

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ALBERTA

Friday, March 8, 1974

[The House met at 10:00 o'clock.]

PRAYERS

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

DR. HOHOL:

Mr. Speaker, at the opening of the Seventeenth Alberta Legislature it is my very real pleasure to be the first to introduce a class. The class is from the very fine, the excellent constituency of Edmonton Belmont and the equally fine and excellent school of J. A. Fife, a Grade 6 class attended by teachers, Mrs. Shirley Richardson and Mr. Don Felstad. Twenty Grade 6 students are in the members gallery and 34 students are in the public gallery.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask them to rise and be recognized by this Assembly.

MR. RUSTE:

Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege this morning to introduce 46 students and their teachers from the Irma School. These students rose early this morning to be here to witness the first Friday sitting of the session starting at 10:00 o'clock in the morning. I'd like them to rise and be recognized at this time. Headed by Mrs. B. Froland, and teachers Mr. Nysetvold and Mr. Cornish, and accompanied by Mrs. Mark, they are in the members gallery.

MR. JAMISON:

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce to you and through you to members of the Assembly students from the Lorne Akins School of the Town of St. Albert.

Mr. Speaker, last week I had the honour of talking to this class and showing them a film on Orders of the Day.

I would ask that the Grade 9 class stand with their teacher Mr. Alf Gould and be recognized by the Assembly.

TABLING RETURNS

MR. MINIELY:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to table, for the information of all hon. members, the audited Interim Financial Statements of the province for the nine months ended December 31, 1973.

MR. GETTY:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to file the copy of the communique which was prepared and released by the four western premiers at the Western Economic Council meeting in Saskatoon recently, and also file copies of documents which were circulated at the Federal-Provincial Conference of First Ministers on Energy recently.

MR. DICKIE:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to file a copy of a report to the hon. Premier by the Chairman of the Alberta Petroleum Marketing Commission, copies of directives by the Alberta Petroleum Marketing Commission, and a selling price bulletin for Crown petroleum by the Alberta Petroleum Marketing Commission.

MISS HUNLEY:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to table the answer to Question No. 296 which was asked on December 6, 1973.

While I'm on my feet, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to file a copy of the Harradence Report.

I'd like also to file a study which was done, called "After Bowden or Belmont", which I think will prove interesting reading.

I also wish to file, Mr. Speaker, a transcript of the hearing which is commonly called the Harradence Commission Hearing.

MR. LUDWIG:

About time, too.

MR. CRAWFORD:

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to table three copies of the answer to Question No. 263 from the last session.

MR. FOSTER:

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to table Return No. 297.

MR. SCHMID:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to table a reply to Questions No. 288 and 293 and I would like to table a return to Order No. 290.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Food Prices

MR. CLARK:

Mr. Speaker, I have two questions I would like to ask today. I would like to ask the first question of the Minister of Consumer Affairs.

In light of the problems of inflation that the workingman faces, I would like to ask the Minister of Consumer Affairs what specific investigations and actions the Department of Consumer Affairs has taken in dealing with the rising costs of sugar and bread?

MR. DOWLING:

With regard to those two specifics, Mr. Speaker, we have kept in touch with those people who have federal responsibility for any monitoring they are doing in sugar and in bread and with Mr. Gray's department as well. We find now, in a recent release by the department, that the price of sugar has been dropping steadily because of a world situation. Sugar, as you know, Mr. Speaker, is not a commodity that is regulated by any board. It is a free commodity and the prices of that commodity are dictated by world markets and world trade.

On the other hand, we have to be extremely careful with the price of bread, Mr. Speaker, so that we do not, by falsely controlling the price at a very low level, destroy those producers who are responsible for the fact that we can eat bread.

MR. CLARK:

Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the minister. Is the Alberta Department of Consumer Affairs doing any monitoring of the prices in the area of these two specific products?

MR. DOWLING:

Yes, Mr. Speaker. The Department of Agriculture, being a very sophisticated organization, has for some time monitored the prices of various food commodities throughout Alberta. Using that as our lead and our guide, of course we are now in the process of developing a bit more sophisticated monitoring system. It is not yet totally in effect. What we have done is to contact retailers throughout Alberta in all areas of retailing asking if they would mind if, from time to time, people involved in the Department of Agriculture or the Department of Consumer Affairs do visit their establishments to determine whether or not there is a general trend of escalation or decrease in prices of particular commodity groups. We have had no negative responses from the very responsible business community of Alberta. Therefore, we are proceeding, Mr. Speaker, and during the course of this session I would hope to be able to be in a position to table some of those first, fairly comprehensive reports.

MR. CLARK:

Mr. Speaker, a final supplementary question to the minister. Is the minister in a position to table these highly sophisticated reports at the earliest possible date, like Monday, in this Assembly?

MR. DOWLING:

I would hate to pin myself down to that particular day, Mr. Speaker. But, of course, I agree with the hon. Opposition House Leader that they are very sophisticated.

MR. CLARK:

A second question to the ...

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Edmonton Strathcona with a supplementary.

MR. KOZIAK:

A supplementary to the minister. Has the minister's department monitored the relationship between the cost of living and personal disposable incomes in the province over, say, the last year?

MR. DOWLING:

Yes, Mr. Speaker. I should say the credit for this goes to the Provincial Treasurer who has indicated to all the members of our caucus that the rise in disposable income for the majority of Albertans over the last 12 months is far in excess of the rise in the cost of living during that same period. So, on the basis of that, Mr. Speaker, we have placed our accent on assisting those people in the lower income area, those on fixed incomes, our senior citizens, and so on, as witnessed by some of the programs we have introduced in the past year and some in our Speech from the Throne this year.

MR. TAYLOR:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker, to the hon. minister. What place do replacement costs play in your monitoring of prices?

MR. DOWLING:

Mr. Speaker, I'm not just sure ... replacement cost of what item? A house, a bag of sugar? I'm not positive what the member wanted.

MR. TAYLOR:

If I could enlarge, Mr. Speaker. Take sugar for example. When the price of sugar drops or when it increases, the replacement costs on the sugar that is already in the stores are immediately shoved on to the consumer.

The point I'm trying to make is: in monitoring your prices when the price happens to drop, is the consuming public then going to get that benefit on the lower side?

MR. DOWLING:

In many cases that does happen, Mr. Speaker. However, we are not in every retail outlet to see that that occurs. I do recall though, when milk was subsidized, there was a great amount of milk powder in storage in the various wholesale areas of our province. We attempted, through the federal ministry, to have that subsidy passed on to that stored

food product as well, so that the effect could be immediate in the market place. We were not totally successful.

MR. NOTLEY:

Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the hon. minister. In your monitoring of the comparison between the cost-of-living increases and the increase in disposable income, can the minister advise whether or not average weekly wages in Alberta have increased by as much as or greater than the cost of living?

MR. DOWLING:

Mr. Speaker, I would love to be in a position to be able to answer that question, but I know that our Provincial Treasurer is very adequately informed on that subject. I would ask him to answer it if he would.

MR. MINIELY:

Mr. Speaker, I think my colleague answered the question rather fully ...

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Oh, oh.

MR. LUDWIG:

Sit down, what are you doing with the answer?

MR. MINIELY:

... but basically, Mr. Speaker, as we've said, the results show that personal incomes, on an average basis - which includes weekly salaries and wages, as the hon. member has indicated - are substantially higher, in fact, near 14 per cent in 1973, whereas the Consumer Price Index rose by 6.5 per cent. So you can see the net disposable income is substantially higher. We do recognize, and have recognized in the last two years, that that average speaks for an average of our Alberta citizens and that there are individual citizens, like senior citizens, for whom we have designed policies well known to the Legislature in responding to those particular citizens on fixed incomes.

MR. NOTLEY:

Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question.

MR. SPEAKER:

Perhaps we might get on to the next topic in view of the time we have spent on this one, although it is an important topic.

I would like to suggest to hon. members that the questions and answers which have just been given may not be taken as precedents for the remainder of the session.

Alberta Crude Price

MR. CLARK:

Mr. Speaker, a second question to the hon. the Premier. I'd like to ask the Premier if the government of the Province of Alberta, in the course of its negotiations with the federal government, has agreed to a price for Alberta crude which will be a part of the removal of the price freeze at the end of March. In other words, has the province agreed to a price with the federal government for Alberta crude?

MR. LOUGHEED:

Mr. Speaker, the answer to that is no.

MR. CLARK:

Will there be continuing negotiations between the Prime Minister and the Premier on an eyeball-to-eyeball basis so that in fact this does happen and there is an agreement in Alberta's interest before the end of March?

MR. LOUGHEED:

Mr. Speaker, I would anticipate it, unless he took umbrage at the fact that I made off with his father-in-law's coat.

MR. CLARK:

In the interests of better federal-provincial relations, I suggest you get the darn thing back.

[Laughter]

MR. LOUGHEED:

Mr. Speaker, I have.

MR. DIXON:

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask a supplementary question on the same subject, of the hon. the Premier. My question is: in reference to Prime Minister Trudeau's statements that regardless of whether or not they get an oil deal with Alberta he is going to go forward with an industrial plan for western Canada, what is the oil deal that the Prime Minister is attempting to get from us?

MR. LOUGHEED:

Mr. Speaker, I think that is a matter of discussion between the Prime Minister and myself and I don't think there is anything I could usefully say to the members at this time. But if and when any understanding is reached, I'll be happy to advise the hon. members.

MR. LUDWIG:

Supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Perhaps we might have one final supplementary on this topic by the hon. Member for Calgary Mountain View and then go on to the next question.

MR. LUDWIG:

Mr. Speaker, while the hon. Premier ran off with Trudeau's coat, did Trudeau run off with his shirt, by any means?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Oh, oh!

MR. DIXON:

Mr. Speaker, ...

MR. SPEAKER:

In view of the fact that that was not a supplementary, perhaps we might have one from the hon. Member for Calgary Millican.

MR. DIXON:

Mr. Speaker, we are on a very serious subject and I would like to repeat another question to the Premier regarding oil rather than overcoats.

My question is: are the federal government's demands unrealistic in your view? Is that the reason no agreement can be reached?

MR. LOUGHEED:

Mr. Speaker, they are ongoing discussions. I anticipate hearing from the Prime Minister by telephone today or Monday. We will be having ongoing discussions, I don't imagine they will be concluding even in the month of March. The nature of the situation is one that probably will be with us for an extensive period of time. When I am able to, I certainly will keep the hon. members advised.

MR. CLARK:

In light of the answer which the Premier just gave, could I ask one further supplementary question. Has then the Province of Alberta agreed to a continuation of the price freeze past the end of March?

MR. LOUGHEED:

Mr. Speaker, the answer to that is no.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Propane Price

MR. R. SPEAKER:

Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Telephones and Utilities. What action does the government intend to take to reduce the propane price, now that the amendment with regard to propane pricing has been proclaimed?

MR. FARRAN:

Mr. Speaker, the whole question of propane prices now is one for the Public Utilities Board which is a semi ... autonomous body. It doesn't come directly under me so far as setting prices is concerned.

MR. R. SPEAKER:

Mr. Speaker, supplementary to the minister. Have the propane wholesalers cooperated with the government to this point? And if not, which propane wholesalers have not?

MR. FARRAN:

Mr. Speaker, the cooperation from producers, so far as a voluntary rollback is concerned, was a hundred per cent.

MR. LUDWIG:

Was the rollback voluntary or was it after the minister threatened to impose legislation? Which of the two was the cause of the rollback?

MR. FARRAN:

Mr. Speaker, the rollback was as a result of a request by the hon. Premier to the major producing companies.

Propane Prices - Consumer Groups Subsidies

MR. NOTLEY:

Can the hon. minister advise the House whether or not, now that the bill has been proclaimed, consumer groups will be fully subsidized when making appearances before the board on the price policy?

MR. FARRAN:

Mr. Speaker, I don't envisage that the Public Utilities Board will have to carry out lengthy hearings in the nature of the public hearings which are usually done for big rate increases for the power utilities. I believe that they will be very ready to listen to any submissions from consumer groups but there won't be any necessity for them to sit in isolated splendour in a courthouse. They can judge the justness and reasonableness of prices on an area-by-area basis.

MR. NOTLEY:

A further supplementary question for clarification. In light of the fact that it does cost money to make presentations and to prepare briefs, my point is: has the government given any consideration to underwriting the cost to consumer groups which might want to make submissions - albeit the submissions will not be on the same scale vis-a-vis the

electrical hearings - but will there be any commitment on the part of the government to underwrite the cost to consumer groups making submissions?

MR. FARRAN:

No, Mr. Speaker, I don't believe it is necessary.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Spirit River ...

Propane Price (Cont.)

MR. TAYLOR:

Mr. Speaker, to the hon. minister. The bill provides that the cabinet instructs the Board of Public Utility Commissioners to study and to order a price on propane. In those instructions will there be anything of a retroactive nature?

MR. FARRAN:

No, Mr. Speaker, the powers of the Public Utilities Board under The Gas Utilities Amendment Act, 1973, begin as of the date of proclamation of the Act.

MR. TAYLOR:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Has the hon. minister any idea when the board will be giving a ruling on the price of propane and when that will become effective?

MR. FARRAN:

Mr. Speaker, the board has immediate responsibility in this field and was in fact already examining complaints about high prices of propane and will continue to do this. They will, as fast as physical limitations of a board of eight people are concerned, be examining the prevailing price of propane in all areas in Alberta.

DR. PAPROSKI:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. I wonder if the hon. minister would indicate to the House, again, how many individual people will be assisted by this rollback?

AN HON. MEMBER:

A good question.

MR. FARRAN:

Mr. Speaker, a rough estimate of the number of Albertans who use propane for heating fuel would be about 200,000.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

IPSCO, Alberta Option

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 hon. Premier advise the House when we can expect a formal announcement with respect to the proposed 20 per cent Alberta option in the Interprovincial Pipe and Steel Corporation?

MR. PEACOCK:

Mr. Speaker, at this time we have made no decision. The option is open. Because of the complexity of the issue I am suggesting that I will be speaking to it in the debate on the Throne Speech, and at that time I will be filing some documentation including the philosophy and the option itself.

MR. NOTLEY:

Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question. Has any discussion taken place between the Alberta government and the principals of IPSCO regarding the feasibility of developing the Clear Hills iron ore deposits as a part of that proposition?

MR. PEACOCK:

Yes, Mr. Speaker. For that reason, and for further questions to that, I felt it would be in the best interests of the House and in the public interest of Albertans to have a full discussion on the issue of steel in Alberta, including the IPSCO option and the development of our natural resources in the Peace River, and the Peace River iron ore deposits. We have had some discussions.

MR. NOTLEY:

Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question. Can the hon. minister advise the Assembly whether or not the principals of IPSCO were favourable to the proposition of including the Clear Hills iron ore development in their overall proposition?

MR. PEACOCK:

Mr. Speaker, as I suggested, because of the complexity of the problem, first of all that the resource reserves of this iron ore in the Peace River have not been proven as being economically feasible and the technology has not been developed to use these iron ore deposits at this time, discussions which have taken place and the intent of the government with regard to the development of these resources can be better understood when we have a fuller and better opportunity to explain the whole issue.

MR. SPEAKER:

We have had a considerable number of supplementaries to most of the question and we have a considerable list of questioners still to be reached. Perhaps we might have a final supplementary on this one from the hon. Member for Calgary Millican.

MR. DIXON:

Yes, Mr. Speaker. I would like to direct a question to the minister regarding IPSCO and the future of the large steel plant in Calgary.

Is the change of ownership going to affect that plant in any way? In other words, are they planning to close it down? What is the situation of the large pipe plant in Calgary at the present time?

MR. PEACOCK:

Mr. Speaker, I suppose the hon. member is referring to Big Inch in Calgary. When the assets of the German company, Thyssen, were taken over in part by IPSCO, the Big Inch was given - or at least IPSCO undertook a management contract for Big Inch for some five years. At this time there is no decision as to what will be done with the Big Inch pipeline facility in Calgary, except, I might add for the information of the House, that as a facility Big Inch in Calgary has been very, very unprofitable since its inception.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Edmonton Kingsway followed by the hon. Member for Cypress.

World Football League

DR. PAPROSKI:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A question to the hon. Minister of Culture, Youth and Recreation. I wonder if the minister would be so kind as to inform the House what is the government's position regarding the proposed World Football League?

MR. SCHMID:

Mr. Speaker, a cable of protest has been sent by the ministers responsible for recreation in western Canada to the Minister of National Health and Welfare regarding the World Football League.

DR. PAPROSKI:

What did the cable say?

MR. SCHMID:

The cable stated that the ministers responsible for recreation in western Canada are against the setting up of another football league in Canada, especially being influenced, of course, by decisions made in the United States.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Land Use Forum

MR. STROM:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct my question to the hon. Minister of Municipal Affairs. I wonder if the hon. minister could advise the House if the land use forum, headed by Dr. Wood, has been given any date on which to have its work completed?

MR. RUSSELL:

Mr. Speaker, the land use forum has set some interim objective dates, if I could put it that way. The last time we met with them, there were a number of research studies and fact-finding assignments that they thought would be necessary and useful to them in order to carry out effective public hearings. A variety of those studies is now under way by a series of consultants throughout Alberta. If the hon. member would like, I could get the proposed schedule of those dates, which are the first important ones, and I would be glad to file it for the benefit of the members.

MR. STROM:

Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question. Is the government giving any consideration to introducing any legislation governing land use prior to the completion of the studies, or any phase of the studies relating to any particular facet of land use?

MR. RUSSELL:

To the best of my ability to look forward, Mr. Speaker, I would say the answer is no. It is becoming increasingly apparent that the results of the land use forum - and of course I think it is obvious that public input into that is important - and whatever legislation is embodied in the new planning act which is now under discussion throughout Alberta, should probably go forward together.

MR. STROM:

Mr. Speaker, if I may ask another question in relation to the makeup of the committee. It is my understanding that Dr. Arnold Platt is a member of the land use forum. He is also, is he not ...? Fine then, Mr. Speaker, I will hold my question.

MR. R. SPEAKER:

Mr. Speaker, a supplementary to the minister. Is the government considering a land-freeze policy while the land-use committee is working?

MR. RUSSELL:

No, Mr. Speaker. That is not under consideration.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Institute of Law Research and Reform

MR. FRENCH:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct a question to the hon. Solicitor General. Has the Institute of Law Research and Reform completed the study of the division of matrimonial property following divorce?

MISS HUNLEY:

Mr. Speaker, the Institute of Law Research and Reform have, of course, tabled or published their five-year report. But they are doing the final proofreading of their working paper on the one which is of such interest to us, the family law and division of property. As soon as the final proof is completed, it will be printed and widely circulated with a request for a reaction from the public.

They anticipate having about two months of public comments, then they will review it and hopefully they will have, before fall, some proposed reform legislation recommendations to make to the government. So I can see daylight ahead on this very important study. I am feeling very optimistic, Mr. Speaker, that by fall we may have some of this legislation that we have been so long awaiting.

MR. FRENCH:

Supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the answer.

Has there been any indication from the institute as to when the initial report or interim report will be received? You indicated that the report would be available and then there would be public reaction. I am wondering when the report will be received before we can ask for public reaction?

MISS HUNLEY:

The only information I have is that they are doing the final proofreading and they expect it to be finished within a matter of days. It will then be printed and distributed. Of course I don't have the exact time frame in which they work since the institute more or less works under its own scheduling.

MR. FRENCH:

Final supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Would it be a fair question to ask whether the report will be tabled in the Legislature when it is available, if we are in session?

MISS HUNLEY:

As far as I am concerned, Mr. Speaker, I would be very anxious to have it tabled here. I would have to take the matter under advisement to be sure that I am able to do so.

MR. RUSTE:

Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the minister. Is there a possibility of that two-month period falling in July and August, when many people are away on holiday and wouldn't be able to react to it as they should?

MISS HUNLEY:

Well, I can't guarantee what the Institute of Law Research and Reform will be doing as far as their time frame goes. Certainly it would be to the interest of us all to be sure that it was widely circulated and reacted to. Otherwise, why bother?

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Eastern Slopes Proposals

MR. BENOIT:

My question, Mr. Speaker, is in two parts. One is addressed to the Minister of the Environment and the other to the Minister of Municipal Affairs.

I am wondering if the government is prepared to give the Legislature a timetable as to when action can be expected with regard to the eastern slopes hearings?

MR. YURKO:

Mr. Speaker, the Environment Conservation Authority is working diligently on its final recommendations and its final report. This report will be submitted toward the end of August of this year if no delay is encountered. Subsequent to that report - and of course even before the report - the government is working and considering various possible policy alternatives. The Minister of Lands and Forests is very involved in considering some of these alternatives.

MR. BENOIT:

The other part, Mr. Speaker, is with regard to the proposed new planning act. Can we expect the new act to be introduced during the spring portion of the session?

MR. RUSSELL:

Well, Mr. Speaker, the covering letter that went out with the proposed discussion paper asked that comments be back by June 30. There has already been some indication that there will be an extension requested to that deadline, and I think we would be agreeable to that.

Following that, of course, we would want to assess the response to the discussion document. So I wouldn't expect a new planning act to be put before the members this year.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Cattle Feeding

MR. MANDEVILLE:

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct my question to the hon. Minister of Agriculture. What consideration is the government giving to assisting the cattle feeding industry with the problem it is facing with the high cost of feed and low beef prices?

DR. HORNER:

Mr. Speaker, with your indulgence, the question will require an answer that has to cover a little bit of ground. The very serious situation the cattle feeder in Alberta has encountered and has been in for indeed several months ...

MR. SPEAKER:

In view of the kindness of the minister in indicating that the answer may be of some length, may I ask the House whether it wishes to have the answer now or would prefer to suggest to the minister that it be made on Orders of the Day?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Now. Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER:

The consensus is that the hon. minister might proceed now with it.

DR. HORNER:

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I did want to point out to all hon. members the very serious situation that the cattle feeder is in in Alberta - indeed the entire livestock industry - because of a serious imbalance within the industry itself, having regard to feed grains and livestock. A great deal of this imbalance has been caused by federal policies with which we have no sympathy whatsoever, particularly the interim feed grain policy which has had a substantial impact on feeders in this country.

In addition to that, the federal - and indeed United States' - government's interference with the cattle industry, is now backing up and causing serious price problems in Canada. The very great number of cattle now coming particularly into Eastern Canada for slaughter has caused serious situations.

We have made representations to the federal government on numerous occasions. As a matter of fact, we have been in almost constant contact with them, hoping we might get an announcement out of Ottawa in the immediate future. There is some indication that that announcement might come today, which, it is hoped, would substantially help the feeding industry in Alberta.

MR. NOTLEY:

Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question then. Can the hon. minister advise the Assembly whether any consideration has been given to the feasibility of a provincial floor price?

DR. HORNER:

Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm sure the hon. member would appreciate that we are part of a federation in which interprovincial trade is one of those things that has to be moving freely. We as a province surely can't be asked to put a floor price on a commodity and then support the entire North American market. I would suggest to the honourable gentleman that what we really require is some federal leadership in this field which we have been asking for for two and one-half years.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Lacombe with a supplementary.

MR. COOKSON:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker, to the minister. Has your department done any monitoring to indicate whether there has been any reflection in the drop of beef prices to the consumers following the spectacular drop at the farm level?

DR. HCRNER:

Yes, Mr. Speaker, through the marketing section, my department does monitor prices on the retail basis. We have had several meetings with the packing and processing industry in Alberta. In fairness, Mr. Speaker, if hon. members who are knowledgeable will review particularly the pork prices of the last two weeks, they will find that our processing industry here has maintained a very close relationship to the Toronto market. In fact, that spread has been less than usual.

I want to say publicly that the reaction of our processors has been an extremely good one to date and we hope that they would continue that.

MR. MANDEVILLE:

Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the hon. minister. Has his department taken a survey of the number of feeders who will not be able to continue feeding operations in the future?

DR. HCRNER:

No, Mr. Speaker, not directly. We do have some information, of course, with regard to the feeder associations operating within Alberta.

I might say that it is my view that we'll see a substantial number of those cattle being turned out to graze and fatten in that way rather than [industry] continuing to pay the high cost of feed grain. In the long run, Mr. Speaker, all Albertans should be aware that this process may, in fact, cause higher prices because of the situation we are in today.

MR. CLARK:

A supplementary question to the Minister of Agriculture. Has the Department of Agriculture carried out studies regarding slaughter in the province, of female animals that are in calf, and the effects it will have on the cow-calf operation and, in fact, feeder stocking in the next year or two?

DR. HORNER:

Well, that is part of the overall study, Mr. Speaker, that goes on continuously in relation to trying to be on top, knowing how many feeder cattle we might have available to go on feed in relation to the cow slaughter. There has been an increased cow slaughter in the past several months, reflecting the uncertainties in the industry.

MR. SPEAKER:

We still have a long list to cover and it is doubtful that we're going to finish. Perhaps we could come back to this topic if we have more time, or else revert to it next day.

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

Alberta Human Rights Commission

MR. WILSON:

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct a question to the hon. the Premier. Can the Premier advise if it is the intention of the government to have the Alberta Human Rights Commission report directly to the cabinet, as recently requested by the Edmonton Social Planning Council Task Force: Women in the Alberta Labour Force?

MR. LOUGHEED:

Mr. Speaker, we haven't given it any specific consideration at this time. At the moment it is reporting to the Minister of Manpower and Labour, having regard to any questions that might come up and that, of course, has been a practice we followed in a sense through some period of time. But it is not something on which we have any firm position and we'd be prepared to give it further thought.

MR. WILSON:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker, to the hon. Minister of Manpower and Labour. Can the minister advise what steps have been taken regarding the implementation of industry-affirmative action programs as requested by the Edmonton Social Planning Council Task Force?

DR. HOHOL:

Mr. Speaker, I had some difficulty with the arrangement of three or four words there in the question. I think the gentleman also had some difficulty with those words.

AN HCN. MEMBER:

Speak for yourself.

DR. HOHOL:

I've made a commitment to study the report in detail this weekend. I have read it, but will be prepared to make a more definitive statement on Monday. It is a lengthy and important document which reached my desk only last Friday and I've made a commitment to study it over this weekend and be prepared to speak next week.

MR. WILSON:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker, to the hon. Minister of Education. Can the minister advise what action has been taken with regard to the Edmonton Social Planning Council request for the release of the report entitled "Sex Stereotyping in Textbooks"?

MR. HYNDMAN:

We are considering it very actively at the moment. We have been doing a good deal, as a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, over the last year in this particular area.

[Interjections]

MR. WILSON:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker, to the hon. Solicitor General. Can the minister advise if the Women's Bureau will be assuming responsibility for actively forwarding the principles of equal pay and job opportunities for women, as requested by the Edmonton Social Planning Council Task Force?

MISS HUNLEY:

Mr. Speaker, I am impressed by the impression the hon. member has about the Director of the Women's Bureau. She is very actively monitoring and working with various government agencies, employers, and the provincial government in an attempt to equalize pay - which occasionally crops up as a problem - also to encourage women to seek opportunities which are available to them and to encourage industry and the government in this very capable source of supply to the labour force.

MR. WILSON:

A supplementary to the hon. Solicitor General, Mr. Speaker. Can the minister advise if she has had an opportunity to read the recent report of the Edmonton Social Planning Council Task Force?

MISS HUNLEY:

No, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Child's Death - Bonnyville

MR. DIXON:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct a question to the hon. Minister of Health and Social Development. The question is in reference to the recent death of an Indian child in the Bonnyville area, apparently after being refused admittance to the Bonnyville Hospital, and the charges by the Native people of discrimination in the medical and hospital field in the area.

What plan or action is going to be taken by the department to investigate this case and the particular charges of the Native people?

MR. CRAWFORD:

Mr. Speaker, as to an actual investigation, I would say first to the hon. member that quite a bit of information was collected as soon as that incident was drawn to my attention.

I think that at the present time we should note that the Provincial Coroner is looking into the matter. So far as I know he has not yet reported. Therefore, in respect to the matter surrounding the death of the child I think any information offered to the House would have to await that report.

But on the question of whether or not the human rights of the child may have been violated by some act of either the doctor or the hospital at Bonnyville, the indications I have up to the present time are that that is not so. However, I would certainly want to encourage those involved to take the matter to the Human Rights Commission.

I should point out just one statistic, Mr. Speaker. The actual percentage of Natives in the area I do not have. It is perhaps in the nature of, say, not more than 10 per cent. Yet hospital admissions for the three hospitals in the area, including the one in question at Bonnyville, run at about 40 to 42 per cent Native admissions as compared to white. So the suggestion there could be discrimination, when you have figures like that, is rather hard to find.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Alberta Housing Corporation Mortgages

MR. LUDWIG:

Mr. Speaker, my question is to the hon. Minister of Municipal Affairs. Has there been any improvement in the processing of Alberta Housing Corporation mortgages as compared to last year when there appeared to be an undue delay in processing these mortgages?

MR. RUSSELL:

Yes, I believe there has, Mr. Speaker. It is important to review what happened last year. Members will recall in the middle of the summer, without prior consultation or warning of any kind, the federal agency, CMHC, raised its lending rate. Notwithstanding that, the Alberta Housing Corporation attempted to hold steady its rate and, of course, this had the anticipated result that we were literally flooded with applications.

The government responded by adding an additional \$22 million to the mortgage funds available. We were able, by keeping all those people who had applied waiting a longer period than normal, to give them mortgages at the old rates. I think this was very beneficial to them, but that was an unique situation. The net result was a benefit to those many thousands of applicants, and I would expect that the routine administrative procedures will be much smoother this coming year.

MR. LUDWIG:

Mr. Speaker, who selects the solicitor who handles the mortgage, the client or Alberta Housing?

MR. RUSSELL:

That's laid out in the lending regulations which are given to each applicant, Mr. Speaker.

MR. LUDWIG:

Supplementary to the hon. minister. Did he lay out to the Alberta Housing officials as to which solicitors ought to be put on the list to process mortgages for applicants?

MR. RUSSELL:

Mr. Speaker, there is a great variety of legal firms available throughout Alberta which do this work.

MR. LUDWIG:

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to repeat the question. Did the minister advise the ...

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. member is not entitled to repeat a question. The hon. minister isn't obliged to reply to the question.

MR. LUDWIG:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Who selects the lawyers who process Alberta Housing mortgages? Do you, personally, or who does?

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please. Will the hon. member address the Chair.

The Chair has the impression that that is actually a repetition of a previous question.

MR. LUDWIG:

Yes, Mr. Speaker, but it's a very proper question and no answer has been given.

MR. DIXON:

Mr. Speaker, I wonder if I could ask a supplementary question. Is there ...

MR. LUDWIG:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. If the question is embarrassing, let the minister say it's embarrassing. I asked him a question and he ducked it.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Order, order.

MR. DIXON:

Mr. Speaker, I think I can ask a question directly of the minister. Is there a list of lawyers supplied by the Alberta Housing Corporation, an actual list that can go out?

MR. RUSSELL:

Yes, there is, Mr. Speaker.

MR. LUDWIG:

Supplementary, did you supply that list?

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please. Would the hon. member address the Chair, please.

MR. LUDWIG:

Yes, Mr. Speaker. Did the honourable, sophisticated minister supply a ...

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please.

MR. LUDWIG:

... list to the Alberta Housing Corporation as to which lawyers ought to be selected to do the Alberta Housing mortgages?

MR. SPEAKER:

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

MR. NOTLEY:

Mr. Speaker, could I pose a supplementary question?

MR. SPEAKER:

We've had a considerable number of supplementaries and attempts at them. I think we should get on to the next topic.

Federal Immigration Policy

MR. STROMBEFG:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is directed to the hon. the Premier. Has the government received the green paper on immigration, supposedly forwarded to the provinces for their input by the Minister of Manpower and Immigration, Robert Andras?

MR. LOUGHEED:

Mr. Speaker, my information is that we haven't actually received the document. We're aware of it and aware of its general nature and we will be reviewing it. Certainly in this province we have some considerable concern today because of the extensive opportunities that are available and the shortage of skilled people in the province. And that, of course, places a responsibility on our administration in the area of training and manpower. We recognize and accept it.

MR. STROMBERG:

Supplementary, Mr. Speaker, to the Minister of Agriculture. Will this have any impact on farm labour?

DR. HORNBER:

I could only add, Mr. Speaker, that the situation on farms in the coming year is going to be critical in regard to labour. We will have to use all the resources we possibly can to get the production that's going to be required, including our student program and, indeed, an immigration program if it would suit that particular area.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Suffield Block

MR. WYSE:

My question, Mr. Speaker, is to the hon. Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs. It's regarding the federal government's announcement to close down the defence research station at Suffield and transfer to Winnipeg.

My question is: did the federal and provincial governments have any discussion on this matter prior to the announcement which was made, I believe, on February 22?

MR. GETTY:

Mr. Speaker, in the course of the various discussions held regarding the Suffield defence base, and the use of the Suffield base for exploration of natural gas, there has been some discussion of that matter.

MR. WYSE:

A supplementary question Mr. Speaker. Since the announcement, has the provincial government asked the federal authorities to reconsider their decision to transfer to Winnipeg?

MR. GETTY:

No, Mr. Speaker, we have not.

MR. WYSE:

One supplementary question then. Will the provincial government make this request and when will it be done?

MR. GETTY:

Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member would be able to provide me with the reasons why we might do that, we would certainly give consideration to doing it.

MR. WYSE:

What is the current status of negotiations then, between the federal and provincial governments regarding transferring the surface rights of the Suffield Block back to the Province of Alberta?

MR. GETTY:

Mr. Speaker, the matter of the actual transfer of the surface back to the government is merely in abeyance. However the government has been able to establish that it will be able to carry on the exploratory drilling program over the next two years necessary to evaluate and develop the Suffield Block. I might say the federal government has been very cooperative on this matter.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order please. We've had about four questions on this topic now.

The hon. Member for Wainwright followed by the hon. Member for Sedgewick-Coronation.

Fertilizer Supply

MR. RUSTE:

Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Agriculture and, if I may be permitted, just a comment before it. This relates to information received this morning from one delivery point in my constituency where, with the exception of 11-48-0 fertilizer, some 740 tons have been ordered with only 237 received or promised.

My question is: what is the government doing to see that adequate supplies of fertilizer are made available in view of the request for increased production?

DR. HERNER:

Mr. Speaker, the whole question of fertilizer production and availability has to be taken in the proper context.

My understanding, from meetings with the industry, is that there will be a substantial increase in the amount of fertilizer that is available in Alberta this year. On the other hand the amount farmers may wish to use has increased more than that. I think there will be a tight fertilizer supply situation this year. I think that our farmers and our people generally must appreciate that in some of these areas there are going to be tight supply situations. We have asked the farm organizations to work with our department in monitoring and, indeed, in trying to secure supplies from other sources in some of these areas.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Sedgewick-Coronation followed by the hon. Member for Drumheller.

Livestock Feed Supply

MR. SORENSON:

Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Agriculture. I am wondering about the livestock feed situation in the province and if there has been a sharp rise in livestock deaths due to starvation.

DR. HORNER:

Mr. Speaker, my information from the department is that I would suggest we've had some difficulty in the northern areas because of the deterioration of the quality of the feed in those areas and there has been some increase in deaths from malnutrition. We're suggesting to those people ... we are making available high protein pellets. If they contact their district agriculturists we can make additional supplies available on a cost basis.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Drumheller followed by the hon. Member for Smoky River.

Freight Rates

MR. TAYLOR:

Thank you Mr. Speaker. My question is to the hon. Premier. At the western conference the Government of Canada promised to supply the Government of Alberta with the actual costs of freight in Canada. Has the Government of Canada yet complied with that request?

MR. LOUGHEED:

Mr. Speaker, I would refer that question to the hon. Minister of Industry and Commerce.

MR. PEACOCK:

Mr. Speaker, I'm afraid I was writing and I wonder if the hon. member would repeat the question please?

MR. TAYLOR:

My question to the hon. minister is: has the Government of Canada yet supplied the Government of Alberta with costs in regard to freight, as it promised at the western conference in Calgary?

MR. PEACOCK:

Mr. Speaker, they have not and Mr. Marchand has informed the railroads, as well as the CTC, that this must be forthcoming and a decision is to be made. We are having a meeting on Wednesday of this week in Vancouver in which the status of the situation and cost exposure will be fully discussed and explained at that time.

MR. TAYLOR:

A supplementary to the hon. minister. Will the actual cost of the Crowsnest rate be included, or has this been requested?

MR. PEACOCK:

Mr. Speaker, that isn't one of the specifics in relation to the cost. The 22 anomalies and the 6 specifics related to coal movement from Alberta to Thunder Bay, coal movement from Alberta to Vancouver, and covered also potash and beef, but did not cover grains.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Smoky River.

Ore Extraction Contract

MR. MOORE:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the hon. Minister of Industry and Commerce regarding a contract which was awarded by the Alberta Research Council for extraction of ore from the Clear Hills area of Alberta.

Why was the contract awarded without being advertised, and would it be the practice of the research council to award contracts in the future without the opportunity of advertisement and tender by local firms?

MR. PEACOCK:

Mr. Speaker, first of all, it isn't the intent for the research council or this government to award contracts generally without tendering.

However, in this particular instance we were experiencing a problem with regard to the spring breakup. We had to move fairly quickly. It was just a sampling proposition with regard to the first move in the development of the Peace River iron ore deposits. What was necessary in order for us to progress with our research for the year 1974, was to have some deep-imbedded samples from this area. It had to be done in a time frame of some 30 days or some similar short period of time.

As a result, the samplings had to be in deep and, unfortunately in relation to the problem at least, they couldn't be exposed to oxidation so they had to be drummed. The expertise to do this particular job happened to be in Edmonton. They had had some experience with [the samplings] before, so they undertook to give this small contract to get these samples out of the Peace River to the Kiss Construction Company on the understanding that the personnel, the supplies and the equipment, to the maximum extent, would be taken from the area in which the samplings would be taken. That, I understand, is under way.

MR. NOTLEY:

Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the hon. minister. Can the minister assure the House that in any future contracts for further investigation and exploration in the area, local firms will be given an opportunity to tender on any work involved?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. minister has actually answered that question in his opening statement and the time for the question period has run out.

ORDERS OF THE DAYCONSIDERATION OF HIS HONOUR THE LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR'S SPEECH

Dr. McCrimmon proposed the following motion to the Assembly, seconded by Mr. Ashton:

That an humble address be presented to His Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant-Governor of Alberta as follows:

To His Honour the Hon. J. W. Grant MacEwan:

"Lieutenant-Governor of the Province of Alberta:

"We, Her Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Legislative Assembly, now assembled, beg leave to thank Your Honour for the gracious speech Your Honour has been pleased to address to us at the opening of the present session."

DR. MCCRIMMON:

Mr. Speaker, at this time I would like to thank the Premier for the opportunity to move this Speech from the Throne of the Third Session of the Seventeenth Legislature of the Province of Alberta. It is an honour appreciated by myself and by my constituents.

As we enter phase three of this government's administration, it can clearly be seen from the Throne Speech that the programs initiated and developed in the first two sessions will be followed and refined during this coming session.

Phases one and two were directed toward making life more secure and comfortable for our senior citizens, injured workers, the handicapped, the mentally ill and retarded, and the development of programs for preserving the developing of the family farm. The encouragement of young people to follow this as a way of life has been successful to a considerable degree in that the trend of our young population from rural to urban centres has been reversed. Over the past year, our farm population increased by roughly 8,000 people. Farm income has been raised, opportunities for young farmers to become established or expand have been offered by this government through the Agricultural Development Corporation. I am pleased to see, as a rural representative, that this corporation has been allotted an additional \$50 million. I feel that no sounder investment can be made by this province than in the land of this province.

I note with pleasure a further commitment by the government to rural natural gas expansion, extended area telephone service, rural electrification expansion, follow-up of the secondary road programs and rural road oiling programs, as well as the hard-surfacing of roads in smaller towns and villages. I feel that the combination of these programs will stabilize the base of agriculture in Alberta and assist in making the amenities of rural living closer to those of our urban neighbours.

As phase three is now well under way, with continued emphasis on the follow-up of social programs developed and enlarged since 1971, firm establishment of the Bill of Rights and The Individual's Rights Protection Act, I feel that in Alberta the rights of the less fortunate, the minority groups, the handicapped, the mentally ill and retarded, have been protected here as nowhere else in North America.

Mr. Speaker, I would like now to speak for a few moments on that subject which has been in the limelight in Canada and in particular in Alberta, for the past six months - energy.

More and more over the past few years, and in particular the past year, the attention of Canadians and indeed all of North America has focussed on Alberta, the energy base of Canada, with its oil, tar sands, natural gas and coal.

As a follow-up to the legislation enacted at the December, 1973, energy session, the amendments to the Alberta Petroleum Marketing Act and other amendments to oil and natural gas legislation will reinforce our position as to the rights of our province, under the BNA Act and the Natural Resources Transfer Act of 1930, to the natural resources which are the birthright of all Albertans. There is no doubt that the present federal government regrets the fact that the provinces control and own their own natural resources, and indeed, in the case of Alberta, has done nearly everything in its power to remove that right of control.

It is probable that the federal government has considerable support in Central and Eastern Canada for the interference and controls that have been imposed on Alberta. And why not? Central and Eastern Canada have enjoyed the lowest fuel rates of any place in North America during the past winter, paid for directly by the citizens of this province. That further differences will arise on the question of energy between the federal government and the Province of Alberta, I do not think there is any doubt. However, the stand the Premier and government have taken is backed solidly by the people of this province with but very few exceptions.

Mr. Speaker, with the legislation at our disposal and the firm commitment of the government in the Speech from the Throne - to bring industries to the source of supply - the potential for diversification and development of industry in Alberta has never been greater. We must, when the opportunity is here, remove ourselves from the dependence on a two-industry system, oil and gas and agriculture, and with the broadening of this industrial base the stability of the provincial economy will be less subject to the boom and bust concept that unfortunately has been the history of the West.

Probably the greatest step towards the development of this concept is well on the way to being achieved with the construction in sight of the first major petrochemical development in the West. We hope that it is the first of many. If you will read carefully the Speech from the Throne, you will see that the legislation to be proposed and that which has been enacted has behind it the basic concept of an Alberta with a sound industrial base; where our raw materials are processed within our boundaries to finished products wherever possible; the holding and continuation of our agricultural leadership, and the supplying of energy in its processed form wherever possible to Alberta, to Canada, and to the United States.

Mr. Speaker, it was clearly brought out at the oil hearings held in this room two years ago that only a portion of Alberta oil and natural gas had been discovered, an estimated 50 to 60 per cent. Yet most of the easy finds have been made and the cost of

finding new gas and oil becomes more expensive and more difficult, particularly with the deeper tests required for the eastern slopes of the Rockies.

The new exploratory drilling programs should keep the rigs drilling in Alberta, in spite of the competitive situation for their services in the United States. With foresight and planning as outlined, we should not find ourselves with a dropping-off of exploratory drilling in Alberta, as has been the case in our neighbouring provinces.

Mr. Speaker, the recent announcement of the 'go ahead' of Syncrude and the announced "Statement of Guidelines" for future oil sands development in Canada and Alberta clarifies the situation for those who wish to invest in this natural resource development, whether it be private enterprise, other provinces or indeed other nations. But at the same time the interests of Alberta and the citizens of Alberta are covered and protected.

The anticipation of massive development in northern Alberta makes timely the new planning authority for northern Alberta in the oil sands area. That new towns and cities and general area development will come rapidly and explosively I do not think there is any doubt. But this pattern of rapid development must be regulated and controlled so that the plants, towns, cities, roads, schools and social and recreational needs can be brought about in an orderly fashion, and the mistakes of other industrial boom areas in our North America can be avoided. Let us learn in this regard from the mistakes of others.

The announcement of an Alberta Oil Sands Technology and Research Authority Act, to be introduced with the expenditure of \$100 million over the next five years, is appreciated. It must be kept in mind that President Nixon has announced that the United States will be self-sufficient in energy by 1980, and they are already directing their vast potential in this direction as has already been shown in their recent budget.

The basic North American competitor of our oil sands development is not the conventional sources of oil, but the vast shale deposits of the United States. So that now it becomes a race - a race based on technology and research - for the most rapid and effective breakthrough for the oil shale deposits of the United States or the deep deposits of the oil sands of Alberta.

Some say that \$100 million is a vast sum to risk. It is, but the rewards are great. And if Alberta does not take the initiative on its own, who will? Surely not the federal government. It is only by a scientific breakthrough that we can get the additional hundreds of billions of barrels of oil that rest in the deeper tar sand beds of the province.

Mr. Speaker, I would like now to speak for a few moments on that heading in the Throne Speech, Opportunity for Citizen Participation. The Alberta Energy Company Act and the Alberta Resources Growth Company open the door for a whole new field of participation and investment for Alberta citizens. Although on two occasions in the past Alberta has had an opportunity to invest in a limited way in the Alberta Gas Trunk Line and the Great Canadian Oil Sands, never before have Albertans had the opportunity to invest in Alberta natural resources development, where the control of that investment will always be in Alberta, in conjunction with their own elected government.

For 50 years Albertans have invested and risked their capital in the oil resources of Alberta, ever since the first days of the Turner Valley field. Some companies have survived since those early days, but of course, many have not. But in nearly every case, in the early days it was Albertans who risked and participated in Alberta's oil resources and kept the exploration and interest alive. Certainly eastern Canada showed no interest until the major strikes were made.

With the enactment of the Alberta energy company act, Alberta citizens will have the opportunity to participate with their government in our own development. Thus, those who own the resource will develop the resource. Capital is needed and I believe that Albertans will respond with that needed capital to develop the Suffield Block, own a part of Syncrude and the pipeline and power station that will service Syncrude. In this way our people will have a double stake, through their own investment and being citizens of Alberta, and with the knowledge that the control will always remain in Alberta.

Mr. Speaker, the Alberta natural gas rebate act is welcome legislation to our citizens. The commitment by this government to strive for fair value in the market for our natural gas, yet keeping the cost to our own people to a minimum - clearly the advantages to small industry and business to come to Alberta are obvious under this act.

However, it is the first time that Alberta has had an opportunity to give an incentive to small business and industry to offset the roadblocks that have been established for many years by discriminatory freight rates and tariffs imposed by the federal government.

Mr. Speaker, during the 1971 election a promise was made to the electors by the present Conservative government, that the education tax on property would be removed. In 1971 a task force was formed which worked on this complex problem for a year and submitted

its report to the government. This report was implemented in 1973, in part, to the limit of the government's financial capabilities at that time.

That the education tax on property will be removed in full in 1974 will be a source of pride to all of us who made this promise three years ago. We are pleased that the government is in a position to absorb the additional \$22 million of cost, which will be returned to the property owners and renters of Alberta and remove from the rural and urban municipalities this whole form of complex tax assessment and collection.

Mr. Speaker, it is realized by all that one of the major concerns of the people of this province is inflation and the cost of living. All of us understand that the international and national problems of inflation are beyond the control of this government. But the impact of this inflation affects our citizens in all walks of life. The new programs in the Throne Speech will help. The removal of the \$15 deductible under the Blue Cross, the implementation of the health care insurance subsidy, the Property Tax Reduction Plan, the natural gas rebate act and the other programs help. But whether this will be enough, if the trend continues, remains to be seen. Perhaps further assistance in other forms may have to be considered if the financial position of the province can absorb these extra burdens.

I would like to emphasize one point with regard to our senior citizens. The announcement that 12 new senior citizens lodges will be built and 750 units of self-contained accommodation will be erected this year means an additional 2,000 of our senior citizens will be living in dignity and comfort with people of their own age and interests. I sincerely hope, Mr. Speaker, that in years to come this emphasis to make life more comfortable and happy for those who founded this province is continued.

Mr. Speaker, to return to my own constituency: Ponoka and Rimbey are in the heart of the cattle raising area, and a great many of the feedlot operators and cattlemen are presently in a very precarious position. The rapid rise in the cost of feed grains and the drop in the price of cattle, in conjunction with a long, hard winter, have brought many in this, our basic agricultural industry, to the point of bankruptcy.

Mr. Minister, we realize that if the federal government had followed the principles you advocated regarding feed grains, marketing and freight rates, the situation would not now be so desperate. We urge your continued efforts to rectify the short-sighted federal blunders in this area, and if the situation does not improve very quickly perhaps some type of provincial assistance to this industry could be initiated.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, the points I have touched upon are just a portion of this impressive document. I have confined my remarks to the legislation mainly covering the facets of energy and agriculture, due to the fact that to cover adequately all the programs and legislation covered in this Throne Speech would take me far beyond my allotted time. I am sure the seconder of this motion will cover many of the other points of social and urban interest.

Mr. Speaker, the Speech from the Throne, read by His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor yesterday, outlines a program of responsibility and dedication by this government to Alberta and the people of Alberta. It shows a firmness to stand up for the rights and principles which are justly ours, but also gives a broad consideration for the elderly, the incapacitated and the less fortunate among our citizens, and a hope for a sound future for the youth of our province.

Mr. Speaker, it has been a great honour for me to move this historic Speech from the Throne. I consider it a great privilege.

MR. ASHTON:

Mr. Speaker, it is again a pleasure to appear in this Assembly under your competent guidance. Your years of public and community service in this province have well prepared you for carrying out your responsibilities.

I am very proud to have the privilege of seconding the 1974 Speech from the Throne.

The speech starts off by directing our memory to the rather momentous progress we have made in this province in the last couple of years. I believe it is well and appropriate that we consider what has been done, because by looking at those accomplishments we can better relate to the steps planned for the year ahead.

The first paragraph of the document summarizes the first two phases of this government's priorities. The objective was to remedy certain basic social inequities. One was senior citizens. Now they can retire in the dignity they deserve. Another was help for the handicapped. Now they can take their place in society and have increased opportunities. No longer are the mentally ill treated as second-class citizens.

And finally, after decades of neglect, our farming industry is being recognized for its value, mainly the cornerstone of our economic life in this province. And I can say with sincere pride that if I were to retire from public office today, the very fact that I may have played some part, albeit a very small part, in achieving some of these results, would give me a great sense of everlasting accomplishment.

Probably if I have any criticism of the Speech from the Throne, Mr. Speaker, it would be that in reviewing these rather tremendous steps that have been taken in the last couple of years, the speech is too short. It devotes only one paragraph to it, and perhaps the hon. the Premier is too modest in that regard.

The evidence of these accomplishments is a matter of public record. We tend sometimes to accept these things as a matter of fact. We are living with them today, but we cannot forget that a mere two or three years ago life in Alberta was much different.

However, we are now moving into phase three. In some respects I suppose phase three may be considered to be even more exciting than phases one and two. The hon. Member for Ponoka has clarified, in his usual competent fashion, the energy issues. He has covered the points, The Opportunity for Citizen Participation under Part A, Alberta - The Energy Province under Part B, and I won't elaborate further on that except to say I agree with his comments. They were well expressed.

This is the most important period of Alberta's economic history. And I should perhaps comment that although I am not inclined to nightmares, if I ever had a nightmare it would be dreaming about where we would be if we didn't have the competent leadership of our present Premier in dealing with ...

[Applause]

On the one hand you have the cries for state control and the sell-out to Ottawa. On the other hand you have cries for unrestricted free enterprise. But give me the common sense and competent approach of the Lougheed team any time. That is why they call us the 'progressive' conservatives.

AN HCN. MEMBER:

Hear, hear.

MR. ASHTON:

Now going over to page 5 of the speech, Mr. Speaker, it has some rather exciting material in it under Legislative and Program Proposals. As an urban member, I am very pleased that this government is again giving agricultural emphasis to its programs.

I grew up in rural Alberta and the word at that time was if you wished to succeed, leave rural Alberta and go to the big cities. Now this is being reversed under the leadership of this government, particularly the Minister of Agriculture and the rural members. Again I can say with sincerity that if any of my children decide to seek their careers in rural Alberta, I would be very proud. Of course, I must admit perhaps my attitude towards agriculture is influenced somewhat by the fact that I am surrounded by a large number of rural members in this corner. Besides, I don't want to have my supply of eggs and potatoes cut off by the hon. Member for Camrose.

I might mention one rural program, the rural telephone service. I notice the hon. Member for Clover Bar is not in the Assembly this morning. But I have received quite a large number of phone calls and letters from people in the Fort Saskatchewan area about this. Possibly some progress will be made and perhaps alludes to it in the Speech from the Throne. We'll be very interested in seeing what happens. The hon. Member for Clover Bar has been madly running about attempting to take some credit for the anticipated progress, but perhaps we should remember that nothing happened when he was on this side of the House. I am sure he will agree with me that no one is happier than he with the results of the 1971 election because now we can get some progress on these things.

The Speech from the Throne also indicates that the Peace-Athabasca delta will be protected by the construction of a weir. Now it is not my objective this morning, Mr. Speaker, to criticize the former administration, because there were many things it did which I agreed with. But I think we would have to admit that their handling of the Peace-Athabasca delta issue was a national scandal, not just a provincial scandal. And I am just delighted, Mr. Minister, that steps are being taken by this administration to come up with a remedy.

Coming then to the expanded parks commitment under the direction of the hon. Minister of Lands and Forests, it is my hope and perhaps my expectation that the blossoming of park development throughout this province in the next couple of decades will meet the most optimistic objectives of my constituents.

There is a reference in the speech to some land-use guidelines for the eastern slopes of the Rockies. I'd have to admit that the use of the word "some" makes me a bit nervous because I would be much happier with the long-range, overall plan, and I would certainly hope that we can work towards this during the next couple of years. The hon. Minister of the Environment referred to this during the question period early this morning. History will certainly be judging us in future generations by how we handle the eastern slopes decisions. Some irreversible mistakes have already been made in the eastern slopes and we must be careful that we don't make any more mistakes.

I'd like to refer to a brief that was submitted by the Sherwood Park Fish and Game Association to the public hearings on the eastern slopes that were held this summer. In one part of it they quite properly say:

The procedure of preparing provisional master plans, releasing them for public comment, and reconsidering them after these public hearings, is a commendable one. However, like every other government venture since the beginning of time, policies have been set down, but not enforced, until there becomes a humble-jumble of nothing, and people are very unhappy.

And in another passage:

Will our Government be ready to control the development? Will the area be well planned? Will they be able to develop the area or will private companies be allowed to push forth without any thought to the destruction of the environment of our Eastern Slopes? We must never let that happen.

I think those comments are well expressed. This particular brief is very thorough and objective and has considered the needs of all Albertans, not just a few interest groups. I certainly commend it for reading by all hon. members.

Getting into the urban programs outlined in the Speech from the Throne, as MLAs I think we must always remember that we are also residents of municipalities whether it be a city, a county or a hamlet, and our constituents are also residents of municipalities. The financing for these municipalities is a key factor in the quality of life for our constituents. Something is being done this year, of course. Although the municipal assistance grants were frozen at \$38 million in 1970, we did increase them to \$42 million in 1972. They went up to \$46 million last year which, over a two-year period, was a rather dramatic increase of 21 per cent. I understand another 15 per cent increase is expected this year.

In addition to this, the provincial government has assumed the growth costs for the municipalities. In other words, that type of expenditure which tends to balloon in this type of society, namely, the costs of education, hospitals, health units and most of the welfare costs.

Added to this, of course, last year we had refunds on the property taxes and this year, their complete elimination. So this should give some elbow room to the municipalities in their financing. I might perhaps humbly suggest that if any municipality cannot survive and develop properly under these conditions, it must be irresponsible.

Dealing with urban mass transit, I'm very pleased that this administration has recognized that Calgary and Edmonton have some unique problems. Of course one is public transportation. Although the matter or the issue of public transportation has long been considered a municipal problem and responsibility, I think the costs are becoming so large that we, as a provincial government, are quite rightly getting involved in this issue.

But I would ask the hon. members and the ministers involved, when they are dealing with the programs for public transportation in the two major cities, that they also consider the needs of some of the nearby communities such as St. Albert, Spruce Grove and Sherwood Park. For example, the bus system between Sherwood Park and Edmonton is atrocious and really unacceptable and would have been unacceptable in the horse-and-buggy days.

There is going to be a tremendous growth pressure on the Edmonton area. I think the development of the tar sands makes that inevitable. I personally believe that mass transit is inevitable and steps need to be taken now. I heard the hon. Minister of Highways and Transport on the radio last night as I was driving home from the Assembly and he indicated that we were going to have a balanced program. I think that's very wise because there still are highway needs, as for example, Highway 16A running between Edmonton and Sherwood Park down refinery row. I hope plans for this area will be considered in the next few years. Mr. King uses the highway frequently.

Considering the recreational grant program, I don't know really what you can say. The program speaks for itself. What more can you say than that the capital grant for the City of Edmonton has jumped from less than \$100,000 to over \$730,000, and that the capital

grant for Sherwood Park has almost tripled, that the provincial government has offered the City of Edmonton and the citizens of Edmonton approximately \$11 million for the Commonwealth Games if the city decides to proceed with the games. The total involvement in this area of recreation is just staggering. As I say, the figures speak for themselves and I won't elaborate on that any further.

The unique new provincial park will be announced for Edmonton. Perhaps I might get a bit parochial and make my bid, as many others have, for east Edmonton. If the hon. members will look at a map of Edmonton and consider the location of the existing park systems and so on, they would have to conclude that east Edmonton has the greatest need. But approximately a year ago, I also made suggestions to some of the hon. members that in view of the unusual nature of the Edmonton metropolitan area with its core city of Edmonton with a few adjacent, nearby communities, perhaps smaller provincial parks should be considered for these smaller communities. But I'm prepared to withdraw that request at this time, because I was just delighted, as my constituents were, with the very recent announcement of the Sherwood Park East Restricted Development Area.

The Sherwood Park East Restricted Development Area is a half-mile wide strip running north and south down the east side of Highway 14X between Edmonton and Sherwood Park. I can say that even if the speculated or talked-about Edmonton parkway surrounding the City of Edmonton never becomes a reality, this particular restricted development area between Sherwood Park and Edmonton just has fantastic recreational possibilities. The thought of picnic grounds, camping grounds, bicycle trails, bridle paths and so on just makes one very excited.

One of the items referred to in the speech, the early childhood services program - I may comment that I held a public meeting about three years ago in my constituency, when I was a candidate for election, on the topic of kindergartens and day-care centres. I believe we can say that the progress made in the last 12 months, Mr. Minister, has met the most optimistic objectives of my constituents on the matter of early childhood services.

I myself had all my children attend private kindergartens, but I don't think I ever really appreciated their value until several years ago when I read excerpts from the CELDIC Report which indicated that at least 10 per cent of the normal school population suffers from varying degrees of learning disabilities or perceptual handicaps. Roughly five boys to one girl are affected by this problem. According to the CELDIC report, there may be 14,000 school-age children in Edmonton requiring attention. What are these learning disabilities or perceptual handicaps? It means that children with normal or above intellects cannot make progress in the basic academic skills such as reading, writing, arithmetic and so on, unless they have special help. They may have the same intelligence as other children, but they just can't accomplish. The key factors relating to early childhood services are early identification, diagnosis and individualized teaching methods.

It was when I realized the importance of the early diagnosis and attention that it struck me that that has got to be the really compelling reason for early childhood services. There have been tremendous steps in special education services in the school system.

During the last 12 months I have visited some 25 schools in my constituency, talking to students and teachers. I can say to the hon. members and the hon. Minister of Education that it is in this area of special education that the parents and teachers are most excited. It's in dealing with those children who are special children that this government has made particular progress.

The provincial government has already announced, and again the Speech from the Throne reaffirms, that there will be new approaches in flexible, modular school design. This is to be applauded. I'm sure all the members in this Assembly will agree that that has got to be a positive move. If any members aren't clear what the community 'corecept' is all about, basically it involves the construction of a core of permanent facilities such as a gymnasium, a library, washrooms, the administrative offices, ancillary rooms and perhaps a couple of classrooms. Then, as the school population grows in that area, modular classroom units are tied in to this basic core. Of course, as the school population declines, as we've seen happen in many of the older districts of the city, the modular units are then moved to new communities. Just think what our situation would be if, ten years ago, this foresight had been exercised. We certainly wouldn't be having the school-building controversy that I have had so recently in my own constituency and which many of the other members, such as the hon. member, Mr. McCrae, have had in their constituencies.

I think, as an example, Terrace Heights School in my constituency has several empty classrooms. I suppose the economic logic is that students will be bused into that school from, say, Mill Woods. But how much better it would have been if we had had modular units that we moved to Mill Woods instead of bringing children to Terrace Heights.

I am very pleased that there are two of these new community core concept schools going into the Sherwood Park portion of my constituency. They are expected to be usable within

another 12 months and they have many interesting features. I might just mention that one of them, for example, will be accessible to wheelchair patients or wheelchair handicapped and will have complete facilities to serve this type of handicapped person.

Again, dealing with the community use of schools, I have a specific example that I would like to relate to the members, a useful example, I think, because it certainly makes clear what a little cooperation and imagination can do. We had a situation in my constituency where the separate high school needed space to cope with its rather exploding numbers of student population and they didn't have enough money to add to the school at the time. There was a church congregation in my constituency that needed additional space but, being a relatively new congregation, didn't have the money to build extra church facilities in the traditional design. So what has been the result? We now have a high school with a very large lecture hall, carpeted, with plush chairs. It's in use constantly throughout the school day. On week nights the facility is used by a large variety of community and school groups. It's a far cry from the cold atmosphere of the steel-chaired gymnasium normally used for meetings. Then on Sundays the lecture hall is used as a house of worship.

The result has been that the facility was built at a fraction of the cost of the school. It was paid for primarily by the church congregation. Also, by being tied in with the school facility and part of the building, the church saved substantial money. The facility is in almost constant use seven days a week, and I just suggest that this concept has tremendous potential for any school system and any church congregation.

The speech also refers to the report on improvements in the province's health delivery system. I may say to the hon. Minister of Health and Social Development that my constituents will be very interested in reading this report. One of the questions they are asking me - and I'm rather interested to find out if the report will answer it - is: what are the long-range plans for health services and hospital services in the East Edmonton-Sherwood Park areas? But time will tell whether we get the answers on that.

There is another intriguing promise or comment in the speech referring to new initiatives in day care. Now, I hope that substantial progress can be made with day-care programs. I suppose it will not be until the budget speech that we see what that short sentence actually means. I have been criticized - and perhaps properly so - for my position on day-care centres because many consider this to be government-subsidized baby-sitting. However I do stress that any assistance to day care should be on a need basis. I think we should recognize some of the realities of life.

One of the hon. members earlier this morning was referring to the Edmonton Social Planning Council Task Force Report on Women in the Labour Force. I think they make our position clear that:

It is not a debate on whether women should work or remain in the home. Women are already in the work force in large numbers and the numbers are growing. ...

It is no myth that women make up over one-third of the Alberta labour force(*).

There are many low-income and single-parent families where the need is great. My prime interest is not necessarily the convenience of the parents but it is the interest of the children. By not providing adequate facilities for these children there may be a trend to create a class of citizens who do not grow up with the same educational and attitude opportunities that the rest of the children in our province have. In addition there are countless families that may have adequate incomes and have the right motivations but cannot find the day-care facilities that are of a high enough standard to justify their confidence.

So I believe we have to recognize the needs of the '70s. The attitude that the woman's place is barefoot, pregnant and in the kitchen, I am sure, doesn't fit into our modern society and so we have to take some steps.

On the topic of women's rights under employment opportunities, I think the front of the Task Force Report very succinctly states the problem.

The Task Force discovered that women were/are relegated to traditionally "female" jobs and that the wages accompanying these jobs are continually low paying. Even within occupations with both males and females employed, women tend to be the lowest paid individuals.

and so on. But I know we have made much progress with regards to women's rights.

Of course we have the enactment of the historic Bill of Rights two years ago and The Individual's Rights Protection Act piloted through by the Member for Calgary Buffalo. And of course, now we have the Human Rights Commission operating and they are starting to have their impact. But there are still things to be done. I think all of the hon. members have had the now famous Supreme Court of Canada case of *Murdoch v. Murdoch* brought to

their attention, which indicates that more needs to be done. I hope that I will have the opportunity to say more about Murdoch v. Murdoch later on in this session.

I should comment also on the promise held out in the Speech from the Throne to ensure that younger drivers will be charged fair and equitable automobile insurance premiums. I have a very personal interest in this item. I have a 15-year-old daughter taking driver training, and with five more potential young drivers on the way I can assure [you] that this item in the Speech from the Throne would be very [much] appreciated. But I suppose I won't even be able to vote on that particular appropriation.

In going on; the hon. Minister of Culture, Youth and Recreation gives promise that he is going to promote the importance of physical fitness. Perhaps it's an appropriate time for me now to explain my thumb. I am getting tired of questions from everybody I see, what happened to your thumb, so I'll make a public statement on the issue.

It's clear that no one needs physical fitness more than I, but I was in a skate-a-thon in Sherwood Park and I tripped over a small child and broke my thumb. I recognize, Mr. Minister, had I been physically fit, I probably wouldn't be wearing the splint today.

Sometimes Alberta Public Works does not get allocated the most exciting programs, but certainly the Minister of Public Works has created excitement in my constituency with his program of cooperation with communities to develop expanded joint facilities. I think we have a classic case in my area to illustrate what is meant by that sentence in the Speech from the Throne.

I was personally very concerned about the lack of what you might call a provincial presence in the Sherwood Park portion of my constituency. We have one of the world's most up-to-date telephone exchanges which was opened by the hon. Len Werry a few days before his untimely death. We also have an expanded new liquor store in Sherwood Park which is operating very efficiently and a small highways licencing office which is appreciated very much. But outside of that we had no provincial government activity.

So I went sort of hat-in-hand from department to department to find out if there were any appropriate government agencies that could suitably be located in Sherwood Park. After getting some interest, I understand they contacted the Minister of Public Works for space, and one morning I received a phone call from the minister's office saying he had a meeting with the County of Strathcona Council at noon that day. We went to the meeting and the minister explained that he was prepared to work with the local council in developing a joint facility. It would be built by the council and the provincial government would rent space from them. Rather than building a provincial building, he wanted to cooperate with the local council and the local businesses.

This has worked out very well. There is a new facility planned and it appears that the County Council, at long last, may move their council offices from Edmonton to Sherwood Park. I'm satisfied that this would never have happened had it not been for the minister's initiative, and my constituents certainly thank you very much for that. This type of facility and the accompanying offices located in Sherwood Park will provide employment, mainly for women who can work close to their homes and still look after their families.

With that Mr. Speaker, I see that I am coming to the end of my time and also the end of the Throne Speech. There are perhaps some other comments I would like to make but I will conclude now by urging all of the hon. members to give their whole-hearted support and their approval to this rather exciting document.

I might say through you to the hon. Premier, Mr. Speaker, as I have commented many times, every time I hear his speech I think it is even better, if that is possible, than the last one. I can say to the Premier, Mr. Speaker, that this Speech from the Throne is even better than the last one and I can hardly wait until next year.

Thank you very much.

MR. CLARK:

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

No.

MR. SPEAKER:

I will put the question if the hon. Leader of the Opposition wishes but it would appear that it will not succeed.

MR. CLARK:

Will you put the question, Mr. Speaker?

MR. SPEAKER:

Having heard the question by the hon. Leader of the Opposition, would all those in favour please say aye. Those opposed please say no. The motion is lost.

MR. CLARK:

Mr. Speaker, I moved that I have leave to adjourn the debate. We asked that you put the question and it was my hearing, from over here, that the members of the House agreed that we could adjourn the debate. Now perhaps there is some difficulty in the hearing apparatus in the Assembly, but on second thought I thought the members made a wise decision.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hearing apparatus was working fine but its connection with the other apparatus wasn't so good. The motion was carried.

MR. HYNDMAN:

Mr. Speaker, I move the House do now adjourn until Monday afternoon at 2:30 o'clock.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

[The House rose at 11:48 c'clock.]