

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ALBERTA

Monday, March 11, 1974

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

PRAYERS

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 4 The Agricultural Development Amendment Act, 1974Bill No. 17 The Coarse Grain Marketing Control Repeal Act

DR. HORNER:

Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce two bills. The first, being a money bill, has the recommendation of the Lieutenant-Governor, and is an amendment to The Agricultural Development Act in which the total amount of funds available to the corporation has been increased from \$50 million to \$100 million to enable our agricultural industry to match its productive capacity.

The second bill, Mr. Speaker, is The Coarse Grain Marketing Control Repeal Act. This bill will effectively repeal The Coarse Grain Marketing Act passed in 1946 at the request of the Canadian Wheat Board. It is my understanding, indeed my knowledge, that the bill is no longer required in Alberta to regulate coarse grains and will fit in with our proposal that with the new crop year coarse grain marketing will become a much freer thing.

[Leave being granted, Bills No. 4 and 17 were introduced and read a first time.]

Bill No. 5 The Industrial Development Repeal Act

MR. PEACOCK:

Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce a bill, being The Industrial Development Repeal Act. The functions performed under The Industrial Development Act are now covered under other enactments.

[Leave being granted, Bill No. 5 was introduced and read a first time.]

Bill No. 6 The Local Authorities Pension Amendment Act, 1974Bill No. 7 The Public Service Amendment Act, 1974Bill No. 8 The Public Service Pension Amendment Act, 1974

DR. HOHOL:

Mr. Speaker, I should like to introduce three pension amendment bills being: Bill No. 6, The Local Authorities Pension Amendment Act, 1974; Bill No. 7 The Public Service

Amendment Act, 1974; and Bill No. 8, being The Public Service Pension Amendment Act, 1974, the chief principle of which, in all three cases, is to clarify maximum benefits under the three acts to retired public servants.

[Leave being granted, Bills No. 6, 7 and 8 were introduced and read a first time.]

Bill No. 9
The Alberta Municipal Financing Corporation Amendment Act, 1974

MR. MINIELY:

Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce a bill, being The Alberta Municipal Financing Corporation Amendment Act, 1974.

Mr. Speaker, this bill will authorize the province to borrow from the Canada Pension Plan of the federal government an additional \$100 million, which in turn is reloaned to a very large extent to the municipalities in the Province of Alberta.

[Leave being granted, Bill No. 9 was introduced and read a first time.]

Bill No. 11 The Corrections Amendment Act, 1974

MISS HUNLEY:

Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce Bill No. 11, The Corrections Amendment Act, 1974.

The main purpose of this bill is to accommodate the establishment of remand and detention units and it anticipates the opening of the Calgary Remand Centre in the immediate future.

[Leave being granted, Bill No. 11 was introduced and read a first time.]

Bill No. 12 The Public Works Amendment Act, 1974

DR. BACKUS:

Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce a bill, being The Public Works Amendment Act, 1974. This amendment will bring The Public Works Act into line with The Builders' Lien Act with regard to the timing of notice of claim.

[Leave being granted, Bill No. 12 was introduced and read a first time.]

Bill No. 13 The Assessment Appeal Board Amendment Act, 1974

MRS. CHICHAK:

Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce a bill, being Bill No. 13, The Assessment Appeal Board Amendment Act, 1974.

The main feature of the bill is to expand the membership of the Alberta Assessment Appeal Board from three members to six and to enable the board to sit in two divisions of three members each. The existing board simply cannot cope with the volume of appeals in Edmonton due to the general assessments in 1973 and no doubt this problem will again arise when Calgary has its general assessment.

The bill also permits the Appeal Board to do the following things: to quash an assessment under appeal; to order a new assessment where justice cannot be done on the basis of facts submitted; and also to give directions for the making of a new assessment where one has been quashed due to the lack of factual information.

[Leave being granted, Bill No. 13 was introduced and read a first time.]

Bill No. 14 The Beverage Container Amendment Act, 1974

MR. YURKO:

Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce a bill, being Bill No. 14, The Beverage Container Amendment Act, 1974.

The bill has two amendments, Mr. Speaker, the first making it possible to establish the depot handling charge by regulation and the second making it possible to establish, by regulation, the pick-up frequency from the depots by the manufacturers of beverage containers.

[Leave being granted, Bill No. 14 was introduced and read a first time.]

Bill No. 16 The Forest Development Research Trust Fund Act

MR. TRYNCHY:

Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce Bill No. 16, being The Forest Development Research Trust Fund Act.

This bill will enable the minister to finance research programs oriented towards improving timber management and production in Alberta.

[Leave being granted, Bill No. 16 was introduced and read a first time.]

Bill No. 18 The Clean Air Amendment Act, 1974

Bill No. 19 The Clean Water Amendment Act, 1974

MR. CHAMBERS:

Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce two bills, No. 18 and No. 19, being The Clean Air Amendment Act, 1974 and The Clean Water Amendment Act, 1974, respectively.

These acts amend several administrative aspects of the existing legislation in order to better enable its enforcement, thereby ensuring a cleaner environment for Albertans.

[Leave being granted, Bills No. 18 and 19 were introduced and read a first time.]

Bill No. 21 The Legislative Assembly Amendment Act, 1974

MR. TOPOLNISKY:

Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce a bill, being The Legislative Assembly Amendment Act, 1974.

The proposed change will standardize for all government departments a requirement for tabling of annual reports.

[Leave being granted, Bill No. 21 was introduced and read a first time.]

Bill No. 22 The Public Service Vehicles Amendment Act, 1974

MR. COPITHORNE:

Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce two bills, the first being Bill No. 22, The Public Service Vehicles Amendment Act, 1974.

This act spells out the definition of axle and axle groups and it designates their regulation rather than by the act. Mr. Speaker, it also deals with the change of name of the Highway Traffic Board to the Motor Transport Board.

Bill No. 25 The Highway Traffic Amendment Act, 1974

MR. COPITHORNE:

The second bill, Mr. Speaker, is Bill No. 25, The Highway Traffic Amendment Act, 1974. This act deals with the operator's licence, to positively identify himself or herself as being the person named in the application.

We are also making it abundantly clear, Mr. Speaker, that the validation tabs may be used as a marker rather than a new licence plate each year.

You will recall also, Mr. Speaker, that during 1973 we tightened up the motor vehicle registration system in an attempt to reduce the number of stolen vehicles being sold in the province. In this field, Mr. Speaker, we are recommending a new clause which will permit an investigating peace officer to hold any motor vehicle if he is suspicious that, because of the lack of identification serial number plate, the vehicle might be stolen.

[Leave being granted, Bills No. 22 and 25 were introduced and read a first time.]

Bill No. 23 The Attorney General Statutes Amendment Act, 1974

MR. LEITCH:

Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce a bill, being The Attorney General Statutes Amendment Act, 1974.

This bill amends a number of Acts. The first is The Clerks of the Court Act. That Act now requires the clerk's office to be open at specified times. The amendment removes that restriction and will enable the clerk's office to be open at such times as are best for the public.

The second is The Execution Creditors Act and this is an administrative amendment flowing from the fact that there is now no monetary restriction on the jurisdiction of the district courts.

The third, Mr. Speaker, is The Franchises Act and the purpose of the amendments is to add to and clarify the material to be filed by applicants with the Securities Commission.

The fourth, Mr. Speaker, is an amendment to The Judicature Act which adds a judge to the Court of Appeal.

There is also, Mr. Speaker, an amendment to The Securities Act which provides for the payment of witness fees on hearings before the Securities Commission.

And lastly, Mr. Speaker, there are amendments to The Trust Companies Act and The Trustee Act which permit the investment in securities of the Inter-American Development Bank and the Asian Development Bank.

[Leave being granted, Bill No. 23 was introduced and read a first time.]

Bill No. 26 The Off-Highway Vehicle Amendment Act, 1974

DR. MCCRIMMON:

Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce a bill, being The Off-Highway Vehicle Amendment Act, 1974.

The general purpose of this bill is to place insurance requirements in the Act rather than in the regulations where they now stand. Insurance requirements for off-highway vehicles will follow the same standards as those provided for automobiles under The Alberta Insurance Act. For offences committed with off-highway vehicles this act provides for the fines to accrue to the benefit of the city, town, village, county or municipal district wherein the offence has taken place.

[Leave being granted, Bill No. 26 was introduced and read a first time.]

MR. HYNDMAN:

Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the hon. Provincial Treasurer, that the following bills be placed on the Order Paper under Government Bills and Orders:

Bill No. 13, The Assessment Appeal Board Amendment Act, 1974; Bill No. 16, The Forest Development Research Trust Fund Act; Bill No. 18, The Clean Air Amendment Act, 1974; Bill No. 19, The Clean Water Amendment Act, 1974, and Bill No. 26, The Off-Highway Vehicle Amendment Act, 1974.

[The motion was carried.]

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

MR. TAYLOR:

It is my pleasure to introduce to you and through you to the hon. members of the Legislature a group of bowling champions from the beautiful Drumheller valley.

First of all we have Mrs. Betty Chuippi who was a Canadian Master Lady Singles Champion in bowling in 1972. This group is in the members gallery and I would ask them to stand as I call out their names: first of all, Mrs. Chuippi; then a group of bantam Alberta champions for 1973 - five young men - Gary Maltin, Ken Pozzolo, Mark Brkich, John Kohut and Jim Gilray; finally, Mr. Sam Maltin, a businessman from Drumheller, who has made it possible for these people to become champions through the operation of his bowling alley and the initiative and opportunity that he provides. I am sure we are very happy to have this group with us.

MR. CRAWFORD:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to introduce to you and to the other members of the House a very interested group of young constituents of mine from Parkallen School who have been touring the building this afternoon, and are now in the members gallery. They are members of the Parkallen Grade 6 class. Their teacher, with them today, is Mr. Bauer. Others accompanying the tour are Mrs. Simmons, Mrs. Reynolds, Mrs. McBain, Mr. Donelon and Mr. Gaalaas. I would ask them to stand, the children too please, and be recognized.

TABLING RETURNS AND REPORTS

MR. LOUGHEED:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to file an exchange of telexes between the Prime Minister and myself dated January 29 and February 15, 1974.

DR. HOHOL:

Mr. Speaker, I should like to table a reply to Question No. 277 as requested by the hon. Leader of the Opposition.

DR. WARRACK:

Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to file two items of interest, the first being the manifest of the Lands and Forests aircraft CF-AFD, the King Air, also the manifest for the Lands and Forests aircraft CF-CKM Queen Air, and the manifest for the Lands and Forests helicopters with respect to the Executive Council and government agencies' travel for the calendar year 1973.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, it is my honour to submit a copy of a report prepared by Foster Economic Consultants Limited for the Department of Lands and Forests entitled "An Assessment of Proposals for Development of Whitecourt-Fox Creek Timber Reserves".

DR. HORNBER:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to table the answer to Question 294, and in addition to that, to table in the House the preliminary report from the Alberta Land Use Forum outlining their activities to date and their proposed schedule for the future.

MR. RUSSELL:

Mr. Speaker, I should like to file two lists of solicitors approved for mortgage work by Alberta Housing Corporation. The first list is the approved list of the former government, and the second list is the approved list of the present government.

MR. LUDWIG:

Better late than never.

MR. CRAWFORD:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to file a copy of the report of the public inquiry held at Fort Vermilion in May of last year with regard to the St. Theresa General Hospital.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Auto Mileages

MR. TAYLOR:

Mr. Speaker, a very short explanation is required before I ask the question, which I will direct to the hon. Premier.

A great deal of concern is now being expressed by people throughout Alberta, and Canada for that matter, regarding the low mileage that we are getting from the carburetors on our cars. It is claimed that large oil companies, such as Shell, Imperial and Gulf et cetera, have purchased carburetors that would provide mileages up to 25 to 40 miles per gallon. My question to the hon. Premier is, has the government conducted any inquiry or has it any information regarding the withholding of such carburetors by the large oil companies?

MR. YURKO:

Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Environment of the Government of Canada has called a conference with the various ministers of environment from across the [country] for the next two days. I will be leaving at 3:05 to attend that conference, and this is one matter that we will be discussing.

I would like to indicate that this is a matter of federal responsibility rather than provincial responsibility. I have been in contact with the federal Minister of Environment on several occasions with respect to this matter and I hope to be bringing back more clarification when I come back from Ottawa on Wednesday night.

MR. TAYLOR:

Mr. Speaker, in view of the lateness of the hour I will withhold any supplementaries.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Lac La Biche-McMurray followed by the hon. Member for Cypress.

Fort McMurray - Capital Budget

DR. BOUVIER:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct my question to the Premier.

Would the Premier advise the House on the position of the government regarding the extraordinary financial problems of the Town of Fort McMurray and the request by the board of administrators of Fort McMurray for special consideration by the provincial government to help finance the proposed 1974 capital budget of over \$9 million, in view of the fact that the maximum available, by debenture borrowing in 1974, is only half a million dollars?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. member's question is, at least so it appears to the Chair, one that could lead to an answer lasting perhaps a half hour or more. If the hon. minister feels that an

answer can be given within the limits placed on the Chair for the question period, perhaps we could have that answer now, otherwise I would respectfully suggest that it might be made the subject of an announcement.

MR. RUSSELL:

Mr. Speaker, with your leave, I think I could very briefly give some assurance at this time to the Town of Fort McMurray.

I visited with their town board last week. We have gone over their current requisition for debenture borrowing for their capital works program. Certainly very strong, and I think very clear assurance, was given to the board that progress of development of the town would not be held up because of lack or shortage of funds. The current estimates of their capital program are now before the local authorities board and we are trying to get a reasonable program approved just as quickly as possible. But secondly, I can tell all hon. members that the government is pretty heavily committed to the development of Fort McMurray and progress there will not come to a standstill because of a shortage of provincial funds.

DR. BOUVIER:

Supplementary, is the minister or a committee of cabinet planning on meeting with the town board as they have requested, primarily a committee of cabinet?

MR. RUSSELL:

Well, Mr. Speaker, again at that time we discussed the matter of liaison and close communications with the provincial government, and we indicated that various ministers would be available to communicate with them at their request.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Tar Sands Development

MR. STROM:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct my question to the hon. the Premier. Have either Ontario or the Province of Quebec made any moves towards getting involved in the development of the tar sands? I ask the question as it relates to a statement made by the Premier some time ago.

MR. GETTY:

Mr. Speaker, both governments have expressed an interest in the investigating means or alternatives in which they might be able to participate in the development of the Alberta oil sands. I should caution the members that these discussions are on a very preliminary basis. However, I would say that both expressed interest.

MR. STROM:

Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question. Would the arrangements then that are to follow, or the discussions, be directly with the government or would they be with some company which would be planning to develop the tar sands?

MR. GETTY:

Mr. Speaker, it hasn't progressed to that detailed part of discussion, and we have not been into the alternatives they might pursue.

MR. STROM:

Mr. Speaker, if I may, a further supplementary question in regard to the development of the tar sands. Has Japan made any attempts to become involved in the development of the tar sands, either with the provincial government or with a new company or with any existing company?

MR. GETTY:

Mr. Speaker, I think it is fair to say that over a period of time the Japanese government and Japanese companies have evidenced interest in a variety of alternatives in the Alberta oil sands.

MR. STROM:

Mr. Speaker, I would have to make it maybe more direct in order to get my question more clearly to the hon. minister.

Has Japan been engaged in any discussions with Great Canadian Oil Sands in an attempt to become involved through the Great Canadian Oil Sands in the development of the tar sands?

MR. GETTY:

Mr. Speaker, not those that I have been involved in, but there may be one of the other ministers who may have something to add to that.

MR. STROM:

I would simply draw their attention, if I may then, to a statement that's been reported in a magazine I have here that these negotiations are going on and I was wondering whether or not the government was aware of it or whether there is any attempt to check this out.

MR. SPEAKER:

Possibly that could be taken as notice.

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

Federal-Provincial Discussions

MR. NOTLEY:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct this question to the hon. Premier. By way of explanation, on Friday last the Premier indicated that he anticipated a telephone call from the federal Prime Minister, either on Friday or today. My question is, - and I have several follow-up questions - has he received such a phone call?

MR. LOUGHEED:

Mr. Speaker, yes. I received a telephone call from the Prime Minister on Friday.

MR. NOTLEY:

A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Is the Premier in a position to report to the Assembly today on the discussion he held on Friday with the Prime Minister?

MR. LOUGHEED:

Mr. Speaker, I am not. It's one of what I presume would be ongoing discussions, either by way of telephone communication or by way of further meetings, but I am not in a position - as I wasn't on Friday - to elaborate in any way on the discussions at this time to the Assembly.

MR. NOTLEY:

Mr. Speaker, a further supplementary question to either the hon. Premier or to the Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs.

Can the government advise the Assembly whether any overall position paper has been developed which would pinpoint those specific western grievances which might be used as the basis of negotiating a trade-off on sheltered energy prices?

MR. LOUGHEED:

Mr. Speaker, I don't think there is a document of that nature in existence. But I would refer the hon. member to the communique that was issued from our meeting in Saskatoon that I believe was filed in the House on Friday. It gives some indication there of the nature of the views of the western provinces in terms of proper regional development in this part of Canada.

MR. NOTLEY:

One final supplementary, Mr. Speaker, to the hon. Premier. Has the Government of Alberta given any consideration to the proposal advanced by the Government of Saskatchewan

with respect to major changes in the equalization fund as a result of the current energy crisis?

MR. LOUGHEED:

Mr. Speaker, our position in Alberta has always been consistent. I believe, in fact I have confirmed this with Senator Manning, that it is quite clear that the present government and the former government have taken the position for some ten years now, I believe, that the calculation by way of equalization should not include in the calculation any payments or any revenues derived by provincial governments from natural resources. That position was strongly taken by the previous government.

It was presented by myself at the very first meeting of first ministers I attended in November 1971.

We think it is wrong in principle because it involves the question of capital receipts in a program of equalization that deals with taxation revenues [which] involve recurring revenues as distinguished from non-recurring ones. We think it has been a mistake. We think now the problem is coming home to roost for the federal government.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Calgary Ring Road

MR. WILSON:

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to address a question to the hon. Minister of Highways and Transport. Can the minister advise when the study by deLeuw Cather, entitled "Calgary Parkway Ring Road Plan", will be tabled in the House?

MR. COPITHORNE:

The date of the tabling has not been decided as yet.

MR. WILSON:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Can the minister advise if he authorized distribution of the report to those who presently have it outside of his department?

[Interjections]

Supplementary, Mr. Speaker ...

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. member seems to be lengthening his previous question.

MR. WILSON:

On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. The minister apparently didn't care to answer the previous supplementary, so I was going to put another ...

MR. SPEAKER:

It's not a point of order. The hon. member isn't entitled to comment on the minister's undoubted right to answer or not to answer.

MR. WILSON:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Can the minister advise what action has been taken, or is planned, as a result of the recommendations in the report?

MR. COPITHORNE:

Not at this moment, Mr. Speaker.

MR. WILSON:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Could the minister advise if the planned action would resolve the Sixteenth Avenue Trans-Canada Highway traffic problem in Calgary?

MR. SPEAKER:

I believe the hon. member's question is answered by what has already been answered.

The hon. Member for Stony Plain followed by the hon. Member for Calgary Mountain View.

Licence Plates - Farm Trucks

MR. PURDY:

Mr. Speaker, a question for the Minister of Highways and Transport. I wonder if the minister could advise the House if farm truck licence plates are now available for distribution in Alberta.

MR. COPITHORNE:

Yes, Mr. Speaker, farm licence plates are now available at all distribution points.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Highrises - Fire Control

MR. LUDWIG:

Mr. Speaker, my question is to whichever minister is in charge of the office of the Superintendent of Insurance ... the Minister of Consumer Affairs.

Has he had any inquiries or expressions of concern about fire-control facilities and escape facilities in high-rise apartments and high-rise buildings in this province?

MR. DOWLING:

Mr. Speaker, we haven't had any direct submissions to my office by anyone in the province regarding that matter. However, we are concerned, and I have expressed concern to the Consumer Affairs Branch as well as to the Insurance Branch on that very fact. We have nothing to report at this time, but it is under active consideration by the branch.

MR. LUDWIG:

A supplementary. Has the minister made any inquiry to determine what facilities are available for escape, in the event of fire, in some of the high-rise apartments?

DR. HOHOL:

If I could comment with respect to The Uniform Building Standards Act. The last report of the National Building Code recommends as guidelines to municipalities across this nation 14 approaches to use with respect to building standards. Some of these address themselves very specifically to the question asked by the hon. member. It is our intention to bring to the Legislature, later on during the session, regulations with respect to The Uniform Building Standards Act based in large measure on The Uniform Building Standards Act for Canada.

The procedure would be briefly as follows, we would accept the 14 guidelines as discretionary for use by municipalities. But, Mr. Speaker, once having made the choice of one or any number of those 14, it will be the responsibility and the onus of the department to ensure that the standards with respect to that particular choice or choices will have been met.

MR. LUDWIG:

Could the hon. minister advise whether he is satisfied that the fire-control facilities and escape facilities in highrises in which senior citizens live in this province are adequate.

MR. SPEAKER:

The honourable and experienced member knows that the rules do not permit, specifically 171 in Beauchesne, a question to a minister requesting his opinion.

MR. LUDWIG:

Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. I did not ask for an opinion. I asked, can he advise if they are adequate and whether he knows where they are. It is a question of fact, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Without wishing to debate with the hon. member, that is clearly a matter of opinion.

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

PWA Service - Lethbridge

MR. WYSE:

My question, Mr. Speaker, is to the hon. Minister of Industry and Commerce. It is regarding Pacific Western Airlines' application to service Lethbridge with air service, which could very well leave Medicine Hat without any service at all. Will the provincial government be presenting a brief to the CTC, supporting Time Air's application or at least asking PWA to include Medicine Hat in its application?

MR. PEACOCK:

Mr. Speaker, we have intervened. We believe that the services of our communities in the province of Alberta must be protected and therefore we have made an intervention in this instance.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Hanna-Oyen followed by the hon. Member for Sedgewick-Coronation.

Licence Plates - Automobiles

MR. FRENCH:

Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Highways and Transport. Will there be an extension of time for the use of current motor vehicle licence plates which expire at the end of this month?

MR. COPITHORNE:

Yes, Mr. Speaker. We intend to extend the period until the end of April.

MR. FRENCH:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Will it be possible to have the tags or stickers which are attached to the new licence plates replaced if they happen to come off due to adverse weather conditions?

MR. COPITHORNE:

Mr. Speaker, hopefully this won't be necessary. The tags are used in several of the states in the United States and have proved to be most successful.

MR. FRENCH:

Mr. Speaker, is there any particular reason the new validation tags have not been attached to the licence plates on government cars?

MR. COPITHORNE:

Mr. Speaker, I didn't catch the question.

MR. FRENCH:

Mr. Speaker, is there any particular reason the new validation tags have not been attached to the 1973 licence plates on government cars? I noticed out in front of the building today that not one single government car has these new tags.

MR. COPITHORNE:

Well, Mr. Speaker, maybe if the hon. Member for Hanna-Oyen would be a little bit patient The period of expiry date has not come due yet and, you know, they will come along. Just be patient.

MR. RUSTE:

A supplementary question to the minister. What was the reason for not having the farm plates available at the start of the season?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. member's question is scarcely in an acceptable form. But if the minister wishes to answer briefly ...

DR. BUCK:

Couldn't get that orange and blue paint from the States.

MR. COPITHORNE:

Mr. Speaker, there was a licence plate distribution problem at the time. Now that has been corrected.

MR. TAYLOR:

A supplementary to the hon. minister. Is the government giving any consideration to issuing licence plates in the calendar year as, I believe, is being done now in Ontario?

MR. COPITHORNE:

Mr. Speaker, the year-end for the provincial government is March 31 and there has not been consideration of this type at this time.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

T4 Slips

MR. SORENSON:

Mr. Speaker, my question is to the hon. Minister of Consumer Affairs. Is the Department of Consumer Affairs considering legislation to protect the public from firms that buy up T4 slips for cash at a considerable discount?

MR. DOWLING:

Mr. Speaker, we are well aware of the problem the hon. member mentions. We have followed with interest some of the things now transpiring in other jurisdictions where this type of firm advertises extensively in the paper. We have enlisted the assistance of our consumer affairs branch to develop an ad that we might sit beside their ad so we can steer consumers in the right direction.

As to legislative measures, these often take quite a long time and the period when they would be of any use would then be past. We could consider it, however, during the summer recess and perhaps could have something for fall if we felt it was necessary.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Natural Gas - - - Prices

MR. DIXON:

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct my question today to the hon. the Premier. It is regarding the recent board ruling of the Alberta Energy Resources Conservation Board, where it favoured the export of gas by Pan-Alberta Gas, and my question relates to price.

Has the government under active consideration the setting of natural gas prices to approximate the current field value of Alberta gas as recommended by the chairman of the board?

MR. LOUGHEED:

Mr. Speaker, it's not the government's policy to establish other than general parameters in this direction. But to specifically answer the question, I would refer it to the Minister of Mines and Minerals.

MR. DICKIE:

Mr. Speaker, dealing with the question of natural gas prices and the changes that do occur, the hon. members will recall that last year the Energy Resources Conservation Board requested companies to file with them the pricing provisions of their natural gas contracts to June 30. In July they furnished us with a report and we made an announcement on natural gas pricing provisions at that time.

I'm pleased to announce in view of the changes that are taking place through renegotiations and new gas contracts, that they have requested now, through another directive, that they file the pricing provisions of those contracts and that is set for, I believe, March 31. We anticipate it will follow the same procedure as last time, but after the board has had a chance to analyze those pricing provisions it will submit a report to us to advise us if they meet the general parameters set by the government.

I think all hon. members should realize that in order to honour the confidentiality of pricing provisions in natural gas contracts, the companies submit their information in detail to the Energy Resources Conservation Board, but when the board makes that report to us, it just refers to the question of whether the pricing provisions meet the parameters of the Alberta government.

MR. DIXON:

Supplementary question to the minister. The reason I asked my question of the hon. Premier rather than yourself, Mr. Minister, was that this is going to entail a policy and my [question] is, how long can we expect the present freeze on the export of gas? Does it look like we will be exporting gas in the near future outside our province - I mean an additional supply?

MR. DICKIE:

Mr. Speaker, I think the hon. member first raised this question dealing with the application by Pan-Alberta which was approved by the Energy Resources Conservation Board. We have now received that report from the Energy Resources Conservation Board and that will be taken to cabinet for its consideration. The general policy has been that the government would consider applications for export if they meet the pricing provisions set by the government.

MR. DIXON:

My final supplementary on this question that is in mind. The board has recommended that you set the price and I was wondering, are we going to set the price in order that we can start exporting gas in the near future?

MR. DICKIE:

As I said, Mr. Speaker, that application will be coming before the cabinet. The cabinet will look at the question of export. We will also consider the pricing provisions and then make a decision at that time.

MR. NOTLEY:

Supplementary question to the hon. minister. In light of rising energy prices overall, has the government considered setting new pricing parameters for natural gas at the wellhead level in Alberta?

MR. DICKIE:

Mr. Speaker, in answer to that, I think if you take the board report dated August, 1971 that they did come in with the question of extending that over a period of time in which they escalated the prices when they set the parameters between 26 and 36 cents. Those parameters have been escalated as a result of that report. We haven't considered changing those parameters at this time in light of present changing prices.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Macleod followed by the hon. Member for Wainwright.

Rural Gas - Plastic Pipe

MR. BUCKWELL:

Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Telephones and Utilities. Could the minister inform the House on the supply and availability of plastic pipe for the rural gas program for this current year?

MR. FARRAN:

Mr. Speaker, I'm happy to be able to tell the House that as a result of a search by the government from one end of the continent to the other, we believe we have an assured supply of enough polyethylene resin to satisfy the requirements of the rural gas co-ops that will be constructing systems during 1974.

MR. FRENCH:

Supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Is there an increase in price of the pipe this year over last year?

MR. FARRAN:

Yes, Mr. Speaker.

MR. NOTLEY:

Supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Is the government considering any increase over the \$1,300 allocated last year under the initial plan for subsidy to the co-ops to bring in natural gas?

MR. FARRAN:

Not at the present time, Mr. Speaker. I think the hon. members should remember the original calculation was that it paid a farmer to switch to natural gas when he was paying 14 cents a gallon for propane. Since the average price for propane is now some 21 cents, it follows that an economical conversion point of \$1,700 is somewhat higher from the farmer's point of view.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Wainwright followed by the hon. Member for Lethbridge West.

Farm Pesticides

MR. RUSTE:

Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Agriculture. Is the government proposing any financial assistance in 1974 for rapeseed producers in the control of the Bertha army worm and similar pests and in view of the prediction of a grasshopper outbreak of serious proportions in various parts of the province?

DR. HORNER:

Mr. Speaker, in regard to the Bertha army worm, my information from my people who have studied the matter is that we should be in pretty good shape this coming year. We do have a substantial amount of chemical on hand and I think the situation is under control.

With regard to grasshoppers, the prediction is a much larger outbreak and here for at least one input cost in agriculture, Mr. Speaker, I can assure the House that we have enough chemical on hand. Indeed the price has gone down \$1.00 a gallon from last year and that's about the only input cost in agriculture, Mr. Speaker, I know of that has gone down.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Winter Games - Highway Improvements

MR. GRUENWALD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Highways and Transport. I wonder if the minister could tell us if his department has any plans to improve the highway between Pincher Creek and West Castle in preparation for the Southern Alberta Winter Games to be held in February of 1975?

MR. COPITHORNE:

Yes, Mr. Speaker, we have some plans for improving that road.

[Laughter]

MR. GRUENWALD:

That's a real good question. Could the minister just elaborate a little bit. Is he going to broaden the road? Is it going to be a hard-surface road? Is it going to be rerouted? Could you give us a little idea, Mr. Minister?

MR. COPITHORNE:

Well, Mr. Speaker, we are going to improve the alignment, improve some of the hills and there will be part of it will be paved. The part to the Beaver Mines and the balance will be oiled and will be kept in good condition during the games.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

School Trustees' Honoraria

MR. HO LEM:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct a question to the hon. Minister of Education on the subject of school trustee raises. Would the minister advise this House if legislation will be introduced this session to require school boards to have three separate readings and votes on matters of raises and honoraria for school trustees?

MR. HYNDMAN:

Mr. Speaker, no legislation, of course, has yet been introduced on that subject but I can advise hon. members that when the school act amendment act for 1974 is introduced, there will be amendments which relate to the question of requiring notice between the various readings of a resolution by school trustees to increase their honoraria. This has, of course, the benefit of giving the public and the media a full opportunity to assess their opinions and offer them to the school board while preserving the local autonomy of the board.

MR. HO LEM:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker, to the hon. Attorney General. Can the minister indicate to this House when the Alberta Supreme Court will rule on the case by Mr. Vladicka of Calgary questioning the legality of the Calgary trustees' authority to vote themselves a sizeable pay raise?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. member's question would have to be based on the assumption that the government has jurisdiction over the Supreme Court.

MR. GRUENWALD:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker, to the Minister of Education. Are there school trustees in the Province of Alberta now who are voting themselves excessive pay for being trustees?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Lac La Biche-McMurray followed by the hon. Member for Little Bow.

Hospital Facilities

DR. BOUVIER:

I would like to direct my question to the hon. Minister of Health and Social Development.

On March 5, the minister made an announcement of a projected 300 bed hospital for Fort McMurray to be built by 1985. My question is, on what projected population figure was such a decision made?

MR. CRAWFORD:

Mr. Speaker, the plans are such that in the event the population projections are not reached, the plans could, of course, be modified in the meantime. But that is based on an expected population of four beds per thousand population.

DR. BOUVIER:

Should the plans prove to be too little too late for Fort McMurray, are there any contingency plans to modify this?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. member will have to wait for his hypothetical questions to come to pass before he can ...

DR. BOUVIER:

A supplementary question then. Does the minister have any plans for other areas in the north that are in need of improved hospital facilities, such as Lac La Biche?

MR. CRAWFORD:

Mr. Speaker, in due course, as the government's priorities with regard to capital programs are made known, the hon. member's question will be answered. I don't want to mention to him that, of course, speaking of the north we have recently opened a new hospital at High Level in the last year or 15 months.

By using 1985 as a reference date with respect to the 300 beds, that there would be any possibility of being too little too late - I would say to him that that is not possible. All the reference to 1985 is meant to do is show that the planning is looking forward throughout that long a period - about a decade.

In the meantime it is a certainty that the year-to-year needs will be met.

DR. BOUVIER:

One last supplementary. Are there any plans for a hospital at Russellville?

MR. CRAWFORD:

Mr. Speaker, I would have to take that question as notice.

DR. BOUVIER:

I might explain that Russellville is the name being given to the town that is going to be built north of Fort MacKay.

[Laughter]

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Fertilizer Exports

MR. TAYLOR:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the hon. Deputy Premier and Minister of Agriculture. Is fertilizer now being exported from the province?

DR. HORNER:

Mr. Speaker, I would expect that some fertilizer is, in fact, being exported from the province because of previous contract commitments by the various companies involved. Further to the question asked by the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview - at least in a note to me - I have a further updated report which I could make available to both honourable gentlemen with regard to fertilizer.

School Bands - Subsidies

MR. R. SPEAKER:

Mr. Speaker, my question is to the hon. Minister of Youth, Culture and Recreation. Will the government make funds available for various Alberta school bands which are planning to travel to Expo '74 at Spokane?

MR. SCHMID:

Mr. Speaker, this question is presently being considered. We have had, I think, about 50 applications, and to treat all equally we hope to come up with a decision in about a week.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Student Loan Agreement

MR. WILSON:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct a question to the hon. Minister of Advanced Education. Is it the government practice to collect on guaranteed student loans in the event of death of the borrower?

MR. FOSTER:

I believe the regulations provide, Mr. Speaker, that in that event the loan may be written off.

MR. WILSON:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Can the minister advise why the student loan agreement, then, states that the full amount becomes due and payable on death of the borrower?

MR. FOSTER:

If the member would like to provide me with a copy of the agreement to which he referred, I would be happy to look at it.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Calgary Court House

MR. LUDWIG:

Mr. Speaker, my question is to the hon. Minister of Public Works. It deals with the activities around the main courthouse in Calgary. Have tenders for the addition of the four storeys to the courthouse been let?

DR. BACKUS:

Mr. Speaker, because of the trickiness of the situation, the addition to the Calgary Court House is being handled on a project-management basis and some of the contracts have been let. There are some in the process of being put out and they will be handled on the basis of project management rather than one single contract being let for the whole procedure.

MR. LUDWIG:

Supplementary, Mr. Speaker, will the project manager be a private firm or the Department of Public Works?

DR. BACKUS:

Mr. Speaker, the project manager in this case is the Department of Public Works.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Family Farms - Capital Gains Tax

MR. RUSTE:

Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Provincial Treasurer. Has further representation concerning the capital gains tax as it relates to the family farm and discussed here in a resolution last fall, been made to the federal government?

MR. MINIELY:

Mr. Speaker, the answer is yes. I think I have copies of the letters I sent to the hon. Minister Mr. Turner and could table them for the information of the members perhaps tomorrow or the day following.

MR. RUSTE:

A supplementary question. Has a reply been received from Mr. Turner?

MR. MINIELY:

The answer is no.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Calgary Millican.

Service Station Supplies

MR. DIXON:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct a question to the hon. Minister of Consumer Affairs. My question is regarding complaints I'm receiving from service station operators and truckers in the Calgary area in particular, complaining about the oil companies rationing certain petroleum products. They are not able to get them. I have in mind in particular, their talking about canned oil. I was wondering how the supply situation is? Is that the reason or what is the reason?

MR. DOWLING:

Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for giving me notice of this question. There are four major companies in Alberta which are of some major consequence. Two of those companies do manufacture their own products here. The other two import from the United States. Three of those four companies indicated there would be no rationing by their firms. The other one indicated they would cut back to 90 per cent of last year's supplies for theirs - for the people they supply.

The problems associated with the rationing are first of all, the cutback in energy supply in the United States, and the second one in that regard is the shortage of barium, which is a major additive used in making lubricating oil. The barium is in such short supply that there has had to be a special shipment into Canada from outside, from offshore.

The other problem, which is not of such a major nature, is the shortage of steel for the making of cans. However, the four majors assure me that there won't be [a] major problem regarding shortages of oil in cans this year.

MR. DIXON:

Mr. Speaker, there is one further supplementary question to the minister regarding petroleum supply. Is any progress being made by the refiners in our province on a uniform gasoline price for all outlets in Alberta?

MR. DOWLING:

Mr. Speaker, we have had some submissions by the ARA and we have also been in touch on a fairly regular basis - or people from the department have been in touch on a regular basis - with the major oil companies. There has been no solution to the problem at this date, however, discussions are ongoing. I suspect that it is a matter of a saw-off somewhere along the line eventually.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Lac La Biche-McMurray followed by the hon. Member for Wainwright.

Peace River Dam

DR. BOUVIER:

Yes, Mr. Speaker, I should perhaps direct this question to the Minister of the Environment, but he is not here. Knowing that the Premier is very interested in this subject and this refers to the proposed - for want of a better term - 'Barrett Dam' on the Peace River, what is the position of the government with regard to this dam?

MR. LOUGHEED:

Mr. Speaker, I do believe that by the very nature of the question and its importance, it should await the return of the Minister of the Environment who has been handling it on behalf of the government. There has been some correspondence with the Government of the Province of British Columbia with regard to the proposed dam and project. I'll take the matter as notice and pass it on to the Minister of Environment so he can respond to the hon. member.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Palliser Wheat Growers Association

MR. RUSTE:

Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Agriculture. Has his department or the government given a grant to the Palliser Wheat Growers?

DR. HORNER:

Mr. Speaker, the answer to that is yes, it is an ongoing grant.

MR. RUSTE:

Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the minister. What is the amount of the grant?

DR. HORNER:

The amount of the grant is, I believe \$5,000. It has relationship to the number of members situated in Alberta who belong to that organization.

MR. RUSTE:

A further supplementary question to the minister. How many members of the Palliser Wheat Growers Association are there in Alberta?

DR. HORNBER:

Well, Mr. Speaker, I don't have those figures right at my fingertips, but I will be glad to get them for him.

MR. NOTLEY:

A supplementary question to the hon. minister. Can the minister advise the Assembly whether any grants are given to the other two farm organizations, Unifarm and the National Farmers Union in Alberta? And pardon me, just to add a supplementary while I am on my feet, what would the criteria be for such grants?

DR. HORNBER:

Well, Mr. Speaker, we make substantial grants to both the other farm organizations and, indeed, to most of the commodity organizations in Alberta in relation to proposals that they might put before us that might be useful in expanding the primary objective of this government - to increase the net income to agricultural producers in Alberta.

Hudson Bay Route Association

MR. STROM:

A question, Mr. Speaker, to the Minister of Agriculture. Will your department be sending representation to the annual meeting of the Hudson Bay Route Association?

DR. HORNBER:

Mr. Speaker, I believe that my colleague, the Minister of Industry and Commerce, has been having somebody at the Hudson Bay Route Association and, indeed, we make a small contribution to that association as well.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Hanna-Cyren followed by the hon. Member for ...

Licence Plates - Automobiles (Cont.)

MR. FRENCH:

Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Highways and Transport and it's with reference to an earlier question that I had this afternoon with respect to the validation tags.

Will it be possible to have these validation tags replaced if they become detached from the licence plates, or will it be necessary to buy new registration tags?

MR. COPITHORNE:

Mr. Speaker, that's a problem that we have not come to grips with yet and we hope that it won't be a problem.

MR. LUDWIG:

A supplementary to the hon. minister. Will 1973 plates that have faded, or become obliterated or tarnished, be replaced without cost to the people applying for 1974 plates?

MR. COPITHORNE:

Well, Mr. Speaker, we have had no complaints as yet on that either.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

CONSIDERATION 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."

MR. CLARK:

Mr. Speaker, rising to take part in this debate, I should perhaps say to some of the hon. members, especially those on the other side of the House, they may find themselves in a situation of listening to the shortest lead-off address that there has been for a Speech from the Throne. However, Mr. Speaker, that will only happen if my voice runs out and I'll endeavour not to let that occur. I should simply say for the benefit of any of the members, Mr. Speaker, who last night may have watched the program, The National Dream, in the course of lifting my glass on a number of occasions this afternoon, I wouldn't want you to associate it completely with the same kind of material that was in the glass last evening in the course of The National Dream.

To get on now, Mr. Speaker, with the problem at hand. I would like to say first of all to the mover of the motion, the hon. Member for Ponoka, I appreciate very much the comments that you made and the concern that you expressed, the need for us to move ahead in the development of the Alberta tar sands in the Fort McMurray area. I also appreciated the comments that you made with regard to the ...

MR. SPEAKER:

Order please. With great respect, I would like to ask the hon. member to refrain from using the word "you" in referring to other members.

MR. CLARK:

Mr. Speaker, I was very pleased by the comments made by the hon. Member for Ponoka with regard to the agricultural situation as it affects his particular constituency.

Mr. Speaker, I was also impressed with the comments made by the hon. member from Sherwood Park. He touched upon the concern for the education for the handicapped and he also touched upon his concern - and I believe it to be real, certainly, Mr. Speaker - his concern for the development of the eastern slopes in this province. I think it is fair to say, Mr. Speaker, that the hon. members who moved and seconded the reply to the Speech from the Throne certainly have set a good tone for the debate which, hopefully, will follow.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to pass my respects along to you. I admire, Mr. Speaker, the sense of humour which the Speaker exhibits in this chamber. I also admire, Mr. Speaker, the sense of fair play. It's been my experience, Mr. Speaker, that as the life of a legislative assembly gets somewhat longer, the good humour of the members sometimes runs just a bit short. So in the course of the next year or perhaps two, Mr. Speaker, that good humour of yours may well be even more important.

Mr. Speaker, it seems to me that I would be remiss if I did not pay credit to the Lieutenant-Governor of the Province of Alberta, the Hon. Dr. J. W. Grant MacEwan.

Dr. MacEwan certainly has been, and is, a distinguished Albertan. He has made a remarkable contribution to agriculture and to the public life of this province. After a lengthy and very successful experience in university fields in Saskatchewan and Manitoba, Dr. MacEwan came to Alberta and was very active in the public life of this province. He was appointed Lieutenant-Governor in January, 1966 and certainly, Mr. Speaker, during that period of time has distinguished himself as perhaps the most travelled, certainly the most approachable, and quite likely the most popular Lieutenant-Governor that the Province of Alberta has seen since 1905.

[Applause]

I recall a particular experience that I had with Dr. MacEwan not very long ago. It was at the time when the new Governor General of Canada was about to take his position. The Lieutenant-Governors of the provinces had been asked to go to Ottawa to pay their respects to the retiring Governor General of Canada. Dr. MacEwan, when he got the

request, looked at his commitments and found that he had something like five or six commitments to meet with various groups across the province. A number of the groups were young people and, as an example of the kind of person Dr. MacEwan is, he held to those commitments he had here in the Province of Alberta. He didn't disappoint those young people at Warner or other areas across the province by going to Ottawa for the affair he had been invited to. Mr. Speaker, I think this exemplifies the attitude and the dedication that Dr. MacEwan has to that office which he so ably fills.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to move on to the energy conference now and say to the government and to the Premier that I and my colleague, the hon. Member for Drumheller, both appreciate very much the opportunity of attending that conference. I think it is indeed helpful to the members of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition to have the opportunity to sit in on a conference such as this. We better appreciate the problems of the other areas in Canada, and at the same time it gives us a broader point of view when we deal with these matters as they come up in this particular Assembly.

I would say, Mr. Speaker, that it is not my purpose this afternoon to become involved in a lengthy discussion regarding the energy crisis, as it is alluded to, that we face here in Canada. As far as the energy conference is concerned, Mr. Speaker, it will suffice for me to say perhaps two things. I felt that the presentation made by the Province of Alberta on the Tuesday, the first day of the conference, was indeed a good presentation and good arguments were put forward by the government of this province. Mr. Speaker, if I were to be critical at all, it would be that I had hoped very, very much that the Premier, in responding to the comments the Prime Minister had made, would have reminded the Prime Minister that in fact they are Alberta's tar sands located in Alberta and in Canada. For those members who attended the conference, for those members who watched the conference on television, you will recall that in the course of the Prime Minister's opening statement the Prime Minister talked of Canada's oil sands located in Alberta.

One other comment, Mr. Speaker, as far as the national energy conference is concerned. I think it is vital that as members of this Assembly we recognize that virtually to a man, ladies also, we agree on the basic proposition that it is necessary for the people of this province to continue to control the development of our resources. In the course of the numerous opportunities there will be for debate during the course of this session, Mr. Speaker, I'm sure many members will get back to that basic point. But it is worth repeating once again, Mr. Speaker, that the members of this Assembly, virtually to a man, agree with the need for the people of the Province of Alberta, through their government, to continue to control the development of our resources.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to spend just a few moments dealing with three or four specific situations or specific problems which face my constituency of Olds-Didsbury. I'm sure that from time to time all members of the Assembly like to take the opportunity to, shall I say, brag about the things they have in their constituency or the things they would like to have. It will suffice for me to say, Mr. Speaker, that the constituency of Olds-Didsbury is located in the heart or near the heart of the Edmonton-Calgary corridor, and this part of the province, the whole Calgary-Edmonton corridor, has indeed a very, very bright future.

Once of the basic problems, Mr. Speaker, that a number of the communities in the southern portion of the Calgary-Edmonton corridor face is a water problem. During the 13 years it has been my opportunity to be a member of this Assembly, I can recall the village of Crossfield, the towns of Carstairs, Didsbury and Olds, the village of Bowden and certainly also the town of Airdrie on various occasions having very, very serious water problems. I recall also, Mr. Speaker, that perhaps six or eight years ago plans were developed within the Water Resources Branch to look at the possibility of a pipeline to serve this whole area. For a variety of reasons - certainly one was that the communities involved weren't as concerned at that time - this pipeline never became a reality. I'm aware, Mr. Speaker, that the Minister of the Environment has met with representatives from the town of Olds and other representatives of the area, and I am certainly extremely hopeful that the government will be able to see its way clear at this time to move on a water line that would stretch from the Red Deer River down to and include services to the town of Airdrie. This would, Mr. Speaker, be of tremendous assistance in the future development of towns in that portion of the Calgary-Edmonton corridor.

Mr. Speaker, I would now like to move on and deal with the Speech from the Throne itself. In a Speech from the Throne of this magnitude, there are many sections that any member can agree with. I'm sure there are several sections, Mr. Speaker, in the Speech from the Throne that in fact all members agree with.

I'm particularly pleased to see that finally we are going to move in the area of the Northern Alberta Development Council, finally start to do something. I'm pleased to see, Mr. Speaker, that we are going to start to move in the area of some consumer education. I'm pleased, Mr. Speaker, to see reference to some of the problems of urban growth. I'm sure that members on both sides of the House will wait with a great deal of interest for

the announcement on the gas rebate program and how, in fact, that is to be handled. The Property Tax Reduction Program which already has been announced - and legislation will be coming forward - will be watched very closely by members on both sides of the House I'm sure.

I was particularly pleased, Mr. Speaker, to see the reference to the northeastern portion of the province and the reference to the oil sands guidelines. These guidelines are overdue. Mr. Speaker, such guidelines though must take into consideration the tremendous changing circumstances in which we live at this particular time. And these guidelines cannot be separated from the need for a regional planning approach or regional planning mechanism in the whole northeastern corner of the province of Alberta. Of course, the question that has to be asked is, how long will these guidelines be in effect? All members, I am sure, recognize the changing circumstances in which we live, but nevertheless these guidelines are appropriate. These guidelines hopefully, Mr. Speaker, will last a great deal longer than did the last oil royalty regulations and legislation approved by this Assembly not more than a year ago.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I would like to move on to a portion of the Speech from the Throne that deals with the Alberta Energy Company and the Natural Resources Growth Company.

It is not my purpose this afternoon or my intention to become involved in trying to speculate what is involved in that legislation before it reaches the chambers. But I must point out to the members of the Assembly that as soon as the government becomes involved in the kinds of investments that are being talked about - as far as the Alberta Energy Company is concerned and the Alberta resources growth company - as soon as the government becomes involved with public money in these areas, Mr. Speaker, then let's all recognize the fact, Mr. Speaker, that the political future of the government is tied up in the success or the failure of these companies, in their acceptance by the public in this province and outside this province and also on the stock markets of this country.

Let's also keep in mind, Mr. Speaker, that with this kind of political involvement, very possibly there is going to be a temptation on behalf of any government to want to give the Alberta Energy Company or the Alberta Resources Growth Company preferential treatment in comparison to companies outside the government, outside the investment portfolios. And this, Mr. Speaker, can not and should not be done.

In looking at the very earnest desire for Albertans to have a larger piece of the investment action in this province, it seems to me that once again it is not too late to go back and seriously consider a device or mechanism by which Albertans can be assisted in becoming direct shareholders in various companies within the province. And it is still not too late for us to go back and very seriously consider going that particular route. Certainly I and a number of my colleagues will have much more to say in that particular area, Mr. Speaker, between now and the time this legislative session comes to a conclusion.

I'd now like to spend a few minutes, Mr. Speaker, on three areas that the Speech from the Throne doesn't hit at all. I'd like to call them omissions as far as the Speech from the Throne is concerned.

When we look back at the first session of this particular Legislature, we heard a great deal about government thrusts in various areas. I would suggest, Mr. Speaker, that this speech is thrustless in several areas. This is a speech, Mr. Speaker, that I think is the result of a government which is very, very much concerned with the energy problems, and rightly so. But it is a speech, Mr. Speaker, written when the government seems to have real difficulty coming to grips with a number of the social problems or a number of the 'people problems' that are present in this province at this particular time.

The first area I would like to deal with, Mr. Speaker, is shelter or the provision of housing for Albertans. In the Speech from the Throne there is one paragraph, I believe, which alludes to housing, one paragraph out of eleven pages that alludes to housing.

I welcomed the government's announcement that there would be a public inquiry into the operations of the Alberta Housing Corporation. I must say, Mr. Speaker, that I wish the guidelines, the terms of reference for that inquiry had been somewhat broader. I wish the terms of reference of the inquiry were not so narrow, Mr. Speaker, that they would not allow individuals an opportunity to have a full look at the entire scope of operation of the Alberta Housing Corporation, because, Mr. Speaker, the Alberta Housing Corporation has a very vital role to play in this province. It has the role, hopefully, of making it possible for those Albertans who wish to, to have the opportunity of owning their own homes, of acquiring their own homes. And we on this side of the House, Mr. Speaker, in Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition, are anxious that the judicial inquiry looking into the operation of the housing corporation get to the bottom of all the charges and all the innuendos and all the statements that have been made. Mr. Speaker, we are interested that that be done regarding those innuendos and suggestions and comments that had been made prior to August, 1971. We are just as anxious that there be a look taken at those

previous things as we are anxious that there be a look taken at those things that have happened since August, 1971.

Mr. Speaker, the fact that there is an inquiry looking at the Alberta Housing Corporation is no reason why there is not a greater emphasis, a greater thrust, or why in fact there isn't a thrust at all in the Speech of the Throne as far as home ownership is concerned. It seems to me, Mr. Speaker, that the objective of public policy in this province should be home ownership for everyone who desires it. We are in some of the very best times, financially, that this province has seen, that in fact this country has seen. If we were to look around the various parts of the world I question whether there are many areas where people have it much better from a financial standpoint than we do right here in the province of Alberta and in Canada.

If there had been, Mr. Speaker, a statement in the Speech from the Throne dealing with home ownership, making it possible for the working man to acquire a home, making it much easier for the young married couple, Mr. Speaker, to acquire their home, we could have gone some distance, I think, towards dealing with some of the social problems that we face as a society.

Talking about just two of those social problems for just a moment - all members of this Assembly are very familiar with the problems of ever-increasing delinquency, not only in this province but regrettably across this country and this continent. As members of this Assembly, too, we cannot be very proud that the percentage of marriage breakdown in the province of Alberta is, in fact, the highest in Canada. As long as two years ago, three years ago, it was 50 per cent higher than the Canadian average.

Now I am not suggesting that by making it possible, or going a considerable distance in making home ownership available for those who desire it, this is going to solve all the problems of delinquency. It is not going to solve all the problems of marriage breakdown either. But I am sure, Mr. Speaker, that it would be one more step in that direction towards stabilizing the family and stabilizing that very basic unit of our society.

When we look at the question of the shortage of homes that are available, Mr. Speaker, and the reasons the price of housing has gone up so quickly, it would be easy to simply blame the provincial government, the federal government. It is very popular to blame the housing industry. It is very popular to say, well, it's partly the federal government's responsibility, partly the province's responsibility, and so on. But in its simplest forms, Mr. Speaker, the real problem seems to be something like the chicken or the egg. It seems on one hand, yes, there is a shortage of homes and as a result of the shortage of homes, more people trying to acquire homes than there are homes available, we have really got away from the advantages of the competitive enterprise system. There isn't the demand-supply relationship that there needs to be.

One of the big problems that especially the cities of Edmonton and Calgary face, and to a lesser extent rural municipalities and urban centres across the province face, is the problem of making it possible that there be serviced lots. Under our present circumstances, lots provided by the civic governments in Edmonton and Calgary must be available to the main trunk lines for water, sewage, transportation and utilities, available to an area which can then be up for development.

As I indicated earlier, it is something like the chicken or the egg question, Mr. Speaker, because the municipalities are short of money. They can only spend so much of their budget on providing the basic trunk facilities and then with the shortage of available lots, there really is no competition, even within the building community itself.

In fact, this kind of arrangement is an encouragement, Mr. Speaker, to the uneconomical and the unsuccessful builder in the home-building industry today, to that person who does nothing to enhance the reputation of the industry, to a person who does nothing to really meet the legitimate needs of people trying to buy homes.

I think it's well recognized that the standing stock or the standing number of homes available is really the issue that sets the price of homes. If there is an abundance, then this has a sobering effect on the escalating cost of new homes. It also, Mr. Speaker, has a sobering effect on the escalating cost of older homes. So we come to the question of how we can get more homes available. We can't do that, Mr. Speaker, until we have more serviced lots. And how can we get more serviced lots on the market so more homes can be built so that, in fact, we have a sobering effect upon the escalating costs of home ownership in this province? It becomes a matter of more financial assistance being made available to municipalities, perhaps designated to the areas of expenditures for water, sewage, utilities and transportation into new areas, into expanding areas, so that, in fact, there is a great number of additional serviced lots available.

I would have been very pleased, Mr. Speaker, to have seen included in the Speech from the Throne a commitment on behalf of this government that either there would be more money going to municipalities, earmarked, if you want, to making it possible for more serviced lots to be available; or perhaps a better route to go, Mr. Speaker, would be for the

province, along with the cities and municipalities involved, to call for proposals of development of main trunk services.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, to getting more serviced lots on the market, there are four other things that I believe this government should have done to encourage home ownership at this time, given the buoyancy of our economy, given the fact that the Provincial Treasurer has a surplus in excess of \$100 million this year, given the fact that we haven't even counted in that \$100 million surplus this year the export tax revenue we'll be getting from Ottawa.

One of the other things we could do, Mr. Speaker, would be to deal with the question of interest rates or mortgage rates for families - either low-income families or young, married families. One route we could go would be to reduce the interest rate in keeping with the earning capacity of the family. But perhaps a better route for us to consider and for the government to move on would be to say to young families or to low-income families, look, we've got confidence in you and we've got confidence in the future of this province. To say, very well, your payments should be \$240 a month. For the next five years, make your payments \$200 a month which, in fact, you can afford, and then at the end of five years or six years down the road, increase that monthly payment from \$200 to \$260 or \$270 when the earning capacity of the family has increased considerably. This kind of approach, Mr. Speaker, is being used in the United States and used quite successfully. So the second area I would have liked to have seen the government move on would be the area of mortgage and interest rates.

Third, Mr. Speaker, is an area which I recognize is outside the jurisdiction of the province, but nevertheless is an area we should concern ourselves with. It is to urge the federal government to remove the federal tax on building products, especially as it relates to home construction in this province.

A fourth suggestion, Mr. Speaker, is that interest paid in the monthly payments people make to Alberta Housing Corporation, CMHC or the large number of other insurance companies involved, that interest paid towards home ownership should be deductible from provincial income tax.

Fifth, Mr. Speaker, there should be a move to come to grips with the warranty question and also the performance question of construction of new homes. The Housing and Urban Development Association of Canada has done some work on the question of a warranty system for new homes. Frankly, I would much sooner see us try the approach that they are suggesting than I would want to see government at the provincial or federal level become involved in one more area. But there is a need for the province to encourage the federal government to move on the program as set out by the Housing and Urban Development Association of Canada.

Then, Mr. Speaker, within this question of warranty and performance, there is the question of those people who go out and put a down payment on a home and then are involved with a fly-by-night company which either disappears, goes bankrupt, or isn't heard of again. I'm told that the HUDAC people, in addition to suggesting their warranty system, have also given consideration to some sort of performance insurance. I recognize that the move on the warranty system and the performance insurance, as far as HUDAC is concerned, and the federal government, is out of our jurisdiction. But what I would urge the province to do right away - and we have the legislation to do this now - is that the Minister of Consumer Affairs should get his back up and go to cabinet and say, look, we've waited long enough on the question of people who are being 'taken' on the question of homes not being completed.

We should immediately establish a performance insurance guarantee which would have to be taken out by every home construction operator in the province. If the HUDAC suggestion comes along later on, okay. If we're satisfied with the guarantees there, then let the members of HUDAC go in that direction. But for those people who are not members, those people who are fly-by-night operators in the province or who, for some other reason, choose not to be involved in that area, then let us suggest to those people - in fact, let us make it mandatory - that they take out this sort of performance insurance so there is a guarantee to those people who are caught in binds we discussed at some length last session.

I'm sure, Mr. Speaker, the members of the Assembly will recall the evening we went until 4:00 o'clock in the morning discussing the estimates of the Attorney General's department. The big cry we heard on that particular occasion was, well, we can't deal with these fly-by-night operators because we haven't got the legislation. Well, we've now got the legislation; it was passed at the fall session. But now we haven't got the regulations. It's darn poor compensation to individuals who have got themselves involved with a firm such as this and then they find out that there is no protection from the government, especially after the legislation was enacted. In fairness to the minister, he tells me he is working on this. I just wish that the minister would commence to burn the midnight oil on this and get some regulations forward at the earliest possible date.

To conclude or to summarize, Mr. Speaker, my comments in the area of housing, in the area where I had hoped the government really would have had a major thrust this year - we should commit ourselves with public policy in this province to the concept of home ownership for everyone who desires it. We must recognize the need for more serviced lots and that's going to mean more money being made available by the government of the Province of Alberta to its municipalities or in cooperation with its municipalities to see that, in fact, there are more serviced lots available so the supply and demand situation can be taken advantage of by the consumer. There is a need also for a positive step in the field of mortgage rates. There is a need to encourage the removal of the federal tax on building products as it applies to houses. There is a need for interest rates on home payments to be made deductible as far as the province is concerned, there is a need to push this warranty scheme and there is a need for us to move now on performance insurance guarantees within the province.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to move to a second area in the Speech from the Throne that was conspicuous by its absence. This deals with the new department that was set up a year ago, the Department of Consumer Affairs.

Shall I say at the outset, Mr. Speaker, that the hon. Minister of Consumer Affairs is a very congenial individual. Perhaps we would have seen more in the Speech from the Throne if the minister weren't so congenial. I've heard the minister say that he doesn't want to build a real bureaucracy in that department. Well, if you look at the Speech from the Throne, that department isn't going to build anything. Other than consumer education, there is no reference in the Speech from the Throne to the area of consumer concern.

Moving along, Mr. Speaker, to the question of what the department can or should be doing. Very obviously, Mr. Speaker, the department should not pretend to be the defender of everyone, if it's going to function properly.

There are a number of groups in our society in this province that need the assistance of a department of consumer affairs. I list two groups particularly, the senior citizens of this province and those people in low-income groups. I think it's essential that during this early time of development the Department of Consumer Affairs clearly set out to the people across this province that the groups we are going to be concerned with are senior citizens and we're going to be concerned to a very great degree with those people in low-income groups. The department must stop trying to be everything to everybody. These groups, senior citizens and low-income groups, must be the prime target for the areas of the department to become involved in.

I'm reminded, Mr. Speaker, of the whole question of propane. One can't help but ask, what was the involvement of the Department of Consumer Affairs last year on the question of propane? Well, I think the most charitable thing we can say, Mr. Speaker, is that the department was conspicuous by its silence.

We passed legislation here in December, I believe it was the evening of December 10, when the Minister of Telephones and Utilities stood in his place, and so did the hon. the Premier. They stood in their places and said to the people in this Assembly and to the people of the Province of Alberta, either there will be a substantial reduction in the price of propane to consumers across this province by the end of December, or we'll implement the legislation which we are now discussing - or that we were discussing that evening.

AN HON. MEMBER:

What happened?

MR. CLARK:

What happened? Nothing happened. We got to the first of the year and then approximately the tenth day of the year the Minister of Telephones and Utilities said the propane companies of Alberta had been good corporate citizens and there had been reductions of something like two cents.

Where was the Department of Consumer Affairs all this time? Well it was conspicuous, definitely conspicuous by its absence.

Following this along, Mr. Speaker, we asked the Minister of Consumer Affairs several times, during the last session and this session already, about the kind of food monitoring this department was doing. We were assured last fall that the department was doing a considerable amount of monitoring. At this session we were told by the minister that, in cooperation with the Department of Agriculture, the department was doing very sophisticated monitoring. I know of a university student here who wrote the Minister of Consumer Affairs, and I would like to quote from the letter:

I would be interested in obtaining a copy of the results of such a monitoring and in particular, those results which deal with food, clothing, antifreeze and fertilizer

prices. It would also be appreciated if you could send me information pertaining to the actions which have been taken as a result of this monitoring.

This is the reply, Mr. Speaker, that we got from the minister, and I quote:

The information which we are obtaining in our monitoring program is for the purpose of examining trends and fluctuations of various items throughout the province, and also to compare data throughout the province with those compiled by Statistics Canada. At present Statistics Canada only collects data for Edmonton and Calgary. It is not for the purpose of supplying information to the consumers on prices of different products at specific stores.

Well, if the purpose of the monitoring isn't supplying information to the consumers on prices, then really, what's the whole exercise all about? We've yet to have some of these highly sophisticated reports tabled in the Assembly. I'm very hopeful that we will.

I must say I'm rather impressed with some studies that have been carried out by the Department of Agriculture in Manitoba; they publish a weekly summation of what's happening to food and farm prices in Manitoba. Looking this information over quickly, it deals with what's happening in the prices. It points out to the consumer what's happening in these areas and then the consumer can make what use he chooses from it.

The point I am trying to make, Mr. Speaker, is that really, to date, the Department of Consumer Affairs has not demonstrated its genuine concern for the problems of senior citizens and the problems of low-income groups. Really, to date the Department of Consumer Affairs appears to be going in a variety of different directions with no clearly set priorities at all.

I would urge, Mr. Speaker, that the Minister of Consumer Affairs, and in fact the government, look clearly at those areas where the public spends the greatest portion of its money, the areas of food, shelter, clothing, automobiles and perhaps fuel, and zero in on those areas. It so happens that the consumer price index of June '72 in comparison to June '73 points out that food went up 16 per cent, fuel went up 9 per cent, housing 6 per cent and clothing 5.1 per cent. Those are the areas to which the department should be bending its best efforts and, as I've said on several occasions, look specifically at the problems being caused, especially for senior citizens and those people on low incomes.

Mr. Speaker, food has been the first area of the greatest increase in the consumer price index. The rapidly increasing food prices are of a great concern, yes, to the members of the Assembly, to those people who buy it, in fact to everyone. But it's probably true, in fact I'm prepared to say that it is true, that as far as food is concerned consumers are still getting a bargain for what they are eating.

But the problem is very complex. Where are the additional costs to the consumer coming from? The supermarket chains say that they're not making any excess profit. The wholesale people say they're not making as much as they need. People in transportation and middlemen say they're not making excess profit at all. Very often we hear the world shortage blamed, and very often we also say, well you know, this is a federal government problem in a certain area, and we can only be involved in a portion of the area.

It seems to me, Mr. Speaker, that what we must look at is some way by which we get the information as it relates solely to Alberta, and then at that time perhaps there are some steps we can take in dealing with what's happening to the price of food in this particular province.

I suggest, Mr. Speaker, that what we should do is select a group of people, likely outside the government, with some expertise from the various departments, charge them with the responsibility of spending from now until the fall session looking at four specific questions and coming back to this Assembly in the fall with some very straightforward and frank recommendations.

The four areas I think they should look at, Mr. Speaker, in reporting back to the fall session of the Assembly, would be to what extent is Alberta dependent upon imported foods from outside the province and what can we do in these areas to reduce our dependency? What are the products that we're dependent upon from outside the province, and in what seasons of the year, and what can we do as a province to become less dependent upon food from outside the province?

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, I think we must ask this group to look seriously at the question of monopoly power. Is it a factor in food prices here in the province?

Thirdly, Mr. Speaker, we have to look at the question, what portion of the food dollar is going to what level of industry? We can't just do this starting in 1974, Mr. Speaker; we must compare it with a period of time four or five years ago to see where the big increases have been, to see the reason for them. Are they justified?

And lastly, Mr. Speaker, this group should look at the question of where the increases in food prices are really coming from. Who is agitating for these kinds of increases?

Mr. Speaker, in concluding this question in this area of consumer affairs, let me simply say that when the government is wrestling with the question of the energy freeze that supposedly is to come off at the end of this month, let us, as members of the Legislature, heartily recognize that what we do in the area of fuel prices is going to have a very pronounced effect on the agricultural input. If, in fact, the cost of the fuel to the farmer is going to go up considerably, and if we are not going to take that into account in the rebate program, then let's recognize that that is going to be another input - an input which the province and this Legislature can do something about.

Let's also recognize, Mr. Speaker, we are looking at the kind of decisions we are going to make about the fuel oil tax and, hopefully, the removal of it and the implications of the removal of the freeze. Let's also recommend that the truckers in this province - especially those people engaged in hauling agricultural produce and those people involved in hauling food - if there is a substantive increase in fuel to them, of course it is the consumer who pays it once again.

In fairness, Mr. Speaker, to the Speech from the Throne, I would have to say that I was pleased with the reference in it so far as consumer education is concerned. I would like to suggest to the Minister of Consumer Affairs that rather than the publication which we have here - which I recognize as the first publication from consumer affairs - that rather than this kind of publication in the future, you might look at dealing with specific cases that the department deals with in getting information into the hands of consumers which helps them deal with their specific problems. I would also point out the kinds of things this department has done and can do. Become very specific.

I am rather impressed with the report put out by the federal Department of Consumer and Corporate Affairs where, in fact, they actually deal with cases the department has handled, cases they have rectified, also cases they haven't yet been able to draw to a successful conclusion. I would hope to see in the future, in this publication, more of that kind of emphasis.

Mr. Speaker, I will now move on to a number of other areas I would like to touch upon just before I conclude. These areas, Mr. Speaker, deal with the government's action in the past few months so far as several departments are concerned. I would like to say, Mr. Speaker, that prior to this session there was considerable comment being made about the need for this session to refine some of the government programs. Well, I would suggest that there are some refinements that we might very seriously look at. I would like to touch on four areas right now.

The first area deals with the question of the advisory committees for the Department of Advanced Education. We have been told, Mr. Speaker, that these advisory committees are going to be set up and will be the public buffer between the government and the universities, that they are going to look at the real problems and be able to give really meaningful advice to the Minister of Advanced Education in areas of college affairs, education of Native people, further education, student affairs, technical and vocational education, and university affairs.

These committees, Mr. Speaker, are going to do this, supposedly, or we are asked to believe it, despite the fact, Mr. Speaker, that each committee can hold from two to six meetings a year. These committees which will deal with these important problems in advanced education, in an appropriate manner we are told, are committees that are restricted as to how many times they can meet per year - not more than six times - perhaps because they will become too well-informed.

Now it is this kind of foolishness that has caused some of the outcries that have come from post-secondary educational institutions in this province. I say at the outset there are no votes for the politician who wants and who says there should be more money spent in advanced or post-secondary education. I would say there are likely few votes for the politician who advocates more money being spent on the public, 1-12 system too.

But to get back to the point at hand. When we say we are going to have a buffer between the universities and the government and then we try to disguise that type of buffer by saying, but you can't meet more than six times a year, and you can only stay in the committee so many times a year, and the executive secretary will be supplied by the department - let's not kid ourselves. We are simply going through the motions. It is this kind of public distrust, this new kind of open government that is, at the very least, disappointing and highly questionable.

Another area, Mr. Speaker, that I noted with interest in the Speech from the Throne, in dealing with sharpening up of the government's action, is the reference towards the end of the speech to the establishment of the province-wide communications network - you are going to be able to call and get information.

MR. D. MILLER:

You get one side.

MR. CLARK:

Get one side. You get no side at all.

It wasn't very long ago that we phoned over to the Vital Statistics Branch, which shouldn't really be a very highly sensitive branch in the government. We asked the question, "What has been the growth of the public service in the last number of years?" Oh yes, they knew. They were in a position to say, "We will prepare the information and make it available." Then it wasn't very long before the Provincial Treasurer must have got wind of this because we got a very nice telephone call back saying, "I'm sorry, but we can't give out this information unless we have the approval of the Provincial Treasurer."

[Interjections]

So we talk about open government. It is a matter of open from one side.

Then we talk, Mr. Speaker, about the DREE agreement that has recently been negotiated. We are pleased that it has been negotiated but if I might use the term 'a conservative estimate', I am told that a conservative estimate would indicate that the Province of Alberta has lost between \$20 and \$30 million in the course of the last 15 months as a result of the attitude the government of the province has.

I am also told that the Government of Alberta, in the end, backed down on a number of issues. We might just as well have gone through that process some time ago so that, in fact, industry would have been settling in those northern areas of the province rather than going to Saskatchewan. It's strange now to have a number of Alberta and Edmonton-based business concerns talking about their operations over in Saskatchewan. In fact, they would much sooner deal in Alberta, but because of the DREE program and the failure of the two governments to get together, they haven't been able to move.

Then, Mr. Speaker, in the Speech from the Throne there were the improvements in the Property Tax Reduction Program. Members will recall that last spring, when the issue got quite hot in the House about the 7.5 per cent guideline, we had an announcement from the government side one afternoon that a municipal-provincial fiscal commission was being established. This was going to look at all the questions of municipal-provincial finance.

Yet when you talk to some of the people on that commission and ask them how they arrived at the conclusions as to the Property Tax Reduction Program - they didn't even know a decision had been made until they heard it on the radio themselves. That is an indication of how seriously the government took that commitment to this provincial-municipal fiscal commission.

Then, Mr. Speaker, there is the question of the penal institutions. I was going to say earlier ... but I guess my voice isn't going to allow me. I had some words for the Solicitor General but I will save those for a more appropriate time when I can perhaps go on a bit longer. Suffice it for me to say, Mr. Speaker, that there is no reference in the Speech from the Throne as far as the Solicitor General's department is concerned.

When we passed this legislation last fall, several members on this side voiced their support for rehabilitative programs. The most important thing that I have seen the Solicitor General's department do in the field of penal reform is sell the Bowden Institute to the federal government for \$2.5 million.

DR. BUCK:

They can't even get a warden.

MR. CLARK:

We've lost three.

We sold the Bowden Institute. You know where the 200 16- and 17-year-old young men who are in institutions in this province are now? They are serving their apprenticeships at Spy Hill in Calgary, and they are serving their apprenticeships at Fort Saskatchewan and the other provincial government institutions.

The minister will rise in her place, I am sure, and she will say that we are going to have segregation in those institutions. I say to you, go and talk to the wardens. They will tell you it bloody well can't be done.

My colleague, the Member for Calgary Mountain View, last year raised the question in this House about the separation of young offenders and longer term prisoners at Spy Hill

in Calgary. He wrote to the Attorney General. We raised it last session. I got the impression the government was duly concerned about what took place in that case. Yet if you go back and check the records at the court house in Calgary, you'll find that this same kind of thing has happened again this year. I'm told the people at the Bowden Institute weren't consulted until after the decision was made to sell the place. It may not be the minister's fault completely - perhaps she was poorly advised. But it certainly is the minister's responsibility as to what is happening with these young offenders, because it is a poor apprenticeship.

You know, there is a report by Dr. Downey entitled After Bowden or Belmont, and the report isn't very glowing about the successes at Belmont and Bowden. If you go back and check the way the information was acquired, they really didn't try to show a very good indication of what the Bowden Institute had done. They didn't really try to outline or set out the successes that have taken place.

The Dr. Downey who recommended that Bowden and Belmont hadn't been very successful was the same Dr. Downey who did this report entitled Alberta 1971, where he comments about the success or the lack of success of the penal institutions. They say that the rate of people going back to our institutions - of the number of people who are in our institutions now, two-thirds of those are not first-time offenders but have been there more than once. That is a sad commentary on the former government and it is a sad commentary as far as this government is concerned.

My colleague from Fort Saskatchewan talked about wardens. Yes, we have lost three wardens. One of the real problems here - and this is a criticism of the present government and the former government too - is that after one becomes a warden what chances are there for that person to move up? There has never been a warden in this province, as far as I can find out, who has moved from being warden of one of our institutions into a more senior position in rehabilitation in this province. Then when you compare the salaries that the federal government can offer to what the province offers, you will find that the wardens are paid two or three thousand dollars a year more in the federal service than they are in the provincial service.

Now granted, in the province we deal with people who are offenders up to two years, then they go into federal institutions. Nevertheless, it is at that stage that in many cases the die is cast as to whether that person, after his period of time in an institution, will come out and be a contributing member of society, or whether he will become a drain upon society. We can follow this matter up more perhaps in Public Accounts or on some other occasion.

Then one last area. I regret the Minister of Agriculture, the Deputy Premier, is not here. The members will recall that last fall the minister got up and announced a program to help farmers with their labour problems in building corrals and so on. In this program a farmer could get up to \$2,000 and the program ended at the end of April. Well, I don't know about the rest of you, but in central Alberta - and I have checked with several DA offices and also with the regional office of the Department of Agriculture - they were advised that this program was to be cut off at the end of January and it was supposed to go until the end of April. And you know the most difficult position in which this placed the district agriculturist - the regional staff of the Department of Agriculture. When they were asked by several farmers why, they said, we are sorry we don't know, we haven't been told but we hope the program is going to operate again next year. That is of very little concern to the young farmer, who rather than get his application in early, was told by the officials of the department, hold it until you get all your receipts and get it then and the thing will be done quickly. Well, that is another area that we might explore when the minister is back.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I see this speech as being a thrustless speech. It is a speech from the Throne of a government that is overoccupied with an important area of energy, the government which isn't giving sufficient concern to many of the legitimate problems. I'm thinking in terms of housing as one area, certainly of the whole field of rehabilitation and penal reform, certainly of the commitment of the Department of Consumer Affairs and the farce they have made out of this propane issue, saying two or three days before the House opens, it is under the Public Utilities Board hopefully so we can't discuss it too much in the House. I don't think that will work.

The last point I'd like to make is this, Mr. Speaker. Hopefully when the budget comes down, there will be some major steps in these areas. Hopefully, despite the fact these areas have been neglected in the Speech from the Throne, the government will be persuaded to make sizeable amounts of money available for housing in this province. Hopefully the government will show its real concern in the field of consumer affairs. Hopefully the government will have something substantive in the field of rehabilitation. Hopefully, Mr. Speaker, the government will have something substantive to deal with the whole system of welfare in this province. After the fall session last year, there was an emphasis by the Premier, when he said we are now going to spend considerable time revamping our welfare system in the province. There is a system that is maligned and a system that needs it. That certainly is another area.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I look forward to the budget and hope the budget has a great deal more thrust and sense of direction than has the Speech from the Throne.

MR. DRAIN:

Mr. Speaker, it is quite evident that someone has to be listened to, so you may as well listen to me. I would begin, Mr. Speaker, by congratulating the hon. Member for Ponoka and the hon. Member for Edmonton Ottewell on their very worth-while contributions to this debate. I confess, however, that I do not quite share the ecstasy that the hon. Member for Edmonton Ottewell showed in his closing remarks in reference to this particular Speech from the Throne. However, it does have merit because it does mention the Crowsnest Pass. That in itself Mr. Speaker, is something that makes this, in my view, a very comprehensive and important document, one on which I would be prepared to discourse in a not particularly critical manner.

However, Mr. Speaker, there are some particular areas that I would touch on. We see, as a result of economic conditions, the good foundation developed by the former government and also the carrying of the ball by this present government, that Alberta is moving very rapidly into a new era, an era, Mr. Speaker, of great growth, of economic progress. Somehow, I have some slight misgivings. There is a social and economic cost that has to be reckoned with. I would be very much an advocate of a growth pattern that would define basically how far and how much, how fast and where to. This, of course, is quite difficult.

It is mentioned in the Speech from the Throne that there are, indeed, limitations on manpower in the Province of Alberta and resources to make this growth possible. We are very aware of the inflationary implications of shortages. I can mention antifreeze for instance, which suddenly shot up from \$2.15 a gallon to \$8.00 a gallon in the Province of Alberta. I could even ask the Minister of Consumer Affairs why this did not occur in the State of Montana, where it is still selling for \$2.25 a gallon. Someone is ripping off some place. So it would appear that in the future there should be some particular authority and power vested in the Minister of Consumer Affairs by legislation which would permit investigation and identification of these particular situations.

I am concerned with a situation that occurred in my constituency where a contracting company that had been involved in building construction was forced into bankruptcy, with a resulting loss to quite a number of home-owners who had made deposits. I felt very sorry about one particular family who had come from British Columbia and who had made a deposit of \$8,000 on a prefabricated house. They stopped in to see me and to tell me about this. I said I sincerely regret that, in my view, all you can look forward to is whatever recourse you might be able to achieve through the processes of the bankruptcy court. My regret was based on the fact that the money these people lost was hard money. It was working people's money. It was money that these people had sweated and worked for to finally achieve a home for themselves and it was gone, disappeared completely.

So there certainly should be an insurance policy of some form, some sort of contractors' contingency policy filed with the Department of Consumer Affairs that would preclude such unfortunate situations arising. I realize it is vital to the home-building industry in this Province of Alberta that the operations of the small building contractor not be a mass of red tape to the extent that it would not permit the development of these particular efforts. Everyone in the contracting business knows that you start out by a crawl and eventually a walk and, if you are successful, you're away to the races.

It's all very well to talk about a bonding system but I might point out to the hon. members that anyone who gets a bond from a bonding company in the Province of Alberta has got to be so 'lily-pure' and so white and so free from flaws that he doesn't actually need the bond. They are not about to stick their necks out for anybody. You can't blame them because the cost of a bond varies from one-quarter or one-half of one per cent. So therefore it would appear there is a rule for the Department of Consumer Affairs to use in this particular direction, some method of trust-funding through an assessment on all those in the construction business or some particular area that would, in fact, protect those people who are affected.

I will flip the page and see what I see there, Mr. Speaker.

Reference is made here to an up-dated, comprehensive, coal mining safety act to be presented for your consideration. I assure you that I do acclaim this very much and very loudly. However, I must also make one particular point in this particular area and that is there has been, in Canada, a great tendency to buy American products, American legislation - not realizing especially in the area of The Coal Mine Safety Act that the Province of Alberta is, in fact, 50 years ahead of what they had in the United States. There were no safety regulations. So if this is an import of USA standards which exist at the present time and that the cloth will then be cut to fit Alberta mining conditions, I would anticipate that there will be some particular difficulties with that.

I express my approval on the educational property tax removal from the home-owners and farmers. This is something that will be some contribution towards reducing the cost of living for our people in the Province of Alberta.

Also the \$15 deductible for the senior citizens; this is one gesture. However, at the present accelerating rate of inflation, brought about primarily by the acceleration of demands, by the desire of everyone of us to take more out of the economy than we put in, there is no way, Mr. Speaker, that any of those on fixed incomes will, in fact, be able to defend themselves.

I note there is \$100 million that is being increased in agriculture towards implanting many new programs. I note in my constituency, that the price of land has doubled in seven months. I wonder whether this has anything to do, in fact, with the availability of credit. Just what is the reason? If the price of land accelerates at the prevailing rate, the only accompanying factor that would make it feasible to go into the business of farming would have to be the acceleration of the price of farm products at a comparable rate. Certainly it would require something more than we can expect. I would think that somehow, someday, there should be a study and an evaluation made as to the causes of this fantastic rise in the selling price of land. It may well be the evolution of our society and the appreciation of the prices we now have that, in fact, enhances this value. However, I would have misgivings about borrowing money at the prevailing rate and going into the business of farming.

The Water Resources Act I understand will be upgraded and I might mention that there are also, in the Province of British Columbia at this time, some efforts being made to reopen the Columbia River Treaty. I think possibly the Province of Alberta should be monitoring this particular situation. If the possibility to think in terms of picking up additional water supplies from southeastern British Columbia for the benefit of southern Alberta did occur, it should be explored.

I will reserve my judgment on the guidelines for the eastern slopes until they are available. This particular area is the people's heritage and it should be respected as such. Any commercialization that is done there should certainly, I would think, be very much under the purview, if not under the total management, of the government of the Province of Alberta.

Now, coming to the frosting on the cake in this particular speech, I refer to:

The province will contribute \$2.75 million or up to 25% of the cost towards neighbourhood improvement programs in many Alberta urban areas. Commencement of special planning programs for the Crowsnest area, in consultation with local citizens, will proceed.

This comes, Mr. Speaker, from a study which has been going on in the Crowsnest Pass for four years. To outline the reasons therefor, I might point out some of the geographical and developmental areas in the Crowsnest Pass.

The Crowsnest Pass is a narrow corridor between the mountains. In the area are four or five settlements which are separated by a very narrow distance and are under the domain of five local governments with the resulting conflict of interests and local problems. How to overcome this has been discussed with all of the councils in the Crowsnest Pass. The final result of the conclusion was that the ball be passed to the government in Edmonton with the object of having some value judgments made on it and, in fact, to see what could be accomplished, the object being, of course, to solve some of the differentials in the physical structure of the various areas, to arrive at an equitable tax base that would be in line with the other particular areas of the Crowsnest Pass, and to enable some of the deprived areas such as 'Bushtown', Hillcrest and Bellevue to achieve some of the amenities that should be considered as rights during the twentieth century, in this particular age of affluence. I speak, Mr. Speaker, of water and sewage for these particular areas, something that we do not have in 'Bushtown' and it is a very important thing.

I wish to express my appreciation of the fact that we were favoured in the Crowsnest Pass by a visit from the ministers of Municipal Affairs, Highways and Transport, Education, Industry and Commerce, as well as the Premier and, of course, the Minister of the Environment.

At one time in medieval history, Mr. Speaker, there was a great cardinal, and I think his name was Wolsey. When he went out amongst the masses, in order not to have his noble nostrils corrupted by the sweat from ordinary people, he carried in his hand an orange filled with spices. He periodically sniffed this particular orange and thereby was able to maintain his total halo of purity. However this did not occur in the situation of one particular minister who saw a little bonfire of smoke coming out from a tiny burner in that particular area, Mr. Speaker, and was affronted.

I speak now about the concern I have about the emission controls that have been given to industry. The good news for the Crowsnest Pass is, of course, this study. The bad news is, will the study be necessary if these particular orders are finally forced to the utmost?

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I would urge, in the matter of emission controls, that they be proceeded with. They should be proceeded with as of necessity, but not any faster than the people who are affected by them can overcome the difficulties they are faced with.

I can say that the Minister of the Environment has certainly been put in a rather delicate situation when we see press reports saying the emission on one square mile in the town of Coleman is 475 tons. Working that into the life of the mine we would have 2.9 feet of coal covering the entire area. If you go there it isn't there, so I think the emission controls should probably do a rerun, because in fact it is not there.

The operators of these particular industries, as I mentioned, Mr. Speaker, have shown a great willingness to cooperate and are proceeding with the modifications they have to make, with as much acceleration as their economic circumstances permit them to travel.

I'm not too concerned with industries. I talk about the 530 employees of Coleman Collieries whose average income is around \$12,000 a year and I suggest that if by government action any of these occupations is particularly knocked out, it should not be done until other jobs of comparable value are available in the area. This is very important, Mr. Speaker, because there is a responsibility. There is a responsibility on the government side and there is my responsibility in bringing this before you.

I think there is another particular area that should be looked at in the matter of formulas. When an industry is, in fact, threatened in any given area as a result of government action, whether this industry should be forced to close should be given as an option to the people by some form of vote. This would make it fair. Then if the people so decide that this is not the way it should go, they should have that particular option.

We also have, referring to Pincher Creek, a situation where we have a hospital located on a very high hill with very difficult access. The hospital itself was an extension of an old building built in 1907. It was built in that particular area without any regard for accessibility or planning. Faced with a situation where the older portion of the hospital has been condemned by the fire commissioner and must be removed this year, it has been indicated by the Hospital Services Commission that their intention is to look at the processes of renovation versus the building of a new hospital.

I sincerely hope that all the particular aspects of the problems will be looked into very, very carefully. Consideration must be given to the long-term plan and the desirability of a new hospital in a location where it can accommodate people, and also looked at from the standpoint of future developments and the ploughing-in of a capital asset which would benefit the area to a great degree. I look forward with considerable anticipation to discussing this particular matter with the hon. Minister of Health and Welfare and to hearing what he has to say about this.

I certainly welcome the implications of the remarks in the Speech from the Throne on the guarantees of fairness and equity including the 'home for a home' concept. There certainly will be parts of the Crowsnest Pass, as a result of the relocation of No. 3 highway, that will affect peoples' homes. Some of these homes, in fact, represent the only savings these particular people have. If this proposal gives the Government of Alberta the flexibility to deal with this in a proper manner, this will be gratefully appreciated.

I wish to draw to the attention of the Minister of Highways and Transport the urgency of settling once and for all the when, how, why and where of No. 3 highway. The town of Coleman was offered the possibility of a very major shopping centre development. They were unable to tell the principals what type of access there was. There was no way the principals could proceed with this particular planning project until the final word was given on the location of No. 3 highway. This is just one instance. There are many others. There are people who want to build houses. There is the position the town is facing as to what direction their subdivisions could go, how their services should be expanded.

All of these particular things are things that should be considered and should have an answer, an answer that is not dragged or pushed under the table or buried in the sand, but something that requires a decision - in fact, a 'now' decision. I hope sincerely that the Minister of Highways and Transport is listening.

MR. COPITHORNE:

No.

MR. DRAIN:

Is the answer no? It will be interesting to see the development of this timber development-forest production fund, whether a program of hybrid breeding of trees will accrue in order to enhance the timber supply.

I thank you, ladies and gentlemen, for your sufferance.

MR. STROMBERG:

Mr. Speaker, may I extend to you, sir, congratulations and best wishes from the people of the Camrose constituency. You have conducted yourself in a most auspicious fashion and when the people of this province compare the decorum of this Assembly to other assemblies across Canada, you, sir, are to be commended.

Mr. Speaker, two years ago I reported through you in the Throne speech debate the state of affairs in the Rose constituency, the depressing conditions on our family farms, in our villages, in our towns and especially the migration of our young people. The conditions and problems that we were experiencing were numerous and some of the major ones were, Mr. Speaker, the funding of our college, the lack of adequate roads, the flooding of thousands of acres of prime farm land. We had over 12 AGT exchanges where three would have been sufficient. We had a major deficit in the operation of the Daysland Hospital, lack of industries for our towns and, of course, the number one problem at that time in Alberta, the rural-urban migration.

Mr. Speaker, after years and years of the government ignoring us in the Camrose constituency and because of conditions in my constituency, the people voted for a change. And also, Mr. Speaker, when I signed my nomination papers...

AN HON. MEMBER:

They'll do it again, too.

MR. STROMBERG:

... I realized the problems that I might be inheriting, and some of these problems I would be inheriting would be, of course, the members opposite me. But I was fortunate in having the help and cooperation of individuals, organizations and elected bodies working together with members of this government, and we have accomplished many things beneficial to our constituency.

Some of the highlights, Mr. Speaker, were: financial aid of over \$200,000 to the Camrose Lutheran College; the Agricultural Development Corporation moved to Camrose; we had the beginning and the start of construction on Highway 953 east from Bashaw; we had 24 miles graded and 12 miles paved on a correction line.

DR. BUCK:

Sounds like pork barrelling to me.

MR. STROMBERG:

A good example of MLAs getting out and working. I have got a list here for Clover Bar too, Mr. Speaker. That's not been done.

We also had new pavement from Heisler north to Daysland and from Heisler south to Forestburg. And speaking of Forestburg, we've got a drivers' examiner in there, and also next Saturday the official opening of the Forestburg Agricultural Society arena. Mr. Speaker, we have a new treasury branch for Daysland, another one announced for Forestburg, a provincial building for Bashaw with a treasury branch facility. The deficit of the Daysland Provincial Hospital has been rectified.

Grants of over \$5,000 for the Museum Society of Camrose; another \$20,000 cultural grant for the Sons of Norway lodge; and we have formed this year two natural gas co-ops in our area. AGT has been busy. We've consolidated three areas. We have seen, Mr. Speaker, another \$60,000 in matching grants in ditch improvement for the Daysland-Bowden Drainage Ditch Association and so cleared up a problem once and for all that's been there for the last 50 years.

This winter, Mr. Speaker, the village of Strome, through no fault of their own, saw their water mains deteriorate in less than 10 years because of the acidity of the soil. With 64 major breaks in less than two years and a \$110,000 payment remaining on their debentures, this village was facing bankruptcy. The government has arranged for a \$60,000 winter works program and I believe is partly responsible for the \$19,000 contributed, along with free engineering by the engineering firm involved. Mr. Speaker, last week

there was an order in council where the co-lease under Big Knife Provincial Park was purchased at cost.

And speaking of Big Knife Provincial Park, this was a show piece for government planning in the whole area of the provincial parks. Since taking office, we have discovered a \$10,000 bridge, hidden from view, going from nowhere to nowhere. We were shocked that 160 acres of this park was held, by lease, by a coal company, that two-thirds of this beautiful and unique park is owned by a power company for future flooding.

Mr. Speaker, I almost forgot the \$380,000 for the Daysland Lions Club modular senior citizens' village, funded by Alberta Housing. And of course my pride and joy, the first ethnic sign in the province, and probably in Canada, erected by Camrose.

DR. BUCK:

How's the road coming to ...

MR. STROMBERG:

I beg your pardon? Mr. Speaker, some of the projects we are currently working on are a provincial park for the south end of the Clover Bar constituency; the continuation of course, of more paving on our secondary roads and lake stabilization for Driedmeat Lake and Ferintosh Lake; a provincial park for Driedmeat Lake and an alfalfa pelleting plant. We need a water supply for Meeting Creek and a nursing home for Bashaw, and especially the saving of the livelihood of 20 farmers who are faced with the proposed flooding of the grazing lands in the Bittern Lake area.

DR. BUCK:

How are you making out with gas produced there, Gordon?

MR. STROMBERG:

I'm glad you brought that up. That's later in my speech. Mr. Speaker, during the blowout of the Sun No. 2 well in the Wetaskiwin constituency, the Minister of Agriculture and two other members of his cabinet were down there immediately - the MLA. They stayed there for over a day but the member for Wetaskiwin did not show up.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to bring to your attention, also the Minister of Mines and Minerals, the dissatisfaction of freeholders to mineral rights to the unitization of the Bruce-Holden gas field. Being that the subject is too complicated to deal with here in my remarks, Mr. Speaker, I would hope the hon. Member for Innisfail would reintroduce his resolution of last year dealing with this legalized form of stealing.

Also, Mr. Speaker, to the Minister of the Environment, with the amount of funding that is being spent, and rightfully so, on irrigation projects in southern Alberta, I would strongly urge that his budget give consideration to east central Alberta and to northern Alberta for lake stabilization, drainage, and water diversification. If we are to give serious consideration to attracting industry in rural Alberta, adequate water supplies must come first.

Mr. Speaker, for the last six years the government has been promising a policy for private colleges. The private colleges have waited patiently while their grant structure has dropped from 85 per cent of funding to now about an average of 66 per cent. Mr. Speaker, when one realizes that our private colleges build their own facilities, stock their own libraries at no cost to the treasury or to the province, when one realizes if there were no private colleges, the cost of educating these students would cost the Department of Advanced Education millions. When one realizes that the private colleges are an industry, are a part of the fabric of that community, then surely the colleges should be allowed to grow and prosper.

Mr. Speaker, when I reflect on the last two years of phase one and phase two, I believe that the major thrust of this government has been in bringing government to the people. No longer are delegations coming to meet with government with that old hat-in-hand attitude.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Oh, oh.

MR. STROMBERG:

This government has been going out to meet the people. How many times has the Minister of Agriculture and the Minister of Culture, Youth and Recreation been in my constituency? More times than on the fingers on my hand, and that is not this hand.

Fifteen ministers have been in my constituency. How many did we see in the old days? I think we did see Mr. Taylor's picture one time in a local paper.

Mr. Speaker, I recall the Minister of Highways visiting our area to take a look at our road situation. He toured my constituency in a 1952 half-ton without shock absorbers. The minister must have got the message because we're certainly getting our fair share of pavement now.

But seriously, Mr. Speaker, this is what government is all about - a government in action. Mr. Speaker, I'm proud to be part of that action.

MR. LUDWIG:

We're trying to bail you out.

MR. SPEAKER:

Are you ready for the question? Having heard the motion by the hon. member ...

MR. KING:

Well, Mr. Speaker, unaccustomed as I am to public speaking, I really did want the opportunity to make a few remarks although I hadn't thought that I would be making them now. I really did want to reply to some of the remarks made by the hon. Leader of the Opposition.

As someone who is interested in housing, I confess to having been very disappointed by his remarks about the housing situation in Alberta. I think that if his comments on housing were an indication of his interest or his concern generally, we might have been better off to have heard about housing from the hon. Member for Calgary Bow and to have heard about consumer affairs from the hon. Member for Calgary Millican and agriculture from any one of a number of hon. members.

I would like to make a few comments about the housing situation because, with all due respect, I think it was done an injustice this afternoon. The cost of housing is the result of a number of different influences, some of which were mentioned and some of which were not. The first, reasonably enough, is of course the cost of land. The cost of land is affected in various ways, depending on whether or not that land is located in the existing core of a city, in the developing suburban areas of a city or in the rural areas adjacent to the city in the way of acreages.

I gathered the hon. Leader of the Opposition was suggesting that the cost of land could be controlled by greater government intervention, and I think particularly he referred to the servicing of land. I'd be very interested to hear the comments of the hon. member, Mr. Wilson, about this. He has had, historically, some connection with a large Calgary developer, and I can remember that a couple of years ago Carma developers made public some information that it's too bad the hon. Leader of the Opposition didn't have a chance to read. They suggested that as between servicing land by the municipal government or by the private developer, the cost was 17 per cent greater if it was done by the municipality ...

Excuse me, I might have something of the same problem the hon. leader has.

The cost of servicing land, according to their information, was approximately 17 per cent greater when done by the municipality as opposed to work done by private developers. If the hon. leader thinks our housing situation can be improved by increasing our costs 17 per cent, then I'd be interested in a further elucidation of Social Credit economic theory.

AN HON. MEMBER:

How about Conservative listening?

MR. KING:

One of the things he didn't mention that I would be very interested in hearing some comment on, would be a tax on the capital gains that we realized on speculation on land. In Edmonton, recent experience has been that in the development of suburban land the cost of raw land can go from approximately \$1,000 an acre to approximately equivalent to \$45,000 an acre by the time that it's developed. Rural acreages are going from approximately \$1,000 an acre, raw land prior to subdivision to approximately \$6,000 an acre at the time of subdivision.

Another component which really affects the cost of housing is obviously the degree to which we improve our housing technology. Housing technology in western Canada

particularly has been wood-based, and one of the interveners or possible interveners in the housing situation might conceivably be the federal government.

The cost of spruce lumber per 1,000 linear feet when used in housing construction - board feet, sorry, you're right - has gone from approximately \$70 in the spring of 1972 to around \$230 in the spring of 1974. In large measure that can be attributed to a decision made by the Government of Japan in 1972 that, commencing in 1972, they would build 2 million new housing units a year for 10 years using western wood-based technology.

When the Government of Japan cast about to find the wood they need to build houses, they looked to Indonesia, they looked to New Zealand, they looked to the United States, South America and they looked to British Columbia. Of all the potential markets that could serve Japan, British Columbia is the only one which, at the current time, combines the necessary product to serve the market with the necessary business organization to deliver the product. It is because of the demand created by the Government of Japan that the cost of lumber has gone up 300 per cent in two years.

By way of a slight digression, I find this really analagous to the current energy situation. Here we are told by the federal government that an export tax is necessary in order to preserve a product for the people of Canada which is essential to their livelihood, that is, energy. And that if the decisions of another national government sufficiently threatens our supply of that product [so] as to greatly increase its price, then that justifies the imposition of an export tax in order to protect our own natural products.

Now if that's a legitimate argument when you talk about energy, then how much more legitimate is it when you talk about one of the renewable resources of the Province of British Columbia, that is to say, lumber? I would really like to know, if we need energy to survive in this country, how much more do we need lumber for housing in order to survive? If the argument is legitimate in the case of energy, why hasn't it been made for lumber?

I'm sorry to have digressed, but one of the things the hon. member didn't mention, which I think has to be put on the record, is the need for innovative research in the development of new housing technology. Nothing has happened in terms of using concrete, steel and modular housing to provide housing at reasonable cost for the people of this province or any other province. The standards of the Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation should be seriously looked at. You cannot finance, through Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation, a home of less than 900 square feet because that's below their minimum housing standard. And yet each and every one of us can think of many people, young married couples starting out who have no children, or old retired couples whose children have grown up and moved out of the home, for whom a house of less than 900 square feet would be entirely adequate. If people had an opportunity to start with a smaller home, to develop their equity in it, to take their equity out of a small home and to move as they could afford it into a larger home, we'd do a lot, I think, to improve the housing situation in this province.

One of the points I don't think the hon. member has considered when he talks about reducing the price of housing in Alberta at the present time, is the really serious problem that it's going to create for people who have only recently purchased housing. What do you do about the person who, in February of this year, bought a house on the market at 22 per cent more than he would have paid a year ago? If you do anything significant to reduce the cost of housing henceforth, what do you do with the millions of dollars, the hundreds of millions of dollars, in equity that may be lost by young people my age who, within the last year or 18 months, have purchased housing?

The last thing I think that is insufficiently appreciated is that someone, perhaps the Institute of Law Research and Reform, should do a study of what we mean by the term ownership as it applies to housing. I think that everyone's concept of ownership is going to have to be thoroughly reviewed. I think that psychologically and socially, individually and as a community, we're just going to have to reconsider what we mean when we use the term ownership, because ownership is so much constrained by society now, and it's going to be so much more subject to ...

[Interjections]

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please. The hon. member has the right to be heard in comparative silence.

MR. KING:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I'm within 30 seconds of closing.

I think that what is meant by ownership has got to be re-evaluated by each and every one of us because it is subject to constraint now. It is going to be increasingly subject

to all kinds of social and political constraints. I think that, frankly, what all of us have grown up to understand by the term is no longer going to be with us. We are living the end of an era when we freely throw around the term "home ownership" without considering its real meaning.

Mr. Speaker, that's the sum of my remarks. I just wanted to react very briefly to what the hon. leader said earlier. Thank you very much.

MR. SPEAKER:

You have heard the motion by the hon. Member for Ponoka, seconded by the hon. Member for Edmonton Ottewell. Are you ready for the question?

[The motion was carried.]

MR. HYNDMAN:

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

[The House rose at 5:27 o'clock.]