

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ALBERTA

Thursday, January 30, 1975

[The House met at 2:30 p.m.]

PRAYERS

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SELECT COMMITTEES

MR. COOKSON:

Mr. Speaker, as chairman of the special committee to select the various standing committees, I wish to table the report on: the Standing Committee on Public Accounts; the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections, Standing Orders and Printing; the Standing Committee on Law and Regulations; the Standing Committee on Private Bills; and the Standing Committee on Public Affairs.

I would ask the permission of the Assembly to waive the necessity of reading out the various names.

MR. SPEAKER:

I take it the hon. member has the leave he requested?

HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill 6 The Department of the Environment Amendment Act, 1975

MR. YURKO:

Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce a bill, being The Department of the Environment Amendment Act, 1975.

The act involves minor structural and functional changes to the department act.

[Leave being granted, Bill 6 was introduced and read a first time.]

Bill 13 The Alberta Housing Amendment Act, 1975

MR. KING:

Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce a bill, being The Alberta Housing Amendment Act, 1975.

The bill first clarifies a reference to The Workers' Compensation Act which is necessitated by the new bill of last year, and secondly, in a number of technical and mechanical ways, expands the capacity of the Alberta Housing Corporation to facilitate the construction of housing in cooperation with municipalities.

[Leave being granted, Bill 13 was introduced and read a first time.]

MR. HYNDMAN:

Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill 13, The Alberta Housing Amendment Act, 1975 be placed on the Order Paper under Government Bills and Orders.

[The motion was carried.]

Bill 215 The Consumer Records Act

DR. BUCK:

Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce a bill, being Bill No. 215, The Consumer Records Act. Mr. Speaker, the purpose of the legislation is to regulate the giving of consumer reports, and governs the disclosure and review of the information so obtained.

[Leave being granted, Bill 215 was introduced and read a first time.]

Bill 204 An Act to amend The Election Act

MR. WILSON:

Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce a bill, being Bill 204, An Act to amend The Election Act. The main purpose of this bill is to revise the requirement that a woman's name be preceded by the prefix "Mrs." or "Miss" in the list of electors, to include the option of the prefix "Ms."

[Leave being granted, Bill 204 was introduced and read a first time.]

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

MR. BATIUK:

Mr. Speaker, it gives me pleasure to introduce to you and through you to the members of this Assembly, some 65 air cadets and kadettes from Mundare Squadron 341. Mr. Speaker, just recently half their number, who are girls, have joined the cadets, which is permissible. Sometime during the spring session of the House of Commons it is assumed that this will be legalized so the girls will be able to participate in the programs and benefits.

They are accompanied today by Capt. Hicks, cadet liaison officer, Lt. Paul from the regular Canadian Forces and Mr. Clark, instructor. Their chaperones are Mr. Bachur, Sister Stanislaus, Mrs. Fedoruk and Mrs. Siracky, with two bus operators, Mr. Boseley and Mr. Tricoteus.

I would ask that all those who were called, and the cadets, rise and be recognized by the House.

TABLING RETURNS AND REPORTS

DR. WARRACK:

Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the Manifest of Lands and Forests Helicopters with Respect to Executive Council and Government Agencies Travel for the Calendar Year 1974.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Syncrude ~ Deadline

MR. CLARK:

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct a question to the Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs relative to the comment he made this morning on a radio program in the city of Edmonton, when he indicated that the Syncrude project would go ahead.

Can we assume that the government, along with the Government of Canada, has been successful in getting the Syncrude group to agree to extend the deadline past the end of January this year?

MR. GETTY:

Mr. Speaker, while I'm pleased the hon. member was listening to my participation on the radio program, I don't recall ever making a statement that the project would go ahead. I think I did say I was optimistic that there was a chance to find a solution, Mr. Speaker.

MR. LUDWIG:

Oh boy!

MR. LOUGHEED:

Mr. Speaker, I wonder if perhaps at the appropriate time, such as this, I could supplement on that matter in answer to a question of the hon. Member for Calgary Millican yesterday, and [it] bears on the question that has now been raised by the hon. Leader of the Opposition.

In answer to the question raised by the hon. Member for Calgary Millican yesterday, I stated that the government took the view that all of its options were open with regard to the Syncrude project, and it was brought to my attention that that could have been misconstrued with regard to the matter of time and the matter of any deadline.

I want to make it abundantly clear that one option is not open. That option is that the government in no way is prepared to bow to any ultimatum; that commitments to the extent that are being suggested can in any way be met by any deadline that is involved in the next few days, or in fact in any deadline that does not give the Government of Alberta, the federal government, Shell Canada and the Ontario government a reasonable opportunity to evaluate the project and to see if it's possible to come up with an arrangement that is in the public interest of Alberta. If, as a result, this project does in fact collapse as a result of such ultimatum by the remaining participants, then that should be faced up to by both this Legislature and by the people of Alberta.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear.

MR. CLARK:

Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the hon. the Premier. Has the Premier met with the representatives of Syncrude today, or does he plan to meet with them today or tomorrow? After that meeting, assuming it's today or tomorrow morning and the House is in session, will the Premier be in a position to come back to the Assembly and give a 'state of negotiations' to the Assembly?

MR. LOUGHEED:

Mr. Speaker, the meeting with the chief executive officers of the remaining participants is scheduled for 4 p.m. today in my office. I have no way of knowing how long those discussions will be. I have no way of knowing whether or not the response of the remaining partners will be definitive as a result of the discussions, it may be possible that their view [is] that the negotiations are ongoing past the time of 10 o'clock tomorrow morning when the House sits again.

If there is anything that I can usefully contribute publicly tomorrow morning at the question period, I will certainly do my best to do so. If there has been any definitive decision taken by Syncrude prior to the time that the House is sitting tomorrow, I certainly will be prepared to respond and, if practical, I certainly will be prepared to accede to the request the hon. leader makes in terms of describing the status of the discussions, if they are close to finality relative to the question of an extension of time and the avoidance of any possible ultimatum. Beyond that I can't make any further comment.

MR. CLARK:

Further supplementary question, Mr. Speaker, to the Premier. Has the Government of Alberta been advised by the federal government that the federal government has given a commitment to Syncrude, that in fact they are prepared to make an investment in the Syncrude standpoint - when I say "investment", either from the standpoint of loan, guarantees or equity?

MR. LOUGHEED:

Mr. Speaker, it's not possible to respond to that in any way because I think it's only fair to the federal government and to other parties involved in looking at this matter, such as Shell Canada or the Ontario government or other governments, that they speak for themselves in these matters.

I certainly don't want to be answering in this Legislature in any way as to the views of other possible participants in such a way that might prejudice the ongoing and very difficult negotiations.

MR. DRAIN:

Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Would the Premier consider as one of the options a possibility of going along with the costs as a matter of buying time, having regard to a sharing basis with the various agencies that are represented, the federal government, Shell and the province?

MR. LOUGHEED:

Mr. Speaker, I think that was pretty close to the direct question I was asked yesterday. Our position on that is that we would keep all our options open and we would close no doors.

Syncrude - Petrofina

MR. DIXON:

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask a supplementary question to do with the tar sands. It is not tied in directly with Syncrude; it would have a bearing on tar sands development.

I was wondering if the energy board has approved the application of Petrofina Canada for another plant in the tar sands area? I wondered if the Premier or the hon. Minister of Mines and Minerals had any indication from the company that they are still planning to go ahead after receiving the initial okay to build the plant?

MR. LOUGHEED:

Mr. Speaker, that would be difficult to answer affirmatively. I am going from memory, subject to checking, and I presume that that response must mean that having been involved in other things, the Energy Resources Conservation Board has made public its statement with regard to the Petrofina application.

My understanding of that recommendation from the chairman is that it is not an acceptance in the sense of the application that was placed before them by Petrofina and their participants, and that the Energy Resources Conservation Board came to a very interesting conclusion when they stated that on the lease, the first basic lease of the Petrofina applicants, there were in fact more reserves than Petrofina had themselves calculated, and that as a result, there was insufficient room on the lease itself to provide space for disposal of tailings, and that the position properly of the Energy Resources Conservation Board was that it would be inappropriate for tailings to be piled on top of attractive lease situations relative to bituminous oil sands.

They came up with a very interesting proposal, which we will be studying, of a possible pipeline that might involve the government or some of the lessees in the area which could take the tailings from that particular proposed location, and maybe involve a number of potential plants down the way, disposing of them some miles to the northeast in a situation that would be acceptable to the Department of the Environment.

Syncrude - lease conditions

MR. LUDWIG:

A supplementary to the hon. Premier. Are there any cancellations, forfeiture clauses or limitations on the leases between Syncrude and the province in the event of failure to proceed with the development of the tar sands project?

MR. LOUGHEED:

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

MR. DICKIE:

Mr. Speaker, I think it would be inappropriate to deal with all the clauses and conditions of the leases. However, I can bring to the attention of the hon. members that there are clauses in the leases, the bituminous sands leases and the oil sands leases, which provide that after receiving a one-year notice from the provincial government they must complete to construction a plant within a four-year period.

Syncrude - Petrofina (continued)

MR. NOTLEY:

Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the hon. Premier. Can the Premier advise the Assembly whether or not there has been any preliminary discussion with the principals of the Petrofina project concerning possible consolidation of their project with the Syncrude venture?

MR. LOUGHEED:

Mr. Speaker, there hasn't been, simply because we felt it inappropriate for us to discuss matters with Petrofina and their partners when they are in the position of awaiting a decision from the Energy Resources Conservation Board.

Syncrude - Shell Canada

MR. LOUGHEED

However, as I think we said earlier in this House - if we have not, I would like to underline - in December we did have discussions with the Shell Canada company who have in fact not a permit but a recommendation from the Energy Resources Conservation Board with regard to an oil sands plant.

We did enter into discussions with them whereby we asked them to give some consideration as to whether or not they wanted to be a new partner in the Syncrude consortium rather than at this stage developing under their own project, without any attempt on our part to influence them in that decision but merely to point out to them that might be something which they in their business management judgment should evaluate.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Calgary Millican with the final supplementary, then perhaps we could go on to the next question and come back to this topic if there is time.

Oil Export Tax

MR. DIXON:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My final supplemental question to the hon. the Premier is: has there been any discussion with the federal government regarding designating some of the export tax that they are skimming off our oil to go back to Alberta by way of investment in the tar sands?

MR. LOUGHEED:

Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure we phrased it in quite that way, but I think what we have suggested to the federal government, having regard to the export tax and having regard to the contribution that an oil sands plant would play in terms of supply to Central Canada, is that in terms of any possible participation by the federal government who, of course, were - Central Canada, as I mentioned earlier, will be the principal beneficiaries relative to supply - that they give consideration to the matter the hon. member raises in terms of the revenues that might be falling to the federal government by way of taxation on Alberta resources.

Freight Rates

MR. CLARK:

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct a question to the Minister of Industry and ask him: what is the status of the freight rate rollback in light of the decision by the federal court, and in fact will Alberta be joining Saskatchewan and Manitoba on Friday of this week in asking that there be a freight rate rollback once again?

MR. PEACOCK:

Mr. Speaker, to answer the hon. member's question: yes, we will be joining Saskatchewan and Manitoba in asking for a rollback. What the effect of that request will be, has already been published in the paper. Mr. Marchand has identified the fact that he will not act on it, and the CTC have also stated that they will not act on it because they have no privilege of acting on rollbacks and prices. So we will have to take it and extend it to a higher court and have the meeting in Regina on Friday.

Maybe my hon. colleague, the Minister of Agriculture, would like to add to that.

DR. HORNER:

I'd like to suggest to the House that we're meeting with the ministers of agriculture and transportation of the four western provinces in Regina, a week from today.

Rail Line Abandonment

MR. CLARK:

Mr. Speaker, a further supplementary question to the Minister of Industry. At what stage are discussions between the federal government and the Province of Alberta on the question of rail line abandonment?

MR. PEACOCK:

Well, Mr. Speaker, first the federal government has agreed that there will be no further abandonment until the parties concerned - that is the province, the communities and the provincial governments - have had the opportunity of reviewing and determining what abandonment might be considered, if any.

Secondly, there has been a moratorium on abandonment for a period of - operational distances as far as the productive railbeds are concerned in Alberta - for the next 20 years.

MR. NOTLEY:

Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question if I may to the hon. minister. Will the government be tabling in the House a position paper, or a statement of position at least, on the government's position on those rail lines which are going to be reviewed this year?

I believe about 6,000 miles of the rail lines are up for review this year, a number of them in the province of Alberta. So will there be a statement on just what the government's position is on those particular tracks?

MR. PEACOCK:

Mr. Speaker, the Department of Agriculture and our department are in the process now of reviewing those lines which are under consideration for abandonment. We will be forwarding that report to the federal government upon analysis, after having reviewed the communities concerned. I think that will be available to the Assembly.

MR. TAYLOR:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. In every case will the communities concerned have an opportunity to provide some input to the provincial government before those representations are made to Ottawa?

MR. PEACOCK:

Mr. Speaker, yes. I thought I had previously stated that. The communities concerned will be involved.

Railways - Cost Disclosure

MR. WYSE:

A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker, to the hon. minister. Have the railways submitted a full cost disclosure to the government as yet?

MR. PEACOCK:

Mr. Speaker, that's a difficult question to answer. A cost disclosure in its total, of course, has not been forthcoming, and that is what the problem is all about.

As the Premier stated at WEOC in July, 1973, we cannot determine any of the costs or their related rates as far as transportation is concerned in a noncompetitive area such as western Canada until those costs are disclosed. They have not been forthcoming as yet.

MR. LOUGHEED:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to add by way of supplement and perhaps elaborate on an answer I gave yesterday.

It will be my intention when I meet with the Prime Minister - I believe the meeting may be actually taking place in Calgary on February 11 - that the matter of transportation will be discussed.

I will specifically want to bring to the attention of the Prime Minister the undertakings that were made by way of policy commitment in the federal Speech from the Throne regarding cost disclosure, and during last June in Edmonton when the Prime Minister spoke on cost disclosure, in both places confirming the necessity for that cost disclosure being provided to the provinces so we could prepare an effective case in this area and responding to the submissions that we did make at the Western Economic Opportunities Conference.

MR. NOTLEY:

A supplementary question, either to the hon. Premier or to the hon. Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs further to your last comment.

Has the government been given any indication at all from Ottawa as to whether or not legislation is actually being put before Parliament to force disclosure as promised in last fall's Speech from the Throne?

MR. GETTY:

Mr. Speaker, we have not had any more recent assurances than that. My colleague, the hon. Minister of Industry and Commerce, may want to comment as well. But we are assuming that the commitment made by the Prime Minister and the Minister of Transportation, both at the Western Economic Opportunities Conference and during the Throne Speech and in public statements, both in and outside the House of Commons, will be lived up to.

MR. TAYLOR:

A supplementary ...

MR. SPEAKER:

Might this be the last supplementary on this topic. We have a number of members waiting to ask their first questions.

MR. TAYLOR:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the hon. minister of transport. Did CTC give the provincial government an opportunity to make representations before it granted the last freight increase?

MR. PEACOCK:

Not as such, Mr. Speaker.

PWA Operation

MR. LUDWIG:

Mr. Speaker, my question is to the hon. Minister of Industry and Commerce. Has there been any extension of Pacific Western Airlines services in the province by way of additional routes or additional services since purchased by the government?

MR. PEACOCK:

Mr. Speaker, PWA operations are strictly under operational management and are not under our jurisdiction. As far as I'm concerned, what extensions there might be to the services are public knowledge and would be available to all the members of the House.

MR. LUDWIG:

Is the hon. minister not personally involved in attempting to extend the Pacific Western Airlines services in the province?

MR. PEACOCK:

Mr. Speaker, of course we are interested, as all citizens of Alberta are, in seeing that the best services, both for passenger and cargo, are made available to this province.

MR. LUDWIG:

Mr. Speaker, I asked the hon. minister whether he was personally involved in attempting to extend services, and did he tell me he wishes he wasn't?

MR. SPEAKER:

Order please.

MR. R. SPEAKER:

Mr. Speaker, a supplementary to the minister. Will government employees be given the same reduced travel rates on PWA as PWA employees now enjoy?

MR. PEACOCK:

Mr. Speaker, no.

MR. NOTLEY:

Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the hon. minister. Can the minister advise the Assembly whether or not he has discussed the position paper tabled in this House, I believe in 1972, concerning transportation and its implications with the officials of PWA to see if they can now fit into that policy?

MR. PEACOCK:

Mr. Speaker, that is a good question. We have had some preliminary conversation as well as the position of the province in regard to its objectives in covering transportation which we have passed along to the operational people of PWA for their perusal and comments.

MR. WYSE:

A supplementary question to the Provincial Treasurer, Mr. Speaker. I'm not sure if it was answered yesterday or not. Will PWA be incorporated as a Crown corporation for corporate tax reasons?

MR. MINIELY:

Mr. Speaker, we have not made a decision on that matter at this time.

Lamb Processing Plant

MR. BUCKWELL:

Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Agriculture. Could he tell the House what stage the lamb processing plant at Innisfail is at, and when will it be opened?

DR. HORNER:

My information, Mr. Speaker, is that the plant is now on schedule and they plan on opening it this spring. The tentative official opening is sometime in June. I imagine they would want to have it operational before that time.

MR. BUCKWELL:

A supplementary question. Who is going to be the first woolly lamb to be offered there?

Telephone Directories

MR. ANDERSON:

Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Telephones and Utilities. Will the minister please see that the phone books used by the MLAs in their offices are kept current?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. member made an emphatic representation in the form of a question.

Bayview Air Service

MR. RUSTE:

Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Industry and Commerce. Was any representation made to government by Bayview Air Service Ltd. before cancellation of a five-day-a-week service from Edmonton to Fort McMurray?

MR. PEACOCK:

No, Mr. Speaker.

Bow River Project

MR. R. SPEAKER:

Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of the Environment. Have all the clearances been made so that lands can be transferred from the federal government to the provincial government in the Bow River project?

MR. YURKO:

Mr. Speaker, to my recollection all the necessary documentation has been accomplished in terms of transferring the surface lands from the federal government to the province. There is still some discussion in regard to the mineral rights of the parcels that are now owned by the federal government.

Acupuncture

MR. HO LEM:

Mr. Speaker, my question today is a result of the considerable needling I had in the House yesterday. It is on the subject of acupuncture.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Oh, oh.

MR. HO LEM:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct the question to the hon. Minister of Health and Social Development and would like to know whether or not he plans to implement an acupuncture clinic in Alberta hospitals similar to that established in Vancouver General Hospital?

MR. CRAWFORD:

Mr. Speaker, the hon. Member for Calgary McCall is still having trouble making his point.

[Laughter]

But, Mr. Speaker, I want to reflect on the fact that I did say to the House during the last sitting that we were looking very closely at what they are doing in British Columbia in respect to acupuncture clinics. I had a representative, a medical doctor of the department, go to British Columbia for that purpose during the fall or winter and received a report on it.

We do not have at the present time any specific intention to go ahead with a program similar to the one in British Columbia. I might note that theirs is not yet fully operational in any event. We are still looking at that possibility though. My feeling is that we will be moving in that direction, but based on consultations with the College of Physicians and Surgeons.

MR. HO LEM:

Supplementary, Mr. Speaker, directed to the hon. Minister of Advanced Education. He, too, was active in needling yesterday.

This question is: as a result of the recommendations coming out of the Canadian Medical Association conference held recently in Ottawa where it recommends that the acupuncture ...

MR. SPEAKER:

Order please. It's not necessary for the hon. member to go into detail as to his reasons for asking a question.

MR. HO LEM:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker, to the hon. minister. Does the minister intend to implement the recommendation coming out of the Canadian Medical Association conference where it recommended that acupuncture be included in Canadian medical schools and associations?

MR. FOSTER:

Mr. Speaker, if the Canadian Medical Association consider their concerns in acupuncture of concern to advanced education and university programs in particular, I am sure they will be in touch with me. When they are, I'll be happy to review their considerations.

MR. HO LEM:

A supplementary question to the hon. Solicitor General. Mr. Speaker, on this question of the Alberta Health Care Commission, will the charges of acupuncture be permitted, Mr. Minister, to be charged to this commission?

AN HON. MEMBER:

Ms. Minister.

MISS HUNLEY:

Mr. Speaker, at the present time we are taking direction from the College of Physicians and Surgeons who consider acupuncture as a research project; but I am working closely with the Minister of Health and Social Development in order that we can develop a program together whereby this can be evaluated and taken into consideration.

MR. SPEAKER:

A final supplementary.

Order please. Order please. There is still a considerable number of members who wish to ask their first question. Perhaps we might have a final supplementary on this point by the hon. Member for Drumheller, followed by a question by the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview.

MR. TAYLOR:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to ask the hon. Minister of Health and Social Development: is the government or is the minister being needled by any doctors to set up this practice of acupuncture in our hospitals?

MR. CRAWFORD:

Mr. Speaker, there is no great rush of physicians and surgeons to begin this particular type of practice.

Northeastern Alberta Commissioner

MR. NOTLEY:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct this question to the hon. Premier. In light of the uncertainty now over the oil sands development, has the government given any consideration, or is it giving any consideration, to reviewing the role of the Northeastern Alberta [Regional] Commissioner?

MR. LOUGHEED:

Mr. Speaker, I think it would be very premature to move in that direction. Certainly as far we were concerned, and I think as far as the people in Fort McMurray have been concerned generally, with the extent of the reports we have received in the area, the action, the approach and the attitude that the commissioner, Mr. Henning, has taken to this date certainly confirm not only the need for it but the practicality of having somebody on the site making sure there is appropriate coordination between the provincial government operations in the field. He has been reporting to us at cabinet on a monthly basis.

Certainly we find it a very positive situation and even if there should be some delay in oil sands development, we still see some value in the situation continuing.

MR. NOTLEY:

Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the Government House Leader. Can the Government House Leader advise the Assembly just what particular approach will be taken to review the commissioner's report by the members of the Assembly? Will a special subcommittee be given that responsibility or will it be done by general estimates committee?

MR. HYNDMAN:

Mr. Speaker, we'll take both those suggestions and any others that might come forward under consideration and make a decision at a later date.

Downey Report

MR. WYSE:

My question, Mr. Speaker, is to the hon. Minister of Culture, Youth and Recreation. It's regarding the Downey report that was compiled last year and hearings were held across the province last fall on it. Is the government prepared to proceed with the recommendations now?

MR. SCHMID:

Mr. Speaker, we have had a great amount of input from librarians across the province. We extended our hearings because we would like to have the public participate as well. We have told them that we have until about spring to consider all the submissions that we receive.

MR. WYSE:

A supplementary question then, Mr. Speaker. Does the government agree with the report, and what was the final cost of compiling that report?

MR. SCHMID:

Mr. Speaker, this government believes that the people themselves should at least have the opportunity to suggest to us ways and means of incorporating certain suggestions on any report. This is what we are waiting for now.

School Libraries

MR. BUCKWELL:

A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker, to the hon. Minister of Education. Is the hon. minister considering upgrading school libraries before considering regional libraries?

MR. HYNDMAN:

I'm not entirely sure, Mr. Speaker, which distinction the honorable gentleman is approaching in his question, but within the last 10 days the government, by means of a \$6.5 million fund of \$15 per student, made a major injection of moneys into school systems for the purpose of enabling them, at a time of inflation and high cost, to materially upgrade learning resources with particular emphasis, I think, on the areas of Canadian content in the school system in environmental and consumer education.

MR. WILSON:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker, to the hon. Minister of Culture, Youth and Recreation. Could the hon. minister advise if the principals of L.W. Downey [Research] Associates [Ltd.] have changed within the last 12 months?

MR. SPEAKER:

It would appear to be the type of question that might more appropriately be placed on the Order Paper.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Agreed.

MR. WYSE:

A supplementary question to the hon. minister. It's regarding the report. When is the government going to take some positive action? The minister has been sitting there on his hands for three or four ...

MR. SPEAKER:

Will the hon. member ...

MR. SCHMID:

Mr. Speaker, can I reply to this please? It took the last government 36 years to do nothing. It took this government only one year to ask for a report.

MR. SPEAKER:

Possibly we might end the debate without the benefit of a rebuttal.

Oil Pipeline Spills

MR. SORENSON:

Mr. Speaker, my question is to the hon. Minister of the Environment. In light of the sharp increase in oil pipeline spill rate in Alberta, is the Department of the Environment going to alter its policy of leaving the monitoring of the pipeline to the company concerned?

MR. YURKO:

Mr. Speaker, I believe the hon. member is referring to breaks in the interprovincial pipeline which are actually under the jurisdiction of the National Energy Board and not under The Pipe Line Act of Alberta. However, they have not been excluded from The Land Surface Conservation and Reclamation Act and in this regard we are asking Interprovincial Pipe Line [Company] to supply us with all details in regard to their breaks, the nature and the integrity of their pipeline, and on the basis of this information we shall then take any additional action that's necessary.

DR. WARRACK:

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to supplement that answer because of the contention by the hon. member that the matter is being left to industry. This is not so at all. There is an oil spill contingency plan organization called OSCAR, organized on a regional basis and now on an interprovincial basis, that is a joint effort by industry and the respective governments.

MR. SORENSON:

A supplementary to the hon. Minister of the Environment. Has the hon. minister made representation to Interprovincial Pipe Line to replace the faulty pipe in the Killam area?

MR. YURKO:

Mr. Speaker, the Energy Resources Conservation Board is in contact with the National Energy Board and Interprovincial Pipe Line Company on a frequent basis. As a result of the three recent breaks during the last year, on investigation it was found that there was some faulty pipe. The entire pipeline was subsequently pressure tested and some sections were removed or replaced.

The pipeline has generally been operated at somewhat reduced pressure. Nevertheless, the extent to which pipe exists that isn't up to standard, I think is still being investigated. I have requested information from Interprovincial Pipe Line by letter and expect to get reports on this matter at the earliest opportunity.

Home Certification Program

MR. WILSON:

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct a question to the hon. Minister of Consumer Affairs. Would the hon. minister advise if the Department of Consumer Affairs has endorsed the HUDAC sponsored, non-profit New Home Certification Program of Alberta?

MR. DOWLING:

Mr. Speaker, yes, very definitely. We were responsible with the Alberta branch of the Housing and Urban Development Association of Canada in developing the first warranty system for new homes in Canada.

I think, Mr. Speaker, that I should refer to Mr. Klaus Springer and Mr. Paddick, who were the executive members of this organization when we started out, and have done a stellar job.

I should say that the warranty system is a one-year warranty against defalcation, major defect. Deposits are insured and so on. There is in addition a four-year insurance coverage which is all provided for the consumer for \$85.

MR. WILSON:

Supplementary, Mr. Speaker, to the hon. minister. Would he advise if the Alberta government will be publicizing this new consumer protection service in Alberta?

MR. DOWLING:

Yes, Mr. Speaker, we have indicated to the Alberta branch of the Housing and Urban Development Association of Canada that we will support their plan totally and will use our advertising budget, or a portion of it, to acquaint the public of Alberta - the consumers of Alberta - with their plan.

I should say, too, that we recommend that all consumers in Alberta who are attempting to build a home or who are going to build a home look into this proposal.

MR. WILSON:

Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Would the hon. minister advise if the government has determined a course of action regarding the builders who do not avail themselves of the certification program?

MR. DOWLING:

We know for certain, Mr. Speaker, at this time that approximately 36 per cent of the house builders in Canada are members of the Housing and Urban Development Association of Canada. They do, however, build some 85 per cent of all the homes constructed in Canada. That percentage of membership is larger in Alberta. We hope that the house builders of Alberta will avail themselves of the plan by joining the HUDAC organization.

MR. WILSON:

Supplementary, Mr. Speaker, to the hon. minister. Would the minister advise what protection advice the Department of Consumer Affairs will be giving new home buyers who deal with nonparticipating builders?

MR. SPEAKER:

Order please. It would seem that such a question might best be answered by means of a memorandum, a question on the Order Paper or something of that kind, rather than perhaps to ask the minister to summarize a brochure here before the House.

MR. WILSON:

On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure at all that there's any brochure, and incidents have occurred in the past that have been raised in this House wherein home buyers have had problems. This program is designed to cover the bulk of people who buy new homes, but if we're talking about the 15 per cent the minister alluded to, I think the public would like to know and I think that perhaps it should be in order that the ...

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Order, order.

MR. WILSON:

... minister be allowed to state what advice his department is giving potential home buyers.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please. I would have to agree emphatically with the importance of the question which the hon. member has placed, but it is obviously a question which requires such a detailed answer that it would be contrary to the rules under which the question period is to be conducted to have it dealt with in the question period.

MR. DIXON:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct a supplementary question to the hon. Minister of Consumer Affairs. It's regarding the introduction of the new bill changing the name of Consumer [Affairs] to Consumer and Corporate Affairs, making it that much closer to the federal act.

I was wondering if the minister could tell me, on behalf of the public of Alberta, where the Consumer Affairs branch comes in provincially, and where Consumer and Corporate Affairs of the federal government comes in. We see ads ... just one point, Mr. Speaker ...

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Order, order.

MR. DIXON:

The reason I say this, Mr. Speaker, is because both departments are telling the public of Alberta to write in their complaints. I think it's a legitimate ...

MR. SPEAKER:

Order please. The hon. member is, as I understand the question, asking the hon. minister within the confines of an answer in the question period to delineate the distinctions in jurisdiction and activity of two different government departments. It would seem to me that that would be a major topic and not the sort that would be suitable for answering in the question period.

DR. BUCK:

Supplementary, Mr. Speaker, to the hon. minister. In light of the fact that there are many people who are having the same problems with mobile homes as built homes ...

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Order, order.

DR. BUCK:

Just wait until I ask the question!

[Interjections]

DR. BUCK:

Mr. Speaker, I know they're not concerned about the little guy, but I am and, Mr. Speaker ...

MR. SPEAKER:

Order please. Would the hon. member please come directly to the question.

DR. BUCK:

Mr. Speaker, if you'd call the dogs off, I maybe just might be able to make it.

Mr. Speaker, my question is: will there be protection for people who buy mobile homes, the same as there will be for people who have homes built?

MR. DOWLING:

Mr. Speaker, the HUDAC program does not cover mobile homes or homes that are built for rent and some types of condominiums. However, the Canadian Standards Association does regulate the type of construction and various things that go into making up a mobile home.

We aren't satisfied in Alberta that the standards are high enough to meet the requirements of Alberta consumers and have made our views known to the CSA people. They were out here last year and we spoke to them at length about this particular topic - made it a point at one of our meetings.

Unfair Trade Practices Legislation

MR. LUDWIG:

Supplementary to the hon. minister. In view of the fact that we are talking about warranties and guarantees, is there any reason for the delay in reintroduction of The Unfair Trade Practices Act?

MR. DOWLING:

Only that we adjourned the session last year with The Unfair Trade Practices Act dying on the Order Paper.

The purpose of that, Mr. Speaker, was to give both the business community of Alberta and the consumers of Alberta an opportunity to state their views regarding its contents. We have received some 30 or more presentations on the contents of the act. We are now in a position to indicate that it is in a form for printing and will probably be introduced this coming week.

MR. DIXON:

Mr. Speaker, if I could rephrase my question. There seemed to be some doubt about it. I could rephrase it and I think it could be acceptable.

I wonder if the hon. minister, Mr. Speaker, could tell me if there is any liaison between the federal and provincial governments regarding consumer and corporate affairs to make sure that the taxpayers are not paying for two services doing one thing.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Doing nothing.

MR. DOWLING:

Mr. Speaker, yes we have been in touch with the new Minister of Federal and - I mean Consumer and Corporate Affairs federally, the new federal Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs. We welcome the department into Alberta in any of the areas [over which] they have jurisdiction. We respect their jurisdiction in certain areas and we know they respect ours.

Tar Sands - Foreign Interest

MR. TAYLOR:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the hon. Minister of Mines and Minerals. Regarding the future development of our oil sands, have there been any recent overtures from (a) the Japanese, or (b) the Arabs?

MR. DICKIE:

Mr. Speaker, there have been no discussions lately that I'm aware of with the Japanese, and certainly none with any of the Arab countries.

MR. TAYLOR:

A supplementary. Have groups from either of these countries visited the tar sands within the last year to your knowledge?

MR. DICKIE:

Mr. Speaker, there have been Japanese groups visiting the tar sands on a rather regular basis since we've taken office. I don't recall any groups from the Arab nations visiting the tar sands.

Forest Resources

MR. RUSTE:

Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Industry and Commerce. Has the government, in discussion with industry, looked at some method of profit sharing with any group using our forest resource?

MR. PEACOCK:

Not that I'm aware of, Mr. Speaker, but possibly my colleague, the Minister of Lands and Forests, would like to respond.

DR. WARRACK:

Mr. Speaker, I'm surprised, in light of the note I sent the hon. member earlier today, that he didn't ask that question of me. He asked a question yesterday with respect to the timber industry and whether that modification of existing stumpage formula had been contemplated and discussed with the industry. I said the answer was no and the answer is no.

At the same time, I would take this opportunity, Mr. Speaker, to make it clear that the possible alternative for future development of our resources in Alberta, be they forest industries, timber, pulp or other industries - certainly the profit-sharing possibility is not precluded.

MR. RUSTE:

A supplementary question to the Minister of Industry and Commerce. What other industries are being considered by government for profit sharing?

MR. PEACOCK:

I don't know what he is getting at, Mr. Speaker, but I have no knowledge of any other industries.

MR. NOTLEY:

Mr. Speaker, I wonder if I could pose a supplementary question on the timber industry to the hon. Minister of Lands and Forests. Has the government given any consideration to requesting or passing legislation if necessary that the pulp companies pay a higher price for chips?

DR. WARRACK:

We've had some very preliminary discussions about that possibility. Judging from the furor that has developed in the British Columbia lumber and pulp industry in this regard, there are some reasons to have reservations. But we've had some preliminary discussions with the industry and feel that there is an excellent possibility that we can reach desirable objectives for the utilization of wood products without that kind of radical measure.

PWA - Financial Statement

MR. WYSE:

My question, Mr. Speaker, to the hon. Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs: when will the PWA new financial statement be made available to Albertans? All we know at this time is that we spent \$36 million. We don't know how much they are in debt, how many planes ...

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Order, order.

MR. GETTY:

Mr. Speaker, the responsibility for the government's liaison with PWA lies in the hands of the Minister of Industry and Commerce, and I'd refer the matter to him.

MR. WYSE:

He denied it.

MR. LUDWIG:

He denied it.

AN HON. MEMBER:

It's up in the air.

MR. PEACOCK:

Mr. Speaker, I might be able to suggest this: there is an annual statement, and the government, because of its corporate and financial interest, of course is interested in the welfare and the profit progress and position of PWA. We will look with interest as an investor when and as the audited statement is made available at the end of their fiscal year.

MR. LUDWIG:

Supplementary to the hon. minister. Would he do it over again if he had the opportunity?

MR. PEACOCK:

Yes, Mr. Speaker.

MR. DRAIN:

... [not recorded] ... and I have to make a slight statement first. I'm sure that with the good mood that the Legislature is in today, Mr. Speaker, I can get unanimous consent to say at least good afternoon to everybody.

Mr. Speaker, my question to the hon. Minister of Industry and Commerce is that it is common practice among some publicly-held companies to have their financial statements published in various newspapers. Is he giving that thought his consideration, having regard for the fact that the people of Alberta are the principal shareholders?

MR. PEACOCK:

Mr. Speaker, we have not, but it's a consideration.

MR. WYSE:

A supplementary question, Mr. ...

MR. SPEAKER:

I regret to say that we have run over the time for the question period, and perhaps we could go back to this topic tomorrow.

Freehold Mineral Taxation

MR. MINIELY:

Mr. Speaker, the hon. Member for Calgary Bow, yesterday I believe asked a question regarding the deductibility of freehold mineral tax paid to the Province of Alberta for federal corporate tax purposes.

Mr. Speaker, the answer to that question is that the freehold mineral tax paid to the Province of Alberta is not deductible for federal income tax purposes.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

MOTIONS FOR RETURNS

MR. NOTLEY:

Mr. Speaker, I ask leave to withdraw Motion 101. The minister tabled the information the other day.

HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER:

No. 101 is withdrawn from the Order Paper.

102. Mr. Notley proposed the following motion to the Assembly:

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

All briefs and submissions received by the government between November 1, 1974 and the date of the receipt of this motion, relating to The Unfair Trade Practices Act, being a bill introduced during the Third Session of the 17th Alberta Legislature and not proceeded with.

MR. DOWLING:

Mr. Speaker, on this motion for a return; subject to the usual concurrence being received from those having made submissions and presented briefs. We have had, Mr. Speaker, some of the briefs presented to us, indicating they are confidential. We will have to contact these people in order that we can receive their concurrence that they may be tabled.

MR. SPEAKER:

There's a difficulty in dealing with this kind of informal amendment to a motion in that it is unlikely to appear in the Votes and Proceedings and there'd be a record of it only in Hansard. Perhaps the hon. member might wish to amend his motion or else agree that he's willing to take his chances on having it passed in its present form, subject to the condition mentioned by the hon. minister.

MR. NOTLEY:

Mr. Speaker, I would agree or perhaps for the record would suggest the addition of "with concurrence". If the minister would like to move that as an amendment, that would be fine.

MR. DOWLING:

Mr. Speaker, I would so move and present you with a written ...

[The motion as amended was carried.]

103. Mr. Wilson proposed the following motion to the Assembly:

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

A copy of each report made by Mr. Rollie McFarlane after each monthly meeting with representatives of Syncrude Canada Ltd. since such meetings began in the fall of 1973.

MR. GETTY:

Mr. Speaker, this would be a matter of either interdepartmental memoranda or verbal reports between a deputy minister and the minister. Since it has never been the policy, nor is it now, for the government to provide that information, we would have to reject Motion for a Return 103.

MR. LUDWIG:

Mr. Speaker, it appears that every time we want information dealing with matters of public concern and importance to all the MLAs we run into a stumbling block in the name of the hon. Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs.

It's just a question of preference. I'm sure that if the government wanted to let the people know what is in those reports, they would spend a lot of public funds letting the people know exactly what is in them. But when they feel that perhaps we ought not to let the people know, maybe we should keep this one under cover, keep things suppressed from the rest of the hon. members, the excuse is: we can't, it's intergovernmental office material and we don't have to give it.

We know the government doesn't have to give anything if they don't want to. They have the majority. They could just tell us, try to get it. That is exactly what the hon. minister is saying, just try to get it. We don't feel like giving it to you; there might be something that might not make us look so good.

I can assure you, Mr. Speaker, that in my experience in watching the hon. members opposite, when they have something they want to crow about, they never let you forget it. It's on the air, it's in their publicity bureau propaganda and it's everywhere. But when it's something they would like to keep covered, they will keep it covered, Mr. Speaker.

I would like to make a reference to the hon. Member of Parliament for Peace River, Mr. Baldwin. He has done everything possible, everything an MP can do, to make the government give information. He is one of the champions of the cause. I wonder what he would say if he were standing here today and found out that this government just says, well we can't say we don't feel like it, but we are saying that it is not the right thing to do. We don't have to give it.

I think we have to stand up and fight for this kind of information. If he feels it should not be made public, that is all the more reason we want to look at it. Let him give us some reason it shouldn't be made public. I'm sure some hon. members there will feel annoyed that I am pressing them. The opposition would not be doing its job if we didn't press for information, legitimate information, information that is necessary for the people of this province.

We can't understand the ramifications of the Syncrude project because the ministers don't know too much about it. They don't want a public inquiry. They are embarrassed at the present time and they would just like to forget about the whole thing. We should not let them. We should let them give us valid reasons why information ought not to be given. Is it so confidential? Has it got military implications that there might be a disaster down the line if they reveal it?

The fact that he says, we don't want to give it, is all the more reason we should press just in case there is something the public ought to know. What he is saying, and he

is developing a practice, the government is developing a practice, that if something may be a little bit unsavory - and I'm not saying there is - but I'm taking this stand that when this government wants to tell you something nothing will stop them. They will give you the whole load. If they don't want to, their attitude is, well you people haven't got a majority, we feel fairly safe and we don't feel like it. That's tantamount to the answer we got. This minister has done this over and over and I think we ought to stand up on this side of the House, and some on the other side, hammer away at him and make him give in and give us the information we want, Mr. Speaker.

MR. CLARK:

Mr. Speaker, in rising to take part in the debate on Motion for a Return 103, there are just four points that I would like very quickly to make.

First of all, the price of this project, when it was announced on provincial television by the Premier in September of 1973, was in the vicinity of \$800 million or \$900 million. It was also announced in that agreement that the people of Alberta would benefit by this project, not only in additional jobs but also in profit sharing as far as this project is concerned.

One of the very mystifying aspects of the tremendous increase in the cost of the Syncrude project has in fact been that in recent months the officials of the Government of Alberta have expressed a great deal of surprise and alarm, and justifiably likely, that they didn't know the price had gone from \$800 million or \$900 million to the vicinity of \$2 billion. We're told by this government that Mr. Rollie McFarlane, who many members in this Assembly know and trust, is the liaison man between the government and the Syncrude group. Mr. Speaker, what the members of the Assembly are asking for here is information to see in fact if there is some way they can see what the reasons are for this tremendous increase.

Might I also point out, Mr. Speaker, that a second concern of all members of the Assembly, regardless of where they sit, has to be the question of what kind of monitoring the Alberta government has been doing. Apparently Mr. McFarlane has been the liaison person. Someone has a responsibility to do the monitoring to see in fact that the expenditures which are made are legitimate and reasonable; because the expenditures that are made now are naturally going to show up in the total cost of the project, and this has an implication on the profit sharing in which the people of Alberta have a very direct interest.

The Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs can get in his place, as he has done today and on several other occasions, and try to give us reasons why this kind of information can't be public, shouldn't be public. We went through the same kind of ritual from the minister when we tried to find out what the chairman of the Alberta Energy Company was getting.

In a situation here, where the people of Alberta will have the opportunity down the road of picking up 20 per cent of the equity if we so choose as far as the Syncrude venture is concerned, we're talking of something in the vicinity of \$400 million. It doesn't seem to me at all unreasonable that we should ask the government for the reports that Mr. McFarlane has been giving to the government. If there are some reasons why certain aspects of one or two of the reports can't be made available, the minister should stand up and tell us and we could perhaps work out some kind of arrangement there. But to say holus-bolus this information can't be made available to members of the Legislature is certainly a sad commentary, Mr. Speaker, on something that used to be referred to in this province as open government.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear.

MR. NOTLEY:

Mr. Speaker ...

MR. GETTY:

Mr. Speaker, I participated in the debate I guess by answering previously. But I did want, with perhaps the House's forbearance, to say that there could possibly be ...

MR. SPEAKER:

If the hon. minister might give the Chair an opportunity to find out whether there is concurrence to permit the hon. minister to speak again in the debate.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER:

I should say in any event that the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview was asking to be recognized quite some time ago.

MR. WILSON:

On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, I have no objections to the hon. minister speaking again, but I would like the opportunity to speak to the motion after the minister.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. member obviously has the right to conclude the debate and nothing that has occurred so far would take that right away.

Is it agreed then that the hon. minister has the unanimous leave of the House to enter the debate again?

HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

MR. NOTLEY:

Mr. Speaker, in rising to take part in this debate, it seems to me that the only plausible argument that could be presented by the government for refusing this motion for a return would be the secrecy provisions of the agreement between Syncrude and the Government of Alberta. But it seems to me that that can be handled by an amendment to this particular motion for a return which would exclude those technical questions which relate directly to, I believe it's Section 13 of the agreement between the Alberta government and Syncrude.

I just might say in passing that I don't think those secrecy provisions should exist, but the fact of the matter is they are there and we, I suppose, have to live with it. But an amendment, as I suggest, would at least allow the other part of the reports to be tabled in the House.

Now as other members have already described, Mr. Speaker, this is a pretty important issue when you consider the fact that the hon. Premier for the last several days has mentioned that all options are open. We have the option of the 20 per cent as suggested in the original agreement, but we could in fact go much beyond that. I suppose one of the options the government might consider is the total billion-dollar request by the consortium.

Mr. Speaker, before the members of this Assembly can make any rational decision on the expenditure of public money, we have to have some kind of accurate picture of what is going on. I well recall, Mr. Speaker, when we had the debate on Syncrude in the fall of 1973, that we were advised that one of the safety measures, if you like, one of the protections built into the agreement was that there would be a person - in this case, Mr. McFarlane - who would be the liaison person between the corporation or the consortium and the government, and we would be kept abreast of exactly what was going on.

Well, Mr. Speaker, we find the other day that there was a rather unfortunate - and I say that in the most kindly way possible - delay between the time the Syncrude consortium received this increase in the cost of building their project from about \$840 million to some \$2 billion and the time they reported it to Mr. McFarlane. Now I think we have to have some reasonable explanation as to why that time took place and what the reasons were.

I would just simply conclude, Mr. Speaker, by saying that this issue is too important to the province to keep the matter under lock and key or behind closed doors. There may be - and I make this point - there may be the occasional part of his report that deals directly with technical information which would not be relevant to our discussion in any event and would come under the terms of the secrecy agreement. But beyond that limitation, Mr. Speaker, it seems to me that the general thrust of Mr. McFarlane's reports to the cabinet should be made available not only to the Legislature but to the people of Alberta, because in the final analysis we have to decide where we go with this project and I think we should decide with as much information as possible.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear.

MR. GETTY:

Mr. Speaker, the reason I asked for the right to participate again in the debate was really because of the importance of the matter. As a matter of fact, I may perhaps be leaving the House prior to the debate ending.

I wanted to point out once again, Mr. Speaker, that it is essential that members of this civil service feel free to express in written memos, or in verbal communications with ministers, that they can do so with complete freedom and not with the knowledge that they would have to restrict their comments which might well become public by a motion for a return in the House.

What I wanted to suggest to the House is that in the meetings that were held monthly with the Syncrude consortium, there were I believe, and there are, reports which were handed from the consortium to each person participating in the meetings. Those are obviously not in the form of an interdepartmental memorandum from a deputy to a minister. Those, I suggest as an alternative to the motion for a return, I would certainly be prepared to scrutinize and see whether they in fact may or may not contradict the confidentiality clause as referred to by the Member for Spirit River-Fairview.

If it is possible that they can be tabled, I would certainly be pleased to do so. They would then give a monthly report that does not break the principle, Mr. Speaker, of interdepartmental memos not being normally tabled in the House and I would be happy to look into that.

I would only say, Mr. Speaker, further to the final comments of the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview, the Government of Alberta has been given the responsibility to make the decision. They are going to make that decision based on all the facts available to

them. That decision will then be placed before the House and before the people of Alberta for them to decide.

MR. DIXON:

Mr. Speaker, I always get a little concerned when motions by private members, whichever party they happen to be in, are turned down. I feel the government is responsible, number one to the people of Alberta and in particular to the Legislature because they are representatives of the people of Alberta - and in particular this government because we all remember how much time they spent saying they were going to have open government; kick those nasty Social Crediters out, because we haven't got open government.

AN HON. MEMBER:

So far so good, Art.

MR. DIXON:

As I have often said in this House, I have no objection to what they were talking about, but they don't practise what they preach.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

MR. DIXON:

Now as I understand parliamentary procedure, most of the secrecy revolves around national defence or national security. In this case, nothing like that is at stake and I don't know why the government opposite always wants to make a federal case out of every provincial request we make.

Surely, Mr. Speaker, the opposition should find out, on behalf of the people of Alberta, what happened, seeing the government won't give it to them. Why wasn't somebody informed that the Syncrude project was in trouble sooner than two weeks ago?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Oh, oh.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Where have you been?

MR. DIXON:

Now I understand, Mr. Speaker, that this government has hired a lot of their friends and relatives and others to do research work and to find out why the costs have gone so high in Syncrude. So I, for one, as a member would like to know how they came to that conclusion, because I have heard statements in the press which are so often denied when you ask the government. They say, no, that's not exactly what was said. We did say it but we didn't mean it, and all that sort of thing. So here, as late as two or three weeks ago, the government opposite was saying, well we're going to investigate these high costs.

I would like to know if Mr. Rollie McFarlane told any member of the cabinet or the cabinet as a whole that Syncrude was in trouble and one of the partners wanted to get out and the costs were escalating. This is the kind of information we would like from those reports. I don't see anything wrong with that. I don't think that involves national security. I don't believe it has anything to do with national defence that you could really argue is a secret matter. It's most important that we, as elected officials on behalf of the people of Alberta, get as much information as possible. As a matter of fact, a government that purports to be open should be bending over backwards to give us information.

I noticed when they got into trouble with PWA, Mr. Speaker, what did they do? They brought in stacks and stacks of so-called information. All we want here is a report from a deputy minister, and the Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs gets up, Mr. Speaker, and says, no, that's too important; that might involve some embarrassing things and we don't want to give it to you.

To me, Mr. Speaker, it's very very vital that government remain open and so I say, Mr. Speaker, if their election promises meant anything at all - and I'm beginning to doubt whether they really meant what they were saying with this kind of action - this government should let us proceed and pass resolution No. 103.

We are not asking you, as the minister pointed out, for any verbal reports, because how can you table a verbal report. All we are asking for is official reports and I'm sure Mr. Rollie McFarlane, who was mentioned earlier, Mr. Speaker, who most of us here know is businesslike enough that he did write down a few things from each meeting and say, well the project is going ahead or the project is in trouble; you should take a look at that; you should get in touch with the federal government or whatever his recommendations were. I don't see anything wrong with them being tabled in this House, especially in light of the very fact that by tomorrow morning, or in the next 24 hours according to the hon. Premier himself - he stated this afternoon that we would have that decision - so this motion certainly will not be tabled in the next 24 hours. So if anybody is embarrassed by it, it won't happen in the next 24 hours. Therefore, I say Mr. Speaker, that it is very vital that the government reconsider its decision and allow resolution No. 103 to pass.

MR. RUSTE:

Mr. Speaker, in rising to comment on the refusal of the government to table this information, I am really amazed at the change that takes place when they move across the floor of the House.

I recall an order for a return proposed by the now House Leader and the now Deputy Premier. It was filed in this House and it dealt within government branch. And certainly, Mr. Speaker, when we hear - and heard - all the talk of open government, we hear everything is going to be out in the open, supremacy of the Legislature. Then we have this time after time; it's an intergovernmental memo. Even the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs suggested to one of our members the other day that he might consider withdrawing the request.

Now, Mr. Speaker, is that open government? I can't help but wonder what they have to hide. I think we received from the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs just a little while ago the suggestion: well the government is going to be responsible and if they weren't going to do it, they're going to go to the people on it. Maybe there is something here that would be of benefit to the citizens of Alberta to evaluate what is going on in open government.

I submit, Mr. Speaker, it's a sad day when we get this kind of excuse for a request by a member of this Assembly for information which pertains to the livelihood of every one of us as citizens of Alberta.

MR. WILSON:

Well, Mr. Speaker, it's all well and good for the hon. Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs ...

MR. SPEAKER:

May the hon. member close the debate?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Let's hear the silent majority.

MR. GHITTER:

You'd think by the fact that our Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs stood up and gave a very lucid argument, all of the cogent arguments which are required, would be enough for the gentlemen over there to understand the importance of what we are saying today.

We've heard considerably about open government this, open government that. Let me tell the hon. members for a moment, Mr. Speaker, what open government really is. Then they might understand.

[Interjections]

Open government, Mr. Speaker, means when this side of the House, when passing legislation, removes privative clauses which allow people access to the courts which was hitherto unknown in the past government. That is what open government is.

Open government, Mr. Speaker, is when our ministers go on cabinet tours to every corner of this province ...[interjections]... instead of standing and sitting cloistered in their little offices as was the case in the past with the old government.

MR. LUDWIG:

Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, the hon. member is very misleading to the House and I want to make a correction ...

[Interjections]

MR. SPEAKER:

Order please. Order please. The hon. member has sufficient experience to know that a dispute as to facts does not constitute either a point of order or a point of privilege.

MR. LUDWIG:

Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of privilege. I did not have an opportunity to explain, but the hon. member made a statement that is misleading and a reflection on myself ...

MR. SPEAKER:

Order please. Order please. The hon. member is simply re-stating what he said the first time.

MR. LUDWIG:

Mr. Speaker, it's a reflection on the person, on a member of the House, and the rules provide for me to stand up and explain with reference to the point made and you're denying me the right to speak in this House, Mr. Speaker, by your ruling.

AN HON. MEMBER:

You're always speaking.

MR. SPEAKER:

With great respect, I hope never to deny any hon. member a reasonable right to speak. But the hon. Member for Calgary Buffalo, who just spoke, as I understood it was criticizing a government, a previous government and not any particular hon. members. And a government is not a member of this Assembly and has no privileges in the Assembly that I am aware of.

MR. LUDWIG:

Mr. Speaker, you did not permit me to state my point of privilege. You ruled me out of order before I got into it. When the hon. member makes a statement that is entirely untrue, there ought to be a means within the rules to stand up and challenge him on that statement ...

MR. SPEAKER:

Order please. If the hon. member feels there should be means within the Standing Orders for correcting alleged misstatements of fact, he perhaps might undertake the necessary initiative to amend the Standing Orders.

But as the Standing Orders and parliamentary tradition are now, I have to repeat to the hon. member that a dispute as to facts, whether the facts are considered misleading or not, does not constitute either a point of order or a point of privilege.

MR. LUDWIG:

Mr. Speaker, as a member of the previous government it's a personal reflection on me, as a statement ...

[Interjections]

MR. SPEAKER:

Order please. I must say to the hon. member that the point has been sufficiently ventilated and we should now return to the debate.

MR. RUSTE:

Mr. Speaker, may I ask the Member for Calgary Buffalo a question?

MR. GHITTER:

Mr. Speaker, I'm happy to respond. I can understand the sensitivities of certain members on the other side of the House and I would be happy to respond to a question.

AN HON. MEMBER:

I'm not sensitive, you can carry on.

MR. RUSTE:

I'd just like to ask the Member for Calgary Buffalo who it was who had the first cabinet meeting outside Alberta? And who had the cabinet tours instituted?

[Interjections]

MR. GHITTER:

Mr. Speaker, I'm happy that their attitude towards open government is when the cabinet goes outside the boundaries of the province of Alberta. But the attitude of this government on their cabinet tours is to meet the people within the boundaries of this province.

Mr. Speaker, I can appreciate the sensitivities of the members and their embarrassment on the other side of the House and I could go on and on as to what open government really means. But I don't think any government has shown as much openness to the people in their programs and [in] their ability to communicate their programs to the people as has this government. When I hear arguments relating to open government, purportedly in support of the motion that the hon. Member for Calgary Bow has presented, I just cannot accept that, Mr. Speaker.

How can we possibly retain the prestige and integrity of our civil service, Mr. Speaker, if we are going to be in a position where every moment they are worried that privileged documents, documents of their opinions, documents as to delicate negotiations are going to be brought before this House to be scrutinized. It would deteriorate considerably the ability of our civil service to speak frankly and meaningfully to their ministers.

I can't imagine that the members on the other side of the House would do anything different had they been in government at this time, and I think that is a long long way down the road before that will ever again be considered by the citizens of the province of this ...

MR. LUDWIG:

Not as long as you think.

MR. GHITTER:

So, Mr. Speaker, I have nothing further to say. It's obvious why we can't accept this. We haven't accepted motions like this for the last three and a half years, and we won't consider motions like this for the next ten and a half years.

[Interjections]

MR. R. SPEAKER:

Mr. Speaker, in making one or two remarks with regard to this information, I think the importance of the item certainly should be taken into consideration. The future of Syncrude, the decisions that have to be made require information. We have heard in the last two or three or days in this Assembly that all alternatives are to be considered; any advice is to be considered. Certainly, as part of the representative body of this province, we need the best kind of information to give the government the best kind of advice that we can.

I think, in asking for this information, that is what we are attempting to do. We are attempting to take the most responsible approach we can. We can stand in the Assembly and talk about the great tours we have made about the province, at public expense we must remember. If we wanted to compare cabinet tours a few years ago - 10, 15 years ago, or about 7 years ago - in expense to what they have been in the last three and a half years, I think I would hang my head and not really raise it in this Assembly.

MR. FOSTER:

Consider the results, yes ...

MR. R. SPEAKER:

And I think we should recall it. Check it out. Okay, doc?

MR. CLARK:

... [inaudible] ... missed that one.

MR. R. SPEAKER:

I don't want to go into that particular argument because I think we are taking our focus away from what we are actually asking for in this Assembly. We can go off and harangue and do all these kinds of things but I think we should talk about the importance of our responsibility, the importance of having information that we can give, not only to this Assembly or to the leaders of this government, but also to the people of the province.

As we travel from one community to another, the question of Syncrude, the question of resource development is raised time after time after time. The people want good information, because if we're really grass-roots representatives, we have to give them some good information so they can give us some good advice in turn, and in turn have good government in this province.

That's the responsibility we have, and certainly I think the government should consider this matter at this time.

MR. SPEAKER:

Would the hon. Member for Calgary Bow now conclude the debate.

HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

MR. WILSON:

Mr. Speaker, the hon. Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs can rise to his full height of indignant arrogance and act hurt because somebody would deign to question his words, his wisdom or his judgment. But I suggest that like all good quarterbacks, he should listen to the coach. Because the other day in the question period the hon. Premier, in response to a question, suggested that this information may very well be available or that it would be a reasonable request if it appeared on the Order Paper as a motion for a return, or some other phrase, to lead us to believe that it was reasonable to enter this motion for a return, Mr. Speaker.

So I suggest that the hon. Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs may not have checked with the hon. Premier before he cut us off at the pass as he did today.

You know, Mr. Speaker, when we raised this question in the House the other day, we asked what minister was responsible for the overall government involvement in the Syncrude project. What single minister was the one who had the overall government responsibility? We were advised that there was a committee up to December 20, I believe it was, headed by the hon. Minister of Municipal Affairs. After December 20 the committee structure changed and the Minister of Mines and Minerals was heading another committee.

But in fact no minister has the ongoing responsibility, or had the ongoing responsibility - at least this is what we were led to believe - not a minister, but a civil servant, a very highly respected civil servant who is known throughout the province and known to many members, as has been mentioned previously. Nevertheless we were led to believe that there wasn't a minister of the Crown who was responsible for this government's overall negotiations or interests in the Syncrude project. So we asked, how

can we find out? How do we get more information? How do we find out if this government is actually doing everything that it possibly can to preserve the Syncrude project?

We have the government represented at the negotiations by a civil servant. We have not one ongoing minister with the total responsibility. So, Mr. Speaker, we are reminded that when there is something good to be announced, when good news is available, this government has a penchant to manage it, stage and promote it to the nth degree, to milk it for every last PR drop that exists.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Hear, hear.

AN HON. MEMBER:

At public expense.

MR. WILSON:

But if there's a sniff of bad news, boy, everybody scurries behind the closed locked cabinet doors.

Mr. Speaker, somebody sent a note down here. It says: "What they are offering is the transcripts with expletives deleted, not the tapes."

But anyway, Mr. Speaker, we are concerned; we are interested. We want to assure that the Lougheed government is doing everything possible to preserve this project because of the magnitude and the impact, and we are trying to assure that public business is being done in public. We're trying to assure that the cabinet is doing its job. I can certainly have questions about no cabinet minister attending these meetings but a civil servant representing all Albertans.

MR. CLARK:

\$400 million.

MR. WILSON:

All Albertans are being represented by one civil servant, apparently. And I think there's some great merit in requesting this information and these monthly reports, Mr. Speaker.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Agreed.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Hear, hear.

[Mr. Speaker declared the motion defeated. Several members rose calling for a division. The division bell was rung.]

[Three minutes having elapsed, the House divided as follows:

For the motion:

Anderson	Clark	French	Ludwig	Sorenson
Barton	Cooper	Gruenwald	Mandeville	Speaker, R.
Benoit	Dixon	Hinman	Notley	Wilson
Buckwell	Drain	Ho Lem	Ruste	Wyse

Against the motion:

Adair	Crawford	Harle	Lee	Stromberg
Appleby	Diachuk	Henderson	McCrae	Taylor
Ashton	Doan	Hohol	McCrimmon	Topolnisky
Backus	Dowling	Horner	Miller, J.	Trynchy
Batiuk	Farran	Hunley	Moore	Warrack
Chambers	Fluker	Hyndman	Paproski	Young
Chichak	Foster	Jamison	Peacock	Yurko
Cookson	Ghitter	King	Purdy	Zander
Copithorne	Hansen	Koziak	Schmid	

Totals:

Ayes - 20 Noes - 44]

104. Mr. Notley proposed the following motion to the Assembly:

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

1. All fees and commissions paid to consulting firms, research firms and any other nongovernmental parties in 1974 for the departments of:
 - (a) Agriculture
 - (b) Municipal Affairs
 - (c) Advanced Education
 - (d) Education
 - (e) Health and Social Development.
2. The cost of each study commissioned by each of the above departments for 1974, the purpose of each study and the names of the firms or individuals to whom these fees and commissions were paid.

[The motion was carried.]

MR. KOZIAK:

Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous leave of the House to move that we call it 4:10. Perhaps if I advise the House of the reason for making the motion; according to the Standing Orders of the Assembly 8(4):

If a motion, other than a Government motion, is moved after 5:10 p.m. on a Tuesday or after 4:10 p.m. on a Thursday and is not voted upon during the same day, it shall retain its place on the Order Paper for the next succeeding Thursday or Tuesday, as the case may be.

The motion which appears on the Order Paper under Motions Other Than Government Motions, Mr. Speaker, by the hon. Member for Calgary Foothills, Mr. McCrae, is an extremely important motion, Mr. Speaker. I would be loath to see it drop to the bottom of the Order Paper after having been given only 21 minutes of discussion today. That's the reason, Mr. Speaker, for my motion to call it 4:10 so that in accordance with the Standing Orders ...

MR. LUDWIG:

On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, I don't believe there's provision for a person to sort of penalty-kill a situation. On top of that, he has to bring himself within the rules to do a thing like this. He's saying, I'm going to play games with this House because I'm caught a little bit with my union suit down.

His attempt to state that this report is so important that it has to stay on the Order Paper, Mr. Speaker - I can say that it isn't important. With the way this government is running affairs, who the heck wants to invest in Alberta anyway? It's academic. We shouldn't even discuss the thing. We should bury it and get on with the business of the House, Mr. Speaker.

MR. YOUNG:

Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. The hon. member is the last person in the House - the last person in the House, Mr. Speaker, who should speak about ...

MR. SPEAKER:

Order please. Order please. Order please. The hon. member's remarks are directly personal to the hon. Member for Calgary Mountain View and they're out of order.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Withdraw, withdraw.

MR. YOUNG:

Well, Mr. Speaker, it was not my intention to make a personal affront to the hon. member and I apologize for that.

The point I did wish to make, Mr. Speaker, is that we have seen notable illustrations of, for instance, a bill discussed so long that it didn't make third reading.

MR. KOZIAK:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank all those who took part in the debate ... [laughter] ... as it's now 4:10.

MR. HENDERSON:

I think the point of the member is probably well taken, but he doesn't need to stand up and make a motion. I think the rule states it's automatic that if the motion is read, the debate starts after 4:10 today, it automatically stays at the top of the Order Paper. I really don't know how the motion that the member is making can possibly be in order.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Next order.

MR. SPEAKER:

There is some question as to whether the hon. member was entitled to make a motion at the time when he did and it certainly would have been open to any hon. member to raise a point of order on that motion. Perhaps we could let it go at a recognition of some of the aspects of a new standing order and perhaps the matter will be dealt with otherwise on a future occasion.

MOTIONS OTHER THAN GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

MR. McCRAE:

Mr. Speaker, might I observe that one would think we were paid by the hour the way we watch the clock.

Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege today to move a motion ...

MR. BUCKWELL:

Point of order. With all due deference to the hon. member, the order has not been called by the clerk.

[Interjections]

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

Be it resolved that the report of the Legislative Committee on Foreign Investment be received.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Now.

MR. McCRAE:

I thank you.

Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege today to propose the following motion: Be it resolved that the report of the Legislative Committee on Foreign Investment be received.

Mr. Speaker, this committee labored long and hard, some 33 or 34 months, preparing what I think is a very credible, very worthwhile and a very documented report on an area that is tremendously important to this province. The study covered an area of extreme sensitivity: foreign investment, an emotional issue, and I think they did well to come up with the fine study they did. It is documented extremely well and it is extremely applicable to the situation here in Alberta. It has received adverse comment in certain predictable quarters, but I think it is a meritorious report and it is a privilege on my part to move that it be received.

Mr. Speaker, in moving its reception I'd like to offer my congratulations to all members of the committee on both sides of the House for their efforts in preparation of the report.

Mr. Speaker, the committee showed an awareness of the situation here in Alberta; [an] awareness that the quality of our life here is dependent on the development of our natural resource industry and an awareness that that development occurred to a large part by the use of foreign capital.

Agriculture, Mr. Speaker, is the number two industry in Alberta followed by manufacturing and construction; but the resource industry, oil, gas and mining, is the number one [industry]. The level of our social benefits here, Mr. Speaker, in Alberta - our education system, the envy of all of Canada, our parks system which is being developed so extensively - and all the other good features of life in Alberta are directly related to the development of the resource sector.

Mr. Speaker, foreign capital was primarily the means by which our resources have been developed. Back before the days of the Turner Valley discovery, life here in Alberta was pretty quiet. There were not the job opportunities; there were not the people around; life was really pretty dull, I believe, in this part of the country. But after the Turner Valley discovery, the foreign corporations or multinational corporations and local companies, small and large, really got with it in the oil industry and developed things to the state where today we have the highest employment and the highest opportunities and benefits throughout all of Canada.

As I've said, a number of Canadian companies were also involved in the oil and gas development, some small and some large, some successful and some unsuccessful; but they had one common problem, Mr. Speaker, and that was attempting to raise capital. If you talk to any chairman of the board or financial officer of an oil and gas company, their experience in trying to obtain financial backing here in Canada in this risk area was always a negative one. Whether they went to Toronto, Montreal, Quebec City, Vancouver or elsewhere the invariable answer was that they could not raise resource capital. So many of them went south of the border to the United States. More recently many of them have gone overseas to the United Kingdom, to Germany, Japan, Sweden, wherever to get risk capital. Canadians by tradition, Mr. Speaker, for whatever reason are more inclined to

put their money in the bank, to invest in bonds, bank deposits, insurance or other nonrisk areas. For some reason they are just not prone to stick their money into high-risk areas.

The committee showed an awareness of this. They showed an awareness of the need here in Alberta for diversification. They recognized that our oil and gas resources are a declining resource and in about eight or ten years we will reach peak production, and after that time the production will decline to the point where, unless we have some other industries here, there will not be the job opportunities, or educational opportunities that now exist. So the committee recognized that we must do much to diversify our economy if we are to maintain not only our present style of life or standard of life, but also to enhance it and improve it, so that future generations of Albertans can enjoy the fine style and standard of living we have here.

I think the Syncrude situation that we have been talking about for the last several days is an excellent example of the recognition of the need for capital in this area. The participants in the project have spent several hundreds of millions of dollars evaluating this project, and at this point in time, although it looked like it was a going concern some months and weeks back, there is a question mark over it right now. We here in Alberta are all concerned where the capital is going to come from that would allow this project to go ahead. Some of us are recommending an input of federal money; others of provincial moneys to keep Syncrude going. I won't comment on that at this point in time, except simply to say that we do need more foreign capital, more capital here in Alberta, whether it be for the Syncrude-type thing, continuing exploration in the oil and gas sector, other tar sands experiments, investment in the petrochemical industry, the forest industry or otherwise. We do need outside capital.

The committee observed the unique opportunity we have here in Alberta for diversification into petrochemicals and other areas so future generations of Albertans and western Canadians will have the opportunity of maintaining the style and standards of life that we have talked about. The committee recommended several ways the provincial government might encourage greater participation by Albertans in the ownership of Alberta industry. Some of these recommendations were: number one, that we attempt to develop to an economic climate more conducive to investment. In this connection they were concerned with inflation and what it has done to the stock market. The suggestion is that the provincial government should take concrete steps that are available to resist inflation, to combat it, so that the stock market comes back and Albertans will be more inclined to invest in equity stocks. Suggestion number two was that the province should lower provincial income tax, so that more discretionary income would be available to Albertans for investment purposes, and should also continue the government policy of not levying an estate, gift or sales tax. I'm sure all members here would applaud lowering of income tax, and in fact many are already seeking to claim credit for any reduction in income tax that may appear in the budget.

Another suggestion, Mr. Speaker, is that the government itself could be a source of investment capital either by guaranteeing conventional loans or by being a lender of last resort. Another suggestion was that some of the regulations of the financial institutions might be lessened so that the restrictions that prevent them from presently providing funds for investment ventures would be removed. The recommendation is that the regulations be made more flexible to meet the needs of the entrepreneur and the investor alike.

Mr. Speaker, I would have some concerns over relaxation of regulations involving trust companies and provincial Treasury Branches and so on. I think the people who do deposit their funds there do so with the expectation that there is little, if any, risk involved. I'm not sure what the committee report encompassed in this area, but I would hope that it wasn't that the trust companies, Treasury Branches and other so-called protected areas of investment or deposit - that the rules regulating them be changed to the extent that they could risk part of the deposit moneys. I'm sure this isn't the intention of the committee, but I would like some clarification of it.

A further recommendation, Mr. Speaker, is that Alberta develop its own corporation tax system. This would create further opportunities for investments in Alberta by giving the government flexibility to offer potential investors tax holidays rather than incentive breaks on their income tax, which would permit them extra funds for future investments. In this connection, Mr. Speaker, it was interesting to observe and note the filing of a position paper yesterday by the Provincial Treasurer outlining basic objections and terms of reference for Alberta business taxation and incentives. I think if any have had the opportunity of reading that report they will see how important it could be in increasing the amount of risk capital available to Alberta investment. There is just no doubt that it is a well thought out and well presented paper and it will be interesting to see the comments that come in from industry and investors alike.

Another thought I've had in this area, Mr. Speaker, is that the Alberta government might develop something similar to the registered retirement savings plans which the federal government has, and which are 'offsetable' against taxable income. I think it is something we could work on here - setting up our own provincial Alberta registered retirement savings plans whereby anyone contributing to that, up to a specified amount, could deduct that part of the contribution or the contribution from Alberta taxable income. I think that would make more money available to Albertans to invest in local resource industry. It would also offer Albertans the opportunity of putting funds aside for their later years.

Mr. Speaker, the foregoing measures would put more money into the hands of Albertans, and with attractive investment vehicles such as the Alberta Energy Company, increased domestic funds will undoubtedly be invested in Alberta industrial ventures.

The report also emphasizes that Albertans must be made more aware of the investment opportunities presently available and suggested some counselling in the school system to teach our young about the situation here in Alberta. A further recommendation is that the resource companies doing business here in Alberta be persuaded or encouraged to list their shares on the Alberta Stock Exchange. This would be helpful to the small investor who may be unaware of a number of the companies which are doing business here. Their listing on that exchange would make them more visible, and our investing public could look at them and decide whether or not they were a plausible investment.

Mr. Speaker, the report also raised a very interesting question of whether Canadian ownership of corporations is always necessarily in the best interest. The examples they used were the Canadian-owned railway system and the recent Petrosar project in Ontario. While they didn't necessarily state or conclude that those prospects or projects were not in the best Albertan interest, it certainly raised an interesting question.

The report concluded, Mr. Speaker, that it is more important for the province to receive its share of natural resource revenue through taxes and royalties than through direct corporate ownership. Also the provincial government has sufficient legislative powers and executive powers to ensure that corporations act in the best interest. This power of control, Mr. Speaker, can be as effective and as extensive as direct ownership and can often attain the same result: a prosperous and stable economy for Alberta. These controls are evidenced by our power to limit and control exports of oil and gas, coal, water and so on from the province. Also our environmental legislation, our taxation legislation, our ability to issue leases when and if we think it feasible of our oil and gas ownership or minerals - there are many many ways in which we control our destiny here in Alberta, and the problem has to be to find the right balance between over-control and under-control.

Mr. Speaker, the report goes on to say that limitations on domestic investment capital make it much more logical to encourage these funds, to encourage funds for new industrial ventures rather than to use new funds to buy into foreign-owned corporations that are presently doing business here. I would agree with that, Mr. Speaker. I think it's much more important to try to develop new industry than to try to raise capital to take over old industry.

Mr. Speaker, having commented on the report on foreign investment, I would now like to offer some comments on the so-called minority observations of the Member for Spirit River-Fairview. As acknowledged in his covering letter, the rules do not provide for filing a minority report, so that in fact his report or observations have no standing in this House. However, Mr. Speaker, they have received considerable publicity, and on that basis I would like to offer a few comments on them.

Frankly I'm shocked at what I consider to be the shallowness and the inflammatory nature of the report: references to such things as "theft of our natural wealth" or "Alberta's wealth". In my estimation, charges such as those are not backed up by adequate or responsible research, nor does the so-called report offer any plausible or serious alternative to foreign investment.

The majority report stresses the desirability of local domestic investment and recommends means to accomplish this. It also recognizes the need for a massive infusion of investment capital in the near future if we're going to realize our Alberta dreams. The minority report suggests, in this connection, that Alberta should offer part of its so-called windfall to facilitate the joint nationalization of Imperial Oil by both the provincial and federal governments.

I want to state, Mr. Speaker, I'm not carrying any torch for the multinationals, particularly Imperial, but I would ask what could be the rationale behind proposing the nationalization of a respected company like Imperial Oil? What could be the objective? Surely not to replace management. Surely they've done a very credible job in finding oil and gas reserves, in marketing their product, in getting the product to market. They've done a credible job in research. They've done a credible job in providing employment. They've done a credible job in every aspect of their company. What then could be the point in nationalizing the company? Surely none other, Mr. Speaker, none other than the effort to take all the profits that might normally accrue to the shareholders for the level of government that might nationalize them. I don't think, Mr. Speaker, that it would be in the interests of the employees or acceptable to them, nor would it find any more oil and gas to secure our future, Mr. Speaker. Neither would it lower prices to us. Mr. Speaker, I don't think it would serve any good cause at all except the nationalistic ambitions of the party proposing that remedy.

Mr. Speaker, I've always been confused by the members of the national [New] Democratic Party. They want to take over companies, they want to operate companies. I've always been confused why they don't get out and start up a company of their own and build it up into something worthwhile, get some experience in operating something and some idea of what it is like to manage or control a company rather than sitting back and doing nothing more than challenging existing companies and suggesting their nationalization.

Mr. Speaker, in this area I'd like to retell a story that circulated in this building last week. It was a barnyard story about a rooster and several other barnyard animals. The rooster discovered some seed and suggested to the other fowl that they should plant the seed and thereby produce a crop that they could all enjoy. The other animals came out with various reasons they wouldn't participate in planting the seed: some were tired,

some were on unemployment insurance and didn't want to jeopardize their opportunities, just a whole host of reasons. So the rooster went ahead and planted the crop. Came time to hoe the crop, the same old story: the others didn't want to help out. Came time to harvest the crop: the others didn't want to help out for the same reasons. Came time to eat the crop: they all joined for the feast. So they participated in the feast, and the next year and the year after that the same reasons were offered why they couldn't participate in harvesting or sowing the crop, but their yearly demands on the crop became such that the rooster decided that there was no point in him planting the crop. So he quit planting the crop and they all starved and they wondered why.

Well I think, Mr. Speaker, the answer is pretty obvious. If you're not prepared to get in and participate and do your own thing, you shouldn't be sitting back asking for nationalization or taking someone else's thing.

Mr. Speaker, I've commented on the ...

MR. HO LEM:

We're waiting for the punch line.

MR. LUDWIG:

Mr. Speaker, unfortunately I believe the hon. member's time has run out. This is private members', private bills day.

MR. MCCRAE:

Mr. Speaker, I move leave to adjourn debate.

MR. SPEAKER:

I don't believe the hon. member requires leave. The debate is automatically adjourned.

PUBLIC BILLS AND ORDERS OTHER THAN GOVERNMENT ORDERS
(Second Reading)

Bill 200 The Firearms Storage Act

MR. WILSON:

Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of Bill 200, The Firearms Storage Act.

Now, I realize, Mr. Speaker, that all hon. members did not receive a copy of Bill 200 until they attended the Assembly this afternoon. However, it is exactly the same as Bill 238 which we introduced last year but which did not come up for debate. We didn't have an opportunity to debate it then, and so all hon. members have had ample opportunity I'm sure to be familiar with what is in the bill.

I might point out, Mr. Speaker, that we did take Bill 238 The Firearms Storage Act and circulate it to a number of people in our constituency. We got back 405 replies, and they indicated that 89.6 per cent of those who replied agreed with the bill, 4.5 per cent disagreed, and the balance did not care to register an opinion.

Mr. Speaker, I very much appreciate this opportunity because this proposed legislation, if passed, would help protect the welfare of those we are elected to represent and hopefully prevent needless tragedy or injury and suffering.

Mr. Speaker, in order to provide all members with a better perspective, I would like to relate a few instances or examples that best explain the need for this legislation.

On December 11, 1971, just 14 days before Christmas, a young man walked into a store in Calgary and proceeded to the sporting goods department. The time was 11:30 p.m. With just a half an hour before closing, he shot and killed a 19 year old part-time employee, who was also a SAIT student, using a 30-30 hunting rifle that was on display on the shelf. Before that incident was over, two police officers and the assailant were wounded. The tragedy could have been worse. There were approximately 150 customers in the store at the time. Perhaps a simple piece of legislation could have prevented this needless tragedy.

It is interesting to note that a similar incident occurred in a large department store in British Columbia. And just two weeks ago, a competing store adopted a policy that they would no longer merchandise firearms. They stated the potential danger and contingent bad publicity just were not worth the risk.

Another example, Mr. Speaker: I have had instances related to me where teenagers have gone into sporting goods stores and openly toyed with loading and unloading rifles on display. Now temptation for youngsters who have questionable motives is bad enough, but surely it is not necessary to invite criminal action by juveniles.

Mr. Speaker, as a result of these examples and a sincere request from a young girl in my constituency, who wrote to ask that something be done, I have prepared this bill, The Firearms Storage Act. Simply stated, this bill provides that any person engaged in the business of selling firearms shall keep such firearms in securely locked facilities at all times, except when it is shown to a potential buyer or the firearm is sold or the firearm is cleaned or repaired. The bill also provides for a fine of up to \$500 for anyone who contravenes the act.

It has been said, Mr. Speaker, that it is people, not guns, that kill. I cannot disagree. However, with the increasing frequency of crime and the massive publicity given the cases, it is even more important that any realistic and reasonable measures we can take as legislators, should be enacted. It has also been said by those who resist gun controls that legislation merely prohibits the innocent from protecting themselves against offenders and criminals. I can't really take issue with that either.

Mr. Speaker, this bill does not propose to prohibit citizens from owning guns. It does not restrict ownership only to the qualified. It does not set up a central registry with a large bureaucracy. Nor does it propose to restrict the production of firearms or the discrimination against any sportsmen. It does not require identification cards. What the bill does is merely to remove a hazard and temptation which exists in our present retailing system.

I should qualify my remarks, Mr. Speaker, when talking about retailers. Many retailers, at this point in time, do keep their firearms under lock and key. Many use a chain arrangement; others remove the bolt or firing pin. They do take a responsible approach.

The intent of the bill is to ensure that all who are in business will be correspondingly responsible. Hopefully, the publicity from the introduction and debate on this bill will remind merchants and others of the need to take responsible precautionary measures.

Mr. Speaker, as a result of Bill S4, presented to the Canadian Senate by the hon. Senator Cameron, and Bill C138 presented to the House of Commons by Mr. Stewart Legatt, Canadian firearm and ammunition manufacturers have reportedly formed the Sporting Arms and Ammunition Association. It includes the whc's who of the gun club, such as Winchester, Crcsman Arms, Canadian Coleman, Remington Arms and so on.

Firearms in Canada is big business. Sales in 1974 were approximately \$47 million. It would be my hope, Mr. Speaker, that those in the industry will recognize reasonable controls are not only in the best interest of the consumer, but also themselves.

A conservative estimate suggests that there is a gun for every four people in Canada. That means that in Alberta alone there are probably 375,000 firearms in existence. While, in this bill, we are not proposing legislation controlling the firearms in the public domain, we have, I believe, a responsibility to protect the public from irrational acts of violence wherever possible.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to read a short excerpt from The Control of Firearms in Great Britain. It's a consultative report presented to Parliament by the Secretary of State for the Home department in May 1973. I quote:

The extent to which the rising trend in the use of firearms in crime can be checked or even reversed by stricter controls must be seen in proportion. No system of legal controls, however stringent, is likely to be wholly successful in preventing criminals from obtaining firearms; there will always be some who are bent on acquiring them and have the resourcefulness or the connexions to do so. Society should make this as difficult for criminals as reasonably possible. Legal controls are aimed at cutting down, so far as is practicable, the ready availability of the more dangerous firearms to the criminal, and to the irresponsible.

Mr. Speaker, it is refreshing to note the desire for reduction of crime through stricter gun control is not limited to any particular party. The Rt. Hon. John G. Diefenbaker is currently campaigning for more stringent penalties for crimes involving guns. The federal Solicitor General, Warren Allmand, has publicly stated that firearm controls should be tightened, and as a result has ordered a major review. Mr. Allmand also said that he is concerned that persons with criminal records or a history of mental trouble had relatively easy access to guns.

Mr. Speaker, I am not suggesting that this bill is a major reform of firearm controls. I am, however, suggesting that a reasonable and practical precautionary measure such as this, if it only resulted in the prevention of one needless injury or death, would be worth while and, I humbly submit, worthy of all members' sincere consideration.

DR. PAPROSKI:

Mr. Speaker, in taking part in this debate on The Firearms Storage Act I would like to say initially that I find it commendable that the member who brought in the bill has focussed on a very important area of concern, firearms. I unequivocally support the item.

However, Mr. Speaker, this item is but a small portion of the total area of law and order in Alberta, in Canada, in our society. I'm surprised that he does not indicate, even in his comments, that he would restrict or limit firearm sales.

Mr. Speaker, to deal with firearms specifically in the bill, and even more specifically to keep such firearms in securely locked facilities as the bill advocates, is unfortunately only scratching the surface.

Mr. Speaker, hon. members, I hope that our Legislature in Alberta can do much much better. First, I suggest, Mr. Speaker, we should review law and order in Alberta in a broad way, quickly, promptly and well, now and for the future, using the information from many other jurisdictions, the public at large, et cetera.

Mr. Speaker, I know the Premier and all members on this side of the House are keenly aware - and I'm sure all members are - of the importance of the matter of law and order. I hope it will be dealt with in short order. Such a review, Mr. Speaker, will bring out societal areas of concern and the action that should be taken in various areas.

Secondly, dealing with firearms specifically, Mr. Speaker, I have no quarrel with this bill but it surely misses the target. If it hits the target at all, Mr. Speaker, I suggest it's only on a periphery - and that's not good enough.

Mr. Speaker, of course we should keep firearms in a secure facility as we do with drugs, medications and other valuables and other harmful items. But I feel very strongly that a number of items should have been included in this bill. I urge the government to consider and bring in legislation in the very near future which should include a number of following items. Some of these items, as the hon. member opposite has indicated, are certainly included in Bill S14 brought in by the hon. Senator Donald Cameron from Alberta. It's certainly again commendable that it should come from an Albertan.

Mr. Speaker, the suggestions I have that should have been included in this bill are: one, machine guns and sawed-off shotguns should join the switchblade knives and guns with silencers as prohibited weapons; two, to cover any other gun, which must be defined, should require a permit. And, for example, a permit should be needed for hunting rifles and shotguns which are, I understand now, Mr. Speaker, exempt under The Criminal Code, and I'm surprised at that. I think a permit and registration should be necessary for every gun, whether it's a hunting gun or a shotgun or not; three, the possession of a weapon - the hunting gun or the shotgun just mentioned - should be allowed only if the owner has passed a test of knowledge on gun handling, gun laws and so forth. I'm sure the hon. members in the Legislature and the public at large could add quite a few more; four, minimal age restriction, and this minimal age should, of course, be defined, as well as the needed training.

Mr. Speaker, as a sideline, the CBC - I remember ...

MR. LUDWIG:

On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I believe the hon. member has strayed far away from the principle of the bill. He's relating at length what he would like to bring into the House if he had the intelligence to do so. He's not debating the principle of the bill. He's saying what should be in a bill of this type. He's wandering far afield.

The principle of the bill is the storage of firearms. He's talking about what he would like to do. Nobody's stopping him from doing what he would like to do, but he mustn't inject too much of his kind of reasoning and wander all over the place when he's dealing with the principle of the bill before the House, Mr. Speaker.

MR. MOORE:

On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. As I understood the remarks of the hon. Member for Calgary Bow when he introduced the bill, one of the underlying principles of the bill, although it has to do with firearm storage, is to prevent the kind of needless accidents or deaths that may occur because of the lack of firearm storage. Certainly the hon. mover of the bill - and I would think most other members - would be entitled to debate all aspects of deaths that might occur because of the improper use of firearms.

MR. COOKSON:

We don't mind, Roy.

MR. SPEAKER:

Ordinarily I would think it to be in order for a member to allege that a bill may have, in his opinion, shortcomings in that it does not include certain things which the hon. member thinks it ought to include; and he may think that the bill is therefore sufficiently inadequate that it should not get second reading.

However, this bill does define firearm in a very broad way. I think it establishes a principle. I would think that any discussion of that definition or any extension of the definition to include, for example, machine guns, is a matter which would be dealt with in committee and really does not touch on the principle of the bill.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Throw your bullets.

DR. PAPROSKI:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I'll be very brief in either case. I'm very empathetic with the hon. member opposite he can't exemplify the patience that he should have for the public's knowledge on this matter.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Agreed.

DR. PAPROSKI:

Mr. Speaker, the fourth item was the minimal age restriction regarding use of firearms and I think this is an important item because CBC just recently did a review on this particular area on an informal basis. It was interesting to note that various minors in various age groups, as I remember even about age 10 or 12, could walk into a gun shop and, as a matter of fact, purchase a firearm whether or not it's under secure facilities.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, the mental and physical status of the individual should be a consideration in firearm legislation before a permit is issued or registration is allowed, or is cancelled.

The last item, Mr. Speaker: periodically the owner of a firearm surely must report change of ownership and transfer regarding the firearm, for obvious reasons.

Mr. Speaker, more responsible firearm or gun legislation and ownership surely should include these items and other items. Such a bill, requiring hunters and gun owners to have permits and register them, I suggest, Mr. Speaker, will undoubtedly cause some distress by the owners who are qualified and trained and responsible, for example those in the Alberta Fish and Game Association.

But, Mr. Speaker, such a bill will also help protect all the other members of society including those who are now responsible. Such a bill as I have suggested, with those items added in addition to what the member opposite has already brought out, will provide clarity regarding the law and order. Rules regarding firearms will help prevent shooting accidents and will help keep guns away from criminals. Mr. Speaker, it will help keep law and order.

Concluding, Mr. Speaker, I advocate that such a bill indeed be drafted with those provisions that I've indicated, with input from the public. The introduction of such a bill in this House in 1975 I strongly feel should be done.

Mr. Speaker, as a sideline, I hope a review of law and order in Alberta [will] be carried out now on an ongoing basis so that changes will be coming about with added legislation regarding policies and increased funding for police protection. Mr. Speaker, community police service, for example, would be a very interesting area and I feel this has a lot of merit.

I think that last statement is appropriate, Mr. Speaker, and if I may have permission of the House to read one comment from a constituent who has sincere concern about firearms and crime in Alberta and in Edmonton - this is only about five or ten sentences, Mr. Speaker, if I may. Among other things regarding crime, he states:

Today, television in many homes is used to baby-sit toddlers from the earliest stages of their lives. They watch ... as violent acts of crime and murder are committed before their eyes on television in [the] comforts of the family living room. Undoubtedly, they accept this as a normal every-day occurrence in our society. Fed on such a diet throughout their formative years, is it any wonder why they become immune to the suffering of the victim in a "real-life situation" later on? For this reason, there must be some correlation between our obsession with "crime and violence entertainment" and we pay for it in all forms. And the ...

MR. SPEAKER:

Order please. I would hope that the hon. member is not establishing a precedent for other hon. members to give their constituents some indirect means of achieving mention in Hansard.

In any event, I would respectfully suggest to the hon. member that the quotation is really more relevant to the question of television than it is to the question of the safe storage of firearms which is simply and exclusively the only principle in this bill.

DR. PAPROSKI:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Concluding then, I state: all guns should be restricted and/or prohibited according to various categories that I've mentioned. I strongly support this direction. Thank you.

MR. LUDWIG:

Mr. Speaker, the hon. member who just spoke ...

MR. SPEAKER:

I believe the hon. Member for Pincher Creek-Crowsnest ... [inaudible] ...

MR. DRAIN:

Mr. Speaker, I find the concerns expressed by the hon. Member for Calgary Bow very commendable. The concerns that come from the hon. Member for Edmonton Kingsway, Mr. Speaker, are rather humanitarian although far off the mark from what, as I see, would in reality be rather impractical in considering that any real and final effect could be derived from this particular piece of legislation.

To me, Mr. Speaker, it's very similar to the Legislature attempting to pass a bill or passing a bill successfully to make water run uphill. We probably could get the Lieutenant-Governor, if we twisted his arm, to agree to it. But the water would keep going in its merry course.

In the matter of firearms I see as one weakness that a person can, under the intent of this bill, walk into a dealer and say, I would like to look at a firearm and then he would have the same in his possession. I would think possibly one direction which could be taken without the vast number of locks and keys which in reality would only keep out the honest and would not protect from the dishonest, would be in the matter of some control over where the cartridges are stored. It is so simple to develop a lethal weapon. A crossbow for instance, which is very elementary - something that can't be legislated against or locked up - will flat shoot for 75 yards and penetrate nearly as far as a conventional 30-30 rifle.

However, having said that, I have also in mind the situation which occurred at Inuvik some three or four years ago where a young man became intoxicated, broke into the Hudson's Bay store, picked up a rifle, shot two people and was finally shot by a police constable

because of the fact that he was dangerous. As a result of this occurrence in that particular area, the guns are now locked and covered with an iron-bar grid. Essentially of course this would be some deterrent because there would be some time involved in getting through to the firearms.

The simplicity for a person with even a small knowledge of machining to manufacture a firearm that is capable of firing or the ease with which you can produce an explosive, to me means that any move in this particular direction would be like the dove that flies with the olive branch over a couple of wrestlers in the Calgary Stampede wrestling arena. It would not stop the battle at all. So having regard for that, Mr. Speaker, I think there would have to be considerably more thought and direction given than is evident in this bill to make it effective.

There is also a tradition on the North American continent, which I suppose is a spillover in Canada and probably the heritage of our pioneer forefathers, that the right to bear arms and to have possession of the same is clearly written in the United States Constitution. It has been and it can be argued that the ability to use firearms has served the Canadian soldier in two wars. The preliminary training he received on the farm, in the field and in the countryside in the pursuit of game, quite clearly was very significant in the matter of how he performed as a soldier.

There is and always will be the criminal element. I do not see how locking up a few firearms will in any way be a deterrent to the person who can pick up a club, a butcher knife, a handful of lye, hair spray or all manner of weapons - a broken bottle, which is just as lethal. So in reality, Mr. Speaker, I would say the bill is commendable. If it were passed, it would mean an additional expense to a lot of people. I would like to see an amendment of this bill, if it gets to committee, which in fact would not pick on firearms as such but would look towards the locking up of the cartridges which are necessary to fire the gun.

With these brief remarks I'll conclude, Mr. Speaker, having run out of things to say. Thank you.

MR. LUDWIG:

Mr. Speaker, in rising to support the bill, I wish to commend the hon. Member for Calgary Bow for raising a very timely issue in this House.

He spelled out several instances where had this bill, this legislation been in effect, perhaps a life or lives could have been saved. No one is going to say that legislation of this type is a guarantee against death by gunfire, but it's a step in the right direction. I am sure a lot of hon. members here will agree that when you pass a law like this you just don't lock up a few firearms. You are probably locking up hundreds of thousands of rifles and small arms throughout the province.

We know that criminals can break in and still get their firearms, but this is making it more difficult for them to get them. This is making it difficult for a person who sees a rifle through a window to break the window and take the rifle and ammunition. It's a precaution. The literature and the material on gun control is very extensive and the debate rages on in the United States, in Britain and all over the world of how best to deal with citizens having arms. And I think the hon. Member for Calgary Bow very wisely chose not to get into the extended area of debate which could not come to any conclusion in this House, or perhaps even in Parliament - getting to the merits of owning or possessing firearms privately. So he did what was expected of him under the circumstances. He's bringing in a bill that would at least prevent some deaths.

It happened in Calgary recently and has happened in Calgary before and elsewhere, where some irresponsible type or someone who may be slightly demented was tempted to pick up a firearm or steal a few firearms easily. So this bill is very commendable.

All I would like to say about the hon. Member for Edmonton Kingsway is that a lot of his ideas are very good, and there is no one preventing him from bringing in the type of legislation he thinks we ought to have. That's what he is here for. If he has got ideas, get them before the House and see whether we can get some support for them. I'm sure that if he brought in a bill with a good idea even his own side might consider giving him some support. But I don't recall him having done so.

So this type of debate - when an hon. member on this side of the House brings in an idea, we all know that the opposition doesn't legislate. If that were so, I think this system would not work. But the opposition is bound to do its job and bring in ideas for consideration, and perhaps if the bill isn't just exactly the way someone can imagine it ought to be, there is an indication, some incentive to the hon. members opposite to look at this issue and bring something in.

I think we, on this side, know the extent of our opportunity to pass legislation. I'm not saying it can't happen, because I believe a lot of the hon. members on that side are very objective. Sometimes they will see that an idea is good and perhaps they can amend it or improve it. There's nothing wrong with taking a private member's bill and getting it into committee and amending it. Some of the finest drafted bills in this House brought in by ministers and big staffs and legislative counsel end up being amended in the final stages of debate. There is always someone who can find something wrong with it. Some group or some individual finds it affects him adversely and we'll look at it and do something about it. But certainly nobody can state that because we haven't got an all-inclusive, comprehensive bill to deal with firearms this ought to be thrown out. In fact

I have my grave doubts as to whether we can legislate in some of the areas - perhaps we can legislate but I think we have to draw the fine line between legislating on property and civil rights and getting into the field of criminal law.

So I think the hon. Member for Calgary Bow did this Legislative Assembly a service, did his constituents and the people of Alberta a service by bringing in a bill to prevent those things happening that have happened. And they have happened quite often. We don't know how many times firearms were stolen because they were easily accessible when there were no deaths. But it is a temptation. There's something about human nature that likes to own a rifle. Most households have a rifle or two. That is not a problem. I don't think that I'd want to support legislation which would say that we have to ban private ownership of rifles.

This bill doesn't say so, Mr. Speaker. This bill merely states that "every person who engages in the business of selling firearms shall keep firearms in securely locked facilities at all times," except when he is displaying a rifle, and if he saw someone who looked a bit odd he wouldn't let him handle a rifle. But it's a far cry from making it easy for them to get rifles. And when the hon. Member for Pincher Creek says that it isn't going to solve everything, granted, it isn't. You just can't prevent people from achieving their criminal ends if they want to commit a crime.

But the main argument advanced by the hon. Member, Mr. Wilson was that it is making it more difficult for people who might be tempted on the spur of the moment to pick up a rifle and fire away. I believe this happened at the Hudson's Bay not too long ago. It's absolutely deplorable that someone in a crowd, someone who might just be lurking in the store, perhaps with a wandering mind or demented mind, can easily grab a rifle right off the rack, just walk over there, take it and fire away. Perhaps in that Hudson's Bay incident we were fortunate there was not a major disaster. This kind of legislation would have prevented it, would have made it very difficult for a person to pick up a rifle and start firing away.

I'd like to urge the hon. members not to look at this thing that it doesn't solve everything: we can't cure the whole problem so let's not do anything. We have a responsibility on this side also to suggest such ideas as we think reasonable, and which we think in the public interest, and not to have bills time and time again saying, good, I support the principle; terrific idea, but ... And away they go, they start spilling off what they'd like to see in the bill. Very commendable, Mr. Speaker, but let the hon. Member for Edmonton Kingsway bring in a bill. I'm sure he'll find out that the further away he gets from this specific legislation, the more controversial it becomes. This debate on gun control, weapon control, crime and ownership has raged for many years in the United States of America and it hasn't been solved. I'm not saying that we are not perhaps guilty of some of the things that happen in the U.S., but I'd like to urge all hon. members to stand up and support the principle of this very worthy bill.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DR. PAPROSKI:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The hon. member mentioned that he doubted he would support any legislation that would ban owning a rifle. Would he also suggest that he would not or would ban owning of a sawed-off rifle?

MR. LUDWIG:

Mr. Speaker, there's a grave difference between a sawed-off rifle and a rifle. In fact I think owning or carrying a sawed-off rifle is illegal at the present time and it's a criminal offence.

MR. DOAN:

Mr. Speaker, in speaking against this bill, I would like to first refer to two or three illustrations of the mover of the bill, the hon. Member for Calgary Bow.

I think his illustrations contradicted the intent of the bill, where he went to some length in the telling of how these accidents had occurred while they were demonstrating the firearms in a sporting goods store.

I feel this bill would be a deterrent or a handicap on the sale of firearms which are one of our most important sporting goods today. In speaking against this bill, I think [I] should offer an alternative. I feel that the purpose would be gained better by having some form of permit, maybe where you would have to go before a police magistrate or somebody of authority and show good reason why you would want to purchase a firearm, and if you could have such a permit, then go and get the firearms and there would be no danger involved.

MR. HO LEM:

Mr. Speaker, standing up in support of the bill: first when we're talking about the storage of firearms I think there are many aspects to be considered, not only from the point of view of safety but also in the way it has of getting into the criminal's hands. We talk about some countries where these things are just simply not displayed to the public in some regions, not only from the point of view of criminal activities but sometimes we read about where the political climate does not encourage the public display of these things.

But first let me make it quite clear that I am not opposed to the sale of firearms. Certainly this bill does not say that we are trying to restrict the sale of firearms, but

just speaking to the storage of firearms. I am sure what prompted the mover of the bill is the safety factor.

It has been mentioned that there were several accidents in Calgary regarding the unsafe display of firearms. There were amateurs going in and seeing these firearms and someone was accidentally shot.

I think that we should also mention here that today, with the changing merchandising procedures, we see firearms sold just about everywhere. I recall a few years back in my younger days that when we wanted to purchase a firearm or rifle we had to go to a gun shop. Today the situation, Mr. Speaker, has changed quite a bit and very rapidly. We see that firearms are sold in drugstores, service stations and just about anywhere that may want to deal in that type of thing, which is very numerous.

The thing that really disturbs me in this display, Mr. Speaker, is that not only the amateur person is able to go up and handle a firearm, but an amateur salesman, a clerk, who has never handled a firearm before yet she is charged with the responsibility of showing and displaying the firearm. I feel that in this area certainly there should be some regulations imposed for the sake of public safety.

Now when we talk about amateurs trying or stepping forward to the display counter or the gun rack, where they can pick up a rifle, immediately the inclination of an amateur is to try it out; let's try the trigger. Has it got a heavy trigger or has it got a hair trigger. This is very normal, not only in regard to amateurs but indeed professionals. Before I would buy a gun or professionals would buy a gun they would like to try the trigger. This is a common thing. It's only natural. There are two types of triggers: first the one that you just pull, and another one where first of all you press on it, there's a certain amount of give, and then you come up to the firm pressure applied to the trigger itself and that's what fires the firing pin.

A lot of people may say well, I would like to try it out because there are no shells in it. This is an assumption only. Many many accidents where people are killed [are by] the rifle that "wasn't loaded". I think also that when we're talking about trying out a trigger, trying it to see whether it's heavy or light, it does quite a bit of damage to the rifle itself, because if it's not loaded the firing pin has nothing to hit against. Generally the firing pin is designed to hit against the soft firing cap of a shell. So there again this shouldn't be done. However, it is.

Now I would like to speak just very briefly, Mr. Speaker, on the fact of this infringement upon the stores, their rights to display, infringement upon an individual's right to go up and handle them. I think that certainly in this area, it could be argued also that we should talk about the rights of the individual, of the members of the public, to be safe from being exposed to these people handling firearms.

So there are some of my thoughts, Mr. Speaker. There has been much said about not selling or displaying cartridges. Certainly that is a step, I suppose, but it doesn't prevent a person from buying a cartridge, having it in his pocket or his possession and then examining the gun.

So I think that certainly this particular bill, the intent of it, is for the sake of the safety of the people; and certainly, as legislators, we have a responsibility to take the initiative to implement something for the safety of the people.

MR. MOORE:

Mr. Speaker, initially I want to congratulate the hon. Member for Calgary Bow who introduced the bill. His reasoning on introduction and his explanation of the principles involved in introducing the bill were certainly a credit to him, particularly after his earlier statements of this afternoon on Motion 103.

MR. WILSON:

Thanks, Marv. I didn't think you were listening.

MR. MOORE:

As I understand the principle of the bill and the interpretation that we've put on discussing the bill, its principle is to ensure that firearms which are in storage are protected well enough, that they don't fall into the hands of persons who might use them for destructive or illegal purposes.

That principle, Mr. Speaker, I can certainly support, although I have some reservations about perhaps the manner in which the act might be implemented and that kind of thing. I think any ...

AN HON. MEMBER:

Oh, you guys are regulating ... [inaudible] ...

MR. MOORE:

... principle that indicates that we should consider the safe storage of firearms is one that most hon. members could support. How that is done, and in what manner the act or regulations that might be attached to it are implemented, is another matter.

I wanted to raise some questions. I think initially, Mr. Speaker, that the introduction of this bill in providing a forum for discussion here indeed does raise some questions which many hon. members have touched on: the whole aspect of gun-control legislation and the safe, not only storage, but handling and control of firearms.

I had thought originally, on seeing this bill on the Order Paper yesterday, that it might have been different from the one that was introduced by the hon. member a year ago

and may have reflected some changes because of the recent incidents in the city of Calgary. I see that it doesn't and there's certainly no problem in my mind there. But because of those incidents it certainly brought to the forefront, even more than a year ago in this Assembly, the concern of citizens, not only in Calgary but I think throughout the province, for the safe handling of firearms.

I, Mr. Speaker, was involved for many years as a merchant selling to the public and for a number of years in a business which I owned, Mr. Speaker, had a sporting goods licence. I would want to say that I tried for many years to get from the licensing branch of the Alberta government - I might add, the previous government at that time - a licence to handle firearms and ammunition. I would say that I was never successful. It was a service station business and I know literally dozens of service station operators who have applied, over the years, to the licensing branch for permission to sell firearms and ammunition and have been refused that permission, largely because it was considered, and I think properly so, that a service station business was one which was prone to break and entry and that individuals who might not have made proper use of guns would have them in their hands.

I mention that, Mr. Speaker, to indicate to the House that in my view, contrary to what some perhaps might think or have said, the licensing branch which is now under the Department of Consumer Affairs has over the course of many many years, not just since this government came into office but long before that, taken into consideration the type of outlet that was asking for a permit or licence to sell firearms before issuing such a licence.

The second point I wanted to raise ran in my mind with regard to the case recently in Calgary where a person broke into, I believe it was the Hudson's Bay store, and barricaded himself and obtained a weapon and some ammunition. I was thinking on the introduction of the bill that one of the principles behind it was to ensure that guns were under an extra lock and key during the time that a business place was closed which is probably two thirds of each day, perhaps sixteen hours a day.

In my view it probably wouldn't do that much good unless you had a set of regulations attached to this act which would indicate the kind of lock and key those guns would be under, to have an additional lock and key inside the store.

We have all seen many sporting goods stores and other places where they display guns behind a glass sliding door with a lock and key on it. It would be just as easy to break that door and retrieve a weapon as it would be to break the outside door or window to get in to that gun.

So, Mr. Speaker, on reading the act I would suggest it would almost inevitably have to have attached to it a clause which would provide for the ability of the minister whose responsibility it is, the Executive Council, to make regulations with respect to the kind of storage that might be provided in each case. Those regulations might dictate that glass storage, for instance, be unbreakable glass. They might indicate that every rifle or gun on display may have to be chained in place which you see done in certain instances.

I would guess, Mr. Speaker, that just asking people to have firearms in securely locked facilities is actually not sufficient in meaning to implement the bill and put it into practice.

I was also concerned about the mover's examples of people who came into business places which were doing business and open to the general public and, removing a gun from the display, began shooting or something of that nature.

I just want to say, as other members have, that I would guess there wouldn't be too much to stop that individual, providing he was of irrational mind, from going in and saying, I'd like to buy a .303 British army rifle and on the pretext of buying it actually gain possession of the same rifle and wind up doing the same thing.

I want to just close, Mr. Speaker, by saying again if the principle of this bill in the mind of the mover - and I think that his principle is to effect a safer storage of firearms - I for one support that principle. I perhaps have some reservations which I would like to expand upon in committee study, if the bill reaches that stage, with respect to the manner in which that principle is carried out.

Thank you.

MR. TRYNCHY:

Mr. Speaker, I too would like to congratulate the hon. member because I believe that the firearm problems in Alberta, possibly in all of Canada and across the world, are something we should be looking at.

In looking at this bill, although I could support it in a way, there are very, very, very many deficiencies. The hon. members that have spoken before me have brought up a number.

It was mentioned that this act could save a life, and I suppose it could. But I'm sure that there are many lives lost by good-intentioned people who have firearms in their houses or in the stores who buy them before and decide to do their killing after.

The hon. Member for Calgary McCall spoke on many good points I thought, and he mentioned that we have too many amateur salespeople handling these guns, and of course anyone who buys a gun would like to handle that gun because you like the feel of a gun. That's what a good sportsman or a good hunter takes out first. When I look at a gun, I especially make sure it's comfortable on the shoulder, has the right length of barrel, and so on and so on. When the people who sell these guns advertise, they point out the many fine features of a lightweight barrel and strong wood and all that. But none of this is

in the act. Of course I think if we're going to be really serious about firearms, we should have an act that probably has a little more strength to it.

When you talk of these restrictions to the seller, the storekeeper, of course all stores like a pretty good display. Displaying of merchandise is number one in selling, so of course you try to keep as much clutter away from whatever you're advertising as possible. You can have them behind glass doors or behind glass windows under lock and key. Of course, if someone wants a gun he can get it by breaking the glass. I've seen guns under a chain, and of course the chain has to be very light because it has to pass through the little plate that holds the trigger, and of course what value is that? You can easily tear the chain with one hand or use tin-snips or a bolt-cutter which are in these stores, and you can get access to the guns anyway. Mind you, you can have them behind bars and have them pretty secure, but of course there's no display. You're only protecting the people who are intending to steal the gun for that part of the moment, say, in store hours, because after hours if you break into the store, it doesn't really matter whether you have bars, glass, or chain, you're going to get the gun. The only way you can protect it is to have it in a vault. So here again if we're really serious, we're going to have to come up with something better than just glass, chain, or bars, and possibly we might be able to have the shelves locked in the vault and the firearms displayed so that purchase has to be made in two places. Maybe by the time the person walks from the gun rack to the shells he may have changed his mind about doing the shooting.

It was brought out by the hon. Member for Edmonton Kingsway that a total review of gun laws and a number of things should be brought in in this province, and I go along with that. I think gun safety should be taught at all levels, and I think our hunting regulations should be reviewed. Also the issuing of licences for hunting should be given to people who know what a gun is all about and what it can do. There are many instances where we have an accident in hunting because of a person unknowledgeable in the handling of guns.

As the hon. Member for Pincher Creek-Crowsnest mentioned, we could have the guns in one shop and possibly the shells sold in the shop across the street, so we would have a little protection there. But what I'd like to see is a real review of gun laws in Alberta, a review of our crimes in Alberta. This type of legislation would not stop the importation of guns. It would not stop the smuggling of guns.

There are a number of lives lost. As we read in the papers there's a party and somebody picks up a gun, they have an accident, or he picks up a butcher knife. So even though we can save one life in a Hudson's Bay store, which I'm sure is what we're after, there are many that are lost in a number of ways.

Probably registration of guns in the province is the way to go, I don't know. But surely this bill as it is right now does not have enough teeth in it to provide the kind of protection I think we really want. I thought the hon. Member for Calgary McCall was going to amend the act, the way he was speaking, and I thought then we could go along with it and probably hear what other types of protection he could insert into this act.

As for real protection for Albertans under this act, mind you, it's a step in the right direction. It doesn't go as far as I would like to see it go and I hope that probably some other members will speak on it and provide us with some more information on how we can get an act that will really go all the way and give us the protection we deserve and expect in this province.

MR. SORENSON:
Mr. Speaker, ...

MR. SPEAKER:
The hon. Member for Drayton Valley, I believe, caught the Speaker's eye first.

MR. ZANDER:
Mr. Speaker, may I adjourn debate?

MR. SPEAKER:
Since it is 5:30 I don't think the hon. member needs leave to adjourn the debate.

MR. HYNDMAN:
Mr. Speaker, as to business this evening: at 8 o'clock we would see moving to continuation of debate on the amendment to the Throne Speech, beginning with Mr. Henderson; and then at 8:45 or 9 o'clock, moving to Government Bills and Orders for second reading and possibly committee: Bill No. 4 The Medical Profession Act; Bill No. 9 The Co-operative Marketing Associations Guarantee Amendment Act, and possibly Bill No. 18 The Social Development Amendment Act.

MR. SPEAKER:
Before adjourning, I wonder if I could draw the attention of the Assembly to Motion No. 2 under Motions Other Than Government Motions, which might possibly have the effect of requiring the Speaker to make representations to the Dominion Government, and if the House would permit I would propose to change the motion merely as to form so that the representation might be from government to government. Do you all agree?

HON. MEMBERS:
Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

[Mr. Speaker left the Chair at 5:30 p.m.]

