

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ALBERTA

Tuesday Evening, April 30, 1974

[Mr. Speaker resumed the Chair at 8:00 o'clock.]

GOVERNMENT BILLS AND ORDERS
(Second Reading)Bill No. 32 The Alberta Energy Company Act (Cont.)

MR. DRAIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in adding my humble remarks to those of all the hon. members who have spoken before, and being number eleven on the list I may find I am repeating myself in some area or other, however it will be just in the manner of emphasizing some points.

I certainly have been enthralled thus far by the type of debate we have had on this very important bill, which will affect the destiny of the people of the province of Alberta in many ways. I was in fact, Mr. Speaker, having difficulty at one point in the debate in containing myself. I had to grip my chair with great vim as the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview swung to the far right and the hon. Member for Macleod swung far left. Then the hon. Member for Calgary Bow, Mr. Speaker, brought pictures before the Legislature of a danse macabre; the hon. Members for Spirit River-Fairview and Macleod, Mr. Speaker, joining this danse macabre as the Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs officiated at the interment of private enterprise in the fair province of Alberta.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear.

MR. DRAIN:

I suppose the root of this great venture had to do with the money tree that grows in the Suffield block - something that no one can deny when you look at it - an opportunity and an opportunity for all Albertans. I question then, Mr. Speaker, whether this in reality is a first. The first government private enterprise association that we had in Canada goes back some little length of time. It goes back, in fact, to the Company of One Hundred Associates formed in 1582 to develop the resources of what was New France at that time. The results of this involvement were not all that good. I hope it does not augur something that will occur to the Alberta Energy Company when it finally gets off the ground.

I see the energy company as a vehicle to utilize some of the riches that the good Lord has endowed us with in the province of Alberta. I see it as something that can have potential in developing an understanding of the complexities of investment insofar as the average man in the street is concerned.

This was touched on by the hon. Member for Calgary McKnight when he alluded to the program as a sort of teach-in, Mr. Speaker, on the fundamentals of investment for the people of Alberta. I would hope that the teach-in will be a happy teach-in and that everyone will graduate with full marks at the end.

However, I do see some dangers in this particular situation insofar as we have here the Alberta Legislature and the government becoming the fond parents of a new company and handing it out to the people of Alberta on a plate and saying, this is something good and we endorse it, and therefore if you buy this it has to be good because we the people, we the government of Alberta, have said so.

So this, in fact, presents a trap which should be guarded against very carefully. I would think that when the prospectus is issued there would be proper statements that there is a certain amount of risk in this.

The jewels which hang on the crown of the Alberta Energy Company are ones anyone can endorse: the Suffield sugarplum tree where we have 100 per cent drilling success with the gas, a pipeline which has a fixed investment rate, tariffs which are determined and a cash flow predetermined by the volume of oil which can be put through and against which all your costs can be written, a power plant with consistent revenue, and then the icing on the cake as it were, Mr. Speaker, the opportunity to become involved in Syncrude. All these are goodies. Certainly this should be something which has a great reception by the people of Alberta. I have already written a rather interesting article on the fact that it is more of a cinch than anything else.

However, the one point that has not been brought up is the simple fact that the Canada Development Corporation will be coming to the market with a rather large issue expected in May I believe, or sometime this year, and there may be a collision course between the floating of the Alberta Energy Company and the Canada Development Corporation, or in other words a battle for funds which might present some difficulties. However, when the Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs stands in his place and says that this is the only vehicle for Albertans to invest in Alberta resources, he knows better than that but he makes that particular statement because it's probably the appropriate statement for the time. There are many ways that Albertans can invest, even in the multinational companies.

He also referred to foreign investment, and he didn't believe what he said when he insinuated that this in fact could be a dirty word to talk about and something that was not very good.

I happen to be reading a book by Henry James. This is one of the 'in' textbooks they are using at the University in teaching political science at this particular time. Interestingly enough, Mr. Speaker, this book was published in 1850, and it referred to the social problems as seen by Henry James in 1850 in the United States. What was referred to as one of the prime problems was the problem of foreign ownership in that country where vast amounts of British capital were coming in and buying out the total heritage of the American people.

I think the foreign investment analysis should include the fact that investment is a direct result of the weakness or strength of any particular economy. A weak economy or an economy where you have a dislocation of the money centers such as is now occurring all over the world with a vast inflow of funds into the Arabic nations will give them the lever to invest in foreign countries and form a sort of positive position. This will reverse itself if the economy of the country is strong enough and the dedication of the people towards working and developing their country is sufficient.

However, I will get back to some of the pitfalls of this energy company, and one is the requirement that is built into this particular company, for the company in fact to perform. I see this as a hazard. I see in this also the relegation of the management of this company, not to the government, which in fact is indirectly responsible for what occurs to the energy company because they will have to answer to the voters - I see it as a pitfall because, Mr. Speaker, we have a wide-ranging ownership of shares in this particular company which, in fact, means that there will be numerous people who can exert political pressure. The management of the company will not be in the board of directors. It will be an 'arm's length' company insofar as the government is concerned. The management will be in the management personnel themselves.

So then you set up the area of empire building. This is the eventual evolution which you cannot avoid in any company. In fact there must be always an onward and upward stress in any company because if it does not go that way it will stagnate.

So, Mr. Speaker, the question arises in my mind, what then? When the sugarplum tree in Suffield has been shaken and all the fruit has been eaten up and the company is still functioning, you will be forced, Mr. Speaker, to make available through government offices another sugarplum tree. And this is where I see a danger insofar as the private sector is concerned. Administration and government do make the rules. Quite obviously these rules would have to be geared toward a company of which they were the father and mother. This I see as a difficulty.

However, this is a holding company. It is something that has to be acceptable. I think probably the Member for Macleod made some very strong points when he asked, in reality what assurance do you have that the average Albertan, in fact, is going to benefit from this? And I realise that some people would, by nature, reject the role of investor. Some people do not think in those particular terms. It would be difficult for them to accept that. I am concerned about how equitable the division of shares is going to be and I might point out to the Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs that when the stock for Alberta Gas Trunk Line was initially put on the market it was on the basis of 20

shares for each Albertan. So some Albertans wound up with 1,000 or 1,500 or 2,000 shares of the initial issue and they did this simply by going from one brokerage house to another and placing many, many orders.

This, I think, could be overcome by using as an identification process the social security numbers of the applicants and these could be run through a computer and any excess applications could be kicked out. This would be one way a rip-off, if you wish to call it that, could be avoided. And I would certainly think that this is something that should be considered very favourably.

There is unquestionably merit in the company as I see it. There is an opportunity. But I must emphasize that in all fairness every possible vehicle be utilized in order to permit the fair and equitable distribution of all shares; some means of financing for those who are not able to invest immediately.

I do not think, once you have got to the point of the secondary offering or when they are then listed on the market and some people would take advantage of the opportunity to make a fast dollar, there could or should be any particular control of the direction these shares go. I question how a vehicle could be made or developed to do this in a satisfactory manner. I think we should just accept that those who have the squirrel instinct will gather the nuts of fortune and pile them up for a rainy day, and some of them will be wealthy and some of them will be poor.

I do not bleed too greatly for the lunch bucket brigade because the lunch bucket brigade in 1974 is breathing down the neck of the white collar class. In fact they are surpassing them. This is the way it should be, Mr. Speaker, because in fact these are the people who are so willing and able to get their hands dirty in producing an honest day's work in this society of ours, and these are important things.

So, Mr. Speaker, in concluding my brief remarks, I intend to vote for the bill. I have reservations. I am very much aware that there could be other investment vehicles that would work. I accept the fact that one of the commitments of this government during the former election was to give an opportunity for Albertans to invest. They are making this opportunity available and it is a good opportunity. I am confident that it is going to be a successful investment, providing however ...

[Applause]

...There is too much applause and I feel that I must say something derogatory at this time because I didn't get up here to applaud the government, Mr. Speaker. I got up here to point out their weaknesses. I've got to get back to the corpus delicti that the hon. Member for Calgary Bow buried.

So with these brief remarks, Mr. Speaker, I'll close off.

MR. STROM:

Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to have an opportunity to make a few remarks on Bill No. 32. I must confess I had expected that we might hear from some of the members in the front row. I humorously asked the Minister of Mines and Minerals whether he was going to get into the debate or not. He gave me a very evasive answer, so I am not able to count on his getting into the debate, Mr. Speaker. I am not sure whether he is waiting to get into the right pecking order on the particular responsibility he has or just what it is. But at least he has not assured me that he is going to get into the debate.

Mr. Speaker, I must say I found the remarks that have been made very interesting. I think we have had some excellent speeches made in regard to Bill No. 32. I am sure they have given the Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs considerable food for thought. I must say, Mr. Speaker, that I was a little disappointed with the hon. minister's speech in introducing Bill No. 32. I had expected that he would give us considerably more argument in support of the bill. I must say that in listening to the speech I sometimes gained certain impressions, and I'd like to go back and check the speech to see whether or not I was correct in the assessment I made.

Now it seemed very evident to me that the hon. Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs lacked the enthusiasm I had expected to see him demonstrate when speaking to the bill on second reading. I went through the speech in Hansard just to see whether or not I was being unfair. I would like to suggest to the hon. minister, Mr. Speaker, that I am not saying this with any point of trying to downgrade his address. But I certainly want to make it very clear that in the presentation he made there is no demonstration of enthusiasm.

He says, for example, "I am quite pleased"; he wasn't really pleased but he was quite pleased to have the opportunity to get up and move second reading. And then he said, "I believe it is a policy which will receive enthusiastic support." He goes on to say, "the Alberta Energy Company can be a unique part of that development." Later on in the speech,

Mr. Speaker, he points out that he believes the government "had a responsibility" to fill the need of presenting this kind of bill. In other words, I gathered he was a little bit under pressure to bring it forward. Then he said this:

But it is quite different and challenging, I think, to actually be an equity owner and watch the various projects being built and coming into production. I think it might be an ideal way for many Albertans to get a better understanding

Again in another paragraph he says, "I hope and I believe our citizens will support and enthusiastically invest in [it]."

As I go down the speech, Mr. Speaker, I find no note of enthusiasm for the bill that the hon. minister was presenting. I want to be fair with him. I gave some consideration to whether or not he had had enough time to think about the proposal they were making. And of course I find that Bill No. 32, I think, has been on the Order Paper longer than any other bill we have had and not yet considered. So I find it very difficult to say that it was on the spur of the moment that he had to rise to his feet and defend or explain on second reading the bill that was being presented to us yesterday.

Now he also said, Mr. Speaker, that one of the reasons he would not go into particular details was that the points had been made by the Premier in a policy statement. Also, I believe he suggested that the Premier had made considerable statements in regard to government policy when announcing the Syncrude project. I would like, of course, to examine this briefly later on if I may. I think it is rather important that we look at the policy statement made in the House some time ago.

In fairness to him, I would like to say that some of the more important points he made were these. First of all, Bill No. 32 is an integral part of the government's energy development. I have no argument with that, Mr. Speaker, because I believe it is a fair statement.

I think he also suggested that the government presently has adequate control over the rate of development of our mineral resources within the province of Alberta; we have adequate control as far as the area of environment is concerned and therefore there isn't any particular need to get into the energy company in order to get better control in these particular areas. And I certainly can agree with him about those statements.

He also suggested that the public, through the energy company, would be able to share in the profits and the risks - and I think it's pretty important to note that - the profits and the risks of the oil sands development. And, of course, as future plants develop, it will ensure an opportunity for Albertans to invest in the development of the resources of our province.

Then, also, there was the significant statement that this particular bill is meeting a need that couldn't be met by any other method. Mr. Speaker, I cannot accept that as a flat statement of fact and I would suggest to you, this evening, that there are alternate ways open to the government that they could follow if they wanted to. The flexibility of legislative authority is great, and as far as the development of natural resources is concerned I'm sure the government could find other ways and means of protecting the opportunity for Albertans to invest if they wanted to, and I would like to say more about that later on.

I listened with a great deal of interest to the hon. Member for Edmonton Kingsway and there again, Mr. Speaker, I've tried to analyse the reasons for several of the statements he made in the course of his speech. I'm sorry he isn't in his place this evening so that I might point this out to him. He went far out of his way, I thought, to explain his strong support for the free enterprise system, then he particularly singled out the NDP and gave them a bit of criticism for the stand they were taking, and the question that immediately came into my mind was why? Why did he find it necessary to spend a considerable amount of his time defending the free enterprise system, or why did he feel that it was necessary to state to this House, in the debate on Bill No. 32, that he was for free enterprise and, of course, would be sure to support it?

It was rather interesting that, after having made these points, he went on to suggest that we are living in changing times - and with this, of course, I have to agree - and then pointed out that under Bill No. 32 the government will be able to adapt [to] a more flexible basis if necessary, giving the distinct impression that the responsibility of the government is to try to attune itself to what it considers might be the public demand at this point in time. And if I might just take a minute on this point.

Mr. Speaker, I suggest that it might be well for us to very carefully consider what this particular objective is at this point in time. I recognize that there is a tremendous interest on the part of many, many people in having a share in the development of the resources within this province. Having said that, I think it's the responsibility of government, and certainly I feel it is my responsibility, to try to point out how this

can be accomplished without government involvement in the development of the natural resources of this province to the extent that is being recommended in Bill No. 32.

I am concerned about the new trends that are taking place and I think that we as legislators have a responsibility to try to point out what we think may be problems and what we actually believe the role of government should be. I have always felt that it is the role of government to establish the rules under which business shall operate within our province or, putting it more generally, Mr. Speaker, I would say that it is the responsibility of government to provide the rules under which our society will operate. But it is not the responsibility of [government] to get into competition with the business section of our society or with the developments that are necessarily taking place. I think it is the responsibility or the role of government to provide the necessary ancillary services that are required and this, I think, has been adequately handled within the province of Alberta and, with the revenues that are going to be available to government, will certainly continue to be very adequately met.

I believe it is the role of government to collect or obtain the necessary funds to perform government responsibilities. It should be noted here, Mr. Speaker, that the government has the power to collect, on behalf of all of its people, any percentage that it deems fair, whether it be in taxes or revenues from any other sources. I have always felt that government should only get into those areas where the job is not being adequately done by the private sector. I could mention a number of areas where this has been done in the past and where I think it can be justified. I'm not going to name them at this particular time. I know the government side of the House takes particular delight in pointing out some of the areas in which we as a government became involved and, of course, suggesting where we went astray. That, of course, could be a subject of debate at some other time and I have no intention of getting into it.

I do recognize, Mr. Speaker, that one of the problems the government will be facing now and for quite some time in the future is finding desirable places to spend the newly found revenue. I noted very carefully that the hon. member for Wetaskiwin-Leduc made reference to this yesterday when speaking on Bill 32. He used it as a support for the government getting into partnership with business and various projects under Bill 32. I cannot justify it on the same basis as was done by the hon. member. I realize the problems the government is going to be faced with, and I think every member in this House does, but certainly I don't think that is justification for saying we ought to get into a partnership with this. I know there is a need for clear-cut guidelines and I say this is something we are going to have to look at very carefully.

Now, let me return again if I may, Mr. Speaker, to the policy paper that was referred to by the hon. Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs. I went back and had a good look at it because I was interested in noting what the Premier had said in regard to the various areas in which the energy company might become involved. I think, as we look through that particular document, we will find that it mentions a number of them on page 6. For example, it suggests the Syncrude power plant, where the energy company would take up 50 per cent ownership. In the ownership of the pipeline from the tar sands to Edmonton, it would be 80 per cent. In the Syncrude project itself it would be 20 per cent. Pan-Alberta Gas Ltd. was mentioned as one area - there is a question mark as to the percentage they would get into it.

Then they talked about the Suffield gas field and I have not been able to determine what percentage they would get into in the Suffield gas field. But I would suggest this, Mr. Speaker, that if they are looking at those [areas] and they are talking about mineral resource development and the involvement of Albertans in development in the future, how about coal? What percentage are they going to pick up at McIntyre Porcupine? Or if they want to go into forestry products, what about the various pulp mills? Or if they are going into new pulp mills, what is the percentage going to be there? Or saw mills, or how about cement? Then we might look at the matter of the McKenzie pipeline? I would hope that part of it is going to run through the province of Alberta. What percentage are we going to get into there?

All I can say is that there are no firm guidelines, Mr. Speaker. There are no firm guidelines as to the areas we are going to get into or the energy company is going to get into. There are no firm guidelines as to what the percentage is going to be. I suggest that these must be carefully noted.

What is the result of the energy company getting into these various activities? I daresay one very obvious result will be that [in any] particular project the energy company becomes involved in, this will be a stamp of approval on that particular project. It can't be otherwise, Mr. Speaker.

I am convinced that the day or the hour that Albertans realize the energy company is in a particular venture, it will become an automatic guarantee that that is a safe project to get into. I say that is a very interesting concept and it may be one that the hon. minister will want to deal with.

But let's take the reverse situation. If it works that way in regard to companies in which the energy company becomes involved, I think it is just as fair to say that those resource companies that do not have shares picked up by the energy company will, in fact, have a handicap placed against them, Mr. Speaker.

Maybe I am being rather harsh in my assessment, but I must state it as I see it and I can see it no other way. I have heard a number of businessmen say on occasion, we have no objection to government getting into partnership with us because that is a mark of approval first of all, and secondly, they can't afford to permit a failure. Well, Mr. Speaker, I think this is something that we ought to very carefully think about before we get heavily involved in this particular act.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the other day I asked you a question in regard to whether or not I would be able to refer to certain sections if I should happen to get into the debate. My reason for referring to sections at this time is simply to try to indicate areas of policy about which I am considerably concerned.

For example, in PART I, 3(4), the board of directors will have the authority to remove a director and to reappoint a man in his place. I think this gives a considerable amount of power to the board of directors.

In Section 15, it says that this is not an agent of the Crown, and then I say what is it? Because I think you have to assume that it can only have a close relationship to government.

In PART 2, 19(c), a statement is made that:

unless otherwise agreed by the Company and the Minister ... no voting shares of the Company shall be purchased, owned or held by the Government of Alberta other than voting shares acquired by ... purchase, dividend or otherwise.

In other words there is a clause which will permit it to be changed, if they so desire.

In PART 2, 24(3), it makes this statement: "So far as it is in the public interest to do so ..." the government is to hold 50 per cent of the voting shares. And I have to ask myself what does the term "So far as in the public interest ..." mean? What does it really mean? I can't interpret it and I would like to know the interpretation of that particular section. I suppose we may be told that we will have an opportunity of discussing it in Committee of the Whole, but I simply want to point out that these are concerns in the structure of the bill itself.

In PART 3, 27, it goes on and suggests that the government may hold "... one per cent of the ... voting shares ... or such other percentage ... as may be fixed by ..." O.C. or by regulation. In other words the one per cent doesn't hold. It can be anything that the cabinet might determine by O.C. or by regulation.

In PART 5, 35, it continues on: "The Lieutenant Governor in Council may make regulations ... respecting any matter or thing necessary or advisable for carrying out the intent and purposes of this Act."

Then in Section 37 it goes on to suggest that "The Crown is bound by this Act." But then it goes on on the same page, that as suggested by an O.C. or regulation anything in the Act can be changed to suit. So I am wondering just what is it that the Crown is going to be bound by. I think this is something that is pretty important and that we need to take a careful look at when considering the bill itself.

Mr. Speaker, I want to make it very clear that I appreciate the concern expressed for getting Albertans involved in the development of our natural resources. I appreciate the interest of individuals to get a piece of the action, but I suggest that equity investment, Mr. Speaker, is only one area in which this can happen. There are a number of areas which in the past have provided tremendous benefits to Albertans and will continue to provide tremendous benefits to our people as we see the mineral resources developing within the province. I think of the professional services that are required for any industry that is set up, the servicing of the industry itself. This whole operation has a spin-off varying anywhere from five to seven to one. Certainly it has tremendous benefit to all Albertans. There are the lease rentals, royalties, taxes, income tax and so on. There are a number of areas in which Albertans are getting a tremendous benefit and I suggest this can be changed if the government feels it is not adequate.

Now, we do come, however, to the question, is it possible for the government to provide an opportunity for Albertans to invest other than through Bill No. 32? I suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, that there is. I noted that the hon. member from - I want to say Devon, but that's where my honourable colleague from Wetaskiwin-Leduc ...

AN HON. MEMBER:

Drayton Valley!

MR. STROM:

... Drayton Valley made the comment that the Government of Alberta - I think that is the way he stated it, and I'll just look it up in Hansard to be correct in quoting him - he stated, "I think, Mr. Speaker, when we looked at the development of the GCOS plant some years ago when the government offered the shares to the public"

Well now, let me say first of all, Mr. Speaker, the government did not offer the shares to the public. The government of the day made an agreement with GCOS that a certain percentage of their debentures would be made available to the public of Alberta if they wanted [that].

I think it's rather interesting to note that at that particular time the tremendous success story of their investment in Alberta Gas Trunk was in the minds of many Albertans. There were numerous people who, on the strength of that investment, were most anxious to get into GCOS some way or another and therefore it was very much oversubscribed.

I think if it didn't do anything else it, maybe, taught Albertans the lesson that there are some investments that must be considered as having risk factors, even though, Mr. Speaker, under that particular operation they were guaranteed that they would not be in a loss position if they kept the investment to maturity.

Now, I say that there are methods by which Albertans can be given an opportunity to invest, without going through Bill No. 32. I think the hon. Member for Macleod, the hon. Member for Cardston and the hon. Member for Calgary Bow have pointed out their concern very clearly.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I think I will be able to wind it up within the allotted time. Thank you very much.

I pointed out very clearly that their concern was that the little man, the poorer individual - and certainly that is open to definition - should have an opportunity to invest. And first of all, I want to emphasize as clearly as I can that I am in 100 per cent accord. That is one of the areas towards which I think we ought to direct our attention. But I say that this bill does not necessarily accomplish it.

By agreement, by legislation, by qualification of licence, the government could make available to Albertans a certain percentage that would be set aside for them in any of the developments that will take place in the future. I think it is the responsibility of government to ensure that this is available. At the end of a certain period, if it is not picked up by the people, it could be picked up by the government and held for a time in trust for Albertans in case they want to invest later on.

I think it is the responsibility of government to clearly outline to Albertans those areas in which they will protect the Alberta investor. For example, I think at this very time the government ought to be making very clear the percentage that they expect will be available to Albertans in the investment in pipeline. I think they ought to be making known the percentage that would be available for investment in the tar sands plant, in forestry projects, in power plants. And, Mr. Speaker, one of the fears that I have at the present time is that if 50 per cent is good in this particular venture I can very easily hear some politician saying, elect me, I'll make it 60 per cent. Somebody else is going to say, elect me and I'll make it 70, and the first thing you know you are moving directly into the government control about which every member in this House, less one, has expressed a concern.

And I suggest that if that is our concern, then we are headed in the direction of doing just that in the bill before us.

Let us remember that our objective is a share for every Albertan. I have no objection to working for that goal, and I would certainly do all that I can to help. But, Mr. Speaker, I have to express my concern that we will be facing difficulties on the route that we are presently taking.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

May the hon. Minister close the debate.

MR. LUDWIG:

Mr. Speaker, in rising to take part in what is touted to be the most important bit of historical legislation in this province, I am amazed that the ministers are quiet. We have as a forerunner to the legislation a policy statement by the Premier. It's neither compatible with Conservative policy nor compatible with the bill.

It's important to the government, it appears, to have good advance billing. That's important. Make the initial impact and after that let the chips fall where they may. This happens to be an attitude that will work to the disadvantage of the government and perhaps to the disadvantage of the people of this province.

I am rather interested to hear debate on that side stating that it's popular. That's what is important, that it's popular. The rest of the details are not that important. Whether principles are involved or not is a different factor.

I heard someone say, well the project of the park is popular so we can afford it. That is rather shabby thinking, Mr. Speaker, and something I did not expect to hear from people higher up in government. It's popular, so we'll find the money that people will agree. But the people also want to hear details. They want to know the whole picture. They're not going to get it by just asking questions of the hon. ministers opposite, and they don't respond.

I have a lot of regard for the hon. Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs. I think he has a tremendous responsibility. And if there was some doubt in his mind as to whether this is really the right way to go, that is understandable, Mr. Speaker. They are treading on strange ground. They are treading in the business of government becoming a partner in business. We don't know whether this is just a one shot kind of affair, or whether this is the beginning of the trend, or whether we are well into the trend of government in business.

Another thing I notice as we listen to the hon. members opposite is that it is going to be big. It is important that something be really big. I am saying, Mr. Speaker, that there well may be some winners in this bill. I think if it is handled properly and carefully and controlled rigidly and the details and specifics spelled out so that we really know what we are talking about and are supporting here, and so that we know and can tell the people exactly what's going to happen, that it might help.

What I am saying is, there is a lot of doubt in the minds of a lot of hon. members here as to what this is all about, because the specifics and the details are not in it. I suppose we should not ask questions. Thus the hon. Premier gets up and says, well he's asking questions, he can't be too enthusiastic about it. It happened the last day and that's a pretty poor level of debate when you have to resort to tactics like that. We have to ask questions, for many reasons.

They get up and say that the future of the province hangs on this bill being successful, that the implementation of the program under this bill has to be successful. Well then, if it has to be successful, as those who are shareholders and trustees of the wealth of this province for the people [say], it certainly behooves everybody, not just on this side of the House but on both sides of the House, to become thoroughly informed. I am sure there must be some good explanations by the hon. minister, Mr. Getty. I have great regard for his ability and his business experience.

I also feel that the great things that happen to a lot of people in this province, the success of a lot of people in this province, and in fact the success of the present government at the polls was on the theory and on the express belief that we do subscribe to the private enterprise, the competitive enterprise system. We all declare in favour of it without exception. One has to wonder what the definition of the competitive enterprise system is, and whether this bill is compatible with it or are we just going to bend the principle a little bit because it happens to be the popular thing to do.

I think that the hon. minister, since it appears he is the only one from the other side of the ministers who is going to get into the debate, has some responsibility to explain to us that the alternatives were all considered and that there are no alternatives. I am saying that this government has established beyond any doubt, and Ottawa has established beyond any doubt, that they are able to give the people almost anything they want, and also they can take from the people just about anything they want, and so there is another way of handling all commercial enterprises, Mr. Speaker, without the government going in.

Now this venture can be successful, Mr. Speaker. It can be successful. It can't be anything else because the government is guaranteeing it and it will have the legislative authority to pick those areas of business that are most likely to succeed. They are not likely to get into any wildcatting. You can count on that, there will be no real risk taken by the government corporation.

They talk about government and people as a partner - government and some people as a partner because obviously there is no assurance that all the people will be involved as shareholders because [the bill] can technically mean that 100 shareholders can own all the shares. We have 1,700,000 people. So it can be a serious problem, for instance, if we don't listen to the opposition in this regard and see that the beneficiaries of the wealth and the money we hold in trust for the people get an equal share. And I don't mean equal - each according to what he can buy, each according to what he has in the bank and can get in quickly and buy or connive at getting more shares than somebody else, as has happened in the past. A scheme, a plan has to be developed where everyone is assured, whether he has money or not, of equal participation. I'm talking about Albertans' equal participation in this venture.

The hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview stood up and said that he would support this bill - although he gave it some criticism he indicated that he supports it - and this bill may well be a good model for legislation in some of the provinces neighbouring Alberta. This has happened before. I see some of the honourable members are not in. For whatever reason, I am sure they are otherwise engaged.

We hear talk that this may well be a trend toward socialism. There were some businesses in the history of the world, and there still are, where the government and certain enterprises were in partnership. These businesses became big, they became very big, they became powerful. In fact they became so powerful that they were telling the governments what to do, and I am thinking of places like the Krupp works. That was a partnership between a government and some very powerful industrial magnates. So which way is this thing going? Is this thing going to be a trend, establishing that the government will look around and if this is good why not make more of a good thing? Will this continue as a trend? Will we eventually end up with government being involved in everything that's worth-while? The question is, who will take care of the rest, because it isn't everything that is profitable.

I think that not too long ago a member of parliament from western Canada made the statement - in fact it was quite recent - that there is no room for a westerner in the Conservative party in Ottawa. It's a fairly prominent name, and I believe that if that honourable member of parliament was here today perhaps the honourable ministers opposite would not be smiling. They would be fleeing from the wrath to come I think, because he would probably take them to task and tell them exactly what he thought of some of their attitudes. This a famous name in Alberta, and we all know who I am talking about. But he made that statement and got a lot of coverage, that there is no room for a westerner in the Conservative party. It had to be something very serious that made that man say what he did. I am now saying that there is no room for a competitive enterpriser in the Tory government of this province unless you can stand up and say that this bill is compatible with competitive enterprise.

It is interesting when a lot of businessmen today are concerned about the credibility of politicians. They are concerned about what will happen tomorrow, how much we can stand by way of juggling and side-stepping of ground rules that we are used to working under. How much more of this and how much more of that, and how much more taxation can we pay? But they still prefer to have the government regulate taxation, regulate commerce and protect the individual by legislation. There is a fear, Mr. Speaker, of competing with a government that's loaded with opportunity, loaded with the legislative authority to make or break anything it likes and choose its own weapons and rules.

It's rather interesting but this thing will have repercussions far beyond what is apparent in this House, that we're feeling that everybody's going to get rich fairly quick and it's popular. It may be popular but we have to assess the situation. Is it correct? Is it something that will endure? Or, when the goodies run out - no matter how long it takes - will someone then have to tell the people the facts of life, that they're sorry but the well has run dry, the profits are not so big and you may as well cash in your tickets while you're ahead of the game?

I want to stress the fact of equality for all investors. This you'll never be able to get around, Mr. Speaker, because every Albertan believes he will be getting a piece of the action, and I don't mean as the bill now reads and as the advance notice that this bill got in the Alberta Energy Company statement by the hon. Premier that every person will get a chance to invest. Every person now has a chance to invest without the government leading the way. Every person has a chance to invest but there are hundreds of thousands of people in this province who can't get any investment for the simple reason that they haven't got the money.

I'm saying that this government has an obligation to make some arrangements with the lending authorities or directly, so that every Albertan be given and be advised that he has so many shares which he can pick up. Unless someone writes back and says, I don't wish to, and I've been advised as to the ramifications of the answer that I don't wish to pick up my portion of the investment, then that is a different matter.

We mustn't make it compulsory because there will be some people who simply are not interested in any event. There are other people who will come around and say, I have \$100,000, I'm ready and willing, but I don't believe that is equality in the least. That's permitting those who have been able to manage, who know the investment business and who are rather astute in these matters. If you say every Albertan has an opportunity to invest, you can rest assured, Mr. Speaker, that some will get lots and some will get nothing. I'm saying that when we're taking an area like Suffield, today it belongs equally to every Albertan but once the company takes it over will the same situation exist? Will it be the same? I don't mean that they just get half because a government will take half of it, so it means every individual has an opportunity to benefit from government enrichment. That isn't good enough. I believe we have to have some assurance from the other side that everyone will have his fair share. I mean an equal share. We're preaching equality because that happens to be the issue. It isn't enough to say it's good, it will be big, it will make the government look like it's really a mover, it's a business and if it works then the sky's the limit.

So this is the stand I want to take: I don't think the bill in its present form, Mr. Speaker, should be supported by anyone who has any pretext, or who feels that he is a firm believer on a matter of principle in the competitive enterprise system, because the way I read the bill, the way I've heard the hon. members here speak, and [in] the advance billing that this bill got, it is not compatible with commercial competition. Unless somebody can state that my view of the situation is wrong, I believe much has to be done to this bill. Much as I find it difficult to believe that the government is prepared to tell us that you have to rely on us, you must believe us, you must have faith in us and you vote for the bill, we'll do the right thing - that is not what the people expect of any MLA in this Legislature, Mr. Speaker. That is not what they expect at all. He is acting on behalf of the people in this debate on this bill and, like a party negotiating on behalf of a client, he ought to know the details in order that he may know whether to accept the settlement as it were, or whether to reject it.

Sometimes because a bill happens to be popular, because people would like to invest, and many will, we should not cross over it lightly and take the position that, well, if it is popular we'll make it work. That isn't good enough. We want to be assured that it will work. We want to be assured that we are not going to have egg on our faces in the years to come when we find that a group of people owns the bulk of the investment and is enriching itself from the choice bits of development in the petroleum industry, while others are watching the benefits go by. I think that it isn't unfair, it isn't unfair at all, to ask for these things, and it is our responsibility to continue to ask.

With those few remarks, Mr. Speaker, I believe that we have to do some soul-searching, and we have to keep demanding from the government a complete detailed explanation of every move that is going to be made.

We talk about people being partners. The people are going to be the minority shareholders and always will be and I do not believe that the expression of this company will be in the control of Albertans. There is a grave difference between the control of Albertans and the control of the Alberta government. There is a grave difference, Mr. Speaker. Every time that this advance notice we have which states that the control will remain in the hands of Albertans - that may be but the control will always remain in the hands of the government.

A corporation, a government corporation - they are saying that it's going to be big. I'm sure it will be the biggest in Alberta and will continue to grow, much to the dismay of those people who invested, who got into business and made this province what it is today. Because up to now, up to this point in time, Mr. Speaker, there has not been any government enterprise, as it were, on a scale like this except in those areas where nobody else would go in. This province became one of the greatest economic centres in North America, one of the most buoyant economies with high standards, a great promise for the future, not under government involvement but under the competitive enterprise system.

We're going to change the ground rules now, and hope to do better. I feel, Mr. Speaker, that with regard to the choice playing fields that the government chose, they couldn't do anything but succeed. They couldn't do anything but succeed financially that is. But whether there's another way - I want to know what alternatives were considered. Why is it that we will allow the bulk of the business in this province to be regulated by legislation and taxation to determine which way the economy goes, while in these particular instances the government got into office by declaring that it subscribes to the principles of competitive enterprise, as did the government it replaced? I believe it will not be too difficult to assess that the government that replaces this government will be one that will dissociate itself from the principles of this government in due course, Mr. Speaker.

I'm sorry some of the hon. ministers, especially the Premier who touted this thing as being a great breakthrough in history, government going into business - that he isn't in the House to at least give us the benefit of some of his thinking on this bill; whether it is something that B.C. has done or will do, something Saskatchewan has done and will do,

something Manitoba has done and will continue to do, something that Lewis will continue, or whether we're heading in the direction of the Krupp kind of enterprise where the government and a few big business magnates will control everything and, consequently, the people, Mr. Speaker.

I believe one more point which doesn't appear to have gotten through to the people is that one of the greatest threats, I believe, to anything democratic is the public dependence on the government, the people's dependence for their well-being on the government, not on their own initiative, not on anything else but what the government is going to do.

If we can form 10 corporations like this, we may as well give everybody an investment and everybody a guaranteed income - we're not saying this. We're saying that if it is such a great thing, and if you carry this thing to its logical conclusion, if we had 10 Suffields, and 10 corporations, then Albertans could forget about working, their capital would keep them rich. That is another factor, Mr. Speaker, that has to be considered.

One question has never been answered but has been posed in this Legislature; is this about as far as the government is going to go into business, or is this just an indication of things to come? I once posed a question to an hon. minister asking what else we have in store. How many years will it take to take the whole industry over? Or will things develop in such a manner that the government will have to do it?

It's strange how the Conservative party in Ottawa will rise in its place and attack the federal government for getting involved in business, getting too much involved in the control and regulation of business. That is a no-no. In Ottawa that mustn't be done. The Tories are the defenders of the competitive enterprise system - some of the greatest in this country.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

MR. LUDWIG:

Yes. But there can't be - if Jack Horner and Baldwin were here today, I doubt whether they'd care to be associated with the brand of Tory we have in this province.

AN HON. MEMBER:

No way.

MR. LUDWIG:

Yes. I would like to hear them. I think he would damn all of you to where he thinks you belong. He has done that before.

So, Mr. Speaker, it is interesting I believe when one of these hon. members of parliament comes through. It would be interesting to note what they think of this government squealing because Ottawa is getting involved - getting too much out of business, setting up corporations which will be competitive. The oil industry is squirming about the whole thing and still this government is doing the same thing, preaching one thing but doing another.

They stand up on the other side, rejoice and defend their position and their bill before they know what it is. I think that we would not be discharging our responsibility if we stood up and said we were voting for it the way it is. I certainly have not made up my mind on this bill, but [because of] the state it is in, with all the blanks that are not filled in, with all the contradictions in the bill itself, and in particular, the complete incompatibility between the Premier's advance billing and the bill [itself], there is no way that I would associate my vote with this bill, Mr. Speaker.

MR. DIXON:

Mr. Speaker, I wanted to make one or two suggestions which I feel are worthy of consideration before we go further into this bill, and I have one or two remarks to make about what has gone on during the debate on Bill No. 32, Mr. Speaker.

I am always concerned as a member, when the government is investing taxation money or if it is investing money that it receives from our natural resources, as to whether it is a good thing. I think this is what will test the time of this bill, if it is proclaimed at a later date.

I have been quite amused. Number one, of course, was the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview, my good friend who shocked the House by saying that he was going to support this particular bill. Right away, my suspicions were brought to light. The hon.

member, as we all know, was elected honestly with the idea that he was a socialist, and he practises the fact that he thinks government control is the best thing for us and makes no secret of it. But when you look around and see that a Tory government, which was elected as [supporting] free enterprise, has the socialist climb on the bandwagon and say that is a wonderful thing, well naturally I am doubly suspicious.

I can understand the government is having problems as to what to do, Mr. Speaker, with the petro-dollars that they have fallen heir to.

You know, there really are two types of socialists. There is the honest type of socialist like the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview who was elected as a socialist. Then you have the other socialist. He's usually a millionaire who has so much money he can afford to be a socialist, and this is what has happened to the government opposite. They have fallen heir to a lot of found money that was made possible by the private enterprise system, number one, and [by] the private enterprise people in Alberta developing the oil industry putting us in the position we are in today to take advantage of a worldwide increase in petroleum products.

I know the hon. members opposite may disagree with me on this, but nevertheless it is true. It was the former government with its businesslike administration which left them in the position they are in today with all this money. They can afford to at least tinker with socialism if not fully practise it. I only have to go back - and it's not only because I happen to be a member opposite, but I was just reading here today about the Alberta Progressive Conservative Convention, and what really scared me was when the hon. the Premier reminded his 1,000 applauding supporters during the main convention address that they had elected an activist government. Boy, if you get the combination of an activist and a socialist government all in one, I'm telling you Alberta could be in trouble.

AN HON. MEMBER:

They are now.

MR. DIXON:

I can't for the life of me, Mr. Speaker, figure out the difference between Premier Barrett's socialism and Premier Lougheed's socialism, because they are both going along the same path, government in business. I can't see the difference between Mr. Barrett going into the petroleum business or the lumber business and this government going into business, whether it be the petroleum business, the Suffield gas business, the tar sands business or anything else, because we are in an excellent position in this province not to go into business. We already control the business, so why would we want to buy into our own business which we already control? If we aren't getting a fair share then we should change the rules.

Tonight I looked up in the dictionary what a socialist was, Mr. Speaker. It said that a socialist is a man who believes in the means of production and the distribution being owned and controlled or managed by the government. Then I was naturally interested, after reading the hon. the Premier's speech to the convention back on February 4, [in looking up] what an activist was, and I'm telling you, it really scares you, Mr. Speaker. It said, the practise of doing things with vigour and decision. Now how do you like that?

MR. LOUGHEED:

That's great.

MR. DIXON:

It says an activist is one who believes in activism, especially in politics. Now listen to this one, Mr. Speaker, because the government hasn't been in too long. Activity: a student who has too many outside activities may find it's too hard to keep up with his studies. So I'm saying, Mr. Speaker, to you and to the hon. members of this house, that maybe the hon. Premier has been too busy with his studies to really reach a final analysis of what we're getting into here in Alberta, as far as government entering into business in the way we seem to be going today.

History has tried to tell us in so many ways the folly of government getting into business. The ditches are full of industries that have run off the track and cost the taxpayers a lot of money, whether it was by direct investment by the government or direct control by the government, or the government in combination with the people getting into business. The heavy water plant in Nova Scotia where billions of dollars have been spent has yet to produce one pound of heavy water.

The Clairtone Corporation as was mentioned by the hon. Member for Wetaskiwin - the TV sets and the radios are heard no more. We don't need to go into the things that have happened in Saskatchewan and British Columbia since they have had socialism because that's

well known, but I'd like to use the position in particular of the former Tory government of Nova Scotia. I don't know whether I agree with the hon. Member for Wetaskiwin-Leduc who said the Hon. Robert Stanfield had rushed off to Ottawa to get away from it all, but on second thought maybe there is some truth to that because there is a sorry story to tell in Nova Scotia, and any other province for that matter, where the government feels that it can do things better than those people who have been in business for years.

DR. HOHOL:

Don't cool off.

MR. DIXON:

Oh no, Mr. Speaker. The hon. Minister of Manpower and Labour tells me not to cool off. I'm just trying to get a second breath here because there are so many things to touch on. So I am going to encourage the hon. Minister of Manpower and Labour to participate in this debate.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed, agreed.

MR. DIXON:

As somebody mentioned earlier, there haven't been too many from the front benches participating in this debate and it's awfully difficult, because when you go back to your constituency and they say, what did the hon. Minister of Municipal Affairs have to say on this matter, what does the hon. Minister of Health and Social Development have to say on this matter - well, I have to tell them they haven't said a thing.

[Interjections]

And of course I'm going to be awfully disappointed if my good friend, the hon. Minister of Mines and Minerals, doesn't get into this act, because I'm sure he's the honourable gentleman who will get the flack from industry on this bill, not the hon. Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs. He can use the excuse that he's down in Ottawa trying to get a higher price for something else for us, or a reduced price, or whatever it is.

So I'm hoping that the hon. Minister of Mines and Minerals would get up in this debate, because it's that industry that is really going to be affected in this particular case.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Agreed.

MR. DIXON:

The test that any government should really apply to itself is the test of necessity. I don't believe you can give me two reasons why the government should get into business with all the investment money that is ready and willing to come into this province of Alberta. It has been for many years, and as long as this government stays out of socialism, which I'm trying to encourage them to stay out of, that investment money will still be around.

I believe there's a gentleman in Edmonton today from one of the trust companies; he thinks up until now Alberta hasn't been a bad place in which to invest. I just hope we don't shake his confidence when we start talking about the government getting into business.

We are faced today, Mr. Speaker, with a really disturbing trend, not only in this government but in other governments I've mentioned, of governments developing or owning, or partially owning resource companies. Of course they are always formed, Mr. Speaker, on the pretext that they are for the common people.

Now we over on this side of the House would be the first ones to rush and okay this bill if we really felt that the common people were going to get a fair shake. But I think that when you talk about investment, if you do any research at all, Mr. Speaker, you will see that it's usually people who are in the \$10,000 bracket and over who are doing the investing, not the ordinary common everyday fellow we're thinking about.

So I would urge the government to look seriously at this bill. If they've got so much money to spend, and it looks like they're going to have a lot of these petro-dollars around, maybe they can think of something that is more interesting and more worth while and more constructive than the government participating in business, investing in

business, in many cases ending up having a monopoly, and then trying to fool the people by saying it's for the common good and that the common man is going to benefit.

I am sure that if you go to a political meeting in the next election or two elections from now, or for any election, and ask the audience how many have invested, you'd be surprised how very few will stand up and say they have money invested. Because after he gets through paying income tax and all the other taxes, very little is left for the ordinary man from the low income that he usually is on.

However, I believe that Alberta, Mr. Speaker, should be the last province where the government is worrying about putting and investing money. If they have any spare money, Mr. Speaker, and I am sure they are going to if the present oil demand keeps up - and the royalties have been increased, and many, many other things. With the buoyant economy we have at the present time, I think it's very imperative that this government think very, very seriously before they make any moves that are going to discourage investment by the private sector, whether it be in Alberta or from outside of Alberta. We need to encourage them rather than discourage them.

However, if you look at this bill, I believe it is just a bill that is trying to give the opinion to Albertans that the government is doing something for them. If you really get down to looking at the bill, Mr. Speaker, you will see that it's not really going to do the great things that have been espoused from the other side of the House.

It's only, I think, to support the power and influence of the party, and along with that, it is going to retrench the bureaucracy that we have. If the hon. Premier or someone else opposite can tell me the difference between the NDP investment in industry and the Alberta Tory government investment in industry I'd like to know what it is, because it is strange that the press and others who are opposed to the NDP say, well, that is a terrible thing. However, we can do it here in Alberta and for some strange reason it's not socialism. Well, I can't see the difference, and until I am shown the difference I am going to be opposed to government intervention in business.

I believe our first step, Mr. Speaker, if we really want to do something for the ordinary man in Alberta - we have so much money coming in, why do we need to have the heavy income tax that we have - our first step is to reduce the income tax, for example, so that the ordinary man, instead of paying \$50 to \$100 a month, if he is working at some construction company, if he could save that \$50 or \$100 a month and wouldn't have to pay it in taxes, let him do his own investing.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Right.

MR. DIXON:

This is what we need. Why in heaven's name, Mr. Speaker, do we have to have the government doing the investing for people? We have been able to carry on right to 1973 and build the great nation we have, and in particular our great province, without government interference. And so I say to you, Mr. Speaker, and to the members of the House that if we want to do something for the ordinary people then reduce taxes so they'll have some real purchasing power left that they can do their own investing with.

And the second step, Mr. Speaker: if we feel, and honestly feel as a government, that we are not getting our fair share from our resources, then we have, by means of this legislature, the means to ensure the people of Alberta that we will get a fair share for them. That is a better bill of goods to sell the people of Alberta than government participating in industry, which only means a greater growth of an already large bureaucracy. Big government is only going to get bigger unless we put an end to it by saying, let the people do something for themselves. Let's reduce the taxation in this province so the ordinary fellow will have some money left, so he will be in a position to invest in this great province of ours. Let's leave industry alone. It is best capable of running the industry in our province, as it has been able to do for so many years.

MR. CLARK:

Mr. Speaker, rising to take part in the debate on Bill 32, let me say at the outset that I believe we've had an excellent quality of debate on Bill 32. May I also say, Mr. Speaker, that I've been very surprised that this particular time we've had the Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs and, if my memory serves me correctly, three government backbenchers who have take part in this debate.

Mr. Speaker, it seems to me that this particular bill and this legislation perhaps is the most important piece of legislation that we will be dealing with during this particular session.

At least, Mr. Speaker, this was the way it was interpreted when the Speech from the Throne was presented, and [from] statements following that, not only by members of the government and members of the opposition but also members of the media.

I would be less than fair, Mr. Speaker, if I didn't say that I have been extremely surprised that the Minister of Mines and Minerals and several other cabinet ministers have neither recognized the importance of this bill nor seen fit to take part in the debate. I trust, Mr. Speaker, that perhaps during the committee work on the debate, a number of the cabinet ministers and some more of the backbenchers on the government side will take part.

Let me also say, Mr. Speaker, that we have had a number of press releases which have been made by the government regarding the Alberta Energy Company. I recall being at the energy conference, and [I recall] the release concerning the Alberta Energy Company. It seems to me, Mr. Speaker, that it is rather appropriate, given the regard the Progressive Conservative party has for the democratic process, that we might well have heard an elaboration on these press releases which have been made to the people of this province, and in fact to the people of Canada. I hope, Mr. Speaker, this isn't a trend we are going to follow in the future in this Legislature, that we are going to get more of the government pronouncements made outside the Legislature and in fact less government cabinet and backbench participation in important pieces of legislation such as this one.

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, let me say that there are two basic principles of this bill which I think are very appealing to Albertans. One is the opportunity for many Albertans to invest in natural resource development in this province. It's been properly pointed out by the member from Cardston, several other members from this side of the House, and in fairness some members from the other side of the House, that presently there are a large variety of opportunities for Albertans to invest.

Nevertheless, when we look at this legislation, Mr. Speaker, I hope it is fair to say - and I emphasize that - I hope it is fair to say that as a result of this legislation, Bill No. 32, The Alberta Energy Company, literally thousands more Albertans are truly going to become investors in the natural resource development in this province. If that happens, Mr. Speaker, it will be a credit to all the members in the Legislature. On the other hand, Mr. Speaker, if in five years time we find out in this province, regardless who the government is, that there isn't a substantive increase in the number of Albertans who are investors in the natural resource developments in this province, then in fact, that will be a damning commentary on this Legislature and on this particular legislation.

Let me say, Mr. Speaker, that another desirable portion of this legislation, as I see it, is that it does make it possible for Albertans - and I emphasize Albertans - it does make it possible for Albertans to maintain more control of development company and development organization here in the province of Alberta.

It wasn't very long ago that some remarks were made by the President of Alberta Gas Trunk, when he pointed out to a audience in eastern Canada that one of the things western Canadians and Albertans really want is greater control over the industrial development which takes place in Alberta and western Canada. I am hopeful once again, Mr. Speaker, that will be one of the end results of this particular legislation.

Now, Mr. Speaker, from my own particular point of view - and several members have expressed varying points of view on this - I expect the Alberta Energy Company, and the investments that it will have, namely Suffield, the pipeline coming down from the tar sands and the power plant investment to do very well on the stock market. I expect that it will do well. I think it is fair to say, the Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs in his introduction indicated that. He also pointed out that it isn't a lead pipe cinch, which I think is important to remind Albertans. Nevertheless, Mr. Speaker, from my point of view I expect the Alberta Energy Company to be a successful investment on the market if in fact it goes forward with the three projects that have already been outlined.

I believe, Mr. Speaker, that it is also important for all members of the Assembly to keep in mind that up until this particular time all Albertans have shared equally in the benefits of natural resource development in this province. I say that, Mr. Speaker, because up until now the take as far as the public is concerned has been through either royalties or lease rental revenue accruing to the province. We are, Mr. Speaker, embarking here on a somewhat different course.

Albertans will still continue to benefit equally from the royalties and from the rentals which the province receives, but as this legislation now sits, Mr. Speaker, it provides an opportunity, I suggest, for a limited number of Albertans to get a much larger piece of the profit pie and we will cease to have an even distribution of the benefits of natural resource development in this province, from the standpoint of government involvement. We're talking about government involvement in very simple and very crude terms. I see the government now becoming involved not only in setting the rules of the game and not only as the umpire in the game, but as a result of this particular legislation they are becoming active participants in the game itself.

A number of my colleagues on this side of the House have expressed their concern about the government involvement in this particular area. I believe it was the hon. Member for Cardston and also the hon. Member for Calgary Bow who said there's no question this legislation is going to be popular. I don't deny that, Mr. Speaker, but because the legislation is going to be popular, and I believe it will do well in the market, that doesn't lessen anyone's responsibility to look at some of the defects in this particular legislation.

I would like to refer back just a moment, Mr. Speaker, to the comments made by the Member for Cardston when he talked in terms of making it possible for every Albertan to invest, and I believe that's vital. Every Albertan should have an opportunity for an equal share as far as the Alberta Energy Company is concerned.

I know very well that some Albertans won't be interested. I know very well that there will be many Albertans, unfortunately, who won't be able to finance shares in the Alberta Energy Company despite installment purchases. But I say this, Mr. Speaker, the Alberta Energy Company should assign to every Albertan, over a certain age, a certain number of shares and those shares should be held in escrow for those Albertans for at least a period of three years. Perhaps, at the end of a period of three years, Mr. Speaker, at least the dividends from the company would allow those people who can't afford it to buy a portion of the shares that they have been allotted. Those shares that people chose not to take at the end of the three-year period, after the shares were held in escrow, could then go back to the Alberta Energy Company. I would suggest, Mr. Speaker, that then new Albertans and Albertans who came of age at that time could have first opportunity once again to acquire the shares.

The hon. Member for Cardston pointed out, Mr. Speaker, that Albertans are investing, at this time, at the rate of approximately \$1 million a week, yes, \$1 million a week. That is a very, very sizable amount of investment in this province. I believe, Mr. Speaker, that a sizable portion of that investment can be channelled into the Alberta Energy Company and I feel, Mr. Speaker, that every Albertan must have this opportunity. The suggestion made by my colleague, the member for Pincher Creek-Crowsnest, when he talked of making use of social insurance numbers, I believe will prevent several of the problems which arose when the Alberta Gas Trunk shares were on the market a number of years ago. The real test, Mr. Speaker, for this legislation is going to be for us to look back in five years and see how many, I hope hundreds of thousands of new Albertans, are shareholders in resource development in this particular province.

Mr. Speaker, might I also suggest that the Government of Alberta, through the Provincial Treasurer, see that the treasury branches in this province play a very, very major role in making available to Albertans the shares in the Alberta Energy Company.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to go on to another point and this deals with the portion of the Alberta Energy Company bill, Bill No. 32, that limits ownership to 1 per cent. I fear this portion of the bill very much, Mr. Speaker. If we're serious about wanting more Albertans to invest, then it's essential that that 1 per cent be reduced manyfold. We may well have the potential of 750,000 or a million Albertans who should have the opportunity to invest in this company.

To say we are going to put a limit of 1 per cent on the amount that any organization or individual can hold will mean, Mr. Speaker, that before very long the bulk of the shares in the Alberta Energy Company may very well be held by trust companies, by banks, by insurance companies and by mortgage firms. That would be very, very regrettable.

A number of my colleagues on this side of the House have expressed their concern about the socialistic tendencies of this particular legislation, and I appreciate their concerns. Let me say to those hon. members, Mr. Speaker, that one of the best guards you can have against creeping socialism, in fact, is to have hundreds of thousands of Albertans who are small investors in the future of the province of Alberta. That, Mr. Speaker, is what I hope this legislation does.

But that's not going to be possible, Mr. Speaker, if we keep this ridiculous 1 per cent maximum in the legislation. Because through a variety of means, this 50 per cent of the shares will end up in the hands of the trust companies, the mortgage companies, the insurance companies and the banking fraternity. This indeed, would be very, very regrettable, Mr. Speaker.

Thirdly, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to draw the attention of the hon. members to Section 4 of the act. If one of the driving forces in this legislation, Mr. Speaker, The Alberta Energy Company Act, is in fact to make it possible for more Albertans to be investors, then let's call a spade a spade and not be willy-nilly about Section 4.

Section 4 says, Mr. Speaker, and I quote: "The Company may, on any offering of any of its shares, offer shares in preference or priority to residents of Alberta." Now, if we jolly well mean what we say here, Mr. Speaker, let's have the guts to take "may" out and

put "shall" in. This is one of the amendments, Mr. Speaker, that we are going to be proposing when we get into the committee stage of this bill.

But the members of the Assembly have got to determine for themselves whether they are really serious, really serious about wanting to make it possible for a tremendous number of Albertans to invest. I make the point again. I recognize that many will choose not to. But for every Albertan who chooses to, we should do all that we possibly can to enhance his opportunities. Let's face the issue squarely. Let's not say "may" in Section 4, let's change it to "shall", and make it very clear to those people who are going to be appointed the directors of this company, what the Legislature has in mind specifically when it talks of making it possible for more Albertans to be shareholders in the investment community.

The next item I'd like to deal with, Mr. Speaker, is the underlying principle of the act that the Alberta government shall have 50 per cent of the shares in the company. After we've had some investment experience with the Alberta Energy Company, Mr. Speaker, and if it is as well received by the public of Alberta as I believe it will be, I would hope before long that the Government of Alberta would consider reducing its shares in the company from 50 per cent to 25 per cent.

This once again, Mr. Speaker, should make a tremendous number of shares available to Albertans. It may well be, at that time, that we have to look at the maximum involvement Albertans can have. But I believe, Mr. Speaker, as was pointed out yesterday by my colleague, the hon. Member for Cardston, that certainly it is well recognized that you can control a company with much less than 50 per cent of the shares involved.

I'm hopeful, Mr. Speaker, that in the course of either concluding the debate or during the course of the committee work the sponsoring minister, the Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs, will make some comments on this particular portion.

Another reason I think we should consider this, Mr. Speaker, is that with the government owning 50 per cent of the shares, or even 25 per cent of the shares in, let's say five years down the road, there is going to be a great deal of political pressure on the government to see that this company is successful. In fact, I don't think it is overstating the case, Mr. Speaker, if we say that the success the shares have in the stock market would be an indication of the political temperature as far as the government is concerned. Indeed, Mr. Speaker, the government, whoever the government is, regardless of their political stripe is going to face a great deal of political pressure as long as the government continues to own 50 per cent of the shares.

I also hope, Mr. Speaker, that the government will seriously consider spelling out in the legislation that the directors of the Alberta Energy Company must be residents of the province of Alberta. I also, Mr. Speaker, would be interested in hearing from the Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs the reasons - perhaps it is unfair to ask this now, but during the committee work - the reasons for the variety of exclusions from The Companies Act itself.

Mr. Speaker, there are two other points that I would like to make rather quickly. One is that particular section of the Certificate of Incorporation or the Memorandum of Association which was registered, I believe, September 13. The Memorandum of Association spells out the objectives of the company.

It seems to me, Mr. Speaker, that it would be very wise to include the objectives of the company in the legislation itself, not just for the benefit of the members of the Legislature, but in fact for the benefit of Albertans. If this legislation is as successful as I am sure members on both sides of the House hope it is, it would be very, very helpful in fact to have these objectives spelled out in the legislation.

The other comment I would like to make, Mr. Speaker, dealing with the Certificate of Incorporation, is the point that the hon. Member for Calgary Bow made so well yesterday. It's under the Articles of Association of the Alberta Energy Company, page 2, on the question of commissions, and I'd like to read this particular section:

It shall be lawful for the Company to pay any person a commission (either in cash or by the allotment of shares or partly in cash and partly by the allotment of shares, or in any other manner) not to exceed 25% of the price at which such shares are subscribed or agreed to be subscribed, in consideration of his subscribing or agreeing to subscribe, or procuring or agreeing to procure subscriptions, whether absolute or conditional, for any shares in the Company.

Now I understand, Mr. Speaker - and this is an area I am not that familiar with - but I understand that these are rather standard articles of incorporation. But we're not dealing with a standard company here, Mr. Speaker. We're dealing with a company that a quarter of a billion dollars of the taxpayers' money is going to be involved with. We're dealing with a company that is going to have Suffield, that's going to have the pipeline from Fort McMurray to Edmonton, that's going to own a large share in the electrical

generating capacity of the Syncrude plant. And to make it possible for the directors of the company to have that flexibility to go up to 25 per cent commission for the placing of shares is, at the very most, extremely shabby workmanship, Mr. Speaker. I suggest that those people who were responsible for putting together the certificate of incorporation - that their faces should indeed be very, very red.

AN HON. MEMBER:

The minister who approved it.

MR. CLARK:

Well, the minister who approved it, and whoever's firm was involved in doing the legal work - the whole bit.

In conclusion now, Mr. Speaker, there are four or five points that I would like to dwell upon. All the members on this side of the House in Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition are committed to the concept of an equal share for every Albertan and the opportunity for every Albertan, regardless of his status in society in the province, to have the chance to invest. We're going to introduce, Mr. Speaker, in the committee stage a number of amendments to the legislation which will make it possible. We genuinely hope that the government will consider those amendments and consider them seriously.

We would also ask, Mr. Speaker, that the government seriously consider rewording Section 4, so that we say the company "shall" give priority to Albertans.

I also hope, Mr. Speaker, that the government will give consideration to the question of directors being residents here in the province of Alberta.

Above all, Mr. Speaker, in addition to making it possible for every Albertan to have a share - above all, Mr. Speaker, it is essential that that insidious 1 per cent maximum holding for any individual or corporation must be reduced severalfold so that in fact the 50 per cent that is available to Albertans doesn't end up in the hands of the banks, the treasury, trust companies, mortgage brokers and insurance firms.

My own situation, Mr. Speaker, is that I plan to support the bill on second reading. On the other hand, Mr. Speaker, if there isn't a conscious effort in the course of committee work to, in fact, move considerably in the direction of making it possible for every Albertan who wishes to, to become a shareholder, following along some concept of the suggestion of holding shares in escrow for a period of time for Albertans - if we don't move in that direction in committee, Mr. Speaker, and if we don't reduce the 1 per cent maximum amount of ownership for any individual or corporation, I'll find it impossible to vote for the bill on third reading.

MR. SPEAKER:

May the hon. minister conclude the debate?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

MR. GETTY:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's quite a pile of notes I have here. I'm not sure whether I'll be able to handle all of them.

There is certainly quite a variety of views that have been expressed on the bill. Those that I think have been offered in a constructive way I certainly appreciate, and I can understand the variety of views. I think there are some valid concerns and considerations that a member should take time to evaluate in voting on this bill. I'll try to refer [to] some general comments, perhaps, and then get back to some of the specifics. I mentioned the notes, and I know that in looking at some of them from the other day I must have been writing too fast. There are some I can't read right now. Other [notes] - I can remember there were some things I wanted to say and now I can't remember what they ...

MR. BUCKWELL:

It's nothing new, Don.

MR. GETTY:

But in any event, perhaps a general comment or two and then on to a few specifics.

I think, Mr. Speaker, that members considering the legislation have to make up their minds whether they buy the concept that the legislation and the position paper set out, because they have to consider the bill in that context. It is not a Crown corporation. It's not something the government is going to control and run. It is a company that will, in most aspects, operate outside of government controls as a public company. It continues to reflect government policy - broad government policy - and we have taken steps to ensure that it should. It will be an investment or holding company that Albertans and other Canadians can invest in, but it will not participate in the day to day exploration and development operations of energy in Alberta. The shareholders of the company and the management will be responsible for the operations of the company and will have the largest say in its general business operations. The government will, of course, only ask it to reflect the broad policy which this government has expressed now and will express in the future.

This act - and there was one thing I was hoping wouldn't get overly involved in the act, Mr. Speaker - this act reflects the legislative framework for the company. It is not intended to carry within it the marketing scheme for the shares of the company. I think it would have been unworkable, and an attempt was not made to do that. It is in the government's position paper and in the statements which the Premier and others have made, that certain things will be assured or attempted to be assured when we have the shares marketed, but we have not made an attempt to put all of the marketing protection and marketing policies in the bill. I think there are valid concerns that any member could have as to what our plans are for getting the shares into Albertans' hands, and I would be happy if we went into that in some detail as the bill proceeds through the House.

I also wanted to point out to the hon. members that when they consider trying to protect the interests of Albertans or the future of the shares, I think they should balance their desires to create restraints on these shares, because what they might do from an overbalance in that direction is prevent the shares from reflecting their true value and, in fact, do the exact opposite to the opinions the members have expressed. They could, in fact, encourage Albertans not to hold them for the future if these shares are restrained in a way that will in fact depress their value.

Also, I think the members, in considering how the shares will be distributed, will have to understand that there is again a balance needed, a balance needed for a full description of the potential of the company and the shares to Albertans and other Canadians; but balance that against overselling the shares, against causing too many Albertans to attempt to put too great a percentage of their earnings and investment dollars into this company.

Then there is the position that if it's not sufficiently explained and sold in our province and described to Albertans, we may have, as some members have pointed out, Albertans who, like others in parts of Canada, have not had experience in the investment climate and have not participated in the market. And if it isn't sufficiently sold to them and sufficiently explained to them they will pass up the opportunity and you will have more sophisticated investors who will, in fact, move into that vacuum and end up with a larger percentage of the shares than we would perhaps like. But I think the balance is necessary and I would urge the members to consider that when they are reviewing both the bill and their good intentions as to restraints on the shares and how they might be sold in the future.

I would just say that it should be clear to all members that the intention of the government is to provide as many qualified Albertans as would want to purchase these shares with an opportunity to do so. We will make every attempt possible to do that. We recognize that some will not want shares, others will have a difficult time in coming up with the money to purchase shares, and we hope that in our marketing scheme we will catch most of the province, although it's fair to say that in any effort like this there will always be some abuses to the program.

I had a couple of notes, Mr. Speaker, to which I wanted to refer, in relation to the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview.

I appreciate his support. When he expressed it, I had some of the reservations the hon. Member for Calgary Millican had as to wondering for a moment what we had done wrong.

However I think, Mr. Speaker, the member's point, that by taking a minority interest in something like the Syncrude plant, or by only having 50 per cent of the shares in some way we have insufficient control within the province on the development of that resource - I thought we had put that one to bed long ago, and it seems to me that it is completely without foundation. We have explained that these are our leases, we have the government developing and accounting manual, we share with the company in 50 per cent of the profits as a royalty to Albertans, we have an option - one of the most valuable things I think we were able to obtain for Albertans - an option to wait until the Syncrude plant is built, and then assess the conditions, assess the cost, prices of oil, many things which will happen between now and then, and be able to exercise our option. I think that

reduces considerably some of the risks, although, as I pointed out, in a development of the magnitude of the oil sands, there will be plenty of risks and plenty of profits.

I think the member did have a valid comment when he was mentioning that he would like to see synthetic crude controlled as to price in some way, as the standard or conventional crude is in the province of Alberta. He suggested the marketing commission. I know it has been said many times, at least I've heard it from the hon. Premier and from the hon. Minister of Mines and Minerals, that in fact this is being considered and will be considered over the year.

I would only point out to the hon. member that while he is anxious to have synthetic crude flow through the Alberta marketing commission, when I reviewed the passage of that bill through the House, one of the members who voted against it was the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview. So I think that maybe he has learned the wisdom of his ways, Mr. Speaker, and now lines up with the government on yet another issue.

The hon. member for Spirit River-Fairview also expressed some concern - and I've heard him use this comment before - about the fact that the government uses an international consulting firm, in this case the Levy group, for information on world energy matters. In some way he takes that and leads us to believe that we will then come to think either exactly like the United States or exactly like international companies.

I don't see how anybody can lead himself from that fact to that conclusion. I just don't see it. We have a responsibility in taking office to manage the resources of the province. In the energy resources we have a responsibility to get all the information we possibly can and to go to the best people we can. But even in doing that it's just one tool, just one source of information that a government would use. To think that anyone would blindly accept a report or blindly go in the direction of one source of information is just not credible. I would urge the hon. member to consider that the government has a responsibility to get all the information possible, but then to take that information, sift out and weigh the variety of conditions and the variety of facts, and come up with policies in the energy development of this province.

I had to be amused, I guess is the right term, when the hon. Member for Calgary Bow participated in the debate. His participation, and his participation in some other debates, Mr. Speaker, reminds me of the story that there is both good news and bad news. I would tell the hon. member that the good news is that he is consistent; the bad news is that he is consistently wrong.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed, agreed.

MR. GETTY:

I had the sense as he was talking that he may even have been just filling in time. I am not sure of the reasoning behind that because, knowing him as I do, I think he was capable, if he was going to really participate, of doing much better than he provided for us yesterday. Frankly I was a little disappointed in the hon. member. Perhaps we gave him too much information to handle all at once, but I would certainly like him to try to dig into the bill, try to really get into the principle. As a matter of fact, in the course of his debate he said, I wish the government would give us an opportunity to debate the principle. I don't know what he was doing up at that moment. When we were in second reading of this bill he said, the principle of private enterprise or not in the energy business. Well, there it was. I thought he had every opportunity possible to do it at that time. Instead, where did he reflect his remarks? It was in a series of relatively insignificant matters, I thought.

I wondered about his comment that this, in fact, would be highly popular with the people, but he was against it because it was a political gimmick. I wonder, Mr. Speaker, about the term, popular with the people. Certainly I believe that something that's popular with the people is reflecting the interests of the people. What's government about if you aren't here to reflect the interests of the people? I am always amused by members who, for some reason, seem to think that those who elected them are somehow not wise enough or smart enough to themselves assess the values of something like this. I get from his comments that we would somehow 'snow' the people with this thing, and then they would immediately sell out and a variety of other people would own the company shares. I don't think the people are that stupid. I believe the people of Alberta, with this matter explained to them sufficiently, with this matter laid out as to its assets and liabilities, the good points and bad points, will not only support it enthusiastically, but they will in fact continue to support it and continue to benefit from that support.

He asked, what's the need? Well, when his constituents, I suppose - certainly mine - want something very badly, I think right there you have a need, a need that government should attempt to reflect. I think Albertans want an opportunity to invest in the oil sands. They want an opportunity to have a greater and greater share of that development

controlled within the province. I think we have come up with a method of doing that, and I frankly think the hon. member should talk to the people in his constituency and explain to them the advantages of the Alberta Energy Company. Don't consider them not clever enough to be able to grasp the values and hold them in the future, but rather, with sufficient assistance from him, perhaps they will - as we think - be able to benefit for some time in the future.

The hon. Member for Cardston - I appreciated his comments. He, I think, has gone through somewhat the same experience I went through in discussions with a great many people in the investment business, many from other parts of Canada, who came in to say, you are making a mistake if you offer this to Albertans first on a preference basis, because they won't buy it. They are too conservative to buy, or they don't invest in things like that. I think, as he thinks, that this in fact will be a sell-out. It will be a line-up, and highly oversubscribed by Albertans. I only hope that we are able to get a sufficient number of shares to each Albertan who wants one so their interest is maintained in holding the shares. He had some comments which I think we will be able to evaluate, as to future marketing of the shares, but again I must caution him as I mentioned earlier that anything that we do which limits the marketability of the shares will not, in fact, necessarily accomplish what in our good intentions we might want to do, that is make sure as many Albertans as possible gain as great a benefit as possible from this investment.

There is one thing I also wanted to mention. The hon. Member for Wetaskiwin-Leduc mentioned that he felt this would be okay, if we use the petroleum dollars that are pouring in in this kind of way to invest in the future. And I agree with him, we should. The hon. Member for Calgary Millican said that if you have to do something for those dollars and you've inherited all those riches then you've come up with this idea as a place to spend them, but I would caution both of them on the timing of this matter. The government was pursuing the Alberta Energy Company and, in fact, the Premier announced the Alberta Energy Company with the announcement of the Syncrude go-ahead long in advance of any idea that we were going to have the tremendous incremental petroleum revenues which, in fact, we have been able to obtain for the people of the province. We were not developing it on that basis; the two meld and that's great but it was not developed as a place to spend that money.

I would also tell him that I share his concerns about a government getting into the oil and gas business per se. I think it's something that, if we were getting into the operating end, I would be quite concerned about and would argue against. I think there's no question that the federal government will probably learn through their national petroleum company, whichever form it takes. They will probably learn if they get into the operating end of the business that private enterprise will be able to out-compete them if they start and operate on the same basis.

AN HON. MEMBER:

How about Suffield?

MR. GETTY:

Well, I had a remark to make because the hon. member mentioned Suffield and I think it was quite clear in the government's statements on Suffield that it is our intention to sell the Suffield natural gas rights to the Alberta Energy Company, but I would like to once again confirm that the Alberta Energy Company will not get into the operating, drilling and exploring part of the Suffield natural gas field. It's been said many times and I confirm it once again: it's the government's intention that the Alberta Energy Company will, either through bids or an evaluation of farmout offers, in partnership with an operating company in the oil and gas industry develop Suffield as a holding company, but participating in the profits. Through those profits to the energy company therefore Albertans will participate as shareholders, in addition to being citizens of this province and benefiting through royalties and leases as they always have in the past.

The member for Wetaskiwin-Leduc mentioned that this would be useful for a balance in the federal government's initiatives in Alberta and while it was not developed with that in mind, it certainly appears to me that as we get more and more information from federal government interests in companies operating in the oil sands and their interests in the oil sands, it may well serve as a very valuable tool in balancing that federal government interest in our oil sands.

I think many of the other members, the hon. Member for Highwood - although as he progressed I started to lose his train of thought, and he went both for and against at the end and I lost some of the points he was trying to make - did, I think, have a valid concern again as to how "every man, woman and child" in Alberta would have an opportunity to participate. He said it's not in the bill. I agree it's not in the bill, but as I mentioned it was not our intention to put it in the bill, it is part of the marketing scheme.

The hon. Member for Macleod, I think, raised more questions and he really didn't have answers for us, but I think the questions he raised are things to be aware of and I certainly appreciated the kind of rationalizing he did and the assessment of the pros and cons. I have made notes of them and they will certainly be things that we consider, both as a warning and as advice in the future. He said that Suffield was not mentioned in the bill and again, in another way, I would say that we did not intend to put the investments in the bill but rather to provide the legislative framework.

The hon. member, Mr. Drain, mentioned that there were abuses in the AGTL distribution of shares and I agree. We're going to try to solve this. We have the same trust company assisting us that handled the Alberta Gas Trunk Line distribution of shares and we are going to work out with them a plan to eliminate as many abuses as we can. I should confirm that nobody is going to get more shares than anybody else. In other words, if anyone is worried about someone buying 1 per cent of the initial offering because they happen to have a lot of money, that will not be possible.

The hon. Member for Cypress - I expected that perhaps he would provide me with a greater amount of the experience that he has been able to garner in the performance of his duties in the House and, in the past, in the Executive Council. I am sorry to think that he felt there was something wrong with my enthusiasm for the bill because of the fact that I said "I think" something will happen and "I believe" something will happen. Frankly, I don't have a crystal ball, I just think and believe they'll happen. I don't know for sure. Who knows who will be here? We can only say that we trust and will make every attempt to do something, and then try to make that happen. But I don't think there was anything that could be benefited by saying the man just thinks or believes something. He doesn't know it in advance. I can't even have my children on Christmas.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Easy Pierre.

MR. GETTY:

One thing, Mr. Speaker, the hon. member, Mr. Ludwig, and the hon. member, Mr. Clark, both said that they just did not appreciate the fact that the Premier did not deliver the policy statement that was delivered in the House and that they waived the policy statement I had the benefit and the opportunity to deliver. The Premier made an announcement on it early, when dealing with Syncrude, and I take both credit and criticism for the policy statement.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I wanted to touch on a few others. I realize I am running short of time. I have many notes here. The hon. Member for Calgary Mountain View got quite worked up about the government getting into private enterprise. And then along came the hon. Member for Calgary Millican who got even more worked up. He said that never happened in this province before, and I just quickly scratched down liquor, beer, wine, banks, telephones, railroads, radio stations. It struck me, Mr. Speaker, maybe it was something that was easy to forget. As a matter of fact, they didn't even sell anyone shares in those efforts. So, Mr. Speaker, the hon. member should just recall what has happened in the past, and I am sure he would see that this is an improvement - an improvement, not a step backward.

He was concerned about the fact that we were going to sell shares and that they might not be handled in the same way as the Alberta Gas Trunk Line was. I'm telling you that I'm glad they're not. We've tried to patch one of the holes in that plan. I'd say also, if the member will go back to that bill, he will recall that, in fact, when they sold shares to Albertans they never sold voting rights with the shares.

As a matter of fact, under their scheme, Albertans didn't get a vote for the shares they were able to buy. As a matter of fact, they sold those shares to transmission companies, explorers, processors, et cetera, the very companies, the very big guys - those were the voting shares - about whom the hon. member, Mr. Clarke, says, keep them out of their hands. So, Mr. Speaker, I think another thing they didn't provide for is the subsequent distribution of shares.

One of the valid points in this bill is that in the future subsequent distributions can go on a preferential basis to Albertans. That's one of the problems with Alberta Gas Trunk Line right now. They can't repatriate the shares that will be of benefit in this bill.

So, Mr. Speaker, I would only say that one other point, the Treasury Branches, was raised; that they hoped they will be able to provide credit for purchases of these shares and take the shares as collateral ...

MR. SPEAKER:

Would the hon. Minister conclude. His time has elapsed.

MR. GETTY:

Yes, Mr. Speaker. I hope the House will give me just about another 60 seconds.

MR. CLARK:

Point of order. As far as we're concerned, we would be pleased to have the minister go on and cover all the points he wants to.

HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

MR. GETTY:

The Treasury Branches - I've discussed the matter with the hon. Provincial Treasurer. We've discussed it for some time and he assures me that they will be able to provide credit. They will take the shares as collateral in our instalment plan. I know that certain banks already say they will.

I think with the kind of support that is developing in the financial field and with the right marketing scheme, we will remove many of the problems that the members have brought up; that the small guy won't get an opportunity to purchase these shares. But I would say this. You can't legislate him into keeping them. There is no question in my mind. Nobody should try to make him keep his shares and not sell them if it seems in his mind that it's best for him to get the benefits of selling those shares. Because there are benefits to be obtained from selling, just as from holding on and I hope that in any amendments or any suggestions the hon. members may have they scratch that from their minds, because it will not be considered or supported.

I'll just wind up now, Mr. Speaker, and I know I've missed some points because there are some I just haven't been able to deal with. I would say this; that in considering whether you are going to vote for this bill, you make up your mind for yourself whether you buy the concept, whether you understand there is a need there or not. And then I hope the members can see the need, they can understand the concept. They will recognize that there is a desire by our people for this kind of vehicle. It is unique, it has risks, it's exciting, it's challenging, it's daring in a way, but then, Mr. Speaker, that's a lot like Alberta is today. So, Mr. Speaker, I urge all hon. members to support this bill.

[The motion was carried. Bill No. 32 was read a second time.]

MR. HYNDMAN:

Mr. Speaker, before moving the adjournment of the House, tomorrow afternoon we will continue with Government Bills for Second Reading beginning with Bill No. 55, The Northeast Alberta Regional Commission Act; and following that, if there's time, Bill No. 47.

I would now move that the House do now adjourn until tomorrow afternoon at 2:30 o'clock.

[The House rose at 10:25 o'clock.]

