

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ALBERTA

Wednesday, April 24, 1974

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

PRAYERS

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 3 The Appropriation Act, 1974

MR. MINIELY:

Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce Bill No. 3, The Appropriation Act, 1974. Mr. Speaker, His Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant-Governor recommends this bill for the consideration of the Assembly.

[Leave being granted, Bill No. 3 was introduced and read a first time.]

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

MR. LOUGHEED:

Mr. Speaker, I have the honour today to introduce through you to the members of the Legislative Assembly, the Ambassador of Japan to Canada who is sitting in your gallery, Mr. Speaker, His Excellency, Mr. Ikura Nishijama, accompanied by Counsellor Murano and, of course, well known to all of us here, Mr. Shigihara, the Consul General of Japan in this province.

The government has had the opportunity to visit this morning and to lunch with the ambassador. On Friday the ambassador will be making his first trip to the Alberta oil sands accompanied by the Minister Without Portfolio responsible for northern development, Mr. Adair.

At the close of our luncheon today His Excellency made a remark which I thought was most relevant in terms of relations between the government of Japan and the people of the province of Alberta, that although we devote a great deal of attention and talk to the matter of resources, what is even more important is the interrelationship between the people of our province and Japan. It has been remarkably illustrated by the efforts that have been made in so many fields of culture and recreation, with dancers, judo experts, hockey coaches - the list gets longer as I hear about them. I think that was most appropriately put by His Excellency, Mr. Speaker, and I am pleased to introduce these distinguished visitors to you and to the members of the Legislative Assembly.

MR. SPEAKER:

If hon. members will bear with me for a moment, I would like to welcome our distinguished guests, on behalf of the Assembly, in the language of their native land.

[As submitted by Mr. Speaker]

Nishiyama Taishi-kakka, Murano Sanjikan, Shigihara Soryoji, Watakushi-wa Arubata-shugikai-wo daihyoshite Nishiyama-Taishi, oyobi gozuiko-no Minasama wo kokoro-kara kangei

itashitai-to omoimasu. Kono kikaini watakushitachiwa nihonkokumin-ga nashitogeta idaina seika oyobi nihon-no bunka-to dento-ni-taishi shosan-no-i-wo hyomei-itashitai-to omoimasu.

Mata, nihon-ga kogyoka-shakai-ni-oite saikono kachi-to gensoku-no ninshiki-wo kiban-to-suru, seikatsu-no shitsu-teki-kojo-wo hakaru-tameni sekai-no shidoryoku-wo hakki-siteirukoto-ni-taishi kei-i-wo hyomei shitai-to omoimasu.

Taishi-kakka, Minasan, kanrei-ni shitagai, Gikai-Zen-in-no kangei-wo ukerutame, gokiritsu-negaimasu.

[The following translation was submitted by Mr. Speaker.]

It is an honour for the Legislative Assembly of Alberta to receive a visit from Your Excellency and your distinguished companions. This gives us an opportunity to express our admiration for the outstanding accomplishments of the Japanese people and the spiritual values in Japanese culture and tradition.

We admire also Japan's world leadership in bringing to an industrial society a quality of life which recognizes the highest values and principles.

I would ask our distinguished guests if they would rise to receive the welcome of the Assembly.

MR. LOUGHEED:

Mr. Speaker, I rise to make another introduction.

Again I am pleased to introduce a group of high school students from my constituency of Calgary West who are attending here at the Legislature and whom I had an opportunity to visit and to attempt to answer their difficult questions before the session got under way.

They have travelled here. I asked them how many had been to the Legislature before. They responded that none of them had. I attempted to explain what would go on. They looked at me askance - I'll talk to them later. But I thought that it was particularly appropriate that the Member for Calgary West is frequently on his feet introducing to this Legislative Assembly another group from the Ernest Manning High School. Would they please rise.

DR. HORNER:

Mr. Speaker, just to prove that Barrhead is not really isolated, Mr. Speaker, we have a group of young people, accompanied by their social studies teacher, Mr. Parmar from the Lorne Jenkin High School in Barrhead. In spite of our water problems out there, they are here today to visit with us. I would ask them to stand and be recognized by the Legislature.

DR. HOHOL:

Mr. Speaker, to make sure the city of Edmonton is also represented, I am most proud to introduce to you, sir, and through you to this Assembly, students from Grade 6 of Northmount School in my constituency of Edmonton Belmont.

Sixty students are in attendance, one of whom is the daughter of the Clerk Assistant of the Legislature and I am sure she will have a special interest and will give an evaluation of his performance here, at the dinner table at home tonight.

Attending also with them are the teachers, Mr. Art Hellar and Mrs. Vivian Broks. I would like to ask them to stand in the public gallery and receive the recognition of the Assembly.

MR. DIACHUK:

Mr. Speaker, I wish to take this opportunity to introduce to you and through you to the members of this Assembly, a class of 27 Grade 9 students from the constituency of Edmonton Beverly which I represent. They are students of the Calvin Christian School and are accompanied by their teacher, Mr. Van Delft and two parents who volunteered to provide the transportation, Mr. Labots and Mr. Kramer. They are seated somewhere in the members gallery. I would ask that they rise and be recognized by the members of this Assembly.

MR. APPLEBY:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to try to keep the balance between urban and rural Alberta and add to what has already been done by the hon. Minister of Agriculture. We have a group of rural students from the Athabasca constituency here today. They are from Boyle and they are Grade 9 students. They are accompanied by their teacher, Mr. Avasthi, their

bus driver, Mr. Alec Harmata. They are in the public gallery and I would ask them to rise and be recognized.

TABLING RETURNS AND REPORTS

MR. DICKIE:

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to table three important reports by the Energy Resources Conservation Board. The first deals with an application by Shell Canada Limited and Shell Explorer Limited. The application is for the approval of a scheme to construct and operate an oil sands processing plant for recovery of oil sands, crude bitumen and products derived therefrom in the Fort MacKay area.

The second report by the Energy Resources Conservation Board deals with a Review of the Alberta Coal Industry, 1973. Hon. members will recall that the government last year, under wide terms of reference, commissioned this report by the board.

As a supplement to the coal report, I'm tabling a supplementary report, also dealing with coal, and it's entitled, The Adequacy of Alberta's Reserves of Surface-Mineable Subbituminous Coal to Meet Market Requirements.

DR. BACKUS:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to table the reply to Question 157, by the hon. Member for Drumheller.

MR. DOWLING:

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to table the Report of the Supervisor of Consumer Credit, pursuant to The Credit and Loan Agreements Act, and to file with you, sir, for the information of the members of the Legislature, copies of all of the promotional literature utilized by Travel Alberta, as well as some other interesting articles.

MR. SCHMID:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to table the return to Order No. 109.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Department of Agriculture

DR. HORNER:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to announce on behalf of the government the approval of regulations under The Disaster Services Act, covering compensation for victims of the current spring flooding in Alberta.

The damage to property is expected to be widespread throughout the northern part of the province, particularly in Vegreville, Two Hills, Barrhead, Calmar and Wetaskiwin areas. Indeed, a late report shows some difficulties in the Stettler area.

Under the announced regulations, victims will be able to claim for residential property, personal effects and agricultural losses. Considered in each situation will be the frequency of past flooding. Leisure items will not be covered, as the major concern of the compensation plan is to enable persons to re-establish their means of livelihood and self-support.

The regulations have established a disaster compensation committee under the chairmanship of Mr. Jack Schmidt from the Department of Municipal Affairs to conduct and administer a program to assess damages and losses and to pay compensation from the Alberta Disaster Services Emergency Contingency Fund.

I might just add here, Mr. Speaker, that this committee will primarily be concerned with damage to people's property, buildings, homes and livestock, and that the agricultural losses, as such, will be assessed by the agricultural development committees in each of the areas. That will be in full swing within a matter of days.

The affected communities have been informed and have received forms by special courier. News releases have been aired on radio and printed in the daily press requesting people to register damages to their municipal offices, beginning this morning. We will be following this up with teams of adjusters through my various colleagues' departments and, as I've said, using the agricultural development committees in the various areas.

Our latest estimate as to total damage by flooding in Alberta this spring, including crop loss, is nearing the \$30 million mark, and we intend to apply to Ottawa under their program for their part of these losses.

MR. TAYLOR:

Mr. Speaker, anyone who has never had the experience of going through a flood finds it difficult to realize the tremendous damage that is done. It's worse than fire. A person can protect himself against fire through insurance. Flood is considered an "act of God" and there is no way to protect oneself, in regard to insurance.

So I welcome the statement by the hon. Deputy Premier. I think it's high time that governments in Canada recognize what experiences people have when they are subjected to floods over which they have no control and have nothing whatever to do [with]. I have seen floods in the Drumheller Valley, the one in 1948, the one in 1955 and the one in 1952, where people actually lost their homes, their basements filled with silt, their pianos ruined, their chesterfields ruined - there is just really no way to describe it. At that time we had to handle it through a fund and the most anybody got was \$100 which was a negligible part of the loss.

So when the hon. Deputy Premier mentions that now compensation will be paid for residences and for other things that help to produce their livelihood, I think it's a tremendous step forward. I want to congratulate the government in taking this action and I would hope that the board that is being set up will realize what these people are really going through and will be fair and as generous as possible.

I also hope that the Canadian government will act similarly, so the victims of this flood, over which they have no control, will at least be able to recoup some of the losses they are experiencing at this time.

Department of Highways and Transport

MR. COPITHORNE:

Mr. Speaker, due to circumstances beyond our control, we find it necessary to extend the 1973-74 Alberta licence plates for an additional period which will extend to May 31, 1974. This, Mr. Speaker, is due mostly to the mail strike. Many applicants who rely on our convenient mail-order service are having their applications and cheques delayed in the mail service. It is highly improbable that a settlement will be reached in time to permit our staff to handle the heavy volume of mail before the normal expiry date of April 30, 1974.

We have also, Mr. Speaker, this year had some problems in licence manufacturing and distribution, which may also have inconvenienced some of the people in receiving their licence plates and tags.

We are notifying all states and provinces that the Alberta licence plates will be extended until May 31, 1974.

We anticipate, Mr. Speaker, that there will be little or no inconvenience to the travelling public.

MR. TAYLOR:

Mr. Speaker, it's an ill wind that blows no good and if there is any good coming out of the mail strike at all, this must be it. It will not only help those who are having a difficult time scraping together the money, at least it will be a real help to them, and I would like to congratulate the minister on extending the period.

Northern Affairs/Department of Manpower and Labour

DR. HOHOL:

Mr. Speaker, the hon. Minister Without Portfolio responsible for northern affairs, Mr. Adair, and I wish to make a joint ministerial statement on behalf of government today with respect to a \$100,000 grant in support of the Alberta Native Development Corporation.

The Alberta Native Development Corporation was established in the fall of 1973 as a joint venture of the Indian and Metis Associations of Alberta. The corporation has been an active participant in the Northeastern Manpower Development Committee, composed of government and other agencies concerned with industrial development in northeastern Alberta. The committee was organized in April, 1973 under the auspices of the federal-provincial manpower needs committee.

The purpose of the project, Mr. Speaker, is to assist local Native residents to take advantage of the expanding employment opportunities and potential in northeastern Alberta. It is expected employment opportunities will be created, not only in the construction and operation of oil sands plants, but also in other economic activities which could result from resource and community developments in the area.

The grant complements initial funding provided by Canada Manpower and Immigration which assisted the initiative of the Metis and Indian Associations in forming this joint venture. The grant will be used to provide the project with a staff whose responsibilities will include the planning, evaluation and coordination of Native manpower activities in cooperation with provincial and federal governments, industry, labour unions and local communities. The corporation will devise innovative approaches to enable Native people to participate through special training, counselling, placement and housing programs.

The magnitude of oil sands, Mr. Speaker, and related developments offers a unique opportunity for Native people in the northeastern section of Alberta to obtain employment. The corporation is a significant step towards providing maximum opportunities in this area.

The Alberta Native Development Corporation is one of the important ways in which local planning and involvement can take place in a multitude of opportunities becoming increasingly available in Alberta's north.

MR. TAYLOR:

Mr. Speaker, for many years there has been a tremendous waste of the power that was available on our reserves among our Metis and our Indian people. There has been little attempt in Canada to make use of this power that is there. The ability has been lying latent and has not been used.

I am glad to see an awakening in Canada of the potential that really lies in the Indian and Metis people. They can make a tremendous contribution to this country. I am very, very pleased that governments across the country - including the statement made by the hon. minister today - are recognizing that potential and are going to give our Indian and Metis people an opportunity to show what they can really contribute towards the betterment of Canada.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Hog Market

MR. TAYLOR:

Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the hon. Minister of Agriculture. Would the hon. minister know the approximate percentage of Alberta hogs that are marketed in the United States?

DR. HORNER:

No, not offhand, Mr. Speaker. I could get that information for the hon. member.

I have had extensive meetings today with the processing industry in relation to hogs. At the moment there would be two kinds of hogs. There is a certain number going down live, but by far the greatest majority would be cuts and sides that are going down in a processed form.

MR. TAYLOR:

A supplementary to the hon. minister. In view of the recent action by the Canadian government in prohibiting the importation of beef to Canada, has the minister seen any evidence of the United States carrying out a reprisal in cutting down the purchase of Alberta or Canadian hogs?

DR. HORNER:

No, Mr. Speaker. I can say very sincerely that I don't think there has been any question of a reprisal. I would make it clear that there hasn't been a ban on beef as such, but rather on the hormone stilbestrol which is being fed to beef. It should be very clear that that's the reason why the beef from the United States has been cut off.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Job Discrimination

MR. WILSON:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct a question to the hon. Premier. Could the Premier advise if it is still the intention of the government to end job discrimination in its hiring practices?

MR. LOUGHEED:

Mr. Speaker, a continuing effort in that area is something that is certainly the view of all the members of the Executive Council. I think it is quite clear to say that some real effort is being made towards progress in overcoming the discrimination that has existed in the past.

MR. WILSON:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker, to the hon. Minister of Manpower and Labour. Will the minister advise when the government plans to take action to reverse the widening gap between starting salaries of male and female government employees?

DR. HOHOL:

Mr. Speaker, the term "widening gap" is difficult to deal with. It's a value judgment. I should remind the House that a collective agreement is the result of two parties who exchange briefs indicating what one party wants to provide in the way of fringe benefits and pay and the other side providing a brief asking for certain conditions of work, fringe benefits and pay. And so that's a pretty important procedure in labour relations. The human rights act, with particular reference to the section having to do with The Individual's Rights Protection Act in terms of discrimination with respect to sex, has had some effect on collective bargaining.

I want to point out that in Manitoba the government chose to place a "notwithstanding" clause in the human rights act. So, the collective agreement was not changed by any statute or any other procedure outside [that] of collective bargaining itself.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Hudson Bay Route Association

MR. STROMBERG:

Mr. Speaker, a question to the Minister of Agriculture. I was wondering if he could inform this House if his department is going to send representation to the annual meeting of the Hudson Bay Route Association to be held at Lloydminster?

DR. HORNER:

Mr. Speaker, we continue to support the Hudson Bay Route Association. Between myself and my colleague, the Minister of Industry and Commerce - who cannot be here today - we will see that there's representation at that particular meeting.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Rural Gas Co-ops

MR. R. SPEAKER:

Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Telephones and Utilities. Has the minister changed the government policy of grants to rural co-ops to pick up the installation costs over \$1,300?

MR. FARRAN:

No, Mr. Speaker.

MR. R. SPEAKER:

Mr. Speaker, a supplementary. What consideration has been given, when the cost is over \$4,000?

MR. FARRAN:

Mr. Speaker, if a co-op comes in with a feasibility study of \$4,000 per capita it has a severe problem. It is probably beyond the viability point. It's a problem that will be tackled in due course. Our first effort will be to get gas to those systems where the per-consumer cost comes in around the \$3,000 bench mark.

MR. R. SPEAKER:

Mr. Speaker, a supplementary to the minister. Will the government pick up 100 per cent or 50 per cent of transmission costs?

MR. FARRAN:

Mr. Speaker, where there are special conditions or lengthy high-pressure lines, the power exists to make special grants over and above the basic \$1,300 per consumer.

MR. R. SPEAKER:

Mr. Speaker, for clarification of the question - has the government made a decision as to whether it's 100 per cent or a percentage less than that? Will there be a consistent policy for all co-ops with regards to transmission costs?

DR. HORNER:

They're not all the same.

MR. FARRAN:

Mr. Speaker, the policy is consistent for all co-ops, with special grants for special cases considered on their merits.

MR. R. SPEAKER:

Mr. Speaker, a supplementary. Has the minister or officials of his department recommended to any of the rural gas co-ops that the size of their service area be reduced so that the financial per-consumer investment limit is \$3,000?

MR. FARRAN:

Mr. Speaker, every feasibility study by consultant engineers through rural gas co-ops is examined and where possible the costs are reduced if they are extravagant. Where costs are close to \$3,000, even \$3,500 - \$3,800 in some cases - consent has been given to proceed on a basis perhaps of special grants for special conditions, defraying some of the over-expenditure above the \$3,000, and the balance being covered by a guaranteed loan against the assets of the co-op itself.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Cypress followed by the hon. Member for Whitecourt.

Fuel Alternatives

MR. COOKSON:

Mr. Speaker, in view of the comments the minister made, I wonder if the minister would comment on any assistance for alternative forms of fuel if, in fact, gas is not a viable type of fuel to introduce?

MR. FARRAN:

Mr. Speaker, provision already exists in the plan for a grant of \$250 towards the cost of a propane tank for rural consumers who lie outside the area where delivery of natural gas is economic and viable.

MR. TAYLOR:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker, to the hon. minister. Would the hon. minister consider the use of coal or heating oil as alternatives too, and endeavour to work out a similar policy?

MR. FARRAN:

Mr. Speaker, at the moment there is no problem over the cost of fuel oil and no need for any special assistance. This is at the present time. The same would apply to coal.

MR. BUCKWELL:

Mr. Speaker, to the minister. In areas where propane may be the only viable fuel, is the government considering subsidization of propane in these cases?

MR. FARRAN:

Mr. Speaker, as the House well knows, the whole question of just and reasonable prices for propane is now a matter for the Public Utilities Board.

MR. R. SPEAKER:

Mr. Speaker, a supplementary to the minister. When a service area is reduced, has the minister worked out a policy by which the members who have been excluded at that point may get back their initial investment of \$1,700 or a portion of the payment?

MR. FARRAN:

Mr. Speaker, if the member read the rural gas plan last year, he'll know that there are provisions for orderly expansion from service areas to fill an entire franchise area.

MR. R. SPEAKER:

Mr. Speaker, I did read the policy. I read it last night and that ... [Inaudible] ... was not there.

[Interjections]

MR. SPEAKER:

Order please.

The hon. Member for Cypress followed by the hon. Member for Whitecourt.

Livestock Services Grants

MR. STROM:

Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Agriculture. Has the Department of Agriculture made a firm decision in regard to extending the time for completing the work on the livestock services grant?

DR. HORNER:

Yes, Mr. Speaker, I announced in the House last week, in response to the hon. Member for Drumheller and other hon. members, that the extension was to May 15.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Forest Fires

MR. TRYNCHY:

Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Lands and Forests. Even though most of the province is under water today, can the hon. minister advise the House if there are any forest fires burning out of control in Alberta?

DR. WARRACK:

Well, Mr. Speaker, this is a very serious matter, particularly in constituencies such as [that] represented by the hon. Member for Whitecourt. As a matter of fact, we have now entered the fire control season, Mr. Speaker, and have had two forest fires, both extinguished, so that none is burning at the present time. We are into full operation in our forest protection efforts for 1974. These are ongoing. I now get daily reports, and will continue to do so, to preserve that resource for this province.

Fire Permits

DR. BOUVIER:

Mr. Speaker, to the hon. minister. Is the minister planning on making fire permits available to farmers at a time when brush will burn, so they can burn the brush that the hon. Minister of Agriculture provided loans for them to clear last winter?

DR. WARRACK:

Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member was up-to-date on matters in his own constituency he would know that we have made some important changes in the fire permit issuance guidelines and particularly as they pertain to the Lac La Biche area, to better balance the need for fire protection and yet at the same time, the need to burn debris so that better agricultural operations can take place.

DR. BOUVIER:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Have the additional rangers been put on in the farm area in order to provide faster permits or to watch the farmers more closely?

DR. WARRACK:

We have streamlined the method of dealing with these matters in comparison with the old government.

DR. BOUVIER:

They didn't need a permit then.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Postal Strike - Workers' Compensation Cheques

MR. DRAIN:

Mr. Speaker, this question is to the hon. Minister of Manpower and Labour. The question is, what arrangements are presently undertaken to make available workers' compensation cheques because of the inability of the mail to deliver same?

AN HON. MEMBER:

A special courier.

DR. HOHOL:

Mr. Speaker, probably the Provincial Treasurer could deal with this because he is looking after this for the whole province. I can't resist the comment that if the hon. member is going home to his constituency this weekend, he could earn some real points by taking the cheques directly to the people who are in receipt of workers' compensation.

MR. DRAIN:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. I have already volunteered.

MR. BARTON:

He can't get government approval.

MR. MINIELY:

Mr. Speaker, I think last week in reply to a question I indicated that we were taking some steps, whatever we could do provincially, to overcome some of the problems caused by the mail strike.

I would have to examine the specific question relative to workers' compensation cheques, but basically we're delivering all provincial mail to basic centres in the province, in different parts of the province, and then asking people who are waiting for cheques to pick up their mail at a central point while the mail strike is on.

We re-emphasize, Mr. Speaker, for the information of the hon. member, that while we are doing what we can, realistically, I think there will be slowdowns and problems.

MR. DRAIN:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Would the hon. Provincial Treasurer consider going the route of having these cheques delivered to, say, the treasury branches in a local area or the local welfare office, having regard to the fact that when a person is bedridden it is difficult to get around?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. member has, in fact, made a representation rather than asking a question.

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

Insurance Premiums - Young Drivers

MR. LUDWIG:

Mr. Speaker, my question is to the hon. Attorney General or perhaps to any minister who is concerned about the issue.

Will the government be bringing in any legislation or any regulations to reduce the premiums on insurance for younger drivers, specifically those 25 and under, as indicated in the Speech from the Throne this session, Mr. Speaker?

MR. DOWLING:

Mr. Speaker, I'm delighted to answer that question. We have made considerable headway through the Alberta Automobile Insurance Board regarding the youthful drivers of Alberta. In the next few days, Mr. Speaker, I'll be prepared with a ministerial statement to acquaint all hon. members with what has transpired.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Taber-Warner followed by the hon. Member for Sedgewick-Coronation.

Irrigation Studies

MR. D. MILLER:

My question, Mr. Speaker, is to the Minister of the Environment. Can the hon. minister inform the House if there is any progress on the Tyrrell and Verdigris lakes irrigation studies?

MR. YURKO:

I didn't quite get the question, Mr. Speaker. I wonder if the hon. member would repeat the latter part?

MR. D. MILLER:

On the Tyrrell Lake, Verdigris Lake irrigation studies.

AN HON. MEMBER:

They don't know where it is.

MR. YURKO:

Well, Mr. Speaker, I'd have to take the question under advisement and report back to the House.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Nurse Supply - Rural Hospitals

MR. SORENSON:

Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Health and Social Development. Is there a shortage of nurses for rural hospitals in Alberta at the present time?

MR. CRAWFORD:

Mr. Speaker, I think the answer to that question is, there is no widespread shortage, and no instances of specific difficulty in filling staff have come to my attention. It is certainly true that some rural points have historically had some difficulty in recruiting up to full strength, but I'm not aware that that situation is any worse than is usual.

MR. SORENSON:

A supplementary. Perhaps the hon. minister could review the situation and report.

Does the government have any incentive program in cooperation with rural hospital boards to attract adequate nursing staff?

MR. CRAWFORD:

Mr. Speaker, the question is directed specifically to the question of hospitals and the nursing staff in hospitals, although the province does play a direct part in attracting nurses, of course, who serve in health units and municipal services, and thereby helps in that sense. But the responsibility of the hospital board for the employer-employee relationships involved is something that we have not interfered with.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Beef Prices

MR. TAYLOR:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the hon. Minister of Consumer Affairs. In the monitoring by the Department of Consumer Affairs, has there been any indication of quite a substantial increase in the costs of the so-called cheap cuts of beef?

MR. DOWLING:

No, Mr. Speaker, there has not. I should say that when I make that statement, I am making particular reference to the initial statistics format that was followed through the Department of Agriculture in conjunction with the Department of Consumer Affairs. We only have the one issue of the other statistics, which are now being updated and really have nothing to compare. However, we will be receiving additional statistics as time goes on. It will give us an indication of whether there has been, over the past month, some considerable increase or decrease.

My view, at the moment, is there has been a decrease rather than an increase in the price of those cuts.

MR. TAYLOR:

A supplementary. Is the monitoring done on a monthly basis or are the reports received weekly by the minister?

MR. DOWLING:

Mr. Speaker, on the initial statistics we were gathering, they were done on a weekly basis. However, the expanded ones, which include articles such as clothing, some appliances and things of this nature, are being done on a monthly basis.

MR. TAYLOR:

A further supplementary. Is monitoring done on the cuts of been [done] at the packing plant level or at the retail level?

MR. DOWLING:

Mr. Speaker, the monitoring is done at the retail level in all cases.

MR. TAYLOR:

One further question. Would the hon. minister check with the packers in this city on what appears to be a very substantial increase in these so-called cheap cuts of beef which is going to take place very, very shortly?

MR. DOWLING:

Mr. Speaker, I do know the hon. Minister of Agriculture this morning met with the people involved in the packing industry. He is up-to-date on that very matter. I would perhaps ask if he would respond.

DR. HORNER:

Mr. Speaker, I might be able to add to that. Our discussions with the meat processing industry this morning were substantial and I hope of some significance for the future in relation both to how the consumer is treated and, as important, how the producer is treated. I think we came to a mutual understanding that they had a major role to play in both areas.

However, I would say this. There would appear to be certain cuts of meat that have been relatively cheap. With the changing temperatures, hopefully there is going to be a substantial increase in the coming months because of the demand for loins particularly.

So we are trying to keep on top of that, my colleague handling the consumer end, and myself trying to keep some fairness and balance between the consumer and the producer.

MR. TAYLOR:

One final supplementary, possibly to the hon. Deputy Premier. In the checking, is a check made on the percentage of the increase which goes to the producer, as [opposed] to the percentage which goes to the middleman?

DR. HORNER:

Those are the very important things we were discussing with the processing industry, that they, in fact, had some responsibility in this area and that, if they wanted, indeed, to continue to have that kind of freedom that they had some real responsibility as corporate citizens.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Driver Records - Disclosure

MR. WYSE:

My question, Mr. Speaker, is to the hon. Minister of Highways. It is in follow-up to a question posed to the hon. minister on Monday by the hon. Member for Pincher Creek-Crowsnest regarding driving records of individuals. Did the minister indicate demerit marks are not made available to insurance companies?

MR. COPITHORNE:

The only demerit marks made available to insurance companies are the ones which are acquired by conviction.

MR. WYSE:

A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. When would a demerit mark not be a conviction?

MR. LUDWIG:

Pretty good question eh?

MR. COPITHORNE:

Well, Mr. Speaker, the hon. member has not been able to figure that one out. It's pretty hard to get them without being convicted.

MR. WYSE:

Supplementary question then, Mr. Speaker. It's hard to figure that one out.

AN HON. MEMBER:

It takes a little while for it to drop.

MR. WYSE:

Supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. In what regard has the policy, as indicated by the minister, changed in the last two years?

MR. COPITHORNE:

Well, Mr. Speaker, there has been a considerable change in the policy. First, there is a very considerable restriction on those people who are able to have access to the demerit points or the convictions that are presented.

MR. WYSE:

Supplementary question, then, Mr. Speaker - according to the record, they have not changed in the past eight years - but a supplementary question to the hon. Premier. Does the government consider the issuing of drivers' records a violation of individual rights in the province of Alberta?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. member is asking for a statement of opinion in the clearest possible way and therefore the question is not acceptable in the question period.

MR. WYSE:

Supplementary question, then, to the hon. Premier. Is the government considering changing the policy?

MR. LOUGHEED:

Mr. Speaker, those matters are constantly under review. I would draw the hon. member's attention to a distinction which I feel from time to time hon. members fail to take into consideration - the question involving confidential information as distinguished from the question of individual rights - upon an accurate reading of the Act and the intent of the Act.

I think the larger question, the question that the government has been working on over the past two and a half years, is the question of the confidentiality of information, which I think is the main thrust of the hon. member's question. I believe the Attorney General has responded that we have asked the Institute of Law Research and Reform to look at this question of confidentiality and to give us an overall basis. We have, frankly, been dealing with it on an ad hoc point to now. We'd like to have an overall policy.

So, to specifically answer the question raised by the hon. member, that point and all points of that nature are under review by the government in the hope that we can come forth with a more comprehensive policy. We're not the only government in Canada struggling with it.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Lie Detectors

MR. WILSON:

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to address a question to the hon. the Attorney General. Would the hon. Attorney General give us a brief progress report on the government's investigation of lie detector operations?

MR. LEITCH:

Well, Mr. Speaker, I don't know that we have ever indicated that the government was carrying out an investigation into lie detector operations. The matter was raised in the House. We've made some inquiries about the use of them, and I've asked the department to make an assessment as to whether, on the information we have, there might have been breaches of The Private Investigators Act which requires licensing and four persons to carry out private investigative work. That review is not completed, Mr. Speaker.

MR. WILSON:

Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Could the hon. minister advise when he expects the inquiries and assessment being carried out will be completed?

MR. LEITCH:

I anticipate in the very near future, Mr. Speaker.

MR. WILSON:

Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Could the hon. minister advise if any evidence of infringement of individual rights has been uncovered in the assessment and investigation?

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Michael Car-Truck Case

MR. DIXON:

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct my question today to the hon. Minister of Health and Social Development. I'd like to inquire of the minister, Mr. Speaker, as to what has transpired in the case of Michael Car-Truck, the youngster who was deserted some weeks ago in the city of Edmonton?

MR. CRAWFORD:

Mr. Speaker, in responding to that, I want to acknowledge that the hon. member gave me notice of it and at the same time be careful not to publicly disclose information which is of a private nature, because the hon. member's question, of course, by its nature identifies the person about whom it is asked.

However, the situation is that the youngster is under the care of the province at the present time. The department has been satisfied that the person who presented herself not long ago, a couple of months ago, I believe, as the mother is in fact the mother. But the

final decision, which is still some distance away, would likely, pending agreement, be made in a court.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Edmonton Kingsway followed by the hon. Member for Little Bow.

Anesthetics

DR. PAPROSKI:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the hon. Minister of Health and Social Development. In view of today's publicized anesthetic death of a young girl in a dental office, can the minister assure the House that he will review the recommendations of the jury with a view to implementing them and consider the prohibition of anesthetics outside [of] hospitals where multiple personnel, drugs and therapy are readily available.

MR. CRAWFORD:

Mr. Speaker, I think the hon. member's question in regard to the use of anesthetics outside of hospitals is one which deserves consideration. The inquest results have been publicly reported as of today. I, myself, haven't reviewed any formal report of the inquest. There is no question that the recommendations that have been made will be given every consideration and all implications that are involved in what is proposed by the coroner's jury will be fully considered.

I might add, Mr. Speaker, since the occasion of a number of deaths from similar causes in a hospital in Ontario, the government has reviewed the situation in regard to hospitals. And I'll be proposing to the cabinet within a very short period of time, probably by next week, a regulation relating to hospitals which will, at least in part, deal with the sort of situation which was found in Ontario.

I would like to conclude, Mr. Speaker, by saying that I recognize that situation of over 20 deaths in the Ontario hospital at Sudbury gives reason for greater anxiety whenever there is a similar occurrence anywhere else, even though the one in Alberta was quite independent of any facility which was publicly operated - it was a dentist's office. But I say that to underline, in answer to the hon. member's question, that recommendations that were made, which may relate to an area outside the hospital system, will certainly also be given very careful consideration.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Rural Gas Co-ops - Taxes

MR. R. SPEAKER:

Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Provincial Treasurer. Has the Provincial Treasurer a reply from the federal tax department with regards to the \$1,700 payment by co-op members?

MR. MINIELY:

Someone behind me, Mr. Speaker, was just saying that I have a little difficulty with the mail.

Last week, in reply to a question from the hon. member, I indicated that I had had a direct discussion with the directors of the Edmonton and Calgary offices, and at that point I made a decision to contact directly the hon. Minister of National Revenue, Mr. Stanbury. I have not received a reply and I'm also planning on talking to the Hon. John Turner, the Minister of Finance, about the matter. I placed a phone call to him but have been unable to get through to him as yet.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to table my letter to Mr. Stanbury regarding the problem. And the short answer to the question is, as yet we have received no answer from the federal government.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Citizens Visiting Board

MR. GRUENWALD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Health and Social Development. Is it the policy of the government to reactivate the Citizens Visiting Board to visit and report on mental health institutions in the province?

MR. CRAWFORD:

Mr. Speaker, I don't in any way want to sound as if I might be getting sarcastic in saying to the hon. member that he was present when The Hospital Visitors Committee Act was passed in this Assembly in 1972. What I can do is say to him that the intention of that Act, which sets up a committee much broader than the old committee that consisted of three citizens who toured only provincial institutions - the intent of that new, much broader body is that it would include the old functions of that previous organization.

I would only just want to add this much, Mr. Speaker, about the progress of the new committee which I think is of importance to the House. It took a little while to get it established and to name the people whom we felt were best suited for a very sensitive type of work. I was able to announce a few months ago, late last year, that Mr. Bob Hall of Calgary was, in fact, the chairman, the committee had been appointed and was widely representative of the province. The committee has begun its work but it has not yet got to the point where an actual report on its activities could be filed.

MR. GRUENWALD:

Thank you, Mr. Minister. The minister made a wise decision in not getting sarcastic.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order please.

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

Fire Permits (Cont.)

DR. BOUVIER:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct this question to the hon. Minister of Lands and Forests. I was wondering if the minister is planning any change in the policy that requires farmers outside the green area to obtain permits for burning brush piles in areas where they did not need one under the old administration?

DR. WARRACK:

Mr. Speaker, I am very happy to elaborate on some of the improvements we have made. In response to requests from local government in the Lac La Biche area, as the hon. member may or may not know, there was an inclusion of that area within the fire protection area that is administered through the Department of Lands and Forests.

Particular to this, and applying across the province, is the change in approach, not to have the same restrictions apply across the entire province, but to have more strict restrictions applied near the metropolitan areas and to loosen the restrictions, if you like, in the other areas so that we have the combined flexibility that is necessary to meet the joint objectives of fitting [in] with the proper agricultural practices near the green zone of the province of Alberta and yet, at the same time, ensuring the production of our forest resources.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Motor Vehicle Inspection

MR. SORENSON:

Mr. Speaker, my question is to the hon. Minister of Highways and Transport. Is it true that the hon. minister is planning some type of compulsory vehicle inspection in the near future?

MR. COPITHORNE:

Mr. Speaker, I've answered this question several times in the House in the past.

MR. LUDWIG:

That's what you think.

MR. COPITHORNE:

We are looking at several ways that might ensure that vehicles on the highway are safer, but we are not considering at this time compulsory car inspection.

Studded Tires

MR. SORENSON:

A supplementary to the hon. minister. Is the hon. minister considering the removal of studded tires from the highways?

MR. COPITHORNE:

Again, Mr. Speaker, I have answered this question several times in the Legislature. We are not considering removing the use of studded tires in Alberta.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Game Licences - Sales

MR. WYSE:

My question, Mr. Speaker, is to the hon. Minister of Lands and Forests. It's regarding the issuing of game licences in the province. Is the government planning to change regulations, to treat all outlets the same? I understand some are on a cash basis and some are consigned. There has been some feedback on this.

DR. WARRACK:

As a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, the way it works is that there are the outlets that are part of the provincial government service to all areas in Alberta including rural areas. Treasury branches, for example - those are on a consignment basis. On the other hand the game licences, also fishing licences, are available on a basis of prepayment. Those are equally available to other outlets that might wish to carry them.

MR. WYSE:

A supplementary question. Is the government considering a change?

DR. WARRACK:

I am happy to take into account the member's representation. There have been suggestions for changes in the hope that the collection problems could be averted and yet at the same time deal with the matter as conveniently as possible for the public of the province and the visitors to Alberta.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Calgary-Millican.

Meat Prices

MR. DIXON:

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct a question to the hon. Minister of Consumer Affairs. My question to the hon. minister is, does the Minister of Consumer Affairs plan to investigate the charges by Mr. Chris Mills of the Canadian Cattlemen's Association that the retail markup on the prices of meat in Alberta and western Canada is higher than in eastern Canada?

MR. DOWLING:

Mr. Speaker, I am aware of the statement made by the Canadian Cattlemen's Association and I do know that, as a result of a report by the Minister of Agriculture relative to his meeting with the Meat Packers Association, this was also discussed at their meeting this morning. I would refer the matter to him.

DR. HORNER:

Mr. Speaker, one has to take into consideration the varying cuts in meat and the preference in different parts of the country for different cuts of meat. We are looking further into the question of the allegations by the western stockgrowers. Our own view at the moment is that the price of beef to the consumer is a pretty reasonable one. There may be some difference though in cut prices, depending upon the locality you live in, and depending upon the kind of carcass from which that cut comes.

MR. LUDWIG:

A supplementary to the hon. Minister of Consumer Affairs. Does he consider that the price of meat to the consumer is a "reasonable" one, Mr. Speaker?

[Interjections]

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. member is clearly asking for information on a matter of opinion which would, as the hon. member knows, undoubtedly lead to an unauthorized debate during the question period.

MR. LUDWIG:

Mr. Speaker, with all due respect, was the hon. Deputy Premier's remark unauthorized? He made a comment and I made a supplementary question based on a remark made by the Deputy Premier.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Order, order.

MR. SPEAKER:

The mere fact that the question followed a certain answer does not of itself redeem the question as being in order.

MR. BUCKWELL:

A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker, to the hon. minister. Could the hon. minister give us an idea of what is the difference in price between the packers' and retail? What is the percentage of markup?

MR. LUDWIG:

"Reasonable".

DR. HORNER:

I can't offhand, Mr. Speaker, but I could get that information for the hon. member in a variety of ways. We've been looking at it. I wouldn't want to mislead the House in any way but I'd be quite happy to get the figures for the hon. member.

MR. BUCKWELL:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. I realize there is a different markup on different cuts. Quite often we are blaming the packer and I would like to know, is it the retail price that the consumer is paying that is ... [Inaudible]

DR. HORNER:

Perhaps, Mr. Speaker, I could get some figures for the hon. member showing the producer price on a dressed-grade basis, plus the wholesale price, plus the retail price, and that would give the hon. member some awareness of the spread between the various stages.

Sulphur Production

MR. DICKIE:

I'd like to respond to a question asked yesterday by the hon. Member for Drumheller in respect to certain information on sulphur.

The Energy Resources Conservation Board has advised me that the 1973 production of sulphur was 6,990,725 long tons. The 1973 sales were 4,408,000 long tons. The cumulative stockpile to year end 1973 at Vancouver for offshore was 253,509 long tons and in Alberta 11,514,543 long tons.

Mr. Speaker, I think there was also a question directed in respect to price and I might add that this is supplementary information. In 1973 the average sales price was \$5.62 per long ton. In March of this year two companies announced they were increasing the price from \$5 to \$20 at plant gate on shipments to North American markets.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

[Mr. Speaker left the Chair.]

* * * * *

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

[Mr. Diachuk in the Chair]

MR. CHAIRMAN:

The Committee of the Whole Assembly will come to order.

Bill No. 17

The Coarse Grain Marketing Control Repeal Act

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Any further questions or comments?

MR. STROM:

Mr. Chairman, I was able to get a copy of a - I believe it's a telegram or a letter to the Hon. Otto Lang. It has six points.

My question to the Minister of Agriculture is, are these the points referred to by the hon. minister - I think we referred to them as five points last sitting - that are requirements of the federal government for getting agreement from the provincial government in regard to some changes? Maybe he will give the explanation.

DR. HORNER:

Mr. Chairman, they are requirements that we feel we have to have in Alberta in relation to a feed grains policy that would be effective. Not having that document in front of me, I can't say what the additional point might be. But, in essence, we go back to those points which were access, availability, price, the equity in freight rates and equity in pricing to the producer.

MR. STROM:

Mr. Chairman, we're just sending a copy over to the minister so he can have a look at it again to refresh his mind because I would like to check some further questions on it.

DR. HORNER:

Mr. Chairman, this is the telegram that the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview was referring to and has no relation to what we are talking about in the five points in the feed grains policy, although some of them are intertwined, if you like.

Again, I want to point out that what we think should be in a feed grains policy: one, access to a supply of feed grains; second, the availability of that supply here in Alberta; third, a price that's preferably known ahead of time and can be forward-contracted for at least 60 days; fourth, an equity in the freight rates with regard to meat as related to the freight rates on grain going east, and fifth, some equity to the grain producer so that he shouldn't have to carry the entire consumer subsidy.

MR. STROM:

Mr. Chairman, let me say that the hon. minister has been good enough to outline it several times for me. I have been interested in getting the document that you suggested was tabled in the ...

DR. HORNER:

I don't know whether it was tabled. I said it's available, but I ... [Inaudible] ...

MR. STROM:

Mr. Chairman, I recall questioning the hon. minister on this the other day and I was told then that - my understanding was that there was a ministerial statement.

DR. HORNER:

No. A press release.

MR. STROM:

A press release? I've been trying to run it down because I've been wanting to get it into my hands so that I might look at it.

Mr. Chairman, my reason for wanting to see it is that I'm very anxious to have it clarified in my own mind as to what it is that the hon. minister has told the federal government is a requirement. I've had two or three occasions that the minister has used to outline in brief - I did not go back and look at Hansard over the last day which maybe I should have - but my question will still be valid.

Is the minister saying to us today, or previously, that all the points he has stated in the House must be met prior to getting agreement with the federal government?

DR. HORNER:

Well again, let me make it clear, these are our points that we would like to see in a national feed grains policy. It isn't that these have to be met to get agreement with the federal government. In effect, what we are saying is: from the point of view of Alberta producers, we would like to see this kind of program enacted as a national feed grains policy.

Again, the statement I made was perhaps only slightly longer than what I am now saying; number one is that the access, the availability of the price, the equity in freight rates and the latter one, the difference between export and domestic prices. These are points that we think our farmers should have built into a national feed grain policy.

MR. STROM:

Mr. Chairman, could I ask the minister then, in the way he is proceeding now, what will happen if the points are not met? Because the minister the other day in the House stated that if necessary, and I think these were his words, if necessary, the government was prepared to bring in required legislation at the fall session. Now I am interested in knowing just what is going to transpire, and what really will prompt the minister to bring in the legislation. Then also tied very closely to that, of course, I'm vitally interested in knowing at this time what is entailed in the proposed legislation the minister is thinking about.

DR. HORNER:

As I have said before, Mr. Chairman, if the national policy meets our general guidelines we will be relatively happy to work with the Canadian Wheat Board and other federal agencies in putting it into effect. If it doesn't, then it may mean that we will have to take certain steps in Alberta to protect our producers and to make sure they have an adequate return for their feed grains. I can't be any more frank than that.

How one does that, depends really on the circumstances at the time. I've said before that if the Canadian Wheat Board was willing, we could do it as their agent in Alberta, and we would follow that route if they were willing to cooperate to that extent. If they are not willing, it may well be that we might require some legislation under our Marketing of Agricultural Products Act to effectively allow the grain commission in Alberta to maintain an orderly market in the feed grain market in Alberta.

MR. RUSTE:

Well, Mr. Chairman, there has been a lot of discussion on Bill No. 17, the repeal of the coarse grains marketing legislation, and certainly the minister, I believe, has indicated he has had discussions with the farm organizations.

In the discussions we have noted that there have possibly been certain things in this legislation that haven't been lived up to. But I submit, Mr. Chairman, to the minister, that he hold this legislation until the fall when we will get the federal proposal and then we will be able to judge it based on the facts as they are then.

I might just mention that I had the privilege yesterday of attending a regional Uniform convention. One of the resolutions was debated there - I might point out, Mr. Minister, that I didn't take part, I didn't comment one way or the other - but the following is a resolution that was passed at the convention:

Be it resolved that Uniform oppose any provincial legislation that attempts to remove the control and jurisdiction of grain movement in this province which is presently controlled by the Canadian Wheat Board.

That is the resolution which was passed by the convention there. In discussions with some of the delegates during the coffee break that followed, I sensed a feeling of concern among our producers about the proposed legislation we have before us.

On that basis I would certainly oppose it at this time and would ask the minister to consider holding this until the fall sitting because we will be meeting then, and we will be able to discuss it in light of what the August 1 announcement of the federal government will be.

DR. HORNER:

Well, Mr. Chairman, I cannot accept that suggestion. In my view we have to be able to be ahead of the federal government in relation to some of the programs they might bring forward.

If we wait and continue to react to some of the program, and only just react to some of their program, then I don't think agriculture will move ahead in this province.

[All sections, the title and preamble were agreed to.]

DR. HORNER:

Mr. Chairman, I move the bill as amended be reported.

[The motion was carried.]

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

MR. CHAIRMAN:

There is an amendment circulated.

MR. LEITCH:

Mr. Chairman, when this was called a few days ago there was a request that I explain the effect of the amendments which have now been distributed to the members. There are three of them.

The first, Mr. Chairman, is an amendment to The Judicature Act which increases the number of trial judges by one. The amendment in the existing bill increases the number of appeal judges by one.

The second amendment, Mr. Chairman, provides for the sale of preferred shares with a redeemable feature. Those are preferred shares of a trust company. That is not now permitted. The proposed amendment would permit such a sale, but only with the permission of the director upon the conditions prescribed by the director. I might also say that under the existing legislation, any sale of shares by a trust company or any alteration of a trust company's capital can only be effected after approval by the Executive Council.

The last amendment, Mr. Chairman, is largely a technical one. Members may recall that last year we amended The Trustee Act to provide for a court to vary the terms of a will where a testator had left property in trust to be distributed after a person reached majority, and the income of the trust to be accumulated until the gift was divest. To cure the fact that at common law in those circumstances the beneficiary of the trust could put an end to the testator's wishes and call for all the funds on his obtaining the age of 21, we changed that common law rule by saying that could only be done upon application to a court. But inadvertently, in the preparation of the amendment, we had removed a provision in the legislation whereby a similar trust for a person under the age of majority could be varied by a court, and we are reinstating that provision by the third amendment.

MR. FRENCH:

Mr. Chairman, with respect to Bill No. 23, I fully realize we have had Bill No. 23 for a few days and then the other day we received further amendments to the bill. My problem is that when the original amendments were introduced, on the left-hand side of the page we had the amendments, and on the right-hand side of the page we had the explanatory notes. Yet when the second set of amendments came in, there was no reference made as to which statute is involved.

Now when we look at Bill No. 23 it involves, I believe, some seven different acts. Taking the second set of amendments, it says, "Section 4 of the bill is amended ..." and when we're looking at some of the amendments to the various acts at night - we're not always in the Legislature, we don't always have the benefit of the statutes in our hotel rooms so we must rely on the explanatory notes. I must say, Mr. Speaker, if the government is going to continue the practice of bringing in a number of acts under one piece of legislation, I would ask that in future, if we do have further amendments to the legislation introduced, some reference be made as to which statute it refers, instead of saying Section 4 of such and such. Because when you go through Bill No. 23, you can find two or three section fours and it is very difficult to understand.

I am not trying to disagree, I just want to bring forth the difficulty we have. It may be fine for the minister in proposing the amendments. He knows what bills are involved but I don't. I suppose the reason for putting the seven acts on one piece of legislation is to simplify it as far as the Legislature is concerned. But for attempting to read the legislation, I would ask, in future, that maybe we give some consideration to either bringing in another bill with the complete changes in it so we can follow the explanatory notes or at least indicate which act is the one where the amendments are going to apply. I would hope the Attorney General would keep that in mind for maybe another year. It would be of some help to us.

MR. LEITCH:

Mr. Chairman, I am always anxious to help hon. members but I must confess that I haven't been able to follow the complaint of the hon. Member for Hanna-Oyen. Were you talking of the explanatory notes on the bill or the explanatory notes on the amendment which was distributed subsequent to the bill being introduced?

MR. FRENCH:

Mr. Chairman, coming back to the original bill. On the left-hand side it says the number one bill is The Clerks of the Court Act, The Execution Creditors Act and so on, for about seven different acts. On the right-hand side it says The Clerk of the Courts Act and then it explains the reason for the changes in that particular legislation. Then it goes on to number two and we have the reasons on both sides of the page.

Now then, when we come to this second sheet which arrived, it says - I'm just reading, "The Bill is amended as follows: A. Section 4 of the Bill is amended by adding after subsection (2) the following subsection:" and so on and so forth. When I go through here, I find a number of section fours. And really, when you strike out the figure 13 and substitute figure 14, it doesn't make too much sense when you look at The Clerks of the Court Act or The Execution Creditors Act, The Franchises Act, and so on. But if you keep going long enough, when you come to The Judicature Act, maybe it makes some sense.

So all I am saying is, when you bring in the second set of amendments, if you are following me now, would it be possible to put in there that this deals with The Judicature Act and then we'd know which act is involved, because we are dealing with seven acts in the bill. I am just giving you some of the problems we have when we are sitting at home trying to see what amendments the government is bringing in. Either that, or go back and introduce the seven amendments with seven different pieces of legislation and then when you are bringing in an amendment to a bill, we can identify it that way.

MR. LEITCH:

Mr. Chairman, I'm not sure I follow the member's difficulty because the explanatory notes on the foot of page 2 of the amendments which have been circulated specify the bill to which the amendment relates.

For example, the first paragraph under the heading: "Explanatory Note" says "A. Section 4 of the Bill amends The Judicature Act. The amendment will add another judge to the Trial Division of the Supreme Court of Alberta." The Judicature Act is one of the acts amended by Bill No. 23, and that is Section (4) of the amending bill. So all the information the hon. member seeks, is, I believe, contained in the explanatory note at the bottom of page 2 of the amendment which was circulated.

MR. FRENCH:

Mr. Chairman, I must have a different set of amendments than the minister has. Because reading on the first page:

Amendments to Bill 23 The Attorney General Statutes Amendment Act, 1974
The Bill is amended as follows:
A. Section 4 of the Bill is amended by adding ...

so and so. You have to keep going until you come to page 2 and find this group pertains to The Judicature Act. Yet when you go through this bill, you find a number of section fours. This is the point I am trying to make. In future years, would it be possible to identify the statute which is involved, or bring in seven different pieces of legislation so that we can follow it.

MR. LEITCH:

Mr. Chairman, we'll endeavour to alter the system so we don't confuse the hon. member in the future.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Any other comments? Title and preamble.

[All sections, the title and preamble were agreed to.]

MR. LEITCH:

Mr. Chairman, I move the bill be reported as amended.

[The motion was carried.]

Bill No. 20 The Interprovincial Lottery Act

[All sections, the title and preamble were agreed to.]

MR. HYNDMAN:

Mr. Chairman, on behalf of the hon. Minister of Culture, Youth and Recreation, I move the bill be reported.

[The motion was carried.]

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

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Any questions?

MR. RUSTE:

Mr. Chairman, just a brief comment and I would like to have the minister's reaction to it. I understand that this is changing it to regulations rather than by legislation. Is that basically what is happening in the changes being made?

MR. COPITHORNE:

Yes, Mr. Chairman, this enables the changing of different weights on different highways by regulation rather than by legislation.

MR. TAYLOR:

I can follow the suggestion of the hon. minister in regard to different weights and different highways. I think that is too cumbersome to go into the act. However, the definition of "axle", in my view, should really be in the act. Axle is going to be just as difficult to define in the regulations as it is in the act. The definition of "board" means the Motor Transport Board pursuant to this act, that is quite clear. "Axle group" and "axle" were previously defined in the Act, and I am wondering why the decision was made to now define "axle" and "axle group" in the regulations rather than in the Act?

MR. COPITHORNE:

Mr. Chairman, the reason is that, if the hon. member would recall during the WEOC meeting in Calgary last year, there is an ongoing negotiation with the federal government in upgrading the weight structure across Canada. That's the reason that clause is put in, in case we are able to agree on wheel and axle combinations.

MR. TAYLOR:

Mr. Chairman, once that has been stabilized and once that agreement has been reached, then there will be no difficulty in putting it back in the Act, I would assume.

MR. RUSTE:

Mr. Chairman, to the minister. Where we got into the matter of weights, I might just mention and have him look at carefully at the condition of some of the highways right now. I understand there should be a ban. I am talking specifically about Highway 14, the last 40 miles. I had occasion to travel on it yesterday and there are a lot of these large transport trucks, evidently hauling grain. The red flag is up in at least half a dozen places. In one place last evening, it was to the point where the bottom of the car axle dragged. The top of the highway is pushed up so it caused a ridge. I would just ask him to comment on what time they institute bans and under what conditions?

MR. COPITHORNE:

Mr. Chairman, we try not to put as many bans on as is necessary. We are trying to avoid putting them on as many of the primary highways as possible. Because of the very long spell of bad weather we had this year and the amount of grain that farmers have not been able to move, we have tried to avoid this. Also, we're doing some experimental work in regard to weight configurations.

Also, Mr. Speaker, the greatest damage to the highways is yet to come. Most often the bans are taken off too soon, rather than put on too late.

MR. RUSTE:

Mr. Chairman, the reason I raised it at this particular point was that I have had occasion to travel over it on many occasions and I just noticed now where the weight of the vehicles is pushing up these ridges to a point where they interfere with motor traffic.

MR. DRAIN:

I just request some information from the minister. In Ontario when they haul heavy loads they add more axles, and I'm thinking of hauling heavy tractors. No doubt the highways department has studied this and whether it is a feasible thing. Would it curtail damage on roads and so on? That's a question I'd like to have answered.

MR. COPITHORNE:

Mr. Chairman, Ontario and British Columbia have 110,000 pound gross vehicle weight, where in Alberta we have 74,000 pounds. This is why this act is brought in such a way, so we can have a combination of configurations that would carry the extra weight, should we enter into the agreement with the federal government and the other provinces in regard to extra weight.

MR. TAYLOR:

Mr. Chairman, a rose by any other name would smell the same, I suppose, but I do think the hon. minister is wise in changing the name of the Highway Traffic Board to the Motor Transport Board. This is in line with what's going on right across Canada, and I would commend the minister for making that change.

[All sections, the title and preamble were agreed to.]

MR. COPITHORNE:

Mr. Chairman, I move that the bill be reported.

[The motion was carried.]

Bill No. 25 The Highway Traffic Amendment Act, 1974

MR. LUDWIG:

Mr. Chairman, I would like the minister to explain, in Section 3(1.1), the reason he has in the first part:

(1.1) Before issuing an operator's licence to an applicant, the Registrar or the licence issuer may

(a) require the applicant to satisfactorily identify himself as being the person named in the application, and

(b) require the applicant ...

Would he have any objection to changing the first "may" to "shall", and in clause (b) say "may" require the applicant to be photographed? It's important to be identified. It's not "may". It's an obligation to identify the applicant unless they know him. But it's a bit ambiguous, and I believe that as far as pictures are concerned, if there is some reason that a person wants to object to it there should be a means of not being involved, whatever the reason is. I'm not saying that most people would object. But if a person does, if it's his conviction that he doesn't want it, then we shouldn't be that sticky about it, that you go in and you fall in line with everybody. We have room for individualism in this system. It's one of the nicer things about democracy, that people who are different, for whatever reason - that we recognize this.

So the question of identification - I don't think an issuer should issue a licence to someone unless he has identified himself; brought something. And of course, nothing is foolproof. I'm aware that somebody can slip in very carefully, have stolen identification or something and get a licence. But his days are numbered. He can always get caught with that. But by and large they should identify the applicant, be satisfied, not just "may" but "shall".

But with regard to the photograph, it isn't important if half a dozen or ten or twelve people haven't got photographs. Many people come from other provinces and they are not photographed and we're not going to lose out too badly. So I would like to recommend that in Section 3(1.1) the licence issuer "shall" require the applicant to satisfactorily identify himself as being the person named on the application, and "may" require the applicant to be photographed by equipment provided by the registrar.

This is not a serious problem, but I think that if those very few people who are concerned - I frankly don't mind. I have no objection at all to having a driver's licence with my identification. It's quite useful in other regards. Sometimes somebody wants my identity and I'd like to produce it without any problem. So this is just a recommendation, Mr. Chairman, that I believe the minister ought to take into consideration and perhaps express his views on.

MR. COPITHORNE:

Yes. In regard to this, we feel that it is necessary that they prove identification, and we feel that it will be five years before the total number of licensed drivers in Alberta are photographed and taken under this jurisdiction of having a photograph on their driver's licence. We feel that the wording is adequate for the time being, and gives assurance that there is positive identification of the person who is photographed on his licence.

MR. LUDWIG:

Mr. Chairman, if the minister states that there is a requirement that the party applying for the licence must be identified, then he should remove the word "may" because it gives discretion. I think it would be sloppy dealing with this if the issuer "may" ask a person to identify himself instead of "shall". He "shall" be properly identified; if not, he should not issue a licence. If there is any doubt, he has to do this very carefully. It's more important that the right person get the licence than the person be photographed for future reference. I think it's a very minor point, but the words "the issuer may" - the issuer shouldn't be given the discretion. He should do it.

MR. COPITHORNE:

I would agree with the hon. member on that, and it would make it stronger to have a word such as "shall" instead of "may".

AN HON. MEMBER:

You'd better move the amendment.

MR. TAYLOR:

May I ask the hon. minister a question. Were there any operators' licences issued during the last year without a photograph?

MR. COPITHORNE:

Mr. Chairman, to my knowledge, no.

MR. TAYLOR:

I would just like to say that the photograph, I think, has been one of the finest things in connection with our driver's licence for quite a long time. I've had occasion to use mine in Ontario and in Quebec, and in both cases there is always amazement. They say, where do you get a licence like that with your picture on it? The picture looks like I have just come out of Sing Sing, but that's not the photographer's fault. That's my fault. But I found it very, very valuable and I think this is going to become more and more valuable as the years go by.

MR. RUSTE:

There are two points I'd like to raise with the minister. What discussions have taken place with the other provinces in relation to this similar type of licence issuing for drivers' licences with pictures? The other one is: there is reference later in the bill here to the validating tabs - what is the intention of the government in this? Are you going to go to the one plate system for all vehicles? What is the reason for the one plate this year on the public service, I guess, and trucks and so on, and then two on the car?

MR. COPITHORNE:

Mr. Chairman, in answer to the hon. member's first question, in the consultation that we had with other provinces, we are one of the leaders, if not the leader, in photographs on drivers' licences. It's pretty hard to consult with somebody who is not in advance with what you are doing in your own particular province.

I might say that I have had the same experience as the hon. Member for Drumheller, particularly when I went to Hawaii. I showed my driver's licence when I went to rent a car and they thought it was not only a very attractive identification but a very positive identification as well. I had the same experience in Ontario and Quebec in a trip down there last fall.

In regard to the second question of the hon. member - what was your second question?

MR. RUSTE:

It was a matter of one licence plate.

MR. COPITHORNE:

The validating tab. This makes legal, by legislation, the use of a validating tab. The reason for the one licence plate on certain categories of licences is because there has been, in the past, some problem of truckers with two trucks buying one set of licence plates. We have this in the Act now so that it is optional, and we are trying it this year as an experiment and seeing how it works.

MR. RUSTE:

Well just to follow up the point, is it the intention of the government to go into the one plate system on cars, as such? And then further to the one with the other provinces, in your discussions with them, are they going to adopt the system of pictures on the drivers' licences that Alberta has?

MR. COPITHORNE:

Well in regard to the one plate, it doesn't necessarily mean that cars will be using only one plate. I said that certain categories of vehicles may be using one plate, but maybe most of them will be using two plates.

The validation tab, this year, is being used by approximately 13 or 14 American states as well as Ontario. Actually there isn't really any necessity to exchange that information with the other provinces. It is a decision of the administration of this province.

MR. FRENCH:

Mr. Chairman, during the question period about a month ago, I asked the minister what would happen in the event of one of these validating tags falling off and how they could be replaced. Now if I remember, I think the minister said that the matter was still under consideration. I wonder if the minister could now advise what procedure would be taken in the event that one of these validating tags happens to fall off or be pulled off by somebody through vandalism or something?

MR. COPITHORNE:

Well, Mr. Chairman, the same procedure that one would take when he loses a licence plate would apply to a validation tab. You would apply for another one and it would be issued at a nominal fee - I think it's \$2 or \$1, I'm not sure of the fee. But it's the same procedure as if you lost a licence plate and, you know, some people from time to time have their licence plates stolen, completely taken off their vehicles both front and back, and if there were no system of replacement they would find themselves having to buy another set of licence plates.

MR. FRENCH:

Mr. Chairman, I would like to point out that there's maybe a little difference between the one and the other. If something happens that the material of which the validating tag is made is defective, isn't properly sticky or whatever you want to call it, and doesn't attach properly, then it's the fault maybe of the manufacturer of the tag, rather than the individual who is using it. But as far as a licence plate is concerned, if that falls off then it's definitely vandalism because somebody has removed it. But I think there is a difference between the two. Maybe it should be recognized but I don't know just where you would draw the line between the two.

MR. COPITHORNE:

Well, Mr. Speaker, the tabs have undergone very severe tests. They have been recognized in other states and have been used for quite some time. They have been found to be satisfactory. We're assured that apart from the odd person putting them on upside down - I guess that happens with licence plates too, only it's not quite as fatal as it is with a sticker, to be put on upside down. I suppose those factors of human error exist. But we have had very, very little complaint, in fact, almost negligible.

MR. STROM:

Mr. Chairman, I just want to revert to the point that was raised by the hon. Member for Calgary Mountain View. The minister said that he would follow the member's suggestion and place the word "shall" in there. I want to make it very clear, Mr. Chairman, that as far as I'm concerned I want (b) to continue to have the word "may" applied to it. So that in (a) I have no objection to "shall" but in (b) it is very important that "may" remain because there are people living outside the province of Alberta who for various reasons must get their licences but who are unable to comply with the regulation photograph until they come back to the country. In those cases it must remain "may". I just want to make that point very clear.

I'm not sure, Mr. Chairman, that we should leave it just this way. If there is going to be a change in it, then I think there ought to be a formal change either brought in by the minister or by an amendment passed here in the House.

MR. COPITHORNE:

Yes, the hon. the Attorney General was just speaking to me about the same point you have now brought up and it is well taken.

MR. LUDWIG:

Mr. Chairman, when we are dealing with licence plates there are a couple of minor points I would like to raise. One is that I had the experience of losing a licence plate. I went to purchase a new set of plates and they sold them to me for the same price I would pay for new plates, except that it happened at a time when the plates were being replaced for a new year of licensing. I don't know what the situation would be if you lost a plate during the year and wanted a replacement.

But the points raised about these tabs being lost, I think it can happen. Somewhere there is always some group which is going to go around and for fun remove a bunch of these things. It's an easy thing to do and it sort of lends itself to that kind of trick. Some will be bumped or lost - you just can't tell. It's well stuck on there but it can come off. And I think that unless we have metal tabs that can be affixed by a clamp or we can bolt them on somehow, the government should consider replacing them. Nobody wants to go to the trouble of replacing a tab unless he has to. So it would be unfair should it just happen that these tabs come off or some people drive on gravel roads a lot. It can just happen that someone keeps going on the road until that thing is entirely beaten off. We shouldn't penalize the people because, even though it may only be a dollar, it is still a dollar, and the person is penalized enough by having to take the time to get it.

Secondly, I raise the point of a lot of defaced licence plates, 1973 plates. This is a problem. Look at buses. Look at the Calgary buses. You have to be very close and very careful to be able to read and identify anything. For instance, if a licence number on a bus, if I saw the bus hit a car or something or it side-swiped me, in some instances I could not identify it. Those licence plates have faded very badly. I don't know how, whether they are washed often, but there are many licence plates on the road today that may as well be covered by mud. I think if they were, the police could haul you to one side and tell you to wash your licence plates. But the reason for that is to be able to identify the automobile. And there are many plates on the road; we have seen them every day.

I believe that steps should be taken to ensure that legible plates are on the car, because those plates aren't there just for police convenience. They are there for the protection of the other driver also. He might be involved in a hit-and-run, and if the plates are not legible he would have no way of protecting himself. Of course, a person like that may not even have a licence plate.

I'm curious to know the reason for the change in colour of the plates for the vehicles for this year. I must admit it's a prettier colour and colour must be important. It's a more attractive colour than you had last year. You are getting much closer to a true Social Credit colour, Mr. Minister. I don't think that was intentional. But in any case, all kidding aside, it's easier to see this year's plate at a greater distance if you ever compare vehicles. You can see them a few yards further; it's a plus.

One more comment about licence plates. Was the delay in manufacture of plates due to the fact that there was a change of policy in the government? I believe they had intended to withdraw a certain type of plate, or had intended to reduce the cost of the plate or something. Was this a factor, or was this not so, Mr. Minister?

MR. COPITHORNE:

With regard to the colour of the licence plates, the colour is a very sharp contrast. I have had no complaints to speak of about the colour or about the legibility. The people of Alberta have basically found the colours very attractive.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Hear, hear.

MR. COPITHORNE:

In regard to the problems with the tabs, it wouldn't matter whether they were the present type or whether they were metal tabs. If somebody takes a notion to remove them, any of them can be removed. Anything that can be put on can be removed. So this is something that isn't infallible to being destroyed by vandals.

Many of the states in the United States have gone to this type of identification on motor vehicles. I think in many of the states, and also in Canada, there is consideration of a greater number of reflectorized plates which are more costly but are more easily read by the public at night and in the daytime. Next year the licence plates in Alberta will

be black on yellow and completely reflectorized. They will be designed in such a way that it will be possible for the plate to be retained for as long as five years. Each year they would be revalidated by stickers such as we are using this year.

In regard to the use of - Mr. Chairman, what was the hon. member's second question? He had something else he wanted me to answer.

MR. LUDWIG:

I was commenting on the change of colour from orange and blue to a rather bright yellow and blue. I thought that was a tremendous improvement and something of an admission on the hon. minister's part, notwithstanding his previous denial that the colours were very tarnishable. These Conservative colours didn't seem to last, so it's an improvement over last year, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the minister, even though he says that the colours are terrific, everyone loves them, telling us he is going to change them anyway, notwithstanding popular demand. I think the minister is very wise in exercising his discretion that way. I am very much behind him. He should change them because frankly, much as he is in love with those colours, somehow they didn't last, Mr. Chairman.

MR. COPITHORNE:

Mr. Chairman, I must say that I believe the hon. Member for Calgary Mountain View may be going colour-blind because there isn't a change in the colour.

MR. LUDWIG:

Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. I'll put myself to a test. If the hon. minister says that this year's plates are not different than last year's then he isn't going colour-blind; he is colour-blind.

MR. FRENCH:

Mr. Chairman, coming back to the tabs. In view of the fact that there are 14 different jurisdictions, as I understood the minister to say, are all these jurisdictions using the same tabs as we are using, or do some of them have a little bolt or something that goes through? What about the California plate? I have seen some of the California plates and it seems to me there is a little screw or something that goes through that maybe would make it a little more secure.

In other words, are quite a few jurisdictions using a different type of tag from what we are using?

MR. COPITHORNE:

Mr. Chairman, the other states use various methods of validating their licence plates if they are not having a new one each year. I think it is just a matter of getting used to a new process, and I am sure it is going to work.

MR. FRENCH:

Mr. Chairman, I am just trying to help the minister a little. I was thinking, if we are going into this new system, if the ones with a little bolt or something are more secure, maybe next year if you are getting different types of plates perhaps some provisions could be made, providing there are more substantial ones in some places rather than others. This is what I was trying to say.

MR. COPITHORNE:

It'll work.

MR. FRENCH:

Mr. Chairman, I think I should tell the hon. minister that I had some difficulty when I was putting my tabs on. As a matter of fact they are quite brittle. I hope I will be able to use the one I have. It's about a third gone because it broke off while being put on. So, again, if I have a third of a tab or two-thirds of a tab, will this qualify as a tab or do I have to get a new one?

MR. COPITHORNE:

If the hon. Member for Hanna-Oyen is having problems, I would be very happy to see that he gets a new tab.

MR. HYNDMAN:

Mr. Chairman, before we take the vote, I would like, for the benefit of Legislative Counsel, just to define with some precision the three oral amendments that were made. I believe it is correct that they are on the first page regarding subsection (1.1). There are three amendments in the first clause. The last word "may" is deleted.

The second amendment is in subclause (a) in which the word "shall" is added before the word "require".

The third amendment is under subclause (b) where the word "may" is added before the word "require".

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Just repeat what you ... [Inaudible] ...

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Would the hon. minister repeat that?

MR. HYNDMAN:

I believe the section would then read,

(1.1) Before issuing an operator's licence to an applicant, the Registrar or the licence issuer

(a) shall require the applicant to satisfactorily identify himself as being the person named in the application, and

(b) may require the applicant to be photographed ...

et cetera

[All sections, the title and preamble were agreed to.]

MR. COPITHORNE:

Mr. Chairman, I move that this be reported as amended.

[The motion was carried.]

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

[All sections, the title and preamble were agreed to.]

DR. MCCRIMMON:

Mr. Chairman, I move that Bill No. 26 be reported.

[The motion was carried.]

Bill No. 27 The Agriculture Statutes Amendment Act, 1974

MR. CHAIRMAN:

There are some amendments circulated. A page of amendments. Any questions?

[Interjections]

Yes, there is an amendment for Bill No. 27.

DR. HORNER:

Mr. Chairman, the amendment simply corrects a clerical error from the last time the statutes were printed and changes a reference from Section 2 to Section 4. It is nothing other than that.

MR. HENDERSON:

Have the amendments been distributed?

MR. CHAIRMAN:

I understand they were distributed on Monday. Some members have them.

MR. RUSTE:

Mr. Chairman, while we are waiting for some members to get the amendments, under The Dairymen's Act I would just like to ask the minister if he would outline the correlation or interchange between the Department of Health and Social Development and the Department of Agriculture as to the regulations regarding the health standards.

DR. HORNER:

Essentially the sanitary standards are administered by the Dairy Branch and the extension people in the field. Also, in effect, they administer the health standards as well, even though they are regulations of and in conjunction with the - what do they call them - the sanitary inspectors for the health unit in the particular area.

MR. RUSTE:

Well, Mr. Chairman, the reason I raised this is that I had representation made to me earlier this year by a small dairy producer who had, over a period of time, been delivering milk to a very small community. He had received notice to desist from this. As I understand it, it goes back to pasteurization and some of these things. It certainly creates some problems for the particular distributor or producer in those cases where he is a small operator, and once he's cut off he's not in a position to go into the modern facilities for pasteurization. He is near to that community and he gets cut off.

DR. HORNER:

Well, Mr. Chairman, I would hope we are not going to go back to the old argument of whether or not all milk shouldn't be pasteurized before its commercial sale. Surely we're beyond that, even in Alberta.

MR. RUSTE:

Well, you can carry that a step further, of course. If I'm going to produce milk on the farm myself then I'm supposed to pasteurize it before I use it on the farm. I agree with the minister. This is a difficult situation, but let's put ourselves in the position of that producer. That's what I was getting at.

DR. HORNER:

Well, Mr. Chairman, we've made all kinds of programs available for dairy producers to upgrade their facilities and there should be no reason that anybody interested and active in the dairy industry who wants to can't improve his facilities up to that standard.

MR. TAYLOR:

Mr. Chairman, I wonder if the hon. minister could give us some information on this Artificial Insemination of Domestic Animals Act. Would he have any indication of the percentage of cattle and hogs being bred by artificial means?

DR. HORNER:

Hog [insemination] is just starting and it would be restricted to the purebred breeders and the select breeders, whereas A.I. in cattle, of course, is a generally accepted method. Again, though, I would suggest that the total percentage used would be rather small. I really couldn't give the member a figure but I know my departmental people can.

Essentially what we're doing here is trying to get some standards for semen so that we don't jeopardize the name our producers have built up for very good semen and our semen banks or the bull studs that we have in Alberta. So we need some standards. They have to have a sperm count of so many, and so on and so forth.

It's particularly important, when we're major exporters of semen, that we have some standards so that our customers will know that the semen is, in effect, healthy and there are viable sperm in it.

MR. STROM:

Mr. Chairman, in Section 3 governing the operation of feeder associations, I note now that the amendment is recommending that the word "fattening" be substituted by the word "growing".

I can appreciate the need for a change, but my question to the minister is: is there any time limit on the loans that are made to feeder associations? I'm thinking of the past where they had to have a cut-off date and report back to the department, so that there was always a very close check made as to the position of loans within individual feeder associations.

Let me say that there can be a problem if they are extended too long in getting a firm determination as to the position of a feeder association. I think this is one of the problems that the minister will have to look at when he changes it from "fattening" to "growing", because fattening was a six-month period and very easy to regulate. This does open up a new situation and I am wondering if the minister would care to comment.

DR. HORNER:

This of course is to cover all classes so that heifers and other stock may be held for certain periods of time. We're getting into the specialized areas where certain farmers produce them from the 500 pound weaner calf, or the 450 pound calf up to 700 pounds, and then if you like, the fattening specialist takes over in the larger feedlot. So there is a variety of things which the feeder associations can get into.

This doesn't change the mechanics of how the feeder associations operate in regard to the closeness of keeping on top of their loans. I'm sure the hon. member appreciates that we are continuing a process, started by the former government, of gradually changing these loans, so they have to apply every year to a rolling type of guarantee for the association then keeping track of them. The other changes there are simply to then keep track of them.

The other changes are simply to encourage lamb feedlots as much as possible.

MR. STROM:

Yes, but it was a rolling loan prior to this. Mr. Chairman, that's where I noticing it here, in regard to sheep and I was mistakenly thinking it applied to the other - but that had already been taken care of. I see.

MR. RUSTE:

Just on this, in the growing you could conceivably under this change then start out with a young calf and grow it through to parenthood, shall we say, and on beyond that really. Is there any time limit at all looked at in the regulations?

MR. FLUKER:

There has to be a cut-off date when you start and when you stop on this revolving plan. It doesn't go for more than a year because the books of every feeder association have to be audited at the end of every season. Therefore, you've got to clean up on your stock, and what you're saying is that you grow them from calfhood to parenthood and go on for years. This is not so, because it's still a feeder association.

MR. RUSTE:

I take it then that there is a year limitation on it.

MR. FLUKER:

That's why they call it the revolving plan rather than the six-month plan. It goes for a year.

MR. LUDWIG:

Mr. Chairman, I'd like to comment with regard to Section 4 on page 2 of Bill No. 27. It is interesting that in bygone years there was a tremendous effort on the part of the opposition in particular to guard against overregulating and I had some concerns about it. I wasn't happy with too many regulations. As time goes by the people get to be regulated a little more. They are conditioned where they need something and they have to mortgage their property to repay the loan and almost mortgage their souls as to whether they can

stick their hands in their pockets when they're hauling the beef to market. I'm not saying that some of these regulations are not absolutely necessary if you are going to go into this, but there is a tremendous sort of increase in the number of regulations being proposed and the authority for regulations being proposed by this government.

I remember we used to hear that it's government by regulation. But the trend has accelerated in the last two years. The hon. Minister of the Environment happens to be a master at this, and he could justify almost anything. He's very good at it. But the question of more and more regulations is a trend in this government and I believe that some members opposite perhaps must have some concern. If it can be shown that there is no other way then you just simply can't do anything about it. But there seems to be a zeal to regulate. Even if you're doing the people a lot of good, sooner or later they will turn against this matter of regulations. You regulate everything and they talk about confidentiality, staying out of the bedrooms, you know, government staying out of people's bedrooms as far as regulations are concerned. This was a big hue and cry in Ottawa.

But it's being duplicated here, and it's rather ironical that the people who believe in freedom and a lot of some individual choice in Ottawa were fighting against these things. They find that their political counterparts are doing the opposite here in Alberta. I think that sooner or later people will begin to resent too much government involvement in the interest of trying to do good for these people, that the government takes a position of we know what's best for you. More and more - they've loaned the money to the man and then they say, now we've given it to you, you've got to pay it back but there's one catch to it, you've got to use it exactly the way we tell you, or else.

At least when someone borrows a thousand dollars from the bank the bank says, here's the money, good luck and we hope we get it back. Whether you take a holiday, whether you buy a car or a horse or something, that's your business. But getting involved in government borrowing, you're buying yourself a pack of regulations and down the line some aversion to it, because there's nothing deadier, as far as I'm concerned, than the person who owes money - or no one more annoyed than a person who owes money and still has to have the agency that lent him the money and secured the loan rather handsomely, tell him that he can do this or that, or that he can't do this or that.

I'm not saying that this particular section is not necessary, but it's prescribing the condition that must be met, or prescribing the qualification that must be met by the persons wishing to become members of the feeder's association. Well, this feeder association must be a voluntary association. Then the government's going to say that certain people can't get in. Maybe there are good reasons for it, but I still have a tendency to resist overregulating and sort of getting your hand into the man's pocket after you've got his mortgage.

So, Mr. Chairman, I wish to go on record as opposing overregulating in any legislation. We, on this side, certainly have an obligation to watch to see that the government doesn't overregulate the people of this province.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

DR. HORNER:

Mr. Chairman, my honourable friend doesn't mind where he treads, but I would like to point out that the present section presently reads:

The Minister may make such regulations and prescribe from time to time such forms as he deems necessary for the proper carrying out of the provisions of this Act and of regulating the operations of feeder associations.

I am simply saying that this is at least an improvement in that it specifies at least what regulations can be made. While we have no intention of getting into the bedrooms of the nation, Mr. Chairman, there are some times when we have to get into the cow's bedroom - in regard to A.I. services, anyway.

MR. LUDWIG:

Mr. Chairman, the hon. members don't intend to get into the bedroom, but we'll get into the barn.

MR. HENDERSON:

It all sounds to me like a lot of bull.

MR. BUCKWELL:

Mr. Chairman, I think I am as much opposed to regulations as anybody, but this Section 4, clauses (a), (f) and (g) were covered under the old Act, and (b), (c), (d) and (e), I think, are very necessary. Many of the urban members don't realize just how complicated

some of these feeder associations have become. Many of them don't realize that you don't get the money unless you've got the facilities, you've got the feed. For example, if you were a first-time feeder - I think it's up to \$10,000 ...

AN HON. MEMBER:

\$8,000.

MR. BUCKWELL:

... \$8,000. And if this loan is not paid it then becomes a charge upon the feeder association. Frankly, while I say one doesn't want more regulations than are necessary, I think this section really spells out in far greater detail just what is required. Those who are going into this feeder association - it's not just a matter of getting government loans and we're away. Anybody who has been in this feeder association - and it's worked very well - that by supervision, not only of the department, but by the supervisor of the feeder association, has made a success of these feeder associations. I think they have done a whale of a job and form a very necessary part in any agricultural community.

MR. LUDWIG:

Mr. Chairman, I am not at all concerned about the fact that some hon. member or the minister will stand up and say, well, you did it the same way. But the hon. members opposite, particularly the hon. minister who just spoke, were quite outspoken about this kind of thing. I'm not saying that because we did it, it's right now. I'm expressing a concern. I made the qualification that sometimes you can't avoid it. But let's be on guard not to get our hands into the man's pocket after he's mortgaged himself to pay the money back. I know there has to be some follow-up and the money just can't be frittered away on a good time, but I'm taking the position on a matter of principle.

I'm not at all impressed with the fact that when the hon. members who are now in the government were hollering about the fact that it is government by regulation, all of a sudden they say, well, you did so it's right for us. I believe that if we're going to do the same thing they did before, then leave it alone. You haven't improved it, you've made it more specific. But that argument that it was done before is about the weakest form of argument you can possibly put up in this House, because the government is a new government and already it's amending its own amendments. It brings in a bill - two days ago - and then we get a sheet of amendments twice as big as the bill. I'm not saying it doesn't have to be done. But when we're looking at these things carefully to make sure that the very things that we objected to on basic principle - that we don't overdo it.

I don't think there is anything wrong with any member on either side of the House getting up and saying, let's not push too heavily on the regulations. Let's try to find out if we can make something work without overregulating everybody. There's nothing wrong with this. Don't think that the people who are regulated don't eventually resent it; they're talking about too much government. Even if sometimes it's for their own good to tell them they have to have some kind of rubber mat in the bathtub so they don't fall and kill themselves, they still resent it. There are certain things where a person has to be left alone to do his own thing.

We can holler as much as we like about too much government from Ottawa, or too much government from here or too much government from the municipality, but the individual has to put up with all three. Sometimes we're not aware of the fact that he is being pushed a little bit by the federal government, a little bit more here and a lot more by the civic government, and, all combined, he's getting irritated. So he gets to the point sometimes where he doesn't care if he changes the government, as long as he changes the government. I am not making apologies for the previous government, that we didn't get involved in too many regulations. But those champions of the cause, of the individual's freedom, who are on this side, are silent. Not only silent, but they think it's a big joke now. I think we have to be credible about these things.

I must admit that many times when I was a member of the government I had a slight aversion to regulations, well-intentioned as they might have been because I happen to be one person who doesn't like to be overregulated by a lot of man-made rules if I can do without them. I display my aversion to them at every opportunity and I will continue to do so.

As long as people will continue to agree to be regulated, they're going to be regulated all the way. You might think this is funny. Some of the ministers have a sort of mania for regulation because they feel that they're doing something. But we have to look at the public as a whole before we push regulations. I want to make the qualification that I'm not saying these are - maybe in this case you can't avoid them. I am sure there isn't a minister in the House in any government who can't stand up and justify necessity. But somehow when I see three or four pages of regulations I wonder how on earth they managed the last hundred years without them. Somehow nobody was really up

in arms. Maybe we're providing more services, so it has to cost more, no matter how we do it. But Mr. Chairman, I don't think one should be exposed to any kind of criticism for expressing concern about overregulating, because that is everybody's concern.

MR. TAYLOR:

Mr. Chairman, I'm sorry to jump back and forth from these various acts, but there is a little information I would like on the first one, The Artificial Insemination of Domestic Animals Act, mostly in order to answer questions of constituents.

[Mr. Appleby in the Chair]

The first thing I would like to know - I think it's wise to start setting standards - and I'm wondering if the sponsor of the bill, or the hon. Minister of Agriculture, would have some indication of the success of the program to date? Are the catches equal to those where the natural method is used, or better? Are the animals produced equal to those that are produced naturally, or better? And secondly, is it very costly to the individual farmer?

I was told - I don't know whether this is a true story or not - but I was told that a salesman went to a farmer to try to persuade him to use artificial insemination on his cattle, and while he was inside the house talking to the farmer, the bull rammed into the salesman's car. Now I don't know whether the bull resented the fact of this artificial insemination program, but I rather think likely it did because the car was red. But anyhow, the point I really want to get to is, are there salesmen out advancing this program to our farmers? And secondly, is it costly and how successful is it? Is there an equal number of failures by the natural means, et cetera?

MR. HENDERSON:

Mr. Chairman, who's explaining it to the bulls?

MR. FLUKER:

As the hon. member is aware, there are a number of programs going on throughout Alberta. AI schools are set up in pretty near every part of the country, to train technicians. What's happening to people who have controlled semen banks is that these technicians now are getting their hands on semen and a lot of it has been going across into the United States. It's not true to form, as the hon. minister said. This is why these regulations are being put forward, in order to control it. If we have some really good semen in this country I don't think we want to let it go out. We want to build up our type of livestock and keep our breeds true to form, and so on, here in Alberta.

As far as the conception rate is concerned between the bull and the breeder, well, I suppose you would have to go back and ask the fellow who does it. And the bull too. I really couldn't say.

[Mr. Diachuk in the Chair]

DR. HORNER:

In addition to the question the hon. member has asked, the conception rates will actually vary depending on who does it and the kind of semen. The costs also vary depending on the bull that is used, if you like. Certainly once you have the conception or the offspring, A.I. is generally used in a major way to upgrade a herd, and/or to do some other particular breeding operation.

The technology is growing very rapidly in relation to not only A.I. but ovum transplants and it's a very exciting part of veterinary medicine at the moment, and indeed [a way] of upgrading herds in a major way very quickly.

I am pleased to be able to say that I think Alberta people are in the forefront of this kind of technology.

MR. HINMAN:

Mr. Chairman, in the matter of regulations of this type, we frequently find that every year a few circumstances arise which point out that a regulation is probably in need of some change. I wondered if there could be a period when notice might be sent out to these associations asking for their comments on regulations.

DR. HORNER:

I would very much agree, Mr. Chairman, that indeed we would be happy to receive - and we will be in touch with the studs and the other people, the A.I. associations that are doing this to get their views on how we can improve the thing and maintain our

standards. But there have been a couple of very unfortunate incidents, not with Alberta semen, but with semen from other parts of the province in which it was diluted with so much milk there were no sperm left. When that gets into the market place I wouldn't want that it would ever have come from Alberta.

[All sections, the title and preamble were agreed to.]

MR. FLUKER:

Mr. Chairman, I move Bill No. 27 be recorded along with ...

AN HON. MEMBER:

Recorded?

MR. FLUKER:

... reported along with the proposed amendment.

[The motion was carried.]

Bill No. 36 The Students Finance Amendment Act, 1974

MR. FOSTER:

Mr. Chairman, during second reading of this bill there were a number of comments made by members of the House and I indicated at that time I would respond briefly to them on committee stage and I would propose doing so now.

There was some concern expressed about the default rate in the province and I indicated our information was that it was fairly low. I would point out, however, that there is, in fact, intense support available for students across a very wide number of programs, both short and long in all of the 20 institutions, and we're considering expanding it beyond that in some areas of trade schools so it's perhaps not unexpected that our loss experience may, in fact, increase. We're moving to attempt to reduce this by the creation of a trust account, in the sense that we would not be extending funds to students on an initial payment or even two payments, but it would be on a draw-down basis in the course of the academic year.

We're going to express a greater interest in the performance of students and encouraging the institutions themselves to keep in touch with a student's academic performance, to ensure that students are not committing themselves to continuing in their programs while incurring substantial debt.

We are going to be encouraging, as far as married students are concerned, some effort by the spouse to save funds during the summer months. This is going to be difficult, but as I indicated in my remarks on second reading, the highest loans are with married people. Of course, we want to encourage them, as they will be concerned themselves, to be financially responsible for the kinds of commitments they make for funds.

Finally, we're also going to take a very close look at the amount of student's savings in the course of any summer period. Again, endeavouring to encourage students to save more funds during the summer months of course should result in a reduced loan requirement by them.

There was some comment about the three-year dependency rule, and some suggestion that this works as a hardship to students. I'd like to point out that the question of a three-year dependency was established in an advisory committee of six students and six members of the public a very short while ago. I believe it has worked quite satisfactorily to the present time. The regulations, which the members may wish to pursue, also provide for independent students. We do not experience the situation, Mr. Chairman, where a student must, in fact, have parental contribution for the three-year period. There are circumstances under which a student can be declared independent, circumstances under which a parent's contribution is not necessary and in that case the board will consider the special circumstances of the student and award a student loan.

Some comments were made about uncooperative parents. I would report with some pleasure that it is extremely rare that we incur that kind of situation.

With respect to appeals, and there was some discussion on this, I would point out that the Student's Finance Board as such exercises very little control over appeals. The appeal mechanism is really a committee composed of members of the public, students and frequently one member of the board. It is therefore, in a sense, the judgment of a peer group and the board as such has very little control. Personally, on behalf of the board,

I'm extremely grateful for the volunteer contribution by members of the public and by students serving on these appeal committees which sit in various locations in the province, obviously for the convenience of the students.

There was some response made with a view to a provision for greater incentives in post-secondary education. I'd like to comment in response to that excellent point, that there are, in fact, some incentives operating in the system at the moment. One of them surely is the fact that tuition fees are at a reasonably low level at the moment for all institutions in the post-secondary system and we are proposing to retain the current level of tuition fees at least until the conclusion of the three-year university finance plan, which is 1975-76.

The incentive that exists elsewhere, as I've already said, is a growing access, I believe, by students to different programs in the 20 institutions; a growing access to the resources of the Student's Finance Board, not simply loans. An example of that is the special bursary program for The University of Lethbridge which applies primarily to non-urban students, encouraging them to gain access to that special university.

I think there is an additional incentive effective in our society today, Alberta in particular, and that is the fact that there are such tremendous employment opportunities, and immediate employment opportunities, for almost every conceivable occupation. That in itself, I think, is some incentive for students to return to post-secondary education. I believe that to have been at least one factor, a major factor, in the return and slight increase in enrolment we experienced last fall, which I anticipate will continue, to some degree at least, this coming fall.

I have no illusions whatever, Mr. Chairman, that there is not still a problem in the sense that the participation rate by people in the lower socio-economic groups in our society is not as high as it should be. I think all of us should address our minds to how we might, in fact, assist students, young and old, in that particular group in our society to encourage them to become part of and participate in the post-secondary educational system.

Certainly the proposed amendment and the granting of admission to the federal program will be of some assistance to that. I would point out that the remission scheme which is currently in effect as far as Alberta funds are concerned is now to apply to the federal funds, with leave of this House and third reading of this bill, but the numbers and types of programs in post-secondary education are expanding. The remission aspect, I'm told, will be appreciated by students and their parents. Hopefully that will contribute significantly to increasing the participation rate of students in this sector.

With respect to remission emphasis I might point out that some people - and I think I am one of them - feel the remission scheme should operate in a major way within the first three years of a post-secondary program. That is certainly the time frame in which most people ...

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Mr. Minister, I wonder if we could get a little more attention here in the Assembly. There is a real humdrum on both sides.

MR. FOSTER:

Mr. Chairman, I appreciate that not too many people are interested and concerned about the problems of advanced education. Perhaps I can be excused for being so enthusiastic. I sit here week after week and get very few questions, so given the opportunity to say a few words I am going to carry on whether anyone is listening or not. But thank you for your advice.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear.

AN HON. MEMBER:

That's how important you consider your job.

MR. FOSTER:

That remission should probably apply in a major way in the first three years of a program. After that, or when a person enters into a second degree following a first degree, they have, I think, a greater capacity to earn, perhaps a greater capacity to save and certainly a much greater likelihood of receiving greater financial return at the end of the program.

There was some concern expressed with respect to one-parent homes. We are not aware of any particular problem in this regard although I must underline that we intend to work closely with high school counsellors in the hope that we can identify that kind of problem, that we may be forewarned, and that those considerations may be received by the board.

There was a comment with respect to people returning from the labour force who want to participate in post-secondary education. That's a very relevant and very true remark. At present our regulations provide for the support of that kind of person, that adult. This is a large and growing area; the board is going to extend its efforts to assist, particularly in the counselling area, these students.

The question was asked whether or not we were aware of any new initiatives or directions by the federal government in the student finance area. There was some discussion about the continuous repayment scheme. At this moment I am not aware of any new scheme being proposed by the federal government. My information is that there may be some minor adjustments of an administrative nature in the existing program, but they are not significant.

With respect to parental contribution - there was some question asked whether or not we should continue to require some parental contribution. I have responded in this House on more than one occasion that in my view we should, provided, however, we are prepared to be flexible enough to provide assistance for students when, in fact, parents cannot or, under rare circumstances, will not make a contribution for their student's post-secondary education.

There were some remarks about greater coordination in the post-secondary system from a student finance point of view, not only within the post-secondary system, but within the departments of government which encourage students to participate in the post-secondary system. This was also discussed, Mr. Chairman, on my estimates in subcommittee and we indicated then that part of our initiative in this department in the next year will be to ensure greater cooperation and coordination among government departments to ensure coordination and the avoidance of overlap or duplication.

There was a comment or suggestion made that perhaps the program as we know it today would function more efficiently if the administration of this program were transferred to the various institutions and therefore decentralized to them. I would respond that that was in part the case a few years ago when the numbers of students participating in the programs were minimal and there were probably fewer students. Today, as I indicated, it's 20,000 files a year. It's a highly complex matter. The institutions simply don't have the staff to accommodate this. However, we are anxious to work with the institutions to ensure that greater capacity exists on campus for the handling of these kinds of problems, particularly from a student finance counselling point of view, which, in my judgment, has not been adequately performed. Not that there are not enough people doing it, but just that the problem is so horrendous with the vast numbers of students on these campuses that the existing staff simply can't cope with the problem.

I think, Mr. Chairman, aside from a suggestion made, I think by Mr. Lee, on the modular approach with which we would agree, I will conclude my remarks and respond to the very many questions which I know exist in this House.

MR. LUDWIG:

Mr. Chairman, I would like to ask the minister if we are increasing the number of categories where a student with a lot of ability - a scholarship type - can go to, say, university without having to put out any money? Are we increasing this incentive to excel because I am sure there must be very many instances where a scholarship student can get grants and bursaries so that we can give an incentive to more and more of this kind of opportunity. I am looking at some of the industries which provide scholarships rather extensively, for instance, one of the hotelmen's associations. There they are taking the lead and I think the government can well afford, perhaps, to lead the way. Maybe it might detract. It might discourage others. But I think we should look at, perhaps, raising the number of opportunities where students of merit can make it whether they have money or not, make it all the way.

MR. FOSTER:

Mr. Chairman, the point is a good one in the sense that I think all of us should strive to encourage students of excellence to participate in post-secondary education. The government policy for the moment is that we will expand the remission factor in the loan program, which, in fact, operates indirectly as a grant, if you will, and in that sense encourage more participation in post-secondary education.

I believe that that is a good program. At the same time, I believe we have some responsibility as legislators and as citizens to encourage the private sector, institutions, businesses, private individuals to make funds available by way of

scholarship or bursary to assist students in their post-secondary education. Certainly we are anxious to do that. I am not in favour at this point, Mr. Chairman, in a government grant scheme simply for the sake of grant. I think there are other things we can do to improve access and to improve the participation rate of students of all ages in post-secondary education without simply giving money away.

MR. LUDWIG:

Mr. Chairman, I have one more comment to make. There are certain problems, I believe, with students in high school and in post-secondary education that are becoming more and more obvious. I am wondering whether the minister has ever given consideration to providing incentives in certain particular areas. And I am talking about the ability to communicate and in the area of English. I believe we all recognize the fact that many people, professional people, people in important walks of life in the province and in the country, are handicapped because somewhere in the system they didn't get what they should have gotten by way of ability to understand and ability to communicate. I am wondering whether the emphasis should not be shifted throughout the whole system to encouraging students to give more emphasis, to give more consideration to perhaps taking more courses in English, more courses in composition and along this line, so that, if they are educated, they could at least communicate what they know. Many of them are handicapped in that regard. And I am not setting myself or anyone up as an example. We all could have done better in that regard.

MR. POSTER:

Mr. Chairman, I think we all share the concern that the men and women in our society should be able to intelligently communicate with each other. And the higher level of that we can gain, the better we are as a society. Certainly the Department of Education and the public and separate school systems of this province have this as their primary emphasis, since they are responsible for K to 12 as it were. But in the post-secondary system, we primarily receive and are responsible for students who are 18 years of age and over, and we are assuming they have attained certain basic skills at that point. Not that we are disinterested in whether or not they have these skills, but whether or not they have them will have been determined by that period.

I think it would be extremely difficult for the department I represent, responsible for autonomous, independent institutions like public universities and public colleges, to be suggesting certain program directives which relate to the ability to read, the ability to communicate, the ability to write and the ability to speak proper English, et cetera. The concerns you express relate to concerns which some people in the university community have expressed. And that is valid. I think we should be mindful of those concerns and bring those to the attention of the proper authorities. I don't believe, Mr. Chairman, with respect, that the proper authority in this case is the Minister of Advanced Education.

MR. HINMAN:

Mr. Chairman, there are a number of aspects of this bill which interest me and I'm going to treat them one by one. One is a matter of scholarships under this part of the administration. I'm very much opposed to the department going into scholarships. Scholarships, if you base them on excellence, are just an additional attribution to the people who are best naturally endowed and have no relationship to their need. Now there have been times when scholarships served a good purpose, when we were short of doctors and we could encourage students by scholarships to go into medicine, a costly program. They might have been justified.

But there are some other things that bother me. When we first devised this program, and I think it's the concept that we all have, the whole basis of it was that no child should be denied the opportunity for post-secondary education because funds were not available. Now, we made some mistakes and the first mistake we made was to make loans without interest. The second mistake we made, of course, was to begin making value judgments as to who should get this thing.

The dependency rule is a good example. The minister has told us that the dependency rule was set up and accepted by a committee which included students and lay people. That doesn't make it any better. A child can vote at 18, he can be conscripted into the army, he's responsible, he's not a juvenile and how we can then say that a committee of students and lay people should say that his parents are responsible for him for three more years is beyond my conception. All you are trying to say is that the parents have to support this child. We hope they will, and the minister has told you that most of them try. But I've been through enough of these to know that there are plenty of shenanigans going on.

The fact that you have to make value judgments puts you on the spot - those people who can make the best case - and certainly many of the parents of these people and many of the students aren't capable of presenting their case with equal clarity - so value judgments are made without hearings on the basis of information supplied to you by people

who have always had trouble filling out forms, except maybe their stomachs, and the value judgment reacts often very badly. In the first place, it takes time, and the student is waiting to know whether he can go to university or not and we go through all these procedures. When you ask a child about his savings, the circumstances are so different that it's beyond me why we should think that a committee can decide whether this child should have saved more or less without going into very many personal matters that have to do with savings, the things that have happened to them.

I can give you an example. A student very unwisely bought a car from a salesman to use in the summer to make money to go to university. He made the money all right but just when he went to the university he discovered the car was stolen. They took it away and he was still on the spot to pay the finance company. Well, these things can go on.

The same is true when you have to make a value judgment about whether the spouse shall contribute. You have to go into such personal areas that you make a value judgment very many times without being able to understand the case and you put people on the spot to give you information which many times they're reticent to give you.

As to appeals, I have been through that round too. The very fact that you have one member of the board [on it] - and very frequently the chairman - makes the appeal a farce in many cases. It's the same criticism I always have of the appeals on taxation and planning. The man who made the decision originally can put up such a case that the poor lay people - the students on it - are just overpowered. If you want a true appeal you keep these people out of it. If you want somebody with broad judgment, maybe you should appoint a judge or somebody like that. But as long as you have one member of the board on that committee the appeal will never get at the roots of this thing.

There are some other aspects of it too. One, we have never explored the insured loan type. Maybe we should require the students to see whether or not they can get insured loans. But to sum it all up, if you want this system to work well, all you need to do is eliminate the interest free or interest bonus aspects of it. An experience I had last year after an appeal - the boy was turned down. He was just going to leave the university. Some of us had supported him a little and I suggested he go talk to the bank. He went down to the bank all alone - no parent, nobody with him. The bank gave him a loan very quickly and he went back to school. The only difference was that he paid 9 per cent which is an injustice.

I'm suggesting that perhaps the time has come when we can control all of this by simply saying that the interest rate will be a standard interest rate. If you want a remission you make an application. We can review it and under certain circumstances we can, by grant, give you a remission. Otherwise, you are responsible.

Now, if you don't do that, how can we justify not making money available to young people who want to be shoemakers, barbers or anything else, to go into business, when we make money freely available to students who are going to be professionals and who are going to be the high wage earners - the high fee earners. I would suggest, Mr. Minister, that all we need to do is to take out the interest free aspect - if you like, offer a bank guarantee in the place of putting it through the student loan association. Most of your problems would disappear and you could still make sure that no student lacks the opportunity for post-secondary education through lack of funds.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. LEE:

Just a question relating to this bill. I think we can view student finance as a form of investment, and probably we do, where we grant loans to students on the idea that we are investing in their particular future.

I think we have and can approach student financing from another point of view, that it is an investment in the economic and social growth of the province. I recollect a few years ago when grants up to \$5,000 were given, combined with the province and the federal government, for individuals who were going into vocational education. I guess the reason for the investment and the need end of it here was that we needed vocational teachers, consequently the decision was made that a grant was also needed to encourage people to go in here.

I just have a question in this regard. Has your department or has the board had much in the way of representation from various regions of the province or various economic groups within the province to initiate some kind of grant for which there would then be a requirement of two years' work or two years' service in a particular job or in a particular part of the province? I'm not particularly supporting that kind of thing but I think it's something we have to investigate, especially if we need trained manpower in a specific part of our province, and a particular economic group.

MR. FOSTER:

Mr. Chairman, there has been discussion of that principle with one group. For example, if it was a school board that was anxious to have teachers or a certain kind of teacher trained or other professions - to have them return to a certain community - it would be a useful technique for that individual group or organization. I think government gets itself into a little difficulty when it sits down and arbitrarily decides that we need X doctors in this community or Y dentists here or other kinds of people and we attempt to direct people with the strings of specific financial incentives. I would prefer to go the open route of making as many spaces or opportunities available as possible, making access for competent and qualified people as available as possible and hope that the free enterprise system, as it were - the simple fact that there are trained men and women available who will find their way to these communities to provide the services, professional or otherwise.

I guess I'm saying that I don't believe that it is government's role to specifically fund specific kinds of skills on condition that they return to a certain community and do a certain job. There may well be organizations or businesses, groups of a certain kind, who have that interest and who want to do that because it serves their self-interest. That, we would encourage, I'm sure.

MRS. CHICHAK:

Mr. Chairman, just on that point, I wanted to raise one or two comments. I think it has been evident to this point that, in fact, the present procedure is not working well because there are many areas in the province where there are citizens who do not receive the service of various professions that the more populated and larger centres do. I think that we have to look at the possibility of some sort of incentive. Although it may not be that we should point directly to a specific location, I think that we can certainly indicate a region or an area.

I think that we have the same responsibility on behalf of those citizens who reside in the outlying areas. They are also providing with their dollars, through taxation, towards the kind of public support that is being given to these students. I think they are entitled to be given some consideration and so I can't entirely agree with the philosophy that you are applying in this particular instance. I think there must be a mechanism applied here, an additional incentive which now is non-existent.

MR. FOSTER:

If my name was Dr. Horner, I would respond to that by saying, we are going to create such a good atmosphere and such strong communities in rural Alberta that we will automatically attract interested and competent professional men and women. And we simply don't have to buy their support to go into the Bentleys and the Rimbeys or the small communities.

If I were Dr. Horner, Mr. Chairman, that's the kind of speech I would be making. But since I'm not ...

AN HON. MEMBER:

Go ahead.

MR. FOSTER:

... I will only say I agree with him.

MR. LUDWIG:

A little more hot air won't hurt.

MR. FOSTER:

Government's responsibility, I think, is to make that kind of climate interesting and challenging for men and women in our society. And I believe that if we are training the numbers of doctors which we are training, they will find their way to the small areas.

Now in the event that that does not happen. Let's pick a small community in this province which is interested in having the services of a doctor or a dentist, that it does not now have. It might be interesting for the town to approach, for example, the Student's Finance Board and suggest that the town would like to see or to support a certain student in a medical program, and will approach that student and make some contribution to his training on the understanding that that student, when trained, will return to that community and provide the professional service.

That's what I was talking about. Government could sit down and could probably identify all the professions and suggest we need X of this profession in that community, and Y of that profession in the other community and will support them. I suggest that that would lead to a level of control and a level of participation by governments in the private lives and the private decision-making of men and women that would be undesirable at this time.

MR. GRUENWALD:

Mr. Chairman, just very briefly, I think the remarks that have been made on this bill are mostly very positive and I have difficulty in disagreeing with any of them. I think my colleague to my right here made so many good remarks it was almost all said.

There are a couple of points that I think would be of interest. I'm just wondering how many students applying for assistance through the Student's Finance Board and are refused, if they are, don't go to university simply because of a lack of funds.

You see I have great difficulty in believing that you can create much incentive for people to go to university simply because you are going to make money available to them. First and foremost, they have to have that incentive themselves. They want to go there. I think this is basic and primary and I really think we have to start with that premise. Then if they want to go of course that's fine. I think we should assist them and make sure, as has been said, that they are not kept out of the institution because of a lack of funds. But at the same time, I am not one to believe that they can borrow themselves rich by going in more and more and more all the time, because there is a day of reckoning and I'm sure that some of them are going to have some real problems when the time comes.

I think, too, the counsellors, as I think you yourself had mentioned - I'm concerned about the advice that some of the students get within the counselling in the universities. Sometimes they get good advice, sometimes they get advice on just how to beat the system. I don't think that is necessarily the best procedure.

I'm wondering too - I just don't know what the situation is - but I see nothing wrong with assisting, say, an Alberta student if he wants to go to a university outside the province. Strictly from a monetary point of view, that's the best deal you could make because you can get by a darn sight cheaper by loaning him money to go to another province than try to educate him here. If you want to look at it from strictly a dollar and cents point of view, I don't think there is much doubt about that.

As far as repayment of loans, while I realize the administrative headaches of it and I think Cal Lee mentioned it once and I talked about it several times, I am just wondering if the student loan could be repaid through the years through income tax. It seems to be a very logical way in which they would repay a loan because as they benefit from their education and if they received higher earnings because of that - and most of them assume they will, because let's face it, it's still the basic reason they go - maybe this would be a real good way for them to repay that loan. You really don't care where they go and what they do if they are making a taxable income. I believe this then would be the way in which they could repay it. I think it is well worth while.

I just wanted to mention too that I don't believe that giving scholarships, and I just have to repeat this, to gifted people is necessarily a good function of the government, as there are unlimited opportunities for the really gifted. Very often you will find the hard-working mediocre student much more deserving of assistance than the real top-notch student. Those are some of the things I think, Mr. Minister, you might consider, but generally speaking I am in agreement.

[All sections, the title and preamble were agreed to.]

MR. FOSTER:

Mr. Chairman, I move the bill be reported.

[The motion was carried.]

MR. HYNDMAN:

Mr. Chairman, I move the committee rise, report progress and beg leave to sit again.

[The motion was carried.]

[Mr. Diachuk left the Chair.]

* * * * *

[Mr. Speaker resumed the Chair.]

MR. DIACHUK:

Mr. Speaker, the Committee of the Whole Assembly has had under consideration the following bills; Nos. 20, 22, 26 and 36 and begs to report same. The Committee of the Whole Assembly has had under consideration the following bills; Nos. 17, 23, 25 and 27 and begs to report same with some amendments and begs leave to sit again.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

MR. HYNDMAN:

Mr. Speaker, as to House business tomorrow: the afternoon will be private members afternoon. In the evening, Subcommittees B, C and D, having finished and completed their work, only Subcommittee A will be meeting on the health commissions. The House will not be sitting, only Subcommittee A of the four subcommittees.

MR. SPEAKER:

On a small point of order. The hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview wishes to withdraw Question 164 from the Order Paper having received the information in another way.

As far as I know, and without creating a precedent at the moment, the hon. member is entitled to do that without the consent of the Assembly, so unless there is any objection I will propose to take it off the Order Paper.

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.]

