

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ALBERTA

Thursday, June 12, 1975

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

PRAYERS

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SELECT COMMITTEES

Select Standing Committee on Private Bills

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, as chairman of the Private Bills Committee, I hereby report that Standing Order 77 concerning publication of notice of application in The Alberta Gazette and newspapers has been complied with in respect of the following petitions:

An act to amend certain settlements resulting from the last will and testament of the Hon. Patrick Burns;

An act to amend The Alberta Wheat Pool Act, 1970;

An act respecting Alberta Children's Hospital Foundation;

An act to incorporate the Institute of Accredited Public Accountants of Alberta;

An act to provide for the extension of time for filing a statement of claim by Hector Couture, beyond the period allowed by The Limitation of Actions Act.

Further, the petition relating to an act to amend an act to incorporate The Canada West Insurance Company has been referred to the Private Bills Committee for consideration pursuant to Standing Order 81(2).

I wish further to report, Mr. Speaker, the meeting of the Private Bills Committee is scheduled for Monday, June 16, 1975, at the hour of 10 a.m. in this Legislative Chamber. At 10:30 a.m. we will move to consideration of Bill Pr. 2, An Act to amend The Alberta Wheat Pool Act, 1970.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill 216 The Right to Information Act

MR. NCTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce Bill 216, The Right to Information Act. The purpose of this bill, Mr. Speaker, would be to compel the government to make available on request a record of public business, with a few minor exceptions. The government's refusal to produce material could be challenged in court, with the final decision to be left to a judge.

Mr. Speaker, I might point out in introducing this bill that it is modelled on legislation introduced in the House of Commons by the hon. Member for Peace River, the house leader of the Progressive Conservative party, Mr. Jed Baldwin.

[Leave being granted, Bill 216 was introduced and read a first time.]

Bill 215 The Landlord and Tenant Amendment Act, 1975 (No. 2)

MR. GHITTER: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce Bill No. 215, The Landlord and Tenant Amendment Act (No. 2).

There are four important principles in this bill, Mr. Speaker. The first would require a landlord to give reasons of eviction to a tenant and if those reasons are not satisfactory in the eyes of the Landlord and Tenant Advisory Board, the Landlord and Tenant Advisory Board within the jurisdiction would have the right to set aside the notice of eviction on the basis that the reasons were not adequate.

The second important principle in the bill, Mr. Speaker, is that the landlord would have the right to remove a tenant on 24 hours' notice to the Landlord and Tenant Advisory Board if the tenant is in breach of any of the conditions of the tenancy.

The third condition and important principle of the bill, Mr. Speaker, is that a landlord would only be allowed two occasions in any one year to increase the rent, on two particular dates enumerated in the bill, in order to overcome the large number of rent increases being experienced in the course of one year. That would now be reduced to two.

The fourth principle, Mr. Speaker, is that the landlord and tenant advisory boards in the municipalities would have much more extended powers than they enjoy at the present time.

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

Bill Pr. 1

An Act to Amend Certain Settlements

Resulting From The Last Will and Testament of The Honourable Patrick Burns

MR. GHITTER: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce a private member's bill, being Bill Pr. 1, An Act to Amend Certain Settlements Resulting From The Last Will and Testament of The Honourable Patrick Burns.

[Leave being granted, Bill Pr. 1 was introduced and read a first time.]

Bill Pr. 2

An Act to Amend The Alberta Wheat Pool Act, 1970

MR. DOAN: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce Bill Pr. 2, being An Act to Amend The Alberta Wheat Pool Act, 1970. Very briefly, Mr. Speaker, this bill requests the reserves of the Alberta Wheat Pool be increased from \$30 to \$50 million and a slight change in the way reserves are paid to members.

[Leave being granted, Bill Pr. 2 was introduced and read a first time.]

Bill Pr. 3

An Act Respecting Alberta Children's Hospital Foundation

MR. GHITTER: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce a bill, being Bill Pr. 3, An Act Respecting Alberta Children's Hospital Foundation.

[Leave being granted, Bill Pr. 3 was introduced and read a first time.]

Bill Pr. 4

An Act to Incorporate The Institute of Accredited Public Accountants of Alberta

MR. DIACHUK: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce Bill Pr. 4, An Act to Incorporate The Institute of Accredited Public Accountants of Alberta.

[Leave being granted, Bill Pr. 4 was introduced and read a first time.]

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

MR. HYNDMAN: Mr. Speaker, for me today it is a special privilege to introduce to you, and through you to members of the Assembly, some distinguished visitors from France. In your gallery, Mr. Speaker, are M. Norbert Segard, the Minister of Foreign Trade for France, and

His Excellency M. Jacques Viot, the French Ambassador to Canada, accompanied by their officials.

Today at noon the Premier had the pleasure of being host at lunch for these two distinguished gentlemen and their party.

I might mention this is the first time, Mr. Speaker, that a minister of the French government has visited the Province of Alberta. Certainly the timing is appropriate in view of the European mission to France, highlights of which were announced in the Assembly about a week ago.

Mr. Speaker, in asking these gentlemen to stand and be welcomed to the Assembly, may I simply say to them: j'espere que vous avez trouve votre visite parmi nous interessante, et que vous emporterez de bons souvenirs.

MR. HARLE: Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure for me to introduce today some 90 students from the Stettler constituency. They attend Stettler Junior High, Grade 9, and are accompanied by Mr. Ambury, Mr. Crawford, and Miss Crawford. They are rather special to me because among them happens to be my son. I ask that they all rise and be welcomed by the Assembly.

MR. KIDD: Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure on behalf of the hon. Member for Camrose to introduce to you, and through you to this Legislative Assembly, 30 Grade 10 pupils from the Daysland school. They are accompanied by their teachers, Mr. Lloyd Gillespie and Mr. Marvin Emann, and their driver, Mr. Doug Ken.

I will forego reading the long list the hon. Member for Camrose has given me which extolls his virtues, and simply ask the group to stand so they may be recognized by this Assembly.

TABLING RETURNS AND REPORTS

MR. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to table answers to Motions for a Return Nos. 120 and 140.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Oil Industry

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct the first question to the Minister of Energy and ask if he's in a position to report to the House concerning a question I asked, I believe some 10 days ago, regarding the difficulties small Canadian and Alberta-based oil companies were having in Calgary -- the question of whether any land had been given up by such companies and the question of geologists [being] out of employment.

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, it was difficult to reply to the question raised by the hon. member for this reason. There are geologists and geophysicists who are not working in Calgary and in other parts of Alberta and Canada, and land is being surrendered by companies. The difficult judgment that has to be made, Mr. Speaker, is whether that is happening in the normal course of events and whether people are not being hired because of the quality of work they perform.

So the general answer to the hon. member is, yes, land is being surrendered in the normal course of events. We do not see land being surrendered or, as the hon. member said, "given up" in any excess amount over a normal historical pattern. With regard to geologists who are out of work, while temporarily some may say it's more than normal, it does not appear to be out of the normal historic pattern either.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the minister. Does the government have any contingency plans it's now contemplating regarding special assistance for small Alberta and Canadian companies, above and beyond the announcements made last November or December by the Premier with regard to royalties, relating especially to Alberta-based companies?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned before in the House -- I'm not sure whether the hon. member was absent on that occasion -- the government is constantly monitoring the level of activity of the oil and gas industry within our province, with full recognition of how important that industry is. One measure of that importance is the fact that it employs approximately one out of every three persons in the province, directly or indirectly. So we are monitoring the health of that industry.

However, Mr. Speaker, many things have happened over the course of the last 18 months. Some have been beneficial to the industry, and some have not. It's a matter of judgment

in most instances. However, in December we put into force the Alberta petroleum exploration plan, which has built into it several significant incentives to the industry. We have had a dramatic increase in the export price of natural gas and are working out an arrangement to have these increased revenues flow back to producers and to the people of Alberta through royalties. This is a significant cash flow increase.

There has been a change of conditions in the United States, which I think makes it less attractive for companies to leave Alberta and go there to participate in the oil and gas industry. We have been discussing with the federal government -- the Premier has mentioned it, as I have in the House -- potential changes in oil and gas pricing within our province. There is, of course, a federal budget coming June 23, and naturally we can't anticipate what is in that.

The point I'm making, Mr. Speaker, is that there are many things at work, all of which have an impact on the health of the oil and gas industry. Many of the recent ones are very positive impacts. Therefore, I think we will have to continually monitor and allow these positive forces to work, then determine whether additional things should be done. We should not, I think, be expending public money to bolster what might otherwise be mere inefficiency on the part of firms, and would have to see if there is an actual justifiable place in which public money might be spent.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, a further supplementary question. Is the government giving active consideration at this time to helping small Alberta-based companies which are having operational or cash flow problems? Has the government given consideration to using the proven reserves of those companies as collateral? In fact, right now in some cases the banks won't.

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, my discussion with participants in the industry is that the banks will lend on proven reserves. They have been perhaps a little more reluctant recently because of changes which have caused problems in the cash flow of companies. They are no longer lending on one well as they used to when a company had one well with reserves, but they require additional wells for back-up. So it is true that the banks are perhaps a little more selective in their financing. As most members know, the capital source of funds through investment dealers has been somewhat restricted because we've had a depressed stock market, particularly in resource areas.

We are assessing those factors, Mr. Speaker, to determine whether there is again a legitimate place for public funds to assist what might otherwise have been a normal source of financing for smaller Alberta companies.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, one further supplementary question to the minister. In the course of the government's consideration, is it considering taking proven reserves as a form of collateral, or a guarantee by the province, for assistance to these small companies?

MR. GETTY: In advancing funds of a loan nature, which I anticipate the hon. member is referring to, the assets of a company are certainly items that would have to be taken as collateral to protect the repayment of that loan. One of the most valuable forms of collateral oil companies have is, of course, proven reserves. There may be a difference of opinion as to how many reserves a company has, Mr. Speaker. Nevertheless I'm certain that should there be a program which involves lending public funds to oil companies with proven reserves, proven reserves would certainly be considered as collateral.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the hon. minister. In your monitoring, does the government . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Would the hon. member please use the ordinary parliamentary form in addressing the question.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the hon. minister. In the government's normal monitoring, does the government possess statistics or any kind of figures to indicate what percentage of either the direct money under the Alberta petroleum exploration plan or money foregone as a result of the announcement on December 10 is actually finding its way into increased exploration and development budgets by the industry in the Province of Alberta?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, it takes some historical experience to be able to do that accurately. One of the terms mentioned in the hon. member's question was "money foregone". It's very difficult for anybody to argue that money is foregone, because an exploration incentive may, in fact, increase government revenue rather than cause the foregoing of revenue.

In any event, with reference to the Alberta petroleum exploration plan, we are monitoring how it is working, but it will take some time before we're able to determine, through the Department of Energy and Natural Resources and the Department of the Provincial Treasurer, how effectively those funds are flowing into the industry.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a further supplementary question to the hon. minister. Does the government have enough interim statistics on this matter to table before we get to the estimates of the Department of Energy?

MR. GETTY: At my last checking, Mr. Speaker, no.

Hydro-electric Development -- Peace River

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, the second question I'd also like to direct to the Minister of Energy. It deals with the hydro-electric site on the Peace River at Dunvegan.

Is the minister in a position to indicate to the Assembly whether the government is committed to public hearings in Peace River, prior to any decision being made on the question of a dam site at Dunvegan?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, I haven't been reviewing the matter of a hydro-electric site at Dunvegan. Perhaps my -- oh, my colleague, the Minister of Environment, is not here. However, Mr. Speaker, I will look into the matter and report back to the hon. member.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, could I then direct the question to the Minister of Utilities?

DR. WARRACK: The hon. member could certainly do that. This is an important area of endeavor in which the Minister of Environment and I work together closely. At this stage, my understanding is that the bulk of the preliminary studies undertaken are under the auspices of the water resources branch of the Department of Environment and, depending on the results and indications of those studies, would involve possibilities as far as future hydro potential is concerned.

I will bring to the attention of the Minister of Environment the fact that question was asked and alert him that the matter might be pursued in the House further.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct a supplementary question to the Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs. Have there been any discussions between the Province of Alberta and the Province of British Columbia or B.C. Hydro regarding the possibility of one of the dams built on the Peace River in B.C. being acquired by Alberta power companies and used in the northern part of the province?

MR. HYNDMAN: Mr. Speaker, there have been some discussions. I'd ask the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources to elaborate on those if he wishes.

MR. GETTY: That's solicited advice, I imagine.

Mr. Speaker, over a period of a year now, I guess, we have had discussions -- I'm now referring to my previous responsibilities -- with the Government of British Columbia regarding various hydro-electric developments on the Peace River and how residents of British Columbia and Alberta might utilize the results of those developments. However, they have been essentially on a very preliminary basis. I don't know of any specifics I could pass on to the House now.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, one further supplementary question to the Minister of Energy. In the course of those discussions, has the possibility of Alberta acquiring hydro-electric power from British Columbia been considered in light of, perhaps, oil being exchanged to British Columbia?

MR. GETTY: The discussions did not pursue the angle of any kind of swap or exchange, Mr. Speaker. There was discussion as to potential connection of electrical grids in order that residents on both sides of the border might receive the benefits of hydro-electric developments, but not in the manner of a swap or exchange.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the hon. Minister of Utilities and Telephones. In the preliminary assessment of a dam on the Peace River, probably at Dunvegan, has any study been done of the method of funding and building this dam -- whether it would be done by public funds or by co-operation with one of the private power companies?

DR. WARRACK: I'm not sure, Mr. Speaker, what the hon. member means when he says, "probably at Dunvegan". In any case, with respect to these studies, I should think those sorts of considerations would follow from an assessment of the potential, which is the objective of the studies under way. I suspect that would be the sensible sequence through which the matter would progress.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a further supplementary question for clarification to the hon. minister or the hon. Premier. At this point there has not been any study as to funding? It's the government's expressed policy to wait until the study under way is completed before any further assessment of the type of funding is considered?

DR. WARRACK: Mr. Speaker, that's not what I said. I did suggest that this might very well be a follow-up of that assessment of potential. As I indicated earlier to the hon. Leader of the Opposition, I will bring to the attention of the Minister of Environment, who is responsible for water resources, that this question was posed today and ask him to look into the matter.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a further supplementary question to the hon. minister. Can the minister advise whether anyone in his department or the government has had preliminary discussions with any of the power companies concerning the funding of the proposed Dunvegan dam?

DR. WARRACK: I'm not sure of the answer to that specific question at this time, Mr. Speaker, but I would be pleased to check.

Optometrist Fee Negotiations

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Social Services and Community Health. Has the minister finalized a fee schedule contract with the Alberta Optometric Association with regard to public assistance recipients?

MISS HUNLEY: Mr. Speaker, officials in the department are negotiating that at the present time. To the best of my knowledge, it has not been finalized.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, supplementary to the minister. Are the negotiations at a stalemate at the present time?

MISS HUNLEY: I'm not sure I'd use the term "stalemate", Mr. Speaker. There have been some problems with them, and I'm hopeful they can be resolved within a short time.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, supplementary to the minister. In the last day or two, has the minister given further directions to her negotiating committee so that new terms have been given in the negotiations?

MISS HUNLEY: I have not talked to the officials doing the negotiating within the last couple of days, Mr. Speaker.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, supplementary to the minister. Under the circumstances of a stalemate, is the minister prepared to intervene in the negotiations?

MISS HUNLEY: I don't know that I'd use the term "intervene". I am assessing some additional information I have. When I have finished my assessment of it, perhaps I would indicate to my officials that they might move off their present position.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, supplementary to the minister. What steps should the members of the Alberta Optometric Association take at this time with regard to providing services to public assistance recipients? I understand recipients would have to pay for any services they are getting now.

MISS HUNLEY: I'd be most disturbed if I found that a profession was not serving the public, Mr. Speaker. Certainly it is not our indication not to pay. Professions which go on strike, as it were, and the public interest is not served, particularly in regard to something as essential as eyeglasses or something they need for their physical well-being, would cause me great concern. I would hope that's not necessary.

Housing Funds

MR. MANDEVILLE: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the hon. Minister of Housing and Public Works. Could the minister report to the House if there is going to be an increase in federal financing for housing, following his meeting with the federal minister in Ottawa on Tuesday?

MR. YURKO: Mr. Speaker, the ministers of housing and urban development met in Ottawa with the federal minister last Tuesday and had a general discussion on the assessment of the housing situation, both for this year and for 1976. They also discussed a number of possible alternatives and made a number of suggestions to the federal minister in regard to possible budgetary initiatives.

But the federal minister was in no way empowered or had the ability, if I may put it that way, to reveal to the provincial ministers at that time what any of the possible initiatives in the forthcoming budget might be.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the hon. minister. Did the hon. minister make representation to the meeting along the lines of the letter he released in this House last week? If so, what was the response of the other ministers?

MR. YURKO: To answer the last question first, the response was very cloudy and very hard to discern as to what the possible initiatives might be. I might indicate that I certainly did make representation with respect to the four points I outlined in the House

several days ago. It was interesting that a number of other governments made very similar points in the form of written presentations to the minister at that Tuesday meeting.

Foothills Hospital Labor Dispute

MR. KUSHNER: Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct this question to the Minister of Hospitals. Has the minister been in touch with the Foothills Hospital management in the last day or so? If he has, would he inform the House if the negotiations have, in fact, been postponed until such time that agreement is reached with the University Hospital?

MR. MINIELY: Mr. Speaker, in reply to the hon. member, my office was speaking to the chairman of the board of the Foothills Hospital just prior to this afternoon's session. I can provide the hon. member with an update of the report the chairman gave to me. It's my understanding that the four Crown hospitals at the present time were prepared to negotiate but that they did want the University Hospital to be the first to commence negotiations.

Mr. Speaker, I don't know whether the hon. member was also asking me for an up-to-date report on the Foothills Hospital.

MR. KUSHNER: I certainly would like to have the updated report.

MR. MINIELY: Mr. Speaker, the chairman of the Foothills Hospital board told me today that there has been some very inaccurate information with respect to the number of people who left the hospital. They took an up-to-date accurate inventory this morning. As I indicated yesterday, on Tuesday there was a total of 95 who did not report for work. That up-to-date figure is 200 out of a total staff of 600 to 700. I indicated yesterday, and it is still the case, that the chairman of the hospital board had indicated to me that they had served injunctions on the staff and were also advising the staff by letter that they should be reporting to work.

Mr. Speaker, I think the important consideration for members of this Legislature is whether there is any disruption at all in the delivery of health care service. The chairman of the board reports to me that the hospital is running effectively, that occupancy is at 75 per cent -- only marginally less than the normal occupancy of the hospital -- admissions are down only slightly and that is as a result of simply a two- or three-day shift. The nurses in the Foothills Hospital, Mr. Speaker, are helping out in the laundry service and some of the support areas of the hospital.

MR. KUSHNER: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker, if I may. Maybe I didn't understand quite clearly as you explained. Have the negotiations, in fact, been postponed until such time as agreement is reached with the University Hospital?

MR. MINIELY: Mr. Speaker, I think that's the wrong term. As all hon. members know, in a negotiation process both the employer negotiator -- in this case the Crown hospitals -- and the employee negotiator -- in this case the CSA -- have a right to determine their own method of approaching negotiations. On the one hand, all the Crown hospitals I have spoken to are prepared to negotiate, but they certainly have a right to decide their negotiation strategy. In the case of the Civil Service Association, they decide their own negotiation strategy. I think within those parameters, Mr. Speaker, it's important for hon. members to remember that in these situations those are left to the parties, as I have indicated several times in the House.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, is the hon. minister able to advise the House whether negotiations are presently taking place?

MR. MINIELY: Mr. Speaker, I think really that negotiations are taking place at all times, as the hon. member would know. Even when parties in a labor negotiation procedure say they aren't talking, that's part of the negotiation.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a further supplementary question to the hon. minister. Is he in a position to advise the Assembly when the last time was that an actual meeting took place between these two parties, which are presumably negotiating?

MR. MINIELY: Mr. Speaker, that specific one I will refer to my colleague, the Minister of Labour.

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, I'm not able to say to the hon. member today when the last meeting occurred between that particular board and its representatives, and the representatives of the Civil Service Association. As I indicated in the House a day or so ago, the question of bringing the parties to the type of discussion that will lead to at least an early identification of the remaining problem areas is the sort of approach the labor relations branch has made people available for.

I think in fairness to hon. members, so there's no mystery about the contribution the labor relations branch is trying to make at the present time in going into the discussions with the parties, I treated it as a matter that should receive the attention of a principal member of the department. Because of the absence until last night of both the

deputy minister and one of the assistant deputy ministers, some work is being done today. I'm not in a position to make a more specific report. I might just add before sitting down, Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure a sort of blow-by-blow report on progress is going to help the parties or the House, if I did give it.

AN HON. MEMBER: Agreed.

MR. TAYLOR: Supplementary to the hon. minister. Isn't this an illegal strike?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. member is clearly asking for a legal opinion.

MR. TAYLOR: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. It appears to me that under The Alberta Labour Act this is an illegal strike. I'm wondering why we're tolerating illegal strikes.

MR. MINIELY: Mr. Speaker, as I have indicated to the members of the Legislature, in the view of the chairman of the board of the Foothills Hospital, it was. For that reason their lawyers did apply for injunction, and those injunctions were granted, as I've indicated, Mr. Speaker. In the rules of the House, we don't reflect legal opinion, but I can give information to the hon. member that the boards have taken that action and have obtained the injunctions.

Cancer Institute Labor Agreements

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary to the Minister of Labour with regard to the negotiations and The Cancer Treatment and Prevention Act, which I mentioned yesterday. Has the Alberta Hospital Services Commission delegated authority to the Provincial Cancer Hospitals Board to negotiate salaries? Has that been done formally in these negotiations?

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, I don't know the answer to that question. The way parties in a bargaining situation authorize their agents to act on their behalf is presumably a matter that's covered in each instance by some documentation. It's in the hands of the respective parties, though, and not in my hands.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, supplementary to the Minister of Hospitals. Has the hospital . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Possibly we could come back to this topic. We're running out of time. Perhaps the supplementaries and some of the answers should be curtailed, because there are a number of members who want to ask their first questions.

Motor Vehicle Accident Statistics

MR. LITTLE: Mr. Speaker, I address this question to the hon. Solicitor General. Could he provide the Assembly with a comparative ratio of the number of vehicle accidents to the number of driving suspensions in the province for a one-year period, possibly last year?

DR. BUCK: Put it on the Order Paper.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. member's question is certainly proper, but not for the question period. It is the kind that should appear on the Order Paper.

MR. LITTLE: Very good, Mr. Speaker.

Rent Controls

MR. YOUNG: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the hon. Minister of Housing and Public Works. In connection with his recent journey to Ottawa, Mr. Speaker, was rent review or rent control a subject of discussion at that time? If so, could the minister outline very briefly the essence of that discussion?

MR. YURKO: Mr. Speaker, one of the specific subjects discussed in a fair amount of detail was rent control and the views of the various provinces on this matter. I might indicate that before this discussion occurred, it was recognized that private investment does not find the investment climate very healthy in regard to rental accommodation. There is, apparently, a depressed mood and a very difficult situation in regard to stimulating investment in this area.

Quebec indicated it had in place a mechanism for rent review and regulation. It was generally suggested that about the only thing it accomplished was a transfer of income from poor landlords to poor tenants. The other type of landlord effectively found his way

around this type of legislation. British Columbia didn't feel very pleased with its performance and thrust in this area.

Generally, the rest of the provinces indicated they were against rent control in this particular climate because of the shock effect it would have on an already very depressed industry. At the same time, it was recognized that each and every province should take a stand on this issue and make it public without equivocation at the earliest opportunity.

MR. YOUNG: Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. In view of the last comment by the minister, could he outline the policy of the government as of today?

AN HCN. MEMBER: Ministerial statement.

MR. SPEAKER: If the hon. minister can do this in one or two sentences, perhaps it might be done now, but we are running short of time.

MR. YURKO: Mr. Speaker, I think a number of ministers have indicated on several occasions a real distaste for any type of rent control in this very difficult situation with respect to rental accommodation. I believe that is basically the view of the Government of Alberta.

Oxygen Color Coding

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to address my question to the hon. Minister of Social Services and Community Health. I'd like to know if the minister can inform the House if there is uniform color coding for medical oxygen used in Alberta hospitals.

MISS HUNLEY: To the best of my knowledge there is color-coding, and I would think it would be uniform throughout Alberta hospitals. I'm not sure whether it's universal across Canada, Mr. Speaker. My officials have been investigating that through the Canadian Standards Association and attempting to have uniform color coding.

If the hon. member means, does every hospital in Alberta use a uniformly colored oxygen bottle or container, I would think that would probably be so. I'd have to check to be sure.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, does the hon. minister know if there is a difference between non-medical and medical oxygen containers, so the two can't be interchanged when they're supplied to hospitals?

MISS HUNLEY: Industrial oxygen, Mr. Speaker, has an all-red container. It might at some time be used in a hospital. I've never actually analysed how many types of oxygen are used in a hospital, but there may be a need for it. Aviation oxygen, I know, is in a green container with a white top. I don't imagine they'd use that in a hospital. Therapy oxygen is used, I'm sure, in a hospital. It's the same color as aviation oxygen and the small one in a hospital is a white container. Nitrous oxygen has a blue container. In what mix those would be used in a hospital, I don't have that information.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, a further supplementary. Is the hon. minister aware that some of the small oxygen bottles . . .

SOME HCN. MEMBERS: Order.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker . . .

MR. CLARK: Oh Foster, quiet.
[laughter]

DR. BUCK: Do you realize, Mr. Speaker, this is a matter of importance?

MR. SPEAKER: It may be, but it's true that a question which starts with, "is the minister aware", is usually a form of announcement. The Chair was just waiting to see whether there is a question lurking in the text somewhere.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, it might not be so humorous if somebody should die in an operating room [interjections] because the oxygen is mixed up.

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. Order please.

DR. BUCK: Well, Mr. Speaker, it wouldn't be so humorous.

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. Does the hon. member wish to ask a question?

DR. BUCK: Yes, I do, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the minister.

I'd like to know if the minister is aware that small oxygen bottles are filled at the hospital out of larger tanks. Are any safeguards built in so that the oxygen and nitrous

oxide would not be mixed up, that they would not have the wrong material in the wrong containers?

MISS HUNLEY: Mr. Speaker, I hope the hon. member isn't getting distressed at my reaction. I was patiently waiting to hear from him.

My answer is, no, I am not aware of it. I have not followed it up, but I will be pleased to do so.

Proposed Agricultural Complex -- Calgary

MR. MUSGREAVE: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to address this question to the Minister of Agriculture. I understand from Calgary sources that the provincial government will not participate in the financing of an agricultural complex to be built on the grounds of the Calgary Stampede board. I understand this was to be an integral part of an ongoing study and scientific plan for export, with particular regard to the beef industry.

I wonder if he could advise the House if he knows the province's position regarding financing.

MR. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member's information is not quite correct. The province has not said they would in no way participate in the development of an agricultural complex on the Calgary Stampede board grounds. However, it is my understanding the board has come to a recent decision that it is not possible for them to go ahead with the construction of an agricultural building complex at the present time. I have indicated to the chairman of the board that we would be agreeable to discussing the financial situation they find themselves in with regard to the building of an agricultural complex and will be proceeding to do that throughout the next few months.

Fishing Industry

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct this question to the hon. Minister of Recreation, Parks and Wildlife and ask whether the government is considering any program to improve the income of Alberta commercial fishermen?

MR. ADAIR: Mr. Speaker, we have had some discussions relative to the possibility of assisting commercial fishermen in Alberta.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, further supplementary question to the hon. minister. Can the minister advise the Assembly what the nature of those discussions were, and whether any definitive programs have been developed?

MR. ADAIR: Mr. Speaker, no definitive programs have been developed. The discussions have been broad enough at this particular point that I can't elaborate on them, other than to say we're trying to assist them at this point, relative, I might add, to some of the discussions taking place in other provinces for the commercial fishermen in those provinces as well.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a further supplementary question to the hon. minister. Has the government reviewed the operation of the federal Fresh Water Fish Marketing Corporation as it relates to the income of Alberta commercial fishermen?

MR. ADAIR: I'm sorry, Mr. Speaker, I haven't the answer to that question at this time.

Farmers' Day

MR. BATHURST: Mr. Speaker, I'll direct my question to the Minister of Education. Despite the minister recommending that Monday, June 16, be observed as Farmers' Day, with the final decision by the local communities, could the minister advise whether it is his intention to review the number of communities, the dates they have chosen, and to act that way in the future?

MR. KOZIAK: Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member is aware, the matter of choosing the date to celebrate farmers' day is a local option. It's a decision made by the local school boards. I might add that in being a local option the school boards take into account local conditions and make their decision according to local circumstances and needs.

DR. BUCK: A couple of more schools, Julian, and we'll all take a holiday.

Welfare Benefits

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a question to the Minister of Social Services and Community Health relative to one I asked the other day. Could the minister advise the Assembly whether welfare recipients receive an allowance for a telephone for medical or other reasons?

MISS HUNLEY: Yes, I'm pleased to be able to reply to that question. Basically, the answer I gave the other day is correct. Social workers may provide a telephone when it's required for employment purposes, or for medical reasons where the reason is self-evident. Thirdly, where there is not sufficient medical evidence to establish the need, the onus is on the recipient to produce medical confirmation. In that case, the social worker is able to allow for a telephone.

Megavitamin Therapy -- Hearings

MISS HUNLEY: While I'm on my feet, Mr. Speaker, perhaps I could reply to another question outstanding, asked by the hon. Leader of the Opposition. The question was about the hearings concerning the use of megavitamins and megavitamin therapy, whether one of the physicians doing a review and conducting hearings for the government had some professional experience in the use of vitamins. One individual, Dr. Yonge, professor and chairman of the Department of Psychiatry at the University of Alberta, does use megavitamin therapy. He has had past experience and association with Dr. Hoffer in Saskatchewan, who's quite a noted individual in this practice.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the minister. Could the minister report to the House whether the hearings are open? Has the minister had a chance to check the question of cross-examination?

MISS HUNLEY: Actually, the ad in the paper more or less outlined the method that would be used. Observers are to be present as I understand it. We have forwarded to those who are proponents of the use of megavitamins -- with whom I've had numerous meetings.

When this matter arose in the House, I believe it was last week, I was under the impression they were satisfied with the approach we were using. However, it was subsequently brought to my attention that they were concerned. Feeling this is a good way to proceed I have replied to them outlining our reasons for it. I have not had an additional response from them.

MR. CLARK: A further supplementary, Mr. Speaker, to the minister. Are the hearings public, open? Can anyone attend?

MISS HUNLEY: My information is that:

Open meetings are scheduled for June 20 in Edmonton and June 26 in Calgary, to which all people who have made their desire to present material personally to the committee have been invited, together with two or three representatives of the major interest groups.

It was not our intention to have a large auditorium and perhaps create the kind of atmosphere in which the best information could not be received and assessed. I believe that met with satisfaction on both sides.

MR. SPEAKER: Might this be the final supplementary on this topic.

MR. CLARK: To the hon. minister. Are some portions of the hearings not public?

MISS HUNLEY: I know some of the members have met, for instance, with Dr. Pauling, who is a noted supporter of megavitamins. They spent six hours with Dr. Pauling in San Francisco. I would believe that would be a private meeting. I think that would receive the support of proponents of the use of megavitamins because of his reputation in this field. So that would not be open, I'm sure, though I don't have confirmation that they did meet with him in a public place. I think they'd meet with him in private.

Motor Vehicle Accident Statistics (continued)

MR. LITTLE: Mr. Speaker, I'm sorry I didn't make my previous question clearer. I was not asking for the statistics, but was asking if they were available. Is that permissible?

Mr. Speaker, I would address this question to the hon. Solicitor General. I will use the new term. Are statistics available which relate the number of vehicle accidents over the period of a year to the number of driving suspensions? Are they also available to relate the accident rate to the total number of driving licences in the province?

MR. FARRAN: Mr. Speaker, I presume we have statistics on the total number of accidents and suspensions. We probably also have statistics on the number of accidents in which a suspended driver was involved. I can get all three of those.

MR. SPEAKER: May the hon. Minister Without Portfolio, the Member for Wetaskiwin-Leduc, revert to the introduction of visitors?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS (reversion)

MR. SCHMIDT: Mr. Speaker, it's my privilege to introduce to you, and through you to this Assembly, 60 Grade 9 students from the Leduc Junior High School in my constituency of Wetaskiwin-Leduc. They are accompanied by their teachers, Mrs. Hartridge and Miss Bishop. They are seated in the members gallery, and I would ask them to rise and be recognized by this Assembly.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

MOTIONS FOR RETURNS

167. Dr. Buck proposed the following motion to the Assembly:
That an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing:
1. The date or dates since 1971 on which W.J. Levy Consultants Corp. entered into a contract or contracts with the Government of Alberta or any agency of the Government of Alberta.
 2. The date of each trip made by a representative of W.J. Levy Consultants Corp. to Alberta and the names of those members and/or representatives of the Government of Alberta or any agency of the Government of Alberta he met with on each occasion.
 3. The date of each trip made by members and/or representatives of the Government of Alberta or any agency of the Government of Alberta to places outside Alberta to meet with representatives of W.J. Levy Consultants Corp. including, for each trip, the names of those members and/or representatives.
 4. All remuneration paid to W.J. Levy Consultants Corp., including expenses, from the beginning of its employment by the Government of Alberta.
 5. Any information held by the Government of Alberta relating to present or former employment of W.J. Levy Consultants Corp. by:
 - (a) the Government of the United States of America;
 - (b) the government of any state in the United States of America;
 - (c) any corporation incorporated in the United States of America and/or any state in the United States of America which is engaged in exploration for oil or in the production of oil-based products.
 6. The names of any other candidates considered for the consulting position held by W.J. Levy Consultants Corp.
 7. The criteria used in the selection of W.J. Levy Consultants Corp.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, I would like to move Motion 167.

I would like to make a comment or two. First of all, I am sincerely disappointed that a minister of the Crown would take the approach he did when he gave us the first return.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Order, order.

AN HON. MEMBER: Carry on.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, do I have the privilege of speaking on my motion?

Mr. Speaker, it could have been handled very simply. I apologize to the minister for not having the name of the individual as a consulting corporation. But the minister could have played his little games by getting up and saying, I wish the hon. Member for Clover Bar would give the exact title of the company doing business with the government. It would be just that simple, Mr. Speaker. But he had to play his little games.

I don't think ministers of the Crown, who are responsible for millions of dollars of taxpayers' money, should play little games with the Legislature. As I say, Mr. Speaker, I

accept full responsibility. But when members of the Legislature and of the media have looked at the return -- I really find it unacceptable, to say the least.

I'm sincerely disappointed in the minister, because I think very highly of his business acumen and I think he's a responsible [minister] of the Crown. But I don't think he had to answer in the manner he did. We are supposed to be adults and responsible to the people we serve. I would just like to say, Mr. Speaker, the minister did answer the questions ordered by this Legislature outside the Legislature. I would like to resubmit it in the form the hon. minister has asked for, Mr. Speaker.

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, I didn't ask him to submit anything. As a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, I would have to ask him now to explain what he means by 2 in the present motion for a return.

Mr. Speaker, in his general discussion, I gather he was inferring there should have been some attempt to guess at what he was trying to request. I think it would not be wise for the government, or anybody, to try to guess at what an hon. member is requesting, because it is an order of the Legislature and one that must be complied with. Therefore, I think it's only wise not to guess what the hon. member wants and then, in fact, frustrate the wishes of the House, but have him prepare exactly what he wants.

He is asking for information about Mr. W.J. Levy -- in the past motion for a return -- I pointed out to him that we did not have a contract with such an individual and then gave him some information he did not request. It was additional information to help him. I thought he would stand up and express his thanks and appreciation rather than his disappointment.

In any event, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask him a question about 2, because 2 in his Motion for a Return No. 167 says, "The date of each trip made by a representative of W.J. Levy Consultants Corp. to Alberta and the names of those members and/or representatives of the Government of Alberta or any agency of the Government of Alberta he met with on each occasion." I would have to ask him if he means the date of each trip made by a representative of W.J. Levy Consultants Corp. to Alberta under the terms of a contract, or specifically to meet with representatives or agents of the Government of Alberta? Because it would be difficult for us to know the number of times representatives of the company would have come to Alberta on a trip and whether or not, in the course of a trip, they met with representatives of the Government of Alberta on some more casual basis.

For instance, a representative of the company came to speak to the CPA meeting in Calgary. Representatives and agents of the Government of Alberta were there and met with him. But it was completely different, I trust, from the kind of information he is trying to obtain here. So perhaps, Mr. Speaker, he could explain item 2 so we can vote on it and get the information he wants.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, I'm not really interested in what pleasure trips W.J. Levy Consultants Corp. made to Alberta. If they want to go skiing, that's their . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Is the hon. member going to answer the question by the hon. minister? Because otherwise he would be closing the debate.

DR. BUCK: Yes, Mr. Speaker, under the terms of contract would be fine. That's what we're looking for.

MR. SPEAKER: The Chair feels a little uneasy about amending a motion in this informal fashion. Could the hon. member, perhaps, prepare an amendment in a formal way, and we could deal with the question a little later this afternoon. Would that be satisfactory?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

168. Mr. Mandeville proposed the following motion to the Assembly:

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

1. The name of each employee of the Agricultural Development Corporation and the salary paid to each such employee for the fiscal years 1973-74 and 1974-75; including the number of the appropriation from which each such employee was paid.
2. The name of each employee of the Agricultural Development Corporation and the rate of salary paid to each such employee as at May 31, 1975, including the number of the appropriation from which such employee is paid.

[The motion was carried.]

169. Mr. R. Speaker proposed the following motion to the Assembly:

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

The name of each study or report prepared for the Land Use Forum, including the name of the consulting firm which prepared each such study or report, and the cost of each such study or report.

[The motion was carried.]

MOTIONS OTHER THAN GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

1. Dr. Buck proposed the following motion to the Assembly:

Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly urge the Government of Alberta, in conjunction with the Government of Canada to:

- (1) Re-evaluate and clarify the responsibilities of the municipal, provincial, and federal levels of government in the fields of municipal financing and administration.
- (2) Introduce legislation which provides adequate, independent sources of revenue to municipalities, including personal and corporate income tax sharing and/or resource revenue sharing.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, I would not like to start out the presentation without bringing a little levity to get one a bit relaxed after the encounter with the hon. Minister of Energy and Resources. I'd like to say, Mr. Speaker, that as one approaches middle age, one of two things may happen. You may lose your sex drive, or your vision starts going. Fortunately, Mr. Speaker, it's the second part that's happened.

[laughter]

Mr. Speaker, in speaking to this resolution, we on this side of the House feel that one of the most . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: Speak for yourself.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, that brings up another point. I hope by the time the fall sitting of the Legislature does commence, there will be an opposition side and a government side. As for being outside, I think my colleague from Spirit River-Fairview will look after making sure the hon. member from Belmont is not going to be here the next time . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: Beverly.

DR. BUCK: Beverly, I should say.

Mr. Speaker, in speaking on municipal finance, I think the area which should concern members of this Legislature and the people of this province is municipal finance. We on this side of the House have made it our number one priority to bring the matter before members of this Legislature -- especially government members -- to see if they are going to take any action. For four years we've been hearing a lot of promises from the formerly now government, which is the when government. Really nothing has been happening.

I'm pleased to see the rookie Minister of Municipal Affairs has returned to the House, because we are expecting some movement into the world, the direction of municipal finance from him.

The removal of the education portion from real property was a commencement in that direction, but already that has been eaten up in increased taxes. So we must look at the entire picture, Mr. Speaker. Canada, in keeping with the development of the industrial world, is now basically an urban society. Our governments, both federal and provincial, have been slow in realizing the importance of this change, and incompetent and sometimes unwilling to develop policies with the foresight necessary to meet the challenges raised by this urbanization.

Almost half of Canada's population now lives in metropolitan centres larger than 100,000 people. In a time when many individuals are questioning the intelligence of having any large cities, in Alberta approximately three out of four people live in towns and cities. In spite of the fact that the hon. Deputy Premier says this government has reversed the trend from the rural to the urban centres, I would like to say, Mr. Speaker, that that is certainly a distortion of the fact.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh.

DR. BUCK: What has happened is that there has been a shift from the urban, out of the major centres, but that is not a shift back to a rural situation. If the hon. government members would be honest with themselves, that shift is out to acreages, not back to the farm.

So I would like to say to the hon. Deputy Premier, I think he had just better have a look at the statistics and retell us the way it is, because I would like to know. I'm concerned, my constituency being partly rural and partly urban. Why are there so many farm auction sales if the government has reversed the rural-urban shift?

[Dr. McCrimmon in the Chair]

This percentage of three out of four people living in towns and cities can only increase in the future, and present policies are totally inadequate to deal with the problems that have arisen.

It seems unnecessary to list all the problems, some of them approaching the crisis stage, which urbanization and loosely knit administrations have brought us. We deal with them every day in this Legislature. The best example is the housing crisis. Others are transportation, communication, and pollution. And the list can go on. As the authors of

a report done for the federal government recently concluded: the most important aspect of these findings is the immediacy of the need for urban policy. There just doesn't seem to be a policy.

The greatest problem areas are already almost unmanageable, and the longer the situation is permitted to develop, the less easy it will be to make changes, even if they are drastic changes. It's within the municipalities that all the human problems reach their peak. All social services such as hospitals, education, income security, care for the handicapped and the underprivileged must be co-ordinated and integrated. Cities must be designed to be livable, Mr. Speaker. The environment must be protected and long-term planning is essential.

Despite the fact that it is the wealthiest in Canada, and despite the claims it has been making to the contrary, the Alberta government has been slower, and I reiterate, slower than most other Canadian governments in meeting the urban crisis, especially at a time when all governments have been caught short. It's not only in terms of financing that we've been slow. Other reforms that need not be expensive have also been exceedingly slow in coming. I refer, of course, to administrative decisions which have been talked about since this government came to power, but which seem no closer to completion in '75 than they were in 1971. That will be a challenge to the new minister.

This resolution is specifically directed towards two major problems which the provincial government must face. First, it is the division of powers and the responsibilities among the three levels of government. Before we resolve the problems, we have to have a demarcation of who is responsible for what. The present situation can only be described, very kindly, as a hodge-podge, with overlapping administrative jurisdictions devouring large amounts of money which could be put to far better use if an efficient and rational distribution of responsibilities were developed.

Under the BNA Act, responsibility for municipal affairs resides solely with the provinces. As such, municipal governments are creations of the provincial government, and what powers they do have are assigned through provincial statute. Further, the power for reform held by the provinces is total, with possibilities ranging from the creation of totally autonomous city states to the complete abolition of municipalities as we now know them. Of course, neither of these extremes is likely, Mr. Speaker, although the cities have been somewhat worried by the proposed planning act which seems to have the potential for reducing the powers of the municipalities to practically nothing. Still, who knows when the planning act will be anything but a proposal. We may have to wait four more years for that one, too.

In spite of this legal distribution of responsibility, all three levels of government are involved in municipal affairs, and no one knows exactly how or why this happened. There is such an extremely complex relationship between the provincial and municipal governments that the responsibilities of the municipalities are practically impossible to determine. As was noted by the Task Force on Urbanization and the Future -- I am sure many of the hon. members are aware of this little pamphlet: because of various pieces of legislation defining the powers and responsibilities of local government, it would be a research project in itself to clearly define just what are these responsibilities at any given point in time.

A few of the relevant statutes are The Municipal Government Act, The School Act, The Police Act, The Public Health Act, the PSS or The Preventive Social Services Act, The Recreation Development Act, and many others further complicating this already complicated system. Then we have the public and private school boards, which have more or less independent existence subject, of course, to provincial whim. There are also a number of semi-autonomous boards, such as the police commission, the library boards, and the boards of health. In the rural areas we have the IDs, the improvement districts, the rural municipalities, and the county system. The interrelationships are really mind-boggling. We have a hodge-podge of them.

On top of all of this, the federal government is becoming more and more heavily involved in the local level when, according to the constitution, the BNA Act, they should not be in it at all. Some of these areas are the numerous activities, for example, of the Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation and various shared-cost programs for hospitals, libraries, highways, assistance in building sewage systems, and programs such as this. There is also a federal department responsible for urban affairs, which should be the responsibility of the provinces.

This situation is somewhat understandable in the case of provinces which depend heavily on federal funds, but it seems unnecessary in this province of Alberta. In fact, you would think this government might even be a little bit embarrassed to have the federal government giving it funds.

It's clear that the whole complex of relationships should be re-evaluated and clarified. As the first step towards rationalization of urban policy in Alberta, and in Canada as a whole, we have to lay down these guidelines.

It would probably be best to keep the federal government out of the fields of municipal administration and financing; keep them completely out of them for reasons of decentralization and local initiative. But if the federal government continues, the reasons for so doing should be clear, marked out, and overlapping of programs should be eliminated.

The confusion of programs in the area of housing is a good example of the types of inefficiencies which contribute to waste and bureaucratic growth. We have the Alberta Housing Corporation and the Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation, each offering a wide variety of different programs, but basically doing the same thing. This doubling up of

services, and others like it, should be eliminated, because we as taxpayers are really paying twice for the same type of service. Knowing the way governments and bureaucracies multiply and grow, it's not only twice as expensive, it seems to get to be three to four times as expensive.

Generally, municipalities should be given clear areas of responsibility within which they can act without being subject to the constraint and scrutiny of the provincial overlords, the big boys at the top. How extensive these responsibilities should be is a complex question, but it shouldn't be so complex that we can afford to go on in the same aimless and inefficient direction we're going in presently. Further, until some concrete decisions are made about these areas of responsibility, discussing local autonomy and real decentralization is a meaningless exercise, because we're not going to solve the problem.

The second specific area to which we are addressing ourselves is financing and the financial wherewithal of municipalities. Really, people can understand dollars and cents. They know when their taxes go up or down, or they're receiving more or less services for their tax dollars. Financing decisions will, of course, be contingent upon the decisions made in regard to the division of powers and responsibilities. There's no doubt this change is long overdue.

A reform of municipal financing should solve a number of our present problems. First, we must develop a rational means of funding municipalities. As I said, dollars are what people can understand. Secondly, the source must be flexible and adequate to meet local needs. Thirdly, the dependence of local governments on the charity of senior governments should be eliminated in order to encourage local autonomy, responsibility, and initiative. I think all hon. members would agree with that.

Mr. Speaker, the major source of municipal revenue has traditionally been the tax on real property. Although there have been some changes, the situation remains basically the same. It just appears things have changed. The property tax is almost universally considered to be regressive. Most economists and responsible politicians agree that government dependence on it as a source of revenue should be drastically reduced. If it remains at all, it should serve the end of specifically meeting local needs such as road repairs, community halls, parks, et cetera. In spite of this general agreement -- we all agree on this principle -- the property tax is still used as the base for both municipal and, to a lesser extent, educational financing.

Aside from the property and business tax, the municipalities acquire revenue through a complex variety of mechanisms reflecting the general confusion in funding. The provincial government, of course, provides grants, both conditional and unconditional. Once in a while we see unconditional grants being called unconditional, but the municipality is informed it must spend it on such and such a project or such an area. This is a new meaning added to the Webster definition of "unconditional". It really indicates the paternalism with which a higher level of government regards a lower level of government.

The municipalities can further raise small amounts of revenue through licensing, service charges, fines, interest, tax penalties, and recreation and community services. Because of the regressive and inflation-resistant nature of the property tax, more and more money from outside sources is necessary to support the municipalities. The taxes now account for a smaller percentage of total revenue while contributions, mostly from the provincial government, are rising. So we're having a change. Income from property taxes is going down, and from the provincial government it's going up. Approximately 65 per cent of the revenue of cities now comes from taxes. About 20 per cent comes from the senior level of government, the provincial government.

Further, Mr. Speaker, the municipalities are getting deeper and deeper into debt. This is especially severe in the smaller communities, where every time you build a new subdivision, you build more sidewalk, more water and sewer, you go deeper and deeper into debt. In 1973 Alberta's cities spent an average of 15 per cent, Mr. Speaker, 15 per cent of their revenues merely to service their debts. Now that is a large percentage. At the same time, property taxes are climbing again -- in fairness to the government, after being substantially reduced by the Alberta property tax reduction plan. If the present situation remains unchanged, that Alberta property tax reduction plan will really have no long-term effect, because it is practically eaten up now.

The nature of this process can be seen in Calgary, where increases in property taxes will, in many cases, completely offset the recently announced reduction in provincial income tax. In Calgary it has gone up approximately 23 per cent. The thing that really concerns me, Mr. Speaker, is that the problem is hitting hardest those members of our society who deserve it the least. That's the low-income home-owner. He is the man who is really being hurt the most.

We'd like to look at some of the solutions, Mr. Speaker. The solution to the problem is clearly to provide the municipalities with an independent source of income which would be flexible enough to meet their expanding needs. The vast majority of Canadians now live in urban municipalities. They shouldn't be treated like children. They should be given some autonomy. I have some statistics here that approximately 10 or 12 cities in Canada with a population over 200,000 should sit in on the provincial and federal fiscal conferences.

The last point I'd like to make, Mr. Speaker, is this. The most effective means of bringing about a more equitable distribution of financial responsibility would be to provide municipalities with the power to levy personal and corporate income tax, similar to the relationship which exists between the federal and provincial governments. Manitoba has taken a step in this direction. It has two points of personal income tax and one point of corporate tax. Now if we used that system here in Alberta, it would raise an

additional \$28 million with no strings attached, for the municipalities. The effect of using this type of system would be to give us a far more equitable system than the property tax. It will serve the ends of decentralization and give local autonomy back, instead of just talking about local autonomy. Real initiative could be undertaken by the local governments themselves so they wouldn't feel they had to do what big brother wanted them to. Generally, I think local governments would be treated as elected officials, the same as we and the members of Parliament are.

Another point, Mr. Speaker, and I will be just a minute, with your indulgence. Maybe the fixed share of revenue resource grant to the provinces wasn't the greatest answer, but at least, Mr. Speaker, the municipalities did know that was their money, which they could use with no strings attached.

Mr. Speaker, in conclusion, I would like to say to the hon. members that this resolution has two very reasonable proposals: first, that a sensible distribution of powers and responsibilities among the three levels of government be studied and decided upon as soon as possible. For the new Minister of Municipal Affairs, that means now and not, as presently, when. The challenge is to the new Minister of Municipal Affairs. Secondly, once this distribution of responsibility is decided upon, municipalities should be given an adequate and independent source of revenue to carry out their assigned responsibilities. Also, I'm sure the members of the Legislature sitting in this chamber who have had years of municipal experience would agree, this resolution is timely. I welcome their participation in the debate.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. ZANDER: Mr. Speaker, in speaking to the resolution which the hon. Member for Clover Bar has brought to the attention of this Legislature, certainly I can agree that in some fields he has brought out, he has some points.

Municipalities, as he refers to them, by and large receive their responsibility through the BNA Act and from provincial acts as they affect the local municipalities. I have to agree, Mr. Speaker, there are overlapping responsibilities in many areas. I don't think you'll ever eradicate them. It cannot be done in a family affair, and it cannot be done in the municipal, provincial, or federal fields of government because of the complex make-up of governments. By and large, as I said before, local governments in the province have been created as a responsibility unto themselves by the provincial government.

By and large, Mr. Speaker, municipalities have two sources of revenue. One is the real property tax and, of course, the other is grants, or grants in lieu of taxes. We could, of course, be a great father to all the municipalities in this province and give all our natural wealth to the municipalities. They would, of course, spend it. We know that.

I've been in municipal government for 24 years and I think if the government of that day had given us more money we would have probably found ways of spending it. I think there has to be a sense of responsibility to the senior government, be it federal or provincial, that the funds given to municipalities as grants are used in a manner that is consistent, and beneficial to all the people of the province.

This brings me to another point, Mr. Speaker, which I think has probably been implied. Maybe the hon. member has taken a leaf out of the book of the City of Edmonton and probably from some city aldermen who have been advocating placing an additional tax on gasoline or levying a tax on motor vehicles to gain more money. I wonder how it would fit into the system of municipal government if there was a gasoline tax instituted in the City of Edmonton. I'm sure that most of the people coming into the City of Edmonton would find ways of ducking the boundaries of the city and therefore would not pay the tax. I think probably we can look at what is happening with the levy on the federal parks in the Province of Alberta today.

We could, of course, assign a portion of the natural resource revenue of this province, as did the former government. But I think the hon. member who has just spoken can well recall, around 1970 or '71, the government seeing fit to freeze the one-third share of the resource income of this province. It found itself in a position where this one-third share was no longer sufficient to cover the demands of the municipalities.

I can also recall the many demands which remained upon provincial governments. I know, because I was in local government. Many times the denial by the provincial government was only right and proper because surely a municipality, whether it's a county, town, village, or city, has a responsibility, when it collects taxes, to use those taxes to the best advantage for the people within its boundaries.

We could allow the municipalities to create their own taxation outside of real property. What would you have, Mr. Speaker? Nothing but chaos. Because you could wander from one state to another just by crossing a road allowance and being in another jurisdiction.

I think it has to be uniform. There's no doubt in my mind that uniformity, the way taxation exists today . . . We know that the mill rate on a dwelling doesn't vary much between the Town of Leduc, the City of Edmonton, or St. Paul. The taxes are relatively easy. We know what they are. The assessment is based on the same formula, so we know we're uniformly assessed and taxed.

The hon. member said we, the province, should look at allowing municipalities to levy personal and corporate income taxes. He said it would raise \$28 million. I think we could also go the other way and say that we could levy a five-cent sales tax, designate it to the municipalities, and raise \$200 million. But, Mr. Speaker, I wonder if that would be enough? Would it satisfy the appetite of local government? I say, no, it wouldn't. Because we could find ways of spending it, whether through recreation, additional

facilities, roads, or whatever. Municipal governments, by and large -- and I include myself, as one of the members at that time -- would like to do everything in one year. But it's not possible, Mr. Speaker. I think that progress comes slowly over the years. It must be slow and planned. I don't think we can do it all in one year by simply dumping \$28 or \$100 million in unconditional grants on municipalities. We would find, by and large, that if we gave \$100 million one year we would be short another \$50 million the next year.

Let's look at the motion brought forward and the solution mentioned by the hon. member, saying the City of Edmonton shall levy personal and corporate tax. Let's pause a moment and say it can do this. Supposing the Town of St. Albert doesn't want to do it?

AN HON. MEMBER: What?

MR. ZANDER: Has the hon. member ever figured out what would happen? I mean, you could have a citizen moving from St. Albert to Edmonton or vice versa, and he could be taxed or not be taxed. Are you going to do this universally, across the province? That is not what he stated. We're going to give the individual municipalities the right to levy personal and corporate taxes. Are we going to do it for all the people of Alberta or only for some and not for others? He didn't leave the answer with this Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, I do believe the organization of where the responsibility rests with municipalities -- certain municipalities do not know where their responsibility begins or ends today. As complex as it may seem, I think we can come to a better understanding among the federal, provincial, and municipal governments as to what the responsibilities are. It's going to be very complex defining those lines of responsibility. But by and large, the BNA Act defines the responsibilities, those that are provincial and those that are municipal.

I haven't got the answer, Mr. Speaker, but I don't believe we can tie municipal grants, municipal assistance, to any form, whether it be personal, corporate, or resource development tax. I know the tax on real property is a tax that destroys. Overtaxing will destroy industry. It will destroy the nature of the people living within that boundary. As I understand it, some municipalities have hit the 100 mill rate in the last year.

But looking over the past and into the future, Mr. Speaker, I would say that by and large in the municipalities today, the municipal assistance grants have gone up almost 300 and 400 per cent in four years. If this is not sufficient, Mr. Speaker, then I just wonder. Maybe we should curtail our spending, budget a little closer, spend less, and be more thrifty.

MR. JAMISON: Mr. Speaker, the resolution of the Member for Clover Bar has put before us a proposal which could occupy the entire efforts of our government members for the balance of this complete session or his term in office. Even given that amount of time, his resolution could not reach his two stated objectives in my estimation.

DR. BUCK: Let's start then.

MR. JAMISON: Which leads me to believe, Mr. Speaker, that the resolution was placed before us with very minimal research or indeed, Mr. Speaker, very little common sense.

MR. CLARK: Let's hear what you've got to say.

MR. JAMISON: For the resolution assumes that just two jurisdictions can solve the extremely complex problem of defining the roles of our three levels of government. Would the hon. Member for Clover Bar presume that Ottawa and Edmonton can resolve this question independently of nine other provinces? The wording of his resolution would indicate this is his belief.

The crux of the matter raised in this resolution, Mr. Speaker, is this: the BNA Act, our Canadian constitution, under which the roles of three levels of government are presently defined, could in no way conceive or even imagine that government would ever, and I repeat, would ever expand to concerning itself with practically every area of activity in which a Canadian citizen might involve himself and, more recently, with great uproar, herself.

It's a whole new ball game, hon. Member for Clover Bar, but the rules are still laid down by the BNA Act, and the federal government acting with the Alberta government as a twosome won't resolve the issues involved in federal, provincial, and municipal tax and revenue sharing.

On the point of the resolution, Mr. Speaker, this Assembly could perhaps take some kind of action. I could have wished the Member for Clover Bar had spelled out what he had in mind. Since he did not, Mr. Speaker, perhaps I could raise a few questions to put to the hon. Member for Clover Bar.

What legislation does he think would provide what municipalities would consider adequate sources of revenue? This government has gone far and away beyond what the Social Credit government did by way of aiding municipal governments. But the municipalities still believe, and I would say most of them in Alberta and even in all Canada, that they must have more aid, particularly from provincial governments.

Mr. Speaker, the matter of adequate sources of revenue hinges on the level and the number of services the municipalities wish to provide. It is the area of social services,

Mr. Speaker, that I believe the Fathers of Confederation could not foresee as a role of governments. Indeed, it has only been over the past 30 years that all levels of government have concerned themselves first with providing sick care, and now delivery of health care. We're providing child care, recreational services, the fostering of cultural development, and protection for consumers.

It's a long list, Mr. Speaker, and it has led governments, particularly the federal government, into a massive bureaucracy which is presently causing considerable concern to many, many Canadians. So how can senior governments determine what amount of aid to municipalities will be adequate? They too, Mr. Speaker, must respond to the expectations of their electorate. If this government is to introduce legislation to provide adequate sources of revenue to municipalities, the government will have to determine from the municipal governments a reasonably accurate forecast of what they will require from senior governments over, I would say, at least a 10-year period. As I have said before in this Legislature, Mr. Speaker, I believe this government is creating a climate for industrial and commercial development throughout this province, which will go a long, long way to provide the adequate and independent sources of revenue for municipalities that this resolution proposes.

This government is presently sharing its resource revenues with the municipalities by way of continuing policies and programs to remove education, hospital, and preventative social services from property owners, leaving that taxation source for municipal purposes. In addition, Mr. Speaker, special provincial assistance with financing water and sewer, recreation, transportation, and parks has been and is being given to municipalities in this period when expansion of industry and commercial development are really just beginning in the Province of Alberta.

Where municipalities have shown the government a clear and responsible need for assistance, the government has been responsive, Mr. Speaker. We will have to continue to meet such needs which vary greatly between have-not municipalities, until such time as our long-range policies will greatly improve the position of municipalities. In so doing, the province must meet its responsibility squarely to assess requests for assistance carefully on the basis of both economics and social effects.

May I say, Mr. Speaker, that every member of this Assembly has an important role to play in informing himself as fully as possible on the affairs of the municipalities in his constituency. Members can then make a valuable contribution to evaluating and clarifying the responsibilities of senior governments in municipal financing, as this resolution proposes.

As to the responsibility of senior governments in municipal administration, I think the Member for Clover Bar would really open a Pandora's box with that one. In my opinion, senior governments should leave municipal administrations to the municipal councils.

For these reasons, I cannot support the resolution before us. I do support the municipal finance council as a vehicle to help resolve the questions raised by the resolution. In this regard, Mr. Speaker, I would look forward to some concrete action coming out of that body in the very near future.

Thank you.

MR. McCRAE: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to offer a few words of wisdom in this debate.

MR. CLARK: Just a few words.

MR. McCRAE: Thank you.

I think the member who proposed this motion was well meaning. Certainly it's a very topical thing, as taxpayers are getting their local tax assessments. In most cases the taxes are going up, so it is a matter of great concern.

Although I think the motion is well intended, I don't think it really gets to the problem. It doesn't, for instance, specify any amount of sharing. There's no formula suggested. It's just a grandmother type of thing, a jumping on the bandwagon. Let's just get up and raise the flag and say, we support the local taxpayer. Well, we all do. But if a motion of this nature is to be seriously considered, there should be some definition, some idea of what the opposition feels the needs of the municipalities might be. Is he suggesting we should treat each municipality the same way? Is there some magic formula relating to size or obligations of the municipality -- the number of people, the amount of their debt, the amount of their tax base? There are no parameters at all. We're left simply to guess what he means.

Well, we've already moved to appoint a municipal provincial finance advisory committee, and two of their tasks are to determine which services should be provided by the provincial and the municipal governments, and the sources of funding for such services; and, secondly, the requirements and sources of revenue of capital works in rapidly growing municipalities. I think, Mr. Speaker, that's a responsible means of meeting the challenges of the municipalities. There's just no doubt they're short of money. The inflationary spiral, the increasing cost of services, is hitting them, and hitting them hard. But it's hitting them all differently. We've appointed a council made up of seven, eight, or more people representing the different levels of government, the school trustees associations, and so on. It is charged with looking into this question, determining responsibilities of the various levels of government, who should be financing the various services, and then making concrete recommendations to the government. When we have those recommendations, Mr. Speaker, we can deal with it with some factual background.

Mr. Speaker, the resolution suggests that by giving the municipalities a share of "personal and corporate income tax sharing and/or resource revenue sharing", the municipalities would have certainty of funding and would be guaranteed a definite amount of dollars or a percentage of provincial dollars with which to meet their responsibilities. Mr. Speaker, I suggest to you that personal and corporate income tax and resource revenues are very uncertain. There's just no way to determine precisely the amount that may come in for the particular year in question. So even if we did allocate them a certain percentage, we would not know what percentage to allocate them, and they in turn would not know what that percentage might bring them in the way of revenue.

Mr. Speaker, having agreed that the municipalities do have many, many problems in financing, recognizing that we're going to have to look at it and try to come up with some solutions to the problem, I would like to refer to some figures showing how revenues have increased over the years. The revenues, of course, come from grants from the province and local property taxes.

Let me read some of the grants, unconditional and conditional, which have been made in the past several years. In 1971-72, Mr. Speaker, municipal grants were \$38 million. The '75-76 estimate is for \$45.9 million. Grants in lieu of taxes in '71-72 were \$3.5 million. In '75-76 they are \$5 million, for a total of \$50.9 million in unconditional grants.

In the conditional grants area, Mr. Speaker, if I might give you these figures: health went from \$3 million to \$17.1 million; welfare and social services, from \$9.2 to \$15.8 million; transportation, from \$24.9 to \$61.6 million; environment from \$.8 to \$5 million; recreation, from \$2.4 to \$31 million; interest subsidy, from nil to \$2.8 million; other programs, from \$.2 to \$4.8 million; for a total of \$40.4 million in conditional grants in '71-72, to \$138.2 million in '75-76. The annual percentage change of total was 27.9. The total grants per capita have increased from \$50 to \$109.

Mr. Speaker, at the same time, the province has moved very substantially in the fields of education and hospital care. Again, let me read you some numbers. In 1971-72 provincial contributions to the school foundation were \$201 million. In 1975-76, they were \$376 million. Other provincial grants to schools went from \$16 million in '71-72 to \$67 million in '75-76, for a total increase from \$218 million in '71-72 to \$442 million in '75-76.

In the field of hospital care, the provincial contribution to hospitalization benefits plans in 1971-72 was \$200 million, and in '75-76 it was \$368 million. For nursing homes, it was \$12 million in '71-72 and \$29 million in '75-76. Total hospital care in '71-72 was \$212 million, and in '75-76 it was \$397 million.

So let's not suggest, Mr. Speaker, that the provincial government has not been keeping pace in its grants, unconditional or conditional, to the municipalities. They have been going upward and upward remarkably. At the same time, we've provided assistance to them in many, many other areas.

But again, we come back to the point of acknowledging they are still in difficulty. As the previous speaker suggested, we are not sure how we would ever satisfy their appetites, because there is a lot of local pressure for increasing services. I think we see that in Calgary, and we support the demand. But the pressures down there are often too great to resist. Perhaps, in some areas, until we have the concrete evidence from the Provincial Municipal Finance Council, it may be better to rely on grants, conditional and unconditional, to help them keep pace with their growing requirements.

I think, Mr. Speaker, when we have the results of the financial advisory council study, we can look at the matter with some assurance we're going in the right direction, and not just funnelling off moneys under some well-intentioned motion without the parameters to make it meaningful. So, Mr. Speaker, I could not support the motion in the way it is drafted at this time. However, I do support the long-term intention of providing further assistance to the municipalities.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. CLARK: In taking part in the debate there are two or three points I'd like to make in about two or three minutes.

First of all, I'd like to say this is our third effort in the course of this session to bring the question of municipal assistance and finance to the floor of the Assembly. That is why we chose this particular motion today.

Secondly, I think it's important for hon. members to keep in mind that the increase to the Province of Alberta in personal corporate income tax was 32 per cent between the years '72-73 and '74-75. But then, if you look at what's happened with unconditional grants in Alberta during that same period of time, you'll find that unconditional assistance to Alberta municipalities actually decreased from \$45.9 million to \$44.7 million, although total conditional and unconditional programs increased from \$79 million to almost \$148 million. Here is perhaps the most important factor of all: in 1972-73, 58 per cent of shared revenue was unconditional; but with this government placing such a high priority on local autonomy, in 1974-75 that unconditional shared revenue had dropped to 30 per cent.

AN HCN. MEMBER: The revenues went up.

MR. CLARK: The revenues went up -- but still, 30 per cent of the assistance that's available to municipalities. So when we talk about remarkable contributions, I think it's important to keep that particular thing in mind, because municipalities don't have the kind of elbow room they need at this time.

The last point I want to make, Mr. Speaker, is simply this: in moving his resolution today, the hon. Member for Clover Bar purposely stayed away from percentages. If he had included percentages in his resolution, the whole discussion this afternoon would have been around whether 35 or 40 or 6 or 12 or whatever per cent he suggested would have been wrong. What we've tried to do is focus attention on the problems municipalities have and focus the argument on that particular situation, not on a wrangling about whether one percentage is better than another, whether or not it is enough.

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

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: May the hon. member adjourn the debate?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

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

Bill 206 The Alberta Heritage Trust Fund Act

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, in moving second reading of Bill 206, The Alberta Heritage Trust Fund Act, I would like to say that the purpose of bringing this act into the Assembly is to establish some type of formal fund or plan into which the revenue from the oil royalties can be placed. We can establish some means or direction by which they are invested in present Albertans and in the future of Alberta.

There are three basic principles of the act. First, it establishes a fund. Second, it establishes a group of trustees to manage the fund. Third, we establish some terms of reference by which the fund is utilized. I would like to make one or two remarks about each one of those particular principles.

In regard to a formal fund, we have found in this Legislature over the past few months that there really has not been established any estimate of revenue or any place in government where these surplus revenues are kept, other than that they are under the power of The Financial Administration Act. When commitments of money are going on, and we hear election promises that the money is going to this area, to that area, and to other areas, we feel that kind of planning is just piecemeal at this point in our development in Alberta. We have a large, fantastic sum of money, from \$1.3 to \$1.5 billion, that can secure the economic and social future of Alberta for many, many years. We have a great responsibility as legislators. I don't think we can wait until fall to come up with the terms of reference, the direction. At this point in time we should have some intense discussion. That is really one of the main purposes of bringing this bill before the House at this time: so we can discuss it and some terms of reference are established prior to all the money being committed.

Second, why trustees as we have established in the bill? We feel that whoever administers this fund should be responsible to the Legislature, that it is a body directly under the control of and influenced by the Legislature. We should be able to discuss the policy and in that sense direct what happens to the money. We also note, with regard to the trustees, that we have recommended the majority of the trustees be elected personnel. We felt that was necessary so that there would be a close relationship between the voting public and the elected representatives; the pulse of the people could be felt at all times. It wouldn't be a group of people who were removed from the political arena, if we want to say that. It's very, very necessary in development that the attitudes and directions of people are sensed in the investment of money.

Third, what are some of these terms we wish to establish? We feel the money would be best handled through low-interest, long-term loans made available to various individuals or groups in the province. If we look at our cities in Alberta or any city, what really is the base of the economy? It's the many, many small stores and businesses initiated by individuals who work day and night to make that small business go. That's the real base of our economy, and we should do everything we can through this type of plan to help that sector of our economy grow.

Agriculture: I think that's been discussed a number of times in assisting farmers in meeting the agricultural needs. Today we've had a long discussion on municipal spending. Our municipalities do need long-term, low-interest money to build special projects. I don't think this needs to interfere with the ongoing operation of a municipality. There are special projects a municipality would like to build, but they can't because they are strapped for funds at the present time. The heritage fund could certainly help in that area. I think the very same principles apply in education.

The second term I think is necessary, and I have already touched on it, is that the needs of many Albertans have to be met. Many Albertans should have access to the funds, so the terms of reference should be built so that individuals can participate; not just a few individuals, the large corporate groups or some group of fast-talking entrepreneurs, but a good cross section of Albertans -- the man in the street. Those are the really stable people who are going to help build and preserve Alberta and make it a better place to live.

The third term I believe is that the money should go toward the non-government sector, so that the dollars available can be used by private individuals or groups to develop and build Alberta. Government's role should be one of support rather than of acting on behalf of the people, doing the thing for people and then giving them some of the benefits, or handing it out to them through programs or building a bigger government. I don't think we want to build that kind of purpose into the terms of reference of the heritage fund.

Why do I feel we should support the principles of this bill? First, because it gives us some direction. Second, at this point in time we can have some planning before we have committed the sum of money. As the Provincial Treasurer indicated, we have from \$1.3 to \$1.5 billion to handle at this time. Third, the fund is for all Albertans and not a few.

That is what is established by this bill. Through those terms of reference we can establish priorities for present and future Albertans, preserve the dollars for many, many years to come, and develop Alberta in a very rational manner.

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, I would appreciate the opportunity of making a comment or two about Bill 206.

In the past year I've heard that many authors have laid claim to the concept and, indeed, the terminology of the words "heritage trust fund". Regardless of who came up with the name, I think all members agree it's sound in concept. It's really what it will do and how it is used and controlled that is important, Mr. Speaker.

The purpose of the fund has been explained by people far more capable than I, but in essence I am sure we all know that it's to set aside certain revenues the Province of Alberta is receiving, namely from the royalties or taxes from crude oil, a resource that we know for sure we are going to run out of sometime. Indeed the amount quoted is going to be almost \$1.5 billion and would include revenues collected since April 1974, Mr. Speaker.

As the members are also well aware, the concept of the heritage trust fund was read in the throne speech just last month, also a commitment on the part of the government to introduce it in the fall sitting. It is to be known as the Alberta heritage savings trust fund.

It might be well at this time, Mr. Speaker, to define the words used in the bill. First of all, "heritage". Heritage, very simply put, means property or money which is to descend to an heir, our children and their children's children. The word "savings" is preservation from the danger of destruction of savings or money. And "trust fund", simply put, is money held in trust.

Now there are those who believe we should perhaps be using this money today. Mr. Speaker, I suggest that we, as Albertans, probably have one of the highest, if not the highest standard of living on the continent. Even with that high standard of living, not including the revenues from the depleting resources, we are still able to pull more than our weight in supporting seven other provinces in Canada.

We enjoy such things as medicare, which is peculiar to the northern half of our continent, and we now have probably the lowest income taxes in Canada. But if we were to spend this extra revenue, Mr. Speaker, I think we would be making a sad mistake. If our predecessors, those who came before, had not saved for future years, which are today, had not saved in terms of proper land use and abused the land, indeed, Mr. Speaker, we would be in difficulties today. Our land would be worn out, and perhaps half the MLAs in this House wouldn't be MLAs.

I would suggest, too, Mr. Speaker, the same thing could be said for schools, hospitals, and indeed culture. But those who came before in their good and solid thinking made it possible for us to have the standard of living we have.

There are those, some of them in this House, who say we should spend the funds, which I suggest we should earmark for heritage funds, in other social areas such as denticare. That may be so. However, I suggest, Mr. Speaker, the income the province experiences, judging by the budget speech, indicates that we have indeed enough income to live at an extremely high standard of living. We could spend that, if indeed we knew not only if but when the wells producing the black gold we receive would run out. We don't know when they'll run out, but we know for sure they will. It seems to me, Mr. Speaker, it is only prudent that we plan for the day they do.

I suppose the question arises, how do we do it? Undoubtedly there are as many ideas in this House, Mr. Speaker, as there are members. However, I think that good sense and common sense dictate we must end up with a set of priorities which serve both the social and economic needs. We're going to have to choose a balance between the needs.

For example, and only one example, the problem we have in rural Alberta today is a tendency for people to move to the metropolitan areas. This creates no end of problems for those cities. The reasons they move are varied and many. One certainly is the high cost of buying land and the high cost of farming.

It seems to me, Mr. Speaker, it would make very good sense, in terms of utilizing the funds from the heritage fund, to broaden our agricultural base. This again has been stated by more eloquent speakers than me. But of interest, I believe, to the House are statistics which are available. I realize you can use statistics both ways, but in 1973 and '74, we find there were three to four million television dinners imported to our province for consumption. It seems to me we would be wise if we addressed our minds to producing not only three or four million that we could consume, but perhaps another five or six million we could export.

Also Mr. Speaker, statistics tell us that over 35 per cent, that is greater than a third of all the food consumed in our nation, is consumed outside the home. So it appears

to me there is an ever-increasing tendency to consume the type of food we could produce off a particular part of our land. Also, Mr. Speaker, as we've become known as the beef capital of the nation, and certainly the irrigation capital of the nation, these two are naturals to go together in the production of food, not to mention the prime needs of the Pacific Rim countries, making the assumption that we could somehow transport it there. However, the Deputy Premier is not in the House, and he might have some comment on that.

In addition, and I think this is particularly interesting for the urban members, it has been proven that 84 per cent of the income from irrigated land does not go to the primary producer; it goes to the community. Only 16 per cent goes to the primary producer. It seems to me many of the problems our metropolitan areas have, which seem to increase not only in direct proportion to the way people move to the city, but almost a squaring effect of the number of people who move, could be removed or avoided by developing the irrigation section. This makes for a sound investment. I think, undoubtedly, it would make a fine investment for funds from the heritage trust fund. Indeed, it has already been announced.

Housing, Mr. Speaker, is not only a problem, it's a crisis, judging by events in this House last week. It seems to be a unique crisis in that if we believe that the family unit is the basis of society, we should be encouraging this type of thing in terms of housing. It seems to me it is becoming more prevalent every day that young couples must both work to get any sort of stake to get into housing. Yet they have the misfortune of having to pay the top income tax rate for the privilege of earning that money with which to accumulate the funds to buy the house. Once they buy it, at rather high interest rates, Mr. Speaker, it seems the first few years are dedicated to paying only interest on the mortgage and no principal. Low-income earners aren't fortunate enough even to do that.

So it seems to me, Mr. Speaker, another wise use of the heritage trust fund would be, as announced, in the area of housing. It seems it is getting to be that you go to a bank, you prove to the bank you don't need the money before it agreed to lend to you. Why on earth we, as Albertans, should have to borrow in New York or eastern Canada when we can get it at home, seems to be beyond me. At least if the heritage fund were used for the program as announced, starter homes within the province, the money would stay at home and, indeed, the profits, if any, would also be here.

However, I suggest we be careful with the housing policy or we may have a migration problem from the west to the east, because, indeed, it seems there is a bit of a problem in housing with our neighbors to the west. Housing makes a particularly wise investment for the heritage fund, Mr. Speaker. Not only does it serve a social need, but the wages earned in the actual construction are spent within the province, and the repayments on the mortgages would, indeed, keep the heritage fund intact.

Then of course another use, the heritage fund could act as a bank. It could rent out its money the same as our financial institutions do. I note in the budget that the Treasurer mentioned that the reserves alone accrued from this depleting resource in the year '75-'76 will be over \$125 million.

Doubtless, Mr. Speaker, there are many areas where the heritage fund could be employed without undue risk, and where the corpus could be retained for future generations. A word of caution is in order, I think, and that would be about interference that it might have with the private sector. I think it's an area we must be very careful of. Far be it from me, Mr. Speaker, to remind the members of this House that it was the private sector, not the government spending, which made possible the heritage fund and the great province that Alberta is.

Mr. Speaker, as I said last month in my maiden speech, it seems there are many who want to eat at the government table, but there are all too few who are prepared to do the dishes. They're not the type of people who built this province, Mr. Speaker.

In conclusion, I suggest that the heritage trust fund concept is sound, solid, and secure. Mr. Speaker, let us control it in the best interests of all Albertans. Indeed if we do, we will stand much taller in the eyes of our children and their children.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Are you ready for the question?

MR. SHABEN: I would like to make a few comments on Bill No. 206 that is before us.

The heritage trust fund concept has certainly caught the imagination of all Albertans. I think the thought and discussion it has provoked throughout the province has been very useful. It has been useful to the legislators, to the members of the government and, indeed, very useful to the people of Alberta. The people of Alberta have an understanding of where the money is derived from, that it is derived from a depleting natural resource.

Some of the terms of reference the Premier has laid down for the use of these funds have again provoked a great deal of discussion, I think. The criteria for the use are excellent: that they have benefit to future generations, our children, and our children's children.

I would like to suggest that the type of thing the heritage trust fund should be used for is water control, water use and management throughout the province. This is something that is discussed throughout North America and is probably ultimately our most valuable resource. The kind of benefits that would accrue -- irrigation, controlling levels of lakes, assuring future supplies of water to the southern part of the province -- would be a useful way to take advantage of our fortunate position and would benefit future generations.

I would like specifically to suggest that the people in the Lesser Slave Lake area, and in the whole province, could benefit by the use of the heritage trust fund to stabilize the level of this lake, Alberta's largest, to encourage commercial fishing and tourism and to help the farming area. I think this is the type of thing the people of Alberta would be happy with; they would have confidence in this sort of spending of these funds. I think the whole concept deserves a great deal of discussion in this Assembly, and I look forward to hearing more comments from the members.

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, I take pleasure in following the hon. member who has just spoken, because he referred to a particularly important topic which I feel has for a long time required more attention than it has received. That, of course, is the question of water management. Insofar as the heritage trust fund is concerned, Mr. Speaker, may I say that I was particularly pleased, coming as I do from a very dry part of the province -- that part which is really in the centre of Alberta's share of the Palliser Triangle . . .

DR. BUCK: Prohibition.

MR. HORSMAN: No prohibition any more, but certainly a lack of water from time to time.

Coming as I do from the Palliser Triangle, the question of water is important to cities such as Medicine Hat for the purpose of not only domestic but industrial use. Of particular importance to us in southeastern Alberta is the question of water management for irrigation use. In this regard, Mr. Speaker, I want to direct my remarks to the already stated policy of this government to direct to irrigation from the Alberta heritage trust fund, the sum of \$200 million over a 10-year period.

Over the past while I have had the opportunity of meeting -- as a matter of fact, first as a candidate, Mr. Speaker, with other candidates from southern Alberta -- with the Alberta Irrigation Projects Association. We received a brief in December 1974, which was a comparison between irrigated crop production and dryland farming in southern Alberta. I think this particular brief pointed out, and impressed upon me at any rate, the importance of proceeding with irrigation and the upgrading of existing irrigation works.

Mr. Speaker, I know there are those who hold an opposite view, that the \$200 million from the trust fund already indicated to be spent on irrigation is not being wisely spent. Many of us are in receipt of information to that effect. However, I think when one looks at the impact irrigation as opposed to dryland farming has upon the production of crops, I suggest the government has wisely indicated that \$200 million will be spent from the Alberta heritage trust fund.

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

If I can briefly indicate to the House some figures, we find that on irrigated land in southern Alberta we have approximately 835,000 acres in crop at this time, producing an estimated total value of [\$158,873,500] in crops of all natures, ranging from hay to cereal crops, vegetable crops, and so on, providing an average gross return per irrigated acre of \$190.27, Mr. Speaker. Opposed to that, we find a table which relates to dryland crop production in southeastern Alberta. Assuming 835,000 acres in dryland production, and of course these are estimates, we find that the same land, in dryland, would produce only \$27,614,900, for an average gross return per dryland acre of \$33.07. Mr. Speaker, that's quite a remarkable difference: from \$190.27 to \$33.07. Mr. Speaker, I suggest to you that on those figures alone, a good case can be made for the moneys which are being expended on irrigation.

Going back over the years, we find that since 1969 the Province of Alberta has been contributing to a capital works rehabilitation program in the districts on a cost-sharing program, whereby the province contributes up to 86 per cent of the cost of approved projects. Those expenditures, Mr. Speaker, from 1969 when they totalled \$583,630, rose in 1974 to \$3 million. However, under the Alberta heritage trust fund we can see the major thrust being undertaken will, over a 10-year period, provide for \$200 million, or if you want to average it over the 10-year period, \$20 million per year. This, I suggest, is a very important thrust and a well-justified expenditure of these trust fund moneys.

We have all received, as members of this House, a document called Water Management for Irrigation Use, prepared by the ministries of environment and agriculture. I hope all members of the House, no matter where they come from in this province, be it from northern Alberta where the water problems are somewhat different, or from the metropolitan centres, will carefully study this proposal. By moving in this direction, the Government of Alberta has quite clearly indicated that a major emphasis will be placed on this use. As a matter of fact, it would represent about one-sixth of the total heritage trust fund if expended in one year. Of course it won't be done that way, because I expect interest will be earned on this trust fund, and a portion of that will be paid to irrigation. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I hope all members will become thoroughly familiar with the outlines. And of course, these are only outlines of this proposal.

Now I wish to say one thing in regard to the particular bill before the House; I think it is premature for this bill to come forward at this time. After all, Mr. Speaker, it is governments which have to establish the parameters for the expenditure of public funds, and not private members. This, of course, will be one of the greatest expenditures of public funds this province has ever embarked upon, and in a very wise manner I might add.

Still dealing with this question of irrigation, it's quite clear the ministers of environment and agriculture took the right steps when they visited southern Alberta

shortly after the March 26 general election. At that time, they toured the various irrigation districts, met with irrigation boards of directors, and requested that the irrigation districts provide to the various departments their projections and ideas as to what should be done with the expenditures of money. In other words, they are asking for input from the local level on the direction to move.

I suggest this type of planning which has been accepted by the irrigation boards, as I understand it, is exactly the type of planning which must go into the whole preparation of the Alberta heritage trust fund, and has been announced in the Speech from the Throne, Mr. Speaker, and in the budget. The details of how the trust fund will be set up, how it will be managed, how the expenditure will take place, will be announced at the fall session of this Legislature. To proceed at this time to introduce a bill on this subject, I suggest, is premature. The same type of planning, indeed planning on a much larger scale, must go into preparation of the heritage trust fund than is going into the expenditure of that portion of the fund which will be spent on water management for irrigation use.

I'm pleased, Mr. Speaker, to have met with the ministers of irrigation and agriculture over the past few weeks and to see how closely the departments are co-operating in developing programs for the expenditure of this major component of the trust fund. I note that Alberta Environment will have the larger portion of the expenditure. That of course will go, first of all, for headworks rehabilitation, \$32 million; improved operation and maintenance, \$12 million; water storage on the Oldman River system, \$65 million; and miscellaneous, \$1 million; for a total of \$110 million.

Mr. Speaker, perhaps some of the members from other parts of the province are not familiar with the Oldman River system. That is one of the major river systems in southern Alberta which goes into and makes up the South Saskatchewan River, which flows through Medicine Hat on into Saskatchewan where it later joins the North Saskatchewan River, which of course runs right by these buildings.

I would hope that the members from the rest of the province would familiarize themselves with this river system, and that they will, when the time comes, be prepared to debate and consider this major expenditure which, of course, involves the building of a fairly major dam in southern Alberta. The hon. Member for Macleod might know where the dam site is going. I'm not entirely sure about that. I think he has some ideas on it, and I look forward to hearing his views on the subject. That, of course, will be a major expenditure from this fund on the part of the government.

Alberta Agriculture's portion of the fund will be \$90,000 -- \$90 million. I'm sorry. Those figures are so big, I sometimes miss some of those zeros, Mr. Speaker, when talking about expenditures of funds of that nature. First of all, the rehabilitation of works in existing districts including major works, which supply water for multipurpose use as a top priority, will be \$40 million over 10 years.

Now at the present time there are 13 irrigation district boards in the south. Many of these irrigation boards, Mr. Speaker, are suffering from an antiquated system of works. I'm sure the hon. Member for Bow Valley is well aware of this particular problem, as one of the largest irrigation districts in southern Alberta is situated within the constituency of Bow Valley. So I'm certain he will join with me in expressing a great deal of interest in how the funds directed toward this particular use will be expended over the next 10 years. I'm sure he will join with me in applauding this move towards rehabilitation of these works.

Then we come to another \$50 million program, Mr. Speaker, which is the expansion of existing irrigation districts, and bringing new acreage under irrigation over a 10-year period. As I say, \$50 million. Now this, of course, will involve a good deal of co-operation and consideration from the local irrigation district boards. Here we have what I think will be one of the most exciting developments as far as water use in southern Alberta is concerned. Irrigation districts capable of expanding water use or land under water will be encouraged to present new programs to the government to show how new land can be brought under irrigation, and to show how much new acreage can be added to the system.

Mr. Speaker, the present acreage of just over 800,000 can be considerably improved, providing the water supply is there. The water supply, of course, will be improved from the headworks program I mentioned earlier, and by upgrading the existing irrigation works so there is less loss of water through seepage and spillage and, as well, more control over the amount of water used. By so doing, and by adding new main canals and subcanals, it will be possible to increase the water supply.

Mr. Speaker, I am really excited about the proposal that has been advanced for this \$200 million expenditure. By increasing the water supply for southern Alberta we can change what is, in large part, a very arid part of Canada into a very productive farm economy. [From] the figures I've indicated already, the difference in amount per acre that can reasonably be expected from irrigating farmland is staggering when one considers the amount of money per acre.

Mr. Speaker, I hope the members of the House who are not in irrigation country will take the opportunity of coming to southern Alberta, now that it is less hostile territory politically, and visiting with some of the members who will attempt to show them around the irrigation districts and acquaint them with what is really being done in this very exciting part of Alberta's agricultural economy.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, may I say that it's not just a matter of producing these crops on irrigated land that is important. It is important as well that we develop a diversification of our agricultural economy so that processing of agricultural products which are grown on these irrigated acreages can be done in southern Alberta.

The hon. Member for Lethbridge West mentioned TV dinners. That's just one of the methods by which we can make use of crops grown on this irrigated land. I was very pleased he mentioned that. Some of the members from southern Alberta toured the new compact foods plant in Lethbridge a short while ago. We saw how these vegetable crops and so on will be produced right in Lethbridge. Some day, hopefully, there'll be an expansion of that type of plant into the City of Medicine Hat and into some of the smaller communities in southern Alberta.

So, Mr. Speaker, coming from southern Alberta, I am very, very excited and very pleased that this government has recognized that one of the major components of this Alberta heritage trust fund will be the expenditure of a significant portion, \$200 million over a 10-year period, on irrigation. I commend the government for that action. I also commend the government for its decision not to proceed at this particular session with implementation of the trust fund legislation, because it needs careful planning. Mr. Speaker, I think the bill introduced by the Member for Little Bow, well-intentioned as it is, is premature at this session of the Legislature.

MR. BUTLER: Mr. Speaker, I'm certainly glad to see that the hon. member is interested in water conservation. I come from a dry area where there are over 5 million acres of land which at one time were settled and abandoned. As far back as 1914, it was surveyed for the Red Deer River diversion. It has been surveyed many times since. Experimental work has been done. I don't know why this hasn't gone on. It was later taken over and referred to as the Pearce stock-watering scheme for east-central Alberta. When he's done with the \$200 million in southern Alberta, in 10 years we could use another \$200 million north of the Red Deer, in what they call the Red Deer River diversion, to put people back into this sparsely settled area. When you have an area such as that with 5 million acres -- our last census was 1,700 resident farmers.

I think a lot can be done with water. There's not a town along that line from Delia, Craigville, and Hanna through to Youngstown that doesn't need water. Youngstown alone has spent \$100,000 trying to find sufficient water over the last 10 years and they still don't have enough. This winter they had to close off the old folks' home, the single men's hostel, and the Department of Municipal Affairs shops, which normally get water from the town system. So in our area, water is really needed. It has been needed as far back as 1914. I hope this Red Deer River diversion some place down the line, if it takes the next 10 years, is not forgotten. It's a place where a lot of money from our heritage trust fund could be well spent for our children and our great-grandchildren. I hope I can make some contribution in the Legislature now, to let people know this country is not forgotten. I have asked the interns to get me all the information they can on this Red Deer River diversion and the Pearce stock-watering scheme. They have not come up with it yet. When they do, I hope to have more to say on it.

I'm certainly proud to be associated with a government which has the foresight to build a heritage trust fund. They could build a wonderful Alberta if they took this money into general revenue and spent it all at the present time, but I'm sure we would build an Alberta we couldn't maintain. I'm certainly proud to be part of a government which has the foresight to keep the money in a trust fund and spend and build what they can maintain in the future. I hope that down the road, when they have completed their irrigation system in southern Alberta, I am able to sell and promote this Red Deer River diversion. I'll have more to say on this when I get my data. I have a lot from memory of the past, but when I get all my data, I'll have more to say on this. I hope we can do a lot for east-central Alberta in the future with this heritage trust fund.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. APPLEBY: I'm pleased to be able to participate in this debate this afternoon, because I feel we're discussing a subject we're all vitally interested in.

The Member for Lesser Slave Lake has said the Alberta heritage trust fund, as it was proposed by the Premier and discussed during the election, was very well received. Certainly this has to be my reaction completely to the thoughts of the people in this province, because the idea or the thought was not criticized in any place I heard it discussed. No doubt there has been, on the part of many of the people of this province some question as to just what it might involve. They realize, of course, that something of this magnitude will require a considerable amount of care, thought, and consideration before it can actually be put into effect.

I think that in the bill itself -- I do agree with some of it. I agree with the second term of the bill, in fact, where it says: "There is hereby established a trust to be named the Alberta Heritage Trust Fund for the benefit of the people of the Province of Alberta." I think we could all agree with that.

The Member for Little Bow has suggested that some of these funds could be placed in some type of revolving accounts which would keep themselves alive, keep coming back in and be self-sustaining. I think this is a good idea. The Member for Lethbridge West mentioned housing and, of course, when we look back on the Premier's original statement with regard to this heritage trust fund, we see that he did mention the possibility of using some of this fund in mortgage funds at preferred interest rates for housing the people of this province. I think that's important. I think it's also significant that we have already recognized in this House the fact that housing is something this government is very deeply concerned with. We had a debate here a few days ago -- an emergency debate on housing. I think that was useful too. Many people were able to express their thoughts

on housing. There is no doubt that today it's one of the things of very vital concern in this province.

Mr. Speaker, in the Premier's original statement, in the first section, he mentioned that appropriate uses for this fund could be such things as those "which diversify and strengthen the economy in the future, and stimulate new jobs for Albertans". I think this is something we have to consider very deeply and very carefully, because we are expending funds that come from a resource which is non-renewable. We want to be looking down the road, Mr. Speaker, into the future, thinking of the people, just as the hon. Member for Hanna-Cyren has said, who are yet to come in this province so they may have a way and a quality of life that is at least equal to that which we enjoy today.

In his statement the Premier also mentioned that some of these funds might be used in "science and research to broaden the productive capacity of the province". I think this is a very significant suggestion. I could think of two items where this might be utilized in the field of science and research. It might, in the future, provide more productive capacity for this province, and more revenue return when these other resources which the heritage trust fund has been drawn from have been utilized.

Of course, the hon. members will not be surprised when I mention the beekeeping industry, because it's becoming more and more necessary, Mr. Speaker, that we do some research in this area. We have, for many years, been dependent on foreign sources for our packaged bees for our beekeeping industry in the Province of Alberta, and we are running into considerable problems in getting the number and quality of packaged bees we want for the future. We have had that problem this year as well. Last year the Department of Agriculture instituted a program for overwintering of bees. They encouraged beekeepers, through incentives, to overwinter their bees so they wouldn't have to buy them from a foreign source. This was a fairly successful program, but it proved . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. With great respect for the hon. member, I have some difficulty in connecting the bee program with the heritage trust fund.

MR. AFPLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was just trying to indicate some of the areas of research and science whereby some of these funds could be expended. However, I will accede to your ruling in that respect.

I also might mention that this afternoon in the question period the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview was questioning the minister in charge of wildlife, regarding the Fresh Water Fish Marketing Corporation. I'm sure the Member for Lesser Slave Lake would agree with me that there is opportunity for research in this direction, to utilize some of the rough fish present in lakes in Alberta and to bring about a productive industry which will bring more revenues into this province in the future. These are the types of things I think we can be looking at in the area of research, besides many, many others, of course.

In his statement the Premier mentioned that improved transportation facilities could be an appropriate area where some of these funds might be expended. I wonder if all the members of this Assembly, Mr. Speaker, are becoming aware of the fact that much of our resource development is changing from the southern part of the province to the northern areas. In these areas, Mr. Speaker, there is an urgent need for development of better and more up-to-date transportation facilities. I think this is an area where we could be expending some of the heritage trust fund.

Mr. Speaker, this idea of using non-renewable resource revenue for planning for the future is not entirely new. In Venezuela they have had such a program in effect for many, many years. In fact, they call this program "planting the oil". The idea of it, of course, was that they would use the money from this resource to build things of a capital nature -- schools, hospitals, roads, and industry -- so that, as we plan here in Alberta, in the future when the renewable resource was gone they would have an economy to support their nation in the manner they desire.

Mr. Speaker, the hon. member who introduced the bill suggested it would be well if they had a system of trustees to monitor this fund. I think he also mentioned a number of these should be elected officials. This of course was exactly what the Premier expressed in his statement when he said, "A new Standing Committee of the Legislature would be proposed to annually review the operations of the Fund and to report to the [Legislature] . . .". The hon. member who introduced the bill said it would be appropriate that elected officials should be on this type of committee to act as trustees of the fund, because they would be responsible to the people. But whc, Mr. Speaker, would be more responsible to the people of this province than a standing committee of this Legislature?

So, Mr. Speaker, I have to agree with the Member for Medicine Hat when he says he feels the bill is premature. I think we are in agreement that the idea of the heritage trust fund is well received and is necessary for the future of this province. But we also have to remember that while the opposition members of this Legislature try to say, on most occasions, hurry, hurry, hurry, let's get on with this, they bring in a makeshift piece of legislation like this and try to stampede the government into hasty action. Afterwards, of course, they stand in the eaves and call us irresponsible because we have not given it due and careful consideration.

I think, Mr. Speaker, it is very, very necessary that we weigh all the merits and all the terms of the legislation which is going to be introduced. We have to be assured that it will be sound, solid and workable, a plan which will actually be what we want and desire for the people of this province. We also have to do some very careful projections

into the future of what we consider the needs of the Province of Alberta will be, and the people who live in this province.

So I think, Mr. Speaker, that at this particular time, it is indeed premature to introduce legislation like this. I think perhaps it is also good that we have had an opportunity to discuss this act this afternoon, because hon. members of this House have had the chance to express themselves and give some of their thoughts and ideas as to how the funds might be expended. Nevertheless, Mr. Speaker, we have a great deal of work to do before the legislation can actually be brought into effect. I know we have a time schedule which says the fall of 1975. I only hope we can meet that schedule. I am not sure that we can.

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

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER: The Assembly stands adjourned . . .

MR. FOSTER: Mr. Speaker, excuse me. If we might hold it at 5:30 for a moment. By way of business of the House, I would remind all hon. members that this evening is the dinner sponsored by the Alberta Teachers' Association.

In terms of business of the House tomorrow morning, Mr. Speaker, we will be proceeding with Estimates, Executive Council, Department of Utilities and Telephones, possibly the Department of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs, and Energy and Natural Resources.

MR. PEACOCK: You're optimistic.

MR. FOSTER: Oh, I'm sorry. We've done Utilities. Then Executive Council.

MR. SPEAKER: The Assembly stands adjourned until tomorrow morning at 10 o'clock.

[The House rose at 5:31 p.m.]