

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ALBERTA

Friday, November 1, 1974

[The House met at 10 a.m.]

PRAYERS

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 81 The Boilers and Pressure Vessels Act, 1974

MR. PURDY:

Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce a bill, The Boilers and Pressure Vessels Act, 1974.

This act will replace an act which was revised some 20 years ago. The new act will provide a greater degree of flexibility in administering and inspecting the growing number of boilers and pressure vessels in Alberta. The terminology has been upgraded, consistent with terminology changes and to provide for innovation and new types of equipment. It will ensure continuing safeguards to the industrial development of the province.

[Leave being granted, Bill No. 81 was introduced and read a first time.]

MR. HYNDMAN:

Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill 81, The Boilers and Pressure Vessels Act, be placed on the Order Paper under Government Bills and Orders.

[The motion was carried.]

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

MR. YOUNG:

Mr. Speaker, I have the pleasure this morning, on behalf of the hon. Member for Edmonton Highlands, to introduce to you and to the members of this House, a class of Grade 12 students from Concordia College who are here this morning with their teacher, Mr. Willie. I would ask them to rise and be recognized by the Assembly.

MR. MINIELY:

Mr. Speaker, I was beginning to worry a little. I see my group is just coming into the Legislature. It's my pleasure today to introduce to you and to the members of the Assembly, some 17 members who are visiting us this morning from Poundmaker Lodge. They are accompanied by the lodge's director, Mr. Eric Stamp.

Mr. Speaker, Poundmaker Lodge is located in my constituency of Edmonton Centre and is a treatment and rehabilitation centre for male and female alcoholics and drug abusers. They are in the members gallery and I would ask that they stand at this time and be recognized by the members of the Assembly.

TABLING RETURNS AND REPORTS

MR. YURKO:

Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to table the Alberta Environmental Research Trust Annual Report for the year 1973.

Also, Mr. Speaker, in accord with the policy of the fact that environmental information is public information, I would like to file with the House a number of reports. The first is A Feasibility Study of the proposed Alberta Environmental Information Foundation. The second is a series of reports, volumes 1 to 8, on the Athabasca Oil Sands Corridor Study, prepared for the Alberta government by the consultants Stewart, Weir, Stewart, Watson and Heinrichs.

DR. BUCK:

Hey Bill, what about that federal report?

MR. YURKO:

That's a federal government report, not an Alberta government [one]. ... [Not recorded] ... prepared to table it when they say.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

National Design Council – Fort McMurray Study

MR. CLARK:

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct the first question to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and ask why the federally-funded study into the development in the Fort McMurray area of the province was unceremoniously wiped out by the minister?

MR. SPEAKER:

Order please. Under the circumstances it would be unfair to deny the minister an opportunity to answer. I would have to draw to the attention of the hon. Leader of the Opposition that a question couched in that way is an open invitation to debate, to which the hon. leader may not have an immediate opportunity to respond.

MR. RUSSELL:

Well, Mr. Speaker, I'll resist the temptation to respond in kind and respond factually instead.

The study that I believe the hon. Leader of the Opposition is referring to was a hypothetical study for some hypothetical northern community to be undertaken by the National Design Council, which is a council actually with excellent objectives and funded by the federal government.

The purpose of that study was to present a hypothetical project for discussion purposes at Vancouver '76, which is going to be a world-wide seminar on human habitation, and the design council had thought that it would be appropriate and useful to have a study dealing with problems of northern development communities.

We already have such a concentration of studies and planning work and construction and all the surveys and associated studies that are necessary for those kinds of projects under way in the area for real projects, not hypothetical projects, that quite frankly it was our opinion that researchers in there doing a hypothetical study at this time would add to the confusion. So we asked the National Design Council if they could find some other place in Canada to base this hypothetical study on, and they have agreed to do that.

MR. CLARK:

A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Did the Town of Fort McMurray request that the hypothetical study by the National Design Council be withdrawn?

MR. RUSSELL:

No, Mr. Speaker. It had nothing to do with the Town of Fort McMurray. As a matter of fact, the information we were given in our first correspondence was that this was to be based on Fort MacKay, and the National Design Council in Ottawa sent two University of Calgary people into Fort McMurray to start the study there. So really the situation was that Alberta was not anxious to see a hypothetical study proceed at this time in the oil sands region, and apparently the people in Calgary working for the National Design Council didn't even know the community they were supposed to be studying.

MR. CLARK:

A further supplementary question, Mr. Speaker, to the minister. Did industry in the northeast area of Alberta or the Northeast Alberta Commissioner ask the government for the cancellation of the study?

MR. RUSSELL:

No, Mr. Speaker, he didn't. And I should say I suppose the responsibility for asking the National Design Council to reconsider that proposal was mine. The only submission that had been made to me was from Ekistic Design Consultants, the consortium of planners who are busily engaged at the present time in doing the regional planning for the area. It was because of approaches to them and confusion that was starting to develop on the part of native inhabitants within the region that I approached the National Design Council and asked them to kindly withdraw.

MR. CLARK:

A further supplementary question to the minister, Mr. Speaker, so that I have this clearly in my mind. Was there a request from any citizen in northeastern Alberta that the minister have the National Design Council study withdrawn - a request from any permanent resident in the area?

MR. RUSSELL:

No, Mr. Speaker, there wasn't. And I should add that insofar as information or dialogue is concerned we've taken, I think, fairly extraordinary steps to try to get widespread information disseminated about what is going on in the area. It was only a month ago that we chartered an aircraft, took up 37 media representatives and set them loose in Fort McMurray to see and report on whatever they wanted. I'm concerned that the news reports are coming out that there is some kind of [censorship] involved here. That is definitely not the case.

MR. NOTLEY:

Supplementary question. Could the minister advise whether or not he sought the input of the Commissioner of northeastern Alberta as well as the various local levels of government, in particular the town board in Fort McMurray, before making his announcement?

AN HON. MEMBER:

It had nothing to do with Fort McMurray at all.

MR. RUSSELL:

Mr. Speaker, with respect, I think the hon. member is showing that he apparently still doesn't understand what the situation is. The National Design Council proposed to do a hypothetical study on the development of a northern community and they wanted to use Fort MacKay as a hypothetical case study for this exposition in 1976. Because of the substantial number of field workers already in the area doing real work, not hypothetical work, we asked them if they could find some other place in Canada to do their hypothetical study.

Coal Permits - Ecological Damage

MR. CLARK:

Mr. Speaker, a second question to the Minister of Lands and Forests. I'd like to ask if the minister has personally seen the ecological damage caused by coal exploration permits that have been approved by his department since the public moratorium was announced?

DR. WARRACK:

Mr. Speaker, did the hon. Leader of the Opposition say, the colossal damage?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

No.

DR. WARRACK:

I didn't hear you then.

MR. CLARK:

I said "the ecological damage".

DR. WARRACK:

Mr. Speaker, my information is that on the very carefully issued inventory survey of permits, the coal exploration permits in the area in question, these have been done with very careful conservation considerations and reclamation requirements, and there has not been ecological damage.

As a matter of fact, in referring to pages 98 and 99 in the Environment Conservation Authority Final Report, it would seem rather clear to me that that view is shared.

MR. CLARK:

Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question, or perhaps I should rephrase my initial question. The question was: has the minister seen the damage done in any of the 58 permits that were approved after the moratorium had been announced by the government?

DR. WARRACK:

Mr. Speaker, my information is that there has not been damage.

MR. CLARK:

My question though is: have you been out on the sites, has the minister been out on the sites of any of the 58 projects that were approved after the public moratorium was announced?

DR. WARRACK:

Ah, that's a different question, Mr. Speaker. The Leader of the Opposition asked me if I had seen the damage, to which I responded that my information is that there is none. Have I been out to some, or any as a matter of fact, of the actual individual situations covered over this vast expanse of Alberta? The answer is no.

Coal Permits - Terms

MR. CLARK:

Further supplementary question to the minister, now that we're on the same wave length. Is the minister prepared to make public the terms and conditions of coal exploration permits which have been issued since the so-called moratorium on the east slopes land was announced?

DR. WARRACK:

Mr. Speaker, as the hon. Leader of the Opposition would be aware, of course, I wrote to him expressing those conditions on August 29, and he has substantially that information.

One thing I could add, Mr. Speaker, is that relative to any such permits, be they for grazing or inventory survey work of whatever kind, with respect to these permits that have been issued on public lands, that's information that can be made readily available and we have done so.

For example, if someone wants a list of all of the grazing leases in Alberta, I would be happy to supply it. And if the hon. member wants to have a second copy of the list I have already sent to him, I would be happy to respond to such a question on the Order Paper.

MR. CLARK:

A further supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. I see the wave lengths aren't working as well now. Were there, or are there, any special conditions or restrictions written into the permits granted after the public moratorium was announced?

DR. WARRACK:

The restrictions, as I outlined in my letter to the hon. Leader of the Opposition, do concern conservation requirements and the reclamation requirements that are involved. These are indeed the very special requirements and considerations that are part of any such permits. I have also indicated before in this House - a week ago yesterday - in response to the question from the hon. Member for Edmonton Calder that part of any letter of authority issued is the very clear understanding that there is no obligation on the government for development work, as contrasted to inventory survey work, and that any such expenditure made in that regard is strictly at the risk of the person or company making the expenditure.

MR. CLARK:

A further supplementary, Mr. Speaker, as you can appreciate, along the same line. Were there any special conditions or restrictions, above the normal conditions and restrictions, written into the permits that were granted after the public was led to believe by the minister there would be no more permits issued?

DR. WARRACK:

Mr. Speaker, I made no such statements which could be distorted into the suggestion of having misled the public, dealing with the last part of the innuendo first.

With respect to the other matter, I do welcome the opportunity again to make it clear, as I did about a minute ago, that the considerations we employ with respect to any of these requests are indeed themselves very special conservation considerations and reclamation requirements. I might also take the opportunity to mention that we have certainly not approved anything like all the applications that have come to us.

MR. LUDWIG:

Mr. Speaker, a supplementary to the hon. minister. Can we then assume from his answer that there were no additional conditions whatsoever attached to the granting of the permits after the moratorium was announced?

DR. WARRACK:

Mr. Speaker, I would be very disturbed if the hon. member was suggesting that we did not utilize special considerations and special requirements in ...

MR. SPEAKER:
Order please.

MR. LUDWIG:
... [Inaudible] ... question.

[Interjections]

MR. SPEAKER:
Order please. Would the hon. member please resume his seat.

DR. BUCK:
A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Could the hon. minister inform the House [as to] what consultation the hon. minister had with the Alberta Fish & Game Association before he decided to allow the permits to be given out?

DR. WARRACK:
Mr. Speaker, we do not have a consultative process with all conceivable associations across Alberta on each of the many dozen applications we get. However, I would point out that on the matter of land use, including the land use considerations on the eastern slopes of the Rockies, that was the very topic on which I had the opportunity and pleasure in February of this year to speak to the Alberta Fish & Game Association in Edmonton at the annual convention they have each year.

MR. R. SPEAKER:
Mr. Speaker, a supplementary to the minister. Were there any environmental groups that the minister did meet with prior to the moratorium?

DR. WARRACK:
I thought I just answered the question. We do not necessarily consult with every conceivable association prior to dealing with these matters. But in instances that associations have sought to meet with me on whatever considerations might be of concern to them, I have been, am, and will be very pleased to meet [with] them.

MR. NOTLEY:
Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question. Can the minister assure the House that existing exploration permits were restricted to the boundaries of existing coal leases?

DR. WARRACK:
In the instances of coal leases which are outstanding, it has always been the practice, as a matter of fact, to deal with the exploration or inventory survey work that is necessary in terms of the sensible configuration of the resource, be it coal or some other resource. In the event that there happens to be only a minor mismatch of the lease itself to the exploration program - in instances like that, to be reasonable and fair, we have considered allowing that work along the extremity to occur.

MR. CLARK:
Mr. Speaker, a further supplementary question to the minister. What is the reason for the Premier's office not knowing that the Minister of Lands and Forests removed the moratorium and issued additional permits?

DR. WARRACK:
Mr. Speaker, there was a communications breakdown in that regard for which I accept the full responsibility. When I noticed that there was some possible misinterpretation, particularly when there are those who want to misinterpret these things, I informed and discussed the matter with the Premier and follow-up letters to the ones the hon. Leader of the Opposition is referring were sent out to fully correct the situation.

MR. SPEAKER:
The hon. Member for Vermilion-Viking followed by the hon. Member for Calgary Mountain View.

Metric System

MR. COOPER:
Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Education and is not quite so controversial. Would the hon. minister tell the Assembly if there is a target date on which the metric system will become the official system of weights and measures in Canada and in Alberta?

MR. HYNDMAN:
Well, that is not a decision which I would make with regard to the Government of Canada, Mr. Speaker.

MR. LUDWIG:
Naturally. How about Alberta?

MR. COOPER:
I mentioned Alberta. What's the target date for Alberta?

MR. HYNDMAN:
I think that would depend, Mr. Speaker, on what is decided in the United States as to the time line because that relates to North America, and then what is decided in Ottawa. We would wish, of course, to follow along whatever time line is finalized. I think it is now looked upon as something which would not be in full operation until the early eighties at the earliest.

MR. COOPER:
A supplementary to the hon. minister. Has the study of the metric system been completely introduced in the Alberta school curriculum at the present time?

MR. HYNDMAN:
It's being gradually introduced in many ways into the school system right now, Mr. Speaker. I think if the hon. member talks to any students in Grades 1, 2 or 3 he will find they know more about metric than the adults in this province right now.

MR. COOPER:
A supplementary to the minister. Will there be any provision for adults then to study the metric system in the way of short courses or night classes?

MR. HYNDMAN:
I would expect that probably some education institutions would do that, Mr. Speaker. However, I think the onus is essentially upon adults in Alberta to show the initiative themselves in developing new knowledge in the metric system.

MR. SPEAKER:
The hon. Member for Calgary Mountain View followed by the hon. Member for Little Bow.

Indian Claims – Right of Way

MR. LUDWIG:
Mr. Speaker, my question is to the hon. Minister of Highways and it's with reference to outstanding claims by Indians for right of way against the Department of Highways and the government of this province.

Can he advise whether the settlement of the claims will be made in cash, exchange for land or exchange for other properties?

MR. COPITHORNE:
Mr. Speaker, a similar question was asked by the hon. member the other day. It was pointed out at that time that the Premier had made a clear statement a few days ago. If the hon. Member for Calgary Mountain View would read back in Hansard he would find the answer.

MR. LUDWIG:
Mr. Speaker, I read back in Hansard and the hon. Premier's statement did not deal with outstanding claims for right of way. The hon. minister is probably, through ignorance, misleading the House ...

MR. SPEAKER:
Order please. The hon. Member for ...

[Interjections]

MR. LUDWIG:
Mr. Speaker, I don't think we should protect the minister from answering ...

MR. SPEAKER:
Order please. Would the hon. member resume his seat. That was not a supplementary question under any guise.
The hon. Member for Little Bow followed by the hon. Member for Sedgewick-Coronation.

Liquor Consumption – Legal Age

MR. R. SPEAKER:
Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Deputy Premier. Has the government considered changing the legal age for the ...

[Interjections]

Repeating that, Mr. Speaker, for the Deputy Premier. Has the government considered changing the legal age for the consumption of liquor to age 21 from the present age of 18?

DR. HORNER:

Mr. Speaker, that matter has not been considered since the former government reduced the age of majority to 18.

MR. R. SPEAKER:

Mr. Speaker, if the present government wants to change it and take a position on it ...

MR. SPEAKER:

Order please.

MR. R. SPEAKER:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker, to the Deputy Premier. Have any studies been made to support the position that greater use and abuse has occurred because of the age reduction to 18?

DR. HORNER:

Well I'm not aware of any studies that might or might not have been made, Mr. Speaker. I suggest the hon. member put his inquiry on the Order Paper.

MR. R. SPEAKER:

Mr. Speaker, a supplementary to the Deputy Premier. Certainly if there is an interest in it, he should take a little initiative.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Order, order.

MR. R. SPEAKER:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Will the government be willing to strike a special committee of young people to study this particular matter?

DR. HORNER:

Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm rather surprised that the Social Credit party is now saying they made a mistake and they don't believe our young people of 18 have any maturity. That's rather interesting.

I'd suggest to the hon. member, Mr. Speaker, that he move around and start contacting some of the young people in this province and get his own views.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear.

MR. R. SPEAKER:

The Deputy Premier has a responsibility to take some initiative in looking into these matters.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Order, order.

MR. R. SPEAKER:

My questions, Mr. Speaker, were ...

MR. SPEAKER:

Order please.

MR. R. SPEAKER:

My questions did not lead to debate. The debate occurred on this matter because of the answers of the Deputy Premier.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Hear, hear.

MR. R. SPEAKER:

I would say that I was asking for information, Mr. Speaker, and I don't appreciate the answers I got.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Question.

MR. CLARK:

Mr. Speaker, on a point of privilege ...

MR. HYNDMAN:
Order.

MR. CLARK:
On a point of privilege, Mr. Speaker, might I just say that you can readily see, on this occasion, why there become innuendoes in our questions when there is that kind of garbage permitted in the Assembly.

AN HON. MEMBER:
Order.

AN HON. MEMBER:
Agreed.

MR. TAYLOR:
Supplementary, Mr. Speaker, to whatever minister might have the information. Have there been any studies completed by the government or others which would indicate alcoholism in Alberta has increased since the age was lowered to 18?

DR. HORNER:
Mr. Speaker, I'm not aware of that but I'll certainly make some inquiries and see whether or not there have been any studies in that regard.

MR. R. SPEAKER:
Why didn't you say that before?

DR. BUCK:
You didn't ask that.

DR. HORNER:
That's not what you asked.

AN HON. MEMBER:
A straightforward question.

MR. DIXON:
A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker, to the hon. Deputy Premier. I wonder if the government is going to take any action on the liquor report which was chaired, Mr. Speaker, by the hon. Member for Calgary Buffalo. What is the government's plan to deal with this investigation that was carried out?

DR. HORNER:
Well, Mr. Speaker, I know the hon. member is interested in the liquor legislation in this province, but at the moment we are concerned with other matters and it is not anticipated that the government will be making any changes in the liquor legislation.

MR. DIXON:
Mr. Speaker, in view of the answer, why was the report [made] and all the money spent on it if there was no action planned?

MR. SPEAKER:
Order please. The hon. member could perhaps deal with that approach by a suitable entry on the Order Paper.

MR. LUDWIG:
Supplementary on the question of drinking to the hon. Solicitor General. Is she aware of any facts or figures which would indicate that drinking among Albertans under 21 has increased in the last two or three years?

MISS HUNLEY:
I don't have any studies on that, Mr. Speaker, in reply to the hon. member's question, but it would be almost certain that it would increase when the legal age was lowered to 18.

MR. LUDWIG:
In view of the answer by the hon. Solicitor General and the fact that these people drive, is she contemplating making any recommendation to do something about it?

DR. WARRACK:
We did.

MR. SCHMID:
Mr. Speaker, maybe to enlighten the ...

MR. SPEAKER:

Order please. Order please. We have an outstanding question for the hon. Solicitor General to which she may or may not decide to reply.

MISS HUNLEY:

I would just as soon the hon. member rephrased his question because it's difficult to reply to a specific with that kind of vague question.

MR. LUDWIG:

Mr. Speaker, I thought the question was specific. I'll reword it. Is the hon. Solicitor General intending to make any recommendation with regard to the problem of drinking and driving, especially by those 21 and under in this province?

MISS HUNLEY:

I wouldn't discriminate against any age group, Mr. Speaker. I think it's of great concern, regardless of whether they're 18, 16 or 85, if they're drinking and driving. Certainly we intend to do everything we can to discourage that practice.

MR. R. SPEAKER:

Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the Minister of Health and Social Development. Has his office or the government received any special requests for special alcoholic rehabilitative programs for young people in the last year or so?

MR. CRAWFORD:

Mr. Speaker, yes, from time to time requests are made specifically on behalf of young people. However, by numbers, they would not be as many as for the balance of the population. I think the government's view has been that the problem is indeed a widespread one and, as the Solicitor General has indicated, approaches to it will take account of different groups in society but not certainly for the purpose of preferring one group to the other.

DR. BUCK:

Supplementary, Mr. Speaker, ...

MR. SPEAKER:

Might this be the last supplementary on this topic.

DR. BUCK:

... to the Solicitor General or the Provincial Treasurer. Mr. Speaker, my question is: what attempt has the government or the Alberta Liquor Control Board made to enforce young people under 18 staying out of bars and cocktail lounges?

MISS HUNLEY:

The responsibility is on the operator of lounges and taverns and so on. I do know they take it very seriously. The Alberta Liquor Control Board inspectors investigate every case. They also inspect all the bars and taverns. It's a very difficult matter and one that causes grave concern to the operators as well as to all concerned citizens.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Youth Employment - Night Shifts

MR. SORENSON:

Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Manpower and Labour. Will the minister indicate whether or not he intends to introduce regulations which would prohibit retail businesses from working those under 18 years of age between the hours of midnight and 6 a.m.?

DR. HOHOL:

Mr. Speaker, this is a very proper and important question. I would first respond that this is a great deal more complex than it appears to be on the surface. We would invite earnestly the recommendations and suggestions and criticism of present legislation and regulation in this important matter.

I should like to draw to the attention of the House that one of the overwhelming considerations in this problem is the matter of access to money in enterprises such as the honorable gentleman refers to. Other considerations have to be those which involve the entrepreneur himself and the onus and responsibility that properly lie upon him in the conduct of his relationships with his employees.

Secondly, there is the matter of municipal by-laws with particular reference to urban centres. City councils have a real responsibility here to examine the nature of the conduct of businesses of this kind during this period of time. Then, of course, there is the matter of regulation and legislation of the provincial government.

In assessing the matter, we're looking at all these considerations - what municipalities will do, what the entrepreneurs will do. We're in close touch with them.

On the basis of this and other kinds of judgments, we'll make a final determination of what we can do to add to the safety, that it be the full measure it can be. Again, as in the previous discussion, the matter of age is only one [factor]. The matter of safety for all people, whether it's from 18 to 65 or 80 is, again, a serious problem.

MR. NOTLEY:

Supplementary to the hon. minister. Can the minister advise us what time frame the government has for acting on this particular problem, whether or not we can anticipate any regulations or legislation during the spring session for example?

DR. HOHOL:

Mr. Speaker, I frankly have difficulty with time frames as I have with monitoring and a few other kinds of propositions put before the House from time to time in debate and in the question period. Surely the Assembly would not want the cabinet to sit down at one time, whether it has to do with pensions for senior citizens or in this important matter of the work week during the night hours, and come out with a proposition and a reply. We will respond as soon as we feel we can be in a position to make the best possible judgment which is fair to the entrepreneur, the employees and the general good of the people of Alberta.

MR. NOTLEY:

A further supplementary question

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview with a supplementary, followed by a final supplementary by the hon. Member for Calgary Bow.

MR. NOTLEY:

Can the minister advise the Assembly whether there is now any formalized consultation between the business community on one hand and the Alberta Federation of Labour on the other to investigate possible solutions to this problem?

MR. SPEAKER:

Order please. Possibly the hon. member might direct that inquiry to the two organizations he has mentioned.

MR. NOTLEY:

Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question - to rephrase it then. By "formalized study" I mean in conjunction with the Department of Manpower and Labour or under the leadership of that department.

DR. HOHOL:

Again I have some honest difficulty with the word "formalized", but certainly we are very clear on the views of the Federation of Labour and the business community, especially of the service station operators. What government seeks is not only the response, because someone got killed during the night shift, that that should be unavailable as a period of employment for young people, but some other and additional kinds of possible resolutions that we might consider jointly.

MR. WILSON:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker, to the hon. Minister of Manpower and Labour. Could the hon. minister advise if the government is currently giving consideration to freezing the number of government employees at its present numerical size?

MR. SPEAKER:

Order please. The Chair's difficulty in recognizing this as a supplementary has moved over into the area of the impossible.

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

Labor Contracts

MR. ANDERSON:

Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Manpower and Labour. What is the government's position with regard to pressure by labor to terminate existing contracts?

DR. HOHOL:

Mr. Speaker, it's a proper question for debate, but I do know what he is asking about and I should like to respond in this way: it is not my impression - I follow the labor relations scene as closely as I can - that there is that much pressure to reopen negotiations.

What is being done is an attempt to deal with one matter and that is the cost of living. That, I submit, is very different from reopening a whole contract which, to me, would mean to negotiate every clause in the agreement. This is not what is being done. The emphasis is on the matter of the cost of living.

MR. ANDERSON:

Has the government made its position clear to the parties concerned with regard to this issue?

DR. HOHOL:

To the extent, Mr. Speaker, that the department people, in their very real responsibility in dispute settlement and involvement of our conciliation people and the Board of Industrial Relations people - yes.

MR. WILSON:

A supplementary to the hon. minister. Would the hon. minister like to take this opportunity to answer my previous supplementary question which was ruled on as not being ...

MR. SPEAKER:

Order please. The hon. member will be recognized in due course.

MR. NOTLEY:

Mr. Speaker, a supplementary, if I may, on this subject. Can the hon. minister advise the Assembly whether his department has given any further study to the question of the so-called question of cola clauses, cost-of-living clauses, in collective agreements?

DR. HOHOL:

Mr. Speaker, I have to respond in two ways. I have a personal point of view which is also the view of the government with respect to cola clauses. But I have to remind the Assembly, sir, that the collective agreement between the Government of Alberta and the Civil Service Association of Alberta is now under negotiation. That is likely one of the matters which will be before them and I simply can't comment in all good taste.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

PWA Purchase

MR. WYSE:

My question, Mr. Speaker, is to the hon. Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs. It is regarding the purchase of PWA. When will a current official financial statement of PWA be tabled or made public - current, up to date?

MR. GETTY:

Mr. Speaker, the government has already tabled the statement for 1973 and for the first six months of 1974. I suppose that at the end of 1974 the company will be preparing [a statement], therefore we will be able to table a full 1974 statement.

MR. WYSE:

A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. I think the people of Alberta have a right to ...

MR. SPEAKER:

Order please.

MR. WYSE:

The question, Mr. Speaker, is ... [Interjections] ... are the majority of the planes leased or owned?

MR. SPEAKER:

I would respectfully suggest to the hon. member that if he would like a breakdown of that kind he might put the question on the Order Paper.

MR. WYSE:

A question, then, Mr. Speaker. At the time of the takeover how many dollars did PWA have outstanding?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. member's second question would be a good companion for the previous one on the Order Paper.

MR. WYSE:

A supplementary question then, Mr. Speaker, to the hon. Minister of Industry and Commerce. The hon. minister announced after the takeover, Mr. Speaker, that it was the provincial government's intention or desire that the people of Alberta and British Columbia be given an opportunity to ...

MR. SPEAKER:

Would the hon. member come directly to the question?

MR. WYSE:

Mr. Speaker, could the minister elaborate on what he meant in that announcement?

MR. PEACOCK:

Mr. Speaker, I'm at a loss to know what the announcement's all about.

MR. WYSE:

Mr. Speaker, the minister announced that he felt the people of Alberta and British Columbia should have an opportunity to invest in PWA.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

What's the question? What's the question?

MR. WYSE:

Could the minister elaborate on what he meant when he announced that? That's what I'm asking. It's very straightforward.

MR. PEACOCK:

Mr. Speaker, that's what I think they should have.

MR. WYSE:

A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Is the government considering selling shares of PWA to the Alberta energy resource company?

DR. WARRACK:

There's no such company.

[Interjections]

MR. PEACOCK:

Mr. Speaker, I think the Premier in his statement made it perfectly clear that the acquisition of PWA by the Alberta government was at this time - that PWA was going to corporately act, as it has, as an operating company in the interests of Alberta, B.C. and the Northwest Territories and other areas that it served, and was going to be operating under the same corporate objectives as it has in the past. It has been very successful and we hope it would continue to be successful. What future considerations might be given to the equity the Government of Alberta owns would be considered in due time and course.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Hanna-Oyen followed by the hon. Member for Calgary Bow.

Community Hall Grants

MR. FRENCH:

My question is to the hon. Minister of Culture, Youth and Recreation. When will the approvals be going out to the various community halls in the province which have made application for the grant under the Community Hall Improvement Program?

MR. SCHMID:

Mr. Speaker, several hundreds of grants have been sent out already, and of course our people travel from community hall to community hall to check into the requirements. As soon as they have done that, approval is given and the cheques are issued. It's on a continuous basis and I am sure a number of people in your constituency have already received their cheques too.

MR. FRENCH:

A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Will the deadline of, I believe, March 31, 1975 be extended?

MR. SCHMID:

No, Mr. Speaker, because we are convinced and assured that most of the community halls which need assistance already have applied.

DR. BUCK:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker, to the hon. minister. Are the grants made on a per capita basis? What are the guidelines the hon. minister uses to decide how large the grant will be?

MR. SCHMID:

Mr. Speaker, all MLAs on the government side, I am sure, know about the \$2,000 grant available to community halls. A number of the hon. members on the opposite side know also. I feel that if the hon. member from the constituency that he happens to belong to doesn't know about that, I'm afraid I can't do much about it.

DR. BUCK:

Mr. Speaker, I am fully aware of that because my honorable opponent and the hon. member from Sherwood Park have been out handing out the cheques and having their pictures taken. But I would like to ask the hon. minister a question. In the areas where the grant is maybe not adequate for a large community centre, would he consider upping the grant to the larger community halls?

MR. SCHMID:

Mr. Speaker, we have kept the grant at a level of \$2,000 because it has to be matched by the community to an equal amount, either through voluntary labor, materials or other things donated for the same amount of value being given by government. It has been found, so far, to be satisfactory. Should it be a program of enlarging a hall it would be a great undertaking and that should be applied for under Project Cooperation.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Calgary Millican with a final supplementary.

MR. DIXON:

Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is regarding the \$2,000 grant. I'd like to ask the hon. Provincial Treasurer - owing to the fact that news report is that the Premier, when he was in Lloydminster, pencilled this \$2,000 into his news release. So apparently, I would take it there was no ...

MR. SPEAKER:

Order please. Would the hon. member, if he intends to ask a question, now ask the question.

MR. DIXON:

Well, Mr. Speaker, I thought I would have to enlarge on what I'm trying to get to. So a direct question to the hon. Provincial Treasurer: was he consulted prior to the announcement in Lloydminster, the pencilled in announcement, that the \$2,000 grant was going to be given to the community association?

MR. SPEAKER:

Order please.

MR. SCHMID:

Mr. Speaker, I can assure the hon. member opposite that the decision of this government is a team decision that was made in cabinet, not like the last government of Mr. Manning.

MR. DIXON:

Well, Mr. Speaker ...

MR. SPEAKER:

Perhaps we could come back to this topic. We have a number of members ...

[Interjections]

Order please. The hon. Member for Calgary Bow followed by the hon. Member for Taber-Warner.

Megavitamin Therapy

MR. WILSON:

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct a question to the hon. Solicitor General. Could the minister advise the nature of the government's response to the Alberta College of Physicians and Surgeons submission on megavitamin therapy and acupuncture in relation to the coverage by the Alberta Health Care Insurance Commission?

AN HON. MEMBER:

You always poke your nose in.

MISS HUNLEY:

Mr. Speaker, I assume the hon. Member for Calgary Bow is asking about the principle and policy of the Alberta Health Care Insurance Commission regarding megavitamins. The policy is: for examination purposes for the first visit, it is automatically paid. If subsequent visits are shown as being for the purpose of injection or consultation concerning the use of megavitamins, those are not paid.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Irrigation Systems

MR. D. MILLER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the hon. Minister of Agriculture. In the interest of maximum production of farm products, is the minister making preparations to meet the requests for additional water for sprinkler irrigation systems through the St. Mary's and Taber irrigation districts?

DR. HORNER:

Well that's an ongoing situation, Mr. Speaker, in that we have moved very rapidly in a major way in the irrigation systems in Alberta in the past two or three years. I would expect that continued expansion of irrigation, of course, is going to depend upon additional storage sites which are under review at the present time.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Gregg River Mine Project

MR. NOTLEY:

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct this question, in the absence of the Premier, to the Deputy Premier and he can either answer it or farm it out as the case may be. In light of the general recommendations of the Environment Conservation [Authority] report as well as the ERCB approval of the Gregg River project, my question, Mr. Minister is: what is the government's position with respect to this project at this particular time?

MR. DICKIE:

Mr. Speaker, perhaps I can answer that by saying I had previously answered a question on that. The application of Gregg River Resources, approved by the Energy Resources Conservation Board, is presently before cabinet.

MR. NOTLEY:

Mr. Speaker, to the hon. Minister of Mines and Minerals. Can the minister advise the Assembly when the cabinet is likely to make a decision on this matter in light of the advisory authority report?

MR. DICKIE:

Mr. Speaker, I don't think I'd like to suggest to the hon. members today a time frame within which a decision will be reached. However, I think I can say it should be shortly.

MR. NOTLEY:

Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the hon. Provincial Treasurer. Can the Provincial Treasurer advise the Assembly whether it is true that the Alberta Treasury Branch is part of the group financing the Gregg River mine project?

MR. MINIELY:

Mr. Speaker, I'd have to check that out. Generally speaking I'm not advised of every organization that goes to the treasury branches for loans. Much of the financial information between the individual applicants and the treasury branches is one which is between them as a treasury branch organization.

MR. NOTLEY:

Final supplementary question to the hon. Provincial Treasurer. Has the government considered any overall policy which would ensure that Treasury Branch loans are consistent with existent government policy with respect to a freeze or moratorium on development where that takes place, or more generally in the question of economic and monetary policy?

MR. MINIELY:

Mr. Speaker, yes, I'm very pleased to say that the treasury branches in the last two or three years have been extremely responsive to the policies of the government in terms

of the priorities in lending, ensuring those priorities meet the needs of the agricultural community and the business community of Alberta. The kind of policy, Mr. Speaker, which the hon. member refers to is a policy which, of course, generally speaking in terms of industrial development related to environmental considerations - that the treasury branches aren't going to be in a position to make a loan unless the project is approved. So they come after the decision, not before it.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Calgary McCall.

Milk Prices

MR. HO LEM:

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct a question to the Minister of Consumer Affairs on the matter of the increase in milk prices because effective today up 4 cents per quart and in total 8 cents by January 1. My question is, Mr. Speaker: can the hon. minister advise the House as to his intentions regarding a milk subsidy program similar to the one which was introduced by the federal government at one time.

MR. DOWLING:

I can't at the moment, Mr. Speaker. It's obviously under consideration at the moment - the assessment of the whole matter of milk and milk subsidy. The federal milk subsidy of 5 cents will come off 1 cent on November 1, 2 cents on December 1 and 2 cents on January 1. We have, through the Department of Agriculture, been in touch with the federal minister regarding that subsidy and the fact that it will in fact increase our milk costs in Alberta by 5 cents.

The Consumer Affairs Department does make money available to interveners at the Public Utility Board hearings, so that they may place their case before the Public Utility Board regarding not only the milk hearings but natural gas and other hearings as well. We understand there will be applications for increases in milk to the PUB. It is our concern that those people involved now in milk production remain in milk production in order that we, as an agricultural province, do not have to import milk supplies.

MR. HO LEM:

Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. In view of the minister's answer, does he expect substantial assistance from the federal government at this particular time?

MR. DOWLING:

Mr. Speaker, I would suggest that the federal government does have some considerable responsibility in this area of subsidies, since it was their subsidy and it is they who are taking it off.

MR. HO LEM:

Mr. Speaker, as a result of this increase, does the minister anticipate general increases in all dairy products in Alberta?

MR. SPEAKER:

Order please. Not only have we run out of time, but this is another one of those questions which asks for market information.

MR. HO LEM:

Final supplementary, Mr. Speaker, can the minister advise what current stabilizing measures will be taken by this government at this time in regard to the milk increases?

MR. DOWLING:

Mr. Speaker, I cannot at this time.

AN HON. MEMBER:

What's new, Bob?

MR. SPEAKER:

I believe the hon. member might come back to the topic at the next question period.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

MR. HYNDMAN:

Mr. Speaker, I move you do now leave the Chair and the Assembly resolve itself into Committee of the Whole to consider bills on the Order Paper.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

[Mr. Speaker left the Chair.]

* * * * *

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

[Mr. Diachuk in the Chair]

MR. CHAIRMAN:

The Committee of the Whole Assembly will come to order.

Bill No. 66 The Alberta Opportunity Fund Amendment Act, 1974

MR. RUSTE:

Mr. Chairman, there are a couple of points I would like to make and have the minister clarify. Dealing with the Alberta Opportunity Fund amendment, and this of course increases the figures up to \$100 million, there are two points. I would like the minister to outline whether or not, in the operation of the Alberta Opportunity Fund to this time, there has been money expended or loaned that has created a business or opportunity which has, in effect, cancelled out an existing one? This is pretty important, because we are setting people up in business and in competition with already existing ones. I would like to have the minister comment on whether or not there has actually been a case where some business has gone out because of competition from one set up under this fund?

The other one. I spoke briefly to the minister the other day on the matter of rates that businesses which do qualify for this are having to pay. That in turn, of course, becomes competitive. We'll say that one applies under the Alberta Opportunity Fund and gets a loan. A similar business doesn't qualify and has to borrow on the outside market. Thereby he pays a higher rate of interest than they do under this fund. Has that been looked at because, in effect, it becomes a sort of unfair competition. I would like the minister to comment on those two points.

MR. PEACOCK:

Mr. Chairman, to speak to the first question regarding whether any loans have been made that would be competitive to an existing company and, therefore, create a discriminatory position because ... oh, Jesus ... of preferred loans. Excuse me.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Blow a fuse.

MR. PEACOCK:

Excuse me, Mr. Chairman. I'll take this mike over here.

We don't know of any particular company that has been forced out of business because the opportunity company has afforded a loan to a new business against an existing business and consequently created a discriminatory position. I would say that the reason we would have an unlikelihood for that to happen is that we choose the directors from the whole province. The directors sit on all these loans. When loans are not of significant size and are handled in house, the loan might be something less than \$7,000 or \$5,000, it therefore might not come up for review to the board of directors. Therefore, the regional director might not have seen it, and it might have created, as you are suggesting, a situation where a loan has been given to an existing business that might make it set up a competitive condition. We try not to have that happen. Needless to say, I don't think the directors or the loans officers are all infallible and so they are going to make the odd mistake. I think it behooves every member of this House to bring that sort of situation to the attention of the AOC.

I can say one such situation has been brought to the attention of the AOC which hasn't forced them out of business as you are suggesting but has created, in their opinion, an unfair competitive position, and that was a trailer plant as opposed to one that was existing. While the trailer plant was located in Edmonton and the other competitor was in another city, the fact remains that he did draw that to our attention. So I think there is a caution here that has to be exercised. But I just can't identify any.

Now to talk about the rates of interest. I suppose you have to weigh and balance the position of whether there should be some preference given for a rate because of the size

of the community, if this is what we are attempting to do as the hon. Member for Calgary Mountain View thinks we can't. If we are attempting to balance the economy then we must afford, because of the competitive market forces, at least an equal opportunity for capital fund investment in those smaller communities which have not got the same opportunity to attract funds because of their limited market or other reasons. So we have elected to reduce the prime rate, because of the size of the community or the size of the business, by 1 per cent on each of those factors.

Once again, if we do not give that form of advantage or incentive, there is no way that the private investor won't take and optimize the position where he is going to invest his money by moving into the more lucrative areas. Once again we pile on centre, areas that can live off themselves sort of thing. So we expand existing centres rather than identify and attempt to develop the smaller centres to which we have directed our efforts.

MR. RUSTE:

One further supplementary on this. Is there an interlocking directorship between the Alberta Opportunity Company and the Agricultural Development Corporation as such? Is there a sort of dialogue between the Alberta Opportunity Company directorship and Agricultural Development Corporation?

MR. PEACOCK:

Yes there is. There is an interlocking directorship here. The director of the Agricultural Development Corporation is also a director of the Alberta Opportunity Company.

MR. HO LEM:

Mr. Chairman, I would like to ask the minister for some justification in regard to the \$400,000 loan given to the Stork laundry which, as I understand it, is specializing in the laundry of diapers. When you consider that the government budgetary allotment to the Lethbridge central hospital laundry was somewhat less than that amount, I would like to have some justification or some reasons for this money being spent.

When you talk about the volume and the dollars spent, how many tons of diapers are anticipated to go through this particular laundry? I'm just wondering, when we are talking in terms of tons of laundry, whether this laundry is designed to do all the diapers in the province of Alberta? Where is this located?

MR. PEACOCK:

Mr. Chairman, first of all: all these loans are Gazetted. We have said before in this House that if there is any member who has any question about a specific loan, the AOC is a responsibility of theirs, as it is of the government side. They can direct that question and I don't think any specifics should be answered in regard to the loans at this time. But if the member wants to determine where it's located, why it was given preference by the board of directors who are representative as businessmen of the whole province, then he can certainly find that information.

MR. HO LEM:

Mr. Chairman, I think that because of the ridiculousness of this entire thing, it should be brought up in the House so it can be recorded.

MR. FARRAN:

Mr. Chairman, on a point of order, I think it's very unfair of the hon. member to ask technical questions about laundries and washing diapers. The hon. minister can't be expected to be an expert in every industry.

MR. HO LEM:

Mr. Chairman, what is so technical about \$400,000?

MR. CHAIRMAN:

It's no point of order.

MR. LUDWIG:

I want to get back to the first question posed by the hon. Member for Wainwright. I thought the minister looked rather perplexed when he stood up, and his answer was also very perplexing. I think his reply that money loaned by government through this company has not been creating competition to existing businesses has to be one of the rather casual and nonsensical replies of the hon. minister. He has business experience. When you lend money to a motor hotel operation in a town like Banff, it's competition for those who have to get money the harder way sometimes. So to say this isn't happening just isn't factual. I don't suppose it's happening all the time.

Any kind of money borrowed any place is creating competition in business. Maybe we need that. We're not against competition. But to say that it isn't happening, that it isn't perhaps hurting some family-created business in some outlying areas, just simply is not true. We have to be realistic about this. If someone gets to this loan, to this source of lending, and starts, say, a new service station in a small town where there is another one just eking out a living, there is no point in saying we're not creating competition to businesses which perhaps could not stand it. In fact, it will happen that some businesses which are being displaced in this manner will probably end up bankrupt.

Sometimes the difference between a small business thriving and a business going down is the amount of competition it has. I'm very much in favour of competition in areas where there is lots of traffic. But in some areas additional competition can take away the difference between making a good living and going under. So I think the minister could speculate all he likes [about] how wonderful the whole system is. We have to be careful that we don't hurt people with government-guaranteed loans. This will happen and it no doubt has happened.

I would like to ask a question of the minister. Has the \$50 million previously authorized been completely exhausted as of this date? If not, how much is still in the kitty, as it were, or still available by way of guaranteed loans? If we have gone over the top, perhaps the minister can tell us.

MR. PEACOCK:

Mr. Chairman, I would just like to add a few comments about this judgment issue of who the Alberta Opportunity Company should direct its loans to, and is it affecting an existing business and to what extent. There is no easy answer to it. Surely to goodness you recognize that a business - the idea of the fund was created and directed at the individual, the individual who had some entrepreneurial qualities, who had a desire to do something in the province of Alberta in the economics of his capability and his talents. To have an identification on every loan that is made, of what the effects and cost benefits might be in the specific area in which you direct the loan or in the expanded area in which it might indirectly have some effect on existing businesses, has to be a matter of judgment because there are just not enough technical information and data available to make those kinds of assessments. Then once again, when all that data are in it would be a judgment. It would be a judgment.

So we do the best we can in the circumstances and we say here, because they are public funds and because they represent different areas of Alberta, we are trying to identify and develop the individual and that small entrepreneur; that's the direction of it basically. Then we turn around and say, all right, we will have directors representing those areas, and they are respected businessmen in those areas, sit on that loans board - that in their wisdom, their knowledge and their experience they agree it is in the best interests, competitive interests, in a free-enterprise environment, for that loan to be extended. Consequently, I think we can sit and go in circles on how we identify a loan. But the fact remains, if there is any better way you can suggest that that can be done, we would like to hear it.

The other point the hon. member brought up is the loans, the amount that's left and the amount that's committed. There are \$30 million in place; \$17 million that are committed and will be drawn down, that is, committed in definite form and will be drawn down as the development of the particular operations takes place or progresses; leaving \$3 million open at this time.

To indicate why we came to this fall session on the \$50 million; the experience in the last six months or year has indicated that the activity of loaning has moved up some 232 per cent over the same period a year ago. Therefore, it would appear that if the \$50 million is not granted to expand the capital of the fund, the \$3 million balance could be exhausted before we come into the spring session.

I might point out while I'm on my feet that there was some question about the size of loans. When you average a loan, I think it's misrepresenting to some degree the facts that are taking place. The AOC is directing itself to all sections of the economy of Alberta - we've emphasized this many times - but particularly to the individual because it's through this individual that we are creating in one small way the capital environment he requires in order to be able to develop and fulfil his ambitions. Sometimes these funds under certain conditions of conventional lenders are not available because he has basically not got the physical assets but has got the mental or physical assets.

So I just bring to your attention the size of the funds, that since September 30, 1973 to March 1974, the under \$50,000 loans have increased some 62 per cent. So you are getting a bigger emphasis on the smaller loan; you are directing yourself to where you're looking at the \$7,000, \$8,000, \$10,000 and \$20,000 loans.

MR. LUDWIG:

Mr. Chairman, a question to the hon. minister. Does the minister find that generally in outlying areas - I mean areas outside the major centres like Calgary, Edmonton, Lethbridge, Red Deer - there is a considerable need to bolster small businesses generally, bolster them somehow or other by loans or by credit or by stimulation of business in the community? Is there a bit of stagnation in these areas so far as the small businesses are concerned?

MR. PEACOCK:

On the contrary, Mr. Chairman. We find there is an increasing stimulation in smaller communities in the smaller businesses where they are beginning to roll and become, I think, more aggressive and certainly more financially viable, generally speaking. And I have to ...

MR. LUDWIG:

To continue. If there is this buoyancy in the outlying areas, what is the real reason for doubling the amount of loans if we are going to, in fact, help stimulate this thing. This is injecting money into the economy, money which otherwise would not be there.

I don't wish to state that the hon. minister gave us a misleading answer but there no doubt is a need for injecting money to help things get going. And if you need to help them get going, there is some problem there. If things are as rosy as the minister indicated in his reply, generally these things start generating their own heat and the system, as we know it, works best that way instead of pumping money into the economy at a time when the premiers are meeting with the Prime Minister to determine how they can maybe offset this thing.

When you look at the tremendous government spending, in fact unprecedented government spending, and some new, especially preferred position of Alberta in industrial spending - if the minister is correct that in all these outlying areas I referred to things are on the up and up, then what are we doing looking for opportunities to pump more money into the system.

There is a level at which time even in farming - it seems to me that the farmers are doing better now. They are getting more money for their product. Crops are good. Borrowing is unprecedented and unless we can assure them that things will always be this way somewhere down the line there will be a day of reckoning. And even if things are not so good in these outlying areas, pumping money into the areas may not save the situation. So somewhere down the line I believe we are not too far apart.

But the minister may have been a little too optimistic about the situation in small areas. I'm concerned about the fact that we are perhaps, that things in the smaller areas - the person who makes good packs up and goes to the big city. He can make good on a business in Vegreville. He'll sell out and he'll come here and do better if he is an entrepreneur. So I'm saying that perhaps things are not all as good as the minister said because we are doubling the amount of loans. I wouldn't be a bit surprised if by next spring he'll say, fellows, things are so good that we're just borrowing ourselves into prosperity and we need more.

Maybe that isn't a logical approach, but somewhere things are not quite what they are made out to be, Mr. Chairman.

MR. PEACOCK:

... [Inaudible] ... answer that. First of all, I think the record of the AOC is there for you to examine. The losses to date represent 1 per cent. It's a lending institution. I don't know what he means by pumping money in. It's only making and developing an environment and an availability. Surely to goodness that is what the fund is all about. And that's not pumping in; that's affording the people opportunities in Alberta who didn't have them heretofore under the conventional lenders.

MR. LUDWIG:

Mr. Chairman, with all due respect to the minister, when the federal government, this government and every government starts providing easier loans; that is one way of priming the pump as it were. In my opinion, at least, that is basic economics.

For instance if this loan were not available, some of the people would get some money, but might not get it. Many would not perhaps. And if the minister says that in spite of this loan everybody who is getting a loan would get it, then what are we doing in it. But I say this \$100 million is going to inject additional money into the economy. If it weren't there - and that's a fact of life, the same way with the Agriculture Development Corporation. We are making money available. We are injecting money into the industry that perhaps otherwise would never get there. So it's a matter of opinion.

The federal government is making programs of grants and loans particularly making money easier for farmers to borrow, making it easier for those to get credit who haven't got it. For instance, if Ottawa now sent a \$250 million loan to farmers, available on easy credit terms, no one can argue that they are not injecting money into the economy. There are times when this is very good and times when it is necessary. I'm not criticizing the Department of Agriculture because that is one area where I would like to see a boom because of circumstances beyond this province. It's a thing which, in my opinion, can only go up and up notwithstanding we may get a decline somewhere in between.

But the fact of life is that this is injecting money into the economy. We are talking on one hand that we have never had it so good. Banks have issued almost unprecedented credit. Everything is on the up and up in the outlying areas but we are coming to the Legislature for another \$50 million in loans.

It's a matter of opinion. I think that mine is the more logical one this time. All told, get all the government programs put together and we are, in fact, priming the economy. The question is, dealing with inflation, dealing with the premiers' conference in Ottawa, is this a time, especially in the most buoyant territory in Canada economically? We still need to get the government involved and I'm not saying push credit, but making credit available in fairly large sums where it would otherwise not be available. Perhaps I'm wrong, but I think the minister was not quite on target.

MR. BUCKWELL:

Mr. Chairman, I would like to ask the hon. minister: according to his annual report for the nine months ending March 31, 1973 you had loaned out \$6 million; then, during the

last current year, April 1, 1973 to March 31, 1974 some \$9 million; and then, in your balance sheet you have an assets loan receivable \$22 million.

I just want to ask the hon. minister the question then: if you have loaned out \$22 million, have you loaned out \$28 million to date this year, and is this \$50 million for next year too, or just for the current fiscal year, say till March 31, 1975?

MR. PEACOCK:

If it's approved at this particular session, it would - providing how the loans move. As I mentioned, we have loaned \$30 million. That's in place. There are \$17 million which are committed on projects which are in the process of being built or will be built before March 1, 1975. So that makes a total of \$47 million.

If between November 1 and March 1, 1975, which is a period of approximately four months, the same record rate of loaning was made, we would then have exhausted our first \$50 million and be into the next \$50 million by some \$3 million. However, historically the last four months of the year, that is the last two months of the winter season and the first two months of the new year, are not large borrowing months. So we see it is conceivable that the additional \$50 million we are asking for here might not be used until March 1, or might not be cut into until March 1. But, on the other hand, it could be.

For instance, allow me to give you an example of what is happening in relation to our economy. The project, for instance, in Whitecourt-Fox Creek. Here is a good example of a lumber industry, or dimensional lumber industry which, because of equipment delivery, might require that fund before April, May, June or whatever might normally be the time of delivery. It might be advanced and come in in January, February or March. Therefore that draw-down that requirement, would be made there. And so what we are saying is we feel we require this money as a cushion in the event that some of these projects move forward.

MR. BUCKWELL:

A further supplementary, Mr. Chairman, to the minister. It may probably not be a fair question to ask you. When you started out with the first \$50 million, how long is it going to take us to loan it out? And as the program becomes more popular, you loan out another \$50 million. In your view, what would be your ceiling? Could you get to a point or have you - I imagine you have discussed it with the officials of your department. Say we'll loan up to \$200 million and that's all we are going to loan out because we really are getting into high-risk ventures when we start loaning out \$200 million.

Would, say, the commercial lending institutions or the Treasury Branch loan out that amount of money, say, at a lower rate of interest even if it was subsidized. Do they get better terms at the [Alberta] Opportunity Company than they would at the banks. I am quite concerned, particularly in the Agricultural Development Corporation - not that we are opposed to the loans that were made but one of the stipulations is you had to be turned down by a lending institution or by the Farm Credit [Corporation]. I have known people who have just gone to the banks and said, will you lend me the money, and they said no. So that's question one, he's off, we'll go to the Farm Credit Corporation. Will you loan us the money? No. We've had them both do it in the same day and then we go to the Agricultural Development Corporation and say we've been turned down by both institutions.

There are people coming to you for an opportunity loan. Do they also have to be turned down by a lending institution, or its Farm Credit Corporation equivalent, to get a loan? I am a little concerned that you really have a tiger by the tail. You could get up to \$200 million and still not enough - is it \$300 million and \$400 million.

I'd just like your comments on this. Just what do you see as a ceiling?

MR. PEACOCK:

Mr. Chairman, I think that's just an excellent, excellent question because when we look at \$50 million and then we come in for another \$50 million and we say, well, now we'll accelerate this a little faster and now are we coming back next year for another \$100 million, what study or information can I impart to the House as to where we're looking at the Alberta Opportunity Company going.

Well, first of all we have addressed ourselves to that very problem and we recognize that most of these loans are 10-, 15-year loans. We have looked at the growth of the economy and projected that forward and said, all right, if the Alberta Opportunity Company comes in under the shortfall of what the conventional lender is supposed to be doing - because we're not in competition with the conventional lender - if he can get it from conventional sources that's where he should be getting it. And that's what we believe in.

So if we say, all right, what is the shortfall and how can we project this, when do we get to a point where we can revolve that fund to sustain itself in the kind of basic economy that we project it to, to the size of the province, the size of the industries and the size of the communities and the shortfall between what the AOC is supposed to be doing as it directs its efforts to the individual as vis-a-vis the conventional lenders.

Our projection is that possibly if we carry on on this incline we're on right now, with the projections we see in regard to the secondary industry and excitement of the tertiary areas - particularly the petrochemical - in the next 10 years, we see that the fund will maybe balance out at \$150 million. Then it will be revolving.

Now it's dangerous to say that, because it could be \$200 million or it could be that \$100 million will balance it out. But to give you some idea, we are looking at that problem you're suggesting of what could be the total exposure and where the fund could revolve itself to fulfill the needs that are the shortfalls between what we felt the AOC was developed for, and what the conventional lender [does].

I might just point out that as we move along into this fund we have done a lot to excite the conventional lenders. The Royal Bank, to name one, has moved in a small business rural-oriented analytical and business management team to determine the needs and requirements within rural Alberta and in the smaller business community, that is the individuals within the urban areas. So they are beginning to address themselves to the same problems AOC has found because they are recognizing that maybe the identification of the physical asset to the moral asset of the person sometimes can't just be black and white and it can't be in a directive from head office.

While I'm generalizing in this area of credit I'm trying to suggest that the AOC, this government and the previous one and CCC have contributed to making the central banking system conscious of the needs and shortfalls as they exist in a province such as Alberta.

MR. BUCKWELL:

In short, then, Mr. Minister, I take from your remarks that in about three to four years time a total fund of \$150 or \$200 million could revolve so that you're lending, say, \$25 to \$30 million per year?

MR. DRAIN:

I think the Member for Calgary Mountain View in his learned dissertation covered part of what I was going to ask.

However, these are, as I understand it, subsidized interest loans. Now there is no question that any viable proposition can get the money. Unfortunately in these times they have to pay a very, very high interest rate. So the difficulty as I see it is that there is a tendency for the Alberta Opportunity Company to become the prime lender. Very obviously, where would you get the consideration that you get from government in lending money. In a matter of a slump there is no such thing as selling the family furniture; that would be politically untenable. So, as the Member for Fort Macleod stated, there should be very great care exercised in how far government goes in this direction.

The Premier, in his remarks, indicated apparent consensus insofar as the meeting of first ministers was concerned in that they had determined there should be some slowing or curtailing of capital expenditures. This apparently was agreed upon as indicated in the Premier's remarks. So then we have a situation here where, because of a policy of injecting another \$50 million into capital funds, it goes in an opposite direction to what has been set up as a policy for Canada at this time.

I would be pleased to hear the minister rationalize this apparent differentiation in policy.

MR. STROM:

Mr. Chairman, inasmuch as my questions are going to be directly related to what the hon. Member for Pincher Creek-Crowsnest has just raised, I would like to raise them before the minister replies.

Placing the question directly, does the minister intend to give any direction to the Alberta Opportunity Company in regard to the question of inflation and the agreement between the first ministers at the recent conference?

Secondly, the interest rates: are they firm, that is are they set now, is no change made on interest rates during the length of the contract and, if not, how does it operate?

Thirdly, the fact that we have no DREE agreement - at least I understood from the answer given by the Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs that there was no agreement - what affect does that have, in the minister's opinion, on loans from the Alberta Opportunity Fund? Is there a greater demand because of the fact that there is no agreement?

And fourth, is the matter of competition. I'll take one example from The Gazette, Ducan Industries Ltd., Lethbridge, and I use it only because I want to have an example:

... Manufacture of recreational vehicle cushions and drapes, mobile home furniture, retail furniture and commercial drapery ...

Loan authorized: \$200,000 guarantee of a bank credit of \$600,000.

Purpose: To assist company in securing a bank operating credit.

Economic benefits expected: Enable the company to maintain its operations and become more competitive.

Now my question to the minister is: in the matter of competition, does the minister not feel that there is an undue advantage provided? Has this company been given that kind of advantage, and is it working to the detriment of another company? I think it is something we as legislators need to keep constantly before us in that we cannot be selective in telling one industry that it has a right to exist in Alberta and another one that it does not have a right to exist. That may be placing it in the extreme but I'm sure the hon. minister appreciates what I am saying.

So I would like to have those included in your reply to my colleague from Pincher Creek-Crowsnest.

MR. WYSE:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I'd just like to express that I think it is a good amendment and I intend to support it. I'm just a little concerned about where the loans are going. I'd like to see more dollars available to the small businessmen in Alberta. When we think that last year over 800 businesses, small businesses, in the province went bankrupt - and a lot of these small businesses want to expand but they can't get the

dollars for the inventory - I think this is an important area where I would like to see the Alberta Opportunity Fund make more money available.

In talking to the company, I know they are looking at it and possibly they will be making some changes in this area.

I would also like to ask the minister: what is the amount of minimum loans, if there are any minimum loans?

I thought the main thrust of the bill in the first place was for the small businesses and low interest. I know of one business in Medicine Hat that is being charged 14 per cent. This is anything but low interest.

MR. DIXON:

Mr. Chairman, there are one or two points I would like to discuss with the minister. As I look over the annual report I wonder if he is becoming concerned [about] the very rapidly rising administrative costs. There are about \$1,400,000 made on the interest but it is costing us about \$700,000 a year to operate this opportunity fund. To me, looking at it from a straight business proposition, the expenditures to run the opportunity fund bear no relationship to the amount of business we are doing.

While I'm on my feet, Mr. Chairman, I mentioned this the other day and the hon. minister did say he was going to look into it. In the matter of the fund - and we are asking for another \$50 million - when I see there has only been \$40,000 loaned out to the transportation company, I would urge again that the minister help the trucking industry in the province. In Calgary at the present time we have a trucking company that just ceased operations with over 100 units that are sitting idle. There was work for them but one of the reasons for closing down was the high cost of carrying the interest to finance the units.

This is one of the reasons I think transportation, as the hon. Premier and the hon. minister have said many many times in this House, is the key to Alberta's growth. The trucking industry is a very, very important part of that and when you look at \$40,000 of the total grants for the first nine months of this year it would seem we're not covering that area in view of the hardships some of these companies are having to obtain finance at reasonable rates.

Also, while I'm on my feet, Mr. Chairman, I wondered why there was so much trouble getting the staff to move to Ponoka. I see even the Premier had to get into the situation - it was so bad apparently, from the annual report - to try to solve some of the problems of the staff not wanting to go out of the city of Edmonton or wherever it was located prior to going to Ponoka.

Why was there all the - apparently there must have been a lot of dissatisfaction when the Premier had to get involved to try to settle the staff problems as outlined in the annual report.

DR. BUCK:

Because of the MLA.

DR. McCRIMMON:

Mr. Chairman, on a point of order.

DR. BUCK:

Because of the MLA.

DR. McCRIMMON:

I think perhaps there is a considerable bit of misinformation on the hon. member's part because I know personally it's a fact that the staff in Ponoka are very, very happy to have moved to a small town. They are contented and whatever information he got or where he got it from is inaccurate and not proper.

AN HON. MEMBER:

It's their own report.

MR. DIXON:

Mr. Chairman, if this was a Social Credit document I would say, well, maybe you could accuse me of being inaccurate. But this is the government's own annual report.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Read it, read it.

MR. DIXON:

And I'll read it to you.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Oh boy.

MR. DIXON:

I'll read it: "By August, with the co-operation of all other government departments, especially encouraged by the Premier ...

AN HON. MEMBER:

What's wrong with that?

MR. DIXON:

... and aided by their own strong qualifications, every person was happily placed in equivalent or higher level of employment!"

[Interjections]

In Edmonton. Not in Ponoka. That was my point. So this is their own report. I hope the hon. Member for Ponoka ...

DR. MCCRIMMON:

[Inaudible]

MR. DIXON:

I like his town as a matter of fact, and I like the hon. member.

But anyway, Mr. Chairman, the other thing is, everything is so happy but the department had to spend \$6,500 in a recruitment program. If everybody was so happy I don't know why we had to spend over \$6,000 to encourage somebody to take a job in Ponoka.

Anyway, Mr. Chairman, the thing I'm concerned about is, if you look over the annual report, expenditures have more than doubled since last year. I would just like the hon. minister to outline: are they going to take a realistic look - it looks like a large empire is being built up and, my goodness, I don't know why you would have to spend over \$700,000 to loan money. That's the easiest thing in the world to do. If you have money to loan, people will beat a path to your door. You don't need to go looking for them like you do in other businesses.

So I would just like the hon. minister to explain. I'm hoping he will take my first suggestion which is the one I'm most concerned about: the aid they are going to give to the transportation industry, and in particular the encouragement to the trucking industry of Alberta, because if \$40,000 is all the truckers have, well, that wouldn't even buy one large unit. So maybe the minister - as I mentioned earlier, he did say in the House two or three days ago that he would be looking into this and I hope from his looking into it, Mr. Chairman, something will be done.

MR. TAYLOR:

Mr. Chairman, I would like to say a word or two on the bill, and I support the bill. I supported the bill previously and I even support it more enthusiastically now when I see one or two examples of what is actually happening in connection with this fund.

I have never been one to support [those in] free enterprise who try to work in the name of free enterprise and still try to get every government grant and every government subsidy that is available. I don't think that's sound. I think it is a mockery of free enterprise. But there is a proper place for the injection of public money into communities and I think the opportunity fund has found that proper place for the injection of money, to get not only a return from the money, as would happen from other lending institutions, but for other reasons. Now if it's just simply a case to get a return for money at the highest possible interest rate I would have very little use for this type of government act because the lending institutions are in that business. They'll get all the market will bear on interest but there is a need for other places which have other reasons, and I'm going to refer particularly to the continuation of our smaller towns. Banks for many years have not been willing to loan capital to smaller towns. They seem to concur with the thinking that the smaller towns are dying out. And they will die out if the businesses disappear. Once the grocery store and the meat market disappear from a village, that village is doomed to die unless something is done in that area.

The other point I'd like to make before continuing is that in a great number of towns and villages today the merchant who has served the people well for many, many years is getting into the high age brackets - in many cases beyond 60, beyond 65 and beyond 70. These people are trying to sell their businesses but many people are loath and reluctant to buy a business in a small town. So it's a case, if they have no sons or daughters to take over, of eventually simply closing their doors and getting rid of their stock and so on, and that means the death of that town or village.

Now the opportunity fund and the opportunity company, through the initiative of the minister, I think have done one of the finest things towards keeping our smaller towns alive - let's say villages and hamlets alive. I refer to just one case today and that is in the village of Standard. There were three merchants there, getting up in years, who didn't have anyone to follow and take over. They did not want to end the last few years of their lives in the hectic business of a merchant in a small town, which means long hours and very few, if any, holidays. So through the initiative of the minister \$100,000 was made available to this town and the merchants were able to get a reasonable return for their businesses. Then the town went ahead with a brand-new shopping centre that is as modern as any you have in Edmonton, Calgary or Drumheller. They opened that - it was my pleasure to be there last week and I was sorry the minister couldn't be there - but 200 or 300 people turned up at the opening of that shopping centre. There I saw some prices below the price of what I see in Safeway in Edmonton, and many of them on par with the best prices you can find in Edmonton too. There is general elation over the fact that they now have a shopping centre where they have a choice of foods, a choice of meats, and

are doing it not with public money, [they are] doing it with their own money with the help of public money. Had it not been for the injection of that public money into that place it would have meant the eventual death of a very fine village, the village of Standard.

Now all I can see is progress for that village and it will continue to grow, because more and more people will come and do business there. They have a choice of goods. They have competitive prices. They have a modern shopping centre. Other businesses, I'm sure, are going to follow.

So I believe there is a place for the injection of public money, when there is more at stake than simply the return of money interest on that money. Here was the continuation of a town, the continuation of a village, which is more important to my mind than getting a very high rate of interest. Had the hon. minister not been willing to change that interest rate so they could get an interest rate within their means, that could never have happened in the village of Standard.

I like the competitive interest rate, an interest rate that is fair but not exorbitant, an interest rate different for businesses in Calgary and Edmonton and from the interest rate charged in a smaller village like Carbon or Standard or a smaller town like Strathmore. I think this is sensible because there's more at stake than simply the return of money when government injects money into a community.

Now having said that, I'd like to make just one or two other points and ask the hon. minister if things could be moved so that the money, once approved, could get into the proper hands as quickly as possible in order to save the unnecessary expenditure of getting short-term loans from banking institutions. The faster that happens, the more good will there is generated and the less cost there is on the people.

I would also like to pay tribute to Mr. Clarke who is the managing director, I believe, at Ponoka. I think the work Mr. Clarke is doing in trying to keep towns alive and giving counselling to businesses in our hamlets, villages and towns is excellent. On two or three occasions a request has come to me for counselling in business, and Mr. Clarke has quickly filled the bill. In every case there has been complete satisfaction. The people know where they are going after discussing the matter. He appears to have a very excellent knowledge of business and a very excellent way of letting people have the information.

So, Mr. Chairman, I support Bill 66. If this type of work can continue every dollar spent is well spent.

MR. ZANDER:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, I don't know whether I should put on as many flowers as the hon. Member for Drumheller did, but certainly I want to congratulate the minister on his initiative and foresight in making \$100 million available for the smaller towns and villages, and some of the businesses in the cities in our province.

Mr. Minister, I was just wondering - I didn't probably go out and see Mr. Clarke on a first-name basis [but] I did phone him once in awhile, not to interfere with any of the loans or use my position as an MLA to put pressure on the company or Mr. Clarke to obtain loans for certain communities in my constituency.

But I'm wondering what the expertise is within the company to assess loans, the possibility of repayment. I will just bring forth the case of Galaxy Aviation Ltd. of Drayton Valley that had made a complete research of aircraft development there. It had been sanctioned and approved, I believe, by the Research Council of Alberta or some of its engineers and the research council of Canada. It was possible for this company to also obtain government funding and government grants. It required a substantial amount of money.

I believe it was in the neighborhood of about \$400,000. But the Alberta Opportunity Company lacked the expertise in that field to provide a feasibility study or whether the loan could be repaid on that basis. I think it was on the basis of the submission that they thought they did not have enough expertise within the department to determine whether the company would be viable or not.

I'm just wondering, Mr. Minister, when you make the comment, is it possible when these people have already spent some \$100,000 or more, and are in line for federal government funding I believe to the tune of some \$200,000 - why has the Alberta Opportunity Company not got the expertise to look into the requirement of whether this would be a viable company although it had been approved by the Alberta research council and the federal research council? That's the only question I have in mind.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

May the hon. Member for Drumheller revert to Introduction of Visitors?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS (REVERSION)

MR. TAYLOR:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you hon. members. It is my pleasure to introduce

to you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and to the hon. members of the Legislature, a group of 42 students from the junior high school in Carbon. These fine young people are accompanied by their principal, Mr. S. Lall, one of their teachers, Mrs. S. Howard and by Mr. R. Harsch, who drove them here. I'm sure we are all happy to have this group of young people visit the Legislature today.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE (CONT.)

Bill No. 66 The Alberta Opportunity Fund Amendment Act, 1974 (Cont.)

DR. BUCK:

Mr. Chairman, just before the hon. minister gets up, I'd just like to ask two short questions. How often does the board of directors meet and what is their remuneration?

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Any other questions?

MR. DRAIN:

I wonder if anyone in the Legislature believes in Horatio Alger any more?

MR. PEACOCK:

I was just going to say, I'm standing.

Mr. Chairman, to quickly answer or attempt to respond to the questions from the hon. Member for Cypress in regard to inflation and its effect, and at the same time to relate it somewhat with what we are doing with the opportunity fund, this is a very complex problem. But may I just say this: the opportunity fund is directed towards production, and surely one of the most aggressive factors to fight inflation must be the increased ability to produce.

I think, without getting into a lot of economics here, I cannot answer it better than to say the opportunity fund is solely directed that way, to the production of the human resources we have in the province that aren't supported to some degree by the physical assets and therefore they can't get it from the conventional lender.

As far as the interest rates are concerned, because they are demand loans ...

MR. STROM:

... [Inaudible] ... for example there was one mentioned at Lloydminster where they were to build a restaurant. Wouldn't you rate it as a possible inflationary measure, because you can't argue that there aren't facilities provided there now. That's not in the production area of producing new goods to take care of the situation you just mentioned.

MR. PEACOCK:

I think we can get on to examples here, and I don't think that either you or I will end up other than in a debate to air some of the opinions we may have, because they are judgments in regard to need. People, whether they be in the service area or manufacturing area, all enhance and attribute to the economy. The more you cycle that, and the more you determine through those services the speed with which that goes, the less influence we will have on establishing inflation.

As far as the interest rate is concerned, because they are demand loans the interest rate is sensitive to the rise and fall of the prime rate. As far as the DREE agreements, because we haven't signed the DREE agreements, yes indeed. One of the reasons for the Alberta Opportunity Fund in certain areas will certainly be the fact that it will offset any disadvantage we may have in Alberta as opposed to competitive areas, if they exist. But it will certainly not be grants; it will be in the form of prime rate minus or plus, depending on the location.

We get into this position of competition once again, as I mentioned, and I can't help but repeat it. We have directors from all over the province. We have 75 members sitting in this House to direct into the Alberta Opportunity Fund those areas where we feel that the sensitivity is not being directed in the best interests of Alberta. Our office is certainly open to react to those problems [where] you feel injustices are being done or extra competition is being exerted.

I don't know how you identify in a free-enterprise system. I don't know where you say that you shouldn't extend a loan because a man has a capacity to do something in a competitive market place, and where you say, I'm sorry but if the conventional lender, regardless of your idea and your abilities, we are just not going to listen to it. I am not sure where that decision takes place and I think those human errors are going to be made. We are, in essence - I don't like to say the last resort because there are

certain cases where it isn't the last resort, but in most instances the fund is a last resort.

To answer the member who was raising the question about the increased cost of production to handle the opportunity fund, may I point out that when you administer \$50 million worth of funds in diversified and various industries, there have to be some reasonable qualifications and buildup of cost benefits of why this person is going in and the projections of what he might do. While we have the emphasis on the individual and on the human resource, the fact still remains that there have to be an awful lot of components to go in to make a success of that particular person's operation. They have to be assessed reasonably well because the fund isn't there, as was suggested by one of the members, as a grant. It is a repayable loan like any other institution and therefore has to be assessed with some degree of a capability of return. So it requires some professional staff.

I might point out for the member's benefit that if I could operate a \$50 million business on a 1.5 per cent cost, I would like to get out of this House and do it.

I would also point out that we are extending ...

AN HON. MEMBER:

We'll do what we can.

AN HON. MEMBER:

... [Inaudible] ... money loans.

MR. PEACOCK:

You'll do what you can. That was wide open.

I would also point out that we are extending it to inventories because we recognize the need there so far as supporting inventories and service industries, et cetera, as well as manufacturing industries.

As far as the trucking industry is concerned and our direction to it, as the members of this House know, in a landlocked province such as ours we are very, very conscious of transportation - all modes of transportation apart from trucking or anything else - and where we go and what directions we have taken. We will direct, and have directed, the Alberta Opportunity Company to look at this situation.

First of all, we have directed our Department of Industry and Commerce to look at it so they can give the technical and professional information and feed it into the AOC [to] guide them in areas where the member is suggesting there is a shortfall of capital available. However, I would suggest that IAC and some of these other institutions, as far as we are concerned, have up to now done an adequate job as far as the trucking industry is concerned.

The speedup of service for the member who commented in regard to Drumheller - we are aware that the processing of loans is a real headache. In our AOC organization we have attempted to speed this process up and are working on that continuously in order to get a better transmission and communication process going so that we can accept, sit on, make decisions and move into the loans [to] eliminate this 'short-termness' and necessity of going into excessive bank rates.

As far as the directors' meetings are concerned, they are held regularly once a month, and more often as they are required. The rate of return for the directors - I think the Minister of Manpower and Labour might answer that or I will give it to you at a later date. Anyway, it's a standard form for remuneration of all directors.

I think I have covered all the questions which have been asked, Mr. Chairman ...

DR. BUCK:

How much do they get paid, Fred?

MR. PEACOCK:

... other than how much they get paid. I can't say offhand but it's a standard rate for all Crown corporations as far as the government is concerned.

DR. BUCK:

How many times a month ... [Inaudible] ...

MR. PEACOCK:

They meet once a month and, if necessary, more often as the applications come in. But they have to meet once a month.

MR. LUDWIG:

Mr. Chairman, I have been listening with interest to the hon. minister. Much of what he says we can buy, and much of what he says I think we ought to question rather carefully.

He talks about the kind of loans that are made and the purpose for which the loans are made. I have an idea that sometimes we have a responsibility to question very thoroughly any loans which are made. I would like the hon. minister to comment on the one that was made in Airdrie for \$85,000 for a real estate firm, if there was such a loan made and if there wasn't, to deny it. I am wondering how this comes in to the industrial expansion of the intent of this money.

Another one I am concerned about is when he is talking about the concern of the trucking business. He ought to level with us and tell us whether there have been any rumors or rumblings of discontent about the fact that the trucking business is very much a competitive enterprise business. They suffered greatly in competing with government-financed trucking lines, like the CPR and the CNR and some others. I wonder if they congratulated the government, especially the hon. minister, on the provincial government's advent into the trucking business.

Where are we going to draw the line about competition, or are we going to get out of it. I think I would be very pleased with the hon. minister if he would tell us today that we are going to sell out the Pacific Western Airlines branch of trucking. We don't need it. We might be landlocked but getting into the trucking business doesn't alter the situation. One thing, I don't know about the minister. He's now in the lending business to the tune of \$100 million. I would hate to see him in the trucking business.

We have been discussing the economy of the province. We have been discussing injecting funds into the economy even though things are all roses. I would like to know what the minister's stand is with regard to giving the complete economic picture in Alberta a bit of a shot in the arm without direct loaning, without intervention. I think the cost of staying in business, whether it's services or production, has increased, perhaps if not more, in direct ratio to the devaluation of the dollar. So not only are they paying more for services but the value of the dollar has gone down. You might say that one cancels out the other. But I think if the value of the dollar remained constant we would still be paying a lot more today in dollars for the services we are getting. We are buying more expensive services with cheaper dollars.

I wonder whether the minister can stand up and sort of brush aside all the political nonsense about the income-tax level in this province and see whether this province can afford to give a meaningful shot in the arm to those many small businesses paying more income tax than the province needs to collect. There would be a master stroke of leadership. Now the hon. Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs is going to tell him to keep the lid on, that we don't want to let anything go. So he's passing the word from the quarterback to the fullback as it were.

We could get into a very meaningful discussion on the income-tax level with regard to all these businesses in the outlying areas, smaller towns which are asking for loans. Certainly if we left them a little more money the businesses there now could maybe generate a little bit of expansion capital and you would really see things happening. It's no use standing up here and telling everybody how great things are in good old Alberta because when we were in office our economy was generally buoyant. We didn't fly quite as high as these gentlemen here. We were a little more modest, we were conservative, which is a far cry from what we are witnessing now.

I think, as I stated once before and it merits repetition, that the hon. Premier and those with him were Conservative by inheritance and not by conviction. When you have no convictions you will almost fall for anything, and that is what is happening.

So the hon. minister ought to stand up for the little businesses. Just lending them money isn't always doing them a favour. There are other things you can do to help them - and take all the credit you can for it - because they need it and they will appreciate it. Reduce their cost of operation, give them a little breathing spell. Even if you lend them \$300,000 they have to pay taxes. Of course they have to pay taxes, the system requires them to pay taxes. But reduce their taxes.

Nobody in his right mind in this House will stand up and say we can't afford to reduce taxes. He can't also say that we don't need to reduce taxes as far as the majority of the people are concerned. Even the bigger businesses will plough more of their money back into expansion and job-creating businesses if you leave more with them.

I'm not fighting a case for those who are well-established and expect to and are helping carry the burdens of government and other services in this province. But there are so many put under [by] the bigger taxes. I know some people who are going broke and have to borrow to pay their income tax. Maybe it's bad management but that isn't the only excuse. Overtaxation.

I'm amused how the hon. members in the front line and in the back line get up and berate the federal government for the taxes they are taking. Well, that's a good argument. Yes, the people are hurting and it's not only federal taxes that are hurting the people. It's provincial taxes also. You can be as pious and prim and lily-white about your accusation that the federal government, even in mineral and oil taxation - the people in the oil industry are throwing this government into the same bag with the federal government because they are taking their share. It's a tug-of-war with the industry in the middle.

So we are going to tax the daylight out of them in income tax in this province and then we'll lend them money to keep them alive. Because, as one hon. member on the other side stated, proof that things are really on the up and up is the fact that the minister came back for \$50 million more. That's the kind of thinking we have on that side. It's not a case of whether we will get into trouble; the real situation is how soon.

I would like to urge the hon. minister to stand up and get into a real people's issue and if he has any faith left in the private enterprise system tell us he is going to get rid of the trucking operation.

It's not what you say, it's what you do that counts, Mr. Chairman. It's not what we say so much about the government that will affect this government, it's what they do that will eventually put them under, because if they haven't lost credibility with their loyal

supporters they have lost a lot of credibility with business. Some staunch supporters are stopping us in the street and wondering what is going on and what we can do about it.

I'm quite convinced if you get a situation where business is saying nothing, that must not be construed to mean their silence is acquiescence, that they agree. A lot of people are just not used to standing up and fighting for themselves, especially when they thought the government was on their side.

No one can challenge the fact that this government has moved sharply to the left into areas other governments which profess to go that way would be very worried about going into. I told the hon. minister before - he likes to shut this kind of stuff out - that the provincial government of B.C. copied his, I believe, Bill 55 or the Alberta Opportunity Company legislation, that they copied it, verbatim in certain sections. I have stated before - the other side laughed - that if the NDP took this province over they could implement their program without a single amendment. They can ride in and do everything they want to do on Conservative legislation. Maybe I'm wrong, but I think they can. So I think there ought to be some name changing here about political parties.

[Interjections]

Yes, or two or more. I'm going to continue this stand because we are apparently talking to deaf ears.

The position of this government, the Premier getting into the private sector of our economy, is comparable to this man in War and Peace who was a real roue, a sinner. He drank and ran around with everybody's women and he was leading quite a life. His relation finally comes up to him and wants to talk to him to see if she can get him to change his ways. She told him, look you are drinking and getting a bad reputation and you are breaking up marriages and you are quite a sinner. He looked at her and he smiled and said, I know I have sinned but I have some wonderful excuses.

That's the situation with our Premier. He knows he has committed the cardinal political sin, but listen to the excuses. Lots of public money to make his story come across. So I think the excuses are good but we recognize them as excuses.

The minister can't stand up with a straight face, beat his chest the way he did during election time in Calgary and say, well I'm a private enterpriser, we are with you all the way, we will not change the system. The double cross came a lot sooner than the people thought.

If the minister doesn't think that a lot of the businesses feel double crossed, call a trucking convention and see whether they will tell you to get out of trucking. The fact that they will tell the minister to get out of trucking will not help because they are in there; they like business. The bureaucrats under him are telling him what to do so he'll stick with it and stick with it to the bitter end because the people are not quite prepared to go that way.

The day when this province votes NDP, the people will instruct the government to go this way. But they did not vote NDP. They voted Conservative whose main thrust, main platform was, we'll go it this way. Never let us forget it. We're going this way. They came and they about-faced immediately, and it goes towards integrity.

The hon. member for Camrose wishes to introduce a class and I'd like to yield the floor to him. I couldn't think of a nicer guy to yield the floor to. I hope you get the nomination there too, Gordon.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

May the hon. Member for Camrose introduce some visitors?

HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS (REVERSION)

MR. STROMBERG:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and especially my appreciation to the Member for Calgary Mountain View.

Mr. Chairman, we have 35 students who have just come in from my constituency with their principal, Mr. Leo Wiberg and their very capable bus driver, Mr. Silverson.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to point out to you that these students have brought a distinction to their school and their community by having won CFRN Reach for the Top competition. Mr. Chairman, they are also from one of the finest schools and villages in the province, from my home town. I will ask them to rise and be recognized by the Assembly.

Mr. Chairman, I'm sorry, I forgot my punch line. That finest town and village in Alberta is New Norway.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE (CONT.)

Bill No. 66 The Alberta Opportunity Fund Amendment Act, 1974 (Cont.)

MR. LUDWIG:

Mr. Chairman, I now wish to get back to what I was saying and I believe I've given the minister some indication of what answers we want from him. I don't think he's proud of the position he's in, but that's his problem. What he tells us will also be taken down in writing and held for posterity. So you also have to be careful what you say.

But that isn't important with the Conservatives any more because they've said so many things that are hardly believable that maybe that isn't important. It's what you do, Mr. Minister, that bothers us. So, just silence on the part of the minister when we probe him with these questions adds to the intrigue. We don't know whether he's with us or against us or whether he has anything to say or whether he wants to say what he has to say. He can laugh, but he has got himself into a bit of a mess. He has now shifted from right to left and he'd like to get back and maintain the right image. But somehow, as far as I'm concerned, we won't let him forget this situation. We want a clean performance. We don't want any nonsense.

Some of us have been in the political field for a while and we can separate the nonsense from fact and the truth. So even with students here, level with them. I'd like to see these students live under a free-enterprise system as time goes by. It's the best system in the world. But the way we're going, they are not going to have it that way. They're all going to be looking for jobs with the government if they're going to have a job at all. That isn't good. That isn't what we stand for. But as I told the hon. minister before, we know the difference between political ideologies. We know how we got here. We know what certain parties stand for. We know what the NDP, the socialists, stand for.

But, Mr. Minister, stand up and tell us what you stand for because right now I don't think you're in tune with your principles. The hon. Premier is a great man to talk about principles. We'll stand by them - that's the key to public confidence. Well, there has been a sad letdown and we'll continue to say these things until the public takes a stand. I'd like to have the hon. minister tell us - this is a political forum - whether he thinks that politically that was the proper thing to do, to get into business up to your neck and then look at the facts later.

The hon. Deputy Premier was a great member of the opposition. [For] anything we did we had to have a cost-benefit analysis. We had to have facts and figures. We had to be sure - good business and a good head. I have a lot of confidence in him. But I wonder whether they sought his advice when they got into this kind of thing, when they got into Pacific Western Airlines. I don't think they did. I don't think they sought the advice of some of the better business heads in this House. They've got some pretty good ones.

I don't know why the hon. Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs is laughing because he's been blushing ever since they got Pacific Western Airlines. I came in here and was told that this session you're going to be talking to a lot of red-necked Conservatives. I came and looked around and all I was talking to were a lot of red-faced Conservatives.

Maybe the minister is tired of this, but I am also tired and a lot of people are tired of politicians saying one thing and doing another. You know what people think of that kind of action. They begin to feel that maybe we had better be more vigilant. Maybe we had better send people here who are going to ask questions and put the minister on the rug and let him stand there humbly with cap in hand and say, I know I have sinned but I want to let you have the excuses. So we'll continue.

I'm sure some hon. members behind there are agreeing because some of them have their heads down. The only thing I can say is that nobody is sleeping. When the Premier spoke yesterday, I counted eight people who had fallen asleep, at least momentarily. So maybe we could continue.

But Mr. Minister, I believe that you ...

[Interjections]

I know the hon. minister, Roy Farran, is not at all sleepy at the present time.

DR. WARRACK:

... [Inaudible] ...

MR. LUDWIG:

Pardon?

AN HON. MEMBER:

Order, order.

MR. LUDWIG:

You know, Mr. Chairman, I thought I had educated the hon. Minister of Lands and Forests but he never knows when to quit. He keeps coming up for more. He comes out like a fish out of water and he stays a while then goes back down gasping. We'll get back into the plucking business and beaver-skinning business if he doesn't watch it. It's also part of the economy. If anybody has blood on his hands, it's that minister, Mr. Chairman. I think we ought to send all the kids of this province a picture of him crucifying a teddy bear, a little bear. They killed 800 adult bears and the little bears are howling from a month's diet of starvation and he's proud of himself. He's a conservationist.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Mr. Ludwig, for the benefit of the members, the Chair has difficulty in associating that point with the bill. Will you please return to the bill.

MR. LUDWIG:

I appreciate your remarks, Mr. Chairman, but I was interrupted and I thought I would give the minister a good send-off for the weekend. After all, you must admit that he asked for it. He still hasn't. Talk about ministers confessing, this fellow has not only committed a cardinal sin, he's proud of it.

Mr. Chairman, I believe I've given the hon. Minister of Industry and Commerce a few leads to come back and bare his soul to us and to the people of the province and tell us how this all came about, because we really don't know. There is a sort of gap in the information here. Put your hands on the table, Mr. Minister. Tell us the way it is, tell us that you're going to get out somehow, or even tell us whether that's the way you're going to go because that's compatible with your principles. I don't think it is, Mr. Chairman. I believe the minister has something to say now.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

MR. PEACOCK:

Mr. Chairman, I move Bill No. 66 be reported.

[The motion was carried.]

Bill No. 75 The Attorney General Statutes Amendment Act, 1974 (No. 2)

MR. CHAIRMAN:

An amendment has been circulated. Does every member have a copy of the amendment? Any questions or comments?

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

MR. LEITCH:

I move the bill be reported as amended.

[The motion was carried.]

Bill No. 72

The Health and Social Development Statutes Amendment Act, 1974

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Any questions or comments?

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

MR. CRAWFORD:

I move that Bill No. 72, The Health and Social Development Statutes Amendment Act, 1974 be reported.

[The motion was carried.]

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Bill No. 73, The District Courts Amendment Act, 1974 ...

MR. HYNDMAN:

Instead of that, Mr. Chairman, we'll do Bill No. 70, The Trust Companies Amendment Act, 1974.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Hon. Government House Leader, did you not want to proceed with Bill 73 now?

MR. HYNDMAN:
No, we'll do No. 70 now.

Bill No. 70 The Trust Companies Amendment Act, 1974

MR. CHAIRMAN:
Questions?

MR. DIXON:
I would like to ask a question. In view of the takeover of Pacific Western Airlines and apparently this government's desire to get into all kinds of business, successful and otherwise, I am wondering if we shouldn't have some amendment here that the government would have to comply, like anybody else under The Trust Companies Act, if they have got their eyes on some trust companies. Because when we are talking about takeover bids and everything else, the greatest abuse this year was the way this government took over PWA with no thought at all about the minority shareholders. So I would like the Attorney General's assurance that the government would have to comply with this act the same as any other individual if they decided to take over a trust company. Because apparently nothing is sacred any more.

MR. LEITCH:
Mr. Chairman, the bill is not now applicable to the Crown.

HON. MEMBERS:
Agreed. Question.

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

MR. LEITCH:
Mr. Chairman, I move the bill be reported.

[The motion was carried.]

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

MR. CHAIRMAN:
Is it agreed?

HON. MEMBERS:
Agreed.

[Mr. Diachuk left the Chair.]

* * * * *

[Mr. Speaker resumed the Chair.]

MR. DIACHUK:
Mr. Speaker, the Committee of the Whole Assembly has had under consideration the following bills: Bill No. 75, begs to report same with some amendments; and Bills No. 66, 72 and 70, begs to report same and asks leave to sit again.

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

HON. MEMBERS:
Agreed.

GOVERNMENT BILLS AND ORDERS
(Second Reading)

Bill No. 76 The Cancer Treatment and Prevention Amendment Act, 1974

MR. CRAWFORD:
Mr. Speaker, I take pleasure in moving second reading of Bill No. 76, The Cancer Treatment and Prevention Amendment Act.

In connection with that, Mr. Speaker, maybe I could say briefly that throughout the province of Alberta the standard of care which is available to the people generally in the field of cancer is considered to be at a good and high level when compared with other jurisdictions in Canada and elsewhere. In fact, some of our facilities are superior and we have some very, very good people involved in both research and in the practice of medicine in this field.

What Bill No. [76] would achieve would be to further aid the excellent work which is being done.

About two years ago the Alberta Medical Association adopted a new protocol, you might say, a new series of principles which they felt should be applied to the treatment of cancer in the province. Among other things, it made the system more accessible to the patient, particularly in areas outside the city of Edmonton. It was proposed at that time the requirement that virtually all the follow-up treatment for cancer patients in the province be carried on at the Cross Institute in Edmonton - that depending on the needs of the patient, of course and the doctors' advice, it would be possible to perform the necessary doctor-patient services in other centres.

In order to do that, it was thought to be essential to maintain the record system which the Cross Cancer Institute has. But in order to maintain it, since the patients don't specifically visit the institute in Edmonton as much as previously, a reporting system was proposed, a reporting system whereby physicians handling diagnosis and follow-up of cancer cases would provide that information to the provincial Cancer Hospitals Board.

Mr. Speaker, the government adopted those views and made them the subject of a position paper last year. I believe it was well-received by people interested in the subject throughout the province and certainly by the Assembly itself at the time.

These amendments relate to the sorts of principles which I have just been discussing which had been made the subject of the government position. I think the assurance which the House is entitled to at this time, is that in going through the details of the proposed sections being put forward in this bill, we were very concerned about issues of confidentiality which might arise. We have brought forward, in a way we feel is the best we could conceive of two things: one is to make sure that essential information is obtained and kept. There is no disease which rates with cancer for the need to have full information in regard to diagnosis and full information available for follow-up care of those patients.

All hon. members who have ever known anyone who has suffered from cancer would know that one of the most important things in the period following surgery, if there was surgery, is a continuous follow-up system. Those who know someone who has had cancer would know that that has been part of the important relationship the patient has had with the cancer treatment services in the province and that is the first of the two essential things we were attempting to achieve in drafting the bill in this form.

The second, of course, is that having obtained that information, it would not be abused or misused in any way by anyone. Hon. members will note that there are provisions, to some extent, that do relate to the question of confidentiality.

So, Mr. Speaker, there are one or two other minor provisions relating to advisory committees and relating to research in the bill, but by and large the items I have referred to are the substance of the bill.

MR. TAYLOR:

Mr. Speaker, I just want to say a word or two. I am sure all hon. members welcome the bill. And I would hope it would mean increased research into the causes of cancer and into some breakthrough into the cures for cancer. Cancer, as the hon. minister indicated, is very worrying to many, many people. The word that a person has cancer generally is most discomfiting because it appears that it's not very often a cure can be effected. While I think there have been cures, I would like to urge the hon. minister to up the amount of research in regard to the causes of cancer and the cures for cancer and a breakthrough in regard to cure.

But also I would like to see in this statistical information that is being mentioned here some record kept of the various types of treatment various people are having, not particularly their names, but the effect it had, how long it lasted and if eventually it did turn out that the cancer got worse and caused the death of that person.

I think this is going to be very valuable information in regard to assessing some of the present methods used in connection with the treatment of cancer at the present time. But primarily I rose to say that I support this bill and I would like to see increased funds spent in research into the causes of cancer.

MR. CLARK:

Mr. Speaker, just one area of concern. That is, it seems to me that in addition to the comments made by the Member for Drumheller about research, which I am sure we all agree with, perhaps even more important is the second area emphasized by this act, and that is the prevention portion. I am sure that if hon. members have had experiences with ones of their own family or close associates, the whole aspect of prevention, in addition to research, seems to me to be the area where we should spend increasingly large amounts of money. I'm not really familiar [with] how active the federal government is in this area.

When I talk about prevention, I'm also including the area of early diagnosis. Really, what I would like the minister to do in closing his comments on the debate here is

indicate to us in the area of early diagnosis - the cancer treatment clinic in the province - the emphasis or the role that it has in rather encouraging not only members of the medical profession but people on a broader front across the province to recognize the very needed importance of early diagnosis.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Question.

MR. SPEAKER:

May the hon. minister close the debate?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

MR. CRAWFORD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like just to comment briefly on the two related points raised by the Member for Drumheller and the hon. Leader of the Opposition.

In regard to research, there isn't any doubt that the Government of Alberta is prepared to put more funds into this area. At the time of our position paper we made a gesture in that direction which I would have to say, in retrospect perhaps, was hardly more than token. I think at that time we made a special grant of around \$50,000, and perhaps that was not very much and we should be looking at greater emphasis.

One of the important things in looking at the question of greater emphasis on research, though, is knowing that the necessary projects have been designed and the people are available to do them. And in arriving at that sort of position, naturally we keep in touch with research that's being done elsewhere, primarily elsewhere in Canada, in order that if a particular type of research is being pursued in one place maybe it would be more advantageous to pursue another kind here. Then we, of course, match that up with the particular interests and talents of the researchers who are here. In recent years - it has been the case for a number of years - changes have taken place in fields of research and one or two or perhaps more people who are very, very interested in specific areas of cancer research have located in Alberta and are engaged in projects.

I think in the area of prevention it's interesting that one of the greatest things that could be done has already been established to the satisfaction of most people, and that is the prevention of smoking. It would be about the greatest preventive measure that could be taken in regard to one particular type of cancer. And since it's a type of cancer which, compared with other types, is of relatively high incidence, it would seem to be important to the whole project to encourage people not to smoke.

So when we talk about prevention we do get into that sort of area, that sort of discussion, and we know that the issues there are ones that have received attention nationally. The drive is always there on the part, I think, of governments and concerned people to see what other step we should be taking with specific reference to encouraging people not to smoke. You get little things like the printing on the package now, warning, it may be dangerous to you. Whether or not that has any effect is doubtful. It is not a large step, but it is a step that falls into the class of prevention. It's an attempt to inform people so they can prevent this particular illness attacking them at some time in the future. So that is clearly of a preventive nature, and I think it's [to] things of that type in regard to known ways - known because of research - that it can be prevented or perhaps diagnosed earlier; that attention will continue to be given.

One other thing I'd like to say about research in respect to this bill. Having made, I hope, a commitment in fact that we're prepared, as a government, to give very strong support to basic research in cancer that can be usefully carried out in the province of Alberta when compared with other jurisdictions - having said that, the importance to the evaluation of treatment methods that result from the collection of information on individual cases throughout the province on a consistent basis, is the other great input that is provided in this bill in the area of cancer research. Because of course evaluation of the ongoing situation is absolutely essential to research.

So, Mr. Speaker, I hope that deals in brief form with the important issues the honorable gentlemen opposite raised. I leave the House with the assurance that this will continue to receive probably even greater consideration from the government in the future.

[The motion was carried. Bill No. 76 was read a second time.]

Bill No. 80 The Legislative Assembly Amendment Act, 1974 (No.2)

MR. HYNDMAN:

Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of Bill No. 80, The Legislative Assembly Amendment Act, 1974 (No.2).

I don't believe this bill needs any exhaustive debate. Its introduction is essentially for the purpose of clearing up possible uncertainty with regard to the status of members of the Legislative Assembly. The principles of the bill, if passed, would essentially put a member of the Assembly in the same position as other citizens of the province in terms of he or she being a member of a co-operative association or a shareholder of a company that is a member of a co-operative association, or if moneys are

received pursuant to The Alberta Property Tax Reduction Act or under the renter assistance program.

MR. CLARK:

Mr. Speaker, in commenting on Bill 80, those of us on this side of the House plan to support Bill 80. I would like to make just one suggestion to the government, that perhaps within the next year or two it would be very appropriate if some mechanism were set up to look at the whole Legislative Assembly Act itself. From discussions I have had with some of the law officers of the Crown, it is extremely difficult the way the Act is worded. It seems to me that what's happened - in fact I can recall that the Act has been amended a number of times just like we're doing here, and we find a great number of, well, rather ambiguous situations develop.

So perhaps once we get any extracurricular activities that might come up in the course of the next year or so out of the way, one of the high priorities, regardless of who is sitting where at that particular time, would be to have a very serious look at The Legislative Assembly Act from stem to stern to deal with a number of the ambiguities that are there now and take into consideration a number of the situations that members of the Legislature find themselves in in 1975 as opposed to when the Act was initially passed by the Assembly many years ago.

MR. HINMAN:

Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the minister would tell us whether or not there is any need to put anything in this act to enable some of our ranchers in the House to borrow money interest-free for one year so they can keep their calf crop.

MR. SPEAKER:

May the hon. minister conclude the debate?

HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

MR. HYNDMAN:

Mr. Speaker, my information with regard to that subject is, the widest-held legal opinion is that there is not a problem. By taking the benefit of that program, a member would not be in a position of rendering himself ineligible to be a member of the Assembly.

[The motion was carried. Bill No. 80 was read a second time.]

Bill No. 77 The Ophthalmic Dispensers Amendment Act, 1974

MR. CRAWFORD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I would like to move second reading of Bill No. 77, The Ophthalmic Dispensers Amendment Act, 1974.

Mr. Speaker, I think I can briefly state the principle of the bill. There are only one or two things that really need be said about it. I had in mind, when I got up, a pun based on bringing the matter into focus. But I decided it would be such a poor job if I tried to proceed with it that I abandoned the idea.

This bill, Mr. Speaker, is in part the result of representations that have been made to the government by people who are in practice at the present time as ophthalmic dispensers in the province of Alberta and whose status is in question as to their right to continue practice. Therefore, the reintroduction of the grandfather clause that was in the bill prior to 1970 is one of the features of this bill.

As we were able to piece the history of it together, the grandfather clause did provide for the continuation in practice of people who were in practice at the time the regulations, being this bill, came into effect in the 1960s, and when a bill later, in 1970, withdrew that particular provision some people had not yet made formal compliance with the need to apply for membership in the guild. However, they would have qualified had the 1965 clause not been withdrawn.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, the bill deals with that issue and then sets the manner in which, where there may be cases of dispute, the courts can deal with the issue. I should say that this bill, in my view, will not have the effect of endangering any standards of practice or qualifications or bring into practice people who are unqualified in any way. I do note that by going back to as long ago as 1965 in the opening section of the bill, in Section 4 - that would seem to be a long time, but my belief is that it will not bring anyone into practice who should not be in practice, or we wouldn't of course bring it forward.

The other related issues clarify the position of the board of examiners for ophthalmic dispensers. When I say clarify the area of examinations, it seemed there was some doubt in the board's mind whether or not they had the right or duty to set practical examinations. They had no difficulty over the issue of written examinations but wondered if they had the right or duty to set practical examinations. This bill provides that practical examinations may be set by the board of examiners and therefore clarifies that particular problem.

Mr. Speaker, I think the only other matters dealt with in the bill which are of significance are in relation to the steps then that would take place in the event of the board having difficulty with resolving the question of examinations. Once again a procedure is also in the bill which involves the Supreme Court of Alberta in those cases where it may be necessary.

MR. DIXON:

Just one question for clarification, Mr. Speaker, to the minister. I was wondering about the qualification there regarding a man having to be in practice three years in Alberta. What about the person - I have to admit I haven't had a chance to really study the bill. I was wondering if a person who has practised for two years in Saskatchewan and moved over here, he wouldn't be barred because of this from attempting to practise here in Alberta?

MR. CRAWFORD:

Mr. Speaker, I can answer that briefly. He wouldn't be barred from practice but it wouldn't mean that he could qualify under the grandfather clause. He would have to qualify under the normal application to the board for certification as to his competency. So his competency at that point would be an issue and the board might, in that case, provide for a practical exam.

[The motion was carried. Bill No. 77 was read a second time.]

MR. HYNDMAN:

Mr. Speaker, I move we call it 1:00 o'clock.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER:

Assuming unanimous consent of the House to the motion by the hon. Government House Leader, the Assembly stands adjourned until Monday afternoon at 2:30 o'clock.

[The House rose at 12:54 p.m.]

