

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ALBERTA

Monday, March 18, 1974

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

PRAYERS

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

MR. HINMAN:

Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to introduce to you and to the House, 52 members of the Grade 6 class from the James Gibbons School. They are accompanied by Mr. Gordon Oswald, Mrs. Belke and Mr. Penny. These boys and girls are from the very fine constituency of Edmonton Meadowlark. I would ask them to rise and be recognized by the House.

MR. GETTY:

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce to the House a group of Grade 6 students from the Richard Secord School. These students are a large group and they are in both sides of the Assembly, in the public gallery and the members gallery. They are accompanied by Mrs. Heggerud, Mrs. Coulter, Mrs. Bowen, Mr. Patrick and Mr. Farrell. I would ask them to stand and be recognized by the Assembly.

TABLING RETURNS AND REPORTS

MR. MINIELY:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to file with the hon. members of the Assembly the report for the year ended March 31, 1973 on Remissions and Write-Offs as required under The Financial Administration Act.

MR. YURKO:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to table the annual report of the Department of the Environment.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Mackenzie Valley Gas Line

MR. CLARK:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct the first question to the Premier, and ask the Premier if the application dealing with the Mackenzie Valley gas line which will presently be presented to the National Energy Board, has the endorsement of the government of the Province of Alberta.

MR. LOUGHEED:

Mr. Speaker, I don't think it is our appropriate position to endorse a specific application of that nature, and particularly since we do not have, nor have we seen, the actual terms of the application.

Our position has been, and our statement to the first ministers conference on energy [was] that we would endorse a project which moved natural gas out of the Mackenzie delta area provided it met the necessary environmental and Native rights considerations.

MR. CLARK:

A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker, to the Premier. Has the Premier or have members of the cabinet met with representatives of the Mackenzie Valley group to look at the route, and especially the environmental concerns within the Province of Alberta?

MR. LOUGHEED:

Mr. Speaker, I will refer that question to the hon. Minister of Mines and Minerals.

MR. DICKIE:

Yes, Mr. Speaker, we have met with representatives of the Mackenzie Valley group. They have shown us the route. The meeting was some time ago, I would say in the latter part of 1973.

MR. CLARK:

One more supplementary question to the minister, Mr. Speaker. Is the minister or the government satisfied with the route and the environmental protection considerations that were discussed with the government by the group?

MR. YURKO:

Mr. Speaker, I met with the company officials on three different occasions. At the same time I journeyed up north this summer to witness the experimentation regarding environmental matters that was going on at Sanssault, Inuvik and Prudhoe Bay, as well as Norman Wells.

The company has been advised as to the requirements of the Province of Alberta in regard to environmental matters with respect to the fact that an environmental impact assessment will be necessary and that, in fact, the province will have the final decision on actual location as to crossing rivers and so forth. It was also advised as to the permits that will be required in terms of building a line across the province; so that the company is very familiar with the Alberta government's laws and Alberta government's requirements in terms of the construction of the pipeline.

Water Pipeline - Red Deer to Airdrie

MR. CLARK:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct a second question to the Minister of the Environment. Has the government concluded its deliberations on the representation made to it by a group from Olds dealing with a water pipeline to run from the Red Deer River down to Airdrie and serving the towns in between?

MR. YURKO:

Mr. Speaker, in regard to the government's policies of balancing growth across the province, it has recognized that the smaller centres need water and sewers before any program of diversification of the towns can, in fact, be put into effect.

With respect to the area south of Red Deer, between the cities of Red Deer and Calgary, there are seven towns which have been surveyed in regard to water supplies and we have found that the availability of ground water and surface water is very limited. As a result, we have examined the idea of bringing water north from the Bow River with a main line to feed the seven towns and have also examined the idea of bringing water south from the Red Deer River to feed the towns of Innisfail, Bowden, Olds, Didsbury, Carstairs, Crossfield and Airdrie. After the initial or preliminary examination in regard to costs and requirements, we now have under active study - an intensive study which will last for four weeks - to determine the actual costs and the manner in which this type of line can be installed to make those seven towns industrially viable.

MR. CLARK:

A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker, to the minister. Will it be necessary for the government to introduce legislation during this session so that the government could go ahead and build a line to serve that area?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Opposition Leader appears to be asking a question of law, as to whether, from a legal point of view, legislation is required to enable the government to do a certain thing.

MR. CLARK:

Mr. Speaker, then could I rephrase the question and ask the minister if it's the intention of the government to introduce legislation that would make it possible for the government to build a pipeline to serve that area - the legislation to be introduced this session so the work could begin this summer?

MR. YURKO:

Mr. Speaker, thus far the government doesn't consider that legislation is required; that legislation now on the books can, in fact, permit the construction of such a line, and that it can be financed through the government's existing water assistance policy. A second alternative would be - and some consideration is being given to this - to set up a non-profit company which would feed water to the various towns, for an appropriate service charge.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Lac la Biche-McMurray followed by the hon. Member for Camrose.

Fort McMurray - Energy Costs

DR. BOUVIER:

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct my question either to the Premier or the Minister of Consumer Affairs. In view of the fact that Fort McMurray is the focal point of tar sands development, and since, because of the economics of supply, energy costs to the consumer in Fort McMurray are considerably higher ...

MR. SPEAKER:

Could the hon. member wind up the debate and proceed with the question?

DR. BOUVIER:

Well, I was just about finished.

But in view of the fact that the consumer in Fort McMurray has to pay more for energy than Edmonton ...

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please.

Would the hon. member please come directly to the question, regardless of how close he may be to the end of the debate.

DR. BOUVIER:

Does the government have any plans to remedy the situation outlined and, more specifically, has the government given any consideration to using, say, its share of the federal export tax on oil to subsidize the cost of energy to Fort McMurray residents?

MR. LOUGHEED:

Mr. Speaker, I believe that most of the citizens of Fort McMurray are well aware that having regard to the rapid growth conditions that exist in that community - as is the case with similar communities that have developed historically in Canada that relate to resource development - they can anticipate that the very nature of the rapid growth is going to create pressures in terms of price which to some extent will balance, but not even close to really balance, the great opportunities of the citizens of Fort McMurray.

DR. BOUVIER:

Supplementary. Is the Premier then saying that they have no intentions of trying to do something to alleviate their problem of high costs?

MR. LOUGHEED:

Mr. Speaker, that would be a misinterpretation of my remarks. I was trying to draw both the member's and the Assembly's attention to the fact that the very nature of the situation at Fort McMurray, with the broad opportunities that are there, is going to be of a nature where there is going to be some pressure in terms of prices and in terms of costs. That's not to say that the government, in many different ways, by way of the infra-structure of public services, won't attempt to take into consideration those factors. But I think that one will have to recognize that the aggregate amount of public expenditure, both evident now and which will be evident shortly, in terms of the development of the Fort McMurray area on a per capita basis, will be substantially greater than the province as a whole. I think the citizens of Fort McMurray will recognize that important contribution.

DR. BOUVIER:

Supplementary, Mr. Speaker, to the Minister of Consumer Affairs. Is the minister monitoring the cost of energy in Fort McMurray to determine that in fact the costs are in line with what should be charged?

MR. DOWLING:

Mr. Speaker, what we are doing is establishing an office of the Department of Consumer Affairs in the town of Fort McMurray. That competition, as I understand at the moment, has not been completed. We want to make certain that the person who does represent us there is of top quality and I'm certain that will happen.

MR. SPEAKER:

Might this be the last supplementary on this point.

DR. BOUVIER:

Yes, Mr. Speaker, one last supplementary on energy in the North. Is the minister familiar with, and monitoring, the problems of supply and cost in Fort Chipewyan as far as the price of gasoline specifically?

MR. DOWLING:

What we are doing through the Department of the Provincial Treasurer, Mr. Speaker, is keeping track of costs of energy sources in Alberta as compared to other jurisdictions throughout the country. To ask specifically about Fort Chipewyan - I'm certain that we have some contact through the Gas Tax Branch of the Department of the Provincial Treasurer in all jurisdictions in our province.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Coal Lake Dam

MR. STROMBERG:

Mr. Speaker, a question to the Minister of the Environment. I was wondering if he could advise this House if he is going to give consideration to the Wetaskiwin Fish and Game Association in banning outboard motors from the impoundment back of the dam on Coal Lake?

MR. YURKO:

Mr. Speaker, last season the Department of the Environment completed the construction of a dam to raise the level of Coal Lake and assure the water supply of Camrose. Small boat regulations are put out by the federal government rather than the provincial government. These regulations are structured in accord with the recommendations of the province, particularly the recommendations made by the Department of Lands and Forests. To my present knowledge, I can assure the hon. member that the government will be giving serious consideration to the request that is being made and when appropriate the federal government will be so informed.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

NWT Foster Child

MR. DIXON:

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct my question today to the Minister of Health and Social Development. It's regarding the public concern and interest surrounding the case of the Northwest Territories' foster child, presently under the care of Mr. and Mrs. Holzer in Edmonton. I was wondering, what position are you or your department taking in this ...

MR. SPEAKER:

Will the hon. member please address the Chair.

MR. DIXON:

I'm sorry, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, to the minister, what position are you and your department taking in this case?

MR. CRAWFORD:

Mr. Speaker, I have at all times treated that issue as being one between the Government of the Northwest Territories, which has responsibility for the child, and the foster parents.

MR. DIXON:

Mr. Speaker, to the minister, I was wondering if the minister is going to look at the contract we presently have with the Northwest Territories, in order that foster parents can appeal in a case like this where they've had the child for five years, or even for that matter for five weeks, in my opinion. Are you going to look at the contract so that we can avoid the present type of situation?

MR. CRAWFORD:

Mr. Speaker, contracts of this type are quite ordinary operating arrangements between governments. We would have arrangements with the various provinces that enable, at either end of the situation, the governmental authority most directly located geographically actually to carry on some duties on behalf of the government that has the responsibility. I'm not aware that there is any absence of a right of appeal to the Northwest Territories government in this case.

MR. DIXON:

My final supplementary question, Mr. Speaker, to the minister. Is the child actually going to be taken away? Has the decision been made that she will be going back to the Northwest Territories?

MR. CRAWFORD:

Mr. Speaker, I don't think I would want to undertake to answer a question of that type in this House and would respectfully suggest that it might be directed to the government involved.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Railway Delays

MRS. CHICHAK:

Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the hon. Deputy Premier. I wonder if the hon. Deputy Premier could advise whether he is doing anything with regard to the railways not moving on some lines for long weeks and months, due to snow?

DR. HORNER:

Mr. Speaker, we've had people in our department reviewing the situation inasmuch as both railways in Alberta are receiving substantial amounts of money under the Canadian National Transport Act in relation to subsidies for lines that they've made application to abandon. These lines, in fact, have not been used. We are now reviewing the situation to see whether or not Canadian National and Canadian Pacific, indeed, don't owe some money to the taxpayers of Canada for a subsidy they really never used.

MRS. CHICHAK:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. I wonder if the hon. Deputy Premier could also advise whether he is able to do anything with regard to the railways leaving loaded grain cars sitting at various elevator points for periods of time, as long as nine weeks, while vessels both at Vancouver and Thunder Bay were waiting to receive such shipments?

DR. HORNER:

Mr. Speaker, part of our review, of course, has been an attempt to speed up the deliveries, particularly from certain lines and certain elevator spots which have been congested. Indeed, the farmers in those areas have been robbed of the opportunity to deliver grain. At the same time we get the message from the Canadian Wheat Board that they would like grain to be delivered by the farmers. We would hope that this situation will be resolved. As my colleague, the Minister of Industry and Commerce, has already indicated to the House, we feel that the federal Minister of Transport does appreciate the situation, and indeed is likely to appoint a supervisor of grain movements very shortly.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

AVC Cheques

MR. NCTLEY:

Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the hon. Minister of Advanced Education I will direct this question to the Premier and then he can farm it out to whomever he chooses.

Can the Premier advise the Assembly what the delay was in sending some 44 cheques to handicapped students at the Alberta Vocational Centre thus forcing them to apply for welfare?

MR. LOUGHEED:

Mr. Speaker, I can't answer that question. I'll take it as notice and get the hon. member a reply.

MR. NOTLEY:

Mr. Speaker, one quick supplementary question. When the Premier takes this as notice, could he also report back to the Legislature as to when these students can expect their cheques?

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Public School Film Library

MR. ANDERSON:

Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Education. Has there been a site chosen for the new public school film library in southern Alberta?

MR. HYNDMAN:

Mr. Speaker, the question of decentralizing the audio-visual capabilities of the department to make them more easily available more quickly to all school boards in the province is in the final stages of development. But at the moment we haven't yet decided exactly where or to what extent the decentralization will be carried forward. I hope

though, when we discuss the Estimates, we'll be in a better position to provide more definitive information to the hon. member and to the Assembly.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Calgary Drug Information Centre

MR. WILSON:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct a question to the hon. Minister of Health and Social Development. Can the hon. minister advise if financing arrangements will be made available by the government to keep the Calgary Drug Information Centre open past the end of March this year?

MR. CRAWFORD:

Mr. Speaker, I spoke to the representatives of the Calgary Drug Information Centre who had an application to make, about January of this year. At that time a number of suggestions were made to them and I believe since that time they have obtained some funding through Calgary Preventive Social Services.

As far as a grant from the alcoholism commission itself is concerned, my understanding is that there is no intention of changing the decision which was made last year to fund only to the end of the current fiscal year.

MR. WILSON:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Can the hon. minister advise if this decision was made after receiving a very well documented and properly presented case by the hon. Member for Calgary Buffalo?

MR. CRAWFORD:

Mr. Speaker, the hon. Member for Calgary Buffalo and I have had some very interesting discussions on the subject, and I expect them to continue.

MR. CLARK:

A supplementary question to the minister. Is it the intention of the Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission to provide the kind of service in Calgary that was formerly provided by this organization?

MR. CRAWFORD:

Mr. Speaker, the intention of the commission is that no service of priority and of real value to the community will be overlooked. I would have to add that there is a difference of opinion over the suitability of the type of service that was being provided by the Drug Information Centre.

MR. CLARK:

Mr. Speaker, another supplementary question to the minister. Is it the intention of the Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission to provide drug information and also facilities for individuals having problems, such as the centre has been providing until now?

MR. CRAWFORD:

Mr. Speaker, I don't think it is entirely clear that every service that was performed by the Drug Information Centre will be provided by the alcoholism commission. If that were so there would be no reason for the Drug Information Centre not to continue to perform those duties. However, the commission's view at the present time is that those that are substantially important can be carried on without duplication.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Farm Implement Repairs

MR. RUSTE:

Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Agriculture. It relates to a question earlier in the session dealing with The Farm Implement Act. He said he would check whether or not the regulations dealing with emergency repair services were completed.

DR. HORNER:

Yes, I have checked, Mr. Speaker. The emergency repair service is a joint agreement between the dealers, the Farm Machinery Appeal Board and the vendors in an attempt to make a voluntary service work. It is not done by regulation.

MR. RUSTE:

A supplementary question to the minister, then, regarding the survey that is taking place - about the emergency repair parts for farm machines and implements that are up to ten years old. Why was ten years chosen? A lot of the machines now are lasting a lot longer than that.

DR. HORNER:

Well, Mr. Speaker, I am rather surprised that question should come from the honourable gentleman. Because that legislation in the books was put into effect by his government over the years, saying that the requirement was that one had to provide parts for a ten-year period.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Beef Subsidy

MR. FRENCH:

Mr. Speaker, my question is to the hon. Minister of Agriculture. What effect will the seven cent subsidy have on the cattle industry?

DR. HERNER:

Mr. Speaker, I welcome that question. As a matter of fact I intend to make a release later today to the cattle people of Alberta and suggest that they do not panic. The markets are in a state of turmoil today because the federal announcement has been substantially unclear. We are trying to clarify that. I would like to acknowledge the help I have had from the hon. Member for Lloydminster in the last 48 to 72 hours with regard to the situation. It's a very difficult one.

My department has been in touch with the federal department. We have offered every assistance we can to organize their program to make it operate smoothly. At the moment there are many unanswered questions as to how the program will operate. I would hope that our cattle people would just stand pat for a day or two until it clarifies. Hopefully then the situation will be resolved.

MR. FRENCH:

Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the minister. Will this subsidy apply to all the beef processed in Alberta? I'm referring to the larger packing plants as well as the smaller packing plants, keeping in mind that many of the smaller plants are located in smaller areas of the province.

DR. HERNER:

That is just one of the major problems that still has to be sorted out. I say just one - there are several others. The question of commission buyers and how farmers are compensated through a commission-buying situation rather than direct to the plants is another. The question of our smaller plants in Alberta is one. The question of whether or not the announcement with relation to Grade A3 and A4 is very effective and indeed very practical is a third.

I can go on, down the line. At the moment, my understanding from the yards here in Edmonton - and I expect to have some advice with regard to other yards in the province very shortly - is that the packers are not buying today because they are unclear of

their position in the whole matter. Whether or not they have to finance the seven cents for a matter of two or three months is another problem that has to be resolved. So, Mr. Speaker, the situation is indeed confused at the moment. We are trying to clarify and help all we can to allow the federal government to make this payment.

MR. FRENCH:

A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Does the minister have any indication as to when he will have answers to the unanswered questions?

DR. HORNER:

As I said, Mr. Speaker, we are working on them now. I would make it very, very clear that this is a federal program, but it affects a great many people in Alberta. Therefore, we are interested in making the program work properly. We will do what we can in terms of manpower or in any other way in which we can cooperate to make the program work.

AVC Cheques (Cont.)

MR. LOUGHEED:

Mr. Speaker, in regard to the previous question from the Member for Spirit River-Fairview, I am advised, through the Department of Advanced Education - although I can't explain the reasons for the delay - that the cheques referred to in the hon. member's question will be ready and will be mailed on Thursday. The order in council is before cabinet tomorrow.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Vermilion River - Pollution Survey

MR. COOPER:

My question is directed to the Minister of the Environment, Mr. Speaker. As a result of the information contained in the survey of the Vermilion River, recently released by the Minister of the Environment, does his department have any plans to prevent the further pollution of the Vermilion River?

MR. YURKO:

Well, Mr. Speaker, the Vegreville Fish and Game did an aerial review of the Vermilion River and concluded that there was pollution on the basis of this aerial survey.

The Department of the Environment, in terms of its role, can't use aerial surveys to determine whether or not pollution exists. It must use detailed analysis above and below feedlots and so forth. We have done, through the department, a pollution analysis on the Vermilion River at, I believe, ten points, indicating a fair degree of biologically degradable material at a number of these points. However, that information is hardly adequate to prosecute anyone, as [they are] points at random. So we commissioned, last year, an intensive one-year study to determine source pollution at various points in regard to feedlots and so forth. On the basis of that information, when it is completed, the department will be prepared to act.

MR. NOTLEY:

Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the hon. minister. Has the minister investigated complaints by many of the feedlot operators that the survey undertaken by the fish and game association represented an invasion of privacy?

MR. YURKO:

Yes, Mr. Speaker, the department was extremely conscious of this fact and this is why in fact it kept the report - which wasn't very factual - a report by the fish and game association, not as a confidential report but in the files of the department. Until the department was prepared to indicate whether or not anybody was polluting, it was felt necessary that we protect the innocence of people until they were proven guilty. They can only be proven guilty on the basis of actual samples taken.

However, we entered into a contractual agreement with respect to the data by the fish and game association and have removed any identification in regard to whose feedlot the picture represented, and as a result released this information on the basis of the fact that it doesn't identify any farmer's particular area - so that there is no identification of the pictures. And I might say again that it's very easy to suggest that somebody is guilty but until concrete evidence is obtained it is necessary to treat such information with a considerable degree of common sense.

MR. NOTLEY:

One further supplementary question to the hon. minister. Will the government be setting out any guidelines with respect to aerial surveys conducted by private organizations - other than the Department of the Environment - in the future so that this sort of thing won't happen again?

MR. YURKO:

Well, Mr. Speaker, the earth satellite takes pictures of every conceivable structure in the Province of Alberta every 17 days, so there is hardly anything that is private or confidential from the point of view of aerial surveys. However, the feelings of people are to be respected. The Department of the Environment doesn't necessarily encourage this type of photography, but nevertheless, if any organization wishes to take such photographs they do so recognizing, of course, that they can be subjected to civil suits.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Camrose with a supplementary, followed by the hon. Member for Vermilion-Viking with, I assume, another supplementary.

MR. STROMBERG:

Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wonder if the minister could advise if the pollution count is higher downstream from Vegreville than upstream?

MR. YURKO:

Mr. Speaker, I made the report public. I can't quite remember the figures, but the report is available to anybody who wishes to see it.

MR. COOPER:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker, to the minister. Has the department recently commissioned a second survey of the Vermilion River?

MR. YURKO:

Mr. Speaker, the intensive pollution survey was commissioned, I believe, late last fall. The department has also commissioned a major study in terms of management of the Vermilion River from a point of view of flooding - as there was extensive flooding last year - and from a point of view of flow regulation and the replacement of some of the structures all the way down the river. I think the hon. member is referring to the second study that I am talking about.

MR. NOTLEY:

A final supplementary question, if I may, to the hon. minister. Could the hon. minister advise the Assembly whether he has had an opportunity to check out reports that some of the pictures taken by this aerial survey were displayed at a recent convention of the fish and game association?

MR. YURKO:

Well, as I indicated earlier, Mr. Speaker, any organization can take pictures and display them at its own peril. If an organization, in fact, did this, then it can be subjected to a civil suit. But certainly the Department of the Environment isn't going to undertake to protect the legal rights of any of the farmers in the area.

MR. SPEAKER:

Could this be the last supplementary on this particular river.

DR. EUCK:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask a question. How much was the grant that the government paid the fish and game association to do this study?

MR. YURKO:

Mr. Speaker, the grant that the government paid to the Vegreville Fish and Game Association was \$1,000 and it wasn't necessarily to do the study, it was to collate the information and put it together in the form of a report which was then to be submitted to the government. The contractual agreement indicated that the report would not be made public until the minister, in fact, released the report. If the fish and game association had asked me to release it after the pictures were unidentified with respect to location, I would have gladly released the report any time.

As a matter of fact, I might say that the President of the Alberta Fish and Game Association, after I gave him all the information involved in the case, couldn't possibly believe that the report about which so much fuss was raised was the one I gave him, which was the Vegreville fish and game report.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Child Health Centre - Calgary

MR. LEE:

Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the hon. Minister of Health and Social Development. Further to his reply to a question in the Assembly last Tuesday regarding a proposed child health centre at the Children's Hospital in Calgary, I wonder if the minister could tell the House whether he has received the report from the Calgary Hospital Planning Council which he referred to in his response?

MR. CRAWFORD:

Yes, Mr. Speaker, the report from the Calgary Hospital Planning Council was received by the Hospital Services Commission and by myself last week and it is my intention to make a statement in the House during the week on the subject.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Urban Affairs - Tri-level Conference

MR. HC LEM:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question today is directed to the hon. Minister of Municipal Affairs. Would the minister indicate, in view of the Province of Quebec's recent decision not to participate further in the third tri-level government conference on urban affairs, if it is this government's intention to participate in such a conference?

MR. RUSSELL:

Mr. Speaker, that was a matter the provinces took under consideration following the second annual tri-level conference held in Edmonton last fall. At that time Alberta indicated that it wanted to have time to assess the effectiveness of annual tri-level conferences on a national basis, as opposed to holding some of them on a regional or even a provincial basis. We have, I think, indicated to the other provinces, through the provincial co-chairman, the Minister of Municipal Affairs for Saskatchewan, that Alberta would prefer not to participate in another annual tri-level conference in 1974, but perhaps instead have a regional one in that year and then pick up the national one again in 1975.

I might add, that that appears to be a developing opinion among a number of the provinces.

MR. HO LEM:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Will the minister give an indication when this decision might be given to the Alberta urban municipalities, so that they might go prepared to the forthcoming tri-level conference - to go it alone.

MR. HUSSELL:

Well, Mr. Speaker, I think by way of clarification it should be indicated that, as far as I know, no national tri-level conference has yet been set for 1974. There are three co-chairmen who work on this, one provincial, one federal and one municipal, and it is the responsibility of the municipal associations to get their instructions and advice through their municipal representative on that. Notwithstanding that, of course, Alberta would cooperate and communicate with its municipalities, but, as yet, the last indication I have had is that there certainly is not a consensus reached to hold another one in 1974.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Stettler followed by the hon. Member for Clover Bar.

MR. HARLE:

Mr. Speaker, my question was asked by the hon. Member for Hanna-Oyen. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Clover Bar followed by the hon. Member for Wainwright.

Industrial Development

DR. EUCK:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to address a question to the hon. Premier. I would like to know if the hon. Premier could indicate to the House specifically what was meant at the recent western premiers' meeting, that the western provinces would go it on their own as far as industrial development strategy went.

MR. LOUGHEED:

Mr. Speaker, I believe the hon. Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs tabled in this Legislature the communique which, I think, speaks for itself. I think it is a misinterpretation of the document to refer to it as an approach that is to go it alone, to quote the hon. member. I think what is intended there is recognition that certain follow-up matters arising out of the Western Economic Opportunities Conference were not all that the western governments felt were required and that, although continual pressure would be exercised upon the federal government to have it follow through on its undertakings and commitments. There was a recognition, too, that the growing strength of the western region was such that it was in the best interests of Canada and of the West if there was a greater degree of interprovincial cooperation in terms of industrial development.

Rather than spreading ourselves from the point of view of having marginal operations in a number of ways, we felt the sort of thinking that has been reflected in the past in terms of the decision to have the veterinary college in Saskatoon rather than duplicated throughout the various provinces, is the sort of decision and the sort of thinking the citizens of Alberta, I think, endorse.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Student Exchange Program

MR. RUSTE:

Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Culture, Youth and Recreation and it deals with one of the student exchange programs. There is a limitation, as I understand it, of 100 miles from the cities of Edmonton or Calgary for their participation. What is the reason for that limitation?

MR. SCHMID:

Well, Mr. Speaker, if it is a student exchange program of the federal government, I would not be aware of what it is. However, I am not aware either of the provincial government having such a program that has a limitation of 100 miles. It sounds rather strange.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Lac La Biche-McMurray followed by the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview.

Oh, sorry. I overlooked the hon. Member for Sedgewick-Coronation.

Seat Belts

MR. SORENSON:

Mr. Speaker, I direct my question to the Minister of Consumer Affairs. Has the minister's department investigated the possibility of lower insurance rates to the consumer if legislation were passed causing the use of seat belts to be made mandatory?

MR. DOWLING:

Mr. Speaker, the Alberta Automobile Insurance Branch is investigating all types and methods of reducing insurance costs to the consumer. You might remember, Mr. Speaker, that last fall or in the spring session we reduced the snowmobile insurance by 50 per cent, increased the coverage on those snowmobiles during a latter period ...

MR. SPEAKER:

Order please. Possibly the hon. minister could get back to seat belts, unless there are, in fact, seat belts on the snowmobiles.

Student Exchange Program (Cont.)

MR. SCHMID:

Mr. Speaker, in the meantime someone whispered to me, "Operation Handshake" which in this case is a rural-urban exchange program where we have rural children coming to the city and then urban children visiting farms during the summer for one week each. And to have a greater distance than 100 miles, it is felt that travel then, of course, would come into the cost factor also. Since, of course, budgets are always restricted, we found it would not be possible to have them further away than 100 miles. However, that doesn't mean to say - if the hon. member has someone who would like to be part of that program, even though it is in his constituency he could always inform us about it and we will do our best to accommodate him.

Seat Belts (Cont.)

MR. SCRENSON:

A supplementary then to the Minister of Health and Social Development. As a result of the minister's attendance at the February provincial health ministers' conference, has the minister yet recommended to the Executive Council that legislation be introduced making the use of seat belts mandatory?

MR. CRAWFORD:

No, Mr. Speaker. I notice the Province of Ontario has proceeded in that way. But I should mention when that conference was held I did take the position on behalf of Alberta, that the proposal which originated with the federal minister, Mr. Lalonde - as desirable as that proposal was to have the use of seat belts compulsory, my feeling was that it would be an extremely difficult matter to enforce. That was the position I took at the time although I had no objection to the urgings of the meeting of ministers that it was advisable in the name, you might say, of the greater safety that would likely be the result of that. However, I've made no recommendation to Executive Council with respect to it yet.

MR. SORENSON:

A supplementary to the Minister of Highways. Is it the intention of the minister to introduce any seat belt legislation this session?

MR. COPITHORNE:

Mr. Speaker, it is not our intention to introduce any seat belt legislation this session.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Lac La Biche-McMurray followed by the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview.

Peace River Dam

DR. BOUVIER:

Yes, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to direct my question to the Minister of the Environment and ask him if he is aware of a proposed Barrett Dam on the Peace River and if he has any plans to protect the interests of the people of Alberta in this venture?

MR. YURKO:

Yes, Mr. Speaker, I am very much aware of the dam.

DR. BOUVIER:

A supplementary. The second part of my question was if he had any plans to protect the interests of the people of Alberta?

MR. SPEAKER:

Possibly if the minister's plans in that direction are extremely extensive, he might wish to make a statement at the appropriate time, outside the question period.

MR. YURKO:

First of all, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to say that we are having excellent relationships with the Province of British Columbia in regard to management of the Peace River waterway. They contacted us quite some months ago with regard to their plans and we set up a ministerial committee to review all management of the Peace River waterway. We have a technical committee and the technical committee is looking at a number of studies or examinations. One is a sedimentation study. Another is a committee for examining the downstream effects, and the committee has now concluded that there will be no downstream effects, with the exception of possible ice jamming or build-up in the Peace River area. B.C. has offered to permit us to work with them on a committee which will regulate flow out of the Bennett Dam to prevent these ice jams from occurring. At the same time we have engaged a specialist in regard to ice jams, and British Columbia Hydro is going to be represented on this committee in terms of studying these ice jams.

However, I might say that the Province of Alberta has longer term interests in regard to studying the overall effects of hydro-electric development on the entire Peace waterway.

MR. NOTLEY:

Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the hon. minister, flowing from his last answer. Can the minister advise whether specific studies are now taking place with respect to the construction of a dam on the Alberta side of the Peace River?

MR. YURKO:

Mr. Speaker, the Government of Alberta recognizes that it will have to program its development of the Peace River in such a way that the rapid programming of the B.C. part doesn't interfere on a long-term basis with Alberta's plans in this area. Alberta is presently actively looking at the Dunvegan site. The first studies that will be done are in association with the technical aspects of foundations, mapping, surveying and so forth so that during the year 1974 the Alberta government will be looking closely at the Dunvegan site from a technical point of view.

DR. BOUVIER:

Mr. Speaker, for clarification. Did I understand the minister to say that he was satisfied there would be no effects from a second dam and specifically, to the water levels in the Peace-Athabasca delta?

MR. YURKO:

Mr. Speaker, the technical committee that reviewed that point very specifically concluded that there would be no downstream effects from the second dam. The second dam is a small impoundment structure. It only impounds about 175,000 acre feet of water, and as a result, flow regulation will still be basically that associated with releases from the Bennett dam. So on the basis of this information, we find that there is no real need, with the exception of the possible ice jamming in the Peace River district.

For some reason or other, ice thickness is very great in the Peace River area. This is what's going to be studied in the future in terms of alleviating this thickness and also preventing ice from piling up, by controlling releases from the Bennett Dam. The Alberta government has been invited to be a direct participant in programming these releases during that part of the spring when, in fact, ice jamming is possible.

MR. BUCKWELL:

A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker, to the minister. If we have the Bennett Dam and the Barrett Dam, will Alberta's dam be a Premier dam, too?

MR. SPEAKER:

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

AN HCN. MEMBER:

Yurko's dam.

Newfoundland-Brinco Purchase

MR. NOTLEY:

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct this question to either the Premier or to the Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs. Could the Premier advise the House whether any discussions have taken place, either formally or informally, with the Province of Newfoundland, with respect to assistance by this province, or sharing by this province, in the proposal of the Newfoundland government to purchase Brinco?

MR. LOUGHEED:

Mr. Speaker, I am not in a position to respond to that question. As members are well aware, the premiers of Canada are in fairly constant communication about many subjects and we discuss them from time to time. I had a visit in my office a few weeks ago with the Premier of Newfoundland. The very nature of these discussions makes them at this point in time something that's between the Premier and myself.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Christian College

MR. WILSON:

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct a question to the hon. the Premier. Can the hon. Premier advise if it is the intention of the government to make possible the establishment of a Christian college in an Alberta university?

MR. LOUGHEED:

Mr. Speaker, I am unable to respond to that question directly. I'll take it as notice and take it up with the Minister of Advanced Education.

MR. WILSON:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Can the hon. Premier advise if he has had representation from organizations desirous of establishing a Christian college in Alberta?

MR. LCUGHEED:

Mr. Speaker, having regard to the degree of mail that I receive and the representations I receive daily, I am unable to respond one way or another to that question. I'll add it to the notice to the first question.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Japanese Skiers

MR. COOPER:

Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the minister in charge of of tourism.

According to a Japanese news release which I have in front of me, Japanese skiers are visiting Alaska at the rate of 1,000 per month. My question to the minister is: what efforts have been made by the department of tourism to attract Japanese skiers to Alberta?

A second question: do Japanese skiers now visit Alberta in any number?

MR. DOWLING:

Mr. Speaker, our attitude toward tourism generally is to make certain that we have adequate facilities in Alberta to provide our visitor with the experience he came here for in the first place.

We do have a very minimal position in the Japanese market. It is a very sophisticated market. We are not in a position where we feel we can turn on the tap to the Japanese tourists although they would like, I am very sure, to come at any time. A considerable number of people come from that country to our province but they come on their own initiative with a minimal amount of commotion.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Calgary Millican.

School Boards - Local Autonomy

MR. DIXON:

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct my question to the Minister of Education. Does the hon. minister plan to investigate the serious charges by the president of the Alberta School Trustees Association, Mr. Gunderson, that the school boards no longer have any local control over education, and that the real power in education in Alberta is held by middle-management groups within our province?

MR. HYNDMAN:

Mr. Speaker, I would question first whether the statements made are charges, and second whether they are serious or not. I say that, Mr. Speaker, because I understand that these statements were made by Mr. Gunderson at a panel of four trustees. He was alone and the other three trustees indicated that they felt school trustees in this province already had enough power and what they should do is use the authority they already have instead of asking for more. I endorse that point of view.

I would just like to say, Mr. Speaker, that I think a review of the ten provinces of Canada would show that in the Province of Alberta there is probably one of the largest degrees of authority given to school boards [compared with] other provinces in Canada.

MR. DIXON:

A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker, to the minister. Are the 1970 amendments giving wide powers given by the former government still enacted by the present government?

MR. HYNDMAN:

Mr. Speaker, we've made very substantial improvements on those amendments and also cleared up a number of the problem areas.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

MR. SPEAKER:

Possibly before we get on with Orders of the Day I might express regrets to the hon. members, some of whom may have received copies of last weekend's Hansard with pages out of order. That has apparently happened on an intermittent basis. If hon. members would turn those copies back to Hansard we will be glad to replace them.

The other is, I would be grateful if hon. members might give some consideration to Motion No. 2 on today's Order Paper under Motions other than Government Motions. I would like to say that the Chair has some misgiving as to whether that motion is in order for this reason: it will involve, if it is gone into, a discussion of all government spending or at least substantial areas of government spending, which is a discussion which is inevitably going to take place in the debate on the Estimates. Consequently, without making a ruling on the point at the moment, and inviting any hon. members who might have opinions on it to perhaps send me some memos, I would suggest that I have some misgiving about the propriety of the motion because of the rule against anticipation.

GOVERNMENT BILLS AND ORDERS
(Second Reading)Bill No. 19
The Clean Water Amendment Act, 1974

MR. CHAMBERS:

Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of Bill No. 19, being The Clean Water Amendment Act, 1974. These amendments, Mr. Speaker, are parallel and quite similar to those which we discussed in some detail on Bill No. 18 last week, with some six basic changes. These should improve, again, the administrative aspects of the Act in order to facilitate its enforcement. My friend from Calgary Mountain View, I think, will be pleased to note that the word "thing", which engineers apparently like to use, doesn't appear in this Bill No. 19.

As in Bill No. 18, the "level of density" is changed to "concentration" in order to better define or improve the definition of water contaminants. Also, the means of prescribing the method or the equipment or the place of determining contamination is improved by, again, allowing a reference to periodicals or texts or papers or any other publication.

This act also allows the minister to appoint a person to act as an analyst with respect to water pollution measurements. Also, as in the case of Bill No. 18, a two-year limitation will be instituted with respect to prosecution for alleged offences under the Act. I think members will agree that that is only fair to industry in this province. Also the Director of Standards and Approvals will be permitted to issue permits for a shorter period of time than the present five-year term.

One amendment, Mr. Speaker, that is unique to this Act compared to Bill No. 18 provides that by regulation the Provincial Board of Health or our local boards of health may be delegated certain powers and duties with respect to swimming pools. I think members will agree that it really isn't practical for the Director of Standards and Approvals or the Director of Pollution Control to get involved in swimming pool construction across the province. Also, this change should promote local autonomy.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, the net result of this amendment act should be to provide cleaner water for the people of Alberta.

MR. HINMAN:

Mr. Speaker, I would call the attention of the House to the same criticism I had about a previous bill. And that is that what this says is that they shall prescribe a method for determining "by reference to any text, periodical, paper or any other publication or in any other manner;". I think what we want is that they shall "prescribe in a clear and consistent manner ...". If the periodical to which they refer is perfectly clear, it would be very easy to copy from it so that the regulation contains it and there could be no doubt.

I am very much opposed to regulations which simply quote from periodicals which are, in many instances, only available to the people who work in a particular field and I think this is one of the criticisms that has always been levelled at regulations - they are inconsistent and lack clarity. As I said before, I am not going to propose an amendment at this time, but I think all we need to do is say that they shall prescribe the regulation in any clear and consistent manner.

[The motion was carried. Bill No. 19 was read a second time.]

Bill No. 21 - The Legislative Assembly Amendment Act, 1974

MR. TOPOLNISKY:

Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of Bill No. 21, The Legislative Assembly Amendment Act, 1974. A new section is added stating that:

every Minister of the Crown who is the head of a department of the Public Service shall, after the end of each Government fiscal year, prepare a general report summarizing the transactions and affairs of his department in that year and shall

- (a) if the Legislative Assembly is sitting when the report is completed, lay the report before the Assembly, or
- (b) if the Assembly is not sitting when the report is completed, lay the report before the Assembly within 15 days after the commencement of the sitting next following the completion of the report.

The existing situation, Mr. Speaker, is that not all government departments are required to table annual reports. Generally speaking, Mr. Speaker, an annual report is a means of communication and a source of information. It often contains such useful information as the function of the department and its organization, the philosophy and responsibility of the department and how well these are carried out, and the avenues of government services. This is very useful information and should be made available from all government departments. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, the proposed amendment will standardize for all government departments the requirement for the tabling of annual reports.

Also, Mr. Speaker, there is an amendment to Section 59 dealing with members of the Legislative Assembly serving on committees. The section now states that the committee be appointed by resolution of the Assembly or by the Lieutenant Governor in Council. The words "by resolution of the Assembly" are deleted. Therefore, the appointment of members of the Legislative Assembly committee would be by the Lieutenant-Governor in Council.

MR. STROM:

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to deal with a couple of principles dealt with in Bill No. 21.

May I say, first, that I accept the first principle outlined by the hon. member who has just spoken, whereby every minister and every department of government will be required to file a report in the Legislature. I think that this is good and I am certainly happy that the government has seen fit to bring in an amendment making this a requirement. I'm not sure that the reports are as widely read as they ought to be, but nevertheless it is my view, Mr. Speaker, that they ought to be there and available for anyone who wishes to read them.

My main reason, Mr. Speaker, for wishing to speak on the principle of Bill 21, however, is not in the matter of reporting. It deals with the amendments that are proposed respecting the setting up of the committees. The hon. Minister without Portfolio has indicated there has been a slight amendment that removes the possibility of setting up committees by O.C. and that they will be set up by a resolution of the Legislature. I think this is good, too.

But I note, Mr. Speaker, that there is a further amendment and it deals with the matter of a member serving on a committee between the sessions. I get the distinct impression, Mr. Speaker, this is referring to committees that are set up by O.C. because it suggests here:

Notwithstanding anything in this Act, where a member of the Legislative Assembly serves, during intervals between sessions or while the Assembly is adjourned for more than five days, on a committee appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council ...

In my view, this seems to remove it from the one that we had in Section 59 and to establish a new subsection which, in fact, provides for setting up a committee by O.C. that will be paid from provincial revenues.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I think that we have made our position rather clear on this side of the House. We are absolutely opposed to it because in our opinion it is lowering the supremacy of the Legislature. To me this is a very, very fundamental principle in the operation of the government of this province, that the Legislature be supreme. And any attempt to reduce this, I would have to respectfully submit, opens the door for a number of problems that can creep in.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I want to make it very clear too, that when I stand in my place in the Legislature, I do not think that it is only my responsibility to ensure that I am making laws that will fit for the day in which I particularly have to serve. But I think, as far as it is possible for us to do it, we have to attempt to ensure that the Legislature will operate in the best way possible in the years that lie ahead.

Now if I may, I would very quickly like to bring to the attention of the Legislature that prior to the amendments of 1972, the particular section said this:

Notwithstanding anything in this Act, where a member of the Legislative Assembly serves, during any interval between sessions of the Assembly, on a committee appointed by resolution of the Assembly or by the Lieutenant Governor in Council pursuant to a resolution of the Assembly, the member shall be paid in respect of such service ...

Now, the important words that I want to bring to the attention of the Legislature are "pursuant to a resolution of the Assembly" which made it very clear, Mr. Speaker, that if there was a requirement for making any changes in between sessions, then it had to be covered by a resolution of the Legislature at the next sitting.

I think it would be rather interesting to the House if I were to just take a moment and indicate why this amendment was brought in the first place. I think there are a number of people who will remember the Liberal member who served in this House from the constituency of Edson. His untimely death created a vacancy on a committee that we had established at that point in time, and it was necessary that a replacement be appointed. As the Act read at that time, it would have been impossible to provide payment for him without making a change in the legislation. It was for this reason that the amendment was brought in, so that it could cover that kind of contingency, but it was still the prerogative of the House to pass retroactive legislation which would, in fact, cover the case in point.

In 1972 we then had a further amendment made to that particular section, and the words, "pursuant to resolution of the Legislature" were left out. It was then left to the discretion of the Lieutenant Governor in Council or by an O.C.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to say to the House just as carefully and as seriously as I can, that it is my view that we ought to protect ourselves - I say ourselves - and that we do not provide any arrangement whereby it is possible to make arrangements by O.C. or to create a situation whereby it is possible to have something happen that will be regretted later on, simply because it was made too easy.

So, Mr. Speaker, I would hope that the government would very carefully review the legislation that it has before us at this time. I recognize that we cannot pass amendments to a bill on second reading, but I certainly want to make it very clear, Mr. Speaker, that at this time I am going to vote against Bill No. 21. If it continues to be on the Order Paper as it is, I'm certainly going to do whatever I can to bring about amendments because I do not like the way the bill reads at the present time.

Mr. Speaker, I just simply want to say in closing that to me the important principle that we must always keep in mind is the supremacy of the Legislature. It applies equally to both sides of the House. It is the protection that we have against any possible misunderstanding that may creep into the minds of the public. I am sure, regardless of which side of the House we sit on, that we are most anxious to ensure that it is written in such a manner that there will be no occasion for fingers to be pointed at the government or any member of the Legislature.

Having said that, Mr. Speaker, I do not like that second principle. It provides for an arrangement that I think can lead to difficulty down the road.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. R. SPEAKER:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to make a remark or two on Bill No. 21. I certainly endorse the remarks of my colleague from Cypress. I feel his points are very well taken and certainly express my views very, very well.

But, Mr. Speaker, there are one or two things that I would like to add. The principle involved in Bill No. 21 of annual reports that are regularized is certainly a good one, and I would endorse that principle. However, Mr. Speaker, I think that if the other

principle in Bill No. 21 which enables the government, through the discretion of the Executive Council, to pay its caucus committees, to pay any back-bencher on the government side of the House, at its discretion, certainly is not a good principle. I feel, Mr. Speaker, that this can lead to a lot of difficulty and certainly indiscretion in that discretion which is given to the Executive Council.

Mr. Speaker, in the bill, the power at one time that rested with the Legislature, whereby a committee was appointed where the members of that committee would in turn receive remuneration as established by legislation, is now changed so that power is placed in the hands of the Executive Council. What that does, Mr. Speaker, is to leave a legislative committee in the clutches and the discretion of the Executive Council who by this act can either pay in total or in part, that is, \$40 per day, or pay mileage [according to] whatever its discretion or its decision may be. In that respect it would act in a role supreme to the decision of this Legislature.

I can see various situations where the Executive Council may not agree with some of the actions of the committee, with some of the members of the committee, that they could use this as a weapon to control or to direct the findings and the actions of those particular committees established by the Legislature. It may not happen with this particular government, but it may happen with one of the governments down the road.

Mr. Speaker, our responsibility is not to establish legislation of the day, but legislation of the day and long-term legislation that is good for the people in this province today and the people who are going to be here in the future. We must take that kind of responsibility, and as far as I'm concerned, the principles involved in the second part of this legislation certainly violate a long-term responsibility and a responsibility to the citizens of Alberta.

I think it is neglect on the part of the government, the Deputy Premier or the Premier himself, not to have brought this legislation before this Assembly, because it was their decision in the early stages to pay the back-benchers of the Conservative party, to make sure they had travelling expenses to get to Edmonton, travelling expenses to get home while working on some kind of committee or doing some kind of research. They should have taken that responsibility of bringing Bill No. 21 before the House.

But who do we have presenting it to the House? A back-bencher. A back-bencher minister who introduced it with very few remarks, read the first part - a few comments. If this is a principle of the government, then the front line should stand up and say it is their principle; it is what they stand for; it's the kind of payment they want to make. Not somebody who had to live with some decision of the central core or the assistant Premier, or the assistant assistant Premier. Because they initially made the decision to make these payments. It wasn't the Member for Redwater-Andrew. He certainly had to go along with it. Now he is trying to take the brunt of the storm and stand alone while the rest look and hang their heads.

MR. GETTY:

Your speeches are considered stones.

MR. R. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Edmonton Whitemud certainly hasn't made too many speeches in this House. I heard nothing from him on the Throne debate. I've heard nothing from him on earlier debates, and here he is telling me about the thunder and the storm on Bill No. 21. I'd like to hear him get up and present his case on Bill No. 21 as to why he wants to pay off the back-benchers, and why he wants to bring more back-benchers in to receive remuneration such as this.

Mr. Speaker, I think the principle involved in Bill No. 21 is wrong. If the government intends to go this route, certainly there should be amendments to Bill No. 21 by which they are able to place all of the information, all of the pay-offs, all of the discriminatory decisions they make before this Assembly every year, and I think a report similar to the first principle, the reporting technique, should be involved in an amendment in the second principle. That amendment should tell who, when, where and how much is involved in their actions. Maybe they are trustworthy - I'm not too sure - but I'd like to see it on paper and then I'd believe it.

Mr. Speaker, my intention is to vote against Bill No. 21.

MR. GRUENWALD:

Mr. Speaker, I'd also like to make just a few comments and ask a couple of questions regarding Bill No. 21. I am not sure of the concept.

Number one, I am wondering if the purpose of the bill is to possibly regularize something that is going on now, whether committees are being set up and paid in this way.

I am not sure if they are or not. Possibly the minister may wish to comment on that in the close.

Also, I am concerned as to whether this may in some way abolish or minimize the legislative committees as we now know them. Will we continue to have committees set up by the Legislature or will all committees in the future be set up by Executive Council? I think this is a rather important piece of information that I think all members of the Legislature are entitled to.

Also it mentions the possibility of setting up committees. Strictly speaking I presume a committee can be locked on as just one person. I am wondering if that is true or whether they are thinking of more than one or groups? But if just any one individual, any MLA, can be set up, assigned to a particular task and paid the sum set out in this bill to do just any type of work at all, again, of course, this would of concern to me.

I think the real concern, though, as both the previous speakers have mentioned and I would have to agree, is the danger of the precedent that is set up, Mr. Speaker. I am not saying for one moment that we would mistrust any of the government members, any of the cabinet ministers, any of the Executive Council on abusing this situation ...

AN HON. MEMBER:

I do.

MR. GRUENWALD:

But you must remember that they won't be there for all time. There will be other people occupying those positions and holding that authority and to set up a piece of legislation that lends itself to abuse, I submit, is a very dangerous type of precedent.

I think you all realize that theoretically every MLA on the government side could have a full-time job, receiving \$40 a day, except for those five days that they have to lay off, \$40 a day, receive mileage even to come to work, charge for their meals and all this type of thing. I submit even the most enthusiastic of the members would have to admit that would be a real abuse.

So I would say this government in its wisdom should not set up a type of legislation that lends itself to this type of abuse and ultimately could develop into real government corruption. So I would hope, Mr. Speaker, the government will reconsider this and accept, later on, amendments that will take away this opportunity for abuse.

MR. WILSON:

Mr. Speaker, in rising to participate in the debate on Bill No. 21, I would like to make a few brief comments and then request the hon. minister who is piloting this bill through the House to respond. And I would challenge him to respond in good conscience to some of the comments, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, it seems to me that Bill No. 21 is an attempt to legitimize paying for Tory caucus committees.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear.

MR. WILSON:

It seems to me, Mr. Speaker, that somebody's conscience is certainly bothering him when we see this kind of legislation introduced to this Legislature. It's nothing more than causing the taxpayers to pay for Tory party research. It's paying people for funds they were elected to do in the first place. Paying caucus committee expenses was certainly bad enough, but now when we are asking the taxpayers to pay wages for doing it, double wages as a matter of fact, it's a preposterous situation.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Hear, hear.

MR. WILSON:

The caucus committee work is incidental to carrying out the duties of an MLA and this is not the situation which we should be endorsing at all in this Legislature. It's an insult to Alberta taxpayers to continue this ruse to extend special benefits to Tory backbenchers.

The reports are not always made public either, Mr. Speaker. And that's another good reason why they shouldn't be paid. This caucus committee or task-force committee work is not made public. They are not always tabled in the House. Certainly there is no cause for taking the taxpayers' funds to pay for this kind of work.

It amounts to another form of dole. It's a shameful system of trying to create two classes of members of the Legislature by economic means.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear.

MR. WILSON:

It means a raise in pay for some privileged members who ran on the PC party slate.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear. Agreed.

MR. WILSON:

Adding fat on top of closed-door government is what this does, Mr. Speaker. It's inconsistent with the parliamentary system that we've grown accustomed to in Alberta. And it is an insult to the voters in Alberta. I think it gives rise to the slogan, the PC party before people. It's an abdication of the responsibility to the electorate which gave the PC party the privilege of governing in Alberta.

Mr. Speaker, if we assume that there are 240 working days in a year and approximately 70 are spent here during the session, including the days of grace, that leaves about 170 days. Multiply that by the \$40, you get \$6,800. Add that to the \$13,500 indemnity and voila! We have everybody on the government side a cabinet minister, earning \$20,300 a year.

AN HON. MEMBER:

They ran out of room.

MR. WILSON:

Well, Mr. Speaker, there is some dissension on the other side, particularly in the expense-account rows, the middle row and the back row. I know some of those people who were elected as private enterprisers are certainly chagrined and disappointed at some of the socialistic legislation that emanates from the front bench over there. And rather than making everybody a cabinet minister, perhaps now is the time for a good, deep cabinet shuffle. Let's get some of those back-benchers who are free enterprisers moved up to the front row before they become completely brainwashed into becoming socialists. It's time, Mr. Speaker, indeed, for a good, thorough, deep cabinet shuffle rather than trying to pay everybody as a cabinet minister over there.

As a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, this government has gone so far left it has squeezed the NDP right off the end of the bench. You know, Mr. Speaker, on coffee-cup row they are calling this the litmus government. They went in blue, but they are coming out pink.

You know, Mr. Speaker, that kind of talk disturbs me because I can't understand how come a past president of a prominent chamber of commerce, for example, could sit in that cabinet and we don't hear from him regarding actions that this government is taking of a left-wing nature. I would have expected that a past president of a chamber of commerce would have stood up on his high heels and roared so you could have heard him all the way to Calgary at some of the legislation that has gone through here. And I cannot understand how he has been squelched.

Then again we have another ardent private enterpriser over there, one of the biggest ranchers in Alberta by land holdings, by cattle, and by erect stature. He is being subjected to this socialistic business and I can't understand why we haven't heard from him. No, Mr. Speaker, this legislation is a diabolical scheme to introduce full-time MLAs on the government side of the House.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear.

MR. WILSON:

And now, Mr. Speaker, if that is what the government wants to do, that's fine. But why don't they have the guts to come out and say that's what they are going to do in

trying to bring legislation through the backdoor keyhole to make them full-time MLAs. It seems like a scheme devised to perpetrate the Tories in office. But it will fail, Mr. Speaker.

In this bill, the way it's presently worded, the expenses can include food, drink, accommodation and first-class air fare or whatever else they want to do. The bill does not even require the MLA on these caucus committees or task-force committees or whatever you want to call them, to go out of his house to get the \$40 a day, or even to go to a meeting. No, Mr. Speaker, all that would have to be done is to pass an Order in Council appointing all the government back-benchers to a committee to study the way of life in Alberta. From then on we would have not just indiscretions like putting your hand in the cookie jar, but we would have real problems in this province, Mr. Speaker, because every one of those people on that committee could live off the taxpayers' funds. They'd get double pay. They'd get their indemnities. They'd get \$40 a day for every day of the year in addition to the sessions. They'd get expense money. This legislation would be just a licence to steal, Mr. Speaker.

No, it's more than a cookie jar indiscretion. That's for sure. You know, Mr. Speaker, this legislation, the way it is written, does not even prohibit a cabinet minister from collecting double pay. A cabinet minister could qualify under this - for \$40 a day plus the expenses. This is a very, very sad day, Mr. Speaker, in the history of Alberta when a government would try to sneak through this kind of legislation to give everybody on their side of the House a raise in pay and a double payment for the same work they were elected to do in the first place.

No, Mr. Speaker, this is not right. Add this bit of hanky-panky to the burgeoning bureaucracy this government is building - the rampant patronage. And I can see, Mr. Speaker, that the first government speaker who gets up had better say that they want to let this piece of legislation die on the Order Paper, or failing that, they had better give a commitment that they have no intention to proclaim this legislation until after the voters have had an opportunity to register their opinion on it.

You know, Mr. Speaker, I can't help but feel that if this kind of shenanigans is carried on, one of these days that great Tory statesman, Mr. John Diefenbaker, is going to rear up, and disown the whole lot across the way.

MR. KING:

Mr. Speaker, I enjoyed very much the comments of the hon. member opposite. They reminded me of a used car dealership in Toronto that had a reputation for making a decision on whether or not they would buy any car that rolled into the lot, just on superficial examination without taking it out for a drive, without lifting the hood or anything. One day a car rolled into the lot very silently; braked to a stop, very silently. The owner of the lot was impressed, walked around the car once, said, I'll give you \$500 for it. The owner took the \$500, walked off the lot. The man got in, turned the key in the ignition and the car wouldn't start. He looked under the hood and there was no engine. The car really had literally rolled on to the lot.

That reminds me of the kind of examination the hon. member opposite gives legislation. His impression of legislation might change considerably if he'd give it more than a superficial examination. I would recommend to him that in the future he should look not only at bills which amend legislation, but he should look at the legislation that is being amended as well, and it might give him a different view of matters.

AN HON. MEMBER:

You'd better hire a lawyer over there. You goofed. You really goofed on this one.

MR. KING:

We have a number of lawyers here who haven't been appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council to any commissions or boards and I'm sure that they'd be more than willing to give some much-needed advice to the hon. members opposite.

The Act as it presently reads, that is the Act that was last dealt with extensively by the hon. members opposite when they were the government - the Act as it presently reads allows precisely the things that the hon. member opposite is talking about, because the Act as it presently reads says that wherever the Lieutenant Governor in Council appoints a member of the Legislative Assembly to a committee, a commission or a board, then that member "shall" be paid \$40 per day. There is no discretion about whether or not he gets it and there is no discretion about the amount he gets. In addition to getting the per diem he gets all the reasonable disbursements.

The amendment which is being proposed is going to do away with that. The amendment is going to say that a member of the Legislative Assembly may sit on a board, a commission or a committee appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council, and may do it without receiving \$40 per diem, in fact, may do it without receiving any per diem whatsoever. In point of fact, the situation which the hon. member decries so loudly and so vehemently is the situation that was enacted by the hon. members opposite. The situation to which he wants to return is the situation to which it is proposed we should return by an amendment to the Act ...

MR. CLARK:

Try it again.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Read it.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Good speech.

MR. KING:

For the hon. members opposite who were in Education for so long that it dulled their minds, I would point to the explanatory notes. Section 59(1) says, "... the member shall be paid ... an allowance of \$40 a day ...". That's the current situation.

What is proposed would read that the Lieutenant Governor in Council 'may' order that the member be paid an amount not exceeding \$40 per day. In other words, what we are introducing is exactly the discretion that the hon. member in his very indiscreet way would like to see.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. LUDWIG:

Mr. Speaker, I do wish to say a few words about this bill. It appears that the second-hand car dealer down East probably bought that car the way the people in this province probably voted for a government last time around, Mr. Speaker.

I think that when we talk about people needing legal advice, perhaps they ought to get together, have a huddle, and find out whether they ought not to take a good look at themselves and see what they are, in fact, trying to pull off in this province.

I think that the way this legislation now reads, we on this side have an interesting job to perform. We ought to go back to Day 1 of this government and see who got paid what kind of money, what for and whether it was authorized legally.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Put it on the Order Paper.

MR. LUDWIG:

I believe that when we want to hark back and say what we did under previous legislation - I believe that we brought these things to the Legislature for approval of the Assembly when we set up any committee. But regardless of what we passed as legislation, we did not take advantage of it, as the hon. members opposite appear to be ...

[Interjections]

Right now every MLA and his helper could get on this kind of committee. They are political committees, make no bones about it. They are not serving the public interests. They are not bringing anything here and they are spending public funds to perhaps inform themselves of which way the political winds are blowing because at the present time they are awfully shifty and they are blowing all over the place in this province.

The hon. Member for Calgary Bow made a very telling point about the fact that when we talk about principles, we have a lot to fear on this side about the principles of this government, because when they can abandon theirs after a short time in office - principles on which they got elected - then we have to treat them ... they are suspect. They will try to use every advantage, as they have.

Even in this House, Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives show [themselves] to be unprincipled in the way they treat one side and the way they treat another. I will not

make a reflection on the Speaker's ruling because he is impartial, he is capable and I subscribe to his impartiality and rulings. But when we deal with actions, it's a different thing. We're dealing with a government that is petty enough to seek every advantage it can, here and elsewhere - including spending taxpayers' money to perpetuate those advantages.

I'm talking about the manner in which the television plug-ins are in this building. It's a rotten disgrace that we should be discriminated [against] in that manner. It is unjustifiable and I'm blaming the government for it. It's discriminatory and it's cheap, and it's a reflection first on the Premier and then on everybody else in cabinet, and not on the Speaker. And it's an insult to the people of Alberta when the PCs fought for television in the Legislature and then are cheap enough to creep right into the gutter and allow only one side to be reasonably photographed. You think that one over. You think that one over.

[Laughter]

You can laugh all you like, but it's bordering on crooked politics as far as I'm concerned, Mr. Speaker.

AN HCN. MEMBER:

Hear, hear.

MR. LUDWIG:

It's not a reflection, as I stated, on your ruling or on your behaviour, Mr. Speaker.

MR. HYNDMAN:

Mr. Speaker, on a point of information, it may be of interest to the Assembly that there are completely and totally similar television outlets on both sides of the back of the Assembly. The government doesn't direct in any way the media as to which side of the Assembly they wish to use.

AN HCN. MEMBER:

Mr. Speaker, the hon. minister is bringing up ... [Inaudible] ...

AN HON. MEMBER:

... photogenic over there.

MR. LUDWIG:

Mr. Speaker ...

MR. SPEAKER:

As a matter of fact, there is some doubt in my mind as to whether the hon. member is actually debating this bill. He is saying, in effect, that the government is generally not enjoying his approval, and therefore this kind of power ought not to be given to the government. It would seem to me that the latter part of the remarks made by the hon. Member for Calgary Mountain View might more appropriately be raised as a matter of privilege and then the topic could be fully aired without it detracting from the relevance of this debate.

MR. LUDWIG:

Mr. Speaker, I appreciate your ruling, and I will abide by it, but sometimes what happens before guides what we do. When I thought the hcn. Member for Edmonton Kingsway, who certainly qualifies - if he qualifies for anything, he qualifies as a second-hand car dealer. When we can talk about second-hand cars, we can talk about the Legislature, Mr. Speaker, I believe. But I will abide by your ruling, Mr. Speaker.

I mention the fact that the hon. Member for Kingsway is defending this bill - for Highlands, I beg your pardon. He's defending this bill ...

DR. PAPRICKSKI:

Mr. Speaker, the name is the hon. Member for Edmonton Highlands, if you don't mind.

Yes, hon. Member for Edmonton Kingsway, I would also be sensitive if somebody tried to mistake him for you.

DR. PAPROSKI:

Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. I don't mind at all if you want to continue that way.

MR. LUDWIG:

Yes, if you're sensitive you could speak up. Yes, Mr. Speaker, the hon. Member for Edmonton Highlands is defending this bill. He needs to defend it. This bill will need to be defended as long as it is on the books in this province.

Furthermore, Mr. Speaker, if you feel that the hon. members on this side are a bit suspicious of what can happen, we're not only suspicious of what can happen, we're now suspicious of what has happened, especially when it is so difficult to get answers to questions when we start probing into something like this. It is our job - we have to do it. It is like pulling teeth, we have to keep pressuring the government. Every bit of information has to be extracted. They preach open government, that they'll give us loads and loads of news over the wire service but nothing about this bill, nothing about their task force committee, nothing about what they get paid. They're anxious to seek credit for pronouncements as if they were achievements, but they try to conceal where the money goes. I believe that the debate on this bill will prompt the opposition to be more vigilant, to be more concerned and a little more suspicious of what goes on because they are padding out their own side. I believe the hon. Member for Calgary Bow told them exactly what needed to be told and now it will bear repeating.

So with those few remarks, Mr. Speaker, I believe that we ought not to proceed with this bill. They ought to take this back and think it over because they are loading up a little bit. The task forces, the government committees that they set up, the political committees are paid for now. They get a monthly pay. They get an indemnity, they get expenses while they are here. It doesn't satisfy me or the hon. members on this side saying that they are not going to abuse it. This thing lends itself to abuse. As I stated, that for what I've seen in this House about impartiality, about seeking credit for what they haven't done, about trying to conceal things that may be embarrassing, we have a job to probe and in fact, keep on asking where the money goes. I think that the public which has trouble making ends meet because of inflation is not too happy to see MLAs getting expenses and getting all sorts of padded-out bills paid when they are on committees, running up and down the province. They are paid an annual pay, let them earn their money this way. So for that reason, Mr. Speaker, I'm going to oppose this bill. I believe that we should continue to resist this type of legislation.

The hon. members on the other side, as I stated, are defending it. This bill needs a lot of defending and will perhaps need a lot more lawyers than you've got on your side to defend it, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Highwood followed by the hon. Member for Wetaskiwin-Leduc.

MR. BENOIT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just wanted to comment. I couldn't withhold myself after listening to the Member for Edmonton Highlands trying to draw that red herring across the question after the Member for Cypress so ably placed before us the fact that the explanatory note that we have for that particular section is not the section as it was put in by the previous government. That's the section as it was amended by the existing government in 1972.

The section by the previous government had another note as the hon. Member for Cypress plainly pointed out, that these committees could not be appointed, or members to the committee could not be appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council except the committee in the first place had been appointed by a resolution of the Assembly, and these were only to fulfil any vacancies that might occur. They were appointed by resolution of the Assembly or by the Lieutenant Governor in Council pursuant to a resolution of the Assembly. The existing government very ably by its majority was able to put in an amendment previously that ruled out that section, that portion that says "pursuant to a resolution of the Assembly". Now they want to take out the whole power of the Legislature for appointing committees by putting it in in such a way that "... the Lieutenant Governor in Council may order that the member be paid in respect of such service any or all of the following: ..."

Now the may and the shall part I will agree with, but not the other part. The explanatory note is the amended resolution. Mr. Speaker, this type of amendment and this type of bill is only an extension of a practice which was begun by this government two

years ago of putting in all kinds of open-ended legislation, which leaves the authority completely in the hands of the government and doesn't even give the authority to the back-benchers on the government side. The whole authority is left in the hands of the Lieutenant Governor in Council or the 22 ministers who sit on the front bench.

I think, Mr. Speaker, that there is more power being given to the cabinet and less power to the Legislature in almost every piece of legislation that comes up, between all the regulations that can be made by the cabinet and the ministers, and the type of legislation that is being put in. The insidious part about the whole thing is that the government has a majority twice the size of the opposition and they can put through the kind of legislation that suits their purposes with this kind of idea in mind, of strengthening the power of the government and taking away from the Legislature.

It is enough that the government has the majority to be able to do what it wants without robbing the Legislature of its power to be able to balance the power of the majority by some kind of legislation that at least calls upon the entire Legislature for a vote. Even that kind of legislation is always under the control of the government when the government has the majority. A bill of this nature proposes to emasculate the Legislature completely and rob the electors of representative power through the back-benchers on the government side as well as the members of the opposition side.

So, Mr. Speaker, I can't approve of legislation of this kind. Now in two steps in two different sessions, they have taken out entirely the opportunity of the Legislature to have anything to say about the kinds of committees that are established. Added to that, it has been pointed out that here in the Legislature, it's the privilege of Members of Parliament as well, as legislators we get a rather large sum that is income tax free to begin with for expense purposes. In this particular Legislature one-third of what we receive of our indemnity is termed expense account and it is income tax exempt to start with. Having increased the indemnity by about 85 per cent recently and having increased the subsistence allowance by 100 per cent, and raising from \$25 a day to \$40 a day the amount paid to members of the committees appointed by the Legislature, we now have to add to that the possibility of paying to members appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council the same amount of \$40 a day. There's just no end to it - one thing leads to another. It's a principle involved that needs to be revealed for what it really is.

I would like to ask two questions of the one who presents the bill to us. One is, is it in any way the government's intention to make this particular aspect of the bill retroactive? Secondly, when does it intend to proclaim it. Because the bill as it is presented to us indicates that it will become effective upon proclamation and not when it's passed, as is usual or when it's assented to, as is usual with most of the bills.

So, Mr. Speaker, with those few comments, I thank you.

MR. HENDERSON:

Mr. Speaker, may I first say I'm not really concerned whether the TV cameras catch me from the backside or the front side, but some of my friends would say my best part is my backside anyhow.

I'm not really too concerned about the question of concealment because I presume that all the funds that are utilized for these purposes are reported in Public Accounts. So that information is there.

I am not really concerned about the question of regulation nor, since I acquired a degree of partiality as far as the proceedings of this House are concerned, am I really too uptight about the fact that the government chooses to use some of the members from that side of the House on studies of various sorts when the House is not in session and uses the public funds to reimburse them, because the information is public as to what they are doing and the accounting of it is public; it shows in Public Accounts.

There is a section in Public Accounts, if members want to look at it, where there is a statement that every dollar of public money that is paid to a member of this Legislature - other than what is authorized by the Legislature for a sessional indemnity and what is authorized as a cabinet minister - everything else relates to all expenses any member claims or any other remuneration that a member receives from having been on a government board and tribunal, which I have been on in the past, is all recorded in Public Accounts. So I am not really concerned on that basis about the legislation.

I really hadn't intended to get into the argument until I heard the sophisticated words of the member from Kingsway or Highlands - I am not too sure which one it was ...[Inaudible]... It's kind of a gruesome twosome over there, you get mixed up, Mr. Speaker. When I listened to, as I say, the sophisticated arguments I was prompted to decide I had better get into the debate. I think that bringing the amendment forth is probably a good idea because the word "shall" that was in the legislation previously was a "shall" that was in there as a result of direction of the Legislature. The Legislature appointed the committee, and the committee was appointed by resolution of the Legislature.

The Legislature has said that those members who are doing the work when the House is not in session, and it's work that is ordered by the Legislature, shall be paid, and I think the "shall" was quite appropriate.

I think it is rather an appropriate expression of humility now to see the government bring in an amendment to suggest that maybe the cabinet shouldn't have quite the say, the prerogative to make it mandatory, but that there is some degree of discretion as to whether they think the work of the individual deserves public remuneration or not.

I think the thing that is bothering me and has bothered me from the start - I question the appropriateness of the amendment that was introduced previously, and this one. It seems axiomatic to me that a member of a legislative committee can only be appointed by this Legislature. It is not a legislative committee unless this Legislature appoints it. I think that is fundamental. I don't disagree with a section being in the Act to the effect that an individual receiving remuneration - he is a member of the Legislature but he is doing work for the government other than what is required of him as a member of the Legislature - that such remuneration provided it's done by, the means it's being done by, by order in council, the funds are publicly accounted for. If anybody wants to disagree with it they can disagree with it, but it is all done openly and publicly, no disagreement of the section being in the Act to that effect.

But I really question the principle underlying the bill that is implied that by order in council a legislative committee can be established, because, as I say, it is fundamentally unsound. It's only a legislative committee if it's a committee of this House, and funds that are voted for the operation of this Assembly and the members of this Assembly by this House should only be used by order of this Assembly.

It seems to me that the authority to authorize payment for work that members of this Legislature may do outside of the time when the House is not in session - that it is being done at the request of the government - should be contained in some other legislation. It should not be in The Legislative Assembly Act. Because by putting it in The Legislative Assembly Act it leaves the impression or the conclusion - it's not explicit but it's close to it, it's implicit - that it's a committee of the Legislature that these funds are being paid out for. I think, if there is an element of misrepresentation in the exercise, that this is what we are really confronted with. I, for one, am not concerned about the argument of concealment, nor do I suggest or believe that the money is being misused.

In the final analysis, the people on both sides of this House are accountable to the public and the public is going to decide whether the money is being well spent or ill spent.

I do question the hypothesis and seeing it incorporated in legislation that the Executive Council has authorities which are on a par with the Legislature. It seems that the orders relating to the affairs and functioning of the members of the House should be contained properly in The Legislative Assembly Act and should be at the direction of the Legislative Assembly. This is my main objection to it because in principle it seems to put orders of Executive Council directing the affairs of the members of this House on a par with orders of this Assembly. I think that is too fundamental a question to leave unchallenged. I have no objection to appropriate authority being provided under other legislation to authorize the utilization of public funding for these specific purposes.

My recollection is that the first time we went through the exercise about the use of this money, the money was in the departmental estimates. Well if the money is coming out of the departmental estimates, the legislation that authorized the payment of it could come out of the departmental estimates or under departmental legislation. But the authorization of payment under The Legislative Assembly Act when it is not work that strictly concerns the activities of this Assembly, I suggest is maybe inappropriate.

It's for this reason, Mr. Speaker, that I think the government should once again reconsider whether this particular amendment should be in the Act. I think the authority to be sure that a member, in accepting funds, doesn't contravene The Legislative Assembly Act - that has to be in the Act. I really don't think the authorization for the actual payment should be in the Act because it leaves the impression that it's a legislative committee that the member is being paid for, when it's axiomatic that a legislative committee can only be established by order of this Assembly, and a legislative committee cannot be established by order of the Executive Council. If the government would go about amending the legislation in the manner outlined, I think that confusion would be avoided. There would be no concern about an individual contravening the Act by accepting the funds, and the individual could be paid through authorization under legislation other than The Legislative Assembly Act.

MR. MOORE:

Mr. Speaker, one doesn't have to have much imagination to know why the hon. members for Calgary Bow and Highwood are sitting among those of the opposition. Surely, a member

of this Assembly should be charged with the responsibility of reading an act and properly finding out what is contained in that act before getting up and making a very highpowered speech.

As the hon. Member for Wetaskiwin-Leduc has said, the payments that are made to all members of the Legislative Assembly for travelling and subsistence, and indeed the \$40 a day allowance that is received for legislative committee work, are contained in the Public Accounts of this province which were tabled last fall for the year ending March 31, 1973.

This bill, if you haven't had time yet to read it ... simply splits Section 59, Mr. Speaker, into two parts. The original section is exactly as it was except the words "Lieutenant Governor in Council" are taken out. It therefore effectively says that the legislative committee appointed by this Legislature shall be paid the \$40 per day plus reasonable disbursements, and so on.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Read the next part.

MR. MOORE:

The second part reads exactly the same as the first part except substituting the words "Lieutenant Governor in Council" for the words "resolution of the Assembly" and then substitutes the word "shall" for "may". Quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, I can say to the members why, in my view, this change was made. I know it is the desire of the Premier and the Executive Council to continue utilizing members of the government side in appointments to various committees where there is some important work to be done.

I know also it is the Premier's desire that members who are appointed to committees, such as I and other members, shall not be paid the \$40 a day, but only reasonable disbursements actually expended for accommodation, travel and so on.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I was appointed to the Alberta Grain Commission almost two years ago and since that time I certainly never had a payment of \$40 a day for attending meetings. I have received considerable disbursements for travel and subsistence and that kind of thing throughout the course of that work. If one actually read the existing Act which is in effect and considered, Mr. Speaker, that a commission such as that is indeed a committee appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council, then one could say the Lieutenant Governor in Council is required to pay the \$40 a day. This particular piece of legislation that is before you, if you will read it, very simply says the Lieutenant Governor in Council has the authority, if he so desires, not to pay a member who is appointed to a committee by the Lieutenant Governor in Council.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to close by saying once again it is sad that people make speeches with such a great degree of 'gust' as the Member for Calgary Bow has, without any facts at all of what the legislation is all about.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Question.

MR. BUCKWELL:

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to say a few words on the principle of this bill. It could be the one bill in this session that is going to generate the most heat and activity and it is rather paradoxical that it was introduced by silent George.

[Laughter]

It is rather interesting, the Member for Edmonton Highlands and the Member for Smoky River, the completely different points of view they have on this same bill. The Member for Highlands said, now fellows you know it's we "may" or "shall". Well, if the cabinet "may" or "shall", I'd like to know what cabinet minister or what chairman of a committee appointed by the legislature shall give a man \$40 when he didn't attend, or shall pay him 16 cents a mile, or shall give him meals or accommodation when he wasn't there, and he may now give them this.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I think in all sincerity, both sides of the House would realize that if they were on a legislative committee, there may have been the odd time that a fellow padded out his mileage or maybe he ate a steak when he could have eaten a hamburger, but I think this is rather silly.

But I'm concerned in one sense - the hon. Member for Wetaskiwin-Leduc talks about Public Accounts. And as we well know, this is after the fact. You could have ended up with a member getting \$1,500 and an election came and he is out. Sure he got the money,

but it is after the fact and you didn't know it until Public Accounts came out. You start to look at them a year after. If we turn around and have the cabinet and Lieutenant Governor appoint a committee, it is also after the fact to the average member. He doesn't know that this committee has been appointed by order in council, unless he gets a copy of the order in council or he reads it in the Alberta Gazette. So again, it is after the fact. What is the point of shouting about a cabinet committee or a committee that has been established?

I can understand - and I don't want to be facetious about this - but I can understand if we wanted to go to Mexico to look at the hogs, the hon. Minister of Agriculture could take every farmer in this legislature, appoint him on a committee - come on, boys. Or we will go down to the Argentine where we were last Friday and look at the lumber and there is nothing stopping us from going down. Pass an order in council and away we go.

But I'm concerned, and the Member for Cypress has brought this up, The Legislative Assembly Act is the members' act. It is through The Legislative Assembly Act that you and I come into being, that we have a right to sit in this Legislature, that the boundaries of our constituencies are set out. Our rights and our privileges as members, our responsibilities and our duties are laid out in The Legislative Assembly Act. And I'm concerned, Mr. Speaker, that when we get to the point - while the cabinet is also represented in The Legislative Assembly Act, it is also represented in the various departments. For example, the Department of Agriculture, there shall be a member of the cabinet, or a member of the Executive Council who shall represent and sit on the Executive Council - we are not arguing with that either. But I'm concerned that the cabinet or the Executive Council shall dip into The Legislative Assembly Act and the members and can say we can appoint a committee.

Now it is not sour grapes on our side that if we are going to have a committee of six members, four are on that side of the House and two are on this. This is not the argument. This is set up. This change in this bill is a double-barrelled one. You are allowed to have a legislative committee as in former times.

What we are concerned about is that the Lieutenant Governor in Council can set up any kind of committee and use any members from one side of the House or the other and the Legislature doesn't know the first thing about it until it comes out in the orders in council. Like the member for Ieduc - if it is going to come out of The Legislative Assembly Act and going to be used, and this is the type of committee that the government wants, then take it out of The Legislative Assembly Act altogether.

Be honest enough, and man enough, to set up an act, or set up a bill, so that if you want to do this it is not paid through The Legislative Assembly Act. Then I wouldn't have to stand in my place and represent people in my constituency who say, do you belong to the Legislature, or why didn't you know about this committee that is working? I didn't know anything about it because the cabinet has set it up. I don't even know who belongs to it; we haven't found out yet. And this is some of the stuff that has gone on in the past.

If you want to pay your own committee members to do the work that the cabinet can't do, then turn around and pay them out of a different act. But don't use The Legislative Assembly Act which covers each and every one of us in our places, because each and every one of us, like it or not, whichever side of the House we are on, we were elected to this Legislature and we have a right to stand in our places. You are using this Act not exactly to blackmail, but to cover us with a tar brush. If you want to use your own side, you will use it. If it is a really disagreeable one, well put on a couple of the boys from the other side.

But you have had enough task forces; you have enough members and the hon. Member for Smoky River can talk all he likes. I couldn't care less if he is appointed chairman of the Grains Commission. He took that. If he thought he wasn't going to get paid, why did he take it? There are others the same way. If you didn't want it, why did you take it? Because it is a stepping stone to something better. But why expect the Legislative Assembly to pay you for a job on a committee you could already have been on if you hadn't been in the Legislature? You are turning around today and expecting - the members turn around after the fact, after you have got the money and after it has all been paid, and then never made a presentation to the Legislature. This is a double-barrelled bill, here ...

MR. MOORE:

Mr. Speaker, on a point of privilege. The hon. member is insinuating, by using my position with the Alberta Grain Commission, that I have been paid for work done on that committee. And that is entirely improper. If the hon. member wants to continue in that vein, I would suggest that he look at the facts with regard to ...

AN HCN. MEMBER:

He didn't say that.

AN HCN. MEMBER:

You're wrong again.

MR. SPEAKER:

I may have missed something, but I didn't get the impression that the hon. member was saying that. But if there is some doubt as to whether he said it or not, perhaps he would like to clarify it.

MR. BUCKWELL:

Mr. Speaker, the only reason I use the Member for Smoky River is because he used himself as an example. I'm sure he is doing a good job or he wouldn't be on there. I know if anybody is going to work for Hugh, he's going to get a dollar's worth of wages out of him.

In conclusion, maybe we have sort of got side-tracked on this debate, but the point the hon. Member for Cypress made that we are playing with a very dangerous thing - I don't think we should give in to the cabinet one iota as far as The Legislative Assembly Act is concerned. This is the Act that protects all the members and it should not just be used; If we decide to form a committee, we don't have to even ask you boys at all. It should come right here before the Assembly and everybody should have the chance to put in their two bits' worth.

MR. RUSTE:

Mr. Speaker, in rising to take part in the second reading of Bill No. 21, I was rather interested in noting what the introducer of the bill did say when he brought it in. I'm just going to quote now.

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.

And that is all that was said, Mr. Speaker. In reading this bill, sure that is fine, the first part I will agree with. But certainly he could have mentioned something as important as what is being attempted by the government through legislation to have us members - well, that's all there was to it - just annual reports.

I hope that the hon. Member for Edmonton Highlands has now read the legislation and has corrected himself, because he referred to something that was in The Legislative Assembly Act of 1972, Amendments, Chapter 60. I would like to read again what was in the Revised Statutes of Alberta of 1970, Section 59, which deals with allowances and expenses for committee work. Section 59 (1) reads as follows:

Notwithstanding anything in this Act, where a member of the Legislative Assembly serves, during any interval between sessions of the Assembly, on a committee appointed by resolution of the Assembly or by the Lieutenant-Governor in Council pursuant to a resolution of the Assembly, the member shall be paid, in respect to such service ...

And then it goes on to give the amounts and so on. I won't go into that.

Now, what the Member for Edmonton Highlands was referring to was the amendment in 1972. Some rather drastic changes took place in that amendment. It reads as follows:

Section 59 is amended by striking out subsection (1) and by substituting the following (which would be 59 (1):

Notwithstanding anything in this Act, where a member of the Legislative Assembly serves, during intervals between sessions or while the Assembly is adjourned for more than five days, on a committee appointed by the resolution of the Assembly,

That's all right.

or by the Lieutenant Governor in Council, not having any reference to the resolution of the Assembly, the member shall be paid ...

So I submit, Mr. Speaker, that the change made at that time, coupled with what you have today, gives open licence to the cabinet to appoint any member on the government side

to a committee. Certainly we have witnessed in this Assembly and the present government the expense accounts just opened right up. And certainly the supremacy of the Legislature is being challenged in such legislation as this. I think for the protection of the members of this Assembly, and for the protection of the House, that we should resist any such amendments in this Assembly.

For a government that has proposed open government - they were quite critical of orders in council, the numbers - we are seeing an increasing evidence of legislative provisos for orders in council, for ministerial orders, for the minister making grants, for closed door decisions, Mr. Speaker. And certainly I, for one, as an elected representative of the Legislature, there are two things that I have a duty to and I feel strongly for. One is to deal with all the legislation that is proposed here and to have a vote and a say in it. The second is to deal with all the expenditures. And here we're finding that committees are being set up by government, by order in council, that are certainly anything but open government. So with that, Mr. Speaker, I intend, unless changes are made, to object to the second reading of this bill.

MR. KING:

On a point of privilege, Mr. Speaker. The points made by the hon. Member for Wainwright were very well taken. I was going to get up and ...

MR. EARTON:

We accept your apology.

MR. KING:

You can't accept it until you hear it. The point made by the hon. Member for Wainwright is well taken. I did misread the 1970 Revised Statutes of Alberta. I don't think it changes the main point of my argument which was that we were providing the discretion they were interested in, but he is correct.

MR. LUDWIG:

Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. With reference to the hon. member who just spoke, perhaps we should let him speak again because he didn't say anything the first time.

MR. KOZIAK:

Mr. Speaker, that just points out that the hon. Member for Calgary Mountain View hasn't spoken today either.

AN HCN. MEMBER:

You know it all.

MR. KOZIAK:

This particular discussion, Mr. Speaker, reminds me - just as the hon. Member for Edmonton Highlands has brought in some experience from outside the Legislature to support his debate on this bill. It reminds me of those situations - you've probably heard of them and a number of you are sitting on the opposite side - where you laugh three times when a joke is told. You've heard of these people; they laugh three times when a joke is told, once when the joke is told, once when it's explained to them and finally when they understand it.

From this side, two people have tried to explain the meaning of the amendment and you still don't understand it. Mr. Speaker, I guess it takes a third speaker to explain to them the difference between the meaning of the word "shall" and the word "may". And it's simply that simple. I think what we've got before us is a rewording of last year's Hansard, or the year before. The members opposite seem to be debating the amendment which was passed in 1972 rather than the amendment which is before them today. Otherwise, their arguments are senseless. And I suggest that perhaps that's what they're doing, rather than suggesting that their arguments are senseless.

The simple matter is that the bill changes from "shall" to "may" the requirement that those members who serve on a committee appointed by the Executive Council as opposed to the Legislative Assembly - from "shall" to "may" that they be paid. Simple as that.

Now, your arguments, or the arguments of the members opposite, Mr. Speaker - I apologize for using that undesirable pronoun - are strictly related to what took place two years ago, and not to the amendment which is placed before them. As a matter of fact, if they were true to their arguments and true to themselves, they would stand up and support the bill rather than decry it. I appreciate, perhaps, their arguments with respect to what may have taken place two years ago, but this is an attempt to change that,

in the direction in which they are arguing. So, Mr. Speaker, their support should be in favour of the amendment rather than in opposition to it. Perhaps, now that it has been explained a third time ...

[Laughter]

Yes, I hear the laughs, Mr. Speaker. They understand it.

MR. HO LEM:

Mr. Speaker, in rising to speak on the second reading of Bill No. 21, The Legislative Assembly Amendment Act, 1974, I want to say that if this bill is passed, what it would mean is that it would finally legalize the government task force. It would enable Conservative MLAs to cash in on the various allowances, namely the \$40 a day plus other expenses, as members of this committee.

The bill also suggests that the present procedure is illegal. If it weren't so, why the amendment at this time, particularly when the members on the opposite side have enjoyed the funds derived from the government task force?

Mr. Speaker, I believe that the bill is making a mockery of the democratic process, in that it is saying that 40 per cent of the electorate who voted in favour of Social Credit last time around shouldn't have a voice in these highly paid committees - not that we want it - but it says that we are not allowed. Why, Mr. Speaker, I ask, is there no guarantee in this amendment stating that all party members, regardless of party affiliations, should be represented in these committees?

I think that perhaps we should congratulate the government for introducing the guaranteed annual income for Tory back-benchers. If the government is trying to implement a pay raise for their back-benchers, why would they not proceed by presenting this to the people by way of a referendum which would be the fair way to do it? I, as a member from Calgary, realize what the results of such a referendum would be. I believe, Mr. Speaker, it's just another sneaky Conservative move to implement overt and blatant political patronage, and the people of Alberta deserve more than that.

With the advent of Watergate, and the distaste that the public has for this kind of political trickery and subterfuge, I am surprised and I am shocked that the government would flaunt the public concern by presenting this type of an amendment. I oppose the amendment, Mr. Speaker.

MR. EATYUK:

Mr. Speaker, would the hon. member permit a question? Would you be able to tell whether you accept \$40 a day ...

MR. SPEAKER:

Would the hon. member please address the Chair.

MR. EATYUK:

Sorry, Mr. Speaker. Would the hon. member tell us whether he receives a provincial government amount of \$40 a day serving on the auxiliary hospital board?

AN HON. MEMBER:

What's that got to do with anything?

MR. HO LEM:

In answer to that, no.

MR. NOTLEY:

I have to first say that while I don't always agree with the hon. Member for Edmonton Strathcona, I think his assessment of the amendment is probably correct, but that doesn't change my opposition to this particular bill.

In my view, the arguments raised earlier by the hon. Member for Wetaskiwin-Leduc are still the most penetrating reasons why members should oppose this particular bill. I think there is a great difference between a legislative committee which is established as a result of a vote by the Legislature on one hand, and a committee which is set up by the Lieutenant Governor in Council on the other. It's just as simple as that.

It seems to me, Mr. Speaker, that regardless of how the government argues its case, the suggestion which is technically correct made by the hon. Member for Edmonton

Strathcona doesn't alter the fact that, in dealing with the principle of Bill No. 21, we are still looking at caucus committees. We are still dealing with the whole issue which admittedly was raised two years ago, in 1972, in this House.

But the opposition didn't bring in this bill. The government brought in Bill No. 21 and as such I think we have to review again our position on it. In my judgment there is just no question that legislation which places caucus committees appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council in the same position as legislative committees set up by order of this Legislative Assembly is just completely wrong.

Mr. Speaker, I want to say just a word or two about the role of caucus committees. We heard two years ago the chant every time a speaker from the government side rose, that they were a government of 49 members. We don't hear that any more. I'm surprised. We've had three or four speakers including the minister who introduced it and we haven't heard a word about being a government of 49 members. What happened to that teamwork? What happened to the boast about all the teamwork which we continually and incessantly heard two years ago? It seems to have all been lost.

In any event, if the cabinet ministers are so overworked that they need to bring the back-benchers into play to do the kind of work which is over and above the normal work one would expect them to do for their caucus, I might say, Mr. Speaker, as a word of digression that it would be very nice for me if we had pay for caucus committees. You know I could have a caucus committee meeting almost every hour.

But the fact of the matter is, Mr. Speaker, that if they want to lighten the load of the ministers, and at the same time open up opportunities for the more talented members on the back bench over there, in any event if they wish to pursue this course, surely a better approach would be to introduce the Legislative Secretary concept which is now used by the House of Commons and has been for a number of years. I believe several other legislatures in Canada also have this approach. In my judgment that would be better than simply setting up caucus committees and using The Legislative Assembly Act to authorize in effect that sort of expenditure.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, the arguments are familiar because we've heard them before. But in my judgment the criticism which was made two years ago about the imposition or introduction of caucus committees is still valid. I was opposed two years ago; I'm still opposed today.

MR. SORENSON:

Mr. Speaker, just a comment on Bill No. 21. I want to go on record as opposing the bill. The bill allows the government to set up caucus committees at any time during the year. We take exception to the appointment of these paid Conservative caucus committees. However, the government is forging ahead with it even though it is wrong, and be sure your errors will find you out. This type of legislation will catch up to you.

We know the Premier is very reluctant to recognize his mistakes and I only wish he were in his seat today to face the music. This type of legislation reeks of 'hand in the cookie jar'. It's putting-on-the-feedback legislation. However the government is intent, so it is just like shooting at the Rock of Gibraltar with a peashooter. They are going to go ahead with it. They've charted their course. To me it's a shameful bill, one of the most shameful bills that has come before this House.

MR. COOKSON:

Mr. Speaker, I would just like to record for the purposes of Hansard essentially what it has cost the Assembly this afternoon because the opposition wasn't able to interpret the difference between "shall" and "may". I came up with a figure of approximately \$15,000 average income in the Assembly, and using the 200-day year, and an 8-hour day, I would like to inform the members that this rather useless debate this afternoon - purposeless - has cost the taxpayers of the province approximately \$1,600.

[Interjections]

MR. HINMAN:

Mr. Speaker, it won't cost much more if I make a few comments. It's the very ...

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Wetaskiwin-Ieduc with a question for the last speaker.

MR. HENDERSON:

I would like to ask the hon. Member for Lacombe a question. Is he aware of the fact that all that waste of money could be avoided if the government would agree to withdraw the bill?

MR. COOKSON:

Well, Mr. Speaker, I think this has been thoroughly discussed and dealt with in prior years. I'm rather disturbed that the issue has to come before the Assembly again.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Shame, shame.

MR. RUSTE:

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask a question if I may. What will this legislation cost the people of Alberta?

DR. BOUVIER:

Mr. Speaker, could I direct a question ...

MR. COOKSON:

I want, Mr. Speaker, to refer to what I just said. That the debate was carried on in prior years and the issue before us is simply being misguided by the members of the opposition.

DR. BOUVIER:

A question for the Member for Lacombe. Is he suggesting in his short speech that the opposition should not oppose anything, that we should, in fact, now go home and save a lot of money for the people of Alberta?

MR. SPEAKER:

Order please. These questions are really in the nature of debate. They don't appear to be seeking really to get any information and they are just leading to further argument. Perhaps we might hear from the hon. Member for Cardston.

MR. HINMAN:

Mr. Speaker, I was just saying, in addition to what has been said by other members, I'm quite concerned about the very terms "shall" and "may". If the Lieutenant Governor in Council feels that a committee is worth having, and if it is going to meet and if it is going to incur travelling expenses, certainly the members appointed to that committee ought to know they will be paid. For whatever it's worth, I would say that if you are going to pass such legislation, the word "shall" ought to be there. Then the Executive Council in its wisdom would have to decide whether the committee it's thinking about, whether it's a caucus committee or whether it's a true committee of the Legislature, is worth what it is going to cost. If it is, there shall be no doubt that the members of such a committee would be paid as it indicates here.

Now the bill further provides that they can be paid for work of the committee which means, I believe, that some committee member might be assigned to do some research. I have no objection to that except that I think he ought to be paid. On the other hand, if we want to adopt the idea that we will try to distribute among the members of this Legislature responsibility for working on committees for which they will not be paid, except expenses, I think perhaps we would be on sound ground. The members would be serving the people who elected them. There would then be an attempt to pass around this responsibility. Everybody would be on the same basis.

So I submit, Mr. Speaker, if for no other reason, we ought to oppose this bill until the word "may" is changed to "shall".

MR. DIXON:

Mr. Speaker, I didn't have any intention to get into this debate until I heard, Mr. Speaker, one or two remarks from some of the members opposite. But really, the basic principle of this bill is the thing that I am concerned about. I think what we are trying to do with this bill is to put an air of respectability on the doubtful task forces and their payments and try to tie it in with The Legislative Assembly Act. I think the two should be at arm's length.

I think anything the Legislature does is done in the open. It's well-known; it's announced in broad terms; it's covered fully by the press which is a lot different to where the government may decide that some of their MLAs aren't working hard enough and they wish to put them on a task force, and all of a sudden they are in somebody's constituency in some task force.

Now if I were a member opposite, I'd be a little hesitant about going on a task force anyway, Mr. Speaker, because I can remember, that they have been kept fairly secret. But if any of the members on any of the task forces has ever made any announcement, lo and behold the next day or even the same day, we have had the minister saying, yes, but that is not government policy, that's just the hon. member's idea and we don't go for it. It's not too wise a decision that he is trying to bring about.

The other argument, too, of course is the task forces, I'm wondering if I would want to be on one if I were a member opposite, because this government has more groups outside the Legislature researching things - so I just wonder why they need all these researchers when they have all these task forces?

Basically I'd like to answer the hon. Member for Lacombe when he says, well, rubber-stamp it and we can go home. Well sure, this is fine. He's probably been in too many Conservative caucuses where they do rubber-stamp things. But I don't think it's up to the Legislature here, if it takes us until next year, to fight the principle of something you don't agree with. Because if you are passing legislation and passing a principle in a bill you don't agree with, and go home just for the sake of saving a few dollars, well then I think democracy is in a bad way.

The hon. Member for Smoky River - I always get a little charge out of him, Mr. Speaker, because he seems to be complaining all the time. He is happy to be on the task force. He is happy to go elephant hunting with the Minister of Agriculture or down to Ottawa looking for Mr. Trudeau and flying all over the place, but he is always complaining about what they are paying him. So maybe he should say they are not paying him enough. Come out and be honest about it and say, this is what I am unhappy about.

But basically this bill, Mr. Speaker, is like some of you fellows who were around - and the odd one of us was around as a young person, or even a little older - during the Depression. This bill is really a Conservative sausage. That's what it is. For any of you who wonder what a Conservative sausage is, well, during the Depression a Conservative sausage was half and half, half meat and half breadcrumbs. The only trouble is, in this case the meat is all to one side and the Conservatives are going to slice that half and the members opposite are going to get left with the crumbs.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear.

MR. DIXON:

And as some hon. member has just mentioned, Mr. Speaker, the people of Alberta are paying for it.

I think if the Conservatives - if that is part of their platform and apparently it is, and I have no objection to that - as long as they want to be honest about it and say, we're setting up task forces. We want to pay our back-benchers. That's fine. But don't tie it in with The Legislative Assembly Act because it has nothing really to do with the Legislature. The only time you can say it has anything to do with the Legislature is if it is fair for every member in this House.

Then we are talking about The Legislative Assembly Act. If you are just going to go and pay the hon. member opposite, there is nothing that I can see that has anything to do with The Legislative Assembly Act. That's just - I don't want to use the term political payoff, but it is certainly political persuasion for the boys to work a little bit harder by putting them on a task force.

Mr. Speaker, I believe, too, that the public in Alberta is objecting to task forces being set up, paid for by public funds, and then no information is ever given about whether the task forces came with any kind of suggestions. There has been nothing out in the open. All you get is the odd little dribble of news from them but no full-fledged report to the Legislature and through the Legislature to the people of Alberta.

So I am opposed to any act that is trying to put a cloak of respectability on the task forces, trying to make out that they are legislative committees. They are not legislative committees. They aren't authorized by the Legislature. And therefore, Mr. Speaker, I intend to vote against the principle of Bill No. 21.

MR. KING:

A question to the hon. member. Has he read any of three task force reports that have been tabled in the Assembly?

MR. LUDWIG:

Have you?

MR. DIXON:

Mr. Speaker, I can answer that quite easily. If the Premier won't listen to them, I don't see why you should expect the hon. Member for Calgary Millican to pay any attention to them.

AN HCN. MEMBER:

Oh, oh.

DR. BUCK:

Mr. Speaker, it's just very, very obvious. The arrogance that has set into this government

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear.

DR. BUCK:

... in two and a half years is something the people of this province should behold. I think it is something that it is our duty to bring to them because when I look across to the opposite side of the House, Mr. Speaker, and the members in the front bench, they are not interested in what is going on in this Legislature. They are not interested in the debate. They know that they've brought this beautiful piece of legislation in. They know it is going to be rammed through and they could care less about the debate.

AN HCN. MEMBER:

Hear, hear.

DR. BUCK:

I am not sure if the Deputy Premier sent a note down saying, gentlemen, just ignore those fellows on the other side. The thing is going to go through. Everything is all right. If you ignore them, maybe they will sit down and shut up.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I don't think we are elected to this Assembly to sit down and shut up. I think we are elected here and there is just no way I am going to sit in my place and allow this Legislature to be raped the way it is being raped by the government on the opposite side.

DR. HORNER:

I'm glad you ... [Inaudible] ...

DR. BUCK:

It's quite obvious that I must be getting to them, Mr. Speaker, because otherwise I wouldn't have heard from the Deputy Premier. When things start irritating him a little you start hearing that little bit of mumbling going on under his breath. But the hon. Premier, I am sure, in his own soul knows that what they are doing is wrong, because when the Hon. John Diefenbaker - if any of the members on the opposite side of the House would take the time to ask the Hon. John Diefenbaker what he thinks about this type of legislation and what he thinks about the task forces, he would shake his jowls and have apoplexy I am sure, Mr. Speaker. Because it is that bad. It is that bad. And I don't care if we are going to argue, as the hon. members who are attorneys will argue if it should be "may" or should be "shall". I, as a layman, I could give a - care less - Mr. Speaker, about "may" or "shall". What we are really arguing about and what we are debating about is, shall they pay themselves?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear.

DR. BUCK:

And we say, no, they shall not pay themselves. That is the the crux of the matter. That is the crux of the argument.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Keep it up.

MR. WILSON:

Sock it to 'em.

DR. BUCK:

Why does this government not come out in the open? This is one of their election platfcrms, open government. Who is it open to? It's open to the Tories, that's who it's open to. It's not open to anybody else.

AN HCN. MEMBER:

Hear, hear.

DR. BUCK:

We don't argue about legislative committees being set up. This is the responsibility of this House. We are all proud to sit on legislative committees. We expect to get paid. As a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, the first time I sat on a legislative committee, the former Premier said, Boys, you got a raise of \$1,800 for your sessional indemnity. You're going to sit on a legislative committee because that's part of your job and you don't get paid any more. That's just the opposite to what the hon. members on the other side are doing.

One thing the members over there all have in common, Mr. Speaker, is this. They are all becoming very socialistic and they all like money.

AN HCN. MEMBER:

Hear, hear.

AN HCN. MEMBER:

From the public purse.

DR. BUCK:

How do we know that the caucus committees are doing anything? I can't believe what those fellows tell me, Mr. Speaker. It is my responsibility not to believe what they tell us. That's what we are here for.

AN HCN. MEMBER:

Hear, hear.

DR. BUCK:

And when they tell us that it comes into legislation, how do I know? How do I know that the report has not been edited? Maybe the hon. minister responsible for propaganda, the Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs, maybe he edits the thing. How do I know?

And I can't believe just because they bring in a report that is made public that that is actually what happened. What if they went on a committee to set up an executive in the constituency of Clover Bar for the Progressive Conservatives? How do we know? They can do just about anything they want to when they set up a committee - as long as they get paid. That's really the whole crux. Do we get paid if we go on these committees or don't we get paid? They can cover it any way they want to. They can put any kind of wrapping around it they want to. They want to get paid. And I don't think that this Legislature should pay people for finding out political information. Because it could be political information. How do we know?

AN HCN. MEMBER:

A study of rural Alberta.

DR. EUCK:

A study of rural Alberta. Certainly, it could be a study of rural Alberta.

Mr. Speaker, I think the whole thrust, shall we say, of bringing this bill in is to get rid of the hon. Member for Redwater-Andrew. Because what do you do when you want to get rid of a member? You give him a task that he is going to be crucified for. This is what happens in the federal Department of Finance. If you have someone who is maybe going to take your position as prime minister or candidate, or leader of the party, you give him the ministry of finance. That's what you do. You know he is going to be chopped up in little pieces and thrown to the fish. So what do you do when you want to get rid of a member who is maybe not doing the job? And I say, maybe not doing the job, because any time the crunch comes on, the Deputy Premier stands up and says, the policy for rural development is such and such. The poor Member for Redwater-Andrew doesn't even get an opportunity. He doesn't get an opportunity. As a matter of fact, I'd like to find out what's going on in the department of rural development, but the hon. Deputy Premier won't give him the opportunity. Well, if he is getting paid \$29,500 a year, let's hear from him. Because that's what he is getting paid for.

But, Mr. Speaker, I'm starting to digress a little bit.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, after much weaselling, we found out what the bill to the taxpayers of the province was. It was \$58,000 for these little blue and orange task forces. And do you know what is happening, Mr. Speaker? These little blue and orange task forces are just like the new licence plates. They are less blue and they are less orange. They are all starting to fade. That's what is happening - just like the Conservative party, they are starting to fade. They have lost that openness, they have lost their concern to serve the constituents, they are worried about what they are going to get paid. That's what they are worried about basically.

AN HCN. MEMBER:

Hear. Self-interest over people.

DR. EUCK:

Mr. Speaker, in this openness, this wish to be servant of the people, I wish they'd come out in the open and do it openly, just like the King Air airplane. I think the government needs an airplane, but why in the dickens did they want to tell us that it's for fighting fires? It may be for fighting fires, but political ones. Why did they not come and tell us the King Air is to fly the Executive Council and even some of the opposition members, if they have a need, on that airplane? I think they need the airplane, but why try this hanky-panky? Why not say, we need an airplane, it will cost the taxpayer a lot of money ...

MR. MOORE:

On a point of order, I don't really believe that the bill under question has ...

DR. BUCK:

Mr. Speaker, I do not have to surrender the floor on a point of order such as that.

MR. MOORE:

Mr. Speaker, my point of order was that I don't believe the bill under discussion has anything to do with government airplanes.

MR. SPEAKER:

I must confess to having great difficulty to relating the King Air to the specific amendment which is before the House.

DR. BUCK:

Mr. Speaker, perhaps the King Air may be used for caucus committees. We don't know what the caucus committees do. Maybe the Queen Air is being used, maybe the helicopter in which the Premier descends from the heavens will be used for caucus committees at \$80 an hour or whatever it is.

I thought that was majestic, Mr. Speaker, when we were lighting the flare at the Lamco Gas Co-op, the hon. Member for Vegreville, myself and the Deputy Premier - who couldn't be there but he is always very busy - and from the heavens descends a helicopter. Beautiful, beautiful. The photographers were there and were taking pictures of the king descending from heaven in a white helicopter with the hon. Member for Vegreville accompanying him.

But, Mr. Speaker, I think this is important. I think it is important in the ...

MR. SPEAKER:

It may be important, but there is some question as to whether it is relevant.

[Laughter]

DR. BUCK:

Mr. Speaker, I think they are trying to put me on but I ...

[Interjections]

We may, Mr. Speaker, in all seriousness need this helicopter to fly the caucus committees around this year because I think we're going to have some flooding. There is a use for caucus committees. But as of now, we still have not been able to figure out what that use is.

The whole crunch and the whole scrunch, Mr. Speaker, is that we are being asked to vote for something that is basically wrong. As members of this Legislature, members of this side and, most importantly, members of that side, Mr. Speaker, if they, the members of that side can vote in all conscience - I don't think they voted with their consciences the last time when they put the \$58,000 appropriation through. If they can go ahead and double the wrong then, Mr. Speaker, I question if they should be sitting in this Assembly.

I thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. YOUNG:

Mr. Speaker, just a few comments on this bill. I have to confess that I hadn't intended to speak to it but it does seem that each time the topic of any financial arrangements with respect to members of the Assembly is raised it becomes an issue which interests everyone. Regrettably, Mr. Speaker, it apparently is the only topic which has been able to interest the opposition this year. The Throne Speech fell flat; there was nothing there.

MR. LUDWIG:

On a point of order. The hon. member ought not to mislead the House with his remark. The Throne Speech didn't fall flat. It was flat to begin with.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order please. Order please.

MR. YOUNG:

Mr. Speaker, the government apparently in that tremendous speech was so complete that the only way ...

MR. SPEAKER:

Order please. The Throne Speech debate has been ended. Perhaps the hon. member might deal with Bill No. 21.

MR. YOUNG:

Yes, Mr. Speaker, I would be happy to do that. I was just pointing out that it took Bill No. 21 to arouse some excitement. This is the first item which seems to be controversial, otherwise the government has done a good job, both by its total function - no omission, no commission, no error.

Mr. Speaker, this particular bill has apparently caused some excitement as I said, partly because it may affect the financial relationships of members in terms of their responsibility here and it also, as many speakers have identified, can be in the course of debate brought around to the responsibility of members.

Mr. Speaker, I feel very keenly about that responsibility. I feel very keenly about how members are able to execute those responsibilities - what kinds of opportunities, as members of this Assembly, are presented for that exercise of responsibility. I think some comments were made about the availability or the possibility of members to do certain things, whether the only opportunity should be governed by a specific decision made on each occasion in this Legislature.

The hon. Member for Calgary Bow would like me to put a little more 'oomph' into my elbows here when I make points.

MR. WILSON:

Yeah!

MR. YOUNG:

But I have observed him and I find the spectacle not something that I wish to emulate.

Mr. Speaker, all I would like to say is that I think the true record and the true concern of all members, in terms of the function of members under this particular item of legislation, under the preceding one, or under the one proposed to be amended - the true performance of members can be identified very clearly from the Public Accounts.

I see no reason for a big fuss and muss. So far it has not been brought to our attention that there has been abuse under the system. As I read the amendment it is my interpretation that, in fact, there will be a greater differentiation between decisions made by order in council and decisions made by this House for specific purposes or specific matters. Until the opposition can identify some misdemeanours, some misuse of funds - all they have been able to do so far in this debate this afternoon is to stir up a lot of air to suggest that the Estimates contain such and such amount of money and to make statements [from] which they would try to have the public believe there is a lot of hanky-panky going on.

Maybe they will only have the effect of indicating how much work is, in fact, done by the team of 49. But their statements and arguments today, I think, have been weak indeed and are basically a rehash of a debate which I believe took place within the last two years in this House.

MR. DRAIN:

Well, Mr. Speaker, I have not very much to say but the last speaker said nothing so I might as well continue with that precedent.

I don't find all of this bill bad. There's the title and preamble which is reasonable, and also the proposal that the Legislature will be the recipient of reports from all of the cabinet ministers and so on. This is very good.

However, when we get down to Section 59 (a) and (b), I am astounded that this type of legislation should be even considered as something that would be rammed down the throat of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition. I feel that somewhere, someone has simply lost his marbles. Whatever happened to all of these caucus committees and so on, that have at least been garnering all this knowledge - that they would expect that this could be accepted by our side, Mr. Speaker.

The debate has been so wide-ranging on this particular bill. We have gone from used car lots in Toronto; we have descended from heaven in white helicopters, and we have even had King Airs and Queen Airs brought into the particular debate. But nowhere has it established that this is, in fact, a good principle. In my view, frankly, it is not a principle that should be considered as being within the purview of true democracy.

There are certain things that the opposition has to do. And one thing the opposition has to do, Mr. Speaker, is to be on total guard for legislation such as this. There has been this type of legislation introduced in British parliamentary history, and through the processes of democratic reform it has been disregarded. And I would expect that this will be disregarded even if the government uses the might and muscles to go their wayward way to the detriment of the true democratic spirit and the confusion of the Conservative party as such. Because this is what it is. This is confused legislation - legislation that is not going any place.

I have much more to say on this subject, Mr. Speaker. I beg leave to adjourn the debate.

AN HCN. MEMBER:

No way.

AN HCN. MEMBER:

Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER:

If the hon. member wishes me formally to put the question I shall, but it would appear that it wouldn't carry.

AN HCN. MEMBER:

Open government.

MR. DEAIN:

Well, in the interests of open government I was attempting, Mr. Speaker, to give the hon. members a chance to get out of here just three minutes earlier, and therefore it would be three minutes less that they would have to listen to me.

But however, in my dissertation, this is the type of legislation that brought the bards to Runnymede, and this is the type of legislation, Mr. Speaker, that made them draw their swords that forced King John to stand under the oak trees and sign the basis of British freedom, the Magna Carta, which is something that has been enunciated many times as one of the ...

[Applause]

... and as we go along to the foundations of democracy in Canada which are presently being affronted by the implication of these bills. I refer you now to Lord Durham's report in relation to the government of Upper and Lower Canada. This had the type of legislation that we see before us in Bill No. 21. In fact, Mr. Speaker, as a result of the Durham report, the foundations were laid for Confederation, and the object of Confederation was in fact to bring true democracy before all sections and all parts of Canada.

When we find bills such as Bill No. 21, that is an affront to the fine traditions of British democracy, something that the Hon. John Diefenbaker would hold abhorrent and that even Mr. "Sir" Robert Stanfield would exclaim in ire about, that would have Mr. Trudeau shrugging in the House of Commons if this was presented before him, is now, Mr. Speaker, being pushed down and rammed down the throats of the members on your left, Mr. Speaker.

I assure you that it is our Christian duty to stand up and oppose this particular legislation in the interests of decency, good government and the responsibilities that every member in this Legislature holds for each portion of his constituency. There are many people in my constituency who are of different parties, but still we hold responsibility for all of them. To the Conservatives in my area, I say, bless you boys, I represent you, just as well as everyone else, the Social Credit and the NDPs in the Crownsnest Pass, all of these are the jewels who form the true sentiments of democracy.

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

[Applause]

MR. SPEAKER:

The House stands adjourned until 8:00 o'clock this evening.

[Mr. Speaker left the Chair at 5:31 o'clock.]