct.

Now when I read these, Mr. Speaker, I've made the point clear that I'm not alleging that maladministration does exist. But the right of individuals to know and check to see that it does not, I believe, is now established.

In some instances, some of the complaints or the points dealing with maladministration can be challenged through court. But that is one of the purposes of the Ombudsman, to give the individual answer a concern, a specific concern to him without him having to go to the expense of engaging counsel. It is expensive these days.

Another reference I want to make with regard to the term "maladministration" is that it can cover a wide range from serious failings or even corrupt practice



to quite minor oversights and mistakes. It could be for example that a body against which maladministration has been found on a number of occasions would nevertheless have a generally high standard of administration apart from a relatively few minor instances of human error. But there are many minor matters and minor complaints that a citizen may have against a municipal government which may be termed maladministration. The kind of things that the public would resent but would not condemn in a civic government.

There is another body that with a single finding of maladministration could have seriously failed in its duty to a member or members of the public. When I use the term maladministration, I don't want it felt there is corruption and theft in everything, but maladministration in the sense that I'm using it covers a lot of minor administrative nuisances perhaps and I would like to refer to such things as bias, neglect, inattention, delay, sometimes incompetence, ineptitude, perversity, arbitrariness and arrogance. Now that is quite a list but throughout the term of office of an administration, a civic administration, one can find examples of these and especially if you have to go to City Hall quite often, that somewhere down the line you feel you have a grievance, and it would be nice to have a place to go and lodge a complaint and have an investigation.

These are just some of the things I'm advancing in support of the idea, Mr. Speaker. I have no strong views on the manner in which the office would be implemented although I believe that as a trial we should just leave it within this Ombudsman's office and perhaps appoint a deputy or two and take it from there.

The Nova Scotia Ombudsman takes the position that we would have to look into the future to see whether there are that many complaints so that the office would become overburdened and would require further staff.

Another reason I believe we ought to implement what I was going to term an experiment, but it is no longer an experiment, it has become an acceptable established institution. We should implement it at the earliest possible date and see what the results are. I know that at least one mayor in Alberta will tell us that there can be no complaints about his administration. I would then say if there are not, I would be the first to feel that perhaps the office ought to be abandoned. It can be abandoned if there is no purpose for it.

Many people felt that the government in office felt that the Ombudsman appointed in 1967 would have nothing to do. Well they found out that he had lots to do and he has more to do now. A conscientious ombudsman can find even more to do and we have had a conscientious ombudsman.

So the need for it ought not to be based on the fact that perhaps people are not knocking down our doors with complaints against municipal authorities and school boards. The point I made, Mr. Speaker, is that it is such a large government now, school boards are large, have a lot of authority, people are disenchanted sometimes and they do not want to wait three years before the next election, they want something done promptly. Things are moving fast, decisions affecting them, the people have to be looked after immediately because they will not wait.

So with those few remarks, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to throw out a suggestion to the hon. members opposite that if they are interested in this idea, if they feel it has merit, it can be implemented in this province. I say it can be for some of the reasons that I've advanced, and in my opinion the reasons and the specific need for the ombudsman, those advanced by me are not exhausted, but if the government is interested, I would have no objection at all to any member on the other side moving this as a government motion and lead it to a debate.

I don't think it matters at all in an impartial non-partisan issue who moves it and who guides the bill through the House. I know there are some hon. members on the other side who are much more capable in guiding bills through the Legislature and they are not ministers sometimes, but they are very capable. I believe I would like to extend an invitation to the hon. Member for Calgary Buffalo to take a good look at this bill, at the reasons behind it, I'm sure he is well acquainted with the issues to see if this bill could not be guided through the House as a government bill. That would be a first, Mr. Speaker, and a very worthwhile first in this province.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. YOUNG:

Would you permit a question?

Mr. Speaker, my question to the hon. member is whether or not it has been determined under the existing statutes the municipalities and school boards have authority to appoint their own ombudsmen. Does he know?

MR. LUDWIG:

Mr. Speaker, in answering the question I take the position that that is not advisable. We have very many municipalities, it would require every municipality to set up its own. It would be a long process. The matter of impartiality would have to be dealt with. I believe that the way it is done, it would be much better if it were done provincially.

Some municipalities couldn't possibly afford an ombudsman. The members or the residents of small municipalities are entitled as well to the same rights as larger municipalities. If Edmonton and Calgary could afford an ombudsman, some small places could not.

I believe the better way to go would be the way I'm recommending, the way it has been established in Northern Ireland, in Nova Scotia, and in other jurisdictions, perhaps in the U.S. as well.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Minister for Telephones and Utilities followed by the hon. Member for Pincher Creek-Crowsnest.

MR. FARRAN:

Mr. Speaker, I'd like first to pay tribute also to George McClellan who has done a remarkable job as Alberta's first ombudsman. He has scored many goals and has handled the job with dignity even when he was under severe attack a few years ago and we are going to find him a very hard man to replace.

Ombudsman I understand is Danish for everybody's buddy. The "Om" comes from "omnia", and the "budsman" must mean something like buddy.

The idea of the hon. Member for Calgary Mountain View has merit. Most ideas have some merit. For instance, Mr. Speaker, what would the ombudsman, a municipal ombudsman have thought of the most recent debate on the Rules. I did contemplate earlier this afternoon a motion which the hon. Member for Cardston was ready to second and it would have gone like this, that the Introduction of Visitors be extended so there was no time for any other debate, because the people suffer from too much government and not enough neighbourliness.

Well, Mr. Speaker, the ombudsman is a form of protection against too much government, or at least the injustice of an inflexible, fossilized, classified bureaucracy. Much of the time of Mr. McClellan, our first ombudsman, I believe, was taken up with Workmen's Compensation Board cases and I suppose with the passage of an enlightened bill in this session the work load will be reduced.

Now I'm sure that a municipal ombudsman would find plenty to do in my city of Calgary. Some of the commissioners and aldermen might appeal to him if they feel they have been cruelly treated by the mayor. In fact, at a local level he might be very busy indeed. I know from my years as an alderman that there is a tremendous variety of cases at the level of a city council and a city ward.

I have been hauled out of bed to answer the telephone innumerable times over the ten years I was an alderman. Complaints that predominate are about neighbours' dogs and cats. The garden lovers only narrowly outnumber the animal lovers. And both of them hate the dog pound. They all claim that the dog pound behaves in a most irregular manner, just the sort of manner the hon. Member for Calgary Mountain View described. I believe a municipal ombudsman would find that dogs and cats would form at least two-thirds of his portfolio of work.

There are many other subjects, though, of fascination to a possible municipal ombudsman. Cracks in the sidewalk which have not been repaired. Discrimination sometimes because the cracks in front of a neighbour's house might have been repaired. Bumps in roads that shake houses and rattle up cars and sometimes even cause a spring to break or an axle to break and the city refuses compensation because negligence can't be proved. This is a very frequent sort of case.

The alleged run-around at city hall is very common. The many neighbourhood disputes over fences, untrimmed hedges, overhanging trees, pigeons - pigeons is a very common one. Sometimes people think that one of the basic fundamental rights of a Canadian is to keep pigeons in his backyard. But the neighbours

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don't always agree. They believe it is a fundamental right that they should not have pigeon droppings on their roofs or their windows. This is a very common complaint.

We also have a lot of complaints about weeds. In the city of Calgary we have many experts on weeds. They can tell a sow thistle from Russian thistle from Scotch thistle, from many other varieties of thistle. If there should be just one in a neighbour's yard down the street, and the weed inspector doesn't issue a weed notice, they can feel very outraged. And I believe they would appeal to the ombudsman.

We have complaints over setbacks. We have complaints very often in the spring when the developers are working in new sub-divisions or they are pulling down something like the Robin Hood Flour Mill - of dust and the failure of the aldermen in city council to enforce their own by-law that the dust should be kept down by sprinkling. In fact, these complainers are sometimes so successful that in Calgary they sprinkle during rainstorms.

That reminds me of another very common complaint that the city parks department still waters the grass during a rainstorm. It has been explained that it would cost too much at city union rates to send somebody to turn off the tap.

Another complaint is that they don't always turn off the city street lights during daylight hours. Again, the same rebuttal is given - the ombudsman might not find it valid that it costs too much at the current going rate for a city electrician to turn them off.

So there are many, many complaints an ombudsman would have to deal with in a city. The rowdy parties in the neighbour's house - this is a common one - where the police are very slow to turn up to tell them to quit playing the record player at one o'clock in the morning.

We have noisy kids on Hondas who race around the block. There are frequent complaints about dirty yards and jalopies left on the street and the city's inaction in not having these jalopies towed away in accordance with the by-law.

Every zoning application has its protagonist and its antagonist. MLAs who haven't been aldermen could never understand. They just wouldn't realize what life is like for a local representative.

I've had women phone me at two or three in the morning. I've had them phone me to complain that their husbands haven't come home and to ask me, as an alderman, what I'm going to do about it.

[Laughter]

AN HON. MEMBER:

What did you do about it?

MR. FARRAN:

I've actually had complaints that the valve in the toilet is stuck and they haven't been able to get a plumber. I've had them phone because the city has been slow to fix leaking mains or potholes or a power outage that has only been on for a matter of minutes. If the power goes out in the City of Calgary, any alderman can expect his telephone will be tied up for the next three hours at least.

So in Calgary they did something about it. They have got a splendid complaints officer - a wonderful guy. He is very patient, very courteous and he does solve quite a few neighbourhood disputes. He can even get somebody from the north of Ireland and somebody from the south of Ireland living next door and the fence is one foot out of line, and he can solve that sort of complaint very often.

DR. BUCK:

He's now in Ponoka.

MR. FARRAN:

What? Well, this is a point now. He has kept his sanity, but how many other fellows would? He solves a lot of these problems with soft talk, not going through all this sort of federal case routine of a provincial ombudsman.

Once he worked under the city solicitor. Now he reports directly to the mayor and you can see what it's done to the mayor.

Every ward alderman is an ombudsman. Every ward alderman is everybody's buddy. With looser procedures at a local level, much looser procedures than we have in these marble halls, an alderman can raise any little beef without notice on Monday council meetings or any other day of the week. He doesn't have to go through all this 'after you Alphonse' routine that we go through with the Speaker. He can pound his desk. He can scream and he can holler and he can force himself onto the floor over something as important as the dogcatcher failing to catch a dog in his neighbourhood.

Now there is merit in having a municipal ombudsman. But one wouldn't do for the province. It would be just impossible for him to do it for the entire province. He'd be in the bug house, as the hon. Member for Clover Bar said, very, very quickly. Nor would any Calgarian accept an Edmontonian as ombudsman over him - even if he were elected. You know, at one time they used to elect the city commissioners as well as the aldermen. Now any Edmontonian who took on a job in Calgary would be driven out of town within a month.

Perhaps the way to do this is to make it permissible in The Municipal Act for any local government to have an ombudsman - if they can find one. The belief of this House is that there should be full local autonomy and that we should pay full respect to the local level of government, but we are not to be paternalistic and force things upon them.

So we must say, well, if an ombudsman is really desired by the municipalities - have they ever asked for one in the annual report of their associations, the AUMA or the AAMDC? If they have, then we should take it pretty seriously because obviously they are finding that they are being driven into the ground themselves and they want somebody to pass the buck to.

If everyone wants an alderman - there are about 350 municipalities in the province - we could have 350 ombudsmen and they could form a club. Then maybe, like the firefighters - you know the new firefighters up north - we could give them a uniform, a war bonnet they could put a feather in for every time they scored a goal and solved a lease. But the successful ones undoubtedly will run for mayor. There is no doubt about that.

Of course, we already have municipal inspectors who watch for corruption and that sort of thing. Hardly a year goes by when the Minister of Municipal Affairs isn't requested to set up an inquiry of some sort at local government level somewhere in the province. But ombudsmen, I reiterate, if we believe in local government, should report to the city council. Then the fat would really be in the fire. I can imagine an ombudsman coming up with his report to the sort of councils we have in Calgary and in Edmonton. They'd eat him alive. They'd just cut him up in little pieces and feed him to the dog pound.

I think the idea is a good one. It may be a little bit naive and it requires a little bit more work. We've got to figure it out a little better than just putting it as a simple proposition as the hon. Member for Calgary Mountain View does. It's not going to be as easy as he thinks. I believe that the best sort of ombudsman, knowing the climate in Calgary at the moment, will be a former Social Creditor. He'd then really get the treatment.

Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to adjourn the debate and call it 5:30.

[Interjections]

MR. WILSON:

Why? I want to hear the Member for Buffalo.

MR. SPEAKER:

Has the hon. minister leave to adjourn the debate?

[Interjections]

[The motion was carried.]

MR. LUDWIG:

Mr. Speaker, before we get off this, may I ask the hon. minister a question? I had intended to, but he moved rather surprisingly.

MR. SPEAKER:

Has the hon. member leave to extend the debate for the purpose of a question and an answer?

HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

MR. LUDWIG:

Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the hon. minister would have any objection if I proceeded to publish his speech and my speech in the North Hill News and gave it to 40,000 Calgarians.

MR. FARRAN:

I'd be delighted. I think I could arrange it for you.

MR. LUDWIG:

Mr. Speaker, would he also object if there were a hanging in effigy of him in his constituency?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Order, order.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Very irresponsible effort.

MR. HYNDMAN:

Mr. Speaker, I move we call it 5:30.

[The motion was carried.]

MR. SPEAKER:

The House stands adjourned until 8:00 this evening.

[Mr. Speaker left the Chair at 5:23 o'clock.]