

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ALBERTA

Tuesday, April 2, 1974

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

PRAYERS

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 214 An Act to amend The Department of Consumer Affairs Act

MR. TAYLOR:

Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce a bill, An Act to amend The Department of Consumer Affairs Act. This bill, if passed, will enable the minister to recommend to the Attorney General to proceed against any person who contravenes the provisions of any act, to do such things as he considers necessary to correct practices that appear detrimental either to business or the consumer, and to stop practices that are considered unethical. It will give the minister teeth to bite the gougers and bite hard.

[Leave being granted, Bill No. 214 was introduced and read a first time.]

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

MR. BATIUK:

Mr. Speaker, it gives me pleasure to introduce to you and through you to the members of the Legislative Assembly, 50 Grade 8 and Grade 10 students from the Ryley School in the County of Beaver in my constituency.

Mr. Speaker, the County of Beaver will be holding a first-ever model parliament on May 18 and I am sure the observation will be beneficial to these students.

They are accompanied by their teachers, Mr. Van Berkel and Mrs. Swierczki and Mr. Kozoway, the bus operator. I would ask that the students, teachers and bus operator rise and be recognized.

MR. JAMISON:

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce to you and through you to the members of the Assembly, 50 boys and girls, Grade 5 students from the Brigadier Gault School, Canadian Forces Base, Griesbach. They are here today to observe the Legislature in action and I would ask them to stand, along with their teacher, Mr. Murchie, and be recognized by the Assembly.

MR. STROM:

Mr. Speaker, it is a real pleasure for me to introduce to you and through you to the members of the Legislative Assembly, two long-time employees of the County of Forty Mile: the Reeve, Mr. Dan Van den Berg, who has been Reeve for many, many years, has been on the council for over 25, and the secretary-treasurer, Mr. Roy Wallman. They are seated in your gallery. I would ask them to rise and be recognized.

MR. CHAMBERS:

Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to introduce to you and on your behalf to the members of this Assembly, 12 keenly interested Grade 9 students from Rosslyn Junior High School which is located in the constituency of Edmonton Calder. These students are presently participating in the study of government. They are accompanied today by their teacher, Mr. Bill Gordon. They are seated in the members gallery and I would ask that they stand and be recognized by the members of this House.

MR. YOUNG:

Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce to you and to members of the Assembly, 13 Grade 10 students from Ross Sheppard High School in my constituency and their teacher, Mr. Mike Jones.

Mr. Speaker, if I may observe, I had some difficulty catching up with them today because of the other very much larger - numerically - groups here, but the quality is equal I am sure.

I would ask that they rise and be recognized.

MR. TAYLOR:

Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce to you and through you to the hon. members of the Legislature, Mr. Ed Ferguson, the Mayor of the Town of Gleichen; Mr. William Murray, the Secretary-Treasurer of the Town of Gleichen and Mr. Dave Vipond of the Petroleum Royalties Corporation. They are seated in your gallery and I would ask them to stand and be recognized.

DR. BUCK:

Mr. Speaker, I finally made it.

I beg leave to introduce to you and through you to the members of this Assembly, 58 Grade 5 and 6 students from the Ardrossan Elementary School. They are accompanied by their teachers, Mrs. McBain, Mrs. Cribb and Mr. Fisk and their bus drivers, Mr. and Mrs. Libby. They are seated in the public gallery and I would ask them to rise and be received by the Legislature.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Office of the Premier

MR. LOUGHEED:

Mr. Speaker, I wish to make a very important announcement pursuant to the reference in the Speech from the Throne. The Alberta Government has reached a decision to pursue a new taxation policy which will have a significant effect upon the economy of Alberta in the future. It is one of two significant new directions by way of fiscal policy for Alberta we will be announcing during the course of this session.

Mr. Speaker, I regret the statement is long - but it will become obvious to members why it needs to be so. In order to frame the nature and reasons for the decisions, I would first like to summarize briefly the fundamentals of the Government's economic strategy for Alberta as it has been developing over the past two and a half years.

These fundamentals are:

(1) To encourage expansion of small and locally-controlled businesses to give them a better chance to compete with large national companies whose expansion decisions are generally made outside the Province.

(2) To use the advantage of the current seller's market for our natural resources including agricultural products as well as oil and natural gas to diversify Alberta's economy in order to strengthen and make Alberta less dependent in the future upon primary production and sale of our resources and therefore less susceptible to fluctuations in national and international circumstances.

(3) As an integral part of such diversification, to take all reasonable steps available to a provincial government to assure that an increasing proportion of our natural resources, particularly our oil and natural gas as well as our agricultural

products, are processed here in Alberta and that we ship from the province, as much as practical - refined petroleum products - petrochemicals - rapeseed oil - dressed meats - and other upgraded products. In short, to change previous policies by reducing the extent of export of jobs with our resources.

(4) To ensure that the growth of the Alberta economy becomes more balanced as our smaller centres strive to reach their potential and the growth of our metropolitan centres becomes more orderly.

(5) To promote such an economic strategy for Alberta by provincial taxation policies which emphasize as much as possible the taxpayers' ability to pay.

Mr. Speaker, it is obvious that business and enterprise in Alberta operate under a different set of circumstances than business operations located in other provinces. Alberta businessmen enjoy the advantage of secure and low-cost energy but face the disadvantage of our landlocked geographic location which means heavy transportation charges to bring in materials not available locally and to ship out finished products to the major market areas.

Alberta businessmen also face the further disadvantage that many of their suppliers, most of their bankers, and financiers, and the majority of their shippers have their decision-making bases outside the province, primarily in Toronto or Montreal. These factors make it more difficult to establish economically viable businesses in Alberta and hence, restrict the private sector's capacity to create meaningful jobs in this province.

Mr. Speaker, Alberta's economic structure is certainly different from that of any other province. We have far less manufacturing and diversification than Ontario and Quebec. We have greater potential for growth than the Maritimes. Our agricultural industry is more diversified than that of Saskatchewan and Manitoba. We are more dependent upon depleting resources than British Columbia. The Alberta economy and Alberta business is significantly different from that in any other province in terms of strength, disadvantages, and opportunities for growth.

Because there is regional economic and business diversity in Canada with unique provincial problems and prospects, we believe that flexible taxation policies are required at the provincial level to recognize these differences. Tax policy, Mr. Speaker, must become a tool for taking advantage of strengths and opportunities. It is clear that tax policy must support our economic strategy and be an instrument to achieve our goals. In addition, it is apparent that natural resource royalty systems are only of limited effectiveness in encouraging firms to process products in Alberta.

Mr. Speaker, under the Canadian Constitution - The British North America Act - the provinces were given the powers of direct taxation. As personal income tax and corporation income tax are considered direct forms of taxation, the provinces have the constitutional right to impose these taxes. However, beginning with the Wartime Tax Agreements all provinces abstained from their right to impose personal and corporation income taxes in return for payments from the federal government. The Wartime Tax Agreements were replaced by the Tax Rental Agreements for the 1947-1961 period. All provinces except Ontario and Quebec entered into Tax Rental Agreements which provide for a share of federal taxation or, at a province's request, an abatement of federal tax. Ontario entered the agreements in 1952 but chose to re-establish its own collection machinery in the corporation tax field in 1957.

The Tax Rental Agreements were replaced by the Tax Collection Agreements in 1962. Under the Tax Collection Agreements, the federal government reduced its income tax on corporations and persons and thereby created 'room' for each provincial government to legislate corporation and personal income taxes at its own chosen rates. In addition, providing that the provincial tax base is identical to the federal tax base, the federal government collects the provincially imposed income taxes without cost to the province.

All provinces have been party to Tax Collection Agreements since 1962 except Quebec with respect to personal and corporation income tax and Ontario with respect to corporation income tax. Under the present Alberta-Canada Tax Collection Agreement, Alberta imposes a personal income tax of 36 per cent of the basic federal tax and a corporation tax of 11 per cent of corporation taxable income allocated to Alberta.

While it is recognized that the Tax Collection Agreements provide the agreeing provinces with autonomy to set the tax rate, there is no flexibility to change the tax bases. That is, the method of taxation, the definition of taxable income and the concepts of income and deductions used for provincial taxation must be identical to those of the federal Income Tax Act.

Mr. Speaker, in short, there is insufficient scope for a provincial government to develop a different definition of the tax base in order to meet particular and unique circumstances. There is no scope to redefine income, provide incentives or to levy differential rates of provincial taxation.

The Government of Alberta has been aware, Mr. Speaker, for some time of the basic and serious weaknesses for Alberta in this approach. As I have mentioned the tax base is determined by the federal government and is not responsive to unique provincial needs.

Another serious problem with regard to the corporation income tax is the rules which are used by national and international corporations to allocate a share of their taxable income to the provinces in which they have operations. We recognize that the geographic allocation of corporation profits is a difficult conceptual issue, but our evidence suggests that the present rules do not result in an equitable share of taxable income being allocated to resource-oriented provinces. For example, if one looked at the share of value-added in Alberta or the share of investment in place, one would find a much larger share amount in Alberta than is artificially allocated to Alberta under the present allocation rules for taxable income. Preliminary data for the 1973 tax year indicates that corporation tax revenue for Alberta was only \$61 per capita while the comparable figure for Ontario was nearly \$73 per capita. Some honourable members will recall that I raised this matter in the Alberta Legislature during Budget Debate in 1968 and again in 1972 and noted that Alberta was being short-changed millions of dollars by the present allocation rules, especially in the case of corporation tax paid by interprovincial pipeline companies and by integrated petroleum companies.

Mr. Speaker, I have presented a brief sketch of the role which we believe a separate provincial corporation income tax could play in the future of Alberta's economy and provided reasons why the existing corporation tax arrangements cannot be used as an instrument of provincial economic policy.

We have now completed our assessment over a number of months as to whether or not continuation of the situation of letting the federal government collect corporation income tax for the Alberta government is in the public interest at this stage of the history of the development of Alberta.

Mr. Speaker, the Government of Alberta has now concluded that it would be in the public interest of Alberta to give notice to the federal government of our intention to terminate the [existing] Tax Collection Agreement with the federal government with respect to corporation income tax. Mr. Speaker, in due course upon final termination, we will enact an Alberta Business Incentive and Tax System. This system will be specifically and uniquely designed and tailored to strengthen the competitive position of Alberta small businessmen and to create the incentives to encourage and accelerate the creation of new jobs in Alberta within the framework of the Alberta industrial strategy I have described.

At the present time, we are not considering any change in the existing arrangement under the Taxation Collection Agreement with the federal government respecting the collection of personal income taxes.

Mr. Speaker, the major two advantages of having our Alberta Business Incentive and Tax System are to reduce the tax load of small business and to encourage processing of our resources in Alberta.

Mr. Speaker, there are possible arguments against the Alberta Government collecting its own corporation tax and they appear to be three. First, it would involve the provincial government in an additional administrative cost. However, the government's estimate of such a cost is less than 2 per cent of the total corporation tax payable and would be made up many times over by the appropriate and fair collection charged against interprovincial pipeline companies whose system starts and input begins in this province.

A second possible disadvantage, Mr. Speaker, would be that companies would have to prepare two separate and different corporate tax returns. For large concerns, the cost of doing so would be negligible. For small companies, the additional cost could be offset by allowing a special deduction.

A further possible argument, Mr. Speaker, might be that such a step would lead to similar action by other provinces and ultimately an alleged 'tax jungle' in Canada and a reduction in the federal government's ability to exercise fiscal policy. However, Mr. Speaker, such an approach has been used by Quebec since 1947, by Ontario since 1957 and this did not encourage other provinces to follow suit. Further, our actions would not result in any loss of the federal government's present occupancy of the corporation tax field.

Mr. Speaker, our assessment is that these arguments do not appear to be of real significance or of substance compared to the advantages to our province. The advantages are:

- (1) It would permit Alberta to design a tax system to allow reduced tax for small and locally-controlled business and service companies all across this province to help them to expand, diversify and compete with large national and international competitors. Discussions with the Alberta Chamber of Commerce groups are already under way in this regard.

(2) It could provide an effective vehicle to stimulate and encourage companies producing our oil and natural gas to process and upgrade the production in Alberta to the fullest extent practical.

(3) It could assure that national and international petroleum and pipeline companies pay a fair and equitable share of taxation to Alberta on their profits which are essentially derived from Alberta resources.

(4) It could encourage the reinvestment in Alberta of profits earned in Alberta - and this would particularly be the case with regard to the larger petroleum companies.

(5) It could encourage agricultural production to be processed in Alberta and then shipped in an upgraded form and hence, indirectly strengthen the family farm and the province.

(6) It could encourage companies earning a significant portion of their profits in Alberta to either have their head office located in Alberta or have a larger segment of their administrative, or research, or computer, or other service jobs, located here in this province.

(7) It could be used as a method to encourage balanced economic growth throughout the province.

(8) It could tend to increase the degree of Alberta control of business operating within this province yet not preclude a continuation of appropriate investment from other places. In particular, it could encourage Alberta companies to sell shares to Albertans to the extent practical to do so.

(9) It could be a tool in ensuring that the growth opportunities on the horizon for our province may be managed so that the quality of life in Alberta will continue to be preserved and improved.

These are nine distinct possible advantages and, in my view, very probable advantages.

Mr. Speaker, the objective of such a new Alberta Business Incentive and Tax System would be to assure that these many advantages are secured for Albertans, particularly the provisions to reduce taxation for small and locally-controlled business and to create new jobs in Alberta based upon processing our resources here in Alberta.

Mr. Speaker, the government is well aware of the magnitude and complexity of such an undertaking announced today and realizes that it may take several years to effectively implement our plans. The Provincial treasury department will examine all aspects of establishing Alberta's own Business Incentive and Tax System and suggestions and recommendations will be sought by the Provincial Treasurer and carefully considered not only from business, but also from the general public and individual citizens. The government's timetable is to present position papers in due course for public discussion and to target for enactment of a new Alberta Business Incentive and Tax System within two to three years after the position papers have been presented.

Mr. Speaker, in concluding, as I said at the outset, the decision announced today will have a most significant - and, we believe - a most beneficial impact upon the economy of Alberta and upon opportunities for our future generations.

MR. CLARK:

Mr. Speaker, in rising to comment upon the rather all-encompassing statement which the Premier has made, I think suffice it to say at the outset that I look forward to reading the document in considerable detail, but my initial reactions, Mr. Speaker, are that if in fact the Province of Alberta opting out of the federal tax agreement from the standpoint of corporation tax will mean that Albertans will get a fairer share of the corporation tax that should come to Alberta, I'm sure that every member in this Assembly will support that.

I would hope, Mr. Speaker, in the process of setting up this provincial corporation tax organization that we would take into consideration the very desirable benefits of encouraging Alberta-based companies, now and in the future, to become much more earnestly involved in the reinvestment of their profits here in the province of Alberta.

I would also hope, Mr. Speaker, that as a result of the announcement the Premier has made today, this will encourage the firms that come to Alberta or are developed here in Alberta to, in fact, retain their headquarters here in Alberta and that their directors and senior management are in fact Albertans as opposed to some of the situations we have now.

I think, Mr. Speaker, we should recognize that, despite the move the Premier has announced, we still have to face the problem of transportation and this doesn't lessen the

responsibility on the Minister of Industry and Commerce to continue to be at the heels of the federal government in that particular field.

I would also say, Mr. Speaker, that the Premier made reference to small business in this province and the tremendous shot-in-the-arm that this announcement could well be to small business. Might I say, we on this side welcome that, Mr. Speaker, because last year there were over 830 filed bankruptcies as far as small businesses were concerned in this province, and if the announcement the Premier has made today will cut that number down substantially, will make small business more viable in the province, then certainly I am in favour of that.

The last comment that I'd like to make, Mr. Speaker, with regard to the announcement that was made today, is that I hope that when we're looking at removing a number of the inequities in the field of corporation income tax we won't forget for one moment that there is an equally large number of inadequacies in the field of personal income tax, and it's these personal income tax inadequacies and problems that to a very great degree bite at the hand of the average person in Alberta.

I recognize that the move today will be of some assistance but let's not for one moment forget when we are looking at the whole field of income tax, and the province is making a decision to become more involved in that field, let's look at the problems in the field of personal income tax and let's look at the question of quality of life and the problems that the average wage earner in this province has with inflation at this particular time.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Liquor Control Board Walkout

MR. CLARK:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the first question today of the Solicitor General. I would like to know if the Liquor Control Board, the Civil Service Association and the Solicitor General have been in contact today in light of the walkout this morning of employees of the Alberta Liquor Control offices in a number of places across the province?

MISS HUNLEY:

Mr. Speaker, I have been advised by the Alberta Liquor Control Board of the status of the negotiations, or lack of negotiations, between the employees who are represented by the Civil Service Association and the Alberta Liquor Control Board. That is the information I have.

MR. CLARK:

Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the minister. Will the minister confirm that there are a number of employees of the Alberta Liquor Control Board who were not at work this morning, who were either on a walkout or strike action?

MISS HUNLEY:

Yes, I have information that indicates that to be correct, Mr. Speaker.

MR. CLARK:

Mr. Speaker, a further supplementary question to the minister. Did the Solicitor General receive communications from the President of the Civil Service Association of Alberta last week, asking that the President of the Civil Service Association and the minister have a meeting? And did that meeting occur?

MISS HUNLEY:

No, Mr. Speaker, I have not received a request. I don't believe there is anything in my mail that hasn't been brought to my attention [indicating] that the President of the Civil Service Association has requested an interview with me.

But, Mr. Speaker, I think it should be clearly understood that as minister responsible for policy in the Alberta Liquor Control Board - it is the Alberta Liquor Control Board, as a Crown agency, that is negotiating with the CSA which is representing the employees. Therefore, I fail to see why the President would be seeking an interview with me concerning this particular labour negotiation.

MR. CLARK:

Mr. Speaker, a further supplementary question to the minister. Is it the policy of the Alberta Liquor Control Board, for whom the minister reports to the Legislature, that members of the Civil Service Association who either walk out or are on strike today are subject to disciplinary action and dismissal from their jobs as a result of being off work this morning?

MISS HUNLEY:

Mr. Speaker, the Alberta Liquor Control Board are the employers. If the employees are absent illegally, as I believe they are if they are not ill or have some other reason to be absent - but if they are indeed absent for the purpose of picketing or a study session or a disruption of service, then I believe the Alberta Liquor Control Board does legally have [the right], and probably will implement this disciplinary action. This could be a suspension of pay for the period in which they are absent, or some other method.

MR. CLARK:

A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker, to the minister. Has the minister been in contact with the officials of the Alberta Liquor Control Board and discussed specifically the question of dismissal or firing of employees of the board as a result of them being off work this morning?

MISS HUNLEY:

I have not discussed this with the Chairman of the Alberta Liquor Control Board. He has advised me that he believes that the Liquor Control Board has this authority and they are prepared to exercise it if they consider it necessary. I believe they will be making that decision themselves when they feel the opportunity [arises] - if it should ever arise.

MR. TAYLOR:

A supplementary question to the hon. minister. Is the hon. minister aware of the major items of disagreement, or the items that are preventing agreement between the board and the employees?

MISS HUNLEY:

I have some information. On March 4 there was a letter of intent signed by the Civil Service Association and the Alberta Liquor Control Board in which they were offered the same wage increase that the government offered to the government employees, which was \$25 per month or 2.5 per cent. I am thinking back now to the wording of this letter of intent, Mr. Speaker. I believe that in it, it was indicated that there would be no further disruption, that there were perhaps some disparities that should be negotiated, and it was my information that the Alberta Liquor Control Board is prepared to talk about some disparities that do exist as long as the other terms of the agreement are kept. To the best of my knowledge, they intend to do so. And that's the situation as I understand it.

MR. NOTLEY:

Mr. Speaker, a further supplementary question to the hon. minister with respect to the terms of the agreement. Can the hon. minister advise the Assembly whether or not in the terms of the agreement there is a no-strike clause?

MISS HUNLEY:

I don't have it before me, Mr. Speaker. I understand that any disruption - and I would really consider a strike to be a disruption - any study sessions, disruptions, things of that nature, although I can't remember the exact wording, my interpretation of it would be that a strike would certainly not be considered according to the terms of the agreement which was entered into by the Civil Service Association.

MR. HENDERSON:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker, on a slightly different tack, and having a personal interest in the subject, could the minister advise what stores are still open?

[Laughter]

MR. TAYLOR:

Another supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Has the hon. minister any idea of the percentage of workers who are disrupting the service now?

MISS HUNLEY:

No, Mr. Speaker, I do not have that information.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Milk Prices

MR. STROM:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to address my question to the hon. Minister of Agriculture. I note that the PUB has announced a three cent increase in the price of milk. I'm wondering if the minister could advise the House of the status of the feed subsidy that has been provided for the dairy industry? My understanding was that it was to close off as of April 1. Is there any change in the policy?

DR. HORNER:

Mr. Speaker, it will continue for the present until we have had time to enter into negotiations with the federal government with regard to the consumer subsidy, the five cents a quart that was put on sometime last year, also, until we have time to evaluate the recent announcements by the federal minister of agriculture in relation to the dairy industry.

Those considerations are going on now and consultation with the federal government is also starting now, so I would hope that I would have a statement for the Legislature in approximately one week with regard to future status.

MR. STROM:

Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question. Under the circumstances, would the hon. minister be able to give an assurance that it would be on - to the end of the month at least?

DR. HORNER:

Yes, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Corporate Income Tax

MR. DRAIN:

Mr. Speaker, this question is to the Premier and has to do with his announcement. I'm wondering if it would be too premature to ask him whether he has defined what in fact is a small business?

MR. LOUGHEED:

Mr. Speaker, no. We purposely haven't done that at this time. The position paper, I referred to in the conclusion of my remarks. I also described the concept of small locally-owned businesses and service companies. I think it's important to communicate that concept of service companies certainly in terms of Alberta. But precisely no, our objective would be to draw that sort of a definition within the first position paper. There might be more than one; there could be a series of them.

MR. NOTLEY:

A supplementary question to the hon. Premier. Could the Premier advise the Assembly when we can expect the first position paper? Will it be timetabled for this fall, or is there any possibility of one this spring?

MR. LOUGHEED:

Well, Mr. Speaker, it certainly wouldn't be this fall. We don't want to get into the experience of the federal government in this situation of setting themselves timetables that they can't meet. I think we are all aware of what occurred there. I would think that certainly not this coming fall; we would hope for it early in 1975. It would be in that period of the first few months of 1975. It may be that the first position paper would 'firm-in' relatively on the point that the hon. Member for Pincher Creek-Crowsnest was raising in terms of small business, but I can't be certain of that at the moment.

MR. TAYLOR:

A supplementary to the hon. Premier. Has the government made any calculations as to the gross amount of reduction that this will mean to small businesses in the province?

MR. LOUGHEED:

Mr. Speaker, no we haven't, but we are satisfied that we can take the general statement that it clearly will be a reduction in tax for small business. The extent and magnitude of it I can't answer. It would to a degree depend on how much additional income we might be able to extract from those international pipeline companies that commence their operations in Alberta.

MR. CLARK:

A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. The Premier is talking about extraction. How much do you ...

MR. SPEAKER:

Would the hon. member address the Chair.

MR. CLARK:

To the Premier, Mr. Speaker. What are the Premier's estimates as to how much [we] - to use his term - "may extract" from those pipeline companies, and how much does the government feel we are now losing as a result of the federal rules of the game?

MR. LOUGHEED:

Mr. Speaker, the answer is in two parts - millions of dollars and the final result will be equity and fairness to Albertans.

MR. BUCKWELL:

A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker, to the hon. Premier. Alberta's intention to the federal government - does it take place immediately or has there to be some lead time?

MR. LOUGHEED:

Mr. Speaker, the hon. Provincial Treasurer perhaps should answer that question in terms of the timing involved and the notification that has been given.

MR. MINIELY:

Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance is aware of our announcement today and I spoke to him personally. I also indicated to him that in due course we would be working out the details and, as the Premier stated in his announcement today, a considerable amount of examination and work will have to be done.

The Minister of Finance for Canada is aware that we will not be providing notice of termination of the collection agreement under corporate tax until such time as we have completed our studies. And at that time we will be following the matter through.

MR. NOTLEY:

A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker, to the hon. Provincial Treasurer. Is there any specific time, though, for the period of notice under the tax collection agreement - such as a year, two years, whatever the case may be?

MR. MINIELY:

Mr. Speaker, I believe the period of notice is one year.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Calgary Remand Centre - Female Prisoners

MR. LUDWIG:

Mr. Speaker, my question is to the hon. Solicitor General. Could she advise what steps have been taken to remedy the situation of lack of facilities for female prisoners in the Remand Centre in Calgary?

MISS HUNLEY:

Mr. Speaker, I was hoping the hon. Member for Calgary Mountain View might ask me that question seeing as how he had a hand in designing it and originating the beginning of the Remand Centre. I'll accept the facilities that I have been handed to work with, Mr. Speaker, and make the best possible solution to the problem.

MR. LUDWIG:

Mr. Speaker, has the hon. Solicitor General been aware of the fact that I have not been in office since 19 ...

[Interjections]

MR. SPEAKER:

Order please. The hon. Member for ...

MR. LUDWIG:

A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker, to the hon. minister. What steps is the hon. minister taking to remedy the situation to see that this does not happen with regard to the Edmonton Remand Centre?

AN HON. MEMBER:

Change the Minister of Public Works.

MR. LUDWIG:

Mr. Speaker, would the hon. minister also advise what other problems she has that I am responsible for?

AN HON. MEMBER:

That would take too long.

MR. SPEAKER:

Perhaps the hon. member might put that on the Order Paper.

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

Native Housing

MR. NOTLEY:

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct this question to the Minister Without Portfolio in charge of northern development and Native affairs. Can the minister advise the Assembly whether he has had an opportunity to investigate the reports attributed to the Minister of Urban Affairs, Mr. Basford, that Metis housing conditions in Alberta are the worst in Canada?

MR. ADAIR:

Mr. Speaker, I haven't seen that report as yet. Yesterday I was with the Northern Alberta Development Council in High Level. I will take it as notice and respond to it.

MR. NOTLEY:

Mr. Speaker, a further supplementary question. Can the minister advise - either the Minister Without Portfolio or perhaps the minister in charge of the Alberta Housing Corporation - where the Government of Alberta stands with respect to Ottawa's new rural Native housing policy?

MR. ADAIR:

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to refer that question, if I can, to the Minister of Municipal Affairs.

MR. RUSSELL:

Mr. Speaker, that was one of the specific agenda items that we did discuss - for discussion purposes only, I should emphasize - in our meeting with the Hon. Mr. Basford yesterday.

As you know, he is proposing what is called a remote housing program that deals with the rural and isolated areas across Canada and is not specifically related to simply Metis housing. In Alberta we have a number of housing programs, one of the specific programs being the Metis housing program. We had a useful discussion yesterday to see how we might take advantage of the existing federal legislation and the existing program in order to promote our provincial Metis housing program.

MR. NOTLEY:

Mr. Speaker, a further supplementary question to the Minister of Municipal Affairs. Could the minister advise what the government's position is with respect to the specific proposal made yesterday by the Alberta Metis Association for a massive 5,000-home program, upgrading and building of homes?

MR. RUSSELL:

Mr. Speaker, the Metis Association handed us rather detailed briefs only late yesterday. As a matter of fact, I believe Mr. Basford got his after the meeting was over.

I've had a chance to examine the summary and objectives, and certainly I can say in a very broad sense that the objectives of both the provincial and federal governments and the Metis Association are identical, that is to substantially upgrade the condition of Metis housing in our respective provinces, to involve the Metis people and the Native associations themselves, and at the same time to provide job opportunities in carrying out that program. And I'm sure that working within those basic - what I think are good - objectives we can achieve substantial progress.

MR. NOTLEY:

Just one final supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Can the minister advise the Assembly whether the government is satisfied with the 75-25 cost-sharing agreement on this proposal?

MR. RUSSELL:

Mr. Speaker, it appears to be an excellent basis from which to start. It's the equivalent agreement that's being offered the other provinces, and because we are already into our second year of a Metis housing program we'd want to examine the full ramifications. But in that sense, yesterday's discussion with Mr. Basford was very useful.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

First Ministers' Conference

MR. DIXON:

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct my question today to the hon. Premier. It's in regard to last week's meeting with the federal-provincial conference with the other premiers and the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister stated that each province put on a slip of paper the amount they wanted for a barrel of oil. I was wondering if the Premier could announce to the House what the price was that Alberta put down?

MR. LUDWIG:

\$6.50.

MR. LOUGHEED:

Mr. Speaker, I would imagine the hon. member would be aware of the fact that just as the Prime Minister answered that question, I would consider that's something that took place within the privacy of that meeting.

MR. DIXON:

Mr. Speaker, to the hon. the Premier. The Prime Minister has announced that prices were made. All I want to know is what Alberta prices were.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Why?

MR. LOUGHEED:

Mr. Speaker, the hon. Prime Minister was asked the exact question under the program Question Period and responded for the exact reason that I just gave.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Sedgewick-Coronation followed by the hon. Member for Lethbridge East.

Boating Regulations

MR. SORENSON:

Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Lands and Forests. Has the minister discussed with other levels of government the regulation of the usage of boats on Alberta lakes and rivers, especially in regard to speed and age of driver and safety devices?

DR. WARRACK:

Mr. Speaker, I'm very pleased to clarify that matter. The jurisdiction in this matter comes under the federal government under the Canada Shipping Act.

The way it works, Mr. Speaker, is that for a given body of water, the local government authority decides what boating restrictions it would like to have. It passes these to the Government of Alberta through the Department of Lands and Forests and we, in turn, refer them to the federal government for their approval by regulation.

So in summary, Mr. Speaker, the recommendations are compiled locally, handled only administratively by the Department of Lands and Forests - and of course that consultation takes place to be sure the recommendations are clear - and then the federal government takes the actual legal action.

MR. SORENSON:

Supplementary to the Minister of the Environment. Does the hon. minister intend limiting the use of boats on small lakes in Alberta? I am thinking especially of those lakes that have been stocked with trout.

MR. YURKO:

Mr. Speaker, the Minister of the Environment and the Minister of Lands and Forests will certainly be discussing this matter in the future and we will be making some recommendations to the federal government on our own.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Provincial Data Banks

MR. ANDERSON:

Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Attorney General. Has the minister had any information regarding abuse of personal data connected in provincial data banks by private companies or individuals?

MR. LEITCH:

No, I don't, Mr. Speaker.

MR. ANDERSON:

Supplementary, has the government planned any legislation to safeguard the privacy of individuals against the abuse of the information held in provincial data banks by companies or individuals?

MR. LEITCH:

Mr. Speaker, I think this matter has arisen a number of times before. Some time ago we did advise that we had asked the Institute of Law Research and Reform to do a report for us on the entire area of privacy which would be much broader than the area just covered by the hon. member's question.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Telephone Facility - Medicine Hat

MR. WYSE:

My question, Mr. Speaker, to the hon. Minister of Telephones and Utilities. I understand the minister made an announcement today regarding the construction of a \$10 million AGT building in Medicine Hat. My question is, Mr. Speaker, when will construction get under way, and will this affect the staff in any way - I understand there are 112 there now - will the staff be increased?

MR. LOUGHEED:

Smile, Bill.

MR. FARRAN:

Mr. Premier, tenders will be called in June for a \$10 million facility in Medicine Hat. The reason for the building is that since August, 1971, there has been phenomenal growth in Medicine Hat.

[Interjections]

The population projections for Medicine Hat show a population of from 35,000 to 38,000 people by 1975. Each of the last two years the number of telephone calls has gone up by 25 per cent. The \$10 million is not all building, a lot of it is machinery and a big telecommunications centre. A lot of it, of course, is caused by the great growth in petrochemical secondary industry in the Medicine Hat area.

MR. TAYLOR:

Supplementary, Mr. Speaker, is the hon. Member for Medicine Hat fully responsible for that total increase in population?

MR. WYSE:

Supplementary question, Mr. Speaker, will the area now serviced by Medicine Hat be extended to include Brooks ...

AN HON. MEMBER:

Calgary?

AN HON. MEMBER:

Lethbridge?

MR. FARRAN:

The communities that will receive long distance service from Medicine Hat include Brooks, Tilley, Duchess and the eastern irrigation district.

EFRC - Medicine Hat

MR. WYSE:

Supplementary question then, Mr. Speaker, rather than hold plebiscites regarding the extended flat rate service, is the government contemplating arbitrarily including other areas?

MR. FARRAN:

Well, Mr. Speaker, that's a new subject and a new question. But I can say that I'm disappointed that the City of Medicine Hat turned down EFRC against, I think, the best economic interests of the city, and certainly the interest of their rural neighbours. I will have a look at it at the end of the EFRC program. There are certain other alternatives open, such as free calling one way from the rural areas into Medicine Hat or possibly charging the people in Medicine Hat for calling out, or the possible EFRC under a general rate increase when this eventually becomes necessary in a few years time.

MR. WYSE:

My last supplementary question then, Mr. Speaker, to the hon. minister. Is the government considering then any kind of an increase in tolls or rentals?

MR. FARRAN:

Mr. Speaker, no. No rate increase is contemplated by Alberta Government Telephones at the present time, and no rate increase is necessary.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Rapid Transit

MR. TAYLOR:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is either to the hon. Minister of Municipal Affairs or the hon. Minister of Highways and Transport.

Was the matter of rapid transit in Calgary and Edmonton discussed yesterday with the hon. minister from Ottawa?

MR. COPITHORNE:

Mr. Speaker, policies were discussed with Mr. Basford yesterday.

MR. TAYLOR:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Did the federal government make any commitment as to the percentage of cost that it would bear in regard to the introduction of rapid transit?

MR. COPITHORNE:

No, Mr. Speaker. There was no commitment made by the federal government.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Licence Plates

MR. LUDWIG:

Mr. Speaker, my question is to the hon. Minister of Highways and Transport. Can he advise what steps he has taken to remedy the situation that developed in Calgary as to the shortage of licence plates in certain categories?

MR. COPITHORNE:

Mr. Speaker, to my knowledge there is no shortage of licence plates in Calgary at the present time.

MR. LUDWIG:

Mr. Speaker, would the hon. minister enquire and advise the House whether there has been a shortage of licence plates for trucks at the AMA office and at the Department of Highways and Transport offices in Calgary?

MR. COPITHORNE:

Mr. Speaker, there was a shortage of "X" licences for a short time in some of the distributing centres throughout the province, but that has been alleviated.

MR. LUDWIG:

Mr. Speaker, is the shortage also being alleviated in Calgary?

MR. COPITHORNE:

Mr. Speaker, I'm having a hard time, again, getting through to the hon. Member for Calgary Mountain View. There is no shortage of licence plates, to my knowledge, in Calgary.

MR. LUDWIG:

Mr. Speaker, would the hon. minister assure that those citizens who came to apply for licence plates and were told that there were none available - would he see to it that they don't have to pay the 75 cents mailing charges per pair of plates?

[Interjections]

AN HON. MEMBER:

It's true.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Calgary Millican.

MR. LUDWIG:

He misled the House.

AGT - Expansion

MR. DIXON:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct a question to the hon. Minister of Telephones and Utilities. It's regarding the statement he made a few moments ago in the House about the tremendous growth of AGT in Alberta.

I was wondering if there are any negotiations or feelers being put out by the government at the present time to buy out Edmonton Telephones?

MR. FARRAN:

No, Mr. Speaker.

MR. TAYLOR:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Has the hon. minister received any feelers from Bell of Canada to buy out AGT?

MR. FARRAN:

No, Mr. Speaker, and we haven't put out any feelers to buy Bell of Canada!

[Laughter]

Corporate Income Tax (Cont.)

MR. MINIELY:

In reply to the question from the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview, I'm not sure that this will clarify it for you. The actual wording in the Tax Collection Agreement states that in giving notice, notice must be given jointly between my colleague, the Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs, and myself to the federal Minister of Finance on October 1 of the last calendar year in which the agreement is to operate, of our intention to terminate the agreement effective as of December 31 of the calendar year in which notice is given.

Now my interpretation of that would be that if you wanted to terminate the agreement, as an example, effective December 31, 1976, the Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs and I would have to advise them on October 1, 1976 as the latest date.

MR. NOTLEY:

I would just like to ask a supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. What is the conclusion of the present Tax Collection Agreement? Could the minister advise the Assembly?

MR. MINIELY:

Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure that I understand his question.

MR. NOTLEY:

What is the conclusion of the term of the present Tax Collection Agreement, or is it something that can be terminated at any time?

MR. MINIELY:

Well I would have to check that specifically. Historically it has gone on in perpetuity except for modifications as agreed [upon] between the federal government and the provinces or, of course, provision in the agreement for termination by the federal government or the province - whichever the case may be.

AGT - Expansion (Cont.)

MR. DIXON:

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct a further supplementary question to the hon. Minister of Telephones and my question is: is the government, on behalf of AGT, not interested in buying Edmonton Telephones?

MR. FARRAN:

Mr. Speaker, I didn't say that. I believe the first question was, had any feelers been put out for the purchase of Edmonton Telephones.

I believe that Alberta Government Telephones and the government itself would look with any interest on an approach by the City of Edmonton to sell their telephone system.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

WRITTEN QUESTIONS

129. Mr. Wilson asked the government the following question:

1. How many jail sentences of sixty days or less were given in Alberta in 1973?
2. How many of these sentences included a fine option, which was not taken?
3. How many people electing for the optional jail sentence arrived with sufficient cash in their possession to have paid the fine?
4. What is the total estimated cost in 1973 to the Alberta taxpayers, for inmates serving a sentence rather than paying an optional fine?
5. What was the total fine revenue received from optional sentences in 1973?

MISS HUNLEY:

I request that question No. 129 be held.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER:

Apparently the House agrees that question No. 129 be held over.

130. Mr. Anderson asked the government the following question:

1. Is it the intention of the government to construct a direct road connecting Lethbridge and Picture Butte?
2. Has the government conducted any studies to determine the location of a bridge on the Oldman River between Lethbridge and Picture Butte?
3. Will the north-south road connect with 43rd Street in the easterly part of Lethbridge?

MR. COPITHORNE:

Mr. Speaker, I accept question No. 130.

MOTIONS FOR A RETURN

126. Mr. Clark proposed the following motion to the Assembly:

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

All correspondence between the Government of Alberta, its boards and agencies, and officials related to the proposed rapeseed plant at Sexsmith and full particulars of any loans, advances, guarantees or commitments made to any persons, firms, suppliers or prospective participants with regard to the said rapeseed plant by or on behalf of the Government of Alberta.

MR. CLARK:

Mr. Speaker, I move Motion No. 126 on the Order Paper.

DR. HORNER:

Mr. Speaker, we're quite agreeable to this motion subject to the usual concurrence with regard to the correspondence part of the question.

MR. CLARK:

May I conclude the debate then by asking the Minister of Agriculture a question. When he refers here to the correspondence between the government, or when we refer to the correspondence between the government and its boards and agencies, are you talking then of the individuals involved in the development of the plant? Unless they are prepared to have the information tabled in the House, you are not prepared to do that?

DR. HORNER:

No, subject to the usual concurrence, Mr. Speaker, certainly the government's correspondence can be tabled without any problem. I'll attempt to get concurrence if there is other correspondence that should be tabled.

MR. SPEAKER:

Subject to the condition mentioned by the hon. Deputy Premier, do you all agree with Motion No. 126?

HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

[The motion was carried.]

128. Mr. Dixon proposed the following motion to the Assembly:

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

1. All correspondence between the Government of Alberta and landowners or people acting on their behalf from whom land was purchased or optioned for the Fish Creek Park in Calgary up to March 31, 1973.
2. All correspondence between the government and the City of Calgary and all others concerning the establishment of the Fish Creek Park in Calgary up to March 31, 1973.
3. The owner's name, legal description, amount of land, option consideration given and the agreed to purchase price of each parcel of land held under option by the Alberta government up to March 31, 1973, for the Fish Creek Park in Calgary.
4. The names of realtors, solicitors or other individuals or companies who are or have acted on behalf of landowners who sold or have their property optioned to the Alberta government for the Fish Creek Park in Calgary, and the name of the landlord they acted for up to March 31, 1973.
5. Names of individuals or companies who are or have acted on behalf of the government in land acquisition for the Fish Creek Park area and the amount paid to same.

MR. DIXON:

Mr. Speaker, I move Motion No. 128 standing on the Order Paper in my name.

MR. YURKO:

Mr. Speaker, the government is very anxious to make available to any hon. member in this House all the information with respect to the establishment and purchase of the land and the correspondence involved in establishing the Fish Creek Park in Calgary.

We have to date tabled a substantive amount of information with regard to negotiations for land purchases that have in fact been concluded. It is our intention to respect this motion for a return and supply such information that the hon. member is requesting, with some exceptions: one, of course, is that interdepartmental correspondence will not be tabled, and this is the usual rule of the government; secondly, the fact that correspondence with property owners, with whom active negotiations are being carried out for land purchase, will not be tabled until those negotiations are completed and the parcel in question is in fact bought by the government - this is, of course, understandable; and third is, subject to the usual concurrence of the various parties involved to the correspondence that exists.

It had been my impression that the caveat with respect to the concurrence of the parties involved had to be incorporated in the motion. So I have an amendment, Mr. Speaker, which reads very simply that Clauses 1, 2, 3 and 4 be amended by adding "subject to the concurrence of all the parties involved."

HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

MR. DIXON:

Mr. Speaker, I am very disappointed with the government's attitude on this motion. It was just a year ago that I brought this motion in, and I accepted the fact that the government at that time said they didn't have all the land purchased in the early negotiations and therefore wouldn't accept the motion.

I think we have to take a stand in this Legislature if we are going to be of service to the public, to get information. I think when you put a rider that says, concurrence with the parties involved, we might as well have no motions before the House at all, because if someone didn't want something to be disclosed, all he would need to say to the minister would be, do not disclose it, so that the attention of the public could be focused on it.

I would like to remind the hon. members in speaking that we do not amend this motion. We have at the present time in Ottawa this very concern by the Conservative party who are saying that they are going to continue their war against government secrecy by the hon. MP for Peace River. He is concerned. I'll just quote what he is saying and I echo his remarks in this Legislature.

How can the individual member of the public know if his or her government is really doing the job it was elected to do if a person is unable to obtain the necessary information on which to base judgments?

I've said before in this House and I'll repeat it again, that if anybody is anxious or is interested in doing business with the government - that is public business - I think the least that could be done is that that information should be made available.

In particular, Mr. Speaker, I am very disappointed in this government because it campaigned - but I guess it has forgotten the promise of open government. You are not going to get open government if you've got to have somebody else's concurrence before this can be done and that can be done. That's like saying to a bank robber, unless you agree that we can take you to jail, that will be the end of the case.

So I believe that we have to take a realistic look at this motion. And, Mr. Speaker, I would like to point out that I have tried to cooperate with the government on this motion because I am not asking for all the correspondence for even the last year. I am asking for just up to March 31 of 1973. I even dropped off one section, Mr. Speaker, that was in my order for a return for last year in order that I could accommodate the government and make the information available so that they wouldn't have to go way back into the files and pull out everything that has gone on from when that park was started until today. So I believe that if the government is going to really let the people in Alberta have the right to know what is going on and how public business is being conducted in this Legislature on behalf of the people of Alberta with their funds, everything should be made available.

I would like to emphasize that I am not interested in interdepartmental correspondence. I didn't ask for it so there is no problem there. But I think this is a realistic and a reasonable motion and I think it should be adhered to without any amendment, because if we are going to put the caveat of concurrence by those who are involved before it can be tabled in this Legislature, well, in my opinion, and in my humble opinion, there is no use putting motions for a return on the Order Paper.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order please. I would like to draw to the attention of the Assembly that the proposed amendment submitted by the hon. Minister of the Environment contains only one of the three conditions which the hon. minister mentioned. If that's going to cause a procedural difficulty, perhaps the House might wish to consider it.

The three conditions, as I recall them, mentioned by the hon. minister, were that there would be no interdepartmental correspondence tabled, and that there would be no correspondence tabled with those with whom negotiations were still actively in progress. The third condition was that the motion be made subject to the concurrence of the parties involved, and only that portion is contained in the amendment submitted by the hon. minister and it relates to Clauses 1, 2, 3 and 4 of the motion.

MR. LUDWIG:

Mr. Speaker, in rising to support the hon. Member for Calgary Millican in objecting to the amendment, I believe that the opposition has the right and responsibility to demand this kind of information. We can't possibly allow the government to keep encroaching on the long-established rights of members in the Legislature by dodging behind the fact that we want concurrence from whomever is involved.

We're not making any allegations or any accusations of anything wrong, but the minute the government starts digging in and saying, we can't give you this, we're going to dig in. We have to consult someone. We have the right to investigate and to inquire, and with some rightful suspicion. The opposition mustn't just trust the government as implicitly as the government members do. If we approve everything they do, there is no point in having any members here except the cabinet, the Executive Council. So I say that once they start digging in and saying, well, we need concurrence, we need this, we need that, and all sorts of excuses, then the whole thing becomes suspect.

When on previous occasions we stood our ground and fought for the information, we got it. Sometimes it was embarrassing to the government, Mr. Speaker. Do we have to go through this all over again? Because this issue cannot be dropped. We will pursue it - whether we get it here, we'll pursue it in the departments. So the government may as well, once it is confronted with a question, try to do all it possibly can. I'm sure if any one of the individuals involved in selling, if he didn't want his correspondence revealed, would have marked it confidential. I'm saying we should fight confidentiality of transactions and deals that involve public funds. We're opposed to it.

I'd just be pleased if, say, the Rt. Hon. John Diefenbaker and Mr. Baldwin, MP were here. They would disassociate themselves from these Conservatives, Mr. Speaker. They'd have nothing to do with them and this kind of attitude. They'd berate them and tell them to go back and - if they'd know what the principles are - to read them. We all have a stake in seeing that the hon. members can get the information they want.

So we are now going to dodge and hide behind every excuse under the sun because we don't want to give it. I'm sure if the hon. members, the hon. Premier, or the hon. minister involved wanted to give us this information, we'd hear a long speech read to us on how great they are and what they have done. But they don't want to give us this information so the challenge is down. We want it, Mr. Speaker, we have the right to get it. If we have to use, as the government is using, every dodge in the book to avoid giving it, we have to use every means available to us to try to get it. I'm sure they would not respect us if we said, well, you don't want to give it so let's go on to the next. That isn't the way these things are run, Mr. Speaker. I think the hon. minister - when we want their hands on the table, we want them on the table, Mr. Speaker, and if he wants to keep them under the table, we'll then have to use everything possible, every advantage, every opportunity open to us to try to get this.

If they want to accuse us of conducting a witch hunt, we have had to do this before with good results, Mr. Speaker. If there is going to be a witch hunt, let the government share the blame or take all the blame for it, for their reluctance, as the hon. Member for Calgary Millican said, to come to us and bare their souls as to what in fact took place. We don't want to make this look like a witch hunt but we have no alternative. So we'll continue this way until we get the information and we will get it one way or another. But we are entitled to get it here.

I'm sure that someone will get up and say, you are not entitled to it. But I can hear their voices just a short time ago when they were on this side. Then they did everything possible and relentlessly pursued their quest for information. It was their responsibility and they did a good job. Now they are turning around and saying, oh no, no, we don't want to. Let's talk it over.

Sometimes, Mr. Speaker, a word to the wise is sufficient. When you don't want to table a letter you could get on the phone and say, well, they want our correspondence and we said no, unless we get your consent. So that is tantamount to saying, you're not going to get it because we are in control, Mr. Speaker. That is the wrong attitude. It is not in the best interests of the people, and I think they should reassess their position, remember what they have said and remember that every hon. member in this House, whether on this side or that side, has a responsibility to see that government spending and government transactions, especially in land dealings of this nature - this is where we ought to know the facts, the figures and the details, Mr. Speaker.

So now we are being stymied. Somebody will come up and say, well, you could do it in public accounts. There is no point in closing the barn door after the horses are gone, Mr. Speaker. We don't want it a year from now. We want it now. We're entitled to it now, and the 'now' government is reluctant. All of a sudden they have become tight-lipped. Unless they want to tell us - and sometimes they just literally flood us with information when they want to give it - when they don't want to give it, they are mum. And there is no shortage of excuses, all kinds of old, old dodges that have been used since time immemorial, unsuccessfully, to try to stop us. I'm sure they'll get up and say, well, we're open, we're wide open and everybody knows everything. This Legislature, Mr. Speaker, does not know anything about the deals - and I'm using that expression with no innuendo of any wrongdoing. But if they resist and they fight and they dodge in every direction and dig in about giving us information, we have no other choice but to keep on digging. If suspicion is aroused as a result of this refusal then the fault lies entirely on the side of the government, Mr. Speaker.

So I urge hon. members to support the right of hon. members in this House to get information and to let us get the information without giving them time to stall and delay and perhaps come up and say, well, sorry but John Brown who sold us the land, maybe for a little higher price than we want to reveal, isn't going to tell us. He doesn't want his correspondence tabled. I'm saying that - and I have no doubt about the fact that the government majority is going to vote this amendment in, Mr. Speaker - if they don't defeat the amendment, then they have an obligation to give us the names of everybody involved so that we can go and do our own digging individually. But they have it, they can give it to us. I'm sure that anybody who sold land to the government or had any dealings or negotiations - that it is not confidential because we can then start and spend money and search in the Land Titles office and try to get this information.

It is the ministers' responsibility to volunteer everything they can and quit hiding behind this nonsense; well, we have to get the concurrence of everybody concerned. That is about the weakest excuse there is when a government doesn't want to give us something we are entitled to. If that is what they want to do, dig up these dodges, dig up these stalls, dig up these excuses, then we'll have to know how to deal with them on other matters in the future, Mr. Speaker.

MR. RUSSELL:

Mr. Speaker, I would just like to take a couple of minutes to refresh the hon. member's memory because I think he is getting rather overheated and excited about an issue that doesn't really exist.

MR. LUDWIG:

Far from it.

MR. RUSSELL:

It was just about a year ago that the hon. Leader of the Opposition asked, in a very identical kind of motion for a return, for correspondence relating to land acquisition by the government in and around the town of Airdrie. Exactly the same kind of amendment was proposed, Mr. Speaker, subject to the concurrence of the correspondent. At that time there wasn't a murmur raised. The Leader of the Opposition accepted it very gracefully and I can say that we were able to check with the correspondents and 100 per cent of them agreed to their letters being tabled.

It's quite interesting, Mr. Speaker, to look at the kinds of people whom we were trying to be courteous to. One group was lawyers writing letters on behalf of their clients and the other group was real estate agents writing letters on behalf of their clients. Presumably those letters were written in good faith to the government, not knowing at the time that they may or may not be made public.

I think it is just a matter of common courtesy that the people be asked. But the hon. Member for Calgary Mountain View appears to be overheated about something as well as suffering from an exceedingly short memory.

MR. STROM:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to say a few words on the amendment. First of all I agree with you that there were two other conditions that were raised and I'm not sure whether we are permitted to comment on them. They are not included in the amendment. I would like to have your ruling on that, Mr. Speaker, first.

MR. SPEAKER:

My understanding is that it's the amendment that's before the House.

MR. STROM:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to say at the outset, Mr. Speaker, that I have tried to do some thinking in regard to the method we have arrived at of seeking the permission of certain people to have correspondence tabled in the House. It seems to me that the practice grew up from the practice of the federal government asking us, on some occasions, whether or not it was acceptable for us to table correspondence that we had had with the federal government. We then used to return the favour by asking the federal government if they would have any objection to us tabling correspondence they had had with us in regard to matters.

It is possible that we have requested it on other occasions, but I would have to confess that I cannot recall those particular incidents at this point in time. One of the things that is really concerning me is that if we are going to carry this too far, I am afraid then that it will create a precedent that could, in fact, deny the House getting access to information that should be made available to it.

I notice the hon. Minister of Agriculture is shaking his head. But, nevertheless, I think I am entitled to have my opinion on it, and I still hold my opinion even though he has shaken his head.

DR. HORNER:

That's agreed.

AN HON. MEMBER:

You're pretty close to home.

MR. STROM:

If we carry this too far, as the hon. Member for Calgary Millican has just said, I think it would place us in the position where we could be denied practically anything that relates to correspondence the government has had with somebody in the past. I don't think that should really exist.

I want to say to the government side of the House that I have tried to think it through as carefully as I can and it seems to me that if the government and the opposition are going to carry out their responsibilities in a proper manner, unless there is negotiation taking place that would be jeopardized, or if a competitor might be revealing information or a firm revealing information to a competitor that would be damaging or circumstances such as that, I think, Mr. Speaker, that the government certainly has the right to file or to table the information without going each time to the individual involved and requesting his permission.

As I said at the outset, I realize it has its origin possibly in the Government of the Province of Alberta being asked for its permission by the federal government to file information and we, in turn, asking for that same privilege. But I would hate, Mr. Speaker, to see this carried too far. For that reason I see no reason to support the amendment.

MR. SPEAKER:

Are you ready for the question on the amendment?

MR. YURKO:

Mr. Speaker, on a point of order by way of offering some clarification. The amendment reads, "... subject to the concurrence of all parties involved." I just wish to assure the hon. members that the concurrence of the government in this regard, in terms of the letters written by the government, I might freely say is given now. We have no difficulty with correspondence we have written. It is correspondence to us that we would like to give the courtesy of getting approval from the other end.

[The amendment was carried.]

[The motion as amended was carried.]

MR. LUDWIG:

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to rise on a point of privilege resulting from something that took place in the Legislature just a few minutes ago by way of my question to the hon. Minister of Highways and Transport wherein I had posed a question to him - and I am alleging, Mr. Speaker, on the point of privilege, that the hon. minister misled the House in his answer to me. I had the opportunity of checking with the Alberta Motor Association in Calgary and with his department, the highway traffic, and they are today short of licence plates, trailer plates. And they were short of "X" plates ...

MR. SPEAKER:

Order please. I shouldn't perhaps interrupt the hon. member since he perhaps hasn't fully stated the point of privilege. But if the point of privilege involves a dispute as to facts between the hon. minister and the hon. member, then it would not be a point of privilege, because it has been ruled over and over again by speakers that a dispute as to facts between hon. members, be they ministers or not, does not constitute a point of privilege.

MR. LUDWIG:

Mr. Speaker, I will avoid mentioning facts. I am alleging that the hon. minister misled the House in a question put to me. That is a breach of privilege of the House, as you have previously ruled. I am alleging that that was with relation to questions I put to him. I cannot allege he did it deliberately, but I believe the minister did mislead

the House in his answer to me dealing with a shortage of licence plates in Calgary, Mr. Speaker.

MR. FOSTER:

Mr. Speaker, speaking on the point of privilege. Rule 14(3) of the rules of this House require that a member must raise a question of privilege in the Assembly immediately after the words are uttered. Mr. Speaker, at least one event has intervened between that point. On that basis, Mr. Speaker, the point of privilege is out of order.

MR. SPEAKER:

With respect to the hon. minister, that would undoubtedly be appropriate to the use of unparliamentary language. However, since the hon. member is raising the point of privilege some half-hour or longer since the alleged point arose, I would think that under the same rule he would ordinarily be required to give notice to the Speaker before raising the point of privilege.

MR. LUDWIG:

But I had to check the facts, Mr. Speaker.

MR. CLARK:

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the hon. member, Mr. Wilson, I move Motion for a Return No. 131.

MR. RUSSELL:

Mr. Speaker, I would have liked to have talked to the hon. member, Mr. Wilson, today because I do propose to amend his motion for a return slightly ...

MR. CLARK:

If I might, on a point of order, we would be very willing to let the motion stand until Thursday.

MR. SPEAKER:

Is it the wish of the House that the motion stand over?

HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

MOTIONS OTHER THAN GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

1. Mr. Young proposed the following motion to the Assembly:

Be it resolved that the Government of Alberta consider establishment of an agency which would be responsible:

- (a) to provide, directly or indirectly, public transportation between municipalities,
- (b) to research, evaluate, and assist in planning new modes of public transportation,
- (c) subject to agreement with the respective municipalities, participate in the operation of public transportation systems.

MR. YOUNG:

Mr. Speaker, I have considerable pleasure today in commencing debate on the motion I have placed before the Assembly. It is a motion, Mr. Speaker, that deals with a topic which I consider has gained in importance very rapidly in recent years.

I am a little bit concerned that because of the way I have worded the motion I may be misinterpreted, and perhaps I should commence with a couple of comments on the particular motion, specifically trying to indicate what I mean.

I have suggested "... establishment of an agency which would be responsible". Now, I was very careful in selecting those words. I do not necessarily consider that an agency to be responsible to accomplish something must necessarily be the agency which actually does that thing, but rather that it assumes responsibility to see that somebody does it. In other words, I am not suggesting and would not want this resolution interpreted to mean that I am encouraging the government to go out and take over the Greyhound Bus Lines system in the province of Alberta. That is not my intent. To improve it in some instances or to be concerned about where it fails to provide service in some instances - that may be my intent.

Mr. Speaker, what I really want the Assembly to consider is whether or not there is a need for an expanded presence of the provincial government in the transportation of people within the province of Alberta. I think, Mr. Speaker, if we stop to consider what has happened in transportation over the years, the transportation of people jurisdictionally seems to have fallen among a number of chairs, and perhaps between some of them.

Mr. Speaker, historically we can look at transportation of people and of goods, with respect to our railway systems, and we will observe that - as anyone who has watched The National Dream, which I have enjoyed each Sunday evening recently - as anyone who has watched that program will recollect and realize immediately, the railway system and the controls on that system, as it has grown up in Canada, predate the province of Alberta.

I think that could quite correctly be the description of the role of the province and railway transportation, that we as a province and as a provincial government have taken - if I can use that expression, Mr. Speaker - have accepted the railway transportation system as it has been developed by the Canadian National Railway and the Canadian Pacific Railway and, subsequent to those developments, controlled by the Canadian Transport Commission. The exceptions of course, Mr. Speaker, are those railways in Alberta which are uniquely for resource purposes, and I'll mention the Northern Alberta Railway and the Alberta Resources Railway. I think, apart from those initiatives, the only other significant action that the government has taken has been to deal with the rates as applied to movement of rail traffic and to express its views about the closure of rail lines.

In that connection, Mr. Speaker, I arrive at one point, I think, of immediate relationship to the subject of concern - public transportation between municipalities and between population centres. Mr. Speaker, in each closure of a rail line in this province there has arisen the argument that the towns on that line are going to be affected in a harmful manner in terms of people-transportation.

There is some debate about whether this is, in fact, so. I realize that the railways produce figures and they show declining numbers of people using the rail system, but perhaps, Mr. Speaker, that relates very directly to the abominable type of transportation which, in recent years, it has been the practice of the railways to provide. I think it's a well-known, well-recognized development that the rail lines have not been particularly enthusiastic about providing passenger service and I have no doubt that their lack of enthusiasm has not improved their service. In fact, it has led them to let it weaken and become a natural discouragement to people in even trying to take the train between stations or between towns.

Mr. Speaker, we then come to the second mode of transport which has been very significant, that of the motor vehicle. Most motor vehicle transportation, Mr. Speaker, is jurisdictionally the responsibility of the provincial government or of municipalities; municipalities for the roads within their boundaries, and the provincial government for general overall licence and control within each province and for the connecting roadways between cities, our major highways. Jurisdictionally again, we have some federal government involvement, and that relates to the Trans-Canada Highway. There is some stimulus that the same kind of involvement or a similar type of involvement should occur with respect to the Yellowhead Highway. But, Mr. Speaker, that involvement has been much more recent than railways, and I think we can say that when it comes to motor vehicles, the province, in terms of transportation between municipalities, has been the chief decision-maker.

That, Mr. Speaker, has created a difficulty in some instances - at least certain city fathers advise us so. It creates a problem of the coordination of planning as between provincial highway authorities and municipal authorities. What happens to traffic when it reaches the boundary of - let's use Edmonton for an illustration - what happens to traffic when it arrives at the city boundary? If the city disagrees with the priorities of the province, we then have a situation where the traffic must filter out into many narrow streets, streets which just simply were never intended to accommodate that kind of major concentration of automobiles.

Mr. Speaker, there is a related point in connection with motor vehicle traffic and the distribution of responsibility. The provincial government has provided funds to the municipalities, either through a provision of grants or on a per capita basis, in various forms, for upgrading and maintaining certain standards within each city. These, I think,

create a challenge for us, as I shall try to show in a few moments when I get to the problem which I think we are facing today.

The third mode of transport, Mr. Speaker, has been air transport, and again I would submit that most of the initiative - not all but most of the initiative - is a federal initiative in this respect and controlled by federal authority. The provincial government again tries to advise. We have our department of forestry airstrips, but not very much which could truly be said to have been stimulated and initiated on a provincial basis in connection with air transport.

Mr. Speaker, now I think we should turn our attention to what has happened in time to the population in Alberta. I suppose any statistics which I might try to develop, which would indicate the degree of urbanization or, if you will, the degree of population concentration, could be debated pro and con and we would get into some problems of definition. Mr. Speaker, I don't think it's necessary to do that. I would simply indicate in that respect that two of, I believe, the three fastest growing cities in the Dominion of Canada are within the province of Alberta. They are Edmonton and Calgary. Their rapid growth indicates or is a consequence of two things; a larger provincial population and a degree of urbanization, movement of people from rural Alberta to urban centres.

The other illustration of growth and concentration of population which I would like to convey - and I don't know how many members will appreciate this - but I wonder how many members had the opportunity ten years ago to look across the North Saskatchewan River from any place in the vicinity of the University of Alberta Faculty Club. Ten years ago, had one looked across the river, I think the tallest building in downtown Edmonton was the Hotel Macdonald. Had anyone looked in the direction of the Legislature Buildings, they would have been standing free and clear and quite sharply marked against the horizon with no other buildings around that would interfere with that view of the horizon. They would stand out quite clearly. If one goes across to the Faculty Club location today to observe the core of Edmonton, one will find that the Legislature Buildings are dwarfed, dwarfed by apartment blocks ...

MR. LUDWIG:

Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. I believe that, in keeping with some of the previous rulings, the hon. member who is debating this motion ought to try to keep within some reasonable bounds of what the motion in fact reads. He appears to be becoming lost in a mirage in looking across the Saskatchewan River.

I believe that we should deal with this motion and not wander too far afield ...

AN HON. MEMBER:

A shining example!

MR. LUDWIG:

... lest we start comparing the heights of the Calgary Tower, the Husky Tower and the CN Tower. We don't want to get into that at the present time.

MR. YOUNG:

Perhaps, Mr. Speaker, the hon. member failed to listen when I led into the comments I was making when I indicated that I would try to use two illustrations to indicate the degree of increase in density of population within the city core. One illustration, Mr. Speaker, is exactly that which I was in the process of concluding, suggesting that a very visible kind of indicator would be something that a member could do for himself very readily. And that is, go across to the Faculty Club and look at what the outline of the city shows from that vantage point, the number of apartment buildings, the number of office buildings, the AGT Tower for instance, the CN Tower, all of these buildings. My point, Mr. Speaker, is that within the last ten years there has been major construction in downtown Edmonton - the same is true of downtown Calgary - which has brought with it a challenge. That challenge is: how to move people at peak traffic times, rush hour times, in and out of the city core.

Mr. Speaker, I shall not pursue that any further. I think that all members could readily recognize the kind of change that has taken place. I did happen, Mr. Speaker, to see a copy of The Edmonton Journal - I think it is two years old now - showing two illustrations side by side. They are quite remarkable. They clearly indicate a change in the concentration of population and therefore the necessity for much-improved transportation techniques and systems, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I have indicated in the (a) part of the resolution "... public transportation between municipalities," that I consider that the provincial government, or some body, must become concerned with the transportation, in connection with their work,

of citizens from the communities surrounding Edmonton into and out of Edmonton. Mr. Speaker, again, we have in very recent years very rapid development in the towns of St. Albert, Sherwood Park, Leduc, Fort Saskatchewan - even ...

AN HON. MEMBER:

Hear, hear.

MR. YOUNG:

... Stony Plain. And I understand that the town of Ryley may be starting to expand rather rapidly now as a 'bedroom community' for Edmonton workers.

DR. BUCK:

Socially.

MR. YOUNG:

Socially. They require transportation to get to the bedroom and back again, hon. member.

Mr. Speaker, my point is that if we force the people living in these communities to use automobiles, they are going to cause an increasing problem to Edmonton. I think that this alone indicates that the problem is somewhat larger than the city of Edmonton. Some of it now is originating beyond the boundaries of the city. This is one of the strong reasons why I am suggesting, Mr. Speaker, that there should be a provincial presence and a much greater provincial concern - there needs to be - than we have experienced prior to this time.

Mr. Speaker, I could perhaps extend this a little bit further. I wonder about the adequacy of our transportation to Fort McMurray. If in fact our developments in Fort McMurray are of the nature that are being suggested, then is it sufficient that we should rely upon air transport to move people between here and Fort McMurray upon our highway system, or could we not make better use of our railway system between here and Fort McMurray for passenger traffic? I throw this out. It's not a recommendation, it is a suggestion, something that maybe we need to start considering. Because one of our major challenges in Fort McMurray is going to be to get people there and be able to keep them there and keep them serviced while they are in Fort McMurray. Surely railway transportation is much more efficient and much cheaper than air transportation, leaving aside the time factor in movement.

Mr. Speaker, there are two other problems which all members are aware of, I'm sure. One is the environmental considerations of a high concentration of auto traffic in a downtown area, the noise, the smog, the impact that automobiles have on the street systems in the city. The other factor which should be brought to mind is the straight economics of the situation. I submit, and I think correctly so, that with the changes now occurring in energy costs, some of our accepted means of transportation are going to change simply because the economics are going to change.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, there has been a substantial change in the kind of technology available for public transportation. We have for high-density transportation, rapid transit: heavy rapid transit I suppose it could be called or high-capacity rapid transit.

We have intermediate capacity transit. The Calgary plan, in fact, which I have before me here suggests that this could be a very definite advantage in Calgary. There is a university group, a university practicum, which has worked for a number of years on a light rapid transit proposition for the city of Edmonton. It suggests that it could fulfil a very useful purpose.

We have medium capacity transportation which I understand is what we normally refer to as the good old bus transportation system, and low capacity transportation, dial-a-bus, taxis, et cetera.

Mr. Speaker, I submit that what we require is an integrated approach, an integrated approach in terms of technology. When we talk of public transportation, we shouldn't tend to think of subway systems. We should tend to think, and need to think, in terms of a total transportation concept involving all of these technologies.

Mr. Speaker, I submit that when we talk about a transportation system in terms of what the community requires, what the citizens of Alberta require, we have got to think in terms of the municipalities, the City of Edmonton, the City of Calgary. Their authority ends at the city boundaries. They may - as Edmonton and St. Albert have recently concluded - reach an agreement between two municipalities, but this isn't a necessary development.

We have the suburban connections then, and we have the inter-urban connections: Edmonton-Calgary, Edmonton-Fort McMurray, Edmonton-Grande Prairie, these types of transportation. What I am trying to say in this resolution, Mr. Speaker, is that the provincial government at this time must begin to give consideration to this type of connection and to assure itself that adequate provision is being made in each situation.

I have suggested, Mr. Speaker, a particular administrative structure - an agency - on the premise, Mr. Speaker, that we are going to be involved in a large amount of money and that we are going to have to make decisions of a very difficult nature, very innovative decisions.

It is my view, in such matters, that the best approach is a cooperative team effort approach. Mr. Speaker, I have some reason to believe that in years past that has not always been the case in terms of the highway program that we have and the municipalities have. I think it is absolutely essential when we talk about, for instance, the metropolitan Edmonton transportation system now calculated to cost \$750 million over a period of 25 years. Mr. Speaker, that is \$30 million a year. Mr. Speaker, \$30 million a year just happens to be twice as much as we have given this year, in a major increase in provincial funds, to the two cities of Calgary and Edmonton. We have a phenomenal problem before us. It's one that I believe must be resolved in a spirit of cooperation with the city authorities in particular.

In saying that, I think we have to take into account the interest of the suburban communities and, as I have suggested, maybe even some other areas that we haven't generally thought about in talking about public transportation - the more outlying ones.

Mr. Speaker, I would not wish to imply in this resolution that the province should move in with an agency and take over the Edmonton transportation system or the Calgary transportation system. I believe, and have always believed, that the government best able and able to most efficiently provide services is that government closest to the immediate area to be serviced. That obviously is the City of Edmonton.

It may well be that in a situation such as we are discussing, where the magnitude of money is obviously so very great and the technology is moving so quickly, we need to look at an agency which could assist the city and in which the city might even be represented. Mr. Speaker, I have no strong feelings on that, but I do not think we can resolve these problems by the province acting unilaterally in one respect and the city acting unilaterally in another. I believe this very keenly in view of the very large sums of money which I am sure are going to be required.

The other reason I had mentioned an agency and a possibility of joint representation on that agency, Mr. Speaker, is because there is a major challenge of research and evaluation of some of the new technologies which needs to be undertaken. I think there is good reason why that should be done in a province like Alberta by one group acting in concert. I would submit that this in particular is an area that the province could consider without even seeming to be trampling on the toes of local autonomy.

Mr. Speaker, I rest my case with the recommendation that the area of challenge which we have in public transportation is one which has grown very rapidly, one which will involve large sums of money, one which is going to engage provincial and municipal authorities in either a cooperative effort or effort at odds one with the other, and one which is going to generate more and more public interest and, I hope, a considerable amount of debate in this Legislature on this motion.

MR. HO LEM:

Mr. Speaker, in rising to speak to the motion before this House, I wish at the outset to say that this issue and topic of public transportation is indeed an important one when we consider the geographic immensity of Alberta, when we consider that the very development and growth and success of this province of ours depends on good communication by transportation facilities within our province. I wish at this time, Mr. Speaker, to record that I support the establishment of such a transportation system within our province.

However, after hearing the academic and philosophical review of the problems by the hon. Member for Edmonton Jasper Place, I am convinced that we have ample reasons to express our concerns and doubts as to the effectiveness of this motion, however well-intentioned it might be.

At the beginning, I would like to voice my opposition to this motion because it encourages yet another government agency or bureaucracy - whatever you wish to label it - with no guarantee, Mr. Speaker, of even the slightest degree of any benefits accruing to the municipalities. Nor does it give any consideration to those municipalities which now find themselves in much need of assistance in this area, and indicate any assurance to them that benefits or assistance would be forthcoming.

Another point, Mr. Speaker, that I have in voicing my objection - an objection which I feel is most valid - is that it is attempting to duplicate in a very poor way the efforts of yet another corporation, the Canadian transport development corporation, which was set up last year in 1973, and also one which boasts of a multi-million dollar budget which would be made available and given assistance by way of grants to the various municipalities throughout Canada.

I suspect that this agency which has been suggested by the hon. member might indeed prove to be a stumbling block rather than a help for those municipalities that are going directly to the Canadian transport development corporation for assistance. So I would say, let's be careful and let's not foul up this situation for those municipalities who might be taking advantage of this invitation.

One only has to look at the track record established by the Ontario transport agency, or the Ontario transport corporation, which, in the minds of many of the Ontario municipalities, is a total loss both in efforts and in results gained. It is costing the Ontario taxpayers untold millions of dollars year after year, and it has been labelled by many as doing more harm than good.

If this province, Mr. Speaker, is looking for ways to spend its fortune then I might suggest that we look for a more effective program than is suggested in this motion. Mr. Speaker, this motion to me is yet another attempt in eroding municipal autonomy and local input. I would suggest that the centralization of power and authority through this agency would ultimately have the effect that the authority in the area of transportation responsibility will be resting in the hands of a very few civil service mandarins - pardon the expression, if you will.

If the hon. Member for Edmonton Jasper Place is so concerned with the transportation problem within the province, why should he take this route, one might ask? In my way of thinking, I feel he should waste no time in lobbying his own caucus members to support a new independent source of revenue for cities and municipalities to solve their own transportation problems in this province. This, I feel, would be a more positive way of doing things and would be giving support to the proposition and the principle of local input and local autonomy which is so important to all Albertans, and which we have heard so much about.

Mr. Speaker, I believe this is an ill-conceived motion and in essence it is a non-confidence vote in the hon. Minister of Highways and Transport. But if it was designed to do this perhaps then it isn't such a bad motion. Or I wonder if the hon. Member for Edmonton Jasper Place is interested in becoming the new hon. minister responsible for this agency?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed, agreed.

MR. HO LEM:

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I would urge the government to utilize existing agencies in cooperation with all concerned over these problems of transport and to take some positive action program to deal with transportation problems rather than just creating yet more new empires or task forces.

MR. LUDWIG:

Mr. Speaker ...

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Edmonton Highlands followed by the hon. Member for Calgary Mountain View.

MR. KING:

Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure to be able to take part in the debate on this resolution this afternoon. The subject is one that has interested me for quite a long time probably, I think, because we are at a stage today in our society where technology offers us the first significant opportunity that has existed, perhaps since the inter-war years, for the development of new forms of effective transportation serving most of our population and most of our industry.

In Alberta when we talk about any form of transportation and, particularly in light of our resolution, when we talk about public transportation there are a number of constraints that have to be kept in mind in exploring our opportunities. Probably the most obvious one is that we have a very large geographic area. We have many geological obstacles and we have a very small population. When our small population is related to our geographic

area, then it is seen that we have an extremely low population density across the province as a whole on which to support a transportation effort.

The second really significant restraint that we have to consider when we talk about transportation in this province is that we are a landlocked province, and that for any transportation purposes we are denied what is for many other parts of the world the cheapest and probably the most efficient form of transportation, water transportation.

The third constraint on the development of an effective transportation system is that at the present time we are at least 1,000 miles from major - that is, world-scale - processing, manufacturing and distribution plants and systems.

The fourth constraint we have to consider at this time is that the province is apparently entering a period of sustained heavy construction which is going to be widely dispersed throughout the province and that any transportation system we consider, public or commodity transportation, has got to be developed in anticipation of the need to meet the demands of heavy construction throughout the province as a whole.

The fifth constraint we have to consider in terms of the development of a transportation system in the province or the redevelopment of a transportation system, is that much of our economic base is likely to be either resource or technology intensive.

In considering the development of a suitable transportation policy not only our objectives and our constraints have to be considered, but also the resources we have at our command, and these include our present transportation system, the experience that has been gained in other jurisdictions, the experimental work that is being done everywhere, and, particularly in Alberta at the present time, the resource of money - financial capacity - although the Provincial Treasurer might have some hesitation about that.

AN HON. MEMBER:

He's got so much, he can't count it all.

MR. KING:

While the remainder of my remarks will be devoted to public transportation per se, everything that I have tried to develop and everything that I will suggest here this afternoon is done on the assumption that the public transportation system, whatever it is, must also serve us for the transportation of commodities.

I think that an appropriate transportation system for Alberta should have the following features. It should utilize all possible means including roadways, railways that are either double or single track, aircraft and hovercraft.

AN HON. MEMBER:

What else is there?

MR. KING:

Nothing else. I don't think there's anything else.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Wild horses?

MR. KING:

It should be capable of moving people within metropolitan areas, that is, on intra-urban routes at an average speed, doorstep-to-doorstep, of 30 miles per hour minimum, and on selected inter-urban routes it should be capable of moving people at an average speed, doorstep-to-doorstep, of 300 miles per hour. I think that it should be economically feasible at about 5 cents per urban passenger mile and about 15 cents per inter-urban passenger mile. And I think that all of those criteria or standards are achievable today, given the present state of the art, in transportation.

Subways, light rapid transit, monorail, freeways, mass transit, helicopters, exclusive traffic lanes, computer-assisted traffic flow and computer-directed vehicles are all presently in use today in one city or another around the world. They are not something that we are dreaming about and hoping to see implemented 10, 15 or 20 years from now.

In addition to all this technological innovation which is in use in the world today, we have to consider that the systems are operated in a wide variety of different ways that include private operation, operation by semi-autonomous bodies, and operation by government agencies. Sometimes they're completely subsidized - that is what is called

free transportation - sometimes they're subsidized in part and sometimes there is no direct subsidy.

Around the world inter-urban transportation includes short take-off and landing [craft], vertical take-off and landing craft, hovercraft, all electric trains, magnetic induction motors and fused-steel rail as well as the more conventional short haul jets, diesel trains and highway traffic.

To come to the resolution, Mr. Speaker, in Alberta the establishment of an agency such as is proposed by this resolution deserves the serious consideration of all hon. members in spite of some of the comments which have just been made opposite. I don't believe there is any particular merit in discussing the virtues of a board as opposed to an agency or as opposed to a Crown corporation, or as opposed to an authority, such as is common in many American states.

Aside from the question of the formal organization itself, there are a number of things which must be achieved in this province and which have to be achieved primarily through one organization. Three things I think stand out particularly.

The first is the establishment of the basic criteria for the development and the operation of public transportation in Alberta. The second is the evaluation of alternative types of transportation in the light of whatever criteria we set and the third is the development of some procedure for recommending methods of administration and funding.

The major obstacle to the development of a comprehensive, modern, integrated transportation system is the fractionalization that exists in terms of administration and fiscal control. The question of striking the proper balance between local control, regional control and provincial control is the critical problem that has been raised by hon. members opposite who, having raised it, make no attempt whatsoever to deal in a positive way with that as a problem. I appreciate the fact that they can recognize the problem which exists right in front of their faces and perhaps some hon. members who may later participate in the debate could go the significant one further step and suggest what kind of balance is desirable. It's fine to say that we should sanctify local autonomy. Local autonomy, given the present financial situation that exists or is possible for many municipalities, is very much like saying that we believe in the right of people to be impoverished, which is exactly the right that you believe the city should have if you believe in local autonomy so far as transportation is concerned, without any consideration as to how it is going to be financed.

There has been an increasing dispersal of population in the province, an increasing dispersal of our economic and our social activity. In the city of Edmonton, for example, you've got the very real problem that was faced until recently by the town of St. Albert where most of the people in one jurisdiction wanted, in fact, to travel, not within that jurisdiction but into a neighbouring jurisdiction. Now, the problem has apparently been solved on an interim basis for St. Albert. But what about the same problem which continues to exist for Sherwood Park, Fort Saskatchewan, Leduc, Devon, Stony Plain and Spruce Grove, to mention only the communities around Edmonton?

Does any similar problem exist in the communities around Calgary and how are those communities, the city of Calgary and the province going to work together to resolve that problem? There are an increasing number of local municipalities which have a vested interest in a particular solution to the problem, and it may be that to concede their particular vested interest is not going to be in the long-term best interests of all of the people of the province.

The second thing that I think has to be recognized at the present time is that in many local jurisdictions there is not the expertise that is necessary for the development of a balanced system. In many jurisdictions, including in my view some of the largest ones in the province, there is an outdated dedication to one form of transportation or another, to the exclusion of all others.

If I could turn to Edmonton for just a moment, I would like to cite a couple of specific examples of this. The strong conviction, until very recently, was that the freeway was the solution to all of the problems of the major urban areas, the failure to recognize that in some urban municipalities transportation systems take up as much as 40 per cent of the gross assessable area of a municipality. In other words, if some form of transportation other than freeways were being used, a significant increase could be realized in the land within the boundaries of the municipality that would be available for development and for taxation rather than for their free use as a transportation corridor.

To cite one specific example, the city of Oakland in California was advised by the state highway authority that the state highway authority was going to put through the edge of the community, at no cost to the city, a freeway approach to a bridge. It wasn't until they were very far advanced in their negotiations that the city discovered that this free approach to the bridge was going to cost them assessment on land annually of \$350,000 for

the freeway approach to one bridge. If you multiply that any number of times, as you could reasonably do in Edmonton, for example, then I think you can see the reason for my concern that we have in the transportation departments of many local municipalities, considerable technical knowledge about one aspect or another of the transportation process at the expense of complete ignorance about the alternatives that are available.

One of the things I should say at this point about the resolution and about the possibility of an agency is that I really hope it would provide an initiative to include the provision for disinterested research - that is research that is done by knowledgeable people with no particular axe to grind.

In Edmonton - I think again that we've been fortunate in the practicums that have been done by the Department of Extension at the University of Alberta - The Immorality of the Motor Car that was completed in 1971, The Light Rapid Transit Report that was completed in 1972 and the report that was just completed last fall on transportation into the western end of the city.

In light of the fact that much of the hired expertise in the local jurisdictions is presently biased, skewed in one direction or another, there are three specific suggestions that I would like to make. The first would be a direction to the railways to provide modern, public, intra and inter-urban transportation within the province of Alberta.

We in this Assembly have often stated to each other the fact the CPR particularly was given significant concessions within this province in exchange for their agreement to provide basic levels of transportation to the people of the province in perpetuity. Now, I grant, Mr. Speaker, that in perpetuity probably meant a different thing 100 years ago in an under-settled and primarily rural community than it would mean today. The fact of the matter is that in Edmonton and Calgary, the CNR and the CPR own prime land ideally located for intra-urban transportation which it is their imminent intention to divert from its transportation function into commercial, industrial or residential development because that is going to be more financially lucrative to them than is transportation. And they are doing this only a few short years after they have spun off all of their profitable economic enterprises into CP investments, CP hotels, their mining interests and everything else, so that every time they go to the Canadian Transport Commission they can justify the horrendous losses they are piling up year after year in the service of our rural communities.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I have said that with an obvious urban bias, but the fact of the matter is that exactly the same principle can be applied to the operations of the railways in public or commodity transportation in the rural parts of the province. And I think it's something that either this agency or the provincial government should seriously consider - the facts that were alluded to a few moments ago about rail line abandonment, about the spurious figures that are provided by the railways to justify the discontinuance of service, not only to the population, but to the industry and to the agriculture of vast areas of this province.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to close on a point very much related to this, that there has been insufficient attention paid, at least to the present time, in determining the indirect costs and the indirect benefits of one transportation system as opposed to another. One of the things that has never been of concern in evaluating the revenue or cost figures of either of the railways has been the social benefit that derives from the continuance of that particular kind of transportation system in the face of the apparent losses that the railways are sustaining.

If I could close, Mr. Speaker, with just one paragraph from The Immorality of the Motor Car which was the result of the practicum on transportation: "This combined private enterprise government approach to transportation is very useful" They are talking here about our general practice of having the government pay for the roadbed, or the highway, or the maintenance of the airways, while private enterprise pays for the vehicle.

... it tends to combine the best of both worlds in that the government agency can consider social costs and benefits in its investment decisions which the private entrepreneur cannot, whereas, the existence of a number of franchised operators introduces an element of competition that does not appear where a single government agency does all the operating. There are only two things wrong with this set-up as it presently exists: (1) there is no single government authority to ensure that public dollars are injected into the most useful form of transport; the agencies are rigidly compartmentalized according to mode ...

And that, I think, is directly what this resolution has attempted to deal with.

The second inadequacy which is referred to here, and I continue the quotation:

... (2) There is a vital omission from the scheme: the railroads. They are the only form of transport where private enterprise investment criteria are used both for infrastructure and operation and, where, the government approach of considering social

costs and benefits is absent. The publicly operated Canadian National is required to operate exactly like a private firm and, in situations where social cost/benefit might be involved, it is expected to behave exactly like the Canadian Pacific, ie., it is bound by the profit motive only.

Mr. Speaker, if an agency such as is recommended by this resolution, or if in fact the government by any other process can do two things - first of all, develop a comprehensive approach to transportation, and secondly, do a cost/benefit analysis of transportation that involves, not simply the direct cost, but the indirect social costs and social benefits - then by this agency or by any other means we will have made a tremendous advance in transportation in this province.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. LUDWIG:

Mr. Speaker, I commend the hon. member who brought this issue to the attention of the House. I was interested in all the remarks made by both my colleague from Calgary McCall and the hon. Member for Edmonton Kingsway ...

AN HON. MEMBER:

Highlands.

MR. LUDWIG:

... Highlands - well, at least only one objects to it.

When I read the motion, Mr. Speaker, it has to be looked at in light of the preamble - and I believe this motion is very meaningless if you look at it, Mr. Speaker. It says here, "Be it resolved that the government of Alberta consider establishment of an agency ...". Now we have not been told what the hon. member had in mind. But it is the establishment of some kind of an agency. Whether it is a Crown corporation or some kind of professional agency, or a task force or what have you, this is left up in the air. I thought the hon. member would give us some idea what he had in mind by saying agency.

When you look further down you can speculate to see whether it might not be some kind of Crown corporation. He goes on to say, "... an agency which would be responsible: (a) to provide, directly or indirectly, public transportation between municipalities," That means the possibility of somebody getting right into business and providing this. It's rather vague right from the beginning, but read the other two portions of the motion, Mr. Speaker, in light of the preamble, "... an agency which would be responsible: (b) to research, evaluate, and assist in planning new modes of public transportation," This would be the same agency. This agency would be quite a big body. Then further, "... an agency which would be responsible: (c) subject to agreement with the respective municipalities, participate in the operation of public transportation systems."

I think the overall intention was good, but the motion - you could agree with some of it and disagree with some entirely. It's really a triple header, Mr. Speaker, following a rather vague preamble.

We're all interested in transportation problems. When I hear the hon. members debate, I think they forgot to deal, at least briefly, with the question of local autonomy. Here the government is going to get involved, the last portion, the (c) portion of the motion says, "subject to agreement with the respective municipalities," Well, no matter whether you have interprovincial or intramunicipal transportation, everything is done within some municipality or other because the whole province is divided into municipalities and other divisions.

So I think the wording and the set-up of this motion is not the kind of motion that we want to pass in this Legislature. But the intent, bringing this issue before the Legislature, was a good thing, Mr. Speaker.

I think we avoided one other issue and that is the question of costs. I see the hon. Provincial Treasurer is not in his seat, but I am quite convinced that if the cities which have had studies, road studies, rapid transport studies, studies of transportation systems in other cities - and the benefit of hindsight - that if the cities were to come before this House through their MLAs and tell us how much money they would need to perhaps provide the kind of transportation system within the cities we would like, I believe that \$900 million would be a good down payment on the cost of this transportation, Mr. Speaker. Therein lies the whole problem.

They could quickly convince the Provincial Treasurer that he need have no worry as to where to put that money. They have a place for it. Particularly bearing in mind the extremely high cost, the inflationary position we are in today of, say, building a rapid

transit system. That would only be the beginning because it's like buying something you can't afford. You have to start borrowing money to operate it.

Rapid transit systems and underground systems, the tube systems in big cities that have a couple million people, perhaps they can afford to subsidize these transportation systems. But if Calgary and Edmonton for instance, the two major cities, [get new transportation systems] then you can't rule out the other cities that are growing rapidly for wanting their share of the modern convenience and a modern transportation system.

I'm afraid that \$900 million would be very quickly dispersed and, as I've stated, that would be just installment one. They would be able to use up the money as it comes in. We'd have a pretty nice transportation system to encourage more people to travel to the cities and if they like it, to settle down. So everything points toward lots of spending, lots of construction, lots of improvements, better amenities to attract people to come to the cities. We'll get bigger and more expensive and we'd always have to try to catch up with some more proper transportation system.

It would all be nice except that a lot of the people, Mr. Speaker, who would be looking at this kind of thing would not want the money to go that way. I say both Edmonton and Calgary have long spoken about the tremendous amount of money they need to improve their transportation systems and they are looking at the province. This is a good year to look because the province has announced already that they are going to have money that they don't need for the budget.

Now the question is, will these cities want grants or are they going to want other means of financing? Or is the public going to want to go for a 40 to 50-year loan with high interest rates and raise taxation to subsidize and to help pay for these transportation systems? There are a lot of problems involved. I'm like the rest of the hon. members who would like to see the best, only someone has to determine how the cities are going to get this money. Calgary and Edmonton would want the lion's share and when you give them that money you have an awful lot of ingrates and enemies who would not really want to see these two cities get the whole piece of the action.

The only way that Edmonton and Calgary can make an impact on the government is to talk to their MLAs. If they don't get the money they can blame nobody but the Conservative MLAs. And they are thinking. While we are here debating this motion, the councils of both cities - they've got some good plans for the moneys that this province will get. You can't blame them because it's part of their money, they are the people of this province.

So I think maybe we ought to have some of the ministers involved like the hon. Minister of Municipal Affairs and the hon. Provincial Treasurer and all the representatives to see whether we are prepared to vote a few hundred million dollars for, say, the city of Calgary first - after all it leads in everything else, it might as well lead in this - and see where the friction is going to begin, Mr. Speaker. You can't always keep dividing the pie equally between those two because other cities now have a lot of interest in the money the government has. They have other necessities they want.

So whether we are looking at a rapid transit system or whether we are looking at more freeways, it appears to me that at the present time we are complaining bitterly about carbon monoxide in cities yet we are doing everything within our means to increase this problem. So we have just scratched the surface of this problem. But the cities have tremendous studies; they have all sorts of expensive books they send to us once in a while as to what they think they need.

Years ago they got rapid transit plans, they got monorail plans - and yes, the hon. member is flashing a study at me, so he now wants us to conduct more studies. I'd suggest they set up an agency of Conservative MLAs, without additional pay, let them read these things and see whether we are not sort of bursting at the seams with studies. The only study we need is how to get the money, because the local autonomists - and we all favour that especially when we are talking to local representatives, we are all local autonomists - all we need to study, Mr. Speaker, is how to get the money for these people and then agree somehow that we'll subsidize them for the rest of the lifetime of the system.

So, Mr. Speaker, I believe I have touched on a few problems here that were raised.

When I mention this motion it really - nobody should vote for this motion, Mr. Speaker, it is too vague, it has three parts to it. The hon. member who moved it couldn't explain what he meant. He shot out in all directions. I thought he'd end up doing a canoe ride across the Saskatchewan River.

This is not the kind of motion I believe any hon. member ought to be associated with. So I'll do him a favour and propose an amendment that will merely reword the thing, Mr. Speaker, and give us something to discuss and something to vote upon. Even in proposing the amendment, I am just trying to improve the meaning of the whole thing because I am certainly stumped as to what he could possibly mean by all those things.

Before I move the amendment, I would like to say that somehow when we talk about direct government involvement, we can't just abandon the fact that private enterprise has carried us a long way. We've gone a long way, and I have not too much faith in government-operated systems because even the local governments couldn't operate a bus system that could pay for itself. They have buses. They got rid of streetcars and they have buses now. They are always getting the taxpayer to subsidize these things. I don't know who rides on these things but they never pay. So I have no faith in the provincial government taking all this over and then making it pay. In fact, I think it would be a very foolish government that would want to get involved in local transportation systems - intramunicipal and intermunicipal transportation systems - because all it will get is complaints. You can't please everybody. The buses are either too big or too small. In fact, they'd have to determine before they get into the business whether they would allow smoking in these buses or not, Mr. Speaker.

The issue was just barely touched, and I am disappointed that the Conservatives, of all people, have forgotten that maybe we should look at some requests for proposals from private enterprise. After all, a lot of trucking businesses operate and make money.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Are they in operation?

MR. LUDWIG:

I don't know where that came from, Mr. Speaker, but it is as meaningless as some of the speeches I heard from the other side.

A lot of trucking businesses are making money. A lot of private transportation people are making money. But once the government gets hold of a bus system or transportation system they go broke; except they can't go broke because they keep subsidizing it. That's why I am opposed to this government going into anything, because we have the benefit of hindsight in other areas, that once the government gets into something it doesn't ever seem to make money.

MR. GHITTER:

Let's have the amendment.

MR. LUDWIG:

The suspense is killing one hon. member.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Let's buy a helicopter.

MR. LUDWIG:

So when we talk about a motion that seems to ignore the fact that maybe we ought to look to see if some private enterprise can provide us with something better than we have and maybe cheaper to operate. At the same time, maybe we could get a few tax dollars from an operation like this.

But once the government goes in, and especially this government - when they happen to have a tendency to want to gravitate towards getting involved in business. The archmover of this kind of movement, Mr. Speaker, just arrived, the hon. minister, Mr. Peacock. I am glad he wasn't here because if he found out anything works in Calgary or Edmonton he would be ready to take it over.

AN HON. MEMBER:

He won't be taking you over.

MR. LUDWIG:

That's for darn sure. No, I don't think the hon. minister could take me over - not as much as he thinks he can either - or anything else.

So, Mr. Speaker, after those few preliminary remarks an expression of my concern about the private enterprise system here and the \$900 million that some people outside of Edmonton and Calgary are rather worried about right now, because they don't mind having it invested on their behalf or something provided for posterity, but they'd hate to have it blown on a rapid transit system either in Calgary or Edmonton.

Mr. Speaker, when the hon. member who moved the motion spoke, first of all he told us in no uncertain terms his ideas are not being listened to too much on the other side,

especially by the hon. Minister of Highways and Transport, who has gone to Calgary to check to see if there is a shortage of licence plates, and the hon. Minister of Municipal Affairs who must - when he was on this side, he knew all about the problems of transportation. He doesn't need a study. He was just bulging with information and he never lets us forget it. And who else is involved in this thing? I suppose the Provincial Treasurer. So if they could just realize how much of that \$900 million they will give the cities, the debate will be over, Mr. Speaker, except that I am of the opinion that maybe the two city MLAs would favour this, but a lot of other MLAs would not jump at the opportunity so quickly.

Mr. Speaker, not to keep the hon. Member for Calgary Buffalo in any further suspense, I move that the motion, moved by the hon. member, Mr. Young - as I stated, it was rather a dubious kind of conglomeration of thoughts - be amended by striking out all of the motion following the word "Alberta" in the first line and substituting thereafter the following words. The motion would now read:

Be it resolved that the Government of Alberta give consideration to conducting a study to determine the feasibility of government involvement in the provision of inter-municipal and intra-municipal transportation systems in Alberta.

Here is a copy for you, Mr. Speaker.

I am saying, Mr. Speaker, that this motion very beautifully summarizes the complete meaning of the hon. member's motion without in fact changing the thing too much. So it is in fact a similar motion, Mr. Speaker, only much shorter, much better worded and one upon which hon. members can safely take sides now. This one - I could support part of this motion and oppose another part of the motion. That is bad construction, Mr. Speaker, because a motion that has more than one portion to it, ought to be divided. So I propose my amendment ...

MR. SPEAKER:

Has the hon. member a copy of the amendment for the use of the mover of the motion?

MR. LUDWIG:

Yes I have, sir.

MR. HYNDMAN:

It's a literary disaster, but send it over.

MR. LUDWIG:

Mr. Speaker, I get blamed for doing a lot of things in this House but I hope I am not blamed for derailing the hon. member. He never got on the tracks to begin with.

This nonsense that they had a motion - firstly, Mr. Speaker, I believe it was out of order and I saved him the embarrassment. You have three different motions, and I believe Rule 200 - I haven't got it before me - Clause 4 says you divide these things up. So I have summed it all up and I think that perhaps - unless the hon. members feel they want to add clauses to it - the intent of the whole issue is expressed in my amendment.

So now that we have the amendment, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to speak to the amendment.

MR. GHITTER:

On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, if I may, with respect to this amendment we are all waiting for with bated breath. As usual, the fanfare was much greater than the actual realization as we read what he has to say.

But Mr. Speaker, surely on the point of order, if one were to read the motion as presented by the hon. Member for Jasper Place and compare it with the motion that was presented by the hon. Member for Calgary Mountain View, it entirely defeats the purpose of the motion. Surely the attitude of the hon. Member for Jasper Place in his motion, Mr. Speaker, was that the government establish an agency so that it isn't the government that is doing this, so that it is an agency independent of the government which will then conduct the matters set out in (a), (b) and (c). That is the whole purpose and purport of the motion.

The amended motion entirely defeats that, in that no longer is the agency to be created, but now the government is to conduct this study. I would submit that that is entirely repugnant to the main motion, something entirely repugnant to the point of view of the hon. member who proposed the motion and, on the point of order, I don't believe that the amendment is in order at all.

MR. LUDWIG:

Mr. Speaker, may I speak to the point of order. The motion, as proposed by the hon. member, Mr. Young, reads as follows: "Be it resolved that the Government of Alberta consider establishment of an agency which would be responsible: "to provide ... transportation ..." or "... to research, evaluate, and ... subject to agreement with ... municipalities ..." to set up a transportation system. And I'm saying that the government give consideration to conducting a study. Now the government may set up an agency, or they may have the studies or they may do anything they like, but the meaning and intent of the debate is in no way affected by the amendment.

I'm submitting, Mr. Speaker, that I did not really, in intent, amend the motion except to give it a little more meaning and to streamline it because he has, in fact, four ideas before us, Mr. Speaker. And if he wants to get to a technical point of order, first of all the motion in the preamble says, to establish an agency. Then he says what the agency might do, and it's three different things. If we're debating about the establishment of an agency only, then the debate should have been finished long ago because everybody was off the topic. So I'm saying that that's only the preamble to the motion, and my amendment clarifies what I thought was odd about the proposal, Mr. Speaker. I'm submitting that my amendment is in order and the hon. members may amend it if they think it isn't what they want.

MR. YOUNG:

Mr. Speaker, I will try to temper my comments about the proposed amendment. But I would say this, Mr. Speaker, that my original motion had one key element in it, and that was, "... the government of Alberta consider establishment of an agency ..." which would do certain things. And that's the important element, "... consider establishment of an agency ...". The proposed amendment would delete all that, Mr. Speaker, and suggest "... give consideration to conducting a study to determine the feasibility of government involvement ...". It's completely different. I am submitting, Mr. Speaker, that the proposal of the hon. Member for Calgary Mountain View destroys the principle of the original motion. And if it destroys the principle, then I submit it's not a proper amendment.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Question, question.

MR. SPEAKER:

I would suggest to hon. members that where there may be some doubt about the propriety of an amendment, the doubt might be resolved in favour of the amendment rather than against it. It's difficult to fit all amendments and motions into any given set of rules.

With regard to the first part of the motion, it recommends that the government give consideration to conducting a study. That may not be a great deal different in substance from the government considering something. What difference is there, perhaps essentially, between considering something and conducting a study or considering the conducting of a study? So it would appear that the really operative part of the amendment, which changes the direction of the motion somewhat, is the portion which deals with government involvement in intermunicipal and intramunicipal transportation. I would suggest, therefore, that the amendment is in order.

MR. LUDWIG:

In dealing with the amendment to the motion, Mr. Speaker, I'm suggesting that the government conduct a study to determine whether it should be involved in providing intermunicipal and intramunicipal transportation systems, because there is a principle here that we ought to look at very carefully. As I mentioned, local autonomy is involved. When we are talking about providing something for Edmonton, they might want to have us provide money and tell us to lay off, to keep out. It's their city. They have an elected council and they want to be the engineers. They might want us to help them build the railway, but they want to operate the system and this will never change. This won't change in Calgary. The public wouldn't go for it.

The second principle that is involved - and although I moved the amendment I do not believe that the government ought to get involved in any kind of a transportation system. I believe that there are so many different needs, so many different problems. The hon. Provincial Treasurer is here. I would like him to get involved now, Mr. Speaker, as to costs. Because, as I stated, the \$900 million he has - well, he is talking about it, he hasn't got it yet but he is hopeful - these cities can absorb that into a transportation

system that would have to be supported by all the people of the province. Because the \$900 million belongs to all Albertans and not to any specific groups even though they be large. I am not sure that I would agree that the government just turn around and give each city a \$400 million grant and then guarantee them another \$500 million loan through some agency. This is how much some of these projected transportation systems will cost. And this is only for the two cities.

As I stated, the cost of everything is so high now that if you project something to be worth \$500 million, by the time you finish it five years from now, or six, seven or eight years from now, then it will cost a billion. Maybe somebody knows how to reverse inflation but there is no evidence that anybody can do it here, Mr. Speaker.

So we have all these different little problems, and if the government really wants to conduct a study as to the feasibility of its involvement in transportation systems - and I'm referring primarily to the two cities now because they're the ones that are screaming the loudest. They've got the most muscle. Edmonton has 15 Conservative MLAs and if it doesn't get what it wants it can only blame its MLAs. They want it and they have already telegraphed their intentions to the government and they'll be here. All they need is a little support from a motion like this and to know that the hon. members who spoke are in favour of it. They'll be here with concrete proposals. I'm sure that the figures I'm quoting are modest compared to proposed costs for some transportation systems that have been studied by governments, including those in this province.

I think that before we go into the business of government jumping in to provide transportation systems, we had better study and see which systems in North America, particularly, have made money. If we're going to get into a losing proposition you may as well start encouraging the people to move out to the smaller towns and maybe it won't cost them as much.

But before we get into any kind of an idea that we want to have the government involved in providing these things itself - what they need the provincial government mostly for is to finance the thing. Let's study how many cities, say under 750,000, have a paying, profitable transportation system. I'll be surprised if there are any. But if there are some they must be awfully good. If they have one I'll just wager that the government isn't running it. It must be some kind of an arrangement with a private enterprise system that is running it because we could see what could happen to a transportation system when we look at what happened to Edmonton last winter, when they got tied up for the better part of the winter and nothing happened. You can't make money that way.

So with those remarks, Mr. Speaker, I believe that it behooves all hon. members to express an opinion on this and we ought to be careful how we vote on this thing. But I would like to hear from some of the financial experts as to whether they're prepared to offer, not only the \$900 million they expect to get next year from now on, but the one after.

I think that when we talk about Calgary and Edmonton, we mustn't forget there are a number of cities now that need money - not as prosperous, not as rich and without as much revenue as Edmonton and Calgary. There are other cities that would rightfully be entitled to help. And I wonder how far the surplus that we have would go.

I'm not sure, Mr. Speaker - as I stated just shortly - that if the government started making grants to provide transportation systems for Edmonton and Calgary there is no stopping. The principle is the same. They would be borrowing money to meet their commitments long after the \$900 million they're talking about will be gone.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Drumheller.

MR. TAYLOR:

Mr. Speaker, I rise to oppose the amendment and I also rise to oppose the motion. I think I can give you the reasons why in a very few minutes.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. member may be required by the Rules to oppose the amendment first and the motion later.

MR. TAYLOR:

That's what I intended to do.

In the first place, I think to establish agencies on top of agencies and superimpose one structure above another is getting to be all too common in our province. Carrying out studies seems to be a way of getting around things. If you find something difficult let's appoint somebody and carry out a study. I would like to suggest that the reason I oppose both - you can tie it to the amendment if you like but it is also applicable to the other - the reason I oppose both is the following: the Department of Industry and Commerce already has an excellent research department on transportation with highly qualified men. These people are not compartmentalized or departmentalized, they can study railways, they can study rapid transit, they can study roads. They are not tied to any one particular mode of transportation. And so, you can get just as objective a point of view from that group that's under the hon. minister Mr. Peacock, as you can get from any group outside. So I say, let's use the men we have already, highly trained men, and men with more experience than you will find out in industry for the most part.

Secondly, there is another very important segment too and that is the Planning Branch of the Department of Highways and Transport, staffed with highly qualified men in road transportation and in other modes of transportation. And again, while they are in a department, they are not departmentalized. They can see the merits of rapid transit, they can see the merits of 'go-go' trains, they can see the merits of ride-a-bus and dial-a-bus. As a matter of fact they are highly conversant with all of these modes of transportation. They make it a point to keep conversant with these types of things. And so there again, we have a second agency that is already not only well informed, but [staffed] with men who are highly qualified, professionally and technically, to go into every mode of transport and to view them objectively.

Then when we come to our municipalities in connection with intermunicipal transportation systems. To study that I think would be a waste of public time. The municipal councillors and the departments concerned know the problems there. It is a case, I think in most cases, of not having sufficient money with which to meet the solutions that are already available, and technology is advancing all the time. The department I referred to in the Department of Industry and Commerce is keeping on top of those modern, technological advances. The Planning Branch of the Department of Highways and Transport keeps in touch with those modern, technological advances. They are not tied to freeways, not at all. They can view all of these things objectively and give the government the benefit of not only their training, but of the studies that have been taking place anywhere in the world.

So, Mr. Speaker, I would like to say that those are the reasons why I oppose the amendment and the motion.

AN HON. MEMBER:

So do I.

MR. HENDERSON:

In the three minutes that are remaining I just want to rise and support at least the opposition to the amendment. I listened with amazement to what brief bit of debate I have heard. It sounds to me as if the original motion should have come from this side of the House, the amendment from that side of the House. The standard exercise for a government when they don't want to do anything is to appoint a committee to study it. And so I get the impression that the original motion at least advocated doing something. Whether you agree with it or not it was advocating doing something, whereas the amendment advocates doing nothing.

As far as the municipalities are concerned, the municipalities are all waiting for the provincial government to get involved in it, particularly the two major urban municipalities. So I don't think any study is required in that direction. What is required is some action, some policy, and the amendment is really in favour of procrastination and doing nothing. I think that it is in the best interest, particularly for people on this side of the House, to vote against the amendment.

MR. BENOIT:

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

MR. SPEAKER:

May the hon. member adjourn the debate?

HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

MR. HYNDMAN:

Mr. Speaker, before adjourning, this evening the Estimates subcommittees will continue their work beginning at 8:00 o'clock in the same rooms they were in last night, continuing with the Department of Advanced Education in Subcommittee A; the Department of Agriculture in Subcommittee B; the Department of Public Works to start tonight in Subcommittee C in Room 108, and the Department of Manpower and Labour in Subcommittee D in Room 312.

Regarding tomorrow's business, tomorrow afternoon, Wednesday, we will proceed to Government Motion No. 1, the Budget motion, in respect of which the hon. Member for Wainwright, Mr. Ruste, adjourned debate.

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

MR. SPEAKER:

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

HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

[The House rose at 5:30 o'clock.]

